

Masterplan for lands at Stoneview Blarney County Cork



Prepared by:

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Arup Consulting Engineers

on behalf of:

Coleman Brothers Developments Ltd, and
John J. Fleming Construction Company Ltd.

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Adopted by:

Cork County Council
27th November 2006

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PREFACE

This Masterplan for a new residential neighbourhood proposed at Stoneview, Blarney has been prepared in response to objective HOU 6-3 of the Blarney - Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan that was adopted by Cork County Council on 6th September 2005.

Through its Special Local Area Plan, the County Council aim to secure the development of a new mixed-use development including up to 2,500 new dwellings, in the area near the proposed Blarney Railway Station, through a phased programme of development that will secure the timely provision of the necessary physical, social and economic infrastructure. So that the development can be properly co-ordinated, it is an objective of the County Council's Special Local Area Plan that the development of the area will only be in accordance with this Masterplan.

The Masterplan has been commissioned by two of the principal landowners at Stoneview (Fleming Construction and Coleman Brothers Developments) and was prepared by a multi-disciplinary design team appointed by them. In preparing the plan the developers' team engaged in a broadly based consultation exercise as envisaged by the Special Local Area Plan and details of this are set out in paragraph 4.16 of the Masterplan. Once a draft of the Masterplan had been prepared, as required by the Special Local Area Plan, it was submitted to Cork County Council (on 14th March 2006) for their consideration.

The objectives of the Special Local Area Plan required the County Council to arrange for the Masterplan to be considered by a 'Partnership Committee' consisting of:

- Elected members of the County Council representing the Blarney Electoral Area;
- Representatives from the Curraghmalaght & Ardamadane Residents Group;
- A representative of the other landowners affected by the masterplan;
- Representatives of the County Council's planning staff; and
- Representatives of the developer's design team.

The 'Partnership Committee' met to consider the masterplan on 27th July 2006 and on 8th September 2006.

The outcome of the 'Partnership Committee' was that a number of changes and alterations were agreed between the parties and the developer's design team revised the document accordingly. The revised document was then submitted to the County Council on 4th October 2006 and considered by the County Council's Development Committee on 17th November 2006.

Following a small number of further amendments requested by the County Council, the County Council approved the Masterplan on Monday 27th November 2006 at its public meeting. Accordingly, the County Council and the developers intend that this Masterplan should be used to guide and co-ordinate the determination of the individual applications for planning permission for all the elements of the development, comprised within Special Local Area Plan objective HOU 6-3, that will come before the planning authorities during the lifetime of the project.

MAURICE MOLONEY
COUNTY MANAGER



This Masterplan for Stoneview, Blarney, Co. Cork, as adopted by Cork County Council on 27 Nov 2006, is The Masterplan referred to in the Blarney Kilbarry SLAP, and is to be read in conjunction with that SLAP.

1 : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Blarney

The historic village of Blarney is located just 8km to the north west of Cork City on the road to Mallow and Limerick, and at present is home to just over 2000 people. The village is set in the wooded river valleys of the Blarney River and its tributaries. It is an attractive village, being small scale and rural in character. Blarney has a long established world wide tourism reputation which is based on the historic Blarney Castle and its grounds as well as the Blarney Woollen Mills which offers visitors a variety of high quality hotels, restaurants, leisure facilities and retail outlets.

Outside the village, its rural context is even more evident in the river valleys, the steeply sloping and wooded hills and the network of river floodplains and associated wetlands. The amenity and leisure value of this beautiful natural environment is enormous for residents and visitors alike.

Growth in Blarney over recent years has been notably less than in other satellite towns. Ironically, the rich environmental context and the rolling topography have been perceived as barriers to development rather than as

attractions. Recent improvements to the N20 Cork to Limerick road and the re-opening of the railway service, scheduled for mid 2008, to the village both serve to make Blarney highly attractive for development.

By virtue of the adopted Special Local Area Plan for Blarney, significant expansion at Blarney is now possible which will afford many people the possibility of living and working in this attractive and rich environment, and having the convenience of modern high quality road and rail based public transport services on their doorsteps.

The challenge is to maximise the potential of the area as a sustainable urban settlement without compromising the town's historic and rural setting, and without undermining its importance as a tourism attraction within the wider area.



1.2 Opportunity

Following of a series of Planning Policy Documents pertaining to the area, from *Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland, 1997*, through to the *Blarney – Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan for Blarney, 2005*, opportunity now exists for an exciting and significant development at Blarney.

The Special Local Area Plan (SLAP) was prepared by Cork County Council under Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, and was adopted, as amended, on the 6th September 2005. The SLAP extends the development zone of Blarney and indicates the expected future development of the subject area and sets out site-specific proposals for the station area. Blarney is considered to offer significant potential for expansion to meet the need for new housing forecast for the rail corridor north of Cork in the CASP strategy.

The SLAP identifies an area of land, X-02, for a new residential settlement and includes agricultural land north of the railway, the Dairygold lands, County Council lands, part of Blarney Business Park, further agricultural land south of the railway, and a small number of private residences close to the existing Station Road bridge. This 'new residential neighbourhood' will accommodate up to 2,500 new dwellings, associated community facilities, a neighbourhood centre, schools, hospital, employment uses, park and ride facility and new train station. Significant road and utilities infrastructure will need to be put in place to support the development at Stoneview.

Most of this land is within 1 km of the proposed railway station site and so offers an important opportunity to locate new housing and employment close to key public transport service. The full SLAP boundary also extends further south of the railway and the N20 into Blarney Village, and encompasses substantial lands with a mix of uses including residential, neighbourhood centre, commercial, educational, amenity and open space.

Prior to the adoption of the SLAP the lands north of the railway formed part of the Metropolitan Greenbelt. They are now designated for a new residential neighbourhood.

The Special Local Area Plan requires that a Masterplan be submitted for the area with a view to it being adopted by the County Council under the SLAP.

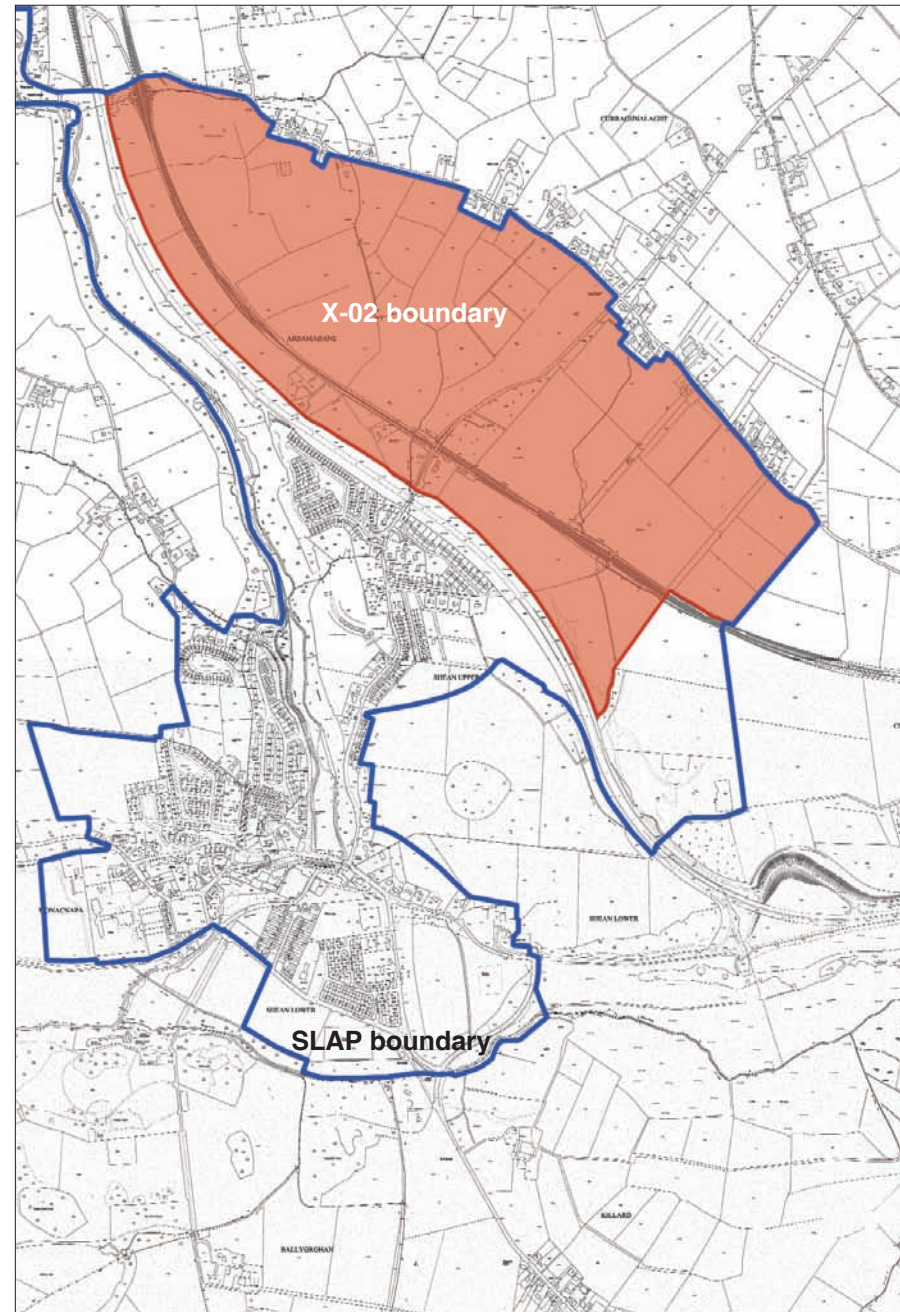


Figure 1 : Special Local Area Plan Boundary and Special Zoning X-02 Major New Residential Neighbourhood

1.3 Masterplan

This Masterplan and the drawings which accompany it are produced by Brady Shipman Martin, Conroy Crowe Kelly Architects, Reddy O'Riordan Staehli Architects and Arup Consulting Engineers on behalf of Coleman Brothers Developments Ltd and John J. Fleming Construction Ltd, who, together, are the principal land owners within the X-02 boundary.

The Masterplan is based directly on the SLAP, building on its objectives and policies and detailing and operationalising these in the context of the current status and circumstances of the Stoneview site. It conforms with the objectives of the SLAP, however, an alternative interpretation of Cork County Council Policy Objective HOU 4-1 is put forward in *Section 4.6.2* below. It is anticipated that the approval of the Masterplan by Cork County Council will be noted by Cork County Council.

The planning framework for the Masterplan and a review of its physical, social and economic context is included as Appendix 1.

2 : MASTERPLAN VISION & PRINCIPLES

2.1 Vision

Stoneview will be a high quality, attractive, sustainable residential settlement with associated retail and commercial needs set in the hinterland of Blarney Village and within a short commuting distance of Cork City. Stoneview will offer an excellent quality of life underpinned by the rural setting, a wide variety of sporting and leisure amenities as well as having the convenience of the N20 and the Cork to Mallow railway on it's doorstep.



2.2 Principles

The principles behind the development of the Masterplan are broken down into a number of headings and are as follows:

2.2.1 General Principles

- To create a new attractive settlement for people to live and work in a rural location, peripheral to the historic Blarney Village, which is sustainable and incorporates the right balance of land uses including residential, retail, commercial, leisure and amenity.
- To take advantage of the proposed new railway station and the N20 running alongside the site so as to create a town which has immediate and direct access to high quality rail and road infrastructure links to Cork City, Mallow and beyond which is in line with National and Cork County Council policies.
- To ensure that the uses of the site serve to complement and strengthen Blarney's existing functions.
- To provide a Park and Ride facility in conjunction with the new railway station and the neighbourhood centre which will facilitate Cork and Mallow commuters and engage them in Stoneview.
- To provide a new mixed use centre at the heart of Stoneview as a sustainable urban focal point adjacent to the proposed rail station which provides an appropriate mix of retail, commercial and civic uses. The centre will be a fulcrum with links to the residential areas, the existing Blarney Village, the new railway station and the N20.
- To provide a variety of public open spaces within the development ranging from small squares and courtyards up a large public park. This will enhance the immediate amenity value within Stoneview, and will complement the multitude of leisure, amenity and sporting facilities already available in the surrounding area.
- To provide for the enhancement of the lands between the N20 and the railway and the integration of it into the overall development as a commercial centre serving both the immediate local needs as well as the wider needs.



2.2.2 Landuse Principles

- To provide a maximum of 2500 new residences in a variety of character areas, each with its own identity and each with a sense of place.
- To ensure that the land use mix of residential, urban centre, commercial, retail including a possible DIY outlet, community and amenity is robust and sustainable so as to underpin the long term viability of the development going forward.
- To ensure that the various uses on the land are compatible and complementary with each other and with the existing Blarney Village.

2.2.3 Community Principles

- To establish a new residential settlement in accordance with the provisions of SLAP, with two residential areas, both developing in parallel, and both served by the common core area, community and amenity facilities. Land will be reserved for the provision of a combined primary and secondary school to the northwest and a separate primary school closer to the neighbourhood centre.
- To provide for recreational and community facilities which will not only serve the people of the area, but will attract new employers and tourists, thus enhancing the key role which Blarney plays in Ireland's tourism industry.
- To provide an appropriate density and mix of development at the core of Stoneview in a manner that will generate a vibrant, sustainable urban centre integrating living, working, leisure and commuting and ensures the presence of people outside of work hours.

2.2.4 Movement Principles

- To provide a new interchange on the N20 to accommodate traffic to and from Cork, Mallow and Blarney. From the interchange, a dual carriageway will lead to two local collector roads which will skirt but not enter the centre and will deliver residents efficiently to their homes in the north western and south eastern parts of the site.
- To provide for a well thought out network of primary and secondary roads, paths and cycle paths throughout Stoneview and into the adjoining areas in a manner which will facilitate everyone, including pedestrians, cyclists, people with disabilities, the elderly, children and vehicular traffic.
- To make the new railway station convenient and accessible to residents of Blarney, the new town and surrounding areas as well as commuters arriving on the N20. To this end, a park and ride facility will play an important role.
- To encourage environmentally-friendly transport including walking and cycling and customer orientated, reliable public transport. A feeder bus service can be established by Bus Éireann / Iarnród Éireann between the railway station, Stoneview centre and the existing Blarney Village.
- To maximise the permeability of the development by ensuring appropriate pedestrian, cycle and vehicular linkages within the development and to surrounding areas are provided in a safe and convenient hierarchy with a minimum of conflict between the different modes of transport. The road system proposed for the area will include dedicated pedestrian and cyclist facilities on all primary routes and linkages.

- To provide for ease of movement and access between Stoneview and Blarney and, during consultation with existing residents, to incorporate revised traffic flow arrangements on the existing Station Road south of the N20 so as to ease the congestion currently experienced while accommodating vehicular travel between Station Road and Stoneview.
- To manage vehicular traffic and parking at Stoneview, particularly in and around the core.
- To minimise through-traffic in the development, while facilitating existing residents to the north of the development site.

2.2.5 Urban Design Principles

- To create a new sustainable and primarily residential town which incorporates a strong and distinctive sense of place, a rich mix of spaces, environments and communities, and a variety of residential building types and individual character areas throughout the site.
- To provide for a distinctive interchange at the N20 which will be of high quality and which will become a landmark feature synonymous with Stoneview and Blarney.
- To provide a mixed use Neighbourhood Centre at the heart of Stoneview which serves the immediate needs of the residents, and links the development to the existing town of Blarney and beyond.
- To create a development around an urban design framework that is highly permeable and accessible and links attractive streets, squares, open spaces and parks, and where public and private spaces are clearly identifiable.
- To promote walking and cycling over car travel through proximity to local facilities and by the provision of a carefully planned network of footpaths and cycle paths
- To provide a high quality, accessible and safe public domain.
- To ensure a hierarchy of spaces, from public to private, which is legible and easy to understand.
- To provide for robust and adaptable development.
- To ensure diversity of spaces, building types and land uses that provide for a variety of user needs and demands and create individual character areas with which people can identify.

2.2.6 Landscape Principles

- To conserve any existing landscape elements where they significantly contribute to the character or sense of the place.
- To provide new landscaping which is appropriate to each of the character areas and enhances its distinction and sense of place.
- To provide high quality landscaping at the N20 interchange and the adjoining network of distributor and local access roads which will enhance the landmark qualities of the interchange and entrance to Stoneview.



3 : STONEVIEW LANDS

3.1 General

The lands under consideration in this Masterplan are c. 1.8km north of Blarney and north of the N20 national primary road and the Mallow to Cork railway. It comprises a number of landholdings totalling 154 hectares. The lands are divided by the Mallow railway line, but the bulk of the land, c. 122 hectares, lies between the railway line and the Ardamadane and Curraghnalaght local roads.

This part of the land is traversed by Station Road which leads from the Curraghnalaght crossroads through the site, across the railway and the N20, and into Blarney Village. The balance of 32 hectares lies between the railway line and the N20, and includes 7 hectares of agricultural land belonging to County Council lands, 1 hectare belonging to Dairygold Station Road, 15.5 hectares of agricultural land with a small number of private residences, and 8.5 hectares (*being part*) of the existing Blarney Business Park.

The lands north of the railway line are in agricultural use. Some of the land southeast of Station Road was run privately for about 5 years as a pay and play golf course but closed in 2004 and the land reverted back into agricultural use. The lands south of the railway line are in different uses including agricultural, some residential, Dairygold storage and distribution, and Blarney Business Park.

3.2 Topography

The site generally falls from north to south. The area north west of Station Road and north of the railway is quite undulating and ranges in gradient from about 1 in 20 to as much as 1 in 7, and from 85m OD at the Station Road railway bridge to 116m OD at the Curraghnalaght crossroad. To the south east of Station Road and north of the railway, the land ranges from relative flat in parts up to gradients of about 1 in 12, and from 77m OD at the old archway under the railway line to 116m OD as above at the Curraghnalaght crossroad. South of the railway, the levels range from c. 76m OD at the southern boundary of the County Council lands to 86m OD at the northern boundary of Dairygold beside the Station Road railway bridge.

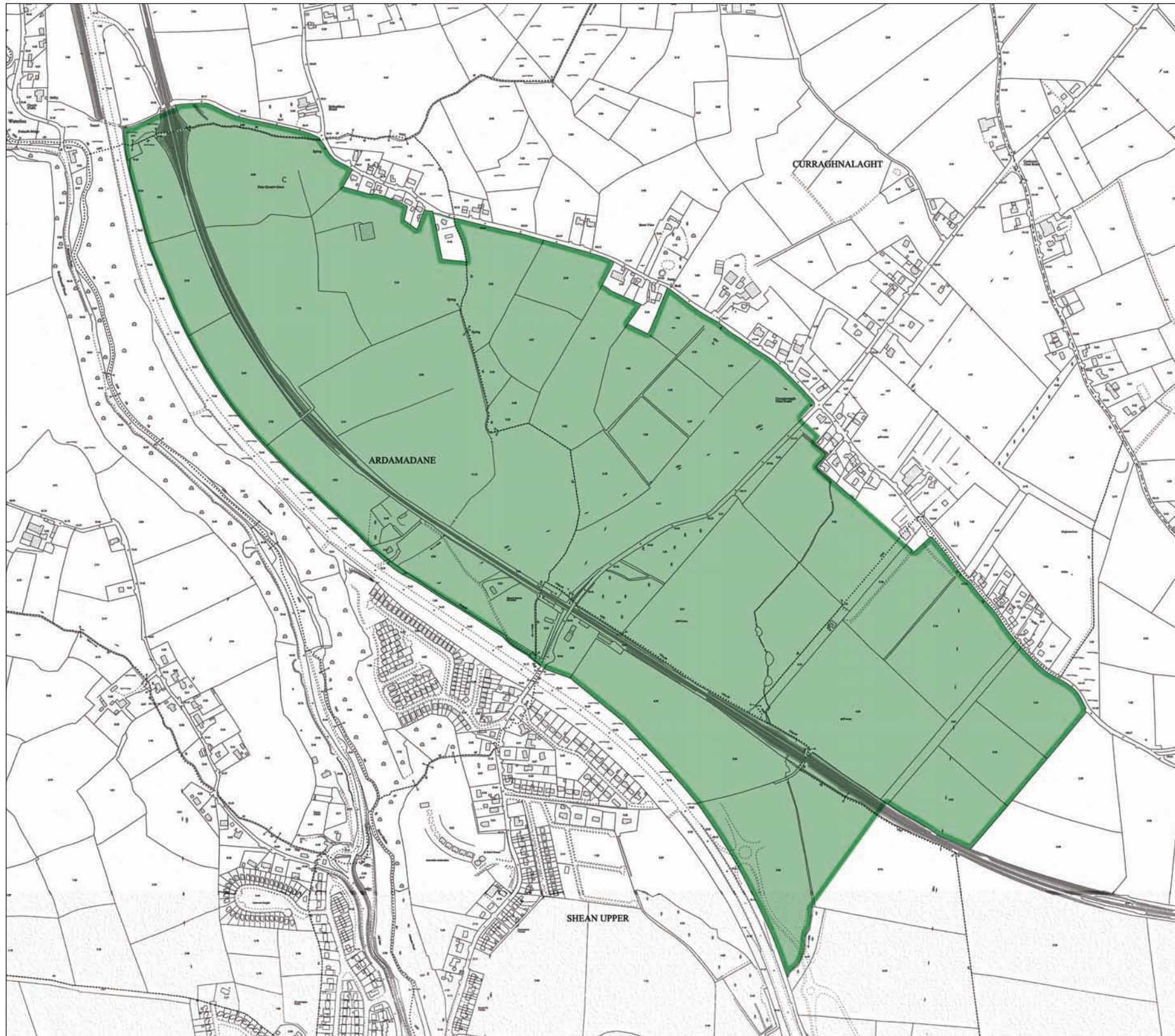


Figure 2 : Masterplan Site Boundary

3.3 Landscape

North of the railway line, the site is generally rural in character with south facing undulating slopes overlooking the town of Blarney. The majority of the site is open but is subdivided into smaller fields by a variety of hedgerows, walls, fences, tracks, streams and trees of varying maturity and condition. A principal feature of the site is the railway line which is in cutting at the northwest of the site, rises to being at grade and then rises further towards the southeast of the site where it becomes elevated. Station Road traverses the site and links Blarney to the higher ground beyond the Curraghmalaght crossroad. Within the site, there are two significant 'rides' of mature trees. These are in the middle and at the southern boundary of the former golf course, and are comprised of two parallel rows of mature trees about 15m apart. Along the Ardamadane and Curraghmalaght roads to the north of the site, there are a number of private residences and farm buildings, most of which have their own built or planted boundaries with varying degrees of openness or seclusion.

Between the railway line and the N20, the landscape is more varied in character. The Dairygold land beside the stone bridge is light industrial in character, but its small size is such that its rural context prevails. The Council lands are presently open and rural in nature and the part of Blarney Business Park included in the X-02 boundary is currently undeveloped, save for the existing entrance to Blarney Business Park and some internal roads.

3.4 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is a record compiled in accordance with the National Monuments Act 1994. It provides a list of all known archaeological monuments and places of archaeological interest, with an accompanying set of constraint maps. There are eleven of RMP sites within the proposed Stoneview Development lands:

- A Possible stone row (CO062-187---) in Curraghmalaght,
- A Natural feature (CO062-189---) in Ardamadane,
- A Natural feature (Fairy Queen's Grave) (CO062-190---) in Ardamadane
- A Mound (CO062-191---) in Ardamadane
- A Fulacht fiadh (CO062-192---) in Ardamadane
- A Fulacht fiadh (CO062-199---) in Curraghmalaght
- A Fulacht fiadh (CO062-211---) in Curraghmalaght
- A Fulacht fiadh (CO062-212---) in Curraghmalaght
- A Fulacht fiadh (CO062-213---) in Curraghmalaght
- A Fulacht fiadh (CO062-214---) in Curraghmalaght
- A Fulacht fiadh (CO062-215---) in Curraghmalaght

A section of the Stoneview lands also lies within the Zone of Archaeological Potential for three archaeological monuments in Curraghmalaght:

- A possible ringfort (CO062-18501-)
- A fulacht fiadh (CO062-18502-)
- A mound (CO062-18503-)

A comprehensive programme of licenced geophysical surveying and archaeological testing has commenced on the Stoneview lands to establish the extent of archaeological features which remain below ground level. Of the eleven RMP sites tested, two were found to be non-archaeological in nature (CO062-189--- and CO062-191---) and no remains in another three were found (CO062-187---, CO062-214--- and CO062-215---). Testing in the area of the Fairy Queen's Grave (CO062-190---) found no archaeological features. The levelled remains of the other five sites were identified, three of which were in poor condition. In addition, a number of previously unrecorded features with archaeological potential have been identified during the archaeological testing. Consultation is ongoing with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to determine how each site or feature will be addressed within future proposals for the Stoneview Development.

3.5 Ecology

There are no environmental designations pertaining to the development site nor is this area likely to be designated in the future. The site does not form part of any Natural Heritage Area, Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation, Statutory Nature Reserve or National Park.

No areas of exceptional ecological value were noted during survey work and similarly no rare or uncommon species of flora/fauna were noted. In general the land consists of a mixture of tillage ground and intensive grassland. Diversity is generally confined to the field margins such as hedges, strips of woodland and wet grassland.

Some habitats of local value were noted including woodland to the south of the N20, and hedgerows and treelines within the proposed development.

A circular area of woodland known as Ring Wood to the south of the N20 is a distinctive feature in the area and consists of an outer ring of trees including ash and oak. The internal area is dominated by sitka spruce. Although the outer ring of trees is of ecological value, the internal area is of limited value.

An area of woodland is located alongside the road which connects Blarney village to the N20. At the western edge there are mature beech and oak and this area is of local value. However most of this area is composed of sitka spruce with native species confined to the margins.



3.6 Ground conditions

Glacial boulder clays overly the bedrock which is the Old Red Sandstone, described as the Ballytrasna Formation in the UCC Geology of Cork District map. The Ballytrasna Formation is a red and purple siltstone with minor fine-grained sandstone. The superficial deposits on the site are described in detail in the 1905 Memoirs of the Geological Survey, Ireland – The Geology of The Country around Cork and Cork Harbour. This describes the upland drift to consist mainly of ‘red rubbly boulder-clay, almost entirely derived from the slaty Old Red rocks similar to those on which it rests’. The stones in the drift are principally angular to sub-angular slaty fragments (75-100mm in size) and there are comparatively few larger boulders. The depth of overburden is also expected to be variable being thinnest close to the Ballygibbon Road and increasing in thickness towards the railway line. Thicknesses of the order of 3 to 6m are expected but these could be, locally, greater or less.

The overburden is expected to be medium dense to dense and allowable bearing pressures of the order of 100 to 250kN/m². This is reasonably good for domestic and commercial developments up to 4-5 storeys in height. The fine content of the boulder clay is expected to be somewhat variable but generally around 20 to 30% by weight. This will mean that the material will be prone to deterioration if exposed to or trafficked during wet conditions. It is expected that some of the material will be suitable for re-use but it will involve carefully controlled working practices to ensure control of the moisture content of the material.

A few areas of the site are known to be quite wet however the Geological Memoirs note that these areas do not contain any peat. These waterlogged marshy areas were noted by the archway under the railway line and mid way between Ballygibbon House and Station Road in the middle of the site. Springs are noted to be a common occurrence in this topography so more wet areas are expected. Control of groundwater and surface water will be required for environmental reasons and to maximise effective re-use of sub-soils in the development.



N20 National Primary Road

3.7 Movement

At present, vehicular movement in and around the site can be broken down into three areas:

- N20
- The Ardamadane and Curraghmalaght Roads
- Station Road

The N20 obviously caters for traffic travelling between Mallow and Cork and beyond, and has, at the eastern extent of the site, an interchange where traffic travelling in both directions can divert into Blarney town rather than continuing on.

Station Road gives access to and from Blarney Village and Curraghmalaght to the north east. This is a narrow road which traverses the site north of the railway line, continues over the railway and the N20 via the Station Road railway bridge and a modern bridge respectively, and then continues downwards into Blarney Village. The standard of the latter part of this road and the number of dwellings along the road is such that it is currently operating over its capacity and is not capable of supporting any additional traffic.

The Ardamadane and Curraghmalaght roads are local roads, principally bringing people to and from their homes and farms to Blarney and to the wider region via a network of other local roads. They are local country roads connecting the site with Killeens, which in turn has direct access to the N20 (Cork to Limerick Road) via the Killeens Cross Interchange.

The site has no pedestrian facilities and its only public transport facilities are local school buses.



Curraghmalaght Road

3.8 Infrastructure

3.8.1 Foul & Surface Water Drainage

The existing site is not currently served by either a foul or surface water sewer. The existing one off houses in the area typically utilise septic tanks for foul water disposal and soakaways for the surface water disposal.

3.8.2 Water supply

The existing potable watermain in the area is served from the Knockarcobally reservoir. The current peak water demand in the Blarney area is very close to existing water capacity from this reservoir.

3.8.3 Other infrastructure

Servicing authorities such as ESB, Bord Gáis, and Eircom are all present within the general area of the site.



Station Road

4 : MASTERPLAN

4.1 General

Key principles have been established to provide guidance for the development of the Stoneview Masterplan as detailed in Section 2 above. Detailed recommendations have been developed based on guiding design principles and the opportunities and constraints of the site. The detailed proposals are outlined in this section of the Masterplan.

4.2 Townscape

Townscape has a vital role to play in the permeability and legibility of the development on the site. The built form, focal points and the diversity of spaces are just a few of the elements that need to be considered in the design and layout of future development. The challenge in this instance is to create a complete new development which serves the needs of the new population around it and takes advantage of its setting in establishing its sense of place.

The following objectives provide a framework for the development of the townscape:

- To create a series of streets and spaces with an intimate scale appropriate to a centre of this size which are interconnected and linking to the railway station, the park and the residential areas.
- To establish a space hierarchy from the neighbourhood square at the centre to the railway square and the park entrance, to be directly connected by streets.
- To use the topography of the site to the greatest advantage in providing and mitigating against the provision of car parking for the centre.
- To ensure a mix of uses and high density of development which will result in a lively and vibrant urban centre.
- To seek a building height of three to four storeys in the core of the mixed use area, with a maximum height of five storeys at strategic locations.
- To maintain building continuity along all streets and ensure an active frontage.
- To encourage innovative and contemporary design and variety in design while respecting the Blarney setting so as to reinforce the vibrant urban centre as an attractive place to be.
- To adopt a high standard of detail and to utilise local materials in the finish of buildings and external spaces.
- To develop an attractive and safe network of open spaces connecting to the surrounding residential areas.

The neighbourhood centre is located in the centre of the lands north of the railway line, adjoining the railway line and between the two new bridges over the rail. It consists of a series of urban blocks which decrease in density with distance from the centre. The new railway station will be located adjoining this centre.





Figure 3: Masterplan for Stoneview, Blarney, County Cork.

Station Street, immediately north and parallel to the railway, will link the two new bridges and is therefore elevated to the bridge levels. The streets connecting from Station Street and the bridges to the Main Street slope downwards. A public car park inside the two urban blocks is proposed, which will take advantage of this change in level. As such, the car park will be one storey below Station Street, but at grade along Main Street. The advantage of this strategy is that the car park is hidden within the blocks, and street level uses can be provided along Station Street. Access points to this public car park will be from the adjoining town centre streets.

Access to and from the delivery yard of the supermarket will be from the collector road that runs east of the neighbourhood centre.

The Main Street is proposed running east-west, one block to the north of the railway. In this location it becomes a strategic local east-west route, connecting the residential areas either side of the neighbourhood centre. It curves slightly along its length so that the views into it are closed, so as to entice visitors along it. The Square is at the intersection of the Central Park with the Main Street, as well two other north-south routes. Street level uses on south and west facing sides of the square will include cafes and public houses that can spill out onto the pavement. Commercial uses will predominate at street level along the Main Street and the Square. A supermarket building can be located within the urban blocks directly south of the Main Street.

It is proposed to emphasise a vista towards Blarney Castle in the neighbourhood centre plan. Higher up the slope from the Main Square there will be a viewpoint within the Central Park that directs views across the valley. As the Park meets the town the landscaping will assist in framing the view. Within the Main Square a line of trees will carry on this strategy. The vista continues down the pedestrian street linking the Main Street and Station Street and is, at this point, framed by buildings.

4.3 Retail

At the centre of the Stoneview development, retail services will include a supermarket of approximately 2000 – 3000m² sales area serving the weekly needs of residents as well as some c. 35 smaller units ranging from 50 – 275m² which are commensurate with its role as the retail and service centre of the new development. The total provision of retail area will be in the order of 7,500 – 8,000m², and that of the Service and Offices will be approximately 4,000 – 4,500m². There will also be approximately 2,200m² of food/drink uses. It is envisaged that the smaller shop and service units in Stoneview will be made up of a variety of users such as those included in the following list.

- Dry Cleaner
- Bookshop
- Bakery
- Confectionery
- Delicatessen
- Coffee Shop
- Health Food
- Hardware
- Butchers
- Estate Agent
- Beautician
- Florist
- Shoe Shop
- Post Office
- Sandwich Bar
- Barber
- Pharmacy
- Video Shop
- Hairdressers
- Newsagents

In addition, local ‘corner’ shops may also be located within the residential areas to serve the local residents only.

This level of provision is consistent with the Retail Strategy for Cork which identifies Blarney as being a neighbourhood centre for the purposes of the retail hierarchy in County Cork. These are characterised as having a greater emphasis on food and convenience goods, often anchored by a convenience shop or supermarket to serve local weekly needs, and generally having a range of comparison shops and service outlets to serve a local need.

In consultation with Cork County Council as part of the Partnership Committee process, it was suggested that it might also be possible to incorporate a DIY centre within the X-02 boundary. An appropriate location for a facility of this kind is identified on Figure 3.

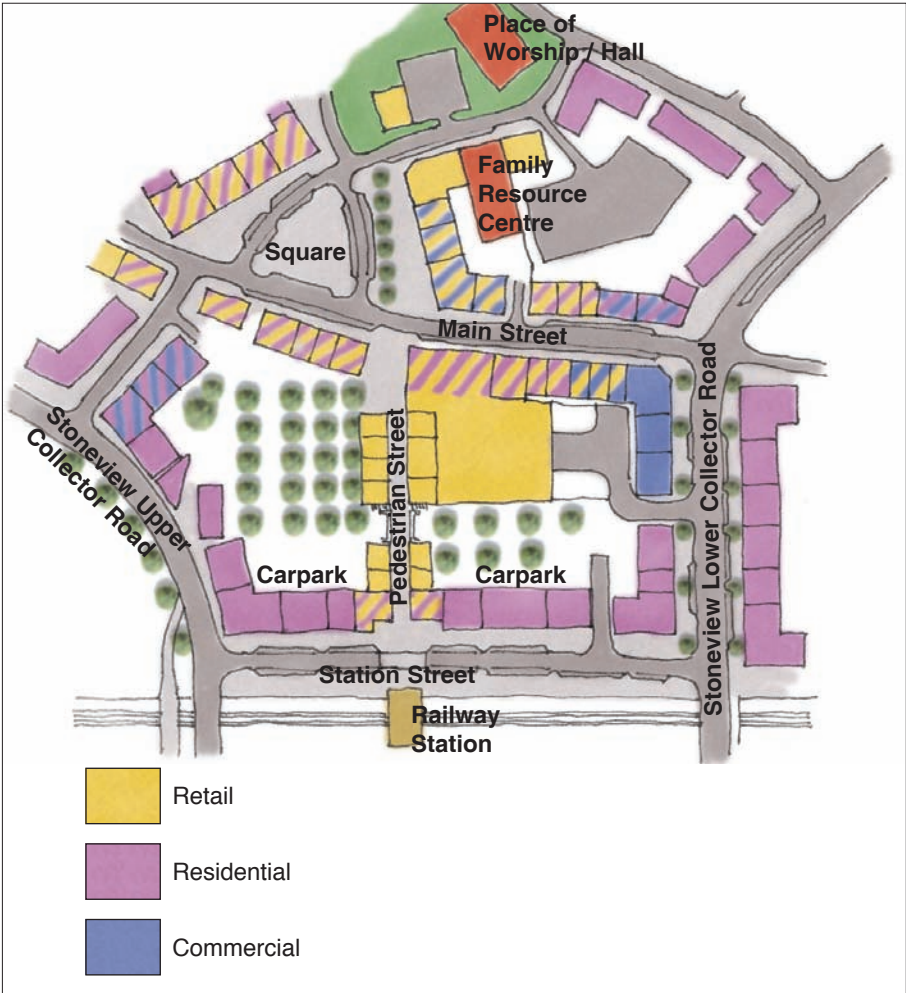


Figure 4: Indicative Neighbourhood Centre Uses



Figure 5: Indicative Section through Urban Block



Figure 6: Indicative Section along Pedestrian Street

4.4 Movement Concept

The over arching concept is to create a system which facilitates ease of movement into, out of, and within the development for pedestrian, cycle and vehicular traffic.

- A new junction on the N20 will permit easy vehicular access to Stoneview, Blarney, and Blarney Business Park.
- The new railway station which the new neighbourhood centre will be located alongside, will facilitate residents of the development as well as commuters who are using the Park and Ride facility and visiting the area.
- A road link will bring cars from the new N20 interchange to the Park and Ride facility on the south side of the railway.
- Two primary collector roads will bring traffic around the neighbourhood centre and onwards to the northern and southern parts of the residential areas.
- The collector roads will also bring traffic, either directly or via adjoining streets, into the various car parks located in or under the neighbourhood centre.
- The site layout will ensure that everyone is within a 5 or 10 minute walk from the neighbourhood centre and transport facilities.
- The cross section of the collector roads will include three lanes, cycle lanes, parking bays, generous footpaths and landscaping. These streets will be designed to look narrower than they actually are by the use of different surface materials, islands, landscaping and street furniture. In this regard, the streets will have adequate vehicular capacity but will have a more pleasant urban pedestrian character than they might otherwise have if they were designed as 'by-pass' roads. The central lane will serve as a right turn lane where required but can also be used as islands at pedestrian crossing points and for hard and soft landscaping to contribute to the urban feel.
- A feeder bus link will operate, subject to Bus Éireann / Iarnród Éireann implementation, from the new neighbourhood centre to the existing town via the new road network.
- The existing route along Station Road from the Curraghmalaght crossroads will be retained so as to facilitate existing residents. It will however be partially realigned so as to integrate with the proposed new road network.
- The two collector roads will be linked across the northern part of the site by an access road, thus facilitating east west movement north of the park.
- The principal roads will serve a network of secondary roads and streets leading to different residential areas as well as different parts of the neighbourhood centre.

Pedestrian and cycle paths will be provided along the principal roads and, together with other linkages which will maximise pedestrian and cyclist permeability of the site, will encourage walking and cycling. In many cases, the design of junctions will be such as to give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists than to vehicular traffic.

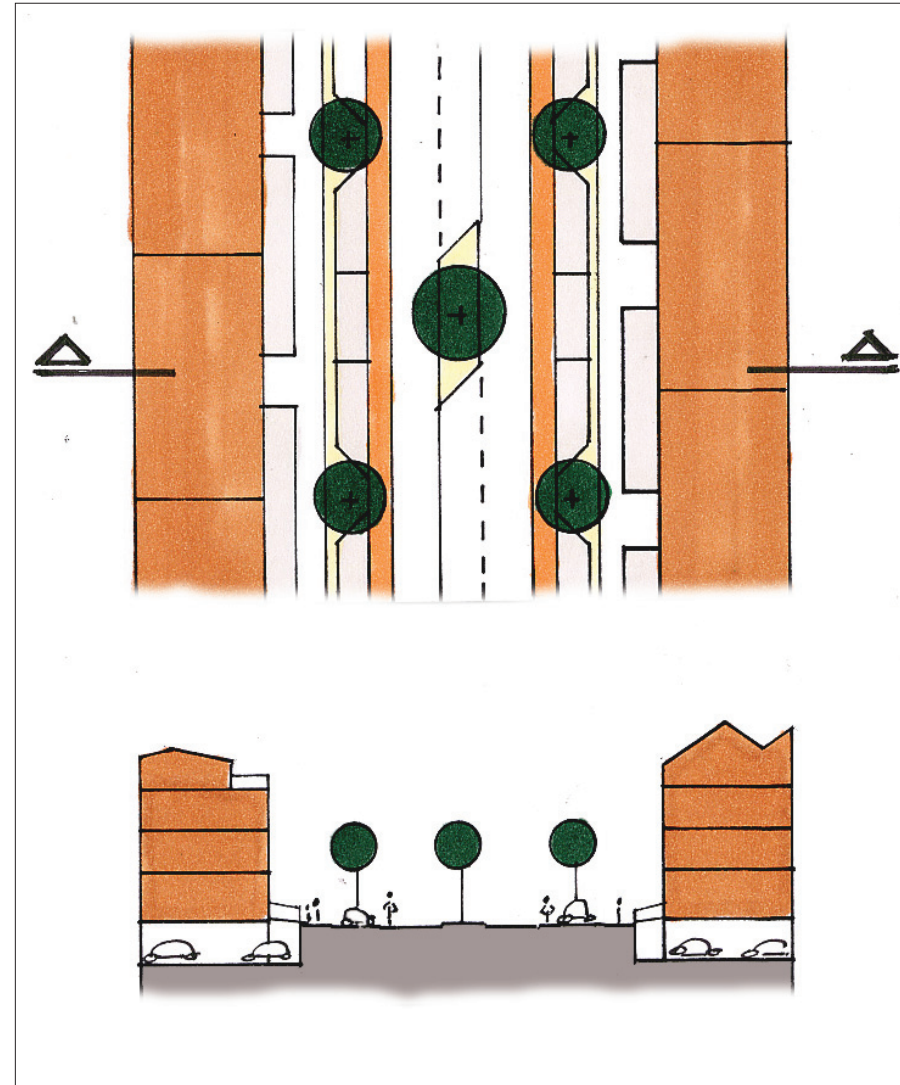


Figure 7: Typical arrangement of Stoneview Upper and Lower Collector Roads at the Neighbourhood Centre

Parking arrangements for commercial uses will be in line with Council Policy to ensure that car parking demands are accommodated within the site.

In conjunction with the construction of a new railway station, a Park and Ride facility will be built immediately south of the station which will be readily accessible from the N20 or from Stoneview and will have capacity for 300 cars. The design of the station will ensure that people using the Park and Ride facility will have easy access by foot between the car park and Stoneview.

Resident parking within the scheme will be provided by group parking, while public parking will be provided both within Stoneview and adjacent to other public buildings (i.e. shops, schools) in the outlying residential areas.

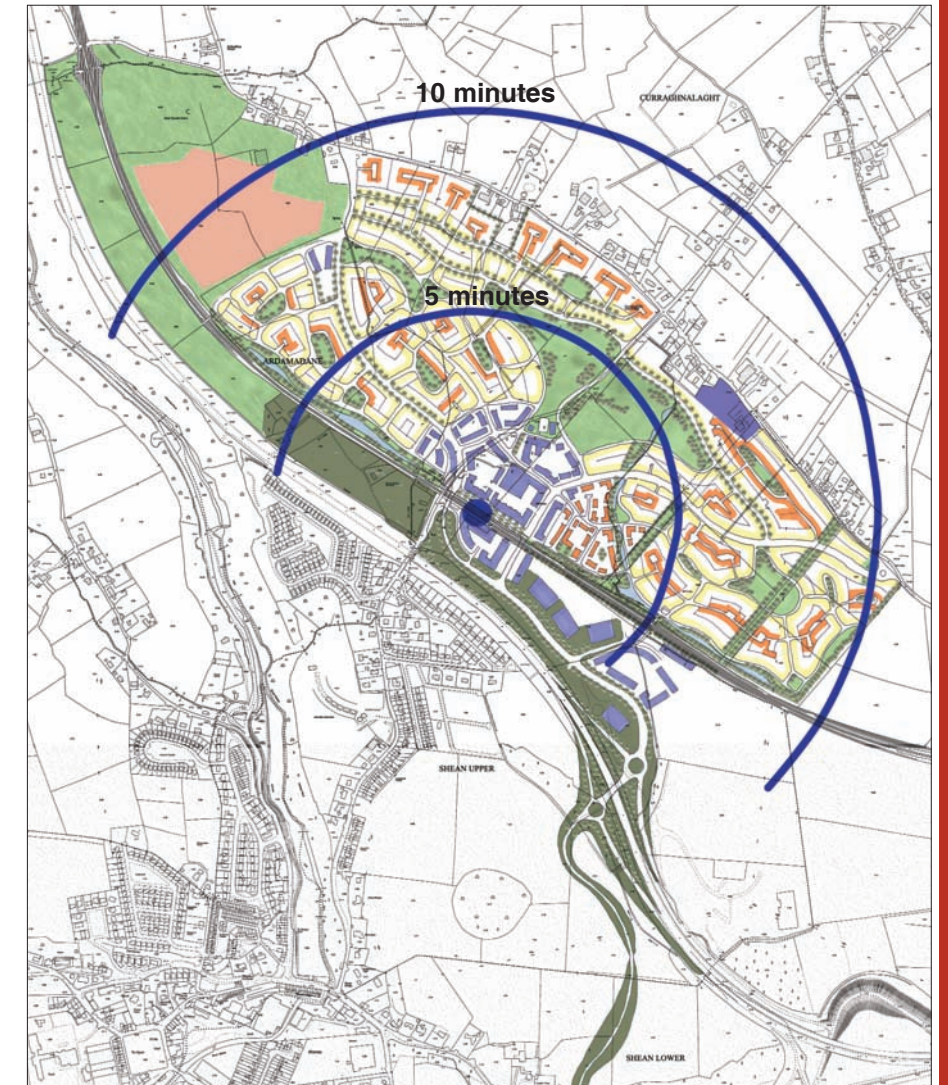


Figure 8: 5 and 10 Minute Walking Distances from Railway Station

Parking and loading areas will be provided on-street within Stoneview and will be managed to ensure a good turn over. The supermarket and adjacent shops will however be served from a delivery yard to the rear.

The Masterplan has been developed to ensure that all forms of transport can easily access and pass through the site. Priority is given to the accommodation of sustainable forms of transport, walking, cycling and public transport. It is envisaged that the presence of the train station will ensure a high proportion of trips to Stoneview will be undertaken by public transport.

4.4.1 Designing the Transport Infrastructure

The design of the road infrastructure to serve the development was developed during detailed consultation with Cork County Council Roads Dept and the National Roads Authority (NRA). It was agreed by Cork County Council, The NRA and the Developer's Design Team that footpaths and cycle paths and all appropriate safety principles for pedestrians and cyclists will be included in the design throughout the entire Stoneview Development. This includes the provision of dedicated footpaths and cycle paths separated from the road carriageways. Pedestrian crossings and raised/changed road surfaces have also been provided at all key intersections and along the 'desire-lines' for pedestrian circulation routes.

A full traffic assessment has been carried out at each stage of the design process to assess the proposed and alternative routes. It is important to adequately and safely meet the needs of existing and future road users, and to improve the existing road network where possible in doing so. In addition to the site specific principles outlined in *Section 4.4* above, broader also objectives included:

- Minimising any increase in traffic on existing roads north of the development.
- Reducing the south-bound traffic on Station Road Lower.
- Providing efficient connections between Stoneview, Blarney, Blarney Business Park, the N20 and the surrounding areas.

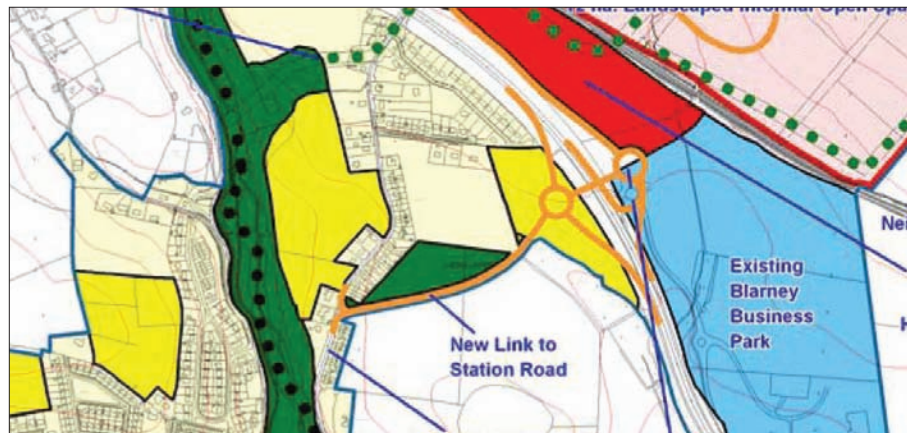


Figure 9: Extract: Draft SLAP Indicative Development Framework

4.4.2 Meeting the Local Need

Balancing the needs of existing road users and providing a safe and efficient road system for the Stoneview development brought about two principal road design challenges during the course of the Masterplan development process.

- 1 Finding an alternative alignment for Station Road which would be compatible with the overall Masterplan objectives and acceptable to residents who currently use Station Road.
- 2 Providing a suitable link road to Blarney

Station Road Realignment

Following the designation of the SLAP Area in the County Development Plan 2003, Coleman Brothers Developments and Fleming Construction Ltd acquired the two principal land banks north of the railway line and either side of Station Road. Initially, both companies made their own submissions to the Planning Authority regarding the development of two distinct neighbourhoods, of equal size and status. The key to the successful development of the SLAP area would however be the re-opening of the Blarney Railway Station, and it became evident that the dual neighbourhood approach would result in one neighbourhood being separated from the Railway Station by Station Road. There was also concern that two distinct neighbourhoods would most likely involve duplication of infrastructures, services and amenities which would prove unsustainable, uneconomic and unviable.

The Planning Authority suggested that both developers work together to produce proposals for a unified development centred on the Railway Station and a single neighbourhood centre. This was clearly in the best interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, although it would have obvious implications for the existing Station Road.

Initially, it was proposed to close the northern section of Station Road from the existing railway overbridge to the Curraghmalaght Crossroads, and to re-route existing traffic entirely around the proposed Central Park. The Curraghmalaght and Ardamadane Resident's Group raised their concern that this proposal would inconvenience the existing residents who currently use Station Road to access Blarney on a regular basis.

This was considered by the Design Team. In order for the traffic flows and the proposed road infrastructure to succeed it was necessary to bring existing traffic travelling from the north towards Blarney around the proposed Neighbourhood Centre, and not through it. A solution which required the realignment of only a part of Station Road from just north of the N20 overbridge to approximately half way to the Curraghmalaght crossroads was found. The initial proposals were revised accordingly and submitted as part of the Draft Masterplan in March 2006.

Following the establishment of the Partnership Committee, the Curraghmalaght and Ardamadane Resident's Group raised further concern regarding the Draft Masterplan proposal to restrict vehicular traffic on a short section of Station Road to a northbound direction only. It was felt that this restriction, from a point just north of the existing N20 overbridge to the proposed Park and Ride, would result in excessively long car journeys for people who wished to travel from Stoneview to Station Road Lower.

This concern has now also been addressed, and a solution is incorporated whereby a set of traffic lights will be installed so that the new single lane carriageway connecting the existing Station Road to the Stoneview Upper Distributor Road (at the Park & Ride) can operate in a two-way manner. This solution will discourage the use of this route as a main route from Stoneview to Blarney while at the same time providing direct access from Stoneview to Station Road for residents of Station Road. The timing of the traffic lights will be monitored to ensure that they have the desired effect in controlling traffic for the benefit of those living on or visiting Station Road.

The road infrastructure system has been developed following detailed consultation with Cork County Council Road Design Dept, The NRA and The Partnership Committee, and provides for the needs of the existing road users as well as catering for the proposed development. The final proposals delivers a road system which minimises journey time and maximises the direct links in the greater Stoneview-Blarney Area .

Station Road and Central Park

To the north of Station Road, where it now proposed to retain the road running through the Central Park for most of its length, the road will be designed to read as an internal park road, utilising both hard and soft landscaping to give a less 'engineered' character. The road surface will incorporate banding of paviers in order to provide passive speed control. Where this road enters the park at either end, there will also be gate piers to signal the transition from the standard road system into the park setting.

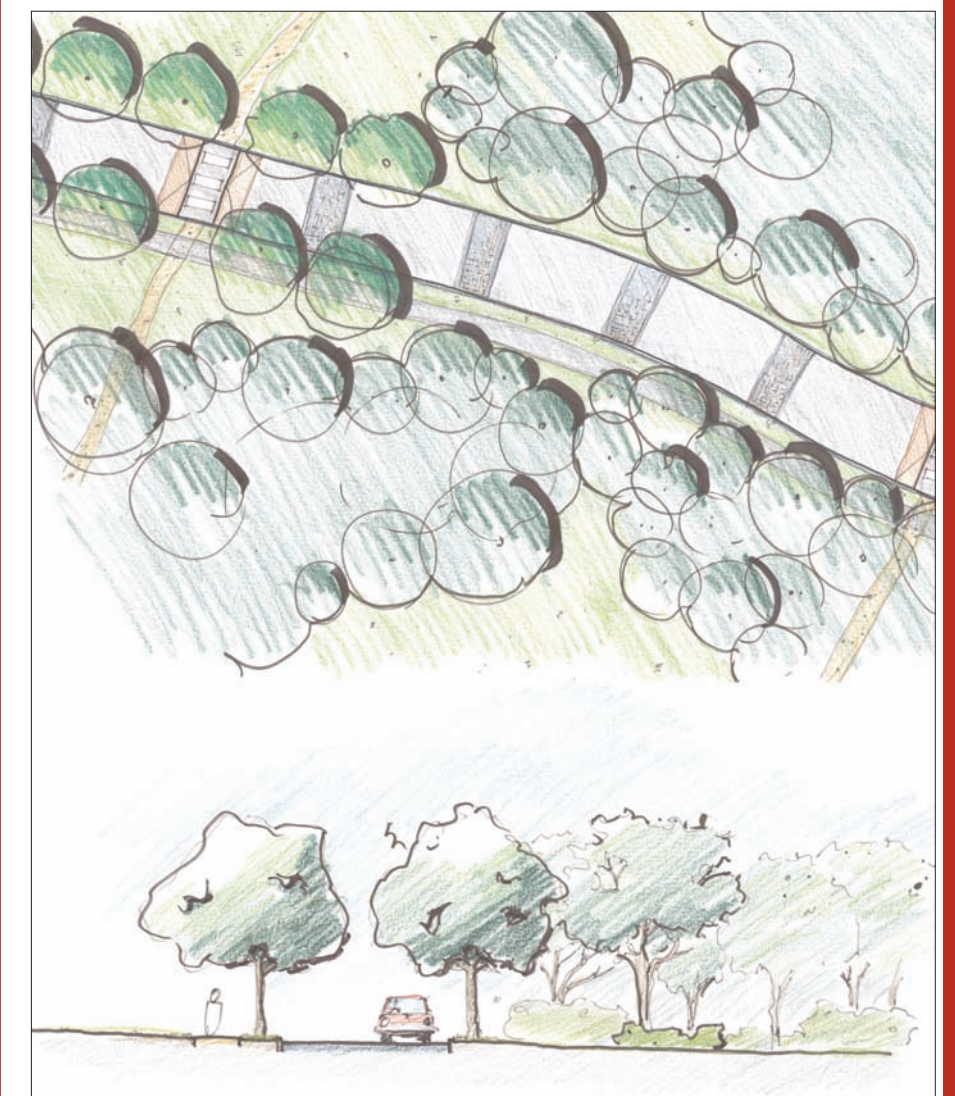


Figure 10: Station Road Design through Central Park - Plan and Section

Blarney Link Road

The draft SLAP proposed a new N20 interchange and a New Link road between it and the southern portion of Station Road. This proposal is illustrated above in Figure 9.

The initial traffic assessment determined that the junction of the existing Station Road and the R617 was operating beyond capacity already. The addition of the New Link road, and the consequent arrival of even a small portion of the new traffic from the Stoneview development onto this section of road would have required the redesign and construction of that section of Station Road in order to deal with the resulting traffic volumes. The extra road width required would have resulted in a solution which was contrary to the existing fabric of the area. Given the difficulties of providing the New Link road joining to Station Road, an alternative solution was required.

The Draft Masterplan proposed an alternative New Link road to the east of Station Road. This proposal remains unchanged in this final Masterplan, is shown in Figure 11, and has the following characteristics and advantages:

- It can accommodate the anticipated traffic volumes in and out of Stoneview in a safe manner.
- It can reduce the existing traffic loads on Station Road.
- It is proposed east of Station Road linking the R617 directly to the new N20 interchange and the new access routes to Stoneview.
- The existing Station Road can remain as it is from Blarney up to the existing N20 overbridge.
- The existing Station Road north of the N20 overbridge will become single carriageway and will be realigned as an underpass leading to the new Stoneview Upper Distributor Road and the Park and Ride. As described above, this single carriageway road will be traffic signalled to permit two-way traffic movements so as to facilitate existing residents of Station Road.
- The existing Station Road Rail Bridge will be for pedestrian and cycle use only.
- This road, as an alternative to the option shown in the SLAP linking the N20 interchange to Station Road Lower, provides a link from the N20 intersection and Stoneview to Blarney while avoiding any increase in traffic on Station Road.

Proposals for the Blarney Link Road have been included in this Masterplan, because the proposed alignment meets the requirements in the SLAP for improved linkages with the town of Blarney. The road alignment shown in the SLAP was indicative only and the link road alignment in this Masterplan has been developed as the most advantageous means to achieve the overall objectives of this SLAP.

During the course of public consultations, it was requested that the new Stoneview Upper and Lower Collector Roads would be made cul-de-sacs at the Ardamadane and Curraghmalaght Roads so as not to impact on the existing residences. While the Developers had no objection to this in principal, it was felt that if the Stoneview Lower Collector Road should be continued to meet the Curraghmalaght Road as it would facilitate traffic coming from Monard entering Stoneview via the Stoneview Lower Collector

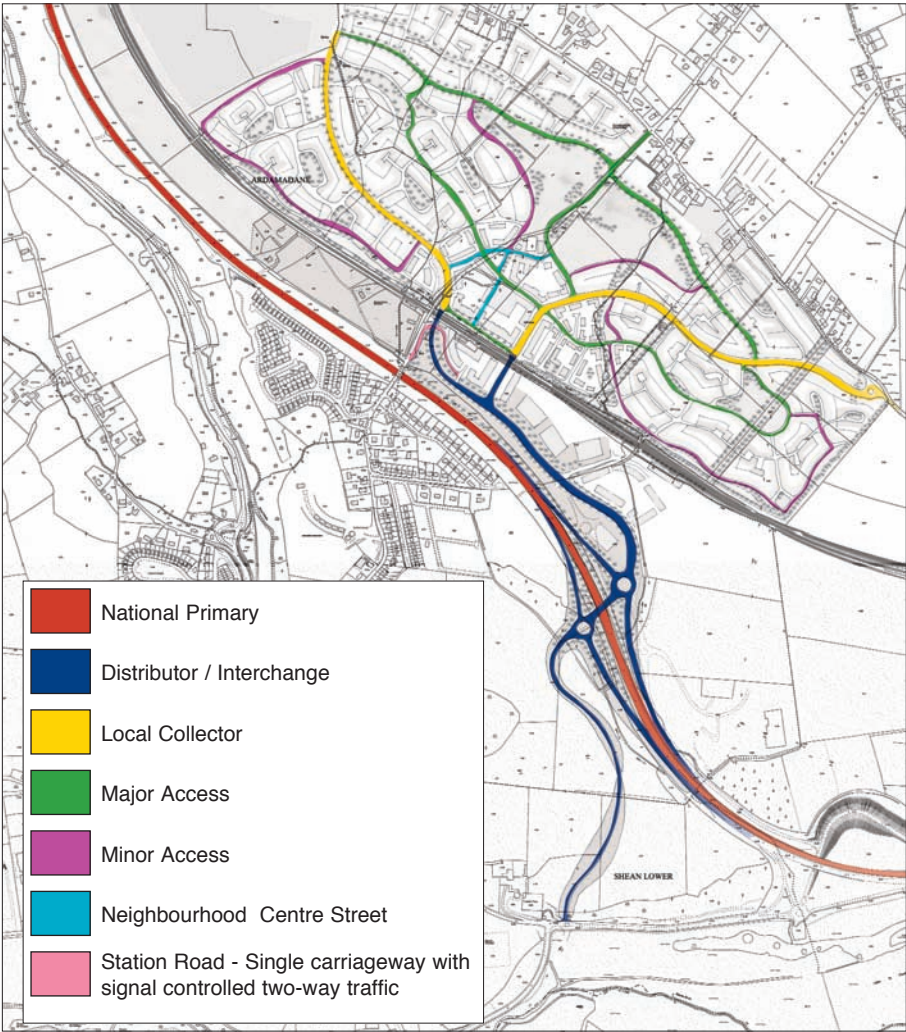


Figure 11: Road Hierarchy

Road rather than continuing on up to the Curraghmalaght crossroads. In order to balance these two needs, the junction of the Stoneview Lower Collector Road and the Curraghmalaght Road was reconfigured to incorporate a roundabout, with separate spurs giving access to the existing residences and to the Stoneview Development. The top of the Stoneview Upper Collector Road is proposed as a cul-de-sac with pedestrian-only access to the Ardamadane Road from Stoneview.

4.4.3 New Railway Station

An important element of the Masterplan is the delivery of a new railway station on site at Stoneview which will serve the existing town and the new development.

The Developers submitted a proposal to enter into agreement with Iarnród Éireann regarding the design and delivery of the station. This proposed agreement includes the design and construction of the station to the requirements of Iarnród Éireann. The anticipated timescale for completion of

the station on site will be around the end of 2008, to coincide with the completion of the other infrastructure and the first phases of development.

Letters from Arup Consulting Engineers and Fleming Construction Company Ltd are included in Appendix 3 of this Masterplan in this regard, and a detailed phasing schedule is incorporated in Section 5.2 - Phasing below.

4.5 Land Use and Ownership within the X-02

General
The landuse objectives of this Masterplan include the provision of a new and distinctive residential settlement in a variety of character areas. These will be developed around a neighbourhood centre which encompasses a robust and sustainable mix of retail, commercial, community and residential uses as well as a new train station and park and ride facility.

4.5.1 Land Use Budget

The following table indicates how the total land within the X-02 boundary will be allocated under this Masterplan

Land Use Budget for Stoneview, Blarney. ¹

All figures are in hectares unless noted

	North of Railway	South of Railway
SITE AREA	122.485	32.110
Housing Area ²	82.070	
Central Park	10.115	
Neighbourhood Centre ³	6.000	
Commercial / Non-Residential ⁴		16.480
Private Residence		5.581
Existing Commercial / Leisure Use ⁵	1.131	
Medical Campus	9.416	
Schools ⁶	7.000	
Open Space	6.753	10.049
Total	122.485	32.110

1. Areas are indicative and may be subject to some amendment at planning application stage.
2. Housing area for purposes of land use budget excludes central park, school sites and neighbourhood centre, but includes other ancillary open space, attenuation ponds and crèches.
3. Includes some residential use.
4. Includes lands owned by Blarney Business Park, Cork County Council and Dairygold.
5. Quills lands.
6. Including recreational space.

4.5.2 Land Ownership

Although the Developers do not control the entire area covered by the Masterplan the land use proposals have been submitted with the knowledge and consent of all landowners concerned including:

- 1 Lands between the N20 and the railway line north of Station Road. The indicative development framework shown on Figure 6.2 of the Special Local Area plan showed the majority of these lands as "Passive Open Space" but with provision for some residential development at the south eastern end adjoining Station Road. In practice in would be difficult to integrate residential development on these lands with the remainder of the scheme due to the limited accessibility.

This area is particularly suited to Passive Open Space as it is bordered to the south west by an existing pedestrian route which can be upgraded to link with the recreational areas and pedestrian networks within the at the northern end of the Masterplan area.

The owners of these lands and the County Council have indicated that they will seek to agree to the future management of these lands.

- 2 Dairygold and Cork County Council lands. Cork County Council are in negotiation with Dairygold regarding the status of the Dairygold lands adjoining Station Road bridge. A letter from John Fleming Construction Company Ltd, dated 13th June 2006, and seeking the consent of Cork County Council to make proposals within the Council and the Dairygold lands is included in Appendix 3 of this document.
- 3 The Quill Lands. This area is noted in the Masterplan as being Established Commercial/leisure Use with potential for further development subject to the merits of any given proposal. A letter from Lane Architects, dated 9th June 2006 is included in Appendix 3 in this regard.
- 4 Blarney Business Park The northern part of Blarney Business Park is included within the X-02 area. During the course of the Masterplan development process, the owners of Blarney Business Park have at different times been either part of the developers consortium, or consulted by the developers.

4.6 Open Space

Fundamental to the principle of creating a high quality residential settlement is the provision of an appropriate amount of quality public open space, which will serve many of the amenity and leisure needs of the residents.

4.6.1 Open Space Proposals

At the centre of Stoneview, the Masterplan proposes a Central Park which will extend to 10.115 ha. and will be within easy reach of all residents. This park will be available for public use for both active and passive recreation. It will be available for the provision of playing fields, community facilities, playgrounds, picnic areas and other such facilities.

Within the development areas, a variety of open spaces will be dispersed throughout each side of the development, resulting in a further provision of over 13% (or just over 11.6 hectares) of the development areas. These will include small and medium green areas and linear parks, and will be landscaped in a range of styles in order to provide variety and identity to the different areas.

Peripheral to the residential areas, two other significant areas of open space are proposed. These include 10.8 ha. of lands to the north of the X-02 area and just over 10.0 ha. of land between the railway and the N20 on the western side of Stoneview.

The first area is ideally located to incorporate a school and community centre complex with associated playing fields close to the edge of the proposed residential areas, with passive open space extending from there around the Fairy Queen Grave and down to the stream at the north west of the site. Some re-grading will be necessary within this area to facilitate playing fields, while other areas can retain their natural topography and accommodate walkways and jogging paths which can loop around that part of the site and link back to the residential areas at different locations.

The second will serve as passive open space, accessed via the western edge of the residential development area and where the Ballygibbon Road joins the N20.

As such, a total of c. 44.5 ha. of open space will be provided throughout the development in a mixture of passive and open space and of different characters and uses. The provision of specific facilities on these lands will be the subject of agreement between the developers and the County Council, but ample space has been allowed in order to provide for the highest standard and scope of recreational facilities. It may be desirable to consider some facilities outside of the development site itself so as to create a balance between the facilities within the new development and those of the existing town. Such a mechanism would have to be agreed between the developers and the County Council.



Figure 12: Open Space Proposals
Areas in dark green are not included in the table below

Open Space Provisions for Stoneview, Blarney.					
All figures are in hectares unless noted					
	Development Lands	Other	South of Railway	Open Space Nett of 10%	Open Space Incl. 10%
SITE AREA	119.402	2.658	32.110		154.170
Park	10.115			10.115	10.115
Quills Lands		1.131			
Site Area	109.287				
10% requirement of developmnt area	8.907				
Linear Parks	5.365				
Open Space	5.705				
Town Square	0.530				
Northern Tip of X-02		1.136		1.136	1.136
Miscellaneous		0.816		0.816	0.816
Total	11.600				11.6
(% Development Area)	13.023 %				
Excess over 10% provision	2.693			2.693	
Medical Centre	9.416				
Passive Open Space (North of Railway)	10.800			10.800	10.800
Passive Open Space (South of Railway)	10.048			10.048	10.048
Dairygold			0.963		
Cork County Council			7.201		
Blarney Business Park			8.317		
Private residences			5.581		
				35.608	44.515

Figure 13: Open Space Provisions for Stoneview, Blarney.

4.6.2 The SLAP and Open Space

The adopted SLAP states that, in addition to the standard provision of open space, there is a requirement to provide an additional 35 ha. of open space in order to offset the ‘loss’ of the former Blarney golf course, and that this is considered to be in line with Objective HOU 4-1 of the Cork County Council Development Plan.

The lands of the former private golf course had reverted back to agricultural use prior to the adoption of the SLAP, and therefore the requirement in the SLAP to compensate for the ‘loss’ of the former golf course cannot be applied, as neither the golf course nor any other public or private open space existed on the land in question. This land was agricultural land.

In the preparation of this Masterplan, given the location of the proposed development, and its vicinity to a high quality public transport corridor, the developers and the County Council have sought to give effect to a number of national policy guidelines including Sustainable Development - A Strategy for Ireland and the Residential Density Guidelines, where high density development is supported and encouraged in the vicinity of high quality public transport corridors.

Although the former golf course was not public open space, it was of amenity value to the area generally. The open space proposals of this Masterplan are intended to be of a higher quality than the golf course, and will have the capacity for a much broader range of leisure and amenity facilities, which will be available to and of benefit to all members of the public. All open spaces provided in residential areas will comply with the Councils recreation and amenity policies.

In addition to these facilities, future plans for Blarney include a possible 25 acres for additional pitches on the Castle Grounds for the Blarney GAA (negotiations recently concluded). The owners of the Blarney Castle Estate have indicated long term plans for the possible provision of a golf course and hotel within the grounds. Blarney Castle Estate has in excess of 400 acres in woodland in the general Blarney area.

This Masterplan provides in excess of 35 hectares of open space within its own boundary. It has been established that the former golf course lands which are the subject of the Council Objective HOU 4-1 referenced in the SLAP, were, and still remain, agricultural lands at the time of the SLAP, and therefore, their future development as part of this Masterplan cannot be deemed a loss of open space.

Furthermore the location of the Masterplan lands adjoin a significant number of existing open space/recreation lands and a high quality public transport corridor.

Facility	Details
Bord na gCon	Field pitch used for soccer
GAA field	7 acres, pavilion & changing rooms
GAA training pitch	15 acres, Loughane, Blarney.
Scoil Mhuire Gan Small	5 acre sports field
Pitch and putt	1 acre hard surface – basketball/volleyball etc Approximately 7 acres, 18 hole course
Blarney golf driving range	30 acres approximately
Blarney golf and country club	120 acres including hotel and holiday complex Replacement golf course for Stoneview
Blarney Square	3 acres centre of village
Proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA)	50 acres (approximately) south of N20
Amenity Walks	Along the River Martin and Blarney wet lands
Whitechurch Community Centre. Located to the north and in Blarney Parish.	Full size senior hurling/football pitch Indoor soccer 2 basketball courts and volleyball courts Meeting rooms and members gym 2 astra turf tennis courts with floodlighting
	Additional plans (finalised 2006) 2 GAA pitches Rugby pitch with spectator stand Ball alley and additional changing rooms
Rockmount soccer club	Full size pitch with changing rooms in Whitechurch Village
Blarney soccer club	Full size pitch and changing rooms in Riverview

It can also be clearly seen from *Figure 14* that Blarney is already very well provided for in terms of open space within the SLAP boundary, not to mention the wider context of open countryside in all directions. The additional specific proposals of this Masterplan will further increase the quality of open space facilities for the future Stoneview residents and the wider Blarney village population. Section 4.9 of this document outlines the general standards for private and public open space provision to be applied to the future development of Stoneview. Section 5.5 of this Masterplan also outlines the future maintenance of all areas of strategic open space.



Figure 14: Blarney - Open Space

4.6.3 Landscaping Masterplan

The development lands can be divided into two distinct areas in terms of overall character and general land use. Firstly, there is the area south of the railway line and the N20 leading to the R617, which will accommodate the new interchange and link roads as well as commercial non-retail uses. Secondly, there is the principal development area to the north of the railway line which will accommodate the new residential settlement.

At present, both areas of land are broadly agricultural in character, and the implementation of the design proposals of the Masterplan will give rise to significant change in character by virtue of change and intensification of use.

The integration of both the infrastructural works and the development into the current setting will require careful consideration in terms of landscape treatment. The intention is to provide a sense of the existing rural setting where possible by the provision of soft landscaping within the development which echoes the rural setting. Equally, the creation of pleasant and useable amenity spaces within the development will be of importance.

Infrastructural Works

The Interchange

The new N20 interchange which will both serve the development and enhance the accessibility of lands at Blarney itself will constitute substantial development on and adjoining the N20. The principal elements of these works will include a grade separated interchange with on and off ramps, new bridges over the existing railway line and a new link road to Blarney.

The introduction of the new interchange is an opportunity to create a strong landmark feature along the N20 road corridor, which will become identifiable as the Blarney and Stoneview entrance. The lands and embankments adjoining the bridge and the on and off ramps will be landscaped using a striking layout of a combination of grassland, low level shrubbery and lines of trees radiating from each of the roundabouts. The soft landscaping scheme will mature to provide a strong, distinctive and attractive setting for the overbridge. Apart from the overbridge itself, the extent of infrastructural works required to provide the interchange system will not be unduly obvious.

The landscaping leading from the overbridge will soften the transition in scale from the National Primary Route into Stoneview itself, beyond which a variety of landscaping, both in scale and character, will extend throughout the streets and open spaces of the overall development in a manner which links the new development with the wider rural setting of the development site.

Lands between the Interchange and the Railway Overbridges

These lands are identified for new commercial non-retail uses, and will be accessed from the northern roundabout of the new interchange. A link road will also lead from that roundabout to the new railway overbridges which will be the primary access to the development. The landscaping proposals for this road are to continue the high quality landscaping from the interchange itself, in a slightly more structured manner, to yield a parkland or boulevard

character along the road leading up to the next roundabout where the setting will become urban and the entrance to Stoneview will be located.

The elevation of this road is such that it will be higher than much of the land between it and the railway and thus, the landscaping will screen the lower portions of the commercial non-development and any associated car parking. This landscaping is important for Stoneview so that the entrance route is not perceived as coming through or alongside a commercial park. The commercial park is a separate entity with its own vehicular entrance.

The Blarney Link Road

The new Blarney Link Road between the interchange and the R617 has been designed to minimise its impact on the views of the lands on which it will be constructed. At present, these lands between the R617 and the N20 are seen, particularly from the northern and southern aspects, as a distinctive hill leading up to the wooded ringfort at the top.

While much of the new road will be in cutting, the horizontal alignment has been designed in a series of curves so as to minimise the possibility of any 'axial' views of long lengths of heavily engineered cutting into the hill. Rather, the curved nature of the road will result in only a portion of the

cutting being visible from any one vantage point. In addition to the horizontal alignment, the gradient of the cutting proposed is at 1 in 6, which will result in slopes which are more consistent with what is currently on site than a steeper and more typical road cutting might otherwise appear.

The sloping edges of the new road are to be planted with a woodland mix of Ash, Beech, Oak, Pine, Hawthorn and Willow, and with lower level shrubs along the edges of the road. This mix will mature to give a much more natural appearance to the new road, and despite the introduction of the cutting into the existing hill, the overall profile of the hill will remain unchanged and still lead the eye upwards to the wooded ringfort.

The Principal Development Area

General

The objectives driving the Masterplan are to create an attractive and sustainable new residential settlement. To this end, the creation of a network of external spaces, large and small, hard and soft, is of fundamental importance to the success of the plan.



Figure 15: Central Park - Indicative Layout

Central Park

At the heart of the development, there will be a large Central Park which will be easily accessible to the residents. Perimeter planting will be introduced to give an overall sense of enclosure to the park which will result in the park being perceived from more distant views as a large pocket of green space at the heart of the wider development. The existing topography of the site is such that some re-grading will be required to provide the flat playing fields. This will result in a variety of topography within the park and will facilitate the creation of other possible character areas such as an amphitheatre, a playground area, picnic areas etc. Woodland planting within the park will further identify the different character areas and offer different degrees of enclosure to different spaces as appropriate, thus creating a variety of open and amenity spaces suitable for various user groups within the new community. An array of pathways will meander through the park linking the various areas within the park, but also linking the park to the surrounding residential areas.

Urban Spaces

At the heart of Stoneview, there will be a neighbourhood square, which links a number of principal streets with the commercial core area. This will provide a focus for the centre, with bars, cafes and restaurants, as well as other retail facilities opening out onto the square. Particular emphasis will be placed on providing a distinctive and attractive character to this square, and the quality of both hard and soft landscaping proposals will play an important role in defining the space and the linking street network. Different surface materials will be selected to define routes, pedestrian and vehicular, through and around the space. Surfaces and street furniture will be selected so as to encourage interaction between people, so that the square becomes a vibrant, inviting and attractive place to be.



Figure 16: Town Square - Indicative Layout

Streetscapes

The proposed development will contain a hierarchy of roads and streets serving the neighbourhood centre and the surrounding residential areas. It is proposed that this network will facilitate and encourage pedestrian and cycle movements. In this regard, it is important that the streets are pleasant, and that the impact of vehicular traffic is minimised. A variety of street edge conditions will be evident at Stoneview, and tree planting along one or both sides of the street will play an important part of the landscaping proposals. Footpath surfaces will be chosen and detailed to offer clear routes through the development, with changes in surface texture and colour signifying transition from one type of space to another. Tree planting will lead pedestrians from the neighbourhood centre along streets into open spaces and onwards to parkland spaces as well as externally to the rural setting which surrounds the site. The larger Central Park will be surrounded by either a single or double row of trees to give a sense of enclosure to the park itself, but also to give a particular identity to the streets around the perimeter of the park.

Linear Parks

At a number of locations within the development, linear parks are proposed. Two of these will be located alongside the railway line and will act as a buffer zone between the development and the railway itself, while at the same time providing amenity space which is convenient and accessible to residents and facilitating a system of storm water management. The intention is to create a variety of parkland spaces including small permanent ponds with perimeter wetland planting, wooded areas incorporating a rich mix of indigenous woodland planting and pockets of shrubbery, and simple grassland areas. Linking all of these spaces, there will be a network of informal walkways, with occasional areas for seating and gathering. The topography of these areas will be re-designed so that the permanent lake features can expand during heavy rainfall to cater for increased ground water run-off. One of these areas is indicated in the drawing below.



Figure 17: Liner Park - Indicative Layout

In addition to the two parks along the railway, there are other smaller linear parks proposed within the development. One of these will be located along the existing 'ride' of trees to the east of the site, where the existing double row of mature trees will provide a ideal setting for informal open space which will provide pleasant and natural linkages between a number of residential areas. On the west of the site, a new linear park is proposed within the development which again will create a link and give identity to a number of residential areas. The landscaping proposals within these areas will be to maintain the exiting tree stock where appropriate, to reinforce the tree rides with new planting where trees have failed, and to provide copses of new trees in the new open spaces in a manner which enhances the character of the areas and the amenity value of the open spaces.

Smaller Open Spaces

Within each of the residential areas, a variety of small to medium sized amenity spaces are proposed to ensure that all residents can enjoy open space which is near to their homes, in addition to the larger communal spaces mentioned above. The scale of these spaces will be determined by the number of houses they serve, and the character of these spaces will range from simple open grassland with specimen planting to courtyard type spaces with a greater emphasis on hard landscaping than grassed areas. In most cases, the roads entering these areas will ramped up from the general tarmac road finish to selected paving within the space. This will further identify and bring a sense of quality to the open spaces, as well as providing for passive traffic calming where children might be at play. In larger spaces, walkways which are additional to the perimeter footpaths may be introduced so as to facilitate ease of pedestrian movement.

The extent of soft landscaping will vary from space to space depending on scale, but might include specimen trees, copses of trees, shrubbery and bedding, or a combination of all.

4.7 Housing

The Masterplan will provide a maximum of 2,500 new residences within the X-02 boundary, which is consistent with the SLAP. The strategy adopted is to group the higher density residential elements of the scheme towards the centre and closer to the railway station. Outside of that, densities will be varied and reducing in a manner which provides accommodation in a number of different typologies including courtyard style development, terraced housing, detached and semi-detached units.

The design philosophy behind the development of the areas of residential development in the Masterplan area is rooted in the requirement to acknowledge the rural setting of the site whilst also being able to deliver the higher densities of residential development required by National policy.

A variety of neighbourhood character areas as detailed below will be provided throughout Stoneview and these will have their own individual identities. An important aspect of this will be the design and location of smaller public open spaces which will give identity to particular groups or clusters of houses, and which bring some of the 'countryside' into the development where possible thus giving a sense of place.

Character Areas

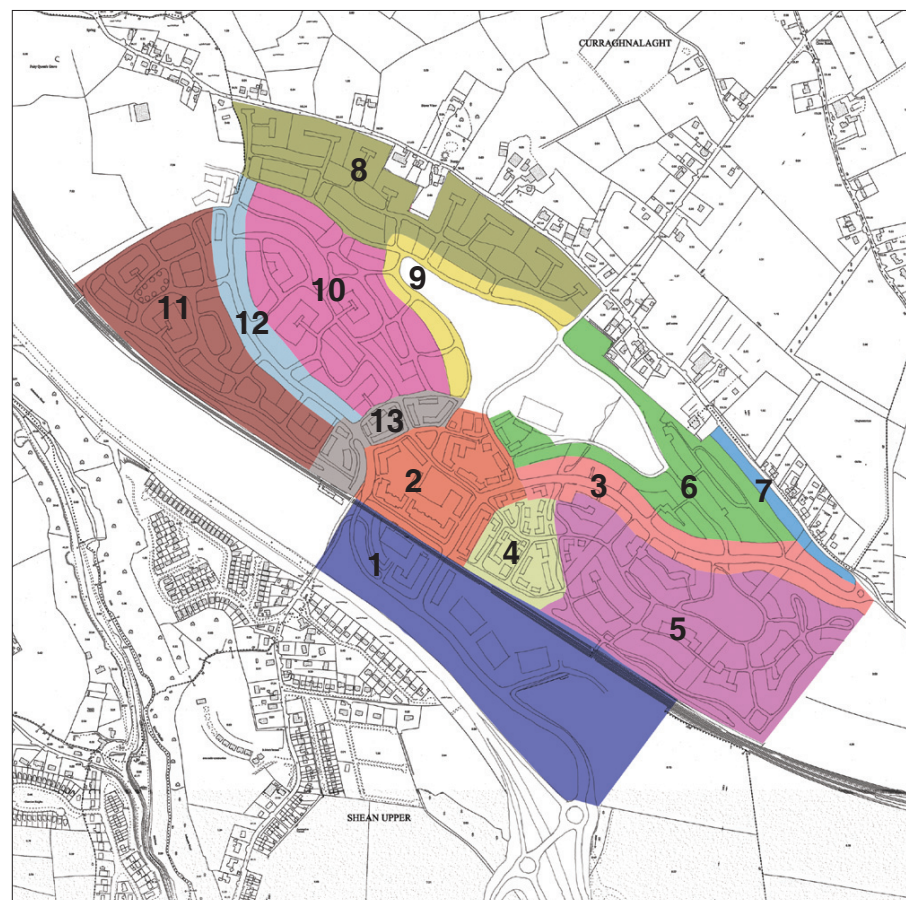


Figure 18: Character Areas

Character Area 1

This area consists of the two local collector routes that lead from Stoneview over the new railway bridges and onwards to the new N20 interchange. The Park and Ride for the new railway station is located between the two railway bridges and is enclosed within an urban block. The character of the area is of a well landscaped environment screening the commercial units between the road and the railway and leading to a well landscaped urban environment. Land uses include the Park & Ride, commercial non-retail uses, and possibly a marketing suite for the development to be located adjacent to the northern roundabout of the new N20 overbridge between the off-ramp and the road leading to Stoneview.

Character Area 2

This is the neighbourhood centre area, with a very distinct character within the Masterplan as it is urban in nature. It is the area that is located directly north of the railway between the two road bridges across the track. Local collector roads from the bridges skirt the neighbourhood centre and lead directly to the housing districts to the north-west and south-east of the neighbourhood centre. The Main Street of the neighbourhood runs perpendicular to these routes in an east-west direction. A triangular shaped neighbourhood square is proposed on this street at the junction of a number of secondary streets and at the intersection of the Central Park green route that follows the vista line to Blarney Castle. The area incorporates the railway station. A pedestrian street runs from the elevated station concourse to the Square. The commercial hub of the settlement is centred on the Square, the Main Street and the pedestrian street, including retail and office uses. Cafes, restaurants and public houses would be concentrated around the square where they could take advantage of sunny aspects and wider pavements.

A compact urban form is proposed in the neighbourhood centre area consisting of a series of urban blocks. Buildings form continuous edges to streets and are located close to the back of the footpath. Buildings are considerably higher than in the residential neighbourhoods and would be generally 3-4 storeys, increasing to 5 storeys at key locations. Buildings would display a fine grain through varying set-backs, window sizes, balcony details, elevational features and finishing materials. A variation in penthouse accommodation such as roof terraces with building set-back or dormer windows will also add interest to the streetscape. Roof finishes would include slate and metal roofing in addition to the dark concrete tiled roof finish that is proposed generally in the south-eastern housing areas. Timber and metal cladding would also be used for wall finishes along with render and brickwork.



The Central Park lies to the north of this character area and intersects with the neighbourhood centre in a number of ways, providing interest in the townscape. It forms an enclosing edge to the north side of the square, and brings the park element into the central commercial hub. A row of trees is proposed leading from the square to a vantage point further up the slope within the park where a vista to Blarney Castle across the valley is available. It is anticipated that the boundary of the park meeting the neighbourhood square will be defined by gate posts and/or other means which will result in a special feature within this character area.



Character Area 3

This is an important reference spine within the south-eastern housing district, and is essentially a formal planted avenue space. It links the neighbourhood centre directly with the Curraghnalaght Road, running diagonally across the slope. Along its length are a series of intersections such as key route junctions and linear parks. These all add interest and character to the route. A small gateway is proposed in the vicinity of the junction with the Curraghnalaght Road to signify departure from the rural road and entrance into the Stoneview development. There is subtle curving to the configuration of the road, which will provide passive traffic calming as well as continuous varying visual foci and spatial enclosure.

Parking will be provided in formal courtyards along this route. Parallel parking will be provided along the collector road where sightlines permit. Buildings enclosing the route will be more formal in style with a combination of brick and render finishes. The tree-lined nature of the road will also give this area a strong sense of identity. Buildings will be 2-3 storeys in height.



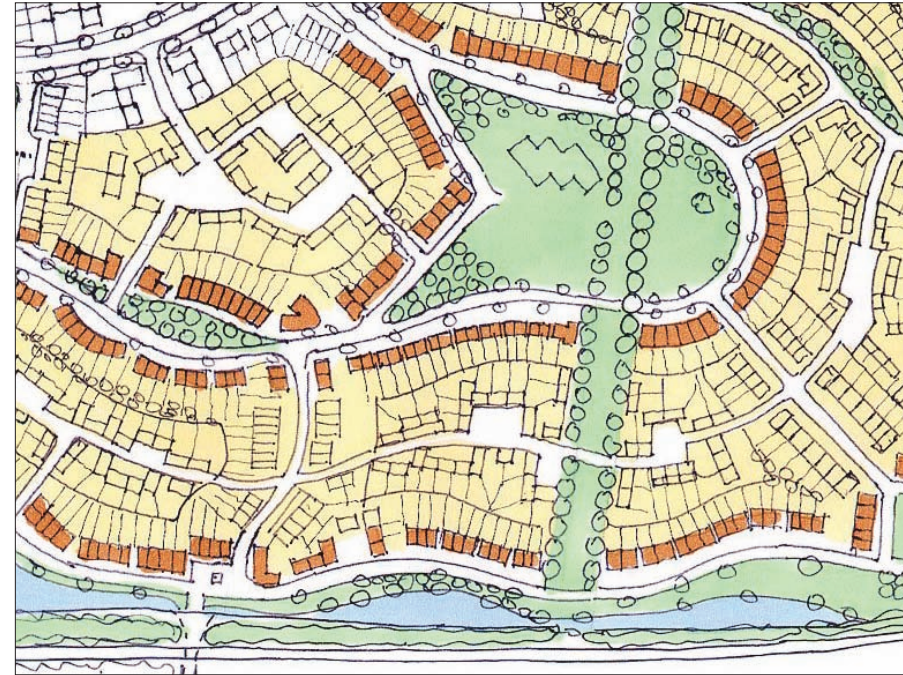
Character Area 4



This is a small character area that forms the transition between the denser urban fabric of Stoneview and the medium density housing beyond. It consists of a number of small urban blocks defined by residential streets with a tight spatial enclosure. Building heights will be generally 3 storeys but there will also be 2 and 4 storey buildings so that there is a gradual change in height between the character areas of Stoneview and the housing beyond. An existing stream forms the eastern edge of this neighbourhood and a landscaped park along the railway forms the southern edge. Building will have a mixture of render and brick finishes, together with cladding materials similar to the neighbourhood centre.



Character Area 5



This is the largest character area of the housing the south-eastern part of the Masterplan and is east of the Stoneview centre and between the central spine road and the railway. It consists of a number of sub-character areas within it which are determined by key structural elements and open spaces. These include an east-west main movement route that connects to the Main Street of Stoneview, and to the housing area beyond to the northwest.

There are many local parks proposed which will give this area an open green character. The open spaces will also provide a means of orientation and an identity and focus to the housing areas within it. Generally the proposed open spaces run along the contours and so will be visually prominent when viewed from far away. The nature of the parks on a sloping site will give more expansive views than in the urban neighbourhood centre



area. There are a number of parks that run across the contours. These include the two existing 'rides' of mature trees. Another incorporates an existing stream, which forms the western boundary of this character area. Along the railway the stream continues to form a series of ponds within a landscaped area. A number of small parks are also proposed along the eastern site boundary, incorporating the existing hedgerows where feasible.

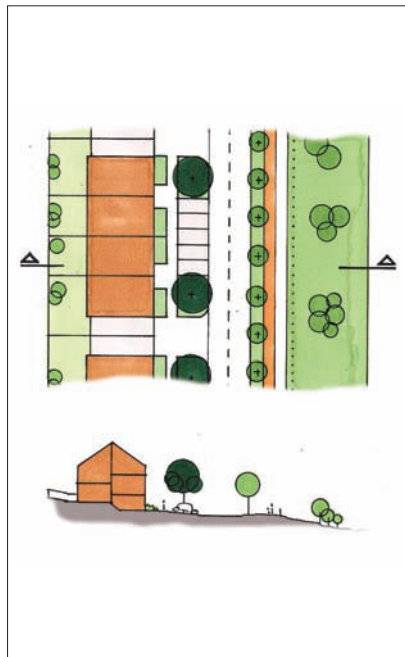
Along the major routes and spaces within this area the built form will generally consist of terraced and semi-detached housing. Detached houses and small corner apartment buildings will be located on triangular corner sites, acting as landmark features at junctions. A series of minor streets run through the inner layers of the residential blocks. The character of these spaces will be more informal with vernacular style housing clusters defining



the edges of interconnecting mews courtyards. A shared surface treatment to the spaces may be proposed. Building finishes and colours will vary between the sub-character areas. Around the larger more formal areas of open space terraces will have a pale neutral colour. Terraces on more informal squares and route edges will have a render finish in varying colours, with accent colours on corner and landmark buildings. Some buildings will also include selected brickwork finish. Buildings will be 2-3 storeys in height.

Character Area 6

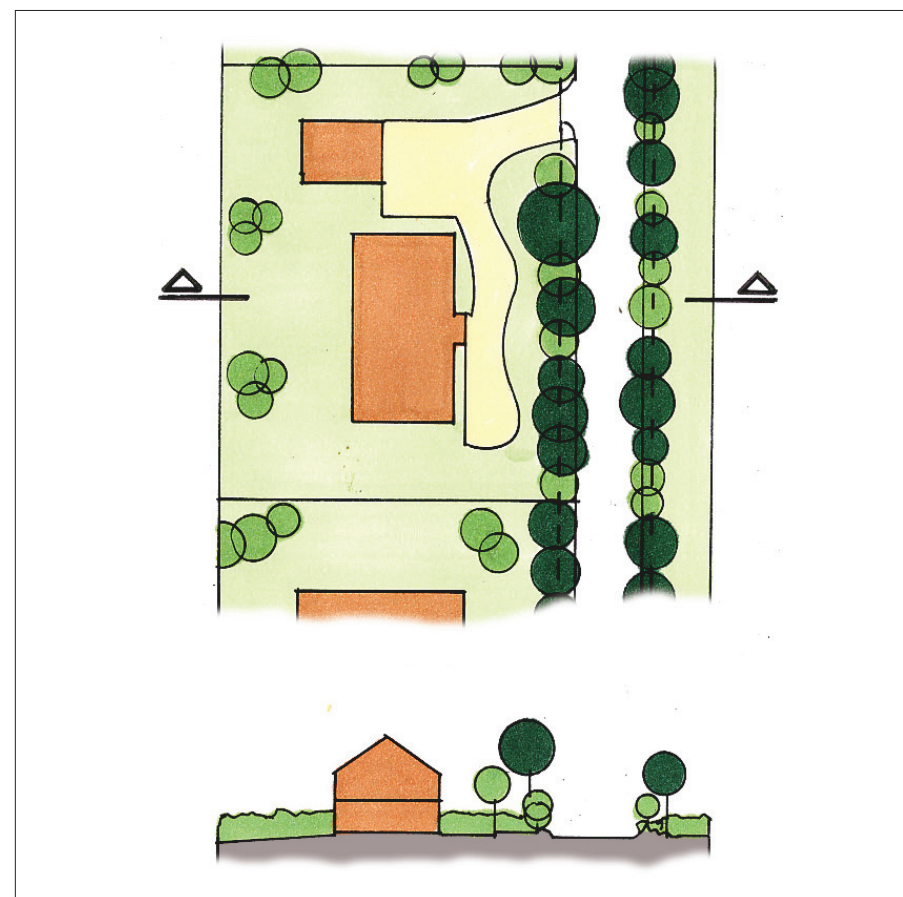
The large park at the centre of the Stoneview lands gives a distinct identity to this character area. This area will be more formal in character with predominantly rows of terraced houses and a regular rhythm of trees forming the park edge. A number of small mews courts will be located behind the formal enclosing park edge. Building heights will vary from maximum 3 storey to the park and maximum 2 storey in the courtyards behind. Building finishes along the park will be painted render with banding around windows and at ground floor. Mews houses behind will have a mixture of brick and render finish. A small number of buildings will be located between the park and the existing dwellings on Curragnalaght Road, and the northern aspect of these will be in keeping with the existing dwellings.



Character Area 7



This is the smallest character area comprising the edge of the Masterplan fronting the Curragnalaght Road. It will have a similar character to the existing development along this route. Hedgerows will be retained where possible. Housing will be low density detached dwellings, with parking on curtilage. Building heights will not exceed 2 storeys. External finishes will include stone as well as brickwork and render.



Character Area 8

This area commands the highest part of the site, its northern boundary is defined by the Ardamadane Road. Informed by its adjacent context of agricultural farmlands and fields, houses in this area will be in keeping with the character of the existing dwellings with open plots and less dense detached and semi-detached residential accommodation, to soften its presence when viewed from the surrounding landscape. This area will be characterised by the use of principles of rural spatial organisation where soft landscaping and trees are used to enclose spaces. Trees and hedges may be introduced to the front boundary of gardens so that the buildings appear only at intervals through driveway entrances, the road itself is contained between the tree lines. Another option is to use both landscape and buildings by grouping single dwellings in small clusters forming attractive courtyard spaces augmented with appropriately positioned hedges and trees. This idea is further strengthened by the use of similar materials and detailing on the clustered houses – a unified design statement sympathetically relating each home to its neighbour and creating a coherent identifiable place.



Character Area 9

A zone along the western boundary of the new park is characterised not just by the presence of the open parkland but also by the scale of the housing used to define its edge and contain the space. The strong, appropriately scaled building line will encourage a sense of overlooking, surveillance and safety. On street parking to be limited to the residential edges with the park-side pavement integrated within the park landscape. The elevated north edge will be colonised by a mix of 2 and 3 storey south facing detached homes with views across the park.



Character Area 10

This large central area has, as its main distinguishing feature, a spine street through its heart as a route leading from the schools site into the Main Street of the neighbourhood centre. Along this street will be sites set aside for small business uses (crèche, convenience store etc.) which will help to add variety to its character mix. A linear park, along the western end of the spine route, promotes walking and cycling through the development and provides a recreational amenity for the adjacent community. It further creates a 'green link' zone between the main park and Blarney connecting existing archaeological sites. A rich mix of terraced, semi-detached and corner buildings contain the streets and green spaces breaking down the overall area into identifiable smaller communities (generally 2 storey with 3 storey buildings used to punctuate the layout and the character).



Character Area 11

The low-lying area of the development is defined along its south edge by a landscaped zone around a series of ponds designed to soften the presence of the railway line and provide a recreational amenity space. This area is predominantly residential and therefore quiet in character with pockets of green space used to give variety to the townscape. This zone mediates between the urban blocks of the neighbourhood centre and the open areas to the west by varying and reducing its density from the centre outwards thus accommodating a wide range of family homes. Buildings will generally be 2 storey, with three storey punctuating the southern edge.



Character Area 12

This area comprises the edges of the collector road serving the north western side of the development, linking the edge of the neighbourhood centre and the schools site to the northwest. It has been designed to contain and visually slow this road with tree planting and soft landscaping. Along this route there will be smaller courtyard clusters of houses with direct access from the road onto shared driveways and parallel roads allowing houses to contribute built frontage to its edges fostering the desired enclosed feeling. These arrangements of units form individual smaller neighbourhoods along the route and allow a varied character to develop with 2 – 3 storey houses.



Character Area 13

This area provides for more dense residential accommodation as well as some ground level neighbourhood centre business spaces (shops, cafes, pubs etc.) and catering for the higher proportion of residents in the central areas. It can be seen as a peripheral buffer zone on the edge of the centre core area itself providing a higher variety and mix of residential types (terrace, apartment, duplex). Continuous built frontage is generally used on 3 edges of these 'blocks' (3 storey) to define squares, streets and the main park as essentially urban in character while the 4th side breaks down the frontage and scale (2 storeys) towards the residential areas beyond.



4.8 Community

The Masterplan reserves land in two locations for the provision of two national schools and a secondary school. One national school will be located between the neighbourhood centre and Central Park, while the other national school and the secondary school will be located to the northwest.

The national school which is adjacent to the neighbourhood centre has been located so as it is a convenient drop off location and safe access to it

will not be compromised by construction traffic of later phases. The sites of the other schools have been determined in order that the schools be within a safe and short distance from nearby residential areas. The chosen locations also encourage multiple destination trips such as a parent's route to the school and train station or town centre.

The Masterplan also allows for the possible reservation of a site for both a Family Resource Centre and a Place of Worship/Hall close to the centre of Stoneview. The final decision in this regard will be subject to agreement with whichever authority or body will operate such a facility, and a multi-use centre may be one possible scenario. In the event that an additional place of worship is seen not to be required in Blarney, the site may be developed for a building of civic character.

The Masterplan also reserves a site for a hospital/clinic towards the north of the site to serve the health needs of the immediate area and of the wider hinterland. It is also envisaged that there may be the provision of associated health services in the neighbourhood centre.

Any civic uses proposed for the Masterplan area will be directed towards the neighbourhood centre area.

The future development of up to 2,500 new dwellings at Stoneview is likely to support a number of viable crèche facilities. The detailed provision of these facilities, including their locations within Stoneview, will be determined by the phasing of the housing development, the emerging age profile of the new population and level of existing supply at the time, and will meet the planning permission requirements of Cork County Council.

Safety

The Stoneview Development has been designed by experienced urban architectural firms who have considered the safety and security of people living in and using the proposed Stoneview Development. Specifically areas which may encourage loitering, anti-social behaviour, or may pose a threat to person safety have been avoided during the design and development of the Masterplan. During the detailed design phases of the project which will follow the Design Team will meet with the local Garda Crime Prevention Officer in Cork and make provision for the requirements of the Gardaí.



4.9 Education

The SLAP calls for proposals for the provision and construction of national or primary schools to meet the educational requirements of those likely to live in the development. It also calls for the setting aside of lands for the construction of a new secondary school. Detailed consultations have been carried out with the Department of Education in relation to its predicted requirements in the Blarney area - see *Section 4.14*. The Department envisaged a requirement for two 16 classroom primary schools and one secondary school within the Masterplan area.

The Department of Education indicated that the provision and funding of sites and school buildings is a matter for discussion between the developers, the Department of Education and the Local Authority. The Masterplan includes designated sites for schools in accordance with the SLAP. The Developers are willing to build the schools early in the phasing of the development, provided that satisfactory agreement can be reached over funding. This Masterplan reserves sites for the schools as detailed in *Section 4.7* and in *Figures 3 and 19*.

4.10 Recreation

The Masterplan has set aside significant areas of space for recreation purposes in line with the Cork County Council policy document Recreation, Amenity and Cultural Policy for South Cork Hinterland Division. This consists of the provision of 10% of all development areas as public open space, the Central Park which can accommodate playing pitches and other facilities, the passive open space between the railway and the N20 and the reservation of sites for schools, community uses and a place of worship/hall.

A site for a leisure building is available in proximity to the combined site for the primary and secondary schools to the north of the development.

It is also a recommendation of the Masterplan that a new footpath and cycle path be provided for recreational purposes starting from the neighbourhood centre and stretching out to the west to Martin River and Waterloo, thus connecting the development with Blarney and the Woollen Mills.

4.10.1 Cork County Council Recreational Policy

This Masterplan provides for generous amounts of quality open space within the X-02 area. *Figure 13 in Section 4.6* above identifies a total of 44.5 hectares, which is 35.6 hectares in excess of the normal 10% provision for residential developments. A wide range of open spaces will be capable of accommodating passive and active recreation and sports facilities to serve the local community.

In consulting with The Department of Education, a clear desire was expressed to share recreational facilities with the public (after hours) so as not to have redundant facilities outside of school hours. This Masterplan therefore proposes making land available for playing fields and other facilities both within the school areas and in the public open spaces.

It is recognised that the Developers will need to discharge their obligations under the Cork County Council Recreational Policy which will apply at the time of subsequent planning applications (based on what is shown by the developer this will amount to 417 points).

While ample lands are available within the Masterplan area, it is possible that the provision of the full quantity of leisure facilities within the site may not be in the best interests of an integrated community development. By agreement with the County Council some facilities might be best provided off site, subject to the requirements of the Recreational Policy, and that the details of any such arrangement would be determined as part of the planning process for the development.



Figure 19: Reserved Sites for School Locations (red) and possible Community Uses.

4.11 Visual Impact Assessment

4.11.1 Introduction

A Visual Impact Assessment of the likely impacts arising from the proposals of this Masterplan has been prepared. While the Masterplan sets the framework for subsequent planning applications and development, it does not set out the detailed proposals which will be included in subsequent applications. This assessment therefore considers the generality of the likely visual impacts arising from proposals insofar as they are detailed in the Masterplan. Subsequent planning applications will be accompanied either by a full Environmental Impact Statement and supporting visual/landscape assessment which will address the specific details of those proposals.

- The methodology used for the landscape assessment entailed:
- A desktop study of the site in relation to its overall context both locally and regionally.
 - Visiting the site and its environs to assess the following;
 - Quality and type of views in the area
 - The extent of the visual envelope, i.e. the potential area of visibility of the site in the surrounding landscape/cityscape.

The character and quality of the surrounding landscape was assessed in relation to the position of existing buildings in and around the site, special landscape features, cultural and historical associations and landform.

The assessment considers the effects on both the character of the site and particular views into the site.

4.11.2 Description of the Receiving Environment

Site Description

A description of the principal development lands to the north of the N20 can be found in Chapter 3 of the Masterplan.

The lands at Shean Lower between the N20 and the R617 are generally made up of agricultural fields bounded by tree lined hedgerows. Elevations range from between 30m AOD (Malin) to the south along the R617 and rise to a height of approximately 75m AOD to the centre of the site. A mature stand of trees locally known as "Ringwood" is located along the crest of this hill.

Site Context

- The site context broadly includes:
- Local Roads and agricultural land to the north;
 - The N20 and the Dublin to Cork railway to the south;
 - Blarney Village and its residential hinterland to the south;
 - The Clogheenmilcon Sanctuary to the south east, and;
 - More distant agricultural lands to the west and to the east.

4.11.3 Impacting Elements of the Development

General Overview

This Masterplan comprises a number of strategic proposals as follows and is consistent with the adopted Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan.

- the construction of a new residential settlement of 2500 homes,
- a neighbourhood centre,
- schools,
- recreation and amenity facilities,
- a new railway station close to the original disused station,
- a park and ride facility,
- the partial realignment of Station Road both north and south of the railway,
- two new railway bridges,
- foul and surface drainage and water supply,
- a new interchange on the N20
- a new link road to Blarney

Impacts on the site itself

The lands for this Masterplan have been identified in the Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan. At present, the majority of the lands are in agricultural use, but the implementation of this Masterplan will see the development of a new residential settlement.

Changes to the character of the site north of the N20, as perceived from Station Road and from within the site, will be profound, but will be in line with the level of development that is anticipated by the Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan.

Changes to the character of the lands south of the N20 by virtue of the new Blarney Link Road will be significant, but the impact of views of these will be mitigated by the designed horizontal alignment of the road, the gentle 1 in 6 cutting along which the road will be built, and the extensive landscaping proposed.

Impacts on the Immediate Context

The Ardamadane and Curraghnalaght Roads run along the northern boundary of the site. While there will be significant changes to the character of and the views from these roads, these changes are anticipated by the development objectives of the Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan. The roads are characterised by their rural setting and elevated position to the north of Blarney Village. Views from these roads are either contained by high hedgerows or open across the site towards Blarney. A number of existing dwellings run along the northern side of these roads, and are generally elevated relative to the road. Development proposed along these roads will mostly comprise of two storey houses. As the ground level is falling towards the south, these houses will be set lower than the existing houses and as such, views from the existing houses will be either retained or framed between the new houses. See *Figure 20* below.

In addition, Station Road will see significant change, principally from north of the railway as described above, but also south of the railway where Station Road will be closed to southbound traffic and northbound traffic will be re-routed. The existing stone Bridge on Station Road will become a pedestrian and cycle route linking the new settlement to Blarney Village. While the new development will bring significant change, it is expected that the completed proposals will have a positive impact on the area.



Figure 20: Typical Section through northern perimeter of site.



Figure 21: View from N20.
Green line indicates foreground obstruction; Tan colour indicates site area.

Impacts on the N20

The N20 rises steadily as it travels from Cork to Mallow in the vicinity of the site. Views into the site from the road are limited to the area alongside Blarney Business Park. The principal development area lies to the north of the road beyond the elevated Dublin to Cork railway line, and is largely obscured by the railway line and intervening vegetation. Much of the proposed development will be screened in a similar manner and it is likely that the impacts arising from the principal development will be slight. See *Figure 21* above.

Of greater impact will be the new N20 interchange, which, by its nature will be very much evident when travelling the N20. The interchange, together with its on and off ramps, will be prominent while approaching and while in the vicinity of the new interchange. This will be consistent with the changes anticipated by the Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan, and will be an acceptable intervention in the context of the National Primary routes. Significant landscaping measures are proposed to enhance the appearance of the interchange and to give it a landmark status signalling the presence of both the existing Blarney Village and the new development.

Impacts on Blarney Village

Blarney Village, being at a lower elevation than the site area, does not generally enjoy views of the site. Only from higher ground to the south of the village, can glimpses of the site be seen - the most open view of the site being from the top of Blarney Castle. From this location, the middle ground is taken up with the northern parts of the village itself, behind which are the partly developed and partly agricultural lands located between the R617 and the N20. The N20 itself and the Dublin to Cork railway line are only visible in part from this location as they are obscured by the intervening

topography. Similarly, much of the lower portions of the site and the development thereon will also be obstructed. The Ardamadane and Curraghmalaght Roads are visible in the distance, and in front of them it is possible to see the upper portion of the site area. This will comprise the Central Park running across the site with development both in front of and beyond it. It is anticipated that the landscaping both within the park and along its perimeter, as well as other landscaping associated with the residential areas, will assist in reducing the impact of the built development. The central park will present a green lung which traverses the site, breaking up and softening the built elements of the site.

The resultant scale of the intervention relative to the wider setting of Blarney will be moderate, and has been anticipated by the development objectives of the Blarney-Kilbarry SLAP. See *Figure 22* below.



Figure 22: View from Blarney Castle.
Green line indicates foreground obstruction; Tan colour indicates site area.

Impacts on the Wider Context

Moving away from the site and from areas specifically mentioned above, the rolling topography is such that there will be views of the site from certain high areas, principally from the south, south west direction. Scenic Routes A38, A40 and A41 are located in this direction, but the glimpse views which may be possible from limited locations on higher ground along these routes will be from such a distance that the visibility of the site and the consequent impact will be slight. Notwithstanding these slight impacts, it should be noted that with the exception of a small sliver of land at the junction of Station Road and the railway line, the development lands are not designated scenic landscape, and the County Development Plan, Section 9.1.5 states that:

"...where particular zoned lands have a scenic landscape designation or adjoin a scenic landscape designation, there is still a presumption in favour of development for the specified land use, but special attention may need to be paid to design, setting and landscaping depending on the individual area and the type of development proposed"

Given that the development lands are the subject of the adopted Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan, it is reasonable to assume that some degree of impact has already been anticipated and accepted in principal.

Summary

Notwithstanding the scale of the proposed development, the site topography and location is such that the likely visual impact of views of the site will in general be slight.

Changes in the character of the site itself will be significant and even profound, but, as has been stated previously, a development of this nature and scale has already been approved in principal by the adoption of the Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan,

4.12 Primary Infrastructure and Services

Expansion of services is required to provide for the development of Stoneview and will be guided by the following objectives:

- To provide adequate infrastructure to accommodate the structured development of the lands.
- To restructure and re-route existing services and infrastructure on the land as required.

To meet the above objectives, the following infrastructure works will be required as part of the development of the site.

4.12.1 Foul Water Drainage

It is proposed to develop a largely gravity foul water drainage network within the site which will collect the foul water from the proposed development. From the low point within the site it is proposed to pump the foul water over the new N20 interchange and discharge to the existing Cork County Council foul



Figure 23: Proposed Foul Drainage Layout

Source: Arup

drainage network via a new gravity drain. The existing wastewater treatment plant will need to be upgraded to cater for the additional flow. Cork County Council has indicated that the treatment plant has the capacity to be extended to cater for the increased flow. It is intended that all foul drainage arrangements shall meet the detailed requirements of the County Council.

4.12.2 Surface Water Drainage

As the proposed site is largely a Greenfield site it is proposed to limit the surface water run-off from the fully developed site to the current Greenfield run-off. As a result, surface water attenuation will be required for the site. At this stage it is proposed that a number of surface water attenuation ponds will be utilised around the development. The Greenfield run-off from the site will discharge as it does at present and in the same quantities, to the existing stream that flows through the adjacent Blarney Business Park which in turn drains to the Blarney wetlands.

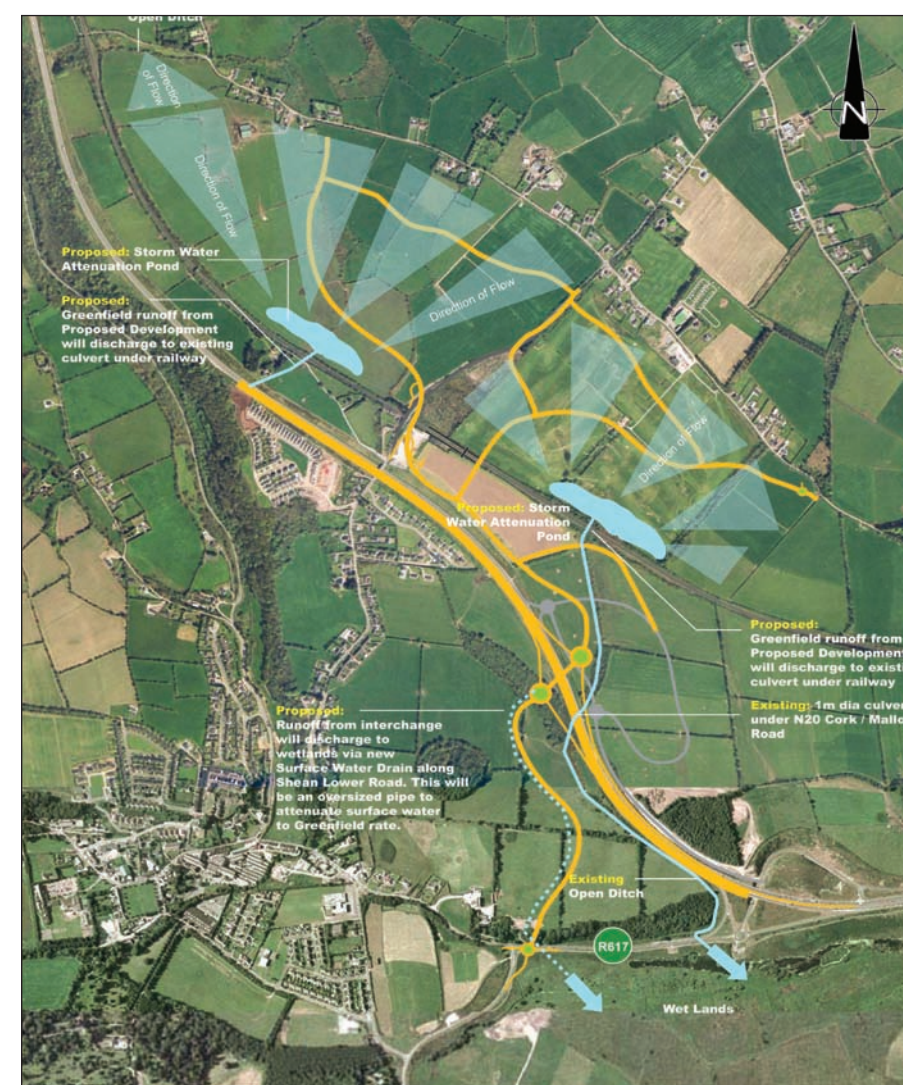


Figure 24: Proposed Surface Water Layout

Source: Arup

4.12.3 Potable Water Supply

Cork County Council are currently assessing the potable water demand for the greater Blarney area which includes the potable demand for the proposed site. This will more than likely result in a new reservoir located at Knockarcorbally.

Existing Residents

It was confirmed at the meeting with the Resident's Group in early 2006, and was stated subsequently in the EIS submitted with the Infrastructure Planning Application, that the proposed new underground foul drainage and watermain systems will be designed and installed to cater for the existing residents immediately north of the proposed development. As part of the Stoneview Development these services will be extended in several locations up to the existing public roads at the northern boundary of the development so that they will be available to the existing residences to tie in should they agree to this with Cork County Council.

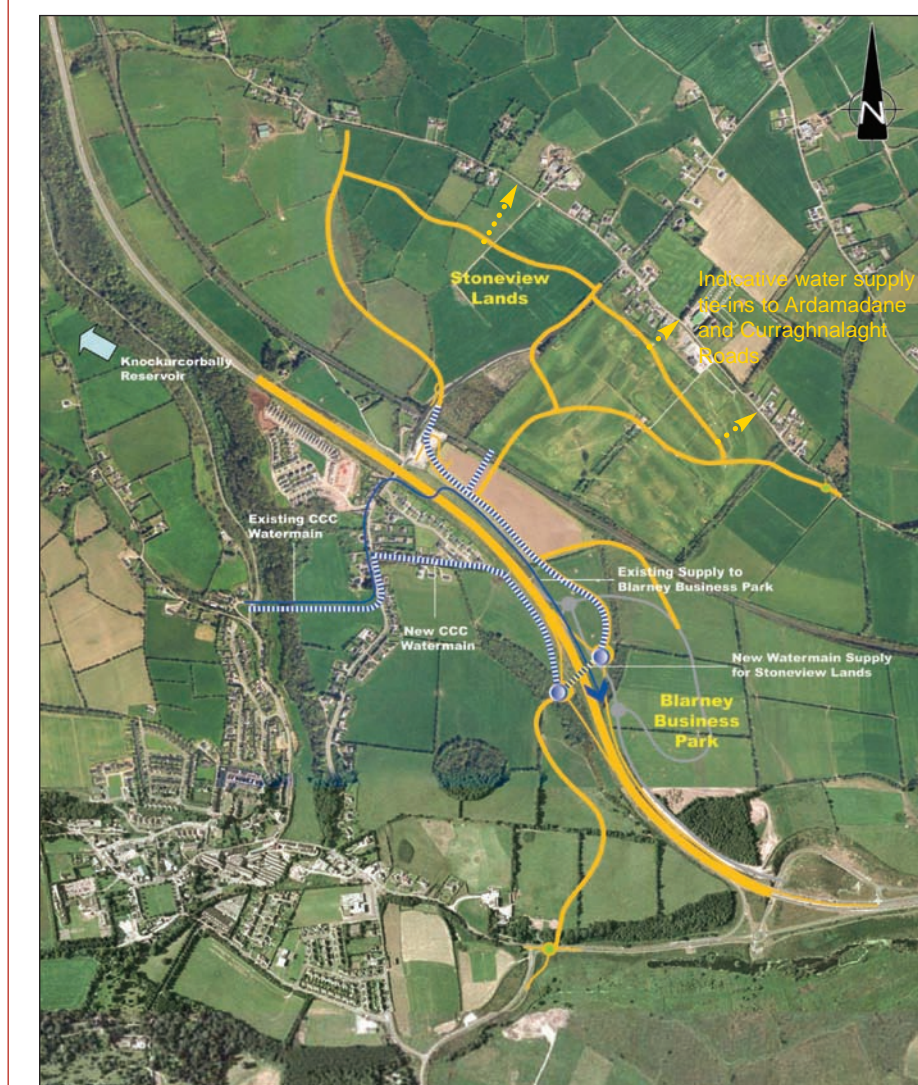


Figure 25: Proposed Water Supply Layout

Source: Arup

4.13 Access and parking

Parking arrangements for commercial uses will be in line with Council Policy to ensure that car parking demands are accommodated within the site.

Resident parking within the scheme will be provided by group parking while public parking will be provided both within Stoneview and adjacent to other public buildings (i.e. shops, schools) in the outlying residential areas. Parking and loading areas will be provided on-street within Stoneview and will be managed to ensure a good turn over. The supermarket and adjacent shops will however be served from a delivery yard to the rear.

4.14 Energy Conservation

The development is highly accessible and encourages the use of public transport, cycling and walking. Residential areas are within a 5-10 minute walking distance to the neighbourhood core of the development. In order to achieve multi-purpose trips, schools, community services and shops are all located within close proximity to each other. Spaces and buildings are to be designed to optimise climatic aspect and incorporate energy efficient building design. The square has been orientated to avail of solar gain and those areas expected to be in use during the evenings (e.g. pubs) are orientated to face south and west.

Streets within the Masterplan area have been designed to avoid excessive cut and fill over the site and housing units are designed to take advantage of the slope by their section. Consideration is given to their orientation for passive solar gain. Landscaping works will take cognisance of ecological features within the Masterplan boundary. Good passive surveillance, considered layout and quality landscape design are all key factors in promoting a sense of place and local pride.

4.15 Information Technology Concepts

High-speed broadband services will be provided throughout the development as part of the initial infrastructural work. This is independent of the Eircom network and will offer consumers greater choice. Broadband providers offer a choice of bandwidth (speed) to facilitate the needs of residents and businesses. The commercial buildings in the town centre will all have Cat V wiring as standard.

4.16 Consultation

The adopted SLAP required a Masterplan for the X-02 area at Blarney. During the preparation of the Draft Masterplan, extensive consultations with Cork County Council, primarily the Planning Policy Unit and Roads Departments, as well as landowners and members of the general public were undertaken. Following submission of the Draft Masterplan on 14th March 2006, Cork County Council established a Partnership Committee

to review it, and a number of changes and recommendations were made. The changes have been incorporated into this Masterplan which was submitted to Cork County Council on 4th October 2006.

A full list of consultees and dates is provided below.

Cork County Council <i>Planning Policy Unit</i>	7 Mar 05, 20 Sep 05, 11 Nov 05, 7 Dec 05, 27 Jan 06
<i>Engineering Dept.</i>	7 Mar 05
<i>Estates and Development Dept.</i>	20 Sep 05
<i>Road Design</i>	13 Jul 05, 14 Sep 05, 27 Oct 05, 24 Nov 05, 29 Nov 05, 14 Feb 05, 24 Feb 06
<i>Water Services Capital Projects Dept.</i>	08 Dec 05
Iarnród Éireann <i>Tracks & Signals Dept.</i>	27 Jul 05, 08 Sep 05, 08 Dec 05
<i>Architecture and Property Dept.</i>	21 Feb 06
<i>Engineering Dept.</i>	12 Dec 05
National Roads Authority	21 Sep 05, 29 Sep 05, 23 Nov 05, 24 Feb 06
Dept. of Education Planning & Building Unit	07 Oct 05
Public Consultation <i>Local Councillors and the Public</i>	15 Feb 06
<i>Ardamadane & Curraghnalaght</i>	22 Feb 06
<i>Residents (see below)</i>	
Masterplan Partnership Committee	27 Jul 06, 08 Sep 06.

The following persons provided written comments and suggestions during the public consultation process:

- Ann Coleman, Shean Upper, Station Road
- Hugh O’ Riordan, Stone View, Blarney
- Marie Julcahy, Coolower, Blarney
- Lisa Ryan
- Brian Kelleher
- Micahael Lynch, The Gables, Stoneview, Blarney
- Denis & Patricia O’ Donoghue, 5 Woodville, Station Road
- Ruth Quill, Lenwood, Kerry Pike
- Lucy Kiely, 3 Ard Dara View, Station Road
- Marie O’ Riordan, Stoneview, Blarney
- Noelette Hurley, Ballygibbon, Blarney
- Mary Horgan, Coolowen, Blarney
- Kieran Sexton, 3 Ard Dara View, Station Road
- Breda Murphy, Rock Road, Coolowen
- PJ Sheehan
- Patrick & Patricia Murphy, Ardamadane, Blarney
- Michael Twomey, Grosvenor House, Farranastig, Whitechurch
- Rose Martin, Carryrehane
- Rose & Bill Ryan, Coolowen
- Rev, Ruth Jackson, 24 Ard Dara View, Blarney
- A. O’ Sullivan
- Ray Hennessey
- Kevin B. Conway
- Paddy Hickey, Hon Secretary, Curraghnalaght & Ardamadane Residents Group



Figure 26: Public Presentation - 15th February 2006

4.17 Development Control Standards

4.17.1 General

These standards are intended to complement the development control standards contained in the current or any subsequent County Development Plan. They deal with general standards and standards for identified development control zones on the land. The standards are designed to provide guidance and may be waived where, on balance, a better planning outcome can be achieved.

4.17.2 General Standards

Design of Layouts

Layouts for residential development should be designed to create a strong sense of identity for residential areas.

Density

It is a policy of Cork County Council to develop housing at higher densities than have traditionally been produced in the area:

- (a) It is an objective to recognise that average housing densities currently being achieved in County Cork are generally well below the range recommended in Government advice.
- (b) It is an objective, to encourage a steady increase in the density of new housing development so that average densities will be generally in accordance with Government advice, by the end of the plan period. (Cork County Council Policy HOU 2-1)

A minimum housing density of 35 units per hectare is recommended except in exceptional circumstances where lower densities may be permitted. (Cork County Council Policy HOU 2-2). The site lends itself to medium and higher density housing development. As such, it is proposed that densities are kept to a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare as a general rule.

It is also a policy of Cork County Council to develop higher housing densities at locations close to public transport corridors:

It is an objective to ensure that new housing development within established town centres, proximate to existing or proposed public transport corridors or on land that is referred to in a specific zoning objective in this plan as suitable for “high density housing development” is carried out at a net density in excess of 50 dwellings per hectare. (Cork County Council Policy HOU 2-3)

It is a recommendation of the Masterplan to accommodate densities of development in excess of 50 dwellings per hectare in the neighbourhood centre area of the site, proximate to the rail station.

Building height

Buildings will be 3-4 storeys in height in the core area with a possible 5 storeys at particular locations. Outside the core, buildings will be 2-3 storeys in height, with buildings on main routes or overlooking large areas of open space will be taller than those in mews courtyards. A maximum of 3.5 storeys in height will apply as a general rule.

Corners

Where possible, corner elements will be clearly defined. In appropriate locations, corner elements are capable of accommodating landmark or gateway buildings that will help to create a sense of place and a point of entry into various elements of the Masterplan area.

Building design and materials

Materials will be in keeping with the general vernacular style of the area, with a modern flavour. Finishes will be durable in order to withstand prevailing winds. A more formal façade treatment will apply to the edge buildings of residential areas, with informal style to the mews interiors.

Privacy

Development should be located, orientated and designed to avoid adverse overlooking and lack of privacy. In residential development a minimum standard of 22 meters separation between opposing windows will normally apply in the residential areas. This standard may be relaxed on an individual proposal basis having regard to context and amenity.

Overshadowing

Development should be located, orientated and designed to avoid adverse overshadowing, particularly of residential development.

Access for Disabled Persons

The layout and design of development must give consideration to the needs of the disabled. Where buildings are intended for public use, the planning authority will require that the design is in accordance with the Building Regulations 1997 or as subsequently amended. The building design should allow full access to the building for all disabled persons, whether employees or the visiting public.

Public Open Space

Public open space will be laid out to a high standard and in accordance with the Masterplan. Development may be levied for contributions towards the cost of its provision.

Private Open Space

Private open space shall be provided for all residential units in the plan generally in accordance with the standards outlined in the Residential Density Guidelines. This may be provided in the form of rear gardens, terraces, courtyards or balconies. The standard may be waived where important amenity, conservation or townscape issues arise.

Drainage

Foul and surface water drainage arrangements shall meet the detailed requirements of the County Council. Refer to detailed recommendations.

Public Utilities

All wires, cables and pipes for the provision of public utility services shall be ducted underground to preserve the amenity and visual character of the area, and in the interests of public safety in urban areas. This work shall be carried out in accordance with the detailed requirements of the County Council.

Streets

Standards for street design in the development should generally be in accordance with best standard practice as contained in the Essex Design Guide. Road design and construction shall comply with adopted County Council standards.

Street furniture

Street furniture throughout the development should comply with the relevant County Council standards. A range of quality street furniture will be chosen for the key streets and spaces in the development. This will be addressed in future planning applications.

Parking

Parking standards will comply with the policies of Cork County Council and the provisions outlined in the Masterplan.

Bicycle Parking

Provision should be made for bicycle stands and storage in commercial and residential developments on the land.

4.18 Part V

Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides a range of options for the integration of social and affordable housing within the proposed development. The Developers will submit their outline proposals to comply with Part V as part of the planning applications. However the details of how the housing objectives will actually be achieved in each of the housing neighbourhoods will not be finally determined until after the final grant of permission.

5 : IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Development Plan

Following the work of the Partnership Committee, this revised Masterplan was submitted to Cork County Council on 4th October 2006 for adoption.

5.2 Phasing of Development

The development will take approximately 10 years to complete if all the necessary finance and infrastructure is in place. For this reason development on the site should be phased to ensure the most efficient use of resources and the balanced, incremental growth of the town. The principal roads and services infrastructure will be constructed first which will facilitate subsequent construction being carried out with minimal need for construction traffic on public roads around the site other than the N20. *Figure 27* shows the phasing timetable.

Infrastructure

The N20 interchange and the two new railway bridges will be constructed first. Assuming a start in early 2007, this work will continue until the end of 2008. The primary road network will start in mid 2007, and will continue until around the end of 2008. Drainage and utilities infrastructure will be constructed in parallel with all of these, and will also be complete at the end of 2008. The construction of the railway station will also be due for completion by the end of 2008.

Neighbourhood Centre

The neighbourhood centre, including the residential element, will commence in 2008 and will continue for just over two years, with the construction of some of the peripheral buildings continuing on until mid 2011.

The central park will commence in 2008, and will be largely completed by 2009, with additional works continuing on until the end of 2009.

Schools

The allocated sites will be available from the outset, and the Department of Education have indicated that they would like to see the schools in place in time to cater for the new child population of Stoneview. Once an agreement can be made with respect to financing of the construction, the Developers are happy to allow the Department to construct the schools or to enter into a contract whereby they will construct the schools for the Department.

Residential

The residential development, outside of the neighbourhood centre, has been broken down into four separate phases. These are demonstrated in Figure 28. The first phase will start in late 2007 once the interchange and most of the primary roads have been completed. The four phase will overlap each and, in general terms, there will be an average of 350 units built per annum, with a maximum of up to 450 units in any one year depending on general progress and the market.

Co-ordination

The implementation activities will be co-ordinated with the wider community via a representative from the developer's team.

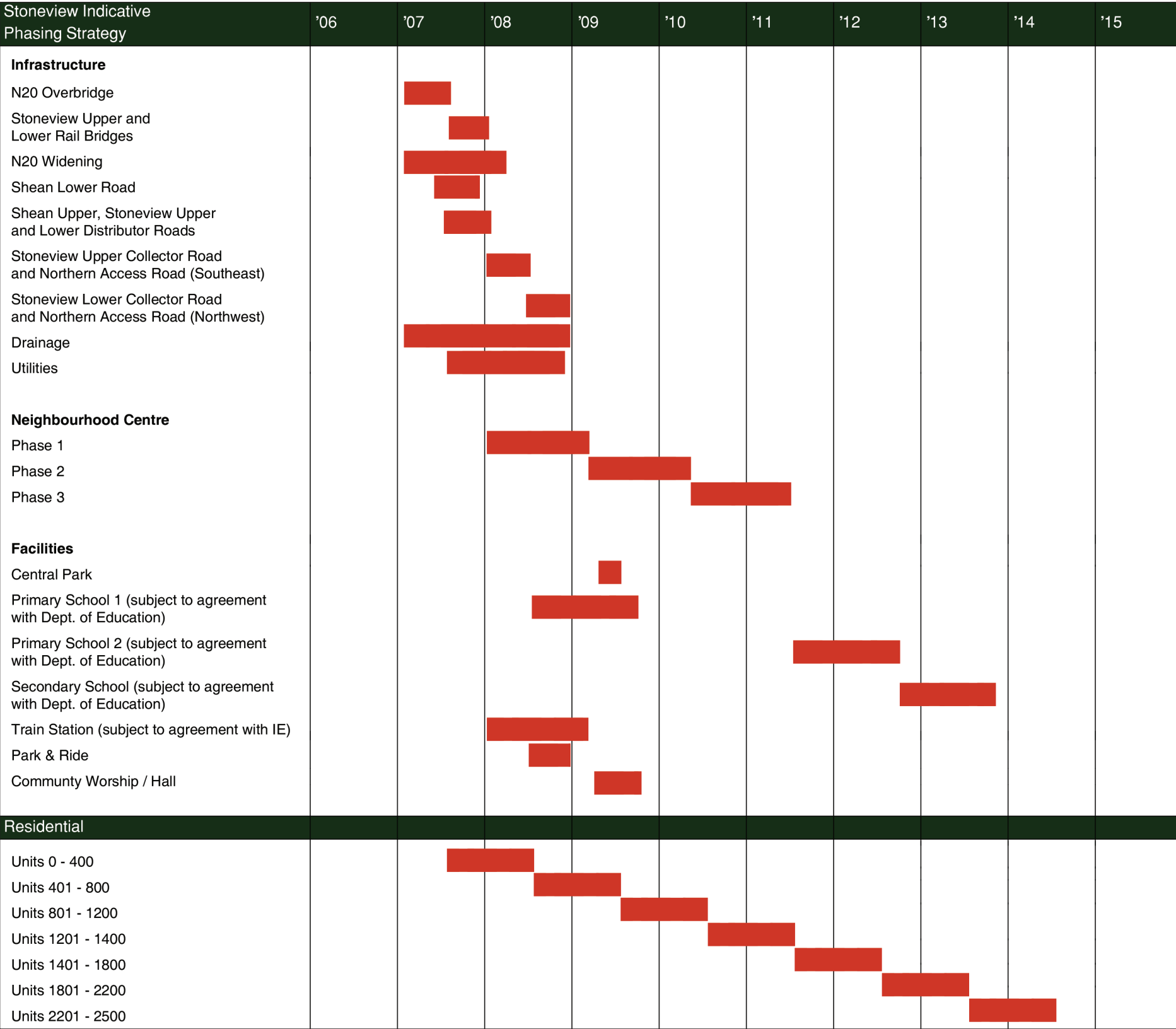


Figure 27: Phasing Timetable



Figure 28: Phasing Diagram

5.3 Constructing the Infrastructure

5.3.1 Infrastructure Construction Activities

Construction of the infrastructure including the roads and drainage network will be carried out over a period of approximately 22 months. The N20 interchange and the new rail bridges will be constructed first so as to provide access to the Stoneview lands and to minimise construction traffic on the existing local roads. The primary construction elements will include:

- Temporary fencing
- Site clearance
- Tree protection fencing where required
- Diversion of services as required
- Stripping of topsoil and storage on site
- Construction on internal circulation routes
- Importing fill where required (sourced from local quarries)
- Site grading
- Construction of bridges
- Attenuation ponds

- Water mains, storm water and foul drainage and gullies
- Gas supply pipes
- Kerbs, cycleways and footpaths
- Laying of road base course
- Topsoil and grass seeding
- Laying of road wearing course
- Street Furniture, lighting, signage etc
- Painting road lines, and erection of signage
- Landscaping and tree planting

5.3.2 Excess Excavated Material

Typically, excavated material that is suitable for use as engineering fill will be used where possible for landscaping and other uses throughout the site thus reducing the need for off site disposal. While the re-use of such material on-site will be maximised, it is possible that some small amounts will require transportation off-site. The developer shall be required to re-use or dispose of this material off-site to locations which have the appropriate planning permissions, permits of licences in place to accept such material.

5.3.3 Construction Access and Traffic

The new road infrastructure involves the construction of the following elements:

- Widening the N20 (Cork to Limerick Road) and the construction of the new interchange.
- The construction of the distribution / collector roads in the Stoneview lands to the north of the N20.
- The construction of the Shean Lower road to the south of the N20.

The construction will be sequenced to minimise the traffic impact to the existing road network in the following order:

- N20 interchange
- Railway overbridges
- Shean Lower Road
- N20 Widening
- Distributor Roads
- Collector Roads
- Other roads

The aim of the sequencing is to complete the bridges over the N20 and the railway as soon as possible after construction starts. This will permit construction traffic to access all parts of the site without using the existing road network other than:

- Accessing the site from the N20
- Crossing the existing Station Road south of the railway and the Curraghnalaght crossroads.

A preliminary estimate of 300 trucks per day has been calculated to transport construction material on and off site. Construction traffic for widening the existing N220 to the dual carriageway will be controlled by an integrated traffic management plan which will also ensure that an uninterrupted flow of traffic will be maintained on the N20 (albeit re-routed via temporary and permanent slip roads during busy construction activities.)

A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be put in place to determine the access routes and entrances to the site (primarily off the N20). Access to the proposed site will be via the N20 (Cork to Limerick Road) to construct the new interchange and widen the existing N20. Specific points of access and egress for the site shall be identified and marked with warning signs in accordance with the requirements of Cork County Council and the NRA.

The same access point will be used to construct the new rail bridges. It is noted that until the completion of one of the railway bridges, construction traffic will need to use the existing Station Road rail bridge in order to get access to the northern side of the railway. Construction traffic will also need to cross Station Road to get from one side of the Stoneview lands to the other throughout the entire duration of the project.

Construction vehicles will use the public road network. The haul routes will be limited to the national and regional roads where possible and will be determined by the location of the sources of materials identified by the developer. The routing of exceptional loads such as the pre-cast concrete bridge beams will require liaison with the Local Authorities and the Garda Síochána.

The traffic generated during the construction phase of the development will be significantly less than when the overall development is completed. The primary access to the construction site as part of the infrastructure development will be via the N20. The widening of the N20 and the construction of the new interchange will require extensive traffic management control along the N20 to ensure the safe passage of vehicles.

In addition to the proposed access points on the N20, construction traffic will also need to use the section of Station Road between the N20 overbridge and north of the existing Station Road rail bridge. The movement of construction traffic along this section of roadway will require traffic management plans to ensure the safe passage of all through traffic.

5.4 Disruption of Services and Station Road

Services

The proposed new underground infrastructure including storm and foul drainage, watermain, electrical power, gas main, and telecoms to serve the Stoneview Development will involve the construction of new and the extension of existing infrastructure. Any disruption of supply of these services to the existing residents and businesses in the area will be minimised, will be co-ordinated with the relevant authorities and the existing users, and will occur at times which have the minimum impact on the existing users.

Station Road

Throughout the construction phase of the Stoneview Development it will be necessary for construction traffic to cross Station Road to pass from one side of the construction site to the other. It was agreed by the Partnership Committee that local traffic movements on Station Road will be prioritised over the construction traffic crossing Station Road during the construction phase of the project in order to minimise the impact on existing traffic movements.

5.5 Planning Applications

Notwithstanding the phasing proposals, the first application will be for the principal infrastructural works on the lands including roads, bridges and services. A subsequent application for all of the buildings will follow thereafter. In both cases, the applicants will seek to have a 10 year permission, and both applications will accord with the Masterplan.

5.6 Social and Community Facilities

Many of the social and community facilities proposed in this Masterplan are expected to be funded by the public sector in the form of capital grants and operational funding. Parcels of land are identified which would be suitable for these facilities. Consultation with service providers will be required prior to the allocation of the land parcel in order to confirm suitability. If a parcel is not suitable, priority should be given to allocating another suitable site/location in the development.

5.7 Strategic Open Space, Roads and Streets

A large part of the lands are reserved for open space uses (these areas are shown in the Masterplan diagrams, *Figures 3, 12 and 14*).

All areas of strategic open space should be ceded to, or taken-in-charge by the County Council on their satisfactory completion. The future management and maintenance of the open space areas included within the development area are to be agreed with the County Council.

The roads and streets, including mews lanes, shared courtyards etc are intended to be taken-in-charge by Cork County Council on satisfactory completion. Only the curtilage of mixed-use buildings and apartment complexes will be privately managed.

The management of existing public walkways will require an agreement between the developers and the planning authority if the management is to change for any reason.

5.8 Wayleaves

Most services and wayleaves will need to be relocated or redirected to facilitate development. Other wayleaves may be retained. These issues will need to be resolved prior to sale.

5.9 Infrastructure

For the purposes of this Plan, infrastructure is categorised as either primary or local. Primary infrastructure relates to the primary roads and streets, lighting, utilities, water and drainage networks. As much of the primary infrastructure will have to be in place at an early stage in the development of the land, substantial costs will be incurred by a developer or management company at this stage.

Local infrastructure will need to be provided at the early stages of each phase of the Plan to facilitate the development of individual parcels of land. Local infrastructure will generally be provided by the developer of the land, or, if a Management Company is in place, by the developers purchasing the individual lots. In the case of the Management Company there may be

some instances in which it will provide local infrastructure with the cost then recouped from development contributions levied on the benefiting development.

A number of strategic items of infrastructure have the potential to be funded through development contributions levied by the Council. A significant number of benefits can accrue to the wider community as a result of the timely provision of such infrastructure including:

- Improvement of the N20 infrastructure to include:
 - Widening and improving the safety of the N20 dual carriageway.
 - The new interchange which will improve access to and from Blarney and the surrounding area to the N20, and would permit two of the ramps on the existing N20 interchange to be removed in the future (i.e. the southbound off-ramp and the northbound on-ramp).
- Providing the Shean Lower Road which links the new interchange to the R617. This is in lieu of the New Link Road as proposed in the draft SLAP.
- Improving safety on Station Road by providing an alternative route into Blarney from the north via the Shean Lower Road.
- Providing a road which will link the Monard development to the N20 in the future.
- The provision of supply capacity for all public services and private utilities to the northern boundary of the site such that existing residences in the area could be served.
- Providing a new railway station and park and ride facility which is for the purpose of the greater hinterland and not just the Stoneview development
- Improving the safety of the existing T-junction on the R617 by replacing it with a roundabout.
- Providing improved and safer access to Blarney Business Park.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

1 Planning Context

1.1 Cork County Development Plan, 2003

In the overall strategy of this plan, Blarney is designated as a satellite town. The strategic aims for Blarney are to encourage the consolidation of the town within its strategic Green Belt setting; continue the promotion of its special tourism and heritage functions; and investigate the potential for medium term rail based growth to the north.

In accordance with the Development Plan, the 'Cork Suburban Rail Feasibility Study' has been completed. The study has suggested that the proposed new railway station for Blarney should be located in the former goods yard area which lies to the southeast of the bridge and Station Road as it crosses over the railway. Following this study, a Special Local Area Plan for Blarney has been produced.

1.2 Cork Area Strategic Plan, 2001 (CASP)

One of the principal recommendations of the Cork Area Strategic Plan involves the promotion of a major growth corridor between Blarney and Midleton. Central to this strategy is the upgrading and better utilisation of the rail system, and the location of development along a key public transport corridor to facilitate improved access to public transport, employment, services and amenities. Whilst Monard is favoured for extensive growth, Blarney is also noted as a potential growth area.

1.3 Special Local Area Plan for Blarney, 2005

The Special Local Area Plan (SLAP) for Blarney-Kilbarry indicates the expected future development of the subject area. The SLAP sets out the site-specific proposals for the station area, which is considered to offer significant potential for the expansion of Blarney to meet the need for new housing forecast for the rail corridor north of Cork in the CASP strategy. The land comprises an area of agricultural land north of the railway, the Blarney Business Park to the southeast and a smaller amount of land between the N20 and the railway owned by Cork County Council, by Dairygold and privately.

The SLAP outlines policies for an area of approximately 121ha, located north of the railway line in addition to the 35 ha to the south. Most of this land is within 1 km of the proposed railway station site and so offers an important opportunity to locate new housing and employment close to one of the new railway stations proposed.

Land Uses & Urban Design

The plans objectives for the site seek the provision of a master plan before individual proposals can commence in order to secure comprehensive proposals for an integrated development planned as a single entity together with its physical and social infrastructure. An objective for the site provides

for a hospital to be included within the overall development. The Masterplan must also include clear and unambiguous proposals for the phasing of the development and the timing of provision for the supporting physical and social infrastructure.

Employment and Economic Activity

The Blarney Business Park is an important employment location within the rail corridor due to its location in close proximity to the proposed rail station and also due to uncertainties concerning the provision of employment development at the new settlement proposed at Monard. In the light of the new development now proposed at Stoneview, parts of the area closest to the new interchange proposed with the N20 are considered to be capable of accommodating a somewhat broader range of uses than the office based industry proposed in the County Development Plan 2003.

Urban Design Considerations

The vision for this new residential neighbourhood adjacent to the railway station has a village/neighbourhood centre at its core. The new hub will create a social focus and a visual identity for the development and will consist of streets and squares, edged by fine-grained buildings. Spaces will be designed so as to create a human-scale intimate village atmosphere.

The village will provide a mix of uses that will serve local weekly needs. These will include convenience and some comparison/DIY shopping to serve this new population, public houses, restaurants, and local services, hairdressers, beauty salons, crèches and a medical centre. Residential accommodation will be incorporated so as to ensure a vibrant street life and passive surveillance. Small office units at upper floors along streets may also be provided.

The hub will be located north of the railway adjacent to the station where it can directly serve the housing east and west. It also has a direct relationship with the Central Park space adjacent to the north and takes advantage of the proposed station location.

In attempting to define the broad principles that can inform the process of detailed design, consideration needs to be given to the establishment of a form and structure to the new development that will embody the following elements:

- A reflection of the existing development pattern in the area;
- Make best use of the attractive features of the site;
- Provide scope for the existing rural dwellings in the area to retain their character;
- The easy development of a sense of place among its inhabitants;
- The establishment of an attractive setting for the new development by the establishment of a landscape structure; and
- Opportunities for an enhanced quality of life for all the occupants.

1.4 Residential Density-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1999

The Guidelines provide for increased densities of residential development for reasons of sustainability, demography and affordability. Under the Guidelines the subject lands can be classified as outer suburban/greenfield and brownfield lands.

The Guidelines recognise that this type of land plays an important role in achieving higher residential densities and so general criteria for development, and more detailed guidelines (such as plot ratio, open space and building height) are all specified.

Guidance on the provision of open space is given in the Cork County Council Document *Recreation, Amenity and Cultural Policy for South Cork Hinterland Division*. This document recommends an open space provision of 12-18%, reducing with the provision of certain amenities as outlined in Table 1 of the document.

1.5 Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland, 1997

This Government policy sets about encouraging more sustainable urban development by minimising urban sprawl and promoting higher density urban development in conjunction with efficient public transport systems. A key element of the policy is the need to retain and reuse existing buildings and to ensure development allows for sustainable living patterns.

1.6 The Retail Planning Guidelines, 2000 and Revision 2005

The Retail Planning Guidelines, produced by the Department of Environment and Local Government, outline retail planning policy context, detail a retail hierarchy for the State, assess past trends and forward general policy objectives. Included in the guidelines are criteria for assessing planning applications for retail development with emphasis placed on preferred locations.

The relevant elements of the Retail Planning Guidelines have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this Plan.

Appendix 2

2 Blarney

Blarney may be characterised as a satellite town of Cork City with a highly developed world-renowned tourist reputation, which is centered on Blarney Castle and the Woollen Mills. There is a general lack of large scale retailing in the town centre, with the majority of the residents travelling elsewhere for their retailing needs, as newly established retail centres such as Blackpool draw trade from Blarney.

2.1 Regional perspective

Blarney is located within the Blarney River floodplains, which is a constraint on the physical expansion of the town. The river valleys around the town have been designated as proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA's) in order to protect their character

The town is approximately 8 km north of Cork City. Main road access is from the N20 National Primary Route. This results in easy access from Cork City centre. Blarney Station lies approximately 1km north-east of the town on the Mallow to Cork main line. The Blarney-Kilbarry rail corridor area is part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Recent improvements in road infrastructure around the town, such as the improvement of the N20 Cork – Limerick road has increased the accessibility of Blarney to the greater Cork area. Planned improvements to rail infrastructure arising from the Cork Strategic Rail Study and the construction of the inner relief road are likely to lead to further improvements in accessibility.

The adopted SLAP for Blarney sets out the scope for additional development for lands adjoining the rail station and these lands are the subject lands of this Masterplan.

2.2 Population

The 2002 Census has shown that Blarney town had a population of 2,146 persons (approximately 650 households). Preliminary Census 2006 results do not have sufficient detail to provide a comparative figure. The County Council estimates that 65 new houses have been completed during 2000 - 2003. Permission has also been granted for a further 160 units. McCutcheon Mulcahy recently carried out a land availability study, including aerial photography and an examination of the planning register. This indicates that approximately 159 new residential units have been developed in Blarney, and 141 in Tower, since 2002.

The preliminary Census 2006 results indicate that Blarney DED (080, Cork Rural Area) currently has a population of approximately 5,226 persons. This equates to a +6.3% growth in population during the 1996 - 2002 inter censal period. CASP population projections indicate that the population of Blarney and its hinterland will increase by 0.64% by 2020.

The Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin notes that the rate of house building in Cork has dramatically increased in recent years. The resultant change in demography has an impact on the type of housing that is likely to be required in the future as well as the likely future need for community facilities. Growth in population and households has been identified in both the CASP and North and West Cork Strategic Plans. However, the rate of new house building is in excess of growth levels as projected for the County area. The SLAP provides the opportunity to direct growth towards appropriate locations along the rail corridor.

2.3 Landuse

The main elements of Blarney's landuse are as follows:

- A long and linear, mixed-use central area largely comprising services, retailing and public open space.
- The railway site is to the north of the town centre.
- Open space areas along the River Martin and distributed through the suburban area.
- Absence or poor representation of the following uses in the town:
 - Local health services and local government services.
 - Offices/commercial within the town centre and its suburbs
 - Retail – Large convenience and small to large comparison.
 - Retail warehousing.
 - Services – Hotels etc. located in the town centre
 - Industry (including enterprise units) located within the Blarney Business Park.

2.4 Employment

Employment and economic activity in Blarney is focused on the retail and services sectors with an emphasis on tourism. Based on the attraction of Blarney Castle, its grounds and the 'Woollen Mills' complex, tourism is the most important industry within Blarney. The existing Blarney Business Park incorporates the Dairygold agricultural goods depot.

The 2002 Census indicates that employment in Blarney rests at 965 persons with 57 persons unemployed. The preliminary Census 2006 figures for employment are not available at present. The SLAP provides for approximately 4,880 new jobs in Blarney and its hinterland by 2020.

Nationally the decline in unemployment and rise of female participation in the workforce are seen as some of the most significant national economic trends. Within the entire study area a 27% fall in the numbers listed as unemployed in the census took place in conditions where the labour force increased from 2,598 in 1996 to 3,570 in 2002 representing an increase of 37% in the numbers of people over 15 years available for employment.

One important factor driving the increase in the labour force has been the increase in female participation. The numbers of females in the Labour force in Tower increased by 114% from 1996 to 2002 reaching participation rates of 55% in 2002. Increases in Blarney were more modest where with an older age structure fewer females are likely to join the labour force. The impact of this trend on community services has been a sharp increase in child care requirements for pre-school children and after school care. However the different participation rates between Blarney and Tower are likely to have imply that demand for such services are not as strong in Blarney compared with Tower.

In respect to the types of employment in the area there is a marked tendency toward tertiary and service based employment. For the study area as a whole over 68% of persons at work are involved in such industries. In Blarney town figure percentage of persons at work in tertiary and services related industries was 70% and Tower had 72%. The relevance of these figures in respect to the proposed development is that such industries often generate significant amounts of commuting as they tend to be dispersed in locations throughout the Cork city region.

Since 2002 sustained growth in the service based industry in the study region is likely based on national trends and the nature of residential development between 2002 and 2005.

2.5 Local Government

Blarney is among the larger settlements located in the Cork rural area. Blarney is under the administration of Cork County Council.

2.6 Community and Social

The principle providers of sports open space in Blarney are the GAA, the various schools and the pitch and putt facility. There is a need for additional sports provision to serve the village and to provide passive open space and pedestrian walks to enhance the environment for both residents and tourists.

There are three primary schools serving Blarney; Scoil An Chroí Naofa, Scoil Íosagain and Gaelscoil Mhuscraí. There is also a secondary school, Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal. There is one modern primary school in Rathpeacon; Rathpeacon National School.

2.7 Local Health Care

There are currently only limited medical facilities available in Blarney. The Health Service Executive has a health centre in Blarney for community based health and personal social services. The service provided includes public health nursing, medicine and community welfare and community work.

The lands subject to this masterplan provide an opportunity to develop a health care unit for the greater Blarney area.

2.8 Retail

There are strong arguments for the significant expansion of Blarney’s retail provision, including retail warehousing in accordance with the policies of the current Retail Planning Guidelines:

1. National planning policy indicates that towns should aim to be self-sustaining and the Cork Strategic Retail Strategy (CSRS) acknowledges that the Metropolitan Area will see major change in the future.
2. The town is recognised in the CSRS as capable of accommodating additional retail floorspace to serve the tourism market.
3. Blarney is considered a fourth tier town in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines, due to its population base (1,500 to 5,000 population category). Fourth tier centres provide basic convenience shopping, either in small supermarkets or convenience shops and some lower order comparison shopping such as hardware, pharmaceutical products and clothes.
4. The town’s retail sector will need to expand to meet the projected growth in population over the next 11 years. The catchment population of the area may further increase with the recent improvements to the roads infrastructure and the new rail connections planned for Blarney
5. It is considered that significant retail development located at the station site would meet the criteria for the assessment of development outlined in the Guidelines in that:
 - It is likely to support the long-term development of the town centre without undermining its quality or role in the economic or social life of the community.
 - It is not likely to diminish the range of activities and services that the town centre can support.
 - The existing primary retail area is likely to benefit, through increased retail attraction in Blarney.
 - A high standard of access can be achieved.
 - Effective links can be made to the existing town centre to allow for commercial synergy.
6. Access to the Masterplan area is excellent, and will further improve with the delivery of the proposed railway station.

Pending the carrying out of a detailed retail impact assessment for any major retail development proposal, the Masterplan makes provision for the development of retail uses including convenience and comparison shopping and retail warehousing.

It is considered that a strong convenience anchor store can underpin the larger development of the town’s retail function. Accordingly, provision is made in this Masterplan for an anchor store. Additional retail development in smaller retail units is also provided for. The retail catchment area for Blarney is difficult to define as it is heavily influenced by the city and also competes with suburban locations and surrounding ring towns. Taking into account the surrounding villages and rural areas, Blarney may have a significant existing, latent retail catchment population.

2.9 Housing

The Blarney SLAP recognises that a critical mass of population is required in the catchment area of the proposed station in order to realise the benefits of the Suburban Rail Network. The location of new development within the environs of the rail station accords with sustainable policy and is identified in the SLAP.

The Blarney SLAP recognises that the level of house building in Cork has surpassed the growth predictions of both CASP and the North and West Cork Strategic Plan.

With some exceptions, housing development in Blarney has, up to now, focused on detached or semi-detached, suburban style houses. This form of development will need to change to meet market requirements as it is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the number of new smaller households (given current demographic trends in Ireland). This will result in a demand for smaller dwellings (to accommodate 1 to 3 persons) as well as medium sized units (2 to 4 persons).

The railway station site has been identified in the Blarney SLAP as ideally positioned to accommodate a wide range of housing types. In particular, medium and higher density units are considered appropriate as the land adjoins the new Blarney Rail station and is well served by both retail and community facilities. The location of higher densities is also in accordance with the current Residential Density Guidelines and the practice of sustainable development.

Social and affordable housing will also be an important element in the development of the masterplan land. A provision of up to 20% social and affordable housing is required following the implementation of the Cork Planning Authorities Joint Housing Strategy. This Masterplan recognises the provision of a social and affordable housing as an integral part of the land use mix and will accord with the requirements of Cork County Council.

2.10 Business and enterprise

Due to the fact that there is a heavy reliance on the tourism sector for much of Blarney’s economic performance, there is not a great level of activity on the business and enterprise front. One obvious exception is the development of the Blarney Business Park to the north of the town. Blarney Business Park offers the opportunity for businesses and enterprises to locate in a high quality landscaped business park environment with excellent telecommunications connections and excellent road access.

2.11 Townscape

Blarney is a tourist location of world repute. It is noted for Blarney Castle and the Woollen Mills in particular. At the heart of the town is a large square green which has a considerable amenity value at the height of the tourist season when people gather on the green to relax and socialise before or after their visit to the Castle. The square is surrounded by a variety of retail outlets, pubs and restaurants catering primarily for the tourist industry. Outside of the square on the east and north sides, there are a number of suburban residential housing estates, while Blarney castle itself is on the west side. To the south, there is very little development and the area is characterised by agricultural holdings.

2.12 Conservation and archaeology

The Blarney area is rich in archaeological remains of many site-types and dates, ranging from the Bronze Age, to the Post Medieval period. The archaeological site that has had the most enduring influence on this area is Blarney Castle which was built in the 15th century. Since that time it has dominated the area, playing an important part in the development of the hinterland areas around Blarney and in the development of the village itself. The Castle is listed as a National Monument under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.

There are eight structures listed for protection in the Blarney area as indicated in the current County Development Plan:

- Church of the Immaculate Conception (00376)
- Blarney Bridge (off the Village green) (00378)
- The Ornamental Tower (within Blarney Castle grounds) (00379)
- Blarney Castle and Country House (00380)
- Blarney Tower House and Bawn (00382)
- Blarney Woollen Mills (00383)
- The Church of Ireland (00384)
- The Icehouse (within Blarney Castle grounds) (00454)

2.13 Ecology

There are four proposed Natural Heritage Areas designated in the Blarney area as indicated in the current County Development Plan:

- Blarney Bog 001857
- Ardamadame Wood 001799
- Blarney Lake – 001798
- Blarney Castle Woods - 001039

Blarney Bog and Ardamadame Wood are located within 2km of the proposed development.

Blarney Bog is a small area of Reed grass (Phalans anendinnacea) fen, situated in the flat valley floor of the River Blarney. The area is of scientific importance because of the lowland wet grassland, freshwater marsh and fen habitats that it supports. It is located a half km west of Blarney Town and 4.5 km northwest of Cork City. It is bounded on the north side by the N20 and to the south of the river by the fences of the agricultural land abutting the wetland site. This wet area was formed through ponding of the Blarney River by a natural blockage at Gothic bridge to the west of the site (probably a fault in the underlying bedrock).

Ardamadame Wood is located north of Blarney village, 6km north-west of Cork City. It is situated along the banks of the River Martin. The site is bounded in parts by the river, the old Blarney-Mallow road and on the eastern side by an embankment and the N20. This site comprises mainly dry deciduous woodland of Oak (Quercus petraea) and Birch (Betula pubescens) with some scrub woodland and improved agricultural grassland.

It is an objective of the County Development Plan 2003 (ENV2-5) “to maintain the conservation value of all Natural Heritage Areas proposed for designation”.

2.14 Transport and Movement

Blarney is served by a number of roadways with the primary access to the town via the Blarney Interchange from the N20 (Cork to Limerick Road). Blarney is also served by the R617 (Blarney to Tower Road) which connects the relatively large residential areas of Tower and Cloghroe with Blarney. In addition, the town is connected with a number of other local country roads including a busy route connecting the north western side of Cork City with the N20 (Cork to Limerick Road) via Blarney.

Traffic conditions within Blarney can be slow within the town as through traffic and parked vehicles battle for the same road space. However, the recent construction of the northern inner relief road which connects the R617 (Blarney to Tower Road) directly with the Blarney Interchange has improved traffic conditions within the town.

Blarney is a popular destination for tourists and is currently well served with tourist retail facilities which has resulted in a high pedestrian demand within the town throughout the day. In addition, the town is relatively well served by public transport routes with a total of 35 services per day connecting Blarney with the city centre. Blarney village itself could benefit from improved traffic/ parking management to enhance both the vehicular and pedestrian environments within town.

Blarney is a commuter satellite town for Cork City. As such, a high level of trips by private car are generated between Blarney and Cork City for employment, shopping and other daily activities. The layout of the town is predominantly low-density, suburban and this has resulted in high levels of trip generation by private car within the town which is considered to be unsustainable.

Public transport in Blarney is under developed. A single, approximately hourly bus service to and from Cork City serves the town.

Due to the lack of retailing in the town centre, there are a high number of trips by private cars to the city centre and other suburban locations, such as Blackpool, for weekly shopping purposes.

2.15 Infrastructure

2.15.1 Sewage disposal

The existing sewage treatment plant located at Tower is designed for 6,500pe. It treats approximately 8,500pe. An upgrade to the plant to 13,000pe is in hand.

2.15.2 Water supply

The Blarney area is currently served by a 200 millimeter diameter watermain connection served from the reservoir at Knockarcorbally. An upgrade is planned for the reservoir for 500,000 gals, with a 300 millimeter diameter watermain planned.

2.15.3 Other infrastructure

Servicing authorities including ESB, Eircom and Bord Gáis are all present in Blarney and have all indicated that the masterplan lands can be serviced without any major difficulty. There will be a requirement for extension and/or upgrading of their existing networks but no major problems are envisaged.

Appendix 3

Arup Consulting Engineers

Our ref C1373-10/GB/JC
File ref L0023
Date 12 June 2006

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Ms. Eleanor McPartlin
McCutcheon Mulcahy
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Cork



Dear Eleanor

C1373.10 Stoneview Development, Blarney, Co. Cork

The Stoneview Team (Developers and their Design Team) has met with Iarnrod Eireann on five occasions to date regarding the co-ordination of the Stoneview Development with the new IE Train Station and Park and Ride. The key discussions and agreements are summarised below:

- The following IE team is responsible for the new Station and Park and Ride:
 - Tony Gerig Project Manager
 - Robert Miller
 - Peter Muldoon Structures
 - Niall Grogan Property
 - Frank Masterson Property
 - Niall Lynch
 - Matt Green
- The phasing of the Stoneview Development and the New Station/Park and Ride Projects will be co-ordinated in detail, and so that the time at which the station will become essential to the development can be determined. The first planning permission for houses will be submitted in 2006. It is proposed that approximately 200-300 houses per annum will be completed each year.
- Regardless of the status and progress on the Stoneview Project IE plans to delivery the new station based on the following milestones:
 - IE feasibility study to be approved by IE board: Aug 2006.
 - Submit planning application for new station: Dec 2006
 - Start Construction: May 2007
 - Complete Construction: June 2008

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Directors: Jerry Mehigan (Chairman & Managing) Joe Burns Troy Burton Sean Clarke Tim Corcoran Gary Cotter Paul Coughlan Denis Crowley Kevin Dolan Derrick Edge Mike Evans Marina Hand Terry Hill (British) Pat Kenny Liam Luddy Eoghan Lynch Sean Mason Donal McDaid Don Mentzies Declan Monaghan Fergus Monaghan Seamus Mulheir John O'Mahony Niamh O'Sullivan Ian S Roberts

Associate Directors: John Burgess Brian Byrne Gerald Bythell Phelim Devine Alan J Duggan Paul Dunne John Flaherty Peter Flynn Ken Freeman Rita Lyden Dennis McCarthy Eileen McCarthy Andrew Nixon Hugh O'Dwyer Noel O'Hara John O'Sullivan James Rooney Grainne Wolfe

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12 June 2006

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- Iarnrod Eireann has permitted developers to construct infrastructure on their behalf on previous projects. There is a legal and commercial basis for this approach which has been adopted for other developments. This approach would be preferred by IE for the new station at Blarney.
- IE will contract with a single legal entity to deliver the bridges or the station. This entity could be either a JV between two or more developers, or one of the developers acting on behalf of the others. In the case of the latter, the contracting Developer would put in place any additional legal agreements between itself and the other developers necessary for it to act on their behalf. For this project it is proposed that Fleming Construction will be the party contracting with IE, and that it will also construct the bridges and the station.
- The IE feasibility study for the new station and park and ride is in progress. Assuming that the Developer does deliver the station on behalf of IE then IE will take the bridge and station design to 'Stage 3' (pre-tender) after which the design will be handed over to the Developer's design team to complete the detailed (construction) deliverables. The Developer's design team will follow the IE review and approval procedures in the design and construction of the bridges and station.
- The Developer will pay IE for the work which IE will undertake to design, review and approve the bridges and station.
- If it is necessary to transfer any land from a developer or third party to IE to delivery the bridges or station then a separate Land agreement will be required. This land transfer would be freehold.
- In addition to the above, agreements will include provision for the following:
 - Access to and from the station for IE staff, passengers etc.
 - Roads/lands which are to be taken in charge by the local authority
 - Rights of way to and from the station
 - Public services and utilities for the station
 - Ownership of the station by IE.
 - Insurances, bonds etc
- The new Blarney station will be designed as follows:
 - 100m long platforms initially with sufficient space to increase to 180m long (nominal) in the future. Exact length to be confirmed.
 - Preferably with a platform level station and an overbridge (with lifts), however the option of a raised concourse station may be considered if funded by the developer.
 - Preferably unmanned, although this can sometimes be difficult in practice.
 - A closed (i.e. access controlled) station rather than one open to the public.
- The existing station, platform etc will not be incorporated into the new station, as it has been sold and is now a private residence.
- A letter is to be sent by the Developer to IE proposing that the Developer will deliver the Bridges and Station. This letter is to include details of:
 - The Project
 - The parties to the development.
 - The Developer who will contract with IE
 - An outline programme for the design and construction works
- The Developer is to request in writing that a letter be issued by IE granting permission to the Developer submit the planning application for the infrastructure (i.e. the two road bridges) over IE lands (i.e. the railway).

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12 June 2006

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- IE will not deliver or operate the park and ride. These can be carried out either by the Developer or by Cork County Council. IE has included a scheme design for the Park and Ride in its feasibility study.

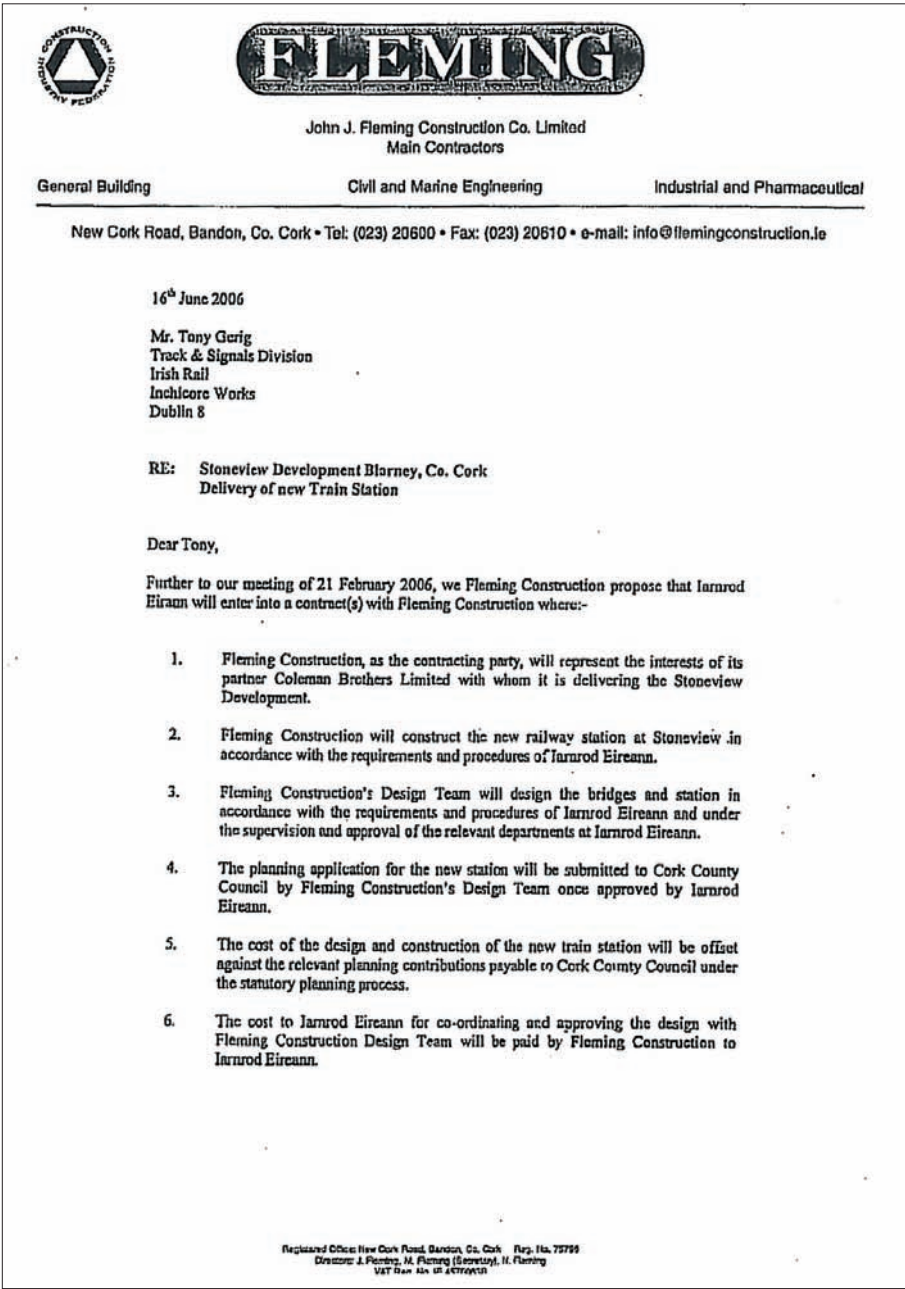
Yours sincerely
for
Arup Consulting Engineers

Gerald Bythell

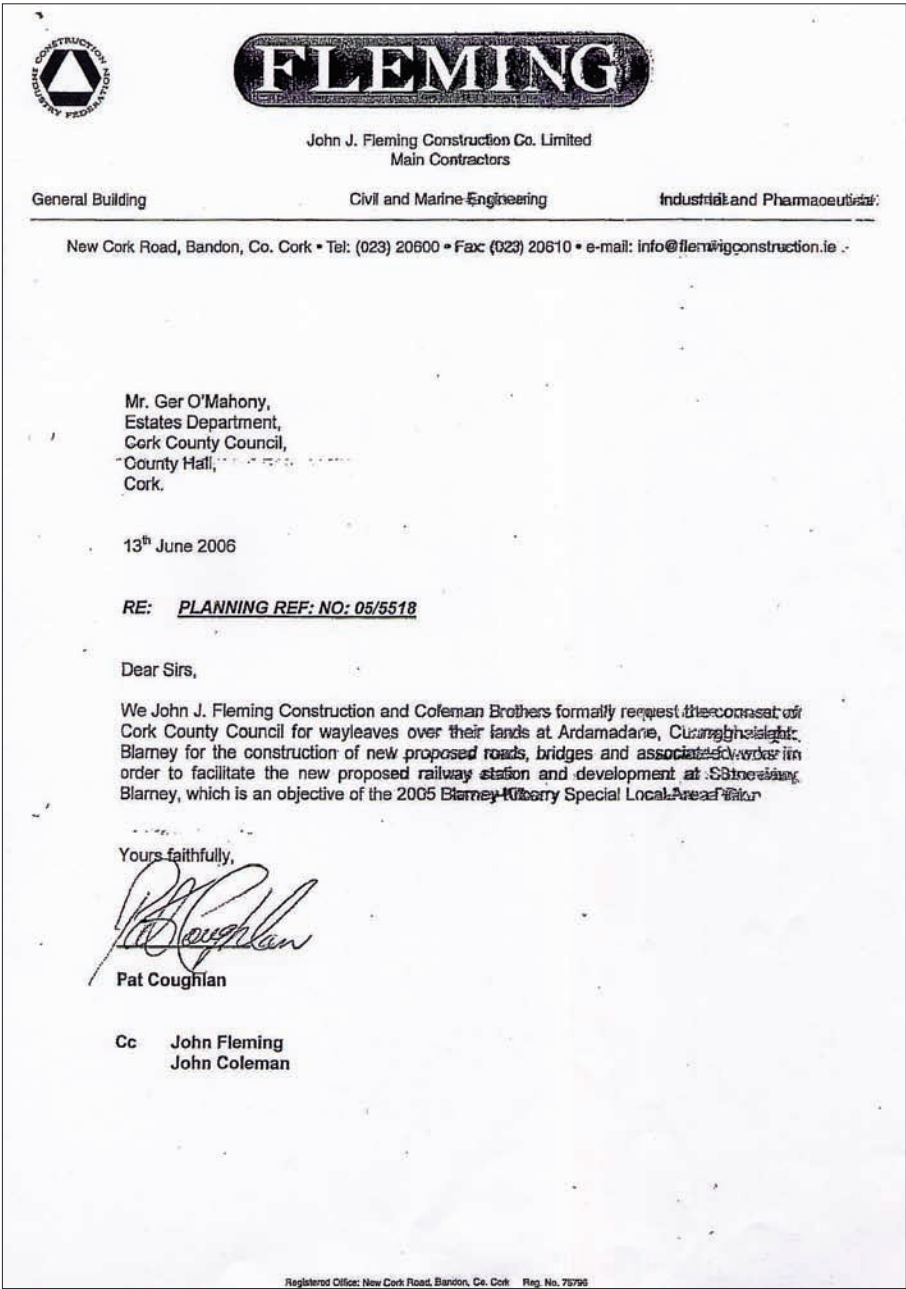
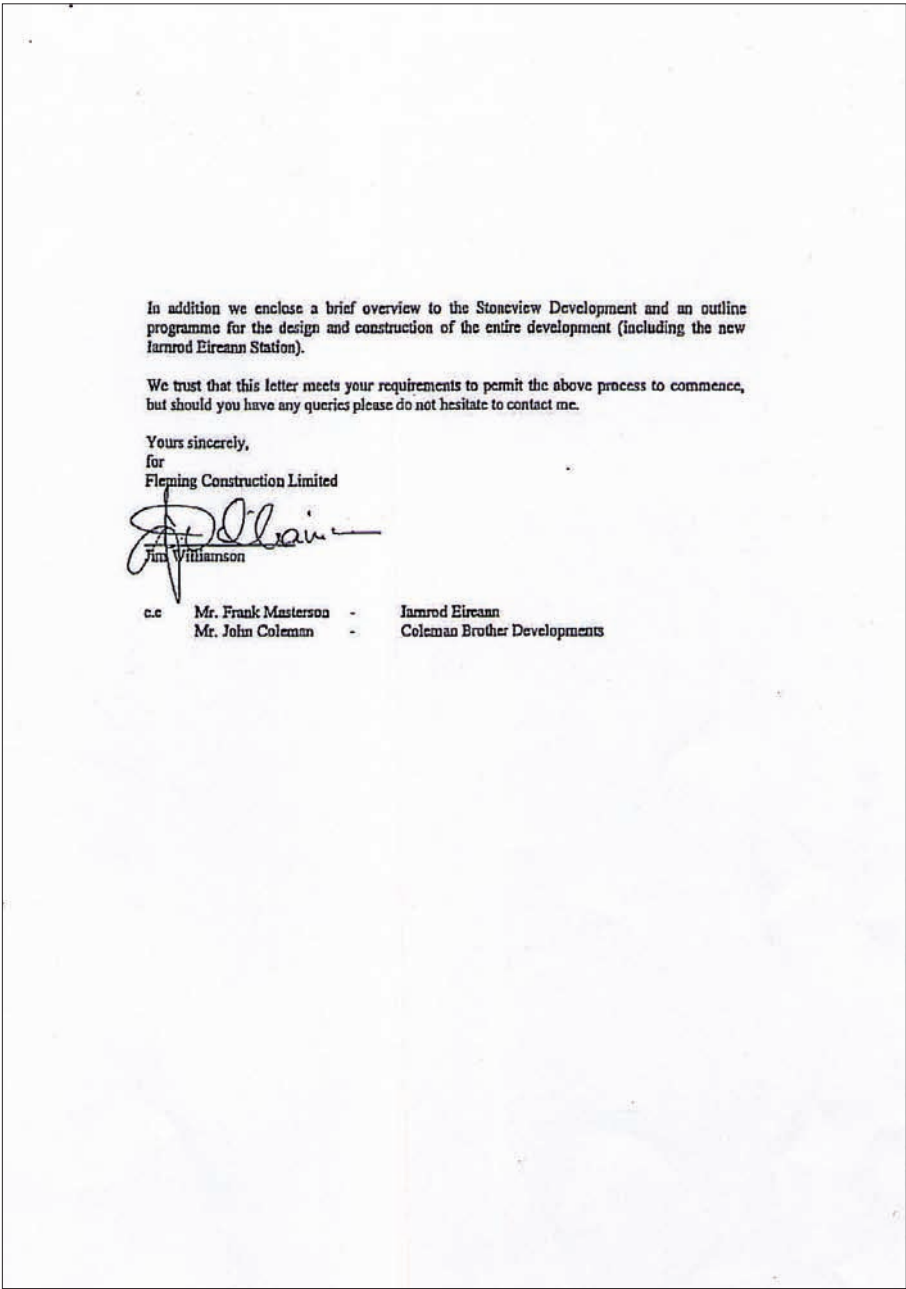
Copy to: Jim Williamson
Denis Crowley

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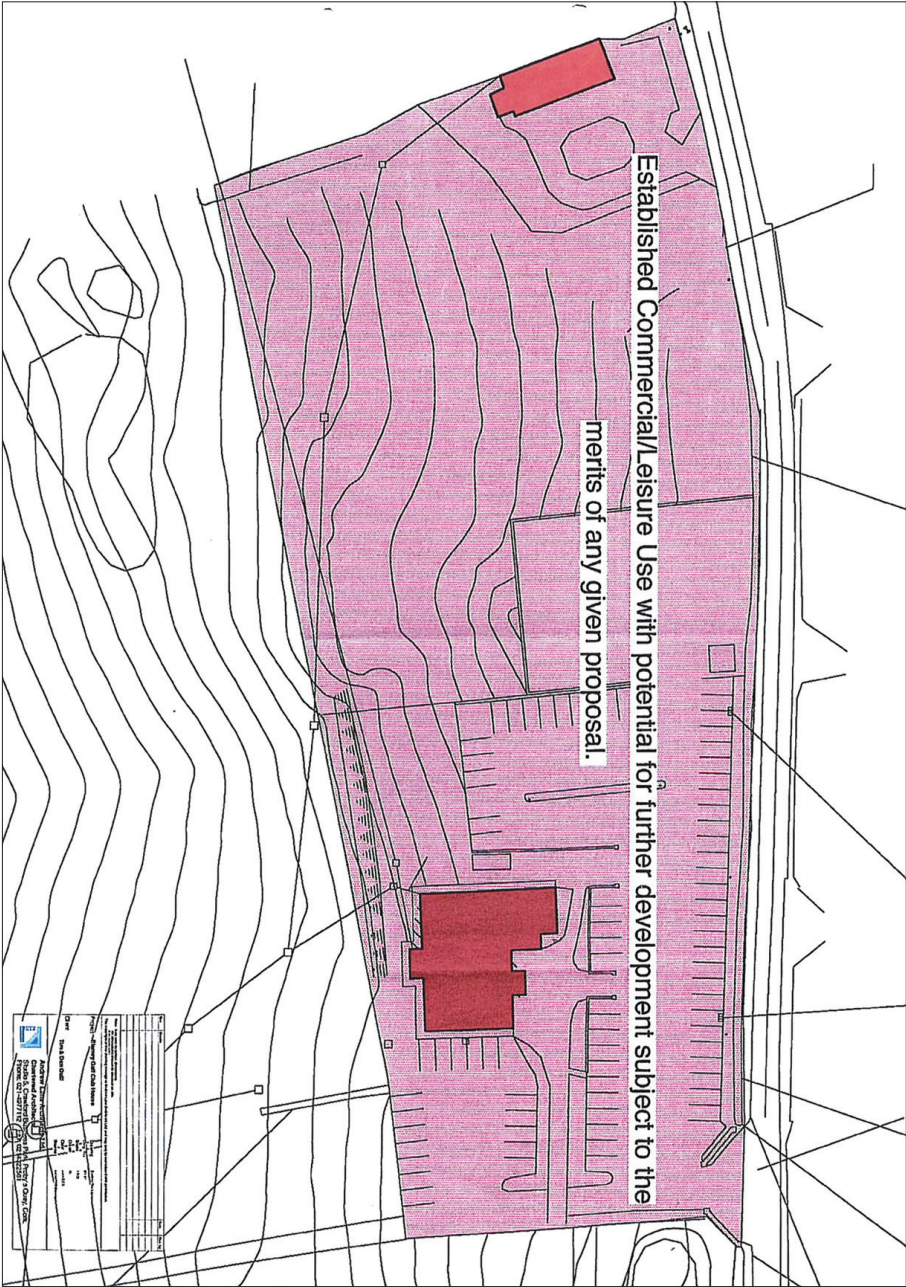
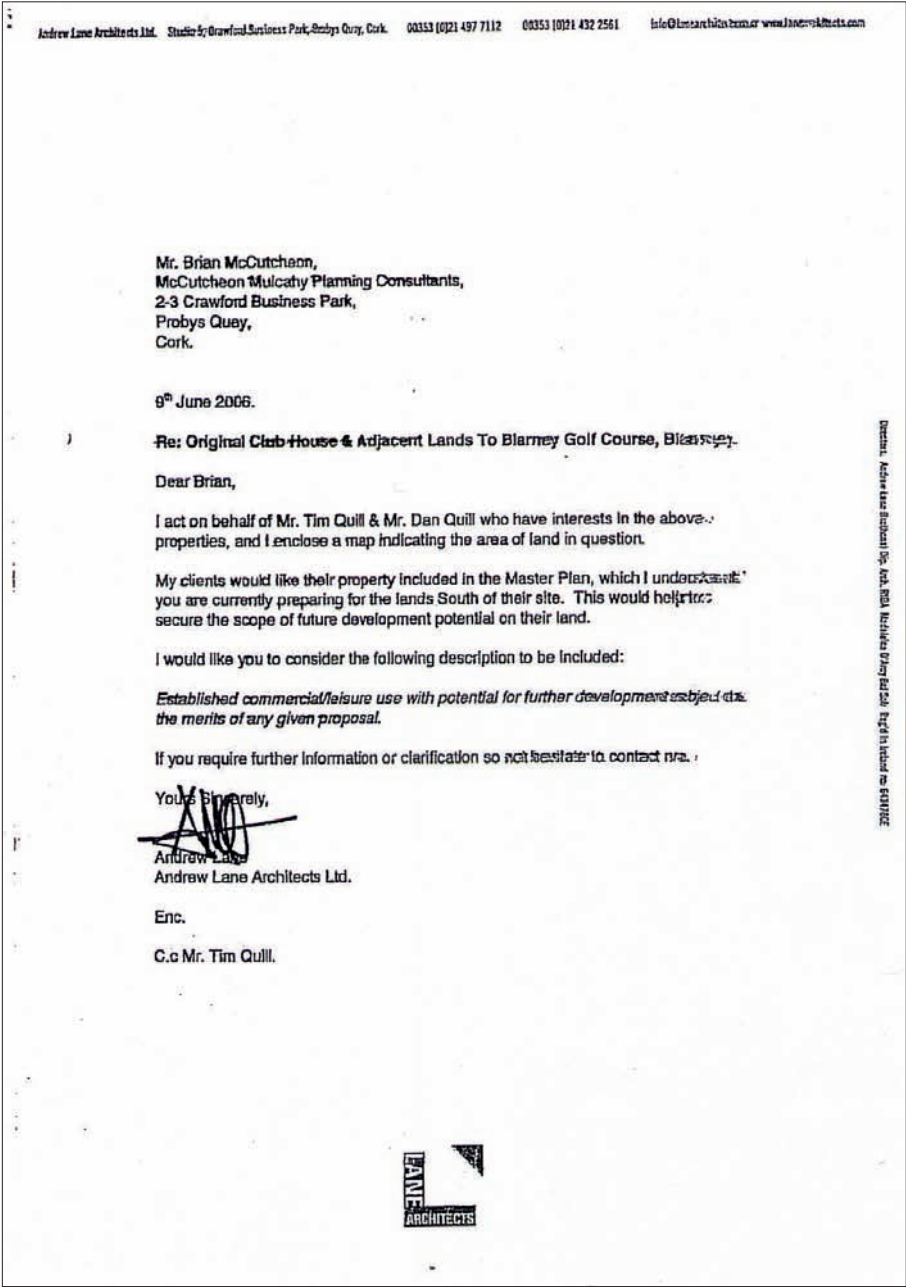
Letter from ARUP to McCutcheon Mulcahy of 12th June 2006 detailing meetings with Iarnrod Eireann



Letter from Fleming Construction Company Ltd to Iarnrod Eireann dated 16th June 2006 regarding the design and construction of bridges and the new railway station.



Letter from Fleming Construction Company Ltd to Cork County Council of 13th June 2006



Letter from Lane Architects to McCutcheon Mulcahy of 08th June 2006 regarding the Quill lands.