1 MUNSTER AVE, GALWAY

New-Build Infill Social Housing including Refurbishment of Existing Terraced House

DESIGN STATEMENT

April 2025

Prepared by
TAKA Architects
33-34 Vicar Street, Dublin 8

for
Galway City Council

1 MUNSTER AVE

CLIENT	Galway City Council
DESIGN TEAM	
Architect	TAKA Architects (TAKA)
Quantity Surveyors	Austin Reddy & Company (ARCO)
Structural & Civil Engineering	CORA Consulting Engineers (CORA)
M&E Engineers	Glenn Nunan Consulting Engineers (GNCE)
Fire & Access Consultant	Ryan Associates (RA)
PSDP	AA Safety Consultants (AA)
Ecologist Consulatant	Jennings O'Donovan (JOD)

Reuben St, Dublin by TAKA Architects

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Munster Ave, Galway

INTRODUCTION

This report is the formal submission by the appointed Design Team presenting a defined housing proposal for planning approval by Galway City Council and the Chief Executive.

The proposal is based on best practice design, current building and safety standards and is consistent with 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities', 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas', 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments' and the Galway City Development Plan for the area.

The Planning Section of Galway City Council have been consulted with the proposal, and have raised comments which have been integrated into the design development.

BRIEF

The project involves the provision of new social housing on an infill corner site in the west end of Galway city centre. The redevelopment of the site is facilitated through the demolition of a single-storey side extension to a terraced house - which will also be refurbished as part of the scheme.

The objective of the brief is to encourage increased density on urban infill sites, through the delivery of projects of high architectural and design quality which would contribute to urban regeneration and make a significant contribution to urban character.

HOUSING

The proposal will deliver 3no. new-build one-bedroom dwellings, with a ground floor accessible unit. An existing terraced house will be refurbished to provide 1no. two-bedroom social housing dwelling.

PUBLIC REALM

The existing corner site of the proposal currently forms a gap in the streetscape of Munster Ave. A proposed new 3-storey development would balance the relationship between the existing 2-storey terraced housing and the neighbouring 4-storey development, establishing an important junction. The passive surveillance of the new housing will provide a safer and more approachable entrance to the nearby Fr. Burke Park.

The enlarged public realm area proposed as part of the development will greatly improve the public footpath and access for pedestrians along Munster Ave.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Architectural render of proposal for 1 Munster Ave

ARCHITECTURE

Galway city centre is characterised by dense, small-scale development; where public & private, commercial & residential life intertwine. This corner site, on the edge of the city centre, presents an opportunity for the public realm to be enlivened by the domestic life of its residents. The proposal for No.1 Munster Ave creates a lively street corner for the enjoyment of both residents and passers-by.

No.1 Munster Ave is a 1940's end-of-terrace house located on a corner site. The house has been extended to the rear and side, with a bedroom extension occupying much of the side garden.

The proposal involves the splitting of the plot – separating the side garden from the existing house – and constructing a 3-storey new-build on the site of the demolished bedroom extension. With No.1 Munster Ave provided with new boundary walls to enclose the rear garden, the site of the new-build is roughly triangular in shape and located on a prominent corner.

No.1 Munster Ave will be refurbished to provide a 2-bed house with significant energy upgrades, including new external windows and doors, internal dry-lining, and new roof insulation. As the house forms part of a terrace, the external character of the house will be retained in keeping with its neighbours.

The new-build proposal will provide 3no. 1-bed apartments, accessed via an enclosed external staircase on the corner of the site. Each apartment is identical, with an accessible dwelling provided at ground floor. The volume of the new structure follows the triangular geometry of the site, allowing for increased access zones to each unit and ensuring the associated private open space provides passive surveillance to the entrance to Fr. Burke Park.

Further detail on the architectural design of the scheme will be given later in this report. Refer to Appendix A1 for architectural drawings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CIVIL & STRUCTURAL

In relation to the proposed development at Munster Avenue, Galway, CORA Consulting Engineers have completed the initial design works to the project and can confirm the following:

1. Initial structural scheme details have been provided to the project quantity surveyor for inclusion in the costings.
2. CCTV survey and geotechnical site investigation works have been approved and will be undertaken in the coming weeks. This information will be used to finalise the structural and civil design works.
3. The site has been identified as being within Flood Zone A. Given the “minor development” nature of the works, a supporting flood risk assessment has been developed in accordance with “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities – November 2009” and Galway City Council Development Plan – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as prepared by JBA Consulting, the inclusion of flood mitigation measures including demountable flood barriers along with passive anti-flooding devices have been included for on the outflow sewer connections.
4. There is a proposal from Galway City Council to have the existing 3” cast iron water main to the north and east of the existing building to be removed.
5. Separate foul and mains water connections have been allowed for with the existing house catered for separately to the new apartment units.
6. Confirmation of Feasibility has been received from Uisce Eireann noting that sufficient capacity exists in the public network to cater for the proposed development.
7. Existing and proposed drainage arrangement drawings have been issued.
8. A supporting engineering services report has been issued.
9. A site specific flood risk assessment has been issued justifying the development of “Highly Vulnerable” development in Flood Zone A.

Refer to Appendix A2 for the Engineering Report and Appendix A3 for the Flood Risk Assessment Report

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Cricket Club (in a floodplain) by TAKA Architects (in collaboration with CORA)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL

The MEP Services Concept Report (Appendix A4) provides an overview of the proposed MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing) services for the social housing project on Munster Avenue in Galway.

The project involves the provision of three new build one-bedroom units and the refurbishment of an existing two-storey house.

The objective of the report is to outline the mechanical and electrical design strategies that will maximize the Building Energy Rating (BER) while ensuring robust, durable, and maintainable systems.

The proposed MEP services will comply with all relevant standards and codes of practice, including the Building Regulations and the requirements of the Building Control (Amendment) Regulations. Each unit will be certified as compliant by the designers and installers, and the entire development will be certified as fully compliant upon completion.

This report also provides specific details about the heating, ventilation, hot and cold-water services, soils and wastes services, electrical services, fire alarm and detection system, communication and information services, and security services for both the apartments and the house.

St. Patrick's Park Public Realm by Taka Architects

1 BRIEF

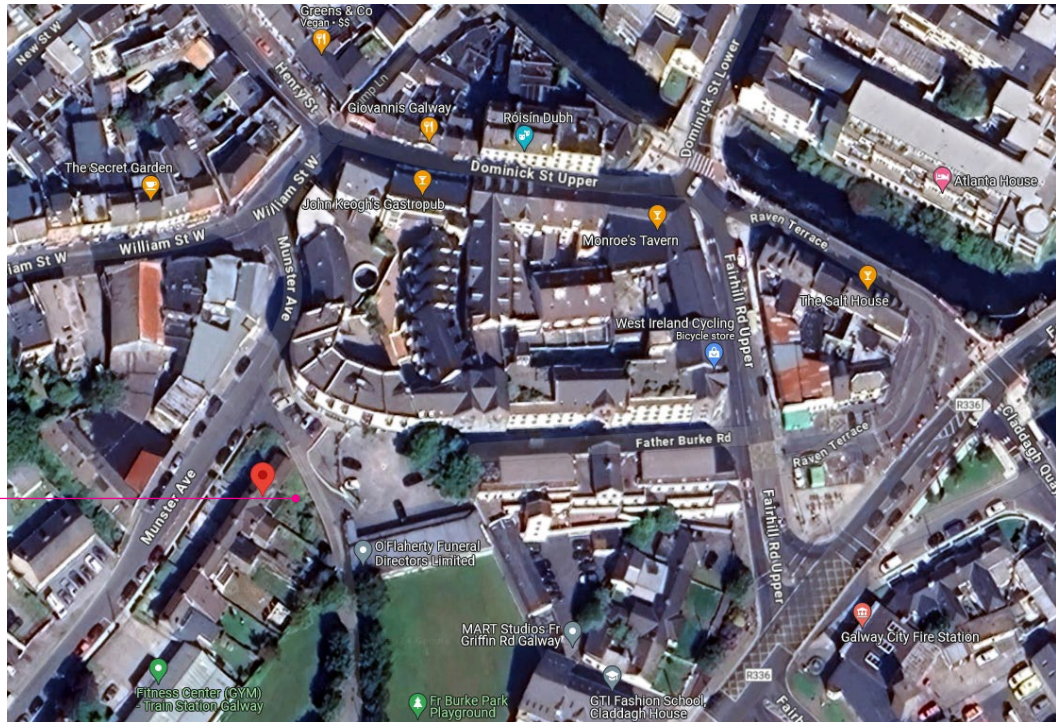
The site is located in the west end of Galway City Centre. The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) suggests density standards within centrally located sites of 30-40no.+ dwelling per hectare. There is also potential for schemes of particularly high architectural and design quality to suggest densities higher than this range.

More recent (Jan 2024) guidance is provided in table 3.2 of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities which suggests density standards for 'City - Urban Neighbourhoods' in Galway of 50-200 dwelling per hectare.

Galway City Development Plan states that in the CC zone adjoining Fr. Burke Park, the maximum plot ratio will be 1.6:1. Consideration is permitted for plot ratios in excess of this where such proposals would contribute to urban regeneration or make a significant contribution to urban character. In particular, for infill development in an existing terrace or street, a high plot ratio will be considered in order to obtain greater height for important urban design reasons.

The overall site covers 0.04 ha of residentially zoned land. This proposal increases the density of the site at No.1 Munster Ave from 25no. dwellings per hectare to 105no. dwellings per hectare. The plot ratio increases from 0.24 to 0.76:1.

The design of No.1 Munster Ave has been through a rigorous review process to ensure it is of high architectural quality, and to ensure that it will make a significant contribution to the urban character of Galway.



Aerial view of 1 Munster Ave

2 SITE CONTEXT

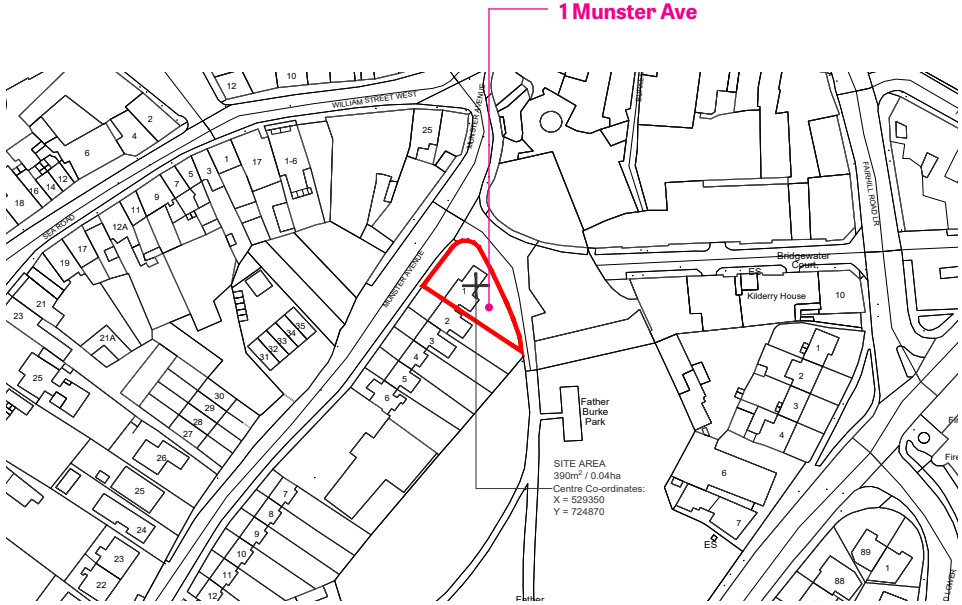
2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

Munster Ave is located in the west end of Galway, at the edge of the city centre. The road is a mix of residential, commercial, and cultural uses. Fr Burke Park is immediately to the south of Munster Ave, with the Claddagh Basin to the west, and the river to the north and west.

No.1 Munster Ave sits at the end of a terrace of 2-storey 1940's houses. It is a corner site at the junction of Munster Ave and the entrance road to Fr Burke Park. Immediately adjacent to the site is a mixed use 4-storey building. A Funeral Director with associated car park is to the side and rear of the site. Immediately opposite is the 'Blue Teapot' theatre.

Site boundary walls are a mixture of blockwork, mass concrete, and roughcast render with concrete cappings. Low pedestrian gates exist to the front and side. There is no off-street parking associated with the house.

Refer to the following section for a description of the existing house.



Site Location Map

View of 1 Munster Ave

2 SITE CONTEXT

2.2 EXISTING HOUSE

No.1 Munster Ave is a 2-storey end-of-terrace house with rear (2-storey) and side (1-storey) extensions, and front and rear gardens. The house is accessed via a sloped ramp from the front pedestrian gate on Munster Ave. Side access is provided to the rear garden via a low pedestrian gate.

External finishes are largely unpainted render, concrete roof tiles, PVC double glazed windows, and PVC rainwater goods. At ground floor, there are 2no. small living rooms with a bedroom and kitchen housed in rear and side extensions. The first floor is accessed via a steep staircase with 2no. bedrooms and a small WC off the staircase landing. Internally, the structure is in fair condition but in very poor decorative order.

An asbestos survey has identified a number of asbestos-containing materials will require specialist removal at the commencement of construction.

View of side extension (to be demolished)

Rear view of existing house

2 SITE CONTEXT

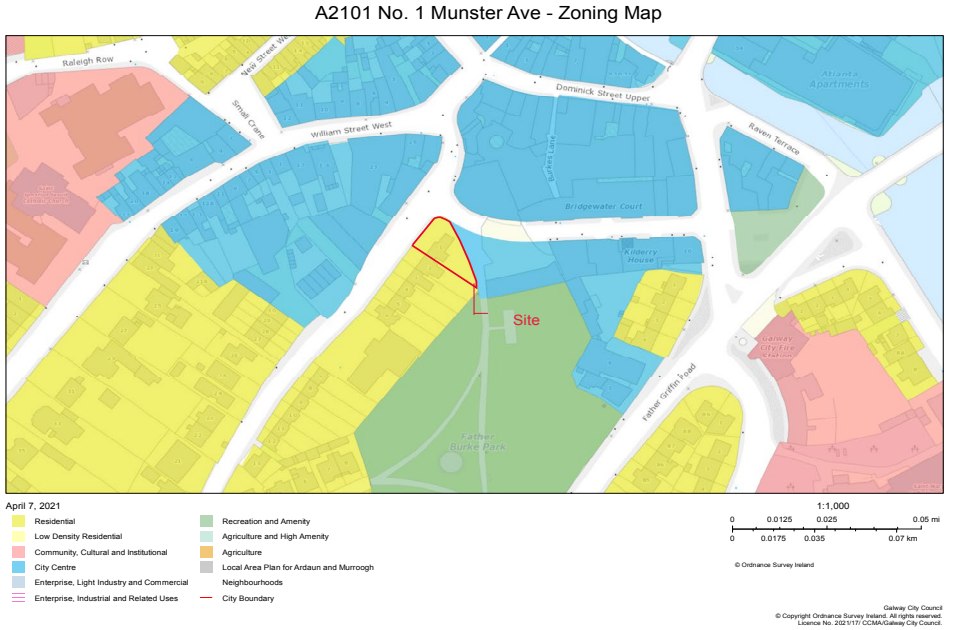
2.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

The site is zoned R- residential. It is bounded by the City zoning to the West, North and east. To the South are the RA – Residential and Amenity zoned lands of the Fr. Burke Park.

2.4 HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

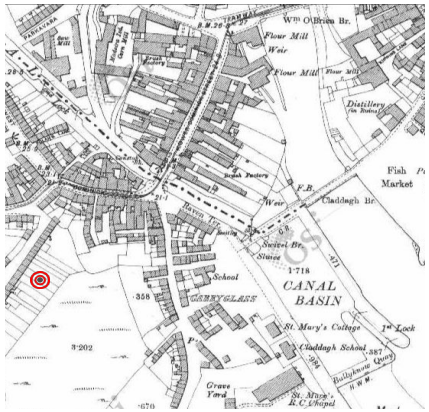
A desktop historical mapping search (see below - 1 Munster Ave marked in red) has been carried out. The 6in 1st edition map (1829-1834) shows 'Munster Lane' which appears to be on or adjacent to the current route of Munster Ave, with housing located on both north and south sides.

On the 25in map (1897-1913) a terrace of housing appears on the south side of with long narrrow plots. By the 6in last edition map (1830's-1930's), the plots for the housing on Munster Ave have been shortened and Fr Burke Park has been established to the south of Munster Avenue.



Zoning Map, 1 Munster Ave

6in 1st Edition Map (1829-1834)



25in Map (1897-1913)

6in Last Edition Map (1830's-1930's)

2 SITE CONTEXT

2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Jennings O'Donovan & Partners were appointed to carry out environmental assessments of the site, including Appropriate Assessment Screening.

The Bat Roost Assessment concluded that no evidence of bats was discovered within the proposal site. The Outline Invasive Species Management Plan shows two non-native species within the proposed project site (Buddleia & Himalayan Honeysuckle) for which removal recommendations were made.

The AA screening concluded that "there are not likely to be any significant effects on any European Site as a result of the construction or operation of the Project at Munster Avenue, Co. Galway. Therefore, an Appropriate Assessment is not required."

The EIA screening concluded that "the proposed development will not cause direct or indirect impacts on any Natura 2000 sites, and that an Appropriate Assessment is not required."

2.6 SITE OWNERSHIP

The entire site is in the possession of Galway City Council. Existing site restrictions include:

1. A shared foul drain to the rear of the property serving neighbouring houses on Munster Ave, which will be retained with new manholes constructed.
2. An existing 3" cast iron water main to the north and east of the existing building which is proposed to be removed.

There are no other known easements, rights of way, or restrictions to be taken into account during design development.

2.7 SITE SURVEYS

A topographical site survey was conducted with the associated levels, contours etc. outlined on the accompanying architectural drawings.

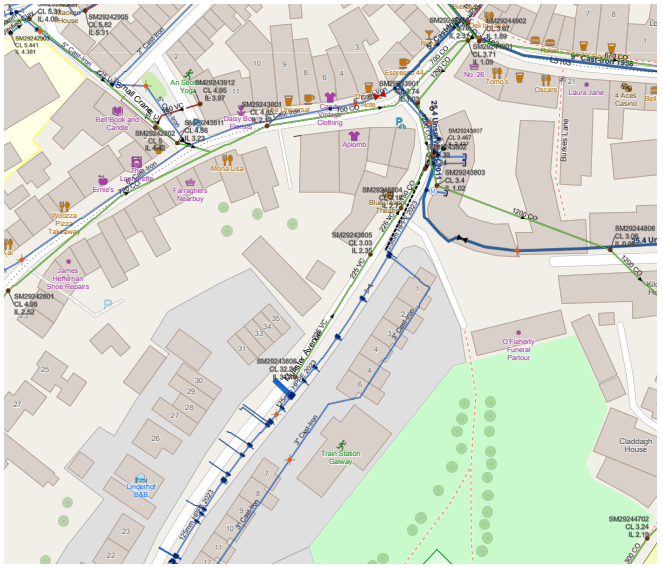
A Ground Penetrating Radar survey has been carried out to identify the location of underground services, accompanied by a CCTV survey of the shared foul drainage to the rear of the property.

2.8 GROUND INVESTIGATIONS

Ground investigations have taken place and informed the design development of the proposed site as outlined in the accompanying engineer's reports.

2.9 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

A Flood Risk Assessment was carried out as outlined in the accompanying engineer's reports. Flood protection measures will be included in the proposed development.



Irish Water Map, 1 Munster Ave

2.10 SITE SERVICES

Existing services are located in Munster Ave. Existing connections will be reused where possible. New connections will be made to provide separate supplies to the existing house and new-build development.

3 SITE STRATEGY

3.1 DESIGN STRATEGY

As stated previously, Galway city centre is characterised by dense, small-scale development with a visible, vibrant community. The corner site on the edge of the city centre presents an opportunity for the public realm to be enlivened by the domestic life of its residents. The proposal for No.1 Munster Ave creates a lively street corner for the enjoyment of both residents and passers-by.

The site of the existing house at No.1 Munster Ave will be split in two – retaining a rear garden for No.1, and producing a roughly triangular-shaped plot for the new-build apartments. The challenge of this potentially awkward geometry has been overcome through careful siting of the new housing volume within the plot.

The new apartments are aligned with the existing terraced housing. An enclosed external staircase is located on the corner and is rotated in plan to run parallel with the road leading to Fr Burke Park. Located to the east of the staircase, looking towards Fr Burke Park, are enclosed external balconies. To the north, between the staircase and the apartments, are enlarged access areas with views over Munster Ave.

The 3-storey housing will mediate between the 4-storey mixed-use development to the north-east and the 2-storey terraced housing to the south-west. The volume of the apartments is stepped forward from the terraced housing, in recognition of the prominent corner site and to mark the end of the terrace.

The proposed development has been designed in line with 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007'. The under-utilised corner site was selected for development as infill housing and is intended to act as an exemplar of a high-quality design approach to small infill developments.

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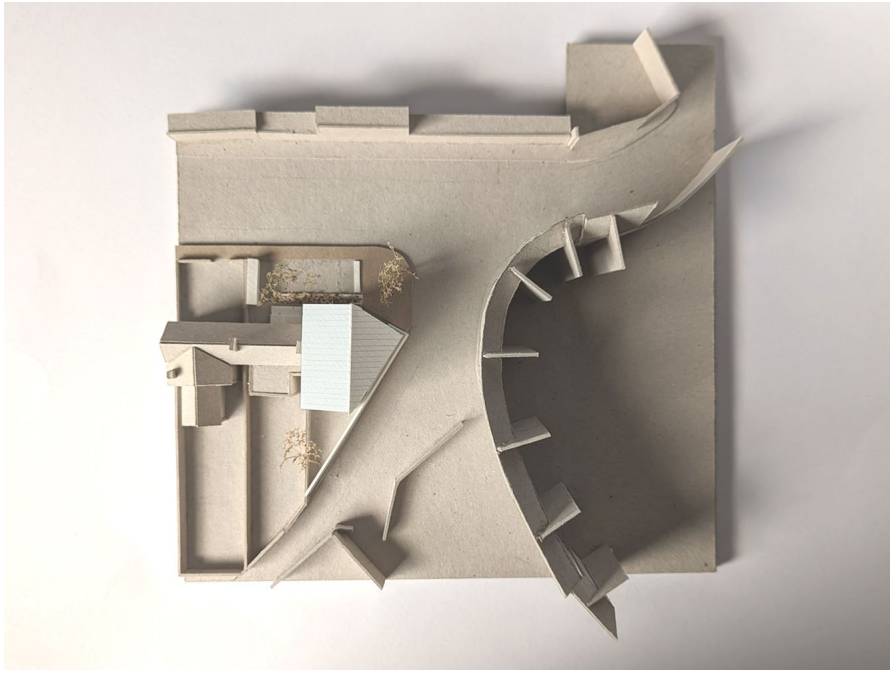
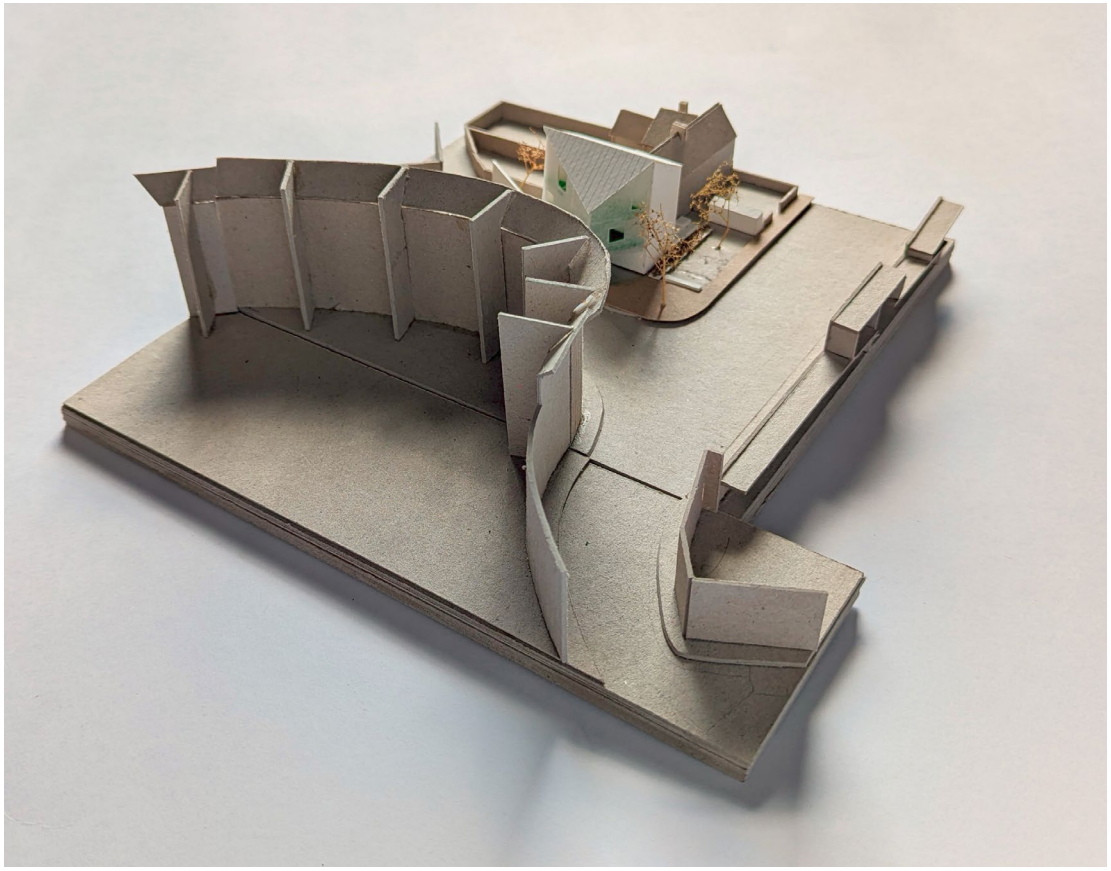
Aerial view of proposal for 1 Munster Ave

3 SITE STRATEGY





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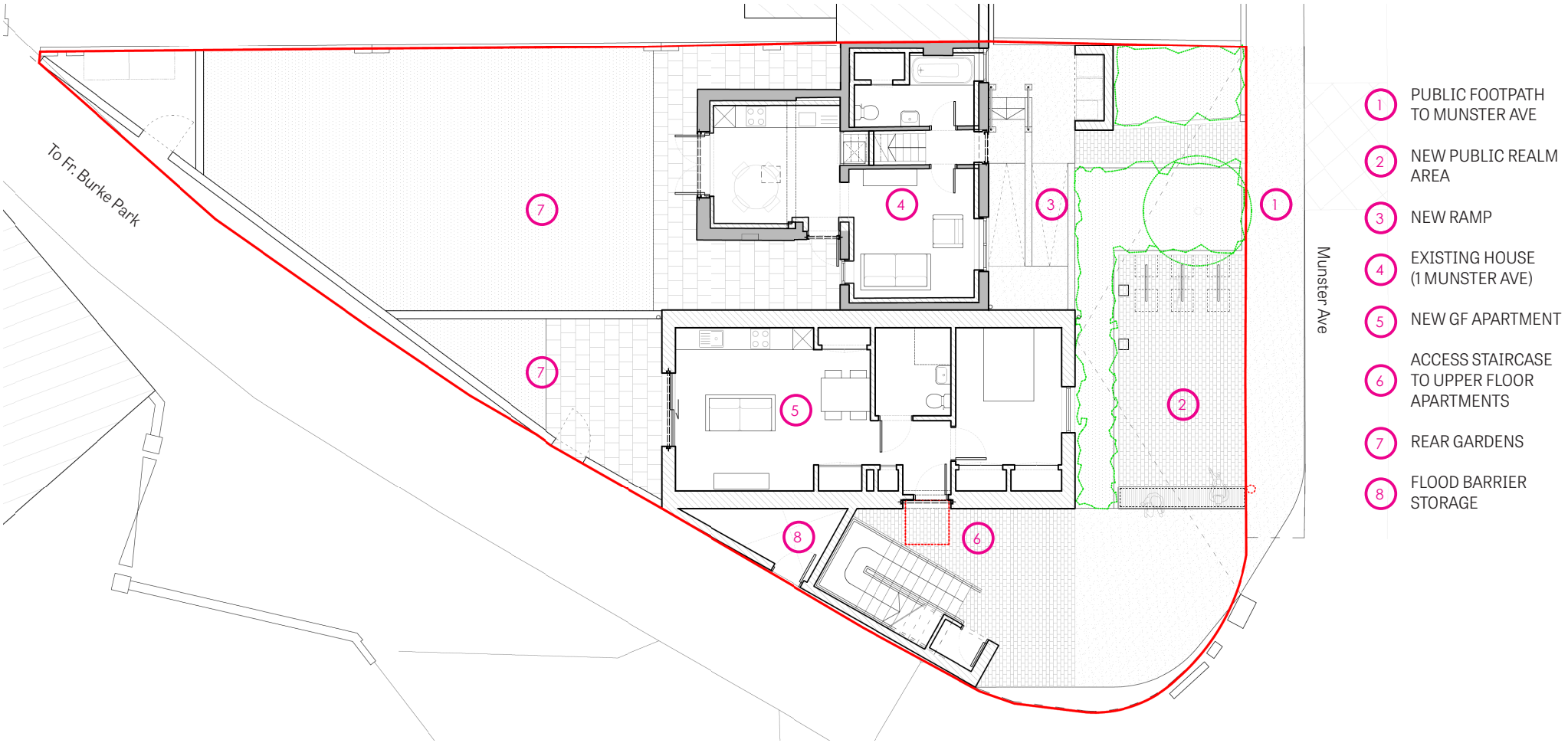
Design development model

3 SITE STRATEGY

Site Plan of Proposal (not to scale)



1. PUBLIC FOOTPATH TO MUNSTER AVE
2. NEW PUBLIC REALM AREA
3. NEW RAMP
4. EXISTING HOUSE (1 MUNSTER AVE)
5. NEW GF APARTMENT
6. ACCESS STAIRCASE TO UPPER FLOOR APARTMENTS
7. REAR GARDENS
8. FLOOD BARRIER STORAGE

3 SITE STRATEGY

3.2 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

A new public realm area is created on the site of No.1 Munster Ave's former front garden, allowing additional space for pedestrians at this tight junction. The public realm will contain planting (forming a privacy buffer to the residential units), a public bench, bike stands, and bin storage for both the new-build and the refurbished house.

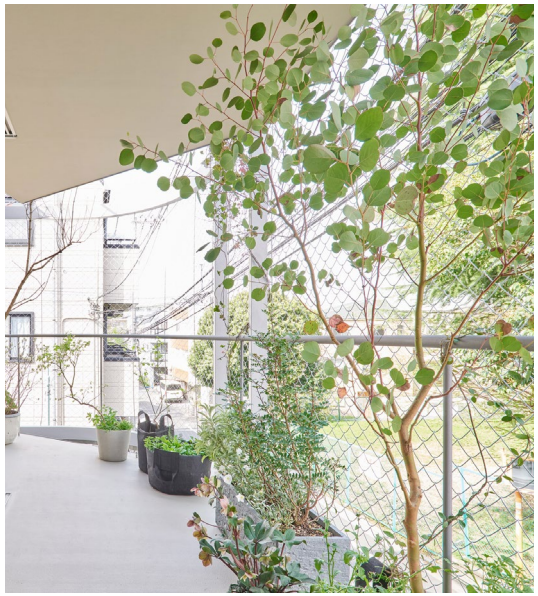
Ground floor units are provided with rear gardens containing paving and a provision for soft planting. The 'greening' of the stairwell is encouraged through the design of recessed steel planters in access areas and balconies.

Ground surfaces will be permeable in compliance with SuDS requirements. Surface water from roofs is attenuated under the public realm area. Refer to the Engineers Report in Appendix A2 for further details on the site SuDS strategy.

Concrete Bench

Bike Stands

Permeable Paving



'Greening' of staircase mesh

Planting as privacy screen

Small-scale public space

4 DESIGN

4.1 NEW BUILD APARTMENTS

The purpose of the development is to create a vibrant street corner for the enjoyment of both residents and the public. The design of the apartments has been carefully developed to provide high-quality housing which adds to the character and atmosphere of the west end of Galway.

The new-build apartments are accessed via an open but enclosed stairwell which accommodates both circulation and private amenity spaces. The aim of which is to activate the corner and provide passive surveillance of the surrounding public realm.

The infill development provides 3no. 1-bed dwellings, with a level access unit at ground floor. Living areas face south-east over Fr. Burke Park, with bedrooms facing Munster Ave. Upper floor apartments are accessed via private entries off the main stairwell. At ground floor, the communal entrance leads directly to the new public space on Munster Ave.

The window to the second floor bedroom of the new build apartments, on the facade facing the existing house (seen in the image on the next page), will have an opaque film applied to its glazing to head height.

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View of new corner at 1 Munster Ave

4 DESIGN

4.2 EXISTING HOUSE

After the demolition of the existing side extension, No.1 Munster Ave will be refurbished to update the internal layout and to upgrade energy efficiency. At ground floor, the smaller living room will be converted into a bathroom. The kitchen will be rearranged to give a better relationship to the rear garden. All fixtures and fittings will be replaced including new internal doors.

Energy upgrades will include: internal dry-lining, new roof insulation, new external windows, and new heating supplied by an air-source heat pump.

Externally, the asbestos-based roof tiles to the kitchen extension will be replaced with concrete tiles. Rainwater goods will be replaced. Existing unpainted render will be retained and cleaned down to maintain the existing character of the house

1 Munster Ave (refurbished) with new corner development

4 DESIGN

4.3 MATERIALS & FINISHES

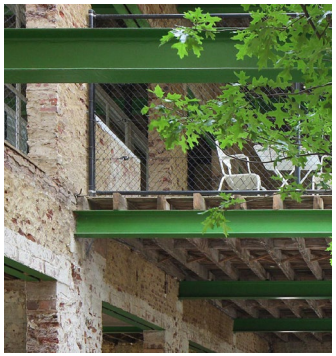
The external material palette has been selected to enhance the existing character of Munster Ave, and to ensure durability and robustness. Contemporary detailing and the use of colour adds visual interest.

While the apartment block is covered in the characteristic unpainted sand/cement render of Munster Ave, it is offset by the innovative use of a high-quality stainless steel mesh enclosure to the stairwell. The visually lightweight mesh allows views both to and from the external circulation and amenity spaces, while screening the more private domestic areas of the apartments. A brightly painted steel supporting structure contrasts with the grey render and stainless steel mesh. Integrated recessed planters may encourage residents to make use of the mesh as a trellis for planting.

The roof finish will be standing seam aluminum, with recessed gutters located at roof edges for cleaning access. External windows and doors are high quality alu-clad with excellent energy performance.

Windows have sloped projectings sills and will be powder-coated aluminium. The external frames may be coloured to match the steel frame of the staircase enclosure – echoing the brightly painted windows and doors of Galway.

Brightly painted window frames

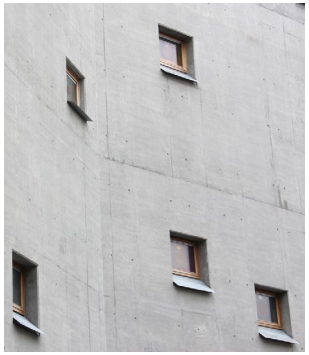


Painted steel structure

Stainless steel mesh

Staircase enclosed in mesh screening

Aluminium roofing



Sloped aluminium windows sills

Unpainted sand/cement render

4 DESIGN

4.4 BOUNDARY TREATMENT

Existing boundary walls are a mixture of weathered concrete and fairfaced blockwork. Walls to the side of the development will be replaced with concrete block, rendered on the outside face. The existing boundary wall to the front will be removed to facilitate the new public space. A new garden wall will be provided to the rear, between No.1 Munster Ave and the neighbouring ground floor apartment.

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Side elevation with new boundary wall

5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN STANDARDS

5.1 DENSITY & PLOT RATIO

The site is located in the west end of Galway City Centre. The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) suggests density standards within centrally located sites of 30-40no.+ dwelling per hectare. There is also potential for schemes of particularly high architectural and design quality to suggest densities higher than this range.

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The overall site covers 0.04 ha of residentially zoned land. This proposal increases the density of the site at No.1 Munster Ave from 25no. dwellings per hectare to 105no. dwellings per hectare. The plot ratio increases from 0.24 to 0.76:1.

5.2 SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

The development consists of 3no. 1-bed apartments and 1no. 2-bed house.

	UNIT TYPE	NO.	GIFA
Apartment	1bed/2pers	3	48sqm
House	2bed/3pers	1	61.5sqm

5.3 PRIVATE AMENITY SPACE

The existing house at No.1 Munster Ave retains c.100sqm of rear garden in the proposed scheme.

In the new-build apartments, the ground floor unit has a rear garden of c.20sqm. Upper floor apartments are provided with 5sqm balconies, in line with the minimum guidelines stated in the Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standard for New Apartments.

5.4 CAR AND CYCLE PROVISIONS

No.1 Munster Ave is located in the city centre and has good links to public transport. Therefore, no off-street parking is provided within the development. 3no. bicycle parking racks are located in the new public space immediately adjacent.

Section 11.3.4 (d) of the Galway City Dvelopment Plan notes that 'on smaller developments, car-parking should also be discouraged'

6 STATUTORY

6.1 CONSULTATION WITH GCC PLANNING

The proposed scheme has been reviewed at several intervals during design development with Galway City Council Planning Department. The planning department's feedback and comments have been intergrated into the proposals.

6.2 FIRE SAFETY CERTIFICATE (FSC) & DISABILITY ACCESS CERTIFICATES (DAC)

Ryan Associates Consulting Engineers have carried out fire and accessibility reviews of the preliminary design, with feedback incorporated into the proposed layouts developed for planning application purposes.

The statutory applications (DAC and FSC) have been submitted. The FSC was granted 15.07.2024 and the DAC was granted 19.08.2024, both with nil conditions.

7 CONCLUSION

The proposal seeks to address and meet some of the critical need for social housing in the Galway City area. The proposed development is fully consistent with the policies, objectives and standards of the Galway City Development Plan 2023- 2029.

The overall form and layout responds to the existing nature and context of the site and satisfactorily integrates into its urban landscape. Furthermore, the density proposed is appropriate for this city centre location and has regard to the pattern of permitted and adjoining development.

The high-quality design of the scheme will act as an exemplar to encourage the careful design of urban infill sites, allowing small-scale densification of the urban core.