

T. +353 (0)21 439 3800

E. architects@jca.ie

www.jca.ie

Cork

Courthouse Chambers,

27/29 Washington St.

DESIGN STATEMENT

1.0 SCHEDULE OF ACCOMODATION

The proposed design provides for 26 dwellings units (with a mix of one & two bed units) within two proposed blocks. The proposed dwellings provide for 19 number 2 bed (3 person) units and 7 number 1 bed units. *(Please see submitted Detailed Schedule of Accommodation)*

2.0 SITE (0.49 ha approx)

The site is situated adjacent to the Farranferris Education Campus, 1.5 km approx. north of Cork City Centre. The site fronts Lovers Walk/Redemption Rd and has return frontage to a recently constructed estate roadway, along its northern boundary. A newly constructed housing development is located directly to the west of the proposed site, and the site is situated within a mature inner suburban residential location. The site is within close walking distance of Blackpool Shopping Centre, Retail and Office Park. The majority of the site is located within a residential, local services and institutional uses zoning objective, Cork City Development 2015-2021. There is planning precedent on the site for a multi-storey building – as the site formed part of a large, proposed development of the overall Farranferris Campus 11/34953 (P.P grant 16/03/2012). The site had planning for a large three-storey over part lower ground floor, education building.

3.0 SITE STRATEGY

The proposed dwellings are provided within two blocks that form a generous communal green /courtyard space between. The proposed layouts would be very suitable for much needed stepdown units for the elderly or for new housing in the locality. All units benefit from dual aspect layouts, with relating generous daylight and natural cross ventilation benefits for inhabitants

The proposed scheme maintains a generous level of communal amenity greenspace within the site boundary serving to soften the proposal into the existing context. The site fronts the public road (lovers walk) to the east, retaining the existing boundary wall and creates a generous raised communal amenity space (with integrated planting) to the front of the eastern block. This layered approach would serve to integrate the relatively modest volumes within the surrounding context.

The layout enables the proposed scheme to benefit from the newly built estate access road directly to the north of the site boundary and seeks to positively integrate the development within the surrounding estate and neighbouring context. Working with the existing topography and surrounding context gentle slopes are integrated to settle the proposed development within its context.

Block A is the smaller of the two proposed blocks and is positioned towards the rear (west) of the site. The ten apartments proposed within this block are fully accessible throughout. These units also provide enlarged accessible WC facilities (shower rooms incorporating a corner WC for independent use), making them particularly suitable for housing for the elderly. The ground floor units within this block provide a generous sheltered recessed area adjacent to the individual front entrance doors, which is envisioned as a private yet social space for the future inhabitants. Strip planting beds are incorporated to define this threshold space and bring definition and an additional layer for privacy from the communal pathway beyond. The ground floor units open to private gardens to the rear (with Southwest orientations).

The proposed first floor units within Block A are accessible via an internal communal ambulant stairs and lift which opens directly to a raised communal deck. This deck/gallery is generous in proportion maintaining a minimum clear width of 2 meters. Privacy screens are integrated to the deck edge to prevent overlooking of the private gardens of the units located below. Recesses are also incorporated into the first-floor units to bring ample daylight into the apartment interiors while maintaining an appropriate degree of privacy from the communal deck/gallery beyond. All units at this level benefit from private balconies and generous glazing within the east facade.

Block B is the larger of the two proposed blocks and is positioned more towards the site's eastern boundary. Responding to the surrounding gradient this block is located a meter below the site's main entrance level at which Block A is situated. The proposed ground floor apartments within this block are also fully accessible throughout. The proposed units provide enlarged accessible WC facilities (shower rooms incorporating a corner WC for independent use). The apertures within the rear facade are modest, maintaining an appropriate degree of privacy, with generous glazing and terraces positioned to the front. The private terraces for these units are appropriately screened from the communal amenity space beyond by generous planting. Brick privacy screens (1.8m high) are proposed to bring additional privacy at the northern edge of these ground floor private amenity terraces.

The apartments located at the upper floor are primarily accessible via an internal communal ambulant stairs and lift which opens directly to a raised communal deck. Four of the units at first floor level are single storey and largely mirror the attributes of the apartments below (being fully accessible throughout). Towards the site's north-eastern corner, the block rises an additional storey defining the corner in keeping with good place making guidelines to provide accommodation for five duplex units. The duplex units provide two bedrooms and a visitor accessible wc at entrance level, with living accommodation located at the upper level. This living accommodation opens to a recessed balcony with expansive views of the city beyond.

3.0.1 SITE STRATEGY –COMMUNAL AMMENITY SPACE

As a result of the design strategy to maintain generous degrees of greenspace within the site boundary the public communal amenity space provided within the proposed development is generous. The total communal amenity space provided within the scheme is 1050sqm (significantly exceeding the minimum requirement of 149sqm of communal amenity space as set forth within Appendix 1 of the 2020 Apartment guidelines for this residential development of 19 no 2 bed apartments & 7 no 1 bed apartments). The communal amenity space provided within the site boundary is accessible, secure, and usable outdoor space for the proposed residents of the development (Please see drawing PL005). The heights and orientation of proposed blocks permit adequate levels of sunlight to reach this communal amenity space throughout the year.

To the west of Block A and adjacent to the main estate road 118 sqm of public open space is also allocated as a sensory garden. This additional allocated greenspace is in keeping with the threshold green spaces provided within the recently completed residential development immediately to the west. This space benefits from an elevated position and relating daylight benefits. This provision is also in keeping with Cork City Development Plan (2015-2021) and the nature of the proposed development being a smaller residential development.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES

4.0.1 HISTORIC CONTEXT

The proposed development site is located to the north of the former St. Finbar's Diocesan Seminary building on Lover's Walk, Farranferris, a protected structure included on the Record of Protected Structures for the city as Farranferris Seminary (Ref. No. PS623). This building is also included on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (Reg. No. 20862028) where it is given Architectural, Artistic, Historical and Social categories of special interest.

The Diocesan College, as it was initially known, was designed by Samuel F. Hynes M.R.I.A.I and described in *The Architect* in May 1885 as follows:

It commands a splendid view of the city, being built on a very elevated site. The ground floor is appropriated to reception rooms, class rooms, study hall, library, chapel, sacristy....etc, all of good proportions and conveniently arranged around a spacious corridor having windows looking in to the court area....The exterior of the building is faced with Bridgewater brick, the arches of doors and windows being relieved by white brick, with cut limestone in the cusped heads and tympana, strings under windows, etc.



*Fig. 1: Illustration of Hynes's Diocesan College as it appeared in *The Architect*, May 16th 1885.*

The building was completed in 1885 by the well-known firm of contractors Messrs. E. and P. O'Flynn who were located nearby on Watercourse Road for a cost of £17, 000. ¹The building was set in extensive grounds, and at the time of construction was located on the outskirts of Blackpool, with a number of small cottages along Lover's Walk the only other buildings in the immediate vicinity (See Fig. 2, below). As today, the majority of the associated grounds was located to the south and southeast of the building, with a smaller, un-landscaped area to the north. Part of this northern area of the original curtilage of the building is the area now proposed for development.

¹ https://www.dia.ie/architects/view/2706/HYNES-SAMUELFRAUCIS#tab_works



Fig. 2: Ordinance Survey Town Plan, updated 1890 (published 1894). Scale 1:1056/Five feet to one statute mile.

From the historic Ordinance Survey maps it is evident that the northern section of the site was never formally laid out, nor did it appear to form part of the gardens associated with the college. No structures or garden features are indicated on these historic maps. On the c.1900 Ordinance Survey map (see Fig. 3), the main boundary of the grounds does not appear to include this field to the north, although it may have remained in the ownership of the college.



Fig. 3: Extract from the c. 1900 Ordnance Survey map showing a tree-lined boundary to the college. Note the field to the north is outside of this area and there is no formal planting or landscaping within this area.

The boundary to the north appears to have been altered in the 20th century to accommodate the construction of a large gable fronted building to the northeast side of the college. This building is still extant today. The entrance, lodge and avenue to the south remain today as per the layout seen on the historic Ordnance Survey maps and will not be affected by the proposed development (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Gate lodge and entrance to the former seminary, located to the south of the building.

To the north of the former seminary a new access roadway has been recently constructed to give access to a new housing development located to the ground northwest (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5: New access road and amenity space to the north of the seminary building. The proposed development site is indicated.

The context of the former seminary building has changed significantly since it was constructed in the 1880s. Although much of the former associated grounds is retained today, outside of the boundary walls, since the mid-20th century the surrounding area has been extensively developed with housing. The surrounding context in which the former seminary building is now located is best seen as viewed from the east (see Fig. 6).



Fig. 6: View of the proposed development site from the east. Site is indicated.

Given the extensive surrounding development, the 20th century building now standing immediately north of the former seminary, and the retention of the main areas of garden and curtilage to the south, it is not considered that the proposed development would increase any existing negative impact on the protected structure. The changes in level across the site will mean that the proposed development will be constructed at a lower ground floor level, while landscaping, tree planting and amenity spaces

around the proposed new residential units will also mitigate against negative visual impacts on the former seminary building/protected structure in both near and long-range views.

5.0 URBAN DESIGN CRITERIA

The proposed development would be very suitable for addressing the specialised housing need of accommodation for the elderly/ and very suitable for much needed housing within the locality.

The proposed development is in keeping with sustainable residential development and reflects national guidance and policy to create high quality spaces for the proposed residents.

The proposed development maintains substantial green communal amenity space within the proposed layout for residents. This communal open green space is envisioned as assisting social interactions between inhabitants and supporting a sense of community within the development.

Car parking is provided for the proposed development – with reference to the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 (Section 16 Part G - Table 16.8) The standards set out are maximums in order to constrain car trip generation and promote patronage of green modes of transport. Within the proposed development 11 parking spaces are provided per unit - below 0.5 max allowable for sheltered housing/elderly person parking provision within zone 3. Where car parking is within communal bays – at least 1 designated space will be provided per access core for wheelchair user. The proposed ground floor units are designed to be wheelchair accessible throughout.

6.0 SITE SERVICES

Please see submitted Site Service Drawings 0010/0020/&0030 by DOSA (Denis O’Sullivan & Associates Consulting Engineers).