

**Roisin McAllister**

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**From:** John Corry [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 24 September 2020 12:02  
**To:** DevelopmentPlan@midulstercouncil.org  
**Subject:** Representation to Local Development Plan, Draft Plan Strategy, Mid Ulster - McAtamney family  
**Attachments:** Representation to Mid Ulster Draft Plan Strategy on behalf of McAtamney Family.pdf; CONCEPT PLAN.pdf; Location Map Lands at Swatragh.pdf  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Team,

Wishing you well with the development of your Local Development Plan.

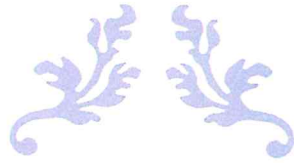
Please find attached Representation on behalf of the McAtamney Family, Swatragh. Documents referred to in the text are included as separate high resolution attachments for your convenience and examination.

Lastly, can I please request that an acknowledgement is issued on receipt of above?

Kind Regards,  
John Corry  
Corry Consulting  
Planning & GIS consultant



Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



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REPRESENTATION TO THE MID ULSTER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN -  
DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY.

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ON BEHALF OF THE MCATAMNEY FAMILY, SWATRAGH



SEPTEMBER 2020  
CORY CONSULTING  
21 Gorticashel Road, Gortin BT798NW



**Representation to the Mid Ulster Local Development Plan - Draft Plan Strategy on behalf of McAtamney Family, Swatragh, compiled by Corry Consulting.**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Our clients, the McAtamney family, welcome the publication of the Mid Ulster Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy (DPS) and for the opportunity to comment on the contents therein. Following examination of the strategies and policies contained within the Draft Plan Strategy, we are pleased to express our clients agreement in their formulation, and consequently find the DPS to be generally 'Sound', when related to the specific soundness tests contained within the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) guidance.
- 1.2 Our specific area of interest in the DPS regards the following PAC soundness test, below:
- “CE2: The strategy, policies and allocations are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base.”**
- 1.3 Whilst we find the DPS to be generally **sound**, and furthermore we would assert that the council's findings in relation to housing allocation and housing need in the settlements of Mid Ulster is **robust**, we would nonetheless like to take this opportunity to highlight some concerns regarding the future deliverability of land based on the status quo at present, specifically within Swatragh Village.
- 1.4 We would respectfully present options to alleviate this concern for the future by expressing an intent to offer land for assessment of suitability and for inclusion as a logical subsuming within the existing settlement limits at this location.
- 1.5 We appreciate that this is an issue to be examined at a later stage of the Plan formation at Local Plan Policy stages, and would be willing to discuss and correspond at greater length, towards the establishment of your Local Plan Policies stage of the LDP preparation, any solutions involving our clients lands, in alleviating any local deliverability issues for required housing up until 2030.
- 1.6 To this end a statement accompanies this representation and is cited below along with a location map and a concept map (Appendix 1) indicating how we



envisage these lands forming part of land use planning in a future LPP for your consideration.

## **2.0 Statement of Case of 'lands for inclusion', highlighted in red on Map 1, Appendix 1.**

### **2.1 Background:**

2.2 Swatragh is a village in the extreme northern portion of Mid Ulster District, and our clients welcome the status as a village being conferred upon it by the DPS, quite rightly due to the services available within the settlement, its population and households, and its local importance as a centre for housing and services close to the Mid Ulster Spine. These factors combine to make it worth sustaining as such a village centre going forward.

2.3 It is our assertion that Council have quite rightly indicated a clear need for an additional 49 dwellings in Swatragh over the plan period to 2030. The 'Regional Development Strategy' (RDS) policy SFG13 enshrines a need to "Sustain Rural communities, smaller towns, villages and open countryside".

2.4 We do express some concern at the ability to achieve this allowance as time progresses, which we shall explore further below. We also offer a remedy to this situation and would wish for consideration of the attached concept plan to form part of this and latter stages of the Plan formation.

### **3.0 Available Land**

3.1 Housing Growth Indicators stipulate that 11,000 new homes are required across Mid Ulster by the end of the Plan period, 2030. For Swatragh, this equates to 49 additional dwellings, as evidenced by the DPS workings thus far, which we fully endorse as stated.

3.2 Nonetheless, an examination of the constraint-free greenfield land in Swatragh, shows that much less than 0.7 Ha is available for immediate suitable development. This is confirmed and borne out from examination of the 'Settlement Appraisal' carried out by Planning as part of the DPS. The yield on this c.0.7 Ha of land will feasibly provide much less than 6-8 additional dwellings, given the access constraints on much of the ground, and in keeping with an anticipated lower development density according to Swatragh's status as a village.



- 3.3 A further constraint on the diminished land available for development in Swatragh, is the fact that (as recognised by the DPS) new housing which accesses directly onto a *Protected Route*, will likely be resisted. Indeed, within Swatragh, two recent planning applications have been recommended for refusal based upon this very constraint.
- 3.4 This puts available land in Swatragh in a precarious position, with the other remaining ground which has not yet been developed, obviously idle for many years and cumulatively, these offer less than 20% of Swatragh's scope for total identified housing needs up until 2030. The Councils annual 'Housing Monitor' will confirm that Swatragh, as a village, is in need of additional land.
- 3.5 To confound this, the number of commitments left yet to be developed within the existing Swatragh settlement limits totals 'zero', and furthermore the number of dwellings completed since 2008 numbers just '2' dwellings. Even considering the 7 additional dwellings on a site recently approved in the east of the village (partly inside and partly outside the development limits), the picture is therefore of a Swatragh which is severely constrained and which is inhibited due to current boundaries in providing for local housing up until 2030 - the 'Plan period'.
- 3.6 Optimistic expectations for the, unlikely, realisation of all greenfield and brownfield sites in Swatragh puts the yield over the 'Plan period' at much less than the accepted DPS housing need of 49 additional dwellings. Furthermore the redevelopment of existing properties to yield additional units of accommodation are unlikely to meet the DPS expectations of quality residential environments, which tick many of the sustainability boxes such as affordable, lifetime homes, and which provide for enhanced amenity spaces, for example rear gardens in excess of 10m, etc., which is one of the aims of the DPS, amongst others.

#### 4.0 **Social Housing**

- 4.1 The latest figures from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the various Housing Associations across Northern Ireland, highlight a precarious situation for social housing in the province. Record numbers of families, single householders, and elderly individuals as well as youths, are struggling to find suitable accommodation with an estimated 26,000 currently in need of a new home. That figure has risen by 34% in only ten years. Driven by economic slowdown and exacerbated by a chronic underbuilding schedule, which



is now progressing primarily via private building enterprises, the situation is worsening and Mid Ulster, including Swatragh, do not escape this difficulty.

- 4.2 Our clients lands present the perfect chance to join up with a recent social development scheme off Drumbane Road, to provide much needed housing, and beyond, by presenting lands totalling 6.3 acres adjacent to the western mid settlement boundary of Swatragh village within which phased development could in turn provide affordable homes as well as purely social housing, and on the basis of need, to be reviewed by in-house development plan processes every number of years. As a starting point, an inclusion of a portion of these lands would go a long way in alleviating the very real housing land availability issue in Swatragh and its hinterland.

5.0 **Alternative Lands- see accompanying 'Concept Map' in Appendix 1.**

- 5.1 The development of lands as indicated by the accompanying maps, are potentially favourable to other specific redevelopment lands as they can provide an opportunity to provide for many of the aspirations that the DPS sets out as its main aims at the outset, and would be the perfect opportunity to allow the establishment of new zero carbon, affordable/social housing, on land which will not necessitate the direct access of traffic onto a protected route. Residents could avail of efficient commuting to job opportunities in the North Coast area surrounding Coleraine, and also within Mid Ulster by being accessible to the route to the southern and prosperous Magherafelt/Dungannon/Coalisland areas.
- 5.2 Our client envisages the inclusion of these lands as an opportunity for a rationalising of the settlement limit within which accessible 'lifetime homes', which are sustainable and affordable, can be built and made available to the local populace or for those wishing to settle there, whilst availing of proximity to services and neighbouring development. These ideals could be beneficial to the aims of the local authority in moving towards sustainable villages, ensuring their continued vitality, whilst solving a very specific land shortage issue in Swatragh without unduly impacting upon natural, built heritage, or other unforeseen constraints.
- 5.3 As a wider vision, we envisage a joined up walkway through these lands, from the affordable/social housing element in the west of the lands to a central area where woodland walks may persist, through to the eastern portion which is the only area of the land which has any minor area affected by flooding. Here,



instead of risking infrastructural difficulties, we foresee an opportunity to create and establish non-essential infrastructure which would be flood resilient, such as grass/4G football pitches, further walks and allotments, and any other appropriate uses, which will enhance the living environment locally and link the two seemingly distinct portions that Swatragh currently finds itself in, dissected by the Church and surrounding lands.

5.4 Our vision would protect the Church from negative detrimental amenity loss, by focusing sensitive development away to the north of and hence, rear of the Church, ensuring the sensitive listed building continues to maintain its setting, yet allowing for development which benefits all of the community in Swatragh. Linkages via footbridge across the Knockoneill River, would provide even further fluidity by linking up with the Granaghan community centre and the local nursery/creche buildings, and easy access to the main street of Swatragh for the pedestrian residing nearby on either side of Swatragh village.

#### 5.5 **Constraints**

5.6 We have carried out a preliminary assessment of the lands outlined in the accompanying Location Map and Concept Map, and can confirm that:

- No ASSI habitat points exist in said lands
- No ASSI is recorded or planned for said lands
- No nature reserve exists
- The lands do not form part of any Natura 2000 network of sites
- No priority habitats nor priority species are presently recorded<sup>1</sup>
- A listed Church, Killelagh Parish Church, is outside of the lands to immediate south

5.7 In terms of the listed Church, inclusion of these lands will not have a detrimental effect upon the setting of Killelagh Church, due to the enclosure of existing trees which are protected by an LLPA (Zoning SH02 in the extant 'Magherafelt Area Plan 2015) to the north of the building and its burial grounds and landscaped areas.

5.8 **Flooding** affects just 8% (approximately half an acre) of the land area presented by our clients for inclusion, therefore most of their lands would present

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<sup>1</sup> Whilst no priority species or habitats are recorded, it is envisaged that the existing woodland present in one area of the site could be maintained and enhanced, and form part of any expansion to green infrastructure in the District, by being incorporated into a walking trail, envisaged on the Concept Plan in Appendix 1 attached.



an abundance of constraint-free land to alleviate the housing land issue within Swatragh. As mentioned, land in flood plain can be easily avoided or utilised for non-essential uses or flood resistant uses like shared amenity spaces.

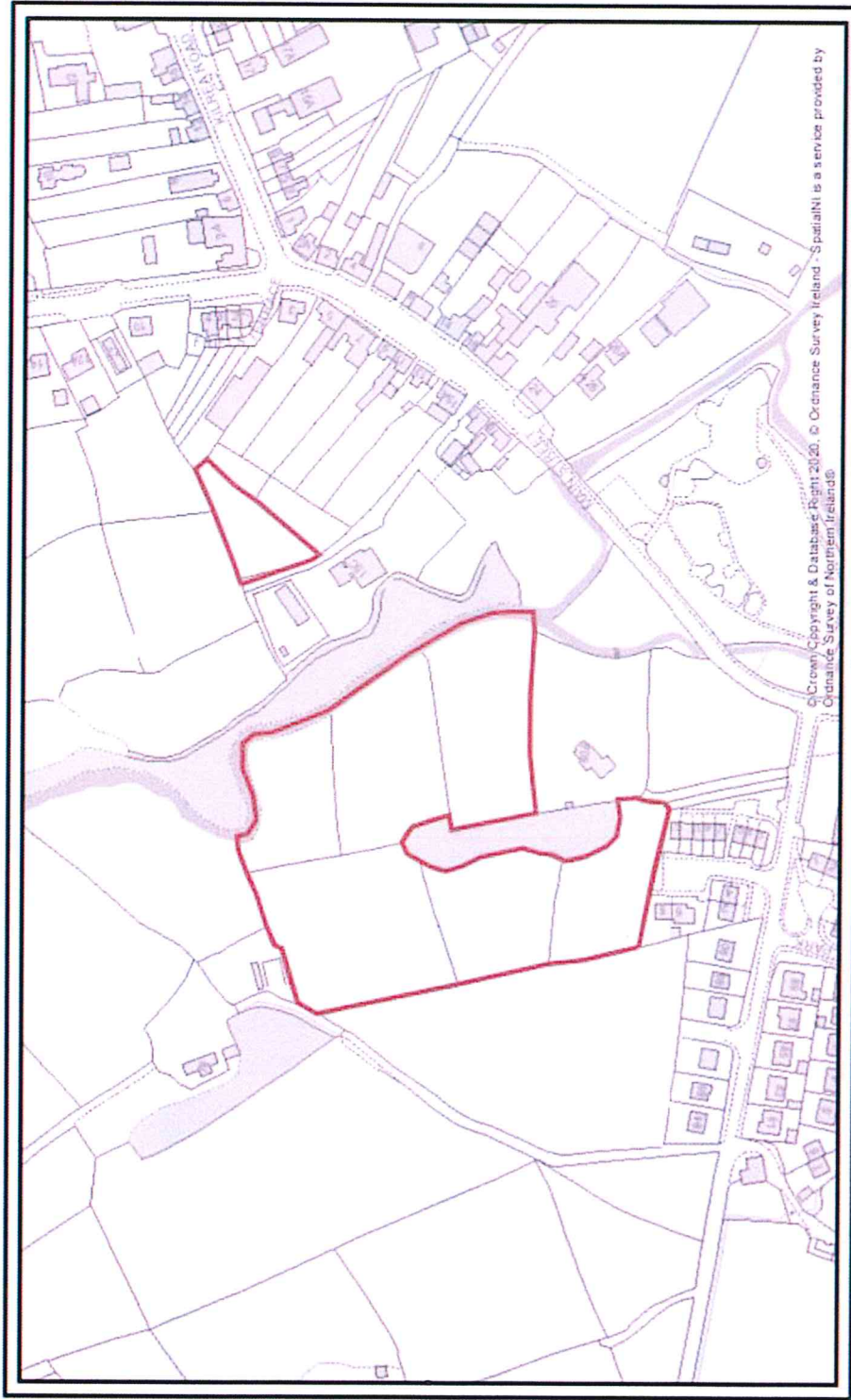
- 5.9 **WWTW Headroom Capacity:** Latest available headroom capacity figures for Wastewater Treatment Works in Mid Ulster have highlighted many settlements at or near capacity, however Swatragh is not currently listed as one of them.

## 6.0 **Future Discussion**

- 6.1 Should any future 'call for sites' occur, the McAtamney family reiterate their willingness to correspond, meet or discuss any viable uses of their lands towards the aim of alleviating the current land shortage issue with Swatragh. We believe the lands indicated to Planning meet many of the objectives of the 'Community Plan' and 'Local Development Plan' Draft Plan Strategy in Mid Ulster, with regards creating sustainable, lifetime housing, delivering upon the allocated growth aspirations laid out regionally and locally, and towards furthering a healthy network of green infrastructure from which to build upon in this part of the north of Mid Ulster District.
- 6.2 The lands as indicated provide for access to services and an enhancement and protection of the natural environment, borne out from the development of sustainable eco-friendly dwellings, social housing requirements, and which respect the built heritage of their surroundings, all the while increasing opportunity for community cohesion and leisure opportunities. They are a serious contender for further consideration towards alleviating the housing issue in Swatragh and we look forward to following the development of the Plan Process towards its adoption.

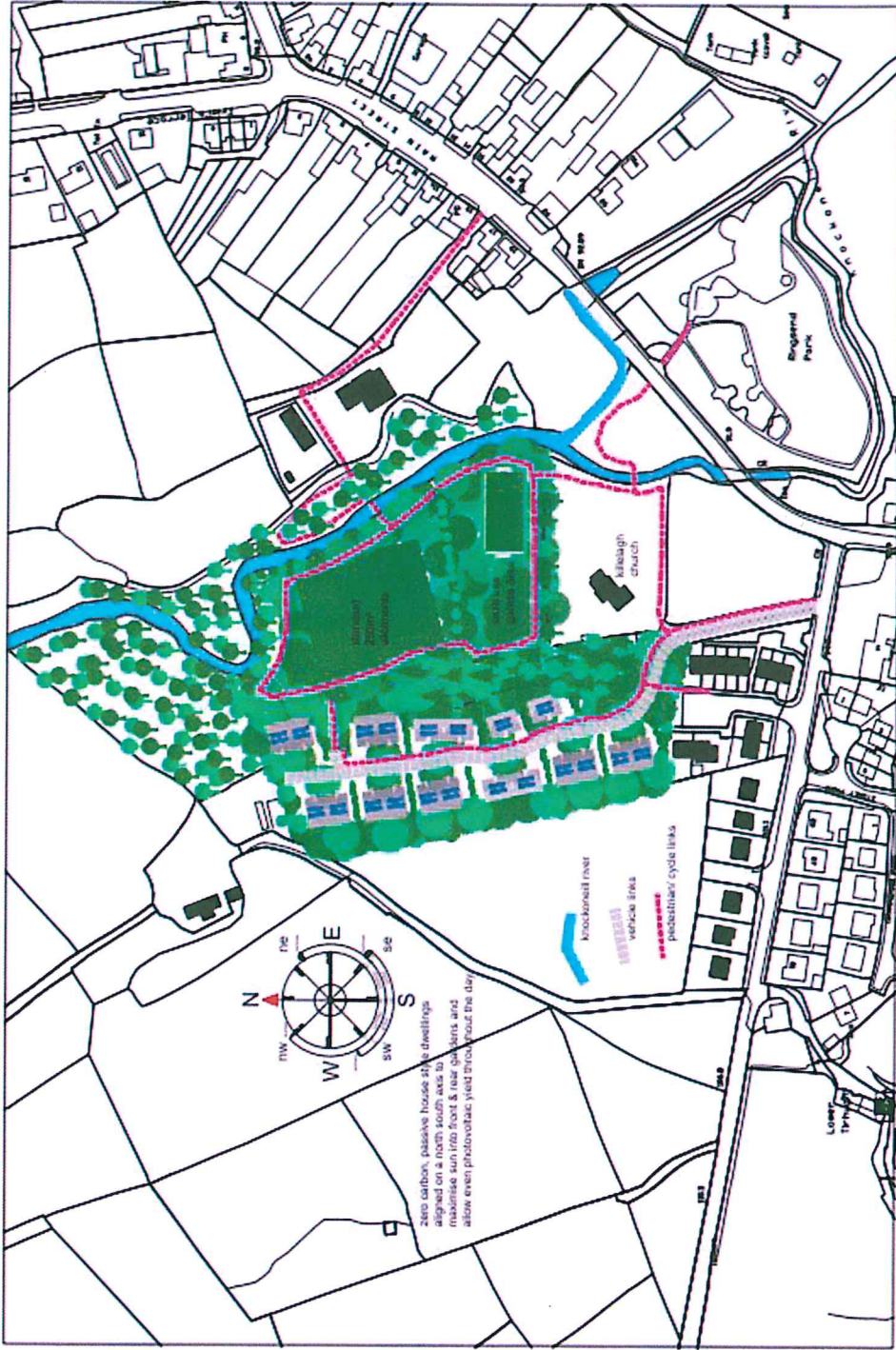


**APPENDIX 1: MAP 1 - LOCATION OF LANDS IN SWATRAGH: North and north west of Killelagh Parish Church, adjacent to Swatragh development limits. (For information only)**





**APPENDIX 1: 'CONCEPT PLAN'** (For information only and illustrative purposes; does not convey ownership of all lands externally.)





### Contact Details

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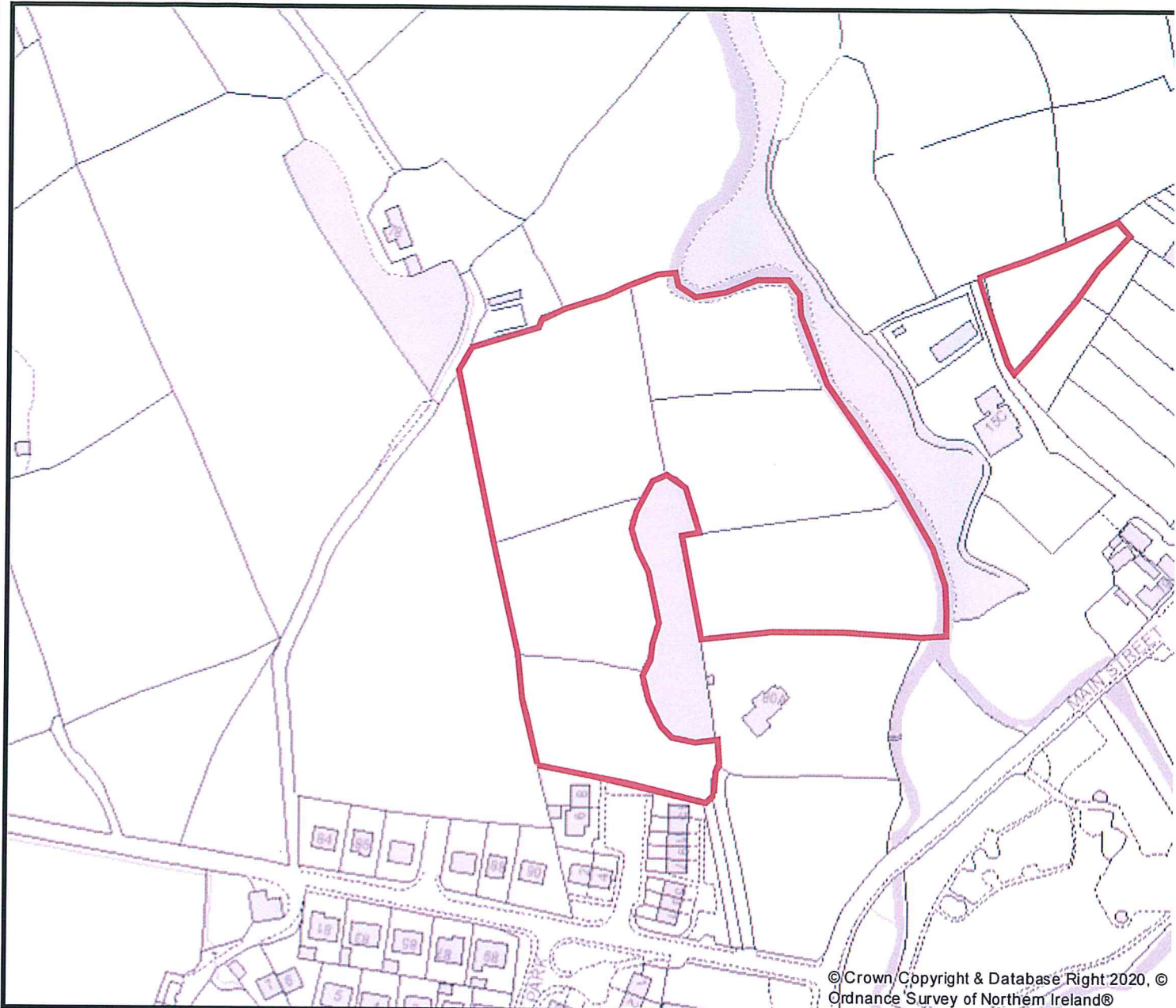
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### Location Map - Lands at Swatragh

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