

Supplemental Information – NPWS Derogation Licence Application

Development Description

A housing development of 9no. x New Social Housing Units has been proposed by Tipperary County Council (TCC) on a 0.09 hectare site at the junction of Grove Street and The Crescent, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary. The proposed development will involve the demolition of a terrace of 3no. x existing derelict two-storey buildings on Grove Street and the construction of a terrace of 3no. x Two Bedroom, two-storey houses in their place. Behind these terrace houses the existing vegetation from the gardens shall be cleared for 6 No. One Bedroom apartments, in two separate blocks, facing The Crescent.

Site Description and Location

The site is located on the junction of Grove St. (R421) and The Crescent (N62) just north of the Main St. in Roscrea. The site currently has a terrace of 3 No. two storey buildings facing onto Grove St. with a large garden area to the rear. These buildings were primarily residential, with one ground floor serving as a commercial unit. The buildings have not been in use for a number of years and the rear garden area is overgrown. The site is zoned Town Centre.



Figure 1: Location of proposed development

Context

The site is located in the middle of Roscrea town and will provide new units in close proximity to all amenities in the centre of the town.

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Traffic & Access

The new development has been designed as a small, streetscape, in-fill development on a derelict site in the heart of the town that is intended for elderly residents who want to be within walking distance of the all the facilities in the town. Because of the nature of the development, on a prominent derelict in-fill site, no new access will be formed onto the existing network. Two parking spaces will be provided to the front of the 3 house terrace on Grove St. while the remainder will be provided as in-line parking off The Crescent with one space for disability access.

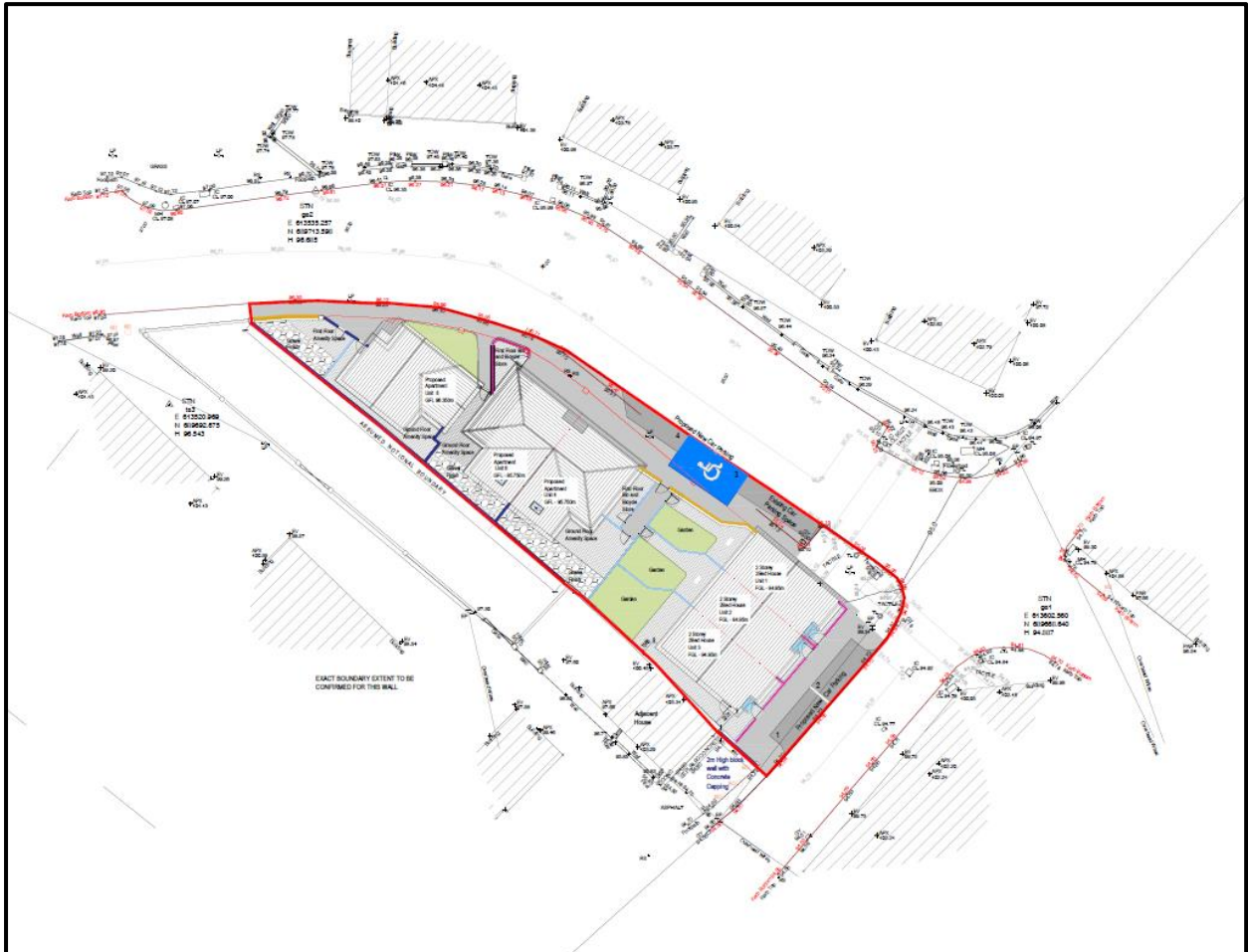


Figure 2: Proposed development

Housing Mix

The proposed development is in keeping with the surrounding land use which is largely residential, just off the main commercial centre of the town.

A range of different unit types has been incorporated to suit a range of dwellers, which we consider is in keeping with town centre living. The two-bedroom units are suitable for couple occupants or perhaps a small family and one-bedroom units for single or couple occupants, who are likely to be elderly. All designs are also in keeping with the minimum standards for multiple unit residential development in the Tipperary Development Plan.

The essence of the design of this development is that it will rejuvenate the existing streetscape on Grove St. through the replacement of 3 run down buildings with modern units while the 6 one bedroom units will restore the streetscape on a prominent corner of The Crescent and eliminate an existing derelict gap site.

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Response to NPWS Report Checklist on Application:

11.1 Explanation as to why the derogation licence sought is the only available option for works and no suitable alternative exists as per Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations

Structural Concerns in the interest of Public Safety

The existing 3no. x derelict terrace houses have not been in use for a long time and have fallen into extreme disrepair. The roof structure is open to the elements and is starting to collapse due to rot of the timber roof structure.

Tipperary County Council (TCC) approached the owners of these buildings to purchase the site from them in the interest of public safety and in order to propose a new town centre development to rejuvenate this site which is located at such a prominent traffic light junction between R421 (main street) and the N62 (main Thurles to Birr/Athlone Road). TCC purchased the site circa 2020.

As can be seen in the attached 'Appendix A – Existing Condition of Building', the structure is in a state of extreme disrepair. Structural surveys were carried out and the only feasible option for this site is to demolish it and rebuild a new structure offset further back from the public road/footpath. Refurbishment works to the existing structure were considered but due to the extent of dereliction, it was not deemed a feasible option due to the extent of damage to the existing.



Photo 1: Front of building (adjacent to public footpath/road, roof structure sagging, roof tiles slipping. Gutters removed previously as they were collapsing onto public footpath below). The proposed new row of terrace houses will be narrower and offset further back from the public roadway.



Figure 3: Proposed new Elevations of 3no.x terrace townhouses to replace existing derelict building

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Photo 2: The existing houses are currently joined on the corner with a neighbouring property. This property is privately owned and occupied. This corner shows evidence of cracking, both building appear to be pulling away from each other. The more dilapidated the existing derelict structure becomes will have a direct affect on the private house. The proposed new development separates the new terrace houses from the private house. The new houses will also be set back in line with the front of this private house. This will provide a safer footpath, better visibility at the traffic lit junction and better stability for the private house.

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Photo 3: Rear Elevation of Buildings (roof collapsing, roof tiles slipping, access blocked to prevent falling objects, structure generally unstable throughout)



Photos 4: View from Ground Floor looking up to first floor (first floor joists rotting/collapsed, roof structure rotting/collapsed, unsafe to access first floor)

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Photo 5: Rear room (roof structure collapsed, rubbish and vegetation collecting in area)



Photo 6: Rear room (roof structure and first floor structure previously collapsed, rear overhanging wall precarious and at high risk of collapse)

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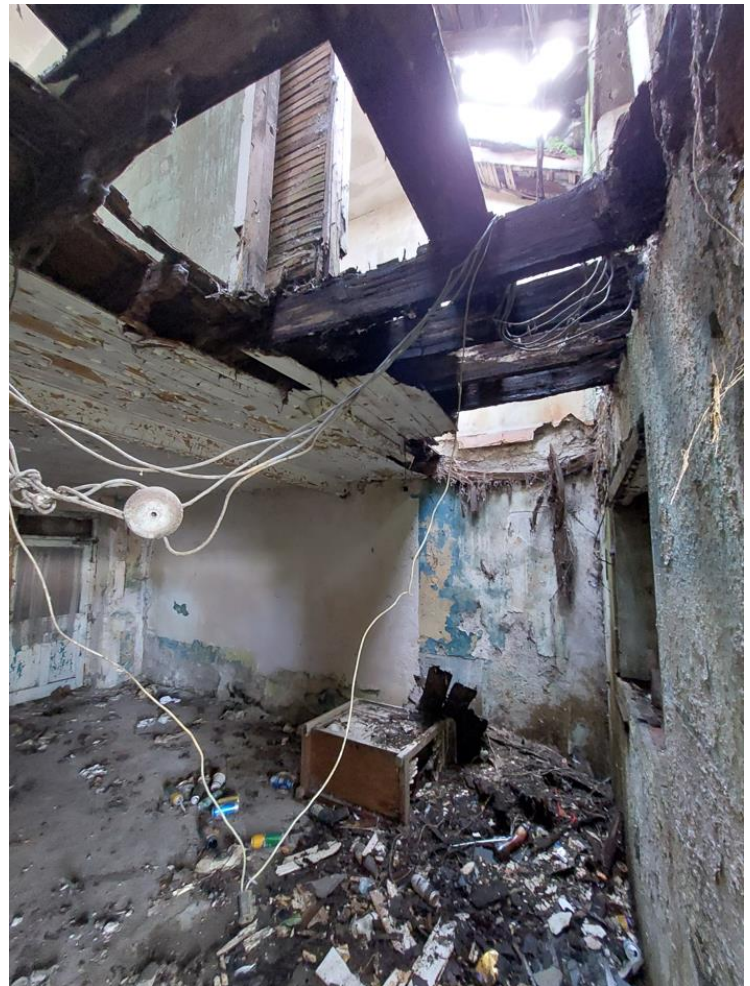


Photo 7: Ground floor looking up (first floor structure rotting/collapsed, roof structure rotting/collapsed, unsafe to access first floor)

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Anti-social behaviour:

There have confirmed reports and evidence of ongoing anti-social behaviour at this site which has contributed to the negative appearance and concern of local residents in the area. See Appendix A for further details.

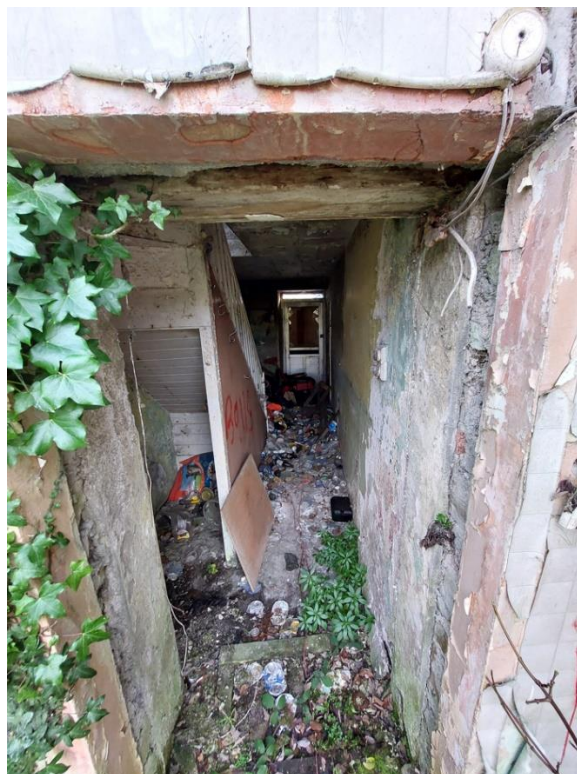


Photo 8: Anti-social activity at house such as rough sleeping, evidence of drink and drug taking.

Prominent Location within a town centre



Photo 9: View of 4-Way Traffic Lit Junction looking South (towards Main Street), intersected by the main road from Thurles to Birr/Athlone (N62).

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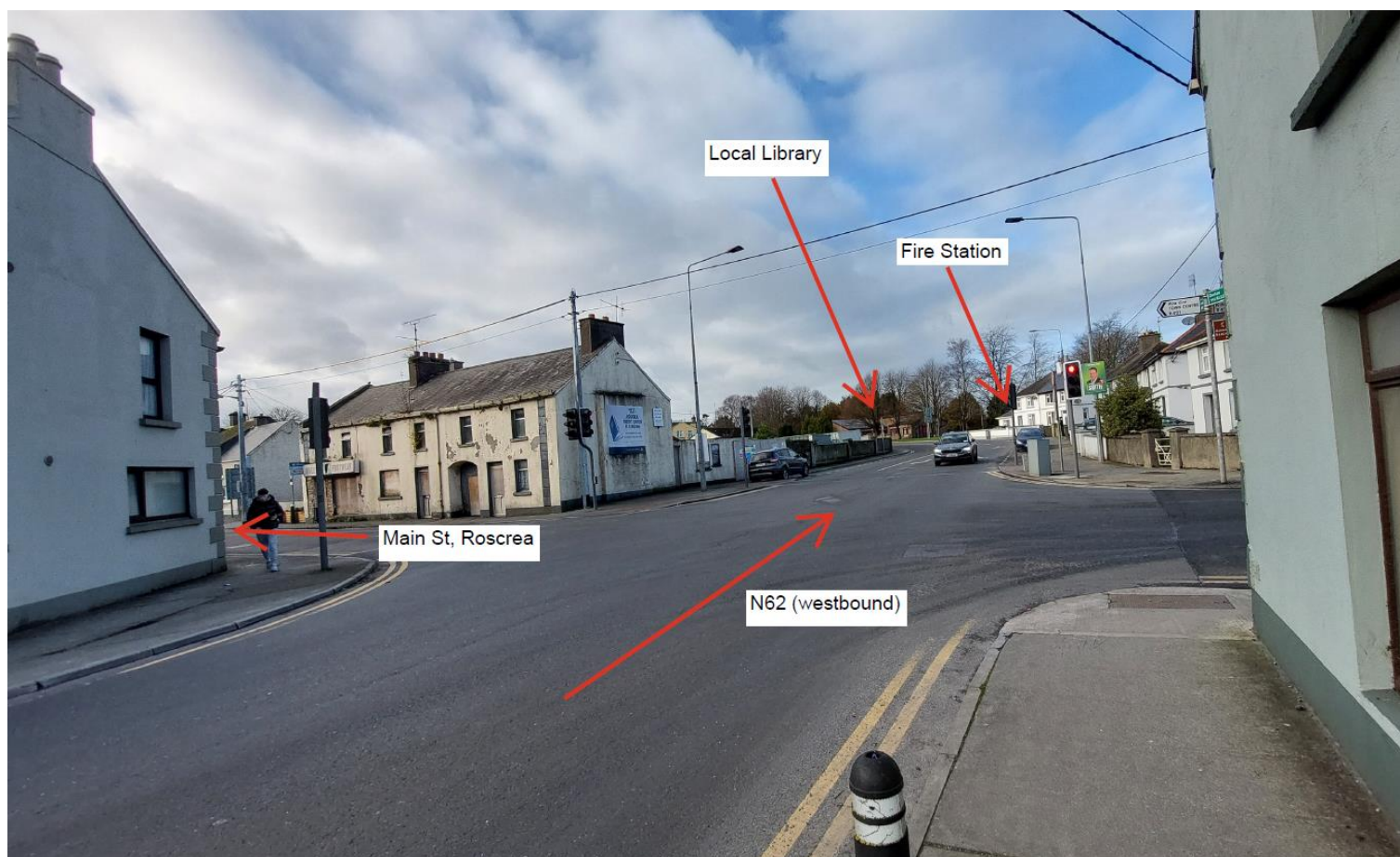


Photo 10: View looking West.

There is an opportunity to redevelop and rejuvenate this main junction within the town centre of Roscrea. The site is currently extremely derelict and has a history of anti-social behaviour in this area which is negatively affecting the local community.

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Response to NPWS Report Checklist on Application:

11.2 Evidence that actions permitted by a derogation licence will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species to which the Habitats Directive relates at a favourable conservation status in their natural range as is required under Section 54(2) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations.

Ecofact, ecological surveyors, conducted a site inspection and emergence/ activity survey of this site on 6th September 2024 during the main bat activity season.

The results of this report detected that small numbers (less than 5no. individuals) of the Common Pipistrelle bat species were roosting in the building. As described in this report, due to the unsafe structural condition of this building and the requirement to demolish it in the interest of public health and safety, unfortunately this will mean the loss of this particular bat roost.

No works can take place on the building without a derogation licence and the implementation of mitigation measures such as works can only take place on this building outside of bat roosting season.

If during the course of works, a bat roost/bats are identified, NPWS will be notified immediately.

As it is one small (<5no.) bat roost that has been identified, it is envisaged that actions permitted by a derogation licence will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the bat population in this area.

Response to NPWS Report Checklist on Application:

11.3 Details of any mitigation measures planned for the species affected by the derogation at the location, along with evidence that such mitigation has been successful elsewhere.

- **Derogation Licence:** As a bat roost was identified at this site, a derogation licence is required for all works. No works can begin at this site until such a derogation licence is granted.
- **Avoidance Mitigation:** Works at this site, which may affect any potential bats/bat roosts, will be done outside of active bat season (between 31st August and 1st March). As mentioned in Ecofacts' Bat Survey report, section 5.2, it is unlikely that bats do not use these buildings during the winter months, however if bats are recorded at any point during the construction works NPWS will be immediately contacted and works will stop.
- **Compensatory Roosts:** The design of this scheme has been revised to allow for the installation of compensatory bat boxes within the site. Refer to the Landscape Drawing attached and figure 4 below showing the indicative locations proposed for the installation of 5no. x new bat boxes which will be fitted on the southerly facing walls of the new structures at fascia level. Boxes proposed are to be Schwegler 3FF or other similar suitable approved. These proposed locations will also be mostly sheltered away from areas with artificial lighting such as street lights.

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- **Landscaping:** The site is constrained but any available green space areas within this site will be planted with native species which will provide suitable foraging opportunities for bat species in the area as well as to promote biodiversity. The landscape plan has been revised to allow for the planting of hazel, crab apple and elder trees. We will endeavour to plant bat friendly shrubs and flowers within the common green areas as recommended by Bat Conservation Ireland, attached to this document as Appendix C – Bat Habitat Information.

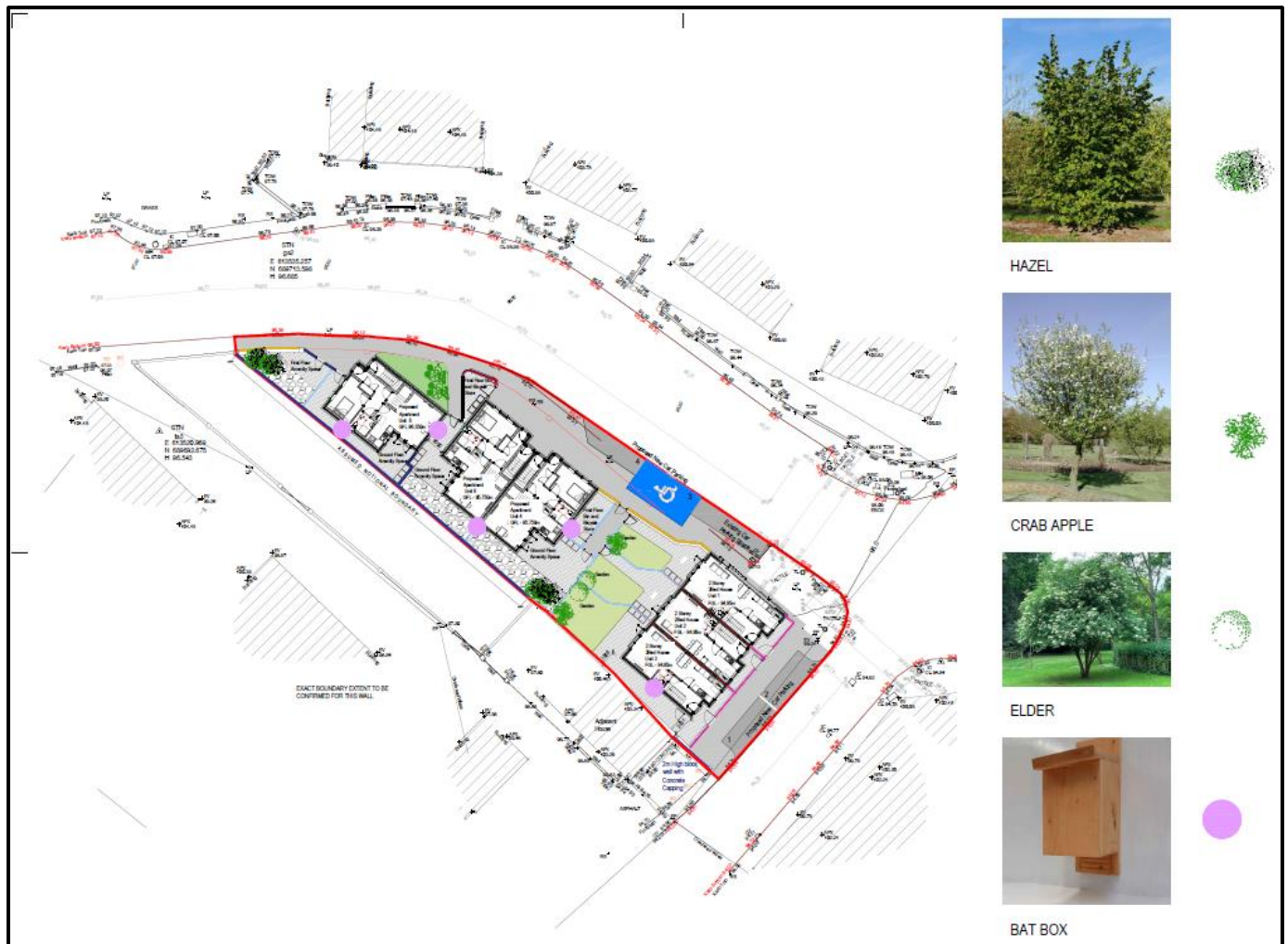


Figure 4: Revised Landscape drawing showing bat boxes and bat friendly landscaping

- **Lighting:** There are 4no. x new additional street lights required in addition to the 2no. x existing which are part of this development. Three of these new lights will be positioned adjacent to The Crescent roadway (N62) to the northern side of the site and the other additional light will be located to the east at the traffic lights/parking spaces. These are required in the interests of public/traffic safety.
In order to minimise negative effects on bat species in this area, it is proposed to ensure that appropriate cowls/hoods are added to the light-posts which will direct the light downwards and reduce glare. The strength of the LED bulbs will also be reduced as recommended by Ecofact's report to a warmer colour wavelength between 2700 and 3000 Kelvin. Indicative locations of the proposed streetlights are shown in the below figure 5.

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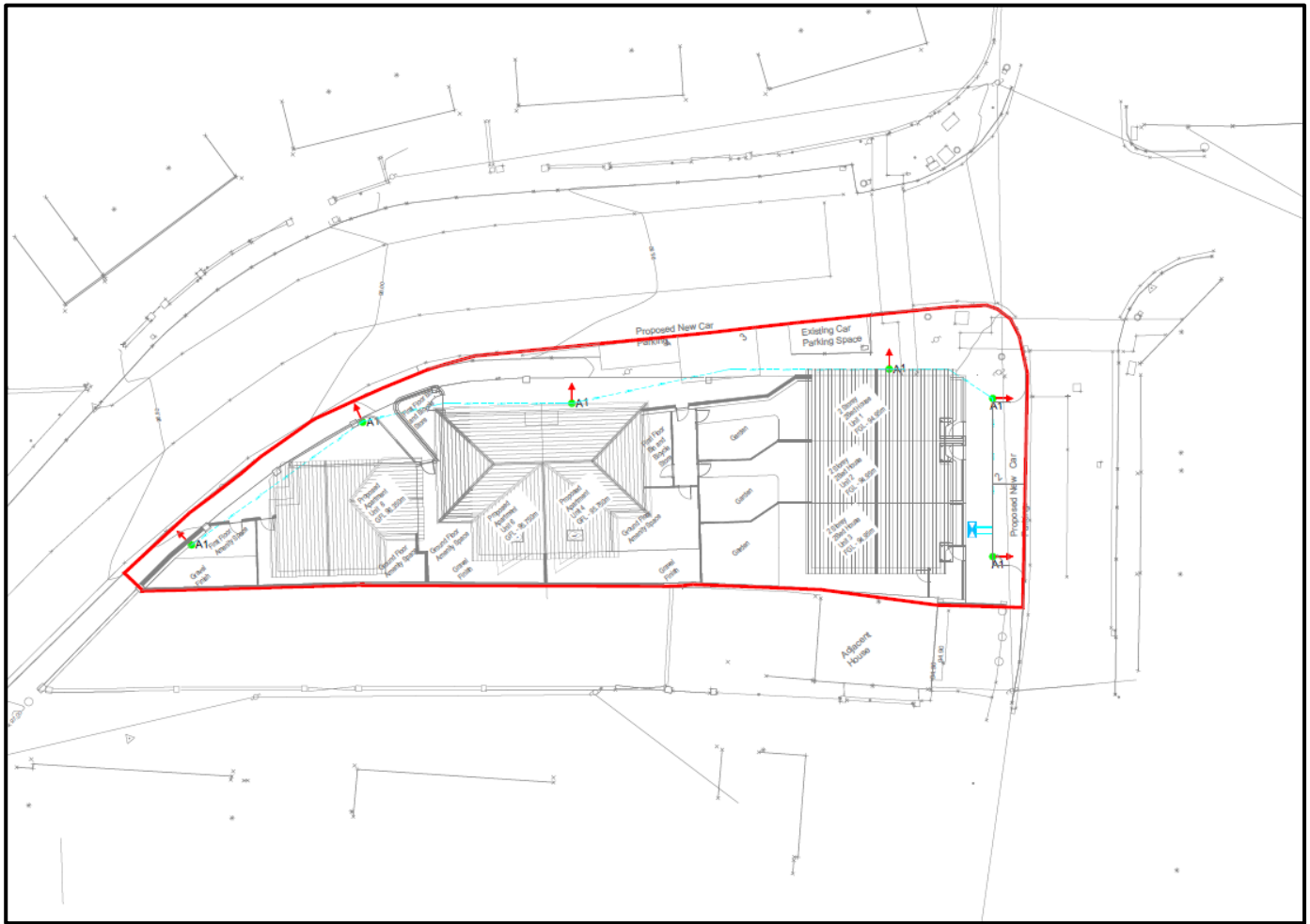


Figure 5: Indicative locations of existing and proposed street lights

Response to NPWS Report Checklist on Application:

11.4 As much information as possible to allow a decision to be made on this application.

Submitted Documents:

- Application form for Derogation Licence.
- Ecofact Ecologists – Bat Survey Report.
- Supplemental Information – for NPWS Derogation Licence Application (Brief of site).
- Appendix A - Photos of Existing buildings condition (Public H&S Issue).
- Appendix B - Drawings - Landscaping Bat Gardening and Site Elevations (for reference).
- Appendix C – Bat Habitat information

END REPORT