

# Blessington, Co. Wicklow

## Universal Design Statement

Proposed Mixed-Use Development at  
Blessington, Co. Wicklow

Section 34 LRD Application - Oct 2024



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## 1.0 Introduction

*Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size or disability. This includes public places in the built environment such as buildings, streets or spaces that the public have access to; products and services provided in those places; and systems that are available including information and communications technology (ICT).*

(Disability Act, 2005)

Deady Gahan Architects have been appointed by Marshall Yards Development Company Ltd. to produce this Statement of Compliance with Universal Design to accompany the Large Scale Residential Development (LRD) planning application to Wicklow County Council for the proposed development of 269 no. residential units consisting of 197 no. houses and 72 no. apartments and associated site works at Blessington, Co. Wicklow.

There are also 3no commercial spaces on the ground floor of the Mixed-Use building (399.0 sq.m. total) near the southern entrance of the site. These spaces have been placed adjacent the site entrance to allow for convenient accessibility for the wider community.

## 2.0 Summary of Proposed Development

The proposed development has been designed to provide high-quality houses and apartments that will contribute positively to Blessington and deliver much needed housing to Wicklow. The proposed residential development is located in Blessington, which is approximately 50 kilometers South-West of Dublin City Centre.

The housing mix will focus on providing affordable homes for both individuals and families alike and it includes 233 no. residential units and 36 no. later living units comprising:

- 12 No. 1 bed / 2-person apartments (Mixed-Use building)
- 12 No. 2 bed / 4-person apartments (Mixed-Use building)
- 24 No. 1 bed / 2-person (own door) apartments (Apt/Duplex Units)
- 24 No. 3 bed / 5-person (own door) apartments (Apt/Duplex Units)
- 07 No. 2 bed / 3/4-person bungalows
- 108 No. 2 bed / 3/4-person townhouses
- 51 No. 3 bed / 4-person townhouses
- 07 No. 3 bed / 5-person townhouses
- 02 No. 4 bed / 7-person townhouses
- 12 No. 3 bed / 5-person semi-detached units
- 06 No. 4 bed / 7-person semi-detached units
- 04 No. 4 bed / 7-person detached units

The proposed scheme of 269 units has a density of 50.3 units/HA considered on a net developable area of 5.35 Ha. There are also 3no commercial spaces on the ground floor of the Mixed-Use building (399.0 sq.m. total) near the southern entrance of the site. These spaces have been placed adjacent the site entrance to allow for convenient accessibility for the wider community.

Connectivity, legibility and permeability are some of the main key themes of the scheme and develops from the wider surrounding area to the local environment. The internal connections within the proposed development will provide easy access from the dwellings to the surrounding amenities and are a crucial element in providing passive surveillance and promoting active neighbourhoods.

In the local context, the provision for connections from the proposed development to Blessington town centre will foster a sense of identity and community for the area. A 3m combined cycle/pedestrian route runs through the site and a series of footpath links have been provided along the boundaries of the scheme in order to ensure that the residents will have easy access to local amenities and cycle routes connecting into Blessington Town Centre. As the proposed scheme is designed to create permeable connections with the surrounding context, a range of pedestrian routes and street connections have been incorporated throughout the layout connecting the proposed site to the public streets to the south, east and west.

The existing topography of the site is relatively flat with a gentle slope across the site from East to West.

To ensure the visual integration of the site, the proposed development will promote the protection and enhancement of natural features on site, including archaeological features, trees, and hedgerows. These features are integrated within the development to create an identity that is unique to its location. Particular attention was placed in the design of the public open spaces in the centre of the site to create a strong and well connected network of usable and enjoyable green areas, pedestrian paths, play areas. These features will enhance/contribute in creating a sense of place.

Large open spaces are located in various locations around the site and act as node points as you progress through the development. These open spaces are carefully positioned in order to take full advantage of the sites natural features and to expand upon the existing smaller public open spaces on the boundaries. There are also some green areas and a pocket park along the other boundaries to address the existing trees and hedgerows.

All the open spaces will be enhanced by the creation of active and architecturally appropriate urban frontages, designed having particular regard to the site context and the topographical nature of the site. The proposed dwellings are also orientated to overlook the open spaces, provide opportunities for passive surveillance of these areas and create strong edges within the scheme. The open spaces vary with a mix of soft and hard landscaping to further enhance the quality of life in the area. Distinct corner units with individual features address the main corners along the main streets and on the open spaces to provide distinctiveness to the site. The variety and quality of the proposed open spaces support active neighbourhoods within the site as well as promoting connections and integration with the existing settlements of Blessington.

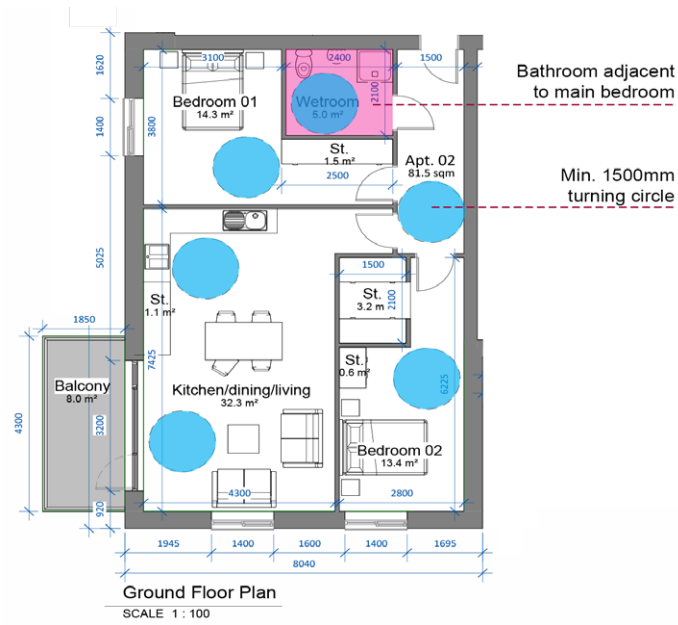
36 no. Later Living Units along with 24 no. Ground Floor Apartment units have been incorporated in the southern and western areas of the scheme in order to satisfy the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland. These units have been designed to cater for a range of end users of any age, size, ability or disability. These units have been designed to allow for flexibility and ease of adaptability to meet peoples changing needs over time in a cost effective and sustainable way. The location of the units allow for ease of access and approach, while being integrated within the community in smaller sections of the site to identify the units easily.



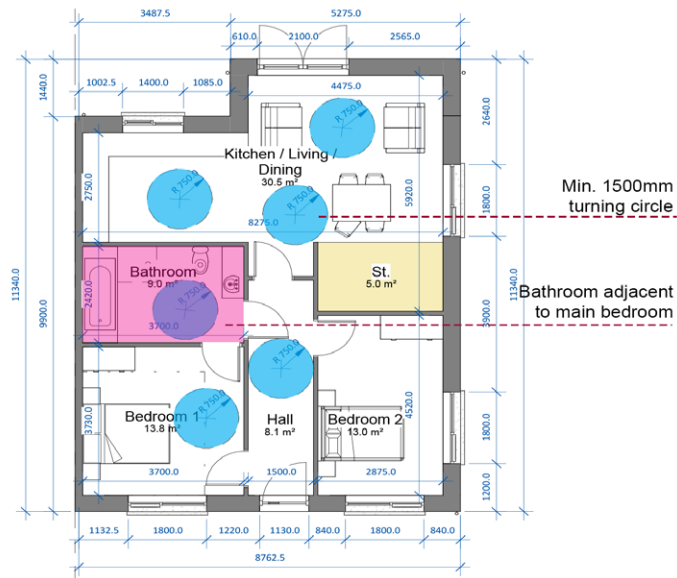
Proposed Apartment/Duplex Units and Apartments (within Mixed-Use building)



## Later Living Apartment Layout with U.D. elements incorporated



## Later Living Bungalow Layout with U.D. elements incorporated



## 3.0 The 7 Principles of Universal Design

Care has been taken in the design of the proposed development to address each Principle of Universal Design. Each Principle has been addressed below and references the Technical Guidance Documents Part M regarding Access and Use.

### 3.1 Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Guidelines:

- 1a. Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- 1b. Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- 1c. Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- 1d. Make the design appealing to all users.

#### DESIGN APPROACH

- The same means of access to buildings within the scheme is provided around the development where possible.
- The majority of dwellings are accessed via the ground floor and are designed to provide Part M compliant access via front door for visitors.
- The majority of dwelling houses are provided with on curtilage car parking located in close proximity to the front door.
- The majority of the apt/duplex units have own door access at the ground floor, are designed to provide Part M compliant access and have the car parking located nearby.
- The majority of the streets and footpaths are designed in accordance with TGD Part M: Min 1:21 gradient pathways with tactile and visual aids at street crossing and seating and rest areas which assist with passive security.
- External amenity spaces have been designed in order to appeal to all users and in accordance with TGD Part M.
- The commercial spaces are located to the south of the site and are situated near an entrance to the scheme. These have been placed adjacent to a site entrance to allow for convenient accessibility for the development and the wider community.



## 3.2 Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Guidelines:

- 2a. Provide choice in methods of use.
- 2b. Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- 2c. Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.
- 2d. Provide adaptability to the user's pace.

### DESIGN APPROACH

- The proposed development provides for a wide variety of house and apartment types including: 3/4 bed semi-detached and detached units, 2/3/4 bed townhouse units, 2 bed bungalow units and 1/2/3 bed apartment units.
- Each of these unit types are compliant with the Building Regulations, in particular TGD Part M Access and Use and TGD Part D Materials and Workmanship.
- Houses and apartments have been designed to provide for adaptability as resident requirements change over time. Provisions includes for:
  - Level access or gently sloping (max 1:21) is provided from car parking space to front door
  - The majority of living rooms are located at entrance level
  - Two storey houses are designed to allow for horizontal and vertical extension for the provision of additional space if so required
  - Internal spatial design is such as to provide adequate space for wheelchair turning and all units have an accessible bathroom.

## 3.3 Simple and Intuitive Use

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

Guidelines:

- 3a. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- 3b. Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- 3c. Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- 3d. Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- 3e. Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

- Pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development provide direct connectivity between destination points on desire lines. Particularly important are the connections of this internal network with the pedestrian paths along the boundaries of the site.
- The majority of pedestrian and cycle routes are provided with a gradient of less than 1:20. All streets and footpaths are DMURS compliant.
- A clear street hierarchy provides a consistent appreciation of place and way finding.
- Node houses that well address the corners are situated at prominent positions to provide landmark points to assist way finding.
- The entrance doors are easily located with familiar features such as entrance canopies and pop-out front doors.
- Each unit is designed in such a way as to eliminate unnecessary complexity. Typical layout are designed in order to promote easy access to each unit and intuitive navigation within.
- Each apartment with own door access has defined entrances to provide clearly established ingress points.

### 3.4 Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Guidelines:

- 4a. Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- 4b. Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- 4c. Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- 4d. Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- 4e. Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

- A selection of different coloured surfaces and sections of raised tables have been introduced to the design to clearly identify hazards such as street crossing, the variations will be visual and tactile.
- Variation in materials, architectural expressions and colours assist in providing legibility between the different character areas and the neighbourhoods.
- Clear signage will assist in way finding and be provided in compliance with TGD Part M.

### 3.5 Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Guidelines:

- 5a. Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- 5b. Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- 5c. Provide fail safe features.
- 5d. Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

- Different coloured surfaces and sections of raised tables have been introduced to clearly identify hazards such as street crossing and level changes.
- The streets have been designed in accordance with DMURs to aid in traffic calming and the use of Shared Surfaces increase pedestrian priority within the development.
- Landscaping is used to minimise risk at embankments.

### 3.6 Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

Guidelines:

- 6a. Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- 6b. Use reasonable operating forces.
- 6c. Minimize repetitive actions.
- 6d. Minimize sustained physical effort.

- Pedestrian routes have been designed to minimise gradient and mitigate the requirement of extensive excavation/change of levels.
- All pedestrian routes are provided with a gradient of less than 1:20 to ease accessibility and to reduce fatigue.
- The majority of units have parking provided within its curtilage or in close proximity to allow for easy access to the unit.
- All duplex apartments are designed with Part M ambulant compliant stairs to minimise sustained physical effort while accessing the units.

### 3.7 Size and Space Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Guidelines:

- 7a. Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- 7b. Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- 7c. Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- 7d. Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

- Each unit has been designed in accordance with TGD Part M and allow for easy access and use both internally and externally.
- All open spaces will be provided with public seating in order to appease all users.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The proposed mixed-use development has been designed so that it can be accessed, understood and used by the widest possible extent of people, regardless of their age, size, and disability. This includes buildings, houses, apartments, streets, footpaths, pedestrian routes and open spaces.