



Wicklow Town - Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

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Submission to the Draft Wicklow Town – Rathnew Local Area Plan

Lands at Dunbar Lower, Wicklow Town

Undertaken by:

O'Connor Whelan Limited

On behalf of:

Seedam Limited

September 2023

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1.0 Introduction

On behalf of Seedam Limited, 53a Rathgar Avenue, Dublin 6, Dublin, D06 K5K2, O'Connor Whelan Limited 222-224 Harold's Cross Road, Dublin 6W, wishes to make a submission to the Pre-Draft Wicklow Town – Rathnew Local Area Plan.

This submission relates to lands at Dunbar Lower, Wicklow Town.

The lands are currently zoned Strategic Land Bank in the existing Wicklow Town-Rathnew Development Plan 2013-2019.

Whilst we are aware this stage of the pre-draft review of the Local Area Plan does not specifically rezone lands, this submission seeks to highlight the merits of having these lands zoned Residential. The owners intend to development housing on the site and a hotel, the latter of which Wicklow Town does not have, which is poor in terms of a county capital and an aspiring tourism town.

We suggest that the lands are zoned Residential in the Draft Plan on the basis of:

- A review of compliance with the national and regional strategies as to the best locations for future residential development.
- A review of compliance with the Wicklow County Council Development Plan.
- A review of compliance with the Wicklow County Council Issues Paper in relation to the pre-draft Plan.
- Highlighting the merits as to why the lands at Dubar Lower should be considered the most feasible for future residential and hotel development.

2.0 Site Description

The lands in question have an area of ca. 12.49 hectares. They are located immediately south of the built-up area of Wicklow Town with residential development or zoned lands in the existing Development Plan to the north, east and west.

The lands are L-shaped and mainly run in an east to west direction, with part of the lands running north to south, as shown in figures 1 and 2 below.

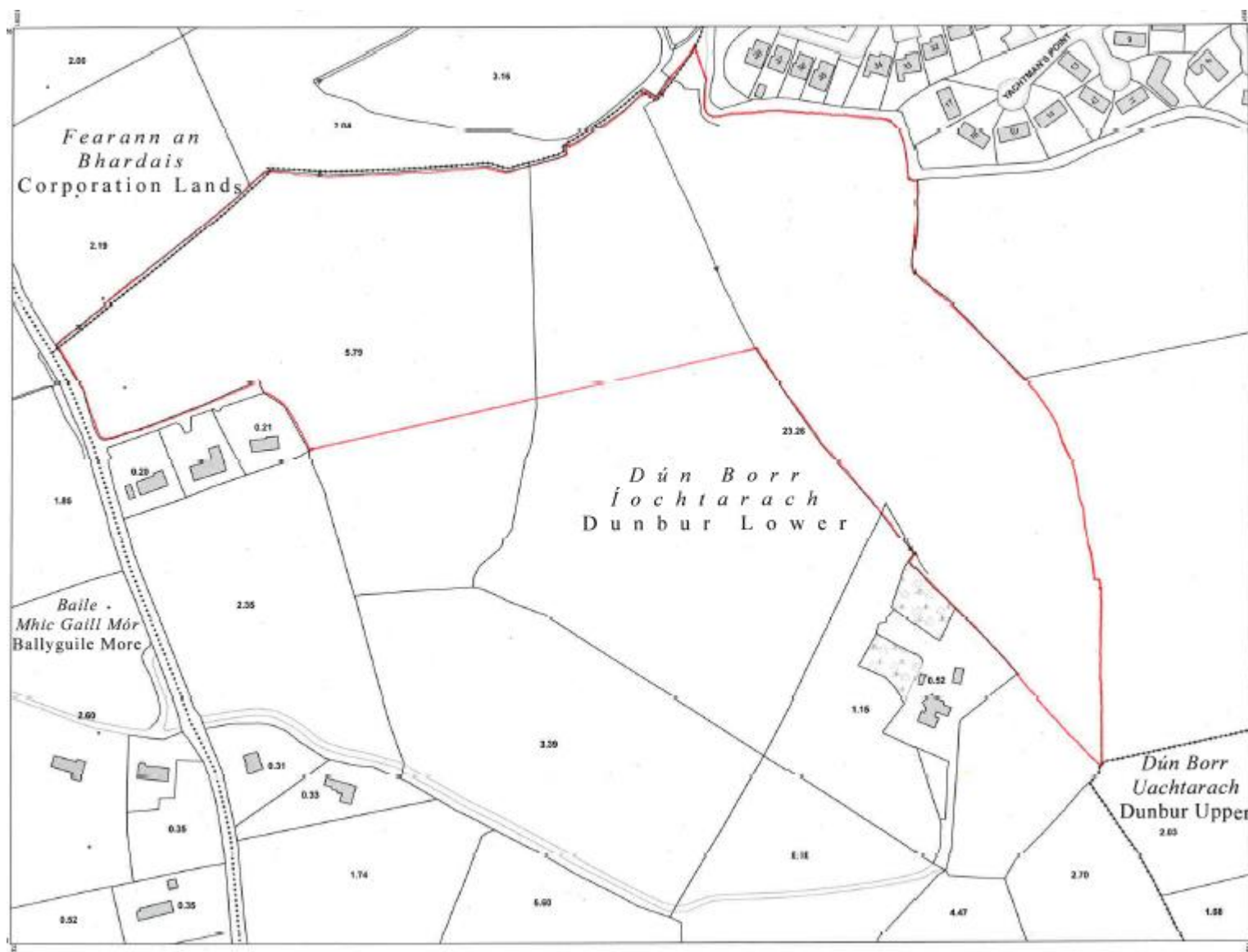


Figure 1: Site Location



Figure 2: Aerial photo of site

2.0 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development to the year 2040. As stated:

“By 2040 there will be roughly an extra one million people living in our country. This population growth will require hundreds of thousands of new jobs and new homes. If we fail to plan for this growth and for the demands it will place on our built and natural environment, as well as on our social and economic fabric, then we will certainly fail in our responsibility to future generations of Irish men and Irish women.”

One of the strategic outcomes in the NDF is compact growth:

“Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.”

The NDF states that the location of housing has taken on a dispersed and fragmented character which has led to people living further away from their jobs and often being at a sizeable remove from important services such as education and healthcare.

National Policy Objective 33 states:

“Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.”

This submission demonstrates that residential provision at this location, will comply with the vision and objectives out in the NDF.

3.0 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the Region up to 2031.

The Vision is:

“To create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all.”

The RSES contains 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes, the following of which are directly relevant:

“2. Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration

Promote the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint and to drive the delivery of quality housing and employment choice for the Region’s citizens. (NSO 1)

6. Integrated Transport and Land Use

Promote best use of Transport Infrastructure, existing and planned, and promote sustainable and active modes of travel to ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning. (NSO 2, 6, 8,9)”

The provision of residential on this site will comply with the objectives of the RSES.

4.0 Wicklow County Development Plan 2023-2029

Strategic Vision

The Wicklow County Development Plan (CDP) sets out the strategic development of the county for the plan period and beyond.

One of the “strategic county outcomes” is relevant:

“SCO1 Sustainable Settlement Patterns & Compact Growth

The delivery of compact growth in all towns and villages by capitalising on the potential for infill and brownfield development, moving away from a reliance on greenfield development and creating places that encourage active lifestyles is essential for the successful delivery of the development plan strategy.”

Core Strategy

The core strategy suggests a county population growth for the county as follows:

2026	2031
155,000 - 157,500	160,500 – 164,000
158,144 – 161,269	170,000 – 173,500

The target for housing completion in Q3 2022 - Q2 2028 is 8,467.

Wicklow -Rathnew is identified as a key town in the core region, defined as:

“Large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres.”

It is the only such town identified as such in the Development Plan and is secondary only to Bray in the overall settlement hierarchy.

Key Towns are identified for growth rates of c. 35% including Wicklow - Rathnew as towns suitable for higher levels of growth.

The population target for Q2 of 2028 is 18,515. This translates to a housing growth of 1,267 units.

The core strategy also states the following in relation to Wicklow town:

“Wicklow is also recognised as the County town, providing important administrative and local government functions. The town is strategically located on the M/N11 and south-eastern rail corridor, at the centre point of the coastal area of the County. It is an economically active town that provides higher order services and facilities for the residents of the town and its catchment. Settlements within the catchment of Wicklow Town include Rathnew, Ashford, Glenealy, Roundwood, Rathdrum and a significant rural population. Within the settlement, Rathnew has a distinct identity and functions as a local service centre for its local community.

Wicklow-Rathnew is a major employment hub, with a strong employment base attracting inflows of workers from around the County. The largest sectors in the settlement are commerce, manufacturing and education / health / public administration. There are a number of active business and industrial parks, with potential for expansion, as well as a supply of undeveloped zoned employment land available for growth. Wicklow Town plays a significant role in the provision of administrative services including the Department of Social Protection branch office, delivering the functions of local government from County Buildings for Wicklow County Council and for the Wicklow Municipal District from the Town Hall building.....”

5.0 Pre-Draft Issues Paper

The Issues Paper states that Wicklow – Rathnew will need ca. 1,500 houses between now and 2031. 30% of new homes need to be in the built-up areas of the towns, meaning that 70% will be outside the built-up areas.

The Issues Paper states that:

“Wicklow County Council are required to identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land in the best location to meet this housing demand target.”

The paper also asks the question:

“Where do we deliver our new housing without contributing to urban sprawl?”

The lands at Dubar Lower are ideally located in terms of providing new housing given its location immediately adjoining the built-up area of Wicklow Town and will not contribute to urban sprawl.

We also suggest that a hotel on the site will make Wicklow town more attractive to tourists and highlight the advantages of the town in terms of its location and the fact that it is a county capital town.

6.0 Merits of the Lands at Dunbar Lower

The zoning of the lands at Dunbar Lower has a number of advantages that will comply with the proper planning and sustainable development of Wicklow Town. These include:

- The lands comply with the policies and objectives outlined in the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region, and the Wicklow County Council Development Plan.
- The lands are already zoned Strategic Land Bank in the existing Wicklow Town-Rathnew Development Plan 2013-2019 (see figure 3 below).
- The lands are located immediately adjoining the built-up area of Wicklow Town, effectively wedged between existing zoned lands, and therefore will not contribute to urban sprawl.
- The lands are fully serviced by development to the north (drainage, water, electricity etc.). There are no restrictions in terms of ransom strips as the developer of the lands to the north own the lands at Dunbar Lower, and therefore they can be developed immediately. The landowners have a pre-connection agreement with Irish Water to service these lands. In terms of water a new holding tank was inserted adjacent to the Greenhill Road to accommodate, present and future development. The Seapoint development to the north was constructed to facilitate the development of these lands. All the services accommodate these lands along with wayleaves to same. Seapoint is taken in charge by Wicklow County Council.
- Access to the site is readily available from the road immediately to the west, where we understand Wicklow County Council have plans to upgrade and add footpaths, meaning these lands are even more developable.
- There is no flood risk attached to the lands.

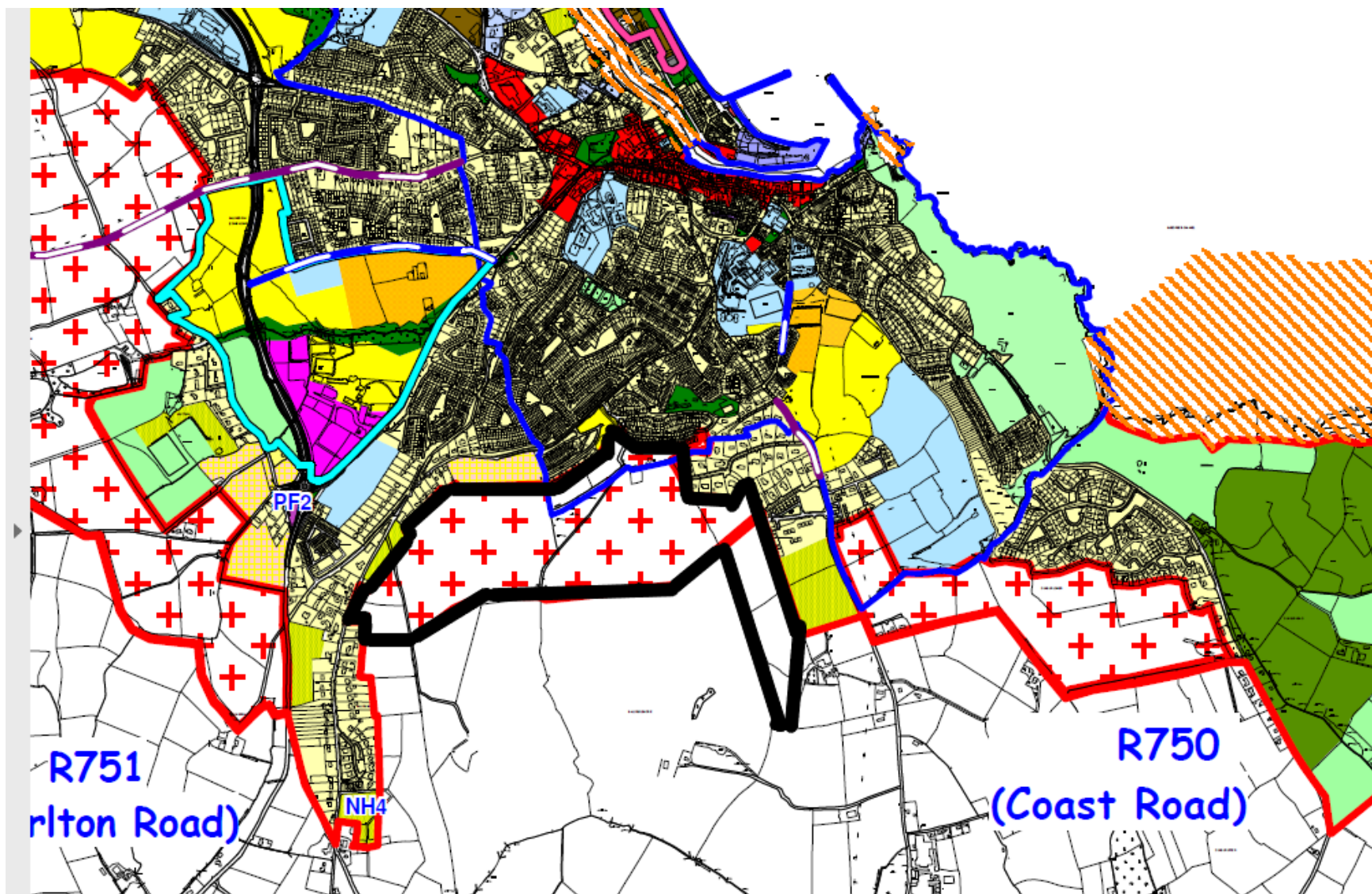


Figure 3: Site Location in the context of the existing Wicklow Town-Rathnew Development Plan 2013-2019 (approximate boundaries outlined in black)

7.0 Conclusions

This submission relates to lands with an area of ca. 12.49 ha at Dunbar Lower, Wicklow Town, submitted on behalf of Seedam Limited, 53a Rathgar Avenue, Dublin 6, Dublin, D06 K5K2.

The lands are zoned Strategic Land Bank in the existing Wicklow Town-Rathnew Development Plan 2013-2019.

We suggest that the lands are zoned Residential in the Draft Plan on the basis of:

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Signed



Alan Whelan
O'Connor Whelan