

# **MANOR WEST, TRALEE**

**Action Area Plan  
2000**



***Tralee Urban District Council***

***Technical Assistance by  
Brady Shipman Martin***

# Manor West, Tralee

## Action Area Plan

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Manor West action area lies approximately 2 kilometres east of the town centre, between the edge of a tract of residential development at Killerisk and the UDC boundary and is zoned primarily for residential development (Figure 1). Pressure for development has recently become intense, with the submission of an application for a mixed development on 20.87 ha (51.57 acres) of land at Manor West. Part of this proposed development comprises a number of replacement uses from the Boherboy/Station action area (Refer to Boherboy, Tralee, Action Area Plan, Tralee Urban District Council, 2000) of 6.3 ha (15.56 acres) of sports pitches and a builders providers of 5,580m<sup>2</sup> (60,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) on 2.4ha. The remainder of the proposal is for mixed retail warehousing, retailing uses and hotel use. The gross floor area of the retail elements of the overall scheme submitted, amounts to some 22,678 m<sup>2</sup> (244,105 ft<sup>2</sup>).
- 1.2 As a result of the above application, Tralee UDC commissioned Brady Shipman Martin to prepare a Retail Impact Study for the proposal. This looked at the capacity of the greater Tralee catchment to sustain an increase in retail floorspace. The conclusions reached in this study were that the Manor West area should be developed in no more than 6271 m<sup>2</sup> (67,500 ft<sup>2</sup>) of net retail space. Based on a gross to net ratio of 4:3, this equates to a figure of 8360 m<sup>2</sup> of retail related space.
- 1.3 Simultaneously, Brady Shipman Martin were commissioned to prepare an Action Plan for the Manor West area, including the site for which the above development proposals had been submitted.

## **2.0 ACTION AREA SITE - DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS**

- 2.1 The action area site measures some 41 ha (Figure 1A). It is bounded to the north by the N21 from which the site would be accessed via a new roundabout. Its western boundary follows the limit of existing development, in a mixture of miscellaneous commercial developments on the N21 frontage, and residential further south. There is a short section of road frontage onto the Killerisk road to the west, which runs north south, and joins the N21 opposite the former county hospital, now Kerry County Council offices. Approximately half way along its western boundary the site abuts a recently surveyed national monument, which was registered by Dúchas The Heritage Service (Registration Order No. F94 6049-1) on 6 March 1998 to secure its protection from future development. This comprises two cairns elevated on a limestone outcrop, part of which has been extensively quarried in earlier centuries for lime. The monument which extends over 2.052 ha is currently largely overgrown with impenetrable blackthorn and hawthorn and is a notable feature in the area. Remedial or Reductive Measures have been outlined in the EIS accompanying the current planning application, which includes temporary fencing during construction.
- 2.2 The southern boundary of the site runs along the Lee River before returning northwards up a stream which dissects the site and which has been recently canalised, to address a flooding problem in this vicinity. The urban district boundary forms the eastern boundary of the site coinciding with the access to the Manor House within the action area and several other scattered properties to the south-east.
- 2.3 The site also contains an additional archaeological site, consisting of an enclosure, which exists below ground level only. The current planning application proposes to retain this beneath a capping layer, which we understand is acceptable in principle to Dúchas.
- 2.4 The built environment to the northern boundary of the site is heavily impacted upon by traffic. Much of the development along the N21 is low density and relates to car borne, traffic generating uses. This is typical of the approaches to a town which has sprawled gradually outwards.

- 2.5 The conversion of the former county hospital to County Offices is a significant step towards securing the future both of the building and its immediate surroundings, which terminate the vista northwards along the Killerisk Road. It also presents itself as a landmark feature, dominating this sector of the town as well as a use which would endorse the creation of a neighbourhood centre, focussing on the existing commercial uses along the road frontage.
- 2.6 A proposal for the realignment of the N21 and N22 from Ratass to Ballymachthomas is currently awaiting approval from the Minister of Environment and Local Government. This involves the creation of a roundabout east of the frontage of the Manor West lands, which will facilitate access to lands both north and south.

### 3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Manor West Retail Study recommends that *'whether all or even most, of the estimated 12,542m<sup>2</sup> (135,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) of additional floor space should be located within a single shopping centre is a matter ultimately to be decided by the Urban District Council. In our view, it will be necessary for the existing businesses to expand in order to position themselves competitively within a rapidly growing economy. We therefore recommend that not more than half of the recommended growth be allowed for within a single new shopping development.* The developers proposal has been altered to reduce the proposed retail development to 12,283 m<sup>2</sup> (132,200 ft<sup>2</sup>), plus 2,787 m<sup>2</sup> (30,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) of convenience net retail floorspace, broadly in conformance with the recommendations of the Retail Study. This is shown on Drg. 3045/04, situated to the north of the action area together with space for ancillary miscellaneous 'neighbourhood' facilities such as a doctors surgery, hotel, public house, offices, etc, which are not included in the retail calculation. The relocation of the existing builders providers from its current site in the vicinity of the station is also excluded from this calculation. The balance of the site, not required for retail and commercial uses is envisaged as being developed in residential use, with higher densities being accommodated in the vicinity of the internal roundabout and fronting onto a secondary access from the Killerisk Road.

### 4.0 DESIGN RATIONALE

#### Node and Neighbourhood Centre

- 4.1 The design rationale is to create a 'node' of neighbourhood, commercial and retail facilities, which could support the surrounding population and where a higher density of development, than that of the surrounding suburbs, would be appropriate. The development of higher density nodes is based on the premise that these nodes are highly accessible to the road network and could be more easily serviced by public transport, thereby facilitating a corollary reduction in private car usage.
- 4.2 The development of higher density residential accommodation at this neighbourhood node is in recognition of recent Government guidance on residential densities<sup>1</sup>, which calls for the provision of a range of density types and densities, to provide greater choice within the housing market and to utilise valuable serviced land more efficiently.
- 4.3 The development of the retail centre as a predominantly single storey development of large warehouse type buildings, is clearly at odds with the creation of a higher density neighbourhood centre. Notwithstanding, the Plan was directed to seek ways in which development proposals currently on the table could be accommodated, to make the Tralee retail sector competitive on a regional basis and to seek ways of reconciling this with the aims of the plan.

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<sup>1</sup> RD/4/98 Ministerial Guidance on Residential Densities

#### **Access and Accessibility**

- 4.4 The location of the site immediately to the south of the junction of the proposed northern relief route and the N21 will ensure that the site is highly accessible and an appropriate location for uses with a much wider market than the immediate vicinity. It is important therefore that access can be taken direct from the main traffic routes. At the same time, the creation of a retail node at this location should provide for facilities that will also serve the surrounding area. It is envisaged that facilities will also be provided which will act as a 'village centre' serving the immediate needs of the locality.

#### **Site Circulation and Layout**

- 4.5 The main accesses to the site will be taken from the N21 from a proposed new roundabout to be constructed prior to the commencement of normal retail operations of the site and on a left turn onto filter lane. From there an access road will run westwards to an internal roundabout, located on the junction of a secondary site access road running southwards from the proposed roundabout on the N21. The secondary site access from the Killerisk Road, where a new junction will be created, will be restricted to non-heavy commercial vehicles to lessen the impact of the development on the residents of Carrig Li. Access to the Killerisk Road for the Carrig Li residents will be from this junction once it has been constructed.
- 4.6 The major part of the commercial uses of the site will lie immediately to the south east of the secondary roundabout and will form a large retail square, through which the road runs along its western boundary. The conventional retailer requirements of a large, centrally located parking area has been accommodated in this square as a parking 'plaza' where a high level of hard and soft landscaping will be required to mitigate the worst impact of such a configuration. The plaza will be bounded on three sides by retail development, with a mixture of neighbourhood centre uses and high density residential accommodation forming its western boundary, facing east across the access spine road.
- 4.7 The spine road will run south along the western side of the plaza, to a second roundabout, formed at its junction with the access from the Killerisk road. From here, the southern arm of this roundabout will run southwards through the site, providing access to the relocated builders providers customer parking area as well as the sports pitches and residential accommodation accessed from this southern spine road.
- 4.8 The access road from the Killerisk road will be developed in higher density, south facing residential accommodation, which is envisaged as providing a formal hard edge of buildings along the road frontage, albeit set back to provide a wide landscaped footpath or esplanade along the road, to distance the occupants from the traffic.
- 4.9 The scheme provides for the retail accommodation set out in table 1. The principal retail elements, 1-3, as well as 4 and 5 are set back against the eastern boundary of the site, where they help to define the central plaza and where they can easily be serviced from the rear. The northern side of the plaza is closed by unit 9, which faces the plaza across the road from the N21 roundabout. The southern side of the square or plaza is bounded by units 7 and 8, the former being the builders providers, relocated from the station action area. The western side of the square is shown developed in a block of mixed commercial uses, which would include neighbourhood uses such as a doctors surgery, some offices, etc. Ideally this might include a cafe and other uses which could help to enliven this side of the square. This block is envisaged as being in the region of four storeys in height along the frontage with the spine road defining the western edge of the square.

**Table 1: Retail Accommodation**

Unit	Use	Gross Floor Space m2 (ft2)	Nett Retail Space m2 (ft2)
1	Department Store	5,073 (54,600 ft2)	3,716 (40,000 ft2)
2	Supermarket	3,722 (40,000 ft2)	2,787 (30,000 ft2)
3	Miscellaneous	1,735 (18,675 ft2)	1,438 (14,478 ft2)
4	Sports	714 (7,685 ft2)	678 (7,297 ft2)
5	Durable Household Goods	894 (9,623 ft2)	849 (9,138 ft2)
7	Builders Providers	3,240 (34,875 ft2)	
8	Furniture	2,592 (27,900 ft2)	2,462 (26,500 ft2)
9	DIY	2,592 (27,900 ft2)	2,462 (26,500 ft2)

- 4.10 Further south, the commercial uses give way to residential accommodation developed in a reasonably high density format, as apartments, with parking to the rear. These relate to the residential uses along the road joining the Killerisk Road. Land to the south west of the plaza, in the vicinity of the scheduled monument is envisaged as public open space which can provide a suitable setting for that monument.

#### **Landmark / Civic Space**

- 4.11 Typically, large retail uses have been developed on green field sites at the edge or out of town, in the form of single storey buildings set within the landscape. In this instance, the site is regarded as an important extension to the town and one which will in the future function as a commercial centre, secondary to the main town centre uses of Tralee. The creation of a commercial node will be marked by a higher density of building at this node. Single storey buildings will not generally be regarded as acceptable, as they are unable to create the townscape appropriate to such a node. The tendency for large retail units to be single storey in format has already been acknowledged, albeit the heights of these buildings are the equivalent of two storeys of the conventional high street.
- 4.12 It is suggested therefore, that greater emphasis should be given to the creation of suitably scaled and designed frontages, which would help to create a good quality retail environment as well as a more permanent extension to the town. Where relevant therefore, administrative offices might be located at first and even second floor level along the building frontages, with suitable fenestration to enliven the facades and to help achieve a human scale.
- 4.13 The proposed entrance from the N21, should mark the gateway to the site. As such, it should be an important commercial principal to create a significant landmark at this location and great care should be given to the placement of buildings along this frontage.
- 4.14 The development of a hotel at this location could take advantage both of a valuable site on the eastern approach to town, as well as to provide a use which has a suitable civic presence and which can be developed to a suitable height, to create a landmark feature.
- 4.15 The site on the frontage of the N21, opposite the hotel site is also regarded as suited to a high profile public use, such as a tavern, fast food outlet or similar. This is shown served by a car park which can be accessed from the spine road through the site and which is shared by the retail unit immediately to the south.
- 4.16 The design treatment of large retail or commercial buildings provides a significant challenge, which should be addressed if the area is to achieve a suitable civic quality, that will help it to endure into the future. One of the greatest challenges lies in how to achieve a multi-storey development, where conventionally only a single storey is developed.

### **Fronts and Backs**

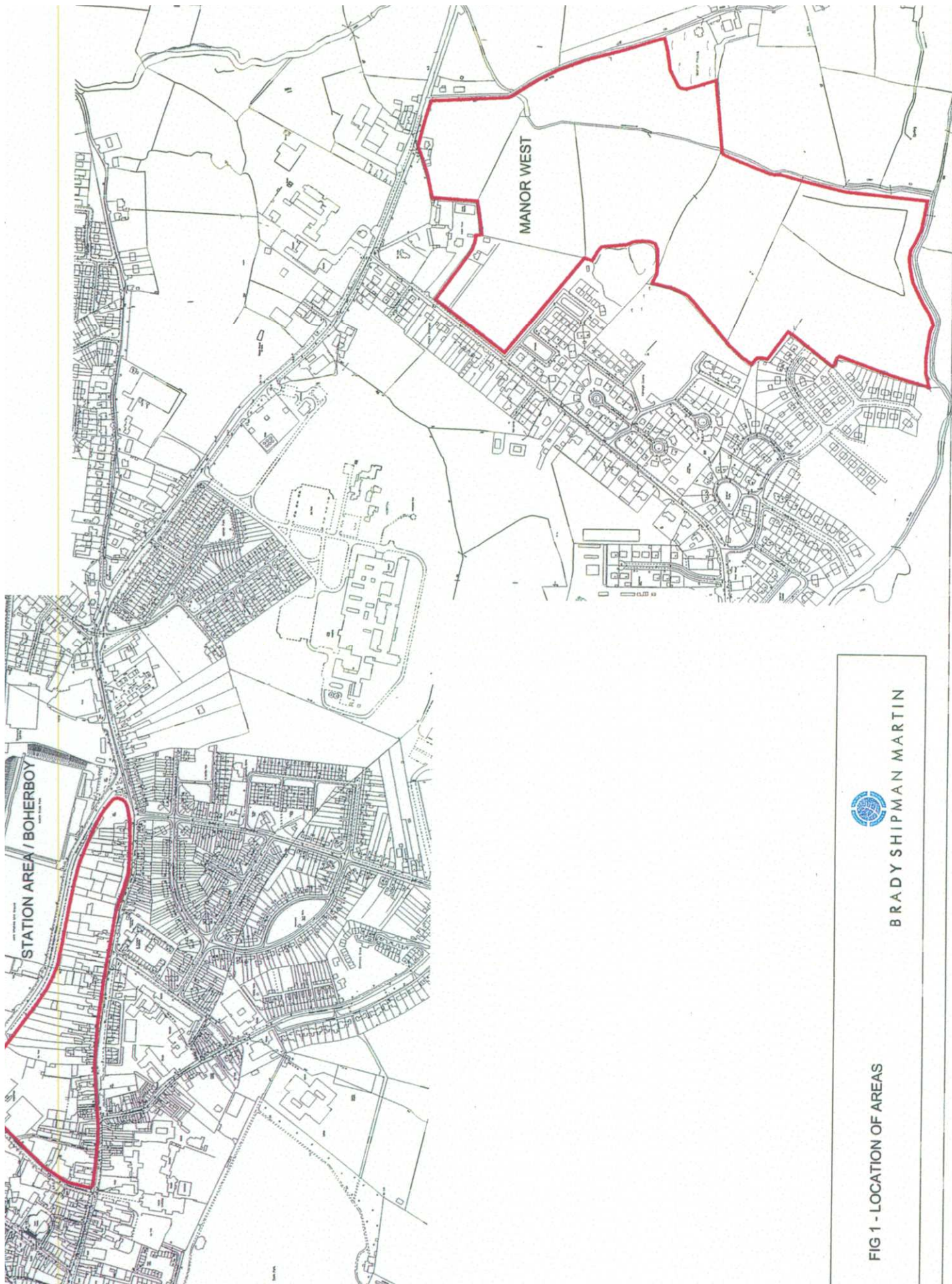
- 4.17 The principal of fronting development onto the public area and providing a 'private' back, to accommodate services, etc, is fundamental to urban design. This should apply both to commercial and residential areas. In the former, retail developments as well as hotel and other commercial uses, require an area for servicing, which can often be unsightly, with cartons and refuse stored for collection, etc and to which public access is restricted. In general, parking should be located away from the site frontage, and the building positioned along the frontage where it can contribute to the creation of a cohesive 'streetscape' and screen the uses behind.
- 4.18 In the case of residential development, the principal of backing private gardens onto other backs, is in the interests both of civic design as well as of security.

## **5.0 LANDSCAPE**

- 5.1 The provision of landscaping, both hard and soft, will be critical to the quality of the environment achieved by the development. The strategy to achieve this is comprised of a number of elements:
- On site landscape features will be retained. This includes tree groups and hedges, which are significant and mature and can provide ready made screening for uses such as large tracts of parking, etc. Hedges in proposed residential areas will be retained as the rear or side boundaries between properties. The large sports uses to the south of the area will be expected to fit largely within existing field boundaries, which will be retained and supplemented. Spot removal will be permitted to facilitate access, as required, and existing planting will be supplemented on the basis of details to be submitted to the council for approval.
  - The watercourse running through the site will be regarded as the backbone of an open space facility along its length. This will provide a feature through the retail plaza, and to accommodate both the locational requirements of the plan as well as the space requirements of the retailers, will run between units 1-3 and the administrative service building in front. Careful detailing and maintenance will be required to incorporate it in a suitable manner and to avoid the build up of litter. The green corridor along the stream will be extended in fingers along the existing hedges, which will act as wildlife corridors and green lungs. Where feasible, these hedges have been retained as boundaries between individual elements of the action plan.
  - Smaller play spaces related to residential development will also be required but will be identified as part of the detailed layout for the proposed residential development.
  - The scheduled monument on the western boundary of the site will be used as a focus for the residential development in its vicinity. An open space, possibly including play space will be located in this vicinity, skirting the monument. This will protect both the environment of the monument itself from development and more positively, will allow the monument to attain a new focus, as a feature within the public domain.
  - The playing pitches envisaged to the south of the area are regarded as an appropriate buffer between the town and the countryside. As such, their relocation to the lands east of the river, as shown dotted on the plan, should be considered. This would release the land west of the river for residential development, which would not be regarded as appropriate if located east of the playing fields.

**Important note**

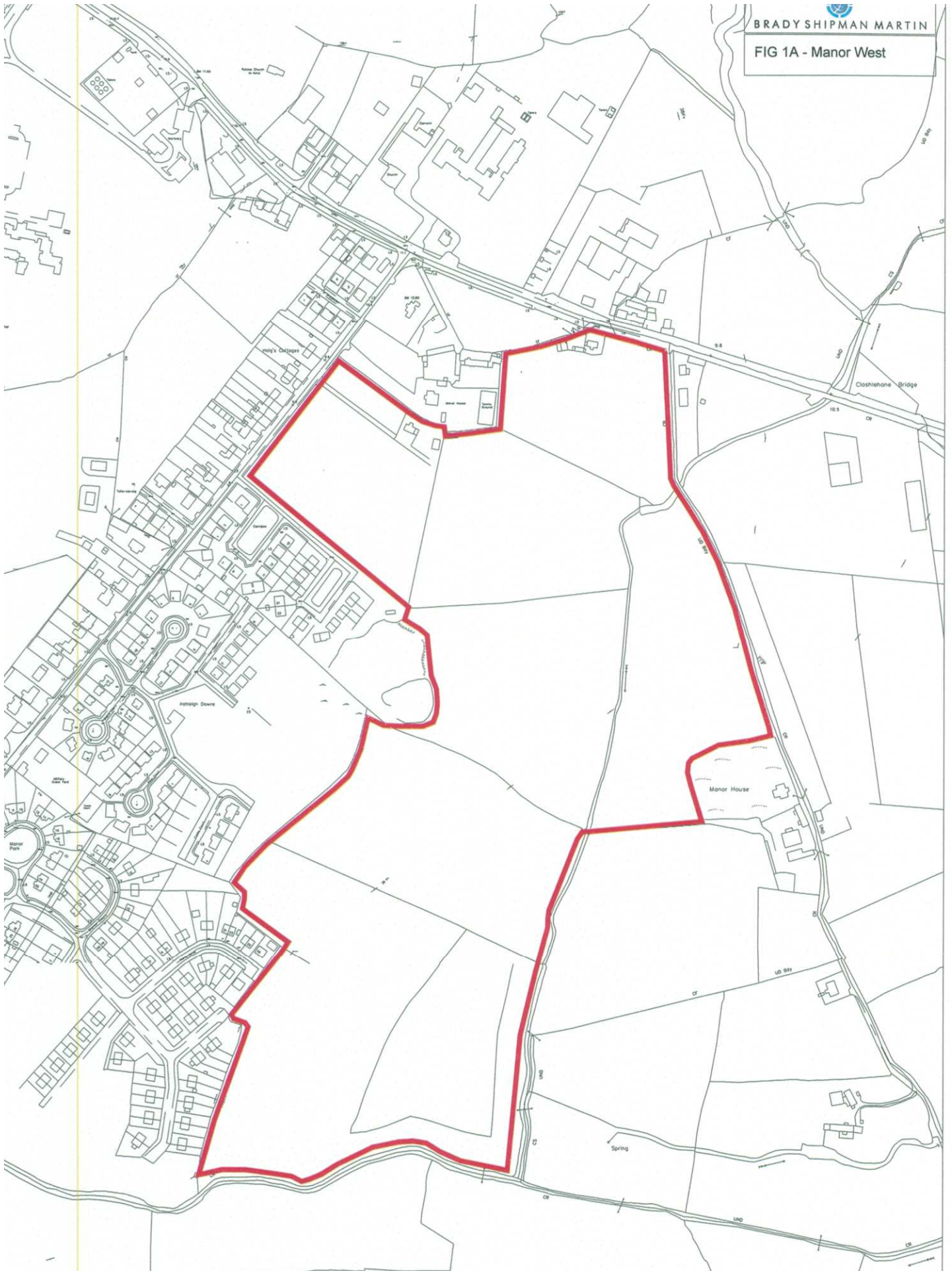
This Action Area Plan was adopted by Tralee Urban District Council on 31 January 2000 subject to amendments to the proposed site layout to reflect a recent planning permission for the development of the site. The amended site layout is shown in Figure 2A, attached, alongside the original Draft Plan layout, Figure 2, attached.



BRADY SHIPMAN MARTIN

FIG 1 - LOCATION OF AREAS

FIG 1A - Manor West



- . Supermarket (3,722m<sup>2</sup>)
- . Miscellaneous (1,735m<sup>2</sup>)
- . Sports (714m<sup>2</sup>)
- . Durable Household goods (894m<sup>2</sup>)
- . Residential Units
- . Builders providers (3,240m<sup>2</sup>)
- . Furniture (2,592m<sup>2</sup>)
- . DIY (2,592m<sup>2</sup>)

aw access to council detail

Road closed

Public open space  
to provide setting for  
scheduled monument

Potential 'Gateway'  
development site.

Proposed roundabout  
with road realignment

Watercourse retained as  
feature through retail plaza.

Possible caravan  
relocation site.

FIG 2 SITE LAYOUT - MANOR WEST

Date March 1999

Status Draft

Drn PK

Checked DMCD

TRALEE ACTION AREA PLAN

Job No 3045

Drawing No 100ai

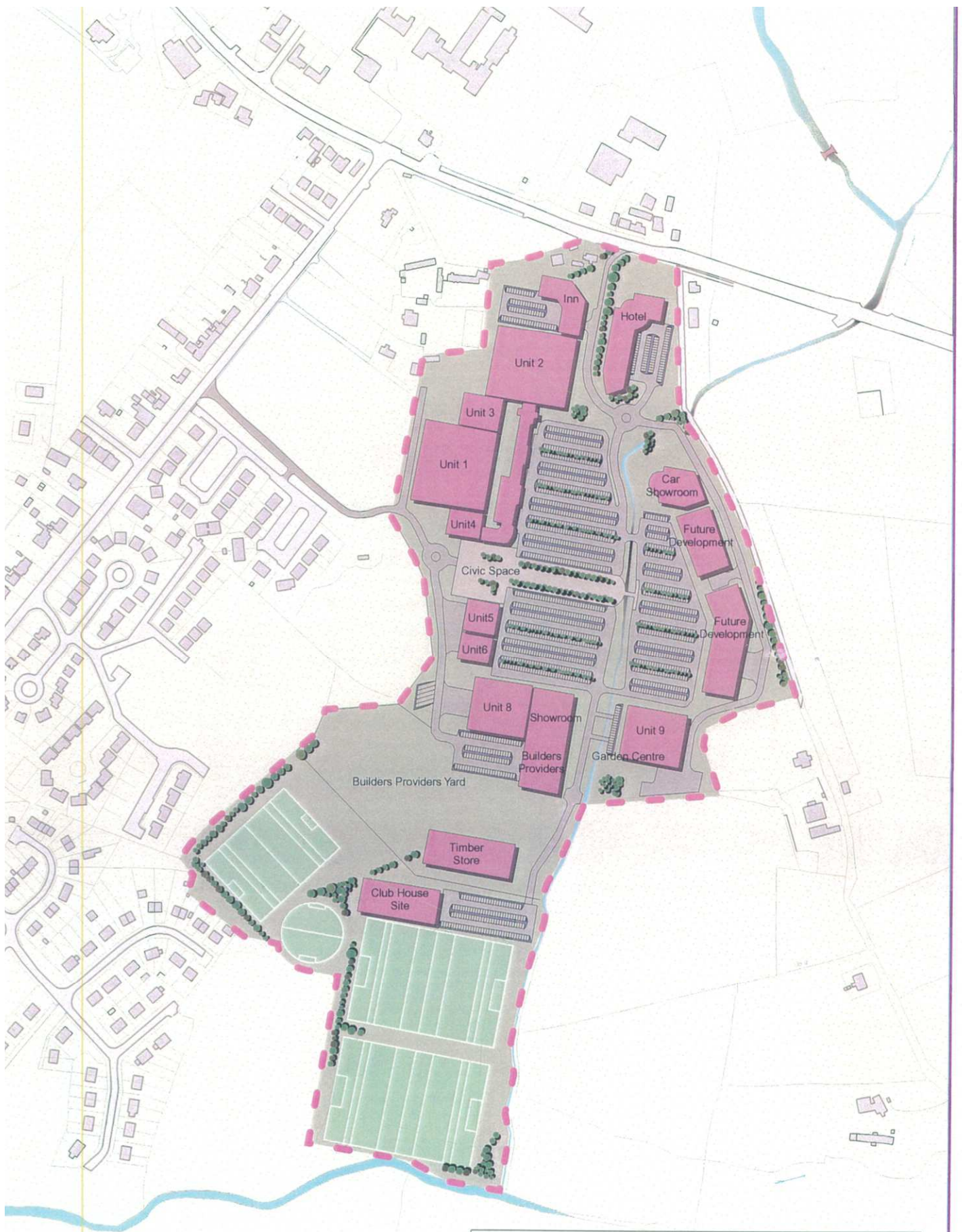


FIG 2A SITE LAYOUT - MANOR WEST

TRALEE ACTION AREA PLAN

Date April 2000	Status Draft
Dm NM	Checked
Job No 3045	Drawing No 101a1