# Residents challenge Galway student flats over scale and sustainability concerns



In the Terryland area of Galway, local residents are taking a stand against a proposed development that would see 568 new student apartments on Coolough Road. The project, which has recently received planning permission from city planners, has sparked significant concern among inhabitants of the surrounding communities, including Crestwood, Tirellan Heights, Castlelawn Heights, and areas along the Dyke Road and Menlo. Residents argue that the development is grossly disproportionate to the character and scale of their established neighbourhood, which is predominantly made up of two-storey houses and bungalows.

Approved in April, the development by McHugh Property Holdings is set to feature 84 apartments spread across seven blocks, with heights varying from two to five storeys. Its proximity to an existing student complex of 257 bedrooms—approved by An Bord Pleanála last October—exacerbates residents' anxiety regarding the ongoing transformation of their area into a concentrated student living quarter. Critics assert that if both developments are realised, they could lead to nearly 1,000 students residing within close proximity to a predominantly residential community, many members of which are elderly.

"The future of our area cannot be determined purely by corporate greed," residents stated in their appeal to An Bord Pleanála. They contend that the development will compromise the peaceful essence of their neighbourhood, transforming it into a student campus where transient populations will outnumber longstanding residents. This stark change raises questions about the suitability of such developments in areas traditionally home to young families seeking long-term housing.

Local residents further criticise the proposed development not only for its scale but also for its lack of adequate provisions for parking—only 16 spaces are envisaged for the entire complex. Many students are expected to come to university by car, and as the residents argue, the overflow will likely spill over into their residential areas. Concerns extend to the potential increase in traffic and the dangers posed to pedestrians and cyclists attempting to navigate the narrow Dyke Road, which is already ill-equipped to handle a surge in student foot traffic.

Environmental considerations are also at the forefront of residents' objections. The planned development threatens the established flora and fauna of the area, with warnings about the destruction of trees and hedgerows raised within the residents' appeal. Many fear that this will negatively impact local wildlife and disrupt the delicate ecological balance of a community that has thrived over decades.

The residents have made clear that their focus is on advocating for sustainable housing solutions appropriate to the needs of the community. They urge for changes in planning strategy towards affordable family homes rather than short-term accommodation catering to transient student populations. Recent trends suggest that this debate is not confined to the Coolough Road developments; across Galway, concerns are growing over the rapid proliferation of student housing that has been met with significant backlash from local communities.

As Galway City Council planners have started to recognise the community’s unease, further developments in the planning framework for student accommodations are likely to be on the horizon. As the decision date for An Bord Pleanála approaches, with a ruling expected by August 20, the fate of this substantial student apartment development—and indeed, the character of the Terryland area—hangs in the balance.

In a time when urban planning increasingly prioritises corporate interests, the voices of local residents serve as a crucial reminder of the need for community-sensitive development that fosters not just growth, but a thriving, integrated residential environment. The growing call for a balanced approach to housing in Galway reflects a broader trend towards sustainable and community-focused urban planning that could shape the future of such housing initiatives.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
2. Paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5.
3. Paragraphs 1, 4, 5.
4. Paragraphs 1, 2, 4.
5. Paragraphs 2, 3.
6. Paragraph 4.
7. Paragraph 6.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://connachttribune.ie/residents-appeal-against-568-student-apartments-on-the-coolough-road/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://connachttribune.ie/residents-appeal-against-568-student-apartments-on-the-coolough-road/> - Residents from several housing estates in the Terryland area have appealed against the granting of planning permission for a 568-bedroom student apartment development on Coolough Road. The development, approved by city planners in April, consists of 84 apartments across seven blocks ranging from two to five storeys. The residents argue that the project is disproportionate to the surrounding area of two-storey houses and bungalows, and they advocate for sustainable, long-term housing solutions for families instead of transient student accommodations.
3. <https://www.galwaybayfm.ie/galway-bay-fm-news-desk/an-bord-pleanala-appeal-over-revised-plans-for-257-bed-student-complex-in-city-167013> - Local residents have appealed to An Bord Pleanála over revised plans for a 257-bed student accommodation complex in Terryland. The development, initially approved in 2020, was revised to include 257 beds across two blocks up to four storeys high. Concerns raised include the project's scale, traffic impact, pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, and parking provision. An Bord Pleanála is expected to make a decision in October.
4. <https://connachttribune.ie/residents-voice-concerns-over-student-accommodation-complex/> - Galway City Council planners have instructed developers of a proposed student accommodation complex in Terryland to reduce the size of an 'excessive' rooftop plant room and provide a noise impact report. Nearly 40 objections from local residents, including the Crestwood and Tirellan Residents’ Associations, have been received, citing concerns over the visual impact, lack of parking, and the existing high-density student population in the area.
5. <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/galway/news/an-bord-pleanala-approves-galway-development-of-257-bed-student-accommodation-will-go-ahead/a1544442000.html> - An Bord Pleanála has approved a 257-bedroom student housing development in Galway City, comprising two blocks up to four storeys high. The project includes ancillary facilities such as a gym, laundry, reception area, and various parking spaces. Despite local resident associations appealing the decision, An Bord Pleanála determined that the development would not negatively impact the area's residential or visual amenities and would be acceptable in terms of urban design and traffic safety.
6. <https://www.galwaybayfm.ie/galway-city/an-bord-pleanala-clears-way-for-257-bed-student-complex-near-terryland-178831> - An Bord Pleanála has approved a 257-bed student complex near Terryland, Galway. The development, initially approved in 2020, was revised to include 257 beds across two blocks up to four storeys high. Local residents had appealed the decision, citing concerns over the project's scale, traffic impact, and potential use as summer tourist accommodation. An Bord Pleanála's approval clears the way for construction to proceed.
7. <https://www.montanedevelopments.com/developments/coolough> - Montane Developments is constructing a modern 254-bed student accommodation scheme on Coolough Road, Galway. The development comprises several blocks ranging from one to four storeys, with 254 bedrooms grouped into 38 clusters. On-site amenities include shared student spaces, a gym, a multi-purpose room, and laundry and storage facilities. The location is approximately 2 km from NUI Galway, making it convenient for students. The development also provides 280 bicycle spaces to encourage sustainable transport.