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## **PART VIII DESIGN STATEMENT**

**Proposed Social Housing in Carbury, Co. Kildare.**

**Kildare County Council**

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## **1.0 Architect's Design Statement**

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This design statement has been prepared by desiun Architects on behalf of Kildare County Council (KCC) for the proposed social housing scheme at Carbury, County Kildare.

The following report describes the context and design rationale of the scheme and provides an overview of the development standards that were followed, including parking provision and relevant housing guidelines.

### **Design Team**

desiun Architects – Lead, ER, Architectural & PSDP  
CORA Consulting Engineers – Civil & Structural Engineering  
OCSC Consulting Engineers – Mechanical & Electrical Engineering  
CSR – Land Planning & Design  
Bolger QS – Quantity Surveying

## **Context**

The site is located to the south-east of Carbury, a rural node settlement. It contains an existing dispensary building and is adjacent to a community-use building.

Carbury is located approximately 7km from the small town of Edenderry, 20km from Kinnegad, 30km from Naas, and approximately 50km from Dublin city centre. It is situated on the R402 regional road between Enfield and Edenderry, near Kildare's border with County Offaly. The source of the River Boyne is located just north of the village.

The picturesque rolling topography forms a gentle landscape across the village which overlooks an attractive hinterland of arable and pastoral farms. Carbury's most famous landmark is the 14th century Carbury Castle on Carbury Hill.

In terms of public transport facilities, the site is located approximately 650m from the bus stop on Johnstown Road, which gives access to Dublin City Centre. Local amenities include the Castle Inn bar and lounge and a car service station within a 5mins walk. Two large supermarkets have a home delivery service within a 7km radius.

The village was bypassed in 2014 following completion of the upgrade to the R402. In terms of sustainable growth, a necessity for the future economic and social life of the village, the proposal is of an appropriate density for a two-storey development while retaining a human scale that is proportionate to the character of the village.

Located to the south-east of the village, just outside the centre, the proposed housing will be experienced as part of the village and therefore seeks to make a positive visual and social impact that relates to the distinctive character of its setting and provides an appropriate response to its context.

## **Design Rationale**

The site layout has been developed to create a terrace of homes behind the retained single storey dispensary building. The site entrance is therefore framed by the existing two buildings that face onto the road.

The proposed external finishes are limited to a palette of high quality, durable materials; render, brick, and slate effect roof tiles. The approach to detailing, texture, colour and pattern will be restrained in ornamentation and embellishment to tie in with the simple, robust design forms of narrow spanned volumes with pitched roof profiles found across Kildare. Materials are used judiciously to enhance the sense of identity and place and create a sense of place in keeping with the character of the village.

The design retains the existing dispensary building. This strategy aligns with the objectives of the KCC's Development Plan 2023-2029. This 'Retro-fit First' approach means that embodied carbon remains locked in, and demolition of the existing structure is not required, which also presents a cost saving.

Retention of the existing building line also maximises open green space and reduces the amount of hard landscaping and traffic infrastructure within the site. This provides the scheme with a green buffer to the west; the public street leading into the centre of Carbury village, and to the east where the houses will be visible from the regional road (R402).



*Image D: Scale and massing responding to the existing topography.*

The sloping topography of the site has been addressed with low brick walls that terrace the landscape. The buildings are linked to the landscape with a robust plinth at the entrances which are designed to be continuous with these garden walls. The falling topography is accommodated in the elevations by gable fronted elements which deal with these transitions while presenting a visual character to the public open space and to the adjacent roadway.

The buildings have been set out to passive design principles. The 3no. 2-bed houses and 1no. 3-bed house all face south. The main living spaces face south to maximise solar gain, while utility and bathroom spaces face north. Deep porches provide covered thresholds at the entrances while also preventing overheating to the living areas and create external social spaces to activate the street, a homezone area.

The 3-bed and 1-bed units have kitchen and living spaces that are dual and triple aspect for cross ventilation purposes and to ensure they achieve natural light throughout the day.

The design has also been developed to align with the criteria set out in the rural design guide.

#### Relevant Objectives:

#### Appendix 4 - Rural Design Guide - Section 2.2

*'In the first instance, applicants should consider whether there are existing dwellings or buildings in the locality that can be renovated or extended to meet their housing need. Renovation of an existing rural building could provide a satisfactory solution to housing need.'*

## **Rural Design Guide**

The Kildare Rural House Design Guide has been prepared in accordance with Objective RD O1 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023- 2029.

The proposal follows the design principles set out in the guide. The following sections describe how the objectives have been incorporated into the design.

### Orientation and aspect

Environmental and sustainability considerations such as heating requirements and heat loss have been considered as described in the section above. All units apart from the detached existing building form a terrace.

### Principles of passive surveillance and security considerations

All houses front onto a shared space with active frontages provided by the gardens and main living spaces. Gable ends also have windows to encourage passive supervision throughout.

### Retention

As stated in the Rural Design Guide (Development Plan, Appendix 4, Section 2.2), *'In the first instance, applicants should consider whether there are existing dwellings or buildings in the locality that can be renovated [...] to meet their housing need. Renovation of an existing rural building could provide a satisfactory solution to housing need.'*

Preliminary investigation suggests the existing house is in reasonable repair, with a sound roof structure.

### Relationship to the land

Traditional rural buildings often hug the contours of the site for shelter - the design respects and works with the existing site contours. This avoids unnecessary cutting or filling of the site. The project aims to blend sympathetically with the topography of the site and to use its slopes and existing natural features to provide a setting for the buildings. Prevailing winds are partially curtailed by the position of the retained existing dispensary building and the community building. Native planting can also provide additional shelter to compliment the massing of the buildings.

### Scale, Massing and Proportion

The buildings are designed to be simple in form with clear profiles that are well proportioned, restrained and well detailed. The scale and massing has been broken up with gable fronts, recessed porches and entrance canopies to create a balanced composition of elements that recognise the rural nature of the context.

### Architectural elements

Window openings exhibit a vertical emphasis with a high solid-to-void relationship. Pitched, slate roofs with an appropriate minimal roof edge treatment are proposed to the new buildings. Porches have been fully integrated with the buildings.



*Image E: Aerial view of the proposal*



*Image G: Existing building*



*Image H: A Retro-fit First approach to the existing building*

### **Vehicle Parking Provision**

On-curtilage parking is proposed to the 2-3 bed residential units. Electric Vehicle charging points will also be included to each space. Table 15.8 requires 1no. space each for units up to and including 3 bed units. This has been provided for in the site plan.

In addition to this, the driveways have been designed with suitably wide layouts of permeable paving to the street frontage to allow an additional parking space to be utilised by visitors as required.

1 parking space per 10sqm is required for the community use building. 13no. is required as described in Table 15.8.

Relevant Objectives:

#### 15.4.5 Design, Layout and Boundary Treatments

*‘Car parking arrangements should be fully integrated into the landscaping scheme so that they do not overly dominate the streetscape or detract from the aesthetics and useability of public open space.’*

#### 15.7.8 Car Parking

*‘Vehicular parking for detached and semi-detached housing which should be within the curtilage of the subject house’*

#### 15.6.3 Amenity Green Spaces

*‘Amenity Green Spaces are generally small areas of open space associated with individual housing estates. Requirements are outlined in 15.6.6 below. These spaces shall comprise areas for biodiversity and link (by way of native hedgerows and trees) with any adjacent green infrastructure network’*

#### 15.7.8 Car Parking

*Table 15.8, Maximum Car Parking Standards, requires 1 space each for units up to and including 3 bed units.*

*Note: ‘The Council reserves the right to alter the requirements outlined above, having regard to the circumstances of each particular development, on a case-by-case basis.’*

*KCCDP 2023-2029 (Table 15.8) requirement: 5 parking spaces*

### **Housing Design Standards – Unit Areas**

The proposal has been brought into alignment with the department standards for unit areas.

Please refer to the attached ‘Housing Standards’ document for a detailed schedule of accommodation that illustrates compliance with aggregate living and bedroom spaces, storage requirements, minimum room widths, TGD M WC provision etc.

Relevant Objectives:

#### 15.4.6 House Design



KCCDP 2023-2029 (Table 15.2) requires the following:

*3B/6P units 100 sqm  
2B/4P units 85sqm  
1B/2P unit 55 sqm*

Quality Housing for Successful Communities (QHfSC) requires:

*3B/6P units 100 sqm  
2B/4P units 80sqm  
1B/2P unit 44 sqm*

### **Design Standards – Bicycles and Refuse Stores**

Front garden spaces have been provided to all housing units. Integrated refuse stores and bicycle shelters have also been proposed to mid-terrace units. 1-bed and 3-bed units have side access to their rear gardens for storage purposes.

1 cycle space per 10sqm is required for the community use building. 13no. is required as described in Table 15.4.

Relevant Objectives:

#### 15.4.6 House Design

*'Adequate provision shall be made for the storage and collection of waste materials. Each house shall have adequately screened storage for at least 3 number 'wheelie' bins.*

*- Terraced / townhouse schemes shall include appropriate design measures for refuse bins, details of which should be clearly shown at planning application stage. Bins should not be situated immediately adjacent to the front door or ground floor window unless adequately screened alcoves or other such mitigation measures are provided. Innovative and attractive design solutions shall be required in this regard.*

*- Terraced / townhouse schemes shall include appropriate design measures for bicycle storage, details of which should be clearly shown at planning application stage. Storage should be provided through one of the following:*

- (a) Incorporation of a utility/store room accessed from close to the front of the house.*
- (b) Provision of access to the rear of houses.*
- (c) Provision of sheltered parking at a public, well lit and secure space.'*

### **Site Investigations**

The design team have procured the following surveys:

- Topographical Survey
- Hydrogeological Survey

The site falls approximately 3m from the southwest to the northeast.

The proposed design follows this topography in order to reduce the amount of cut and fill and to present a design that is in sympathy with the landscape as described in the Rural Design Guide section above.

The hydrogeological survey was issued on 28/08/2023 and concluded that:

*The overall impact of the cumulative agglomeration of on-site wastewater treatment plants on the key groundwater receptors is negligible, due to the enhanced attenuation properties of the ground conditions in the area.*

*The nature and extent of the proposed development along with the proposed high level treatment and discharge infrastructure will mean that the impact on groundwater from the proposed development will be negligible.'*

Refer to the full report for more detailed information.

### **Overview**

The proposed development has been designed as a high-quality, contemporary addition to Carbury village, respecting the scale, massing, and material context of Kildare. Each house has been designed to the relevant standards described in 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007' and the 'Kildare Development Plan 2023-2029'.

We believe that this scheme is a positive addition for the community and the village of Carbury.