



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report 306409-20

Development	Change of use from office to 86 no. residential units
Location	Dolcain House, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Planning Authority	South Dublin County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	SD19A/0324
Applicant(s)	Randalswood Holdings Ltd.
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party v. Decision
Appellant(s)	Randalswood Holdings Ltd.
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	26 th November 2020
Inspector	Louise Treacy

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site has a stated area of 0.865 ha and is located at Dolcain House, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22. The site is located approx. 780 m to the east of the town centre of Clondalkin and within approx. 1km walking distance of the Red Cow stop of the Luas red line to the south-east. The N7 national primary route is approx. 360 m to the south of the site, while the M50 motorway is located approx. 780 m to the east.
- 1.2. The site is bounded by Monastery Road, a 2-lane carriageway to the front/north, by Round Tower GAA Club and pitches to the west/south-west, and by an asphalt production facility to the south and east. A protected structure (in ruins) is located opposite the site on the northern side of Monastery Road.
- 1.3. The site is irregularly shaped and accommodates 3 no. office blocks (Blocks A, B and C) which have a stated floor area of 6,986.4 m². The site is raised above the level of the adjoining public road, with the existing office buildings being prominent features in easterly and westerly approaches to the site. The office blocks appeared to be partially occupied at the time of the inspection.
- 1.4. Blocks A and B are set back from the front boundary by 20 m and 27 m respectively and are linked by a glazed atrium. Block C is located to the rear of the site, behind Block B. Block A is 5-storeys in height, with the 4th floor level being set-back, the atrium and Block B are 4-storeys in height, while Block C is 4-storeys over an under-croft level. Car parking is provided around the blocks at surface level, with further spaces available at lower ground floor level. The lower ground floor level is accessed via a ramp which is located towards the eastern site boundary but was inaccessible at the time of the inspection.
- 1.5. The front boundary of the site is characterised by a concrete post and rail fence with mature trees and landscaping. A palisade fence and mature trees are provided along the western site boundary to the adjoining GAA club and along the southern/south-eastern boundary to the rear of Block C. The existing landscaping provides screening to the adjoining asphalt production facility which is operated by SIAC Bituminous Products Ltd. (hereafter SIAC BP).

- 1.6. The site is accessed via the southerly arm of the Monastery Road/Woodford Hill roundabout, which also provides access to the adjoining asphalt production facility. Both sites utilise a shared internal access road for a distance of approx. 36 m, with the subject site accessed via a T-junction on the western side of the internal route. No footpaths or cycle paths are provided along the shared access road or a large section of the front boundary of the site along Monastery Road.
- 1.7. The sole pedestrian entrance to the site is located within the northern boundary opposite Blocks A and B. This entrance connects to a footpath which terminates to the front of the site and extends in a westerly direction along the southern side of Monastery Road. A pedestrian crossing provides access to the footpath on the northern side of the road. Inbound and outbound Dublin bus stops are available at this location.
- 1.8. The lands further to the north and west of the site are primarily residential in nature, with more commercial/warehouse uses present to the south-east, proximate to the boundary with the N7 national primary route.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development consists of a change of use from office use to residential use, together with extensions and modifications of the existing blocks known as Block A and Block C and associated atrium, into 86 no. residential units consisting of 69 no. 1-bedroom apartments and 17 no. 2-bedroom apartments with associated staff areas.
- 2.2. **Block A across ground to 4th floor:** the proposal includes the removal of the existing 4th floor, part removal of the existing podium slab between ground floor level and lower ground floor level, upgrading of the existing external fabric of the building together with internal removal works and modifications to internal layouts to accommodate the proposed residential units. The proposal also includes the construction of a replacement 4th floor and a 5-storey extension of the block to the north.
- 2.3. **Atrium across ground to 4th floor:** the proposal includes the upgrading of the existing external fabric of the building, modifications to the structure to include the

construction of 1 no. additional floor, together with modifications to internal layouts to accommodate the proposed residential units.

- 2.4. **Block C across ground to 5th floor:** the proposal includes the upgrading of the existing external fabric of the building together with internal removal works and modifications to internal layouts to accommodate the proposed residential units, together with the construction of 1 no. additional floor.
- 2.5. The development also includes modifications of the existing lower ground floor car park and ground floor car park area to include landscaped areas, public open space areas, surface and lower ground floor level car parking, motorcycle parking, cycle parking and bin storage; all with associated signage, drainage, mechanical plant, roof gardens and associated access and site development works, while maintaining the existing site and basement entrances on completion.
- 2.6. The proposed development comprises Phase 1 of 3 no. phases of development which are proposed across the entire 0.865 ha site, comprising a total of 181 no. apartment units to be provided within the refurbished and extended office blocks and by way of a new stand-alone block. Each of the 3 phases of development have been proposed by way of separate planning applications.
- 2.7. Phase 1 relates to the development which is proposed under this appeal case. Phase 2 relates to Block B, which adjoins the atrium and Block C, and is proposed to accommodate 24 no. apartment units. Phase 3 relates to Block D, a new stand-alone block on the eastern-most portion of the site, which is proposed to accommodate 71 no. apartment units. Further details in relation to the status of the 3 phases of development are provided in Section 4.0 Planning History.

3.0 **Planning Authority Decision**

3.1. **Decision**

- 3.1.1. Notification of the Decision to Refuse Permission for 6 no. reasons issued on 10th December 2019. The refusal reasons can be summarised as follows:

- (1) The proposed development would be visually obtrusive and would adversely impact the visual amenity of the application site and the character of the wider area;

- (2) The proposed development would fail to provide an adequate standard of accommodation for prospective residents by reason of poor outlook, lack of privacy, access to daylight/sunlight, air quality, noise disturbance and poor quality and quantity of shared open space;
- (3) The proposal would provide an over-provision of one-bed units without adequate justification based on local demand or demographic profile and therefore would fail to provide a balanced range of dwelling types;
- (4) The proposal would fail to provide an appropriately landscaped area within the application site and would fail to provide an acceptable quality and quantity of public open space or play space for prospective residents;
- (5) The proposed intensification of vehicular traffic would lead to unacceptable levels of traffic congestion on the adjoining road network to the detriment of traffic safety. The proposal would also result in poor access for pedestrians and cyclists due to the use of the shared entrance, without proper infrastructure, leading to unsafe conditions and traffic hazards;
- (6) The development as proposed, in the absence of an overall masterplan or framework for the 'RES' zoned lands, taken in conjunction with the two concurrent planning applications within the site boundary and the extant planning permission on part of the site and the adjacent lands to the east, represents undesirable, haphazard, piecemeal, un-coordinated development and would set an undesirable precedent for similar type developments in the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

- 3.2.2. While the Planning Officer noted that the redevelopment of this brownfield site would be in accordance with the objectives of the NPF, it was considered that the proposed development would not provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for prospective residents due to poor outlook, access to light and privacy. It was also considered that no justification had been provided for the proposed unit mix, comprising 80% 1-bedroom units and 20% 2-bedroom units.

- 3.2.3. The reduced set-back of Block A from the street, coupled with its additional height and width and the mass of the structure and its poor elevational treatment, was also considered to be materially harmful to the character of the site and surrounding area.
- 3.2.4. The Planning Officer also had concerns in relation to: (1) noise, air quality and traffic safety due to the proximity to the neighbouring asphalt plant; (2) the quality and quantity of open space, landscaping and play space; (3) potential traffic and pedestrian safety issues; and (4) traffic congestion.
- 3.2.5. **Other Technical Reports**
- 3.2.6. **Water Services:** No objection subject to conditions.
- 3.2.7. **Environmental Health Officer:** Request for Further Information recommended regarding: (1) an acoustic assessment of potential noise impacts of nearby roads and the adjoining industrial site; and (2) the impact of the plume from the chimney stack located in the adjoining industrial site.
- 3.2.8. **Parks and Landscape Services:** Request for Further Information recommended in relation to: (1) landscape masterplan and landscape design rationale; (2) tree survey/arboricultural assessment; (3) details of play proposals; and (4) a detailed SuDS scheme.
- 3.2.9. It was also noted that a bat survey had not been submitted and that the site boundary has large trees and hedgerows which bat species typically frequent.
- 3.2.10. **Roads Department (20th November 2019 and 6th December 2019)**
- 3.2.11. The report of 20th November 2019 noted no objections to the proposed development subject to conditions.
- 3.2.12. The report of 6th December 2019 recommended that planning permission be refused on the basis of traffic congestion on the adjoining road network. Conditions are identified in the event planning permission is granted.
- 3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**
- 3.4. **An Taisce:** Submits that the application should be assessed in terms of its impact on the amenity of the area and relevant development plan provisions.

3.5. Third Party Observations

3.5.1. 1 no. observation was made on the application by SLR on behalf of SIAC BP, which operates the adjoining asphalt production facility. The points which were raised can be summarised as follows:

- (1) The proposed development could be impacted by, and impact upon, the continued operation of the existing asphalt plant;
- (2) The planning application Design Statement has not identified potential conflicts between the asphalt plant and the proposed development and how such conflicts may be eliminated or mitigated;
- (3) There are no restrictions on the operation of the asphalt plant, including night-time working, output/production volumes, the volume of intake materials; the number/timing of HGV traffic movements; noise emissions/emissions to atmosphere; continuous plant/excavator movements; and on-site lighting arrangements;
- (4) The on-site activities are currently screened from the view of, and not overlooked, by any residential property;
- (5) It is envisaged that the asphalt production activity will continue at this location for the foreseeable future. The proposed residential development may give rise to an increased number of nuisance/environmental complaints regarding emissions and noise;
- (6) The reduced separation distance between the asphalt facility and the residential development will increase the potential for residential amenity impacts. Appropriate noise mitigation measures should be incorporated into the development;
- (7) Potential conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists due to the absence of cycling and walking infrastructure;
- (8) Traffic safety implications of HGV trucks accessing the asphalt plant at night-time, due to absence of street lighting;
- (9) Inaccurate red line boundary.

4.0 Planning History

- 4.1. **Planning Authority Reg. Ref. SD19A/0327; ABP Ref. 306399-20:** Planning permission sought for, inter alia, a change of use from office to residential use, extension and modification of the existing block, known as “Block B” into 24 no. residential units, consisting of 20 no. 1-bedroom apartments and 4 no. 2-bedroom apartments and all associated development.
- 4.2. South Dublin County Council issued Notification of the Decision to Refuse Permission for this application on 10th December 2019 for 6 no. reasons. The refusal reasons reflect those issued in relation to the current appeal case.
- 4.3. A first-party appeal has been lodged in relation to this decision, which is a concurrent case before the Board (ABP Ref. 306399-20).
- 4.4. **Planning Authority Reg. Ref. SD19A/0328:** Planning permission sought for, inter alia, a new building of 71 no. residential units known as “Block D” consisting of 46 no. 1-bedroom apartments, 19 no. 2-bedroom apartments and 6 no. 3-bedroom apartments across ground to 6th floor and all associated development.
- 4.5. Notification of the Decision to Refuse Permission for this application issued on 11th December 2019. Planning permission was refused for the same 6 no. reasons issued in relation to the current appeal case and the Block B application identified above. No appeal has been brought in relation to this decision.
- 4.6. **Planning Authority Reg. Ref. SD10A/0064; ABP Ref. PL06S.237700:** 10-year permission granted on 9th November 2012 for a mixed-use development comprising commercial (office) use (circa 11,268 m² gross floor area), 5 no. retail units (circa 1,450 m² gross floor area), a crèche (circa 790 m² gross floor area), a café/restaurant (circa 285 m²), community rooms/management office suite (circa 228 m² gross floor area), and 346 no. residential units, to be accommodated in 15 no. blocks ranging in height from 3 to 6 storeys.
- 4.7. This planning application includes part of the current appeal site, excluding the existing office buildings, and the entire site of the adjoining asphalt plant.
- 4.8. **Planning Authority Reg. Ref. SD08A/0616:** Planning permission granted on 9th December 2008 for an additional floor of office accommodation at 5th floor set-back level to the southern elevation of the existing SIAC HQ.

- 4.9. An extension of the duration of this permission to 9th December 2018 was granted on 5th February 2014 under **Planning Authority Reg. Ref. SD08A/0616 EP.**
- 4.10. **Planning Authority Reg. Ref. SD06A/1072:** Planning permission granted on 8th May 2007 for a 4-storey extension over undercroft car parking on the southern elevation of the existing SIAC HQ.
- 4.11. **Planning Authority Reg. Ref. S99A/0023:** Planning permission granted on 7th May 1999 for a 4-storey addition linked by a glazed atrium to the existing 4-storey offices.

5.0 Policy and Context

5.1. South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022

5.2. Land Use Zoning

- 5.2.1. The site is subject to land use zoning “RES” (Existing Residential) which has the objective “to protect and/or improve residential amenity”. Residential land uses are permitted in principle under this zoning objective.

5.3. Settlement Strategy

- 5.3.1. The subject site is located approx. 780 m south-east of the settlement of Clondalkin, which is a Metropolitan Consolidation Town within the settlement hierarchy of South Dublin County.
- 5.3.2. **Core Strategy Policy 2 Metropolitan Consolidation Towns:** It is the policy of the Council to support the sustainable long-term growth of Metropolitan Consolidation Towns through consolidation and urban expansion.

5.4. Housing

- 5.4.1. **Housing Policy 7:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all new residential development within the County is of high-quality design and complies with Government guidance on the design of sustainable residential development and residential streets including that prepared by the Minister under Section 28 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- 5.4.2. **Housing Policy 8:** It is the policy of the Council to promote higher residential densities at appropriate locations and to ensure that the density of new residential development is appropriate to its location and surrounding context.

- 5.4.3. **Housing Policy 9:** It is the policy of the Council to support varied building heights across residential and mixed-use areas in South Dublin County.
- 5.4.4. **Housing Policy 10:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that a wide variety of adaptable housing types, sizes and tenures are provided in the County in accordance with the provisions of the Interim South Dublin County Council Housing Strategy 2016-2022.
- 5.4.5. **Housing Policy 11:** It is the policy of the Council to promote a high quality of design and layout in new residential development and to ensure a high-quality living environment for residents, in terms of the standard of individual dwelling units and the overall layout and appearance of the development.
- 5.4.6. **Housing Policy 12:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all residential development is served by a clear hierarchy and network of high quality public open spaces that provides for active and passive recreation and enhances the visual character, identity and amenity of the area.
- 5.4.7. **Housing Policy 13:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all dwellings have access to high quality private open space (inc. semi-private open space for duplex and apartment units) and that private open space is carefully integrated into the design of new residential developments.
- 5.4.8. **Housing Policy 17:** It is the policy of the Council to support residential consolidation and sustainable intensification at appropriate locations, to support ongoing viability of social and physical infrastructure and services and meet the future housing needs of the County.

5.5. **Transport**

- 5.5.1. **Transport and Mobility Policy 5 Traffic and Transport Management:** It is the policy of the Council to effectively manage and minimise the impacts of traffic within the County.

5.6. **Development Management Standards**

- 5.6.1. All medium to large scale proposals (10 dwellings or more) shall be accompanied by a Design Statement which shall consist of: (1) a site analysis; (2) a concept plan and/or masterplan; (3) a statement based on the design criteria set out in relevant national planning guidance documents; and (4) a statement or quality audit

addressing street design as outlined in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

5.6.2. The development plan requires that car parking for residential developments shall be provided at a rate of 0.75 space per 1-bedroom unit and 1 space per 2-bedroom unit in Zone 2, which includes sites within 400m of a high-quality public transport service. No parking requirement is identified for visitors.

5.6.3. Bicycle parking is required at a rate of 1 space per 5 apartment units, with 1 space per 10 units required for visitors.

5.7. **Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)**

5.7.1. The key development standards for apartment units in the context of this appeal case are summarised below:

- **Overall floor area:** 1-bedroom unit - 45 m²; 2-bedroom/3-person unit – 63 m² (not to comprise more than 10% of the total units); 2-bedroom/4-person unit – 73 m². The majority of the units shall exceed the minimum floor area standards by 10%;
- **Unit Mix:** Max. 50% 1-bedroom units, with no requirement for 3-bedroom units;
- **Storage space:** 1-bedroom unit - 3 m²; 2-bedroom/3-person unit – 5 m²; 2-bedroom/4-person unit – 6 m². Storage for bulky items should also be provided outside individual apartment units;
- **Dual Aspect Ratio:** Minimum 50% dual aspect units; where single aspect apartments are provided, the number of south facing units should be maximised, with east and west facing units also acceptable;
- **Floor to Ceiling Height:** Min. of 2.4 m required, but 2.7 m encouraged;
- **Lift and Stair Cores;** Max. of 12 apartments per floor per core;
- **Private amenity space:** 1-bedroom unit - 5 m²; 2-bedroom/3-person unit – 6 m²; 2-bedroom/4-person unit – 7 m²;
- **Communal amenity space:** 1-bedroom unit - 5 m²; 2-bedroom/3-person unit – 6 m²; 2-bedroom/4-person unit – 7 m².

- The recreational needs of children must be considered as part of communal amenity space. Small play spaces (85 – 100 m²) catering for children up to the age of 6 to be provided in a scheme with 25 or more units of 2 or more bedrooms; and play areas of 200 – 400 m² to be provided for older children and young teenagers in a scheme with 100 or more units with 2 or more bedrooms.
- Private and communal amenity space may adjoin each other, but there should be a clear distinction, with an appropriate boundary treatment and/or a 'privacy strip' between the two. Designers must ensure that the heights and orientation of adjoining blocks permit adequate levels of sunlight to reach communal amenity space throughout the year.
- **Public open space:** No requirement identified under the Guidelines. Section 11.3.1 (iii) of the development plan requires that a minimum of 10% of the site area in new residential developments shall be provided as public open space.
- **Bicycle parking:** 1 cycle storage space per bedroom, with visitor parking required at a rate of 1 space per residential unit;

Car parking: In suburban/urban locations served by public transport or close to town centres or employment areas (intermediate urban locations), planning authorities must consider a reduced overall car parking standard and apply an appropriate maximum standard.

5.7.2. **Communal facilities** should not generally be imposed as requirements by the planning authority in the absence of proposals from and/or the agreement of the applicant.

5.7.3. While noting the recommended threshold of 1 no. 20 space **childcare facility** per 75 dwelling units as provided under the *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2001), the 2018 Guidelines confirm that the threshold for any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms.

5.7.4. Provision shall be made for the **storage and collection of waste** materials in apartment schemes. Refuse facilities shall be accessible to each apartment stair/ lift core and designed for the projected level of waste generation and types and quantities of receptacles required.

5.8. Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)

5.8.1. Planning applications for increased building height, shall demonstrate that the proposal satisfies a number of criteria as set out in Section 3.2 of the Guidelines.

5.8.2. **At the scale of the relevant city/town**, these include: (a) the site is well-served by public transport; and (b) the proposal successfully integrates into / enhances the character and public realm of the area.

5.8.3. **At the scale of the district/neighbourhood/street**, these include: (a) the proposal makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape; (b) the proposal is not monolithic and avoids long uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks; (c) the proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of legibility through the site; and (d) the proposal contributes positively to the mix of dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood.

5.8.4. **At the scale of the site/building**, these include: (a) the form, massing and height of the buildings should be carefully modulated to maximise access to natural daylight, ventilation and views and minimise overshadowing and loss of light; (b) appropriate and reasonable regard to quantitative approaches to daylight provision; and (c) where a proposal may not be able to fully meet the daylight provisions, this must be clearly identified and an alternative for compensatory design measures should be provided.

5.8.5. The Guidelines confirm that in suburban/edge locations, development should include an effective mix of 2, 3 and 4-storey developments which integrate well with existing and historical neighbourhoods. Developments of 4-storeys or more in height can be accommodated alongside existing larger buildings, trees and parkland, river/sea frontage or along wider streets.

5.9. National Planning Framework (NPF)

5.9.1. The NPF sets out objectives which aim to secure more compact and sustainable growth patterns in urban areas in the period to 2040.

5.9.2. **National Policy Objective 3b** seeks to deliver at least 50% of all new homes targeted in the five cities and suburbs of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, within their existing built-up footprints.

5.10. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region

5.10.1. The purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of the NPF by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region to 2031, including the promotion of compact growth and urban regeneration and sustainable settlement patterns. The RSES includes a number of Regional Policy Objectives (RPO), with the following considered most relevant to the assessment of this appeal case:

5.10.2. **RPO 3.2:** Local authorities, in their core strategies shall set out measures to achieve compact urban development targets of at least 50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the built-up area of Dublin city and suburbs and a target of at least 30% for other urban areas.

5.10.3. **RPO: 3.3:** Local authorities shall, in their core strategies, identify regeneration areas within existing urban settlements and set out specific objectives relating to the delivery of development on urban infill and brownfield regeneration sites in line with the Guiding Principles set out in the RSES and to provide for increased densities as set out in the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas', 'Sustainable Urban Housing; Design Standards for new Apartments Guidelines' and the 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities'.

5.10.4. **RPO 4.3:** Support the consolidation and re-intensification of infill/brownfield sites to provide high density and people intensive uses within the existing built-up area of Dublin City and suburbs and ensure that the development of future development areas is co-ordinated with the delivery of key water infrastructure and public transport projects.

5.11. Natural Heritage Designations

5.11.1. None.

5.12. EIA Screening

5.12.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, comprising 86 no. residential units on zoned residential land in an established urban area, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environment impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. A first-party appeal has been lodged by CDP Architecture on behalf of the applicant. It is proposed to amend the development by way of the appeal submission, including: (1) the omission of the extension to the north of Block A, with the proposed development now following the building line and footprint of the existing blocks; (2) an adjustment to the design of the roof plan to reflect the amended Block A layout; (3) reduction of the proposed car parking provision, allowing for an increased quantum of communal open space and privacy screening to apartment units at ground/surface level; and (4) new pedestrian circulation paths within the site and a new cycle path extending from Monastery Road to the surface level car parking.

6.1.2. The revised Masterplan proposals for the site also reflect the omission of Block D as refused permission by South Dublin County Council.

6.1.3. The appeal submission can be summarised as follows:

- The cumulative measurement of all noises present at the proposed development location, are 53 dB LAeq (16-hour) daytime and 49 dB LAeq (8-hour) night-time. These levels are within the South Dublin County Council Noise Action Plan for desirable low levels, and as such, no mitigation measures are required;

- The results of vibration analysis for Peak Particle Velocity and Vibration Dose Value indicate that these are negligible at the site, and as such, no mitigation measures are required;
- Based on the statutory obligation and duty of care of any facility operator such as SIAC, information provided in SIAC planning statements and environmental reports, and on the statutory consents in place for operations on this adjoining site, there should be no emissions to air that would impact on the potential air quality for prospective residents of the proposed development;
- There will be no emissions to air from the proposed development that would result in a risk to baseline air quality in the area. Taking account of the existing environment and the proposed development, it is considered that there would be no significant impact on air quality at the proposed development and no associated human health impacts;
- The link road into the site has existing road markings and street lighting which will assist with the safe movement of vehicular traffic;
- The applicant's land ownership at the south-eastern boundary extends across the existing fence line and is not an error on the planning application drawings;
- All proposed units meet or exceed the minimum required storage standards;
- Non-conforming balcony spaces have been revised to provide a minimum depth of 1.5 m;
- Additional privacy screens have been provided to individual units in Block A and additional landscaping has been provided to the perimeter of the block to improve the outlook from the units and the overall appearance and setting of the scheme;
- Daylight Factor Analysis has been undertaken for a selection of units in Blocks A and C, with minor internal configurations undertaken to bring the daylight received in the units in line with recommended standards;

- A dual aspect ratio of 53.5% was achieved in the scheme as originally submitted, with a ratio of 58% achieved in the revised scheme proposed for the consideration of An Bord Pleanála;
- The apartment development will improve the unit mix in an area which is predominantly characterised by housing units;
- The revised proposals which have been prepared for the consideration of the Board, remove the northern extension to Block A, with the height of the existing block retained. Although the building heights are greater than those prevailing in the area, the proposal relates to existing buildings which are to be retained, with the exception of an additional floor to Block C;
- An additional floor of accommodation to the existing development has already been deemed appropriate by South Dublin County Council under Planning Authority Reg. Ref. SD08A/0616/EP;
- The proposed change of use from office to residential, will serve to integrate the proposal into its residential context;
- A revised Autotrack drawing prepared by Lohan Donnelly illustrates how access to the site for refuse vehicles and fire tenders can be achieved;
- A Construction Traffic Management Plan, public lighting, SuDS measures and a bat survey can be agreed by way of planning condition in the event permission is granted in this instance;
- The proposal is exempt from Part V requirements under Section 96(13) of the Act, which relates to the conversion/reconstruction of a building where at least 50% of the external fabric is retained;
- The increased density of development on the site accords with national and local planning policy, which seeks to increase housing supply and residential densities, whilst avoiding urban sprawl;
- The revised proposals for the consideration of the Board demonstrate usable public open space of 13.8% at ground floor level, 23.5% at both ground and roof level, with the total green areas across the site accounting for 40%. A play space can be easily accommodated at ground floor level and can be

agreed by condition in the event planning permission is granted in this instance;

- The refusal of permission on the grounds of pedestrian accessibility should be disregarded on the grounds of the existing pedestrian access into the development, the signalised pedestrian crossing already available within the wider road network and the acceptable walking distance to the Luas stop;
- There is no cycle network in the immediate vicinity of the site. The amended scheme includes a cycle ramp to aid cyclists in accessing the proposed development from the road network. A bicycle channel can also be provided to the access stairs by way of planning condition;
- The development which was permitted on the subject site and adjoining lands cannot be implemented without the benefit of a revised planning application, due to the overlap with lands within the applicant's ownership and the right-of-way which the applicant avails of across the adjoining site;
- The proposal for the adaptive reuse of existing office buildings aids with sustainability targets, energy conservation and minimisation of urban sprawl;
- The development will create a much-needed opportunity for the aging population to downsize, by creating other housing opportunities in this area;
- There is a minimal risk of flooding associated with the proposed development;
- The accompanying TTA outlines that the proposed development will not be a significant traffic generator and will not adversely impact on the operation of the adjoining public road. The Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit sets out recommendations to improve road safety, all of which have been, or can be accommodated on completion of the development;
- The proposed development is ideally suited in close proximity to a number of forms of sustainable transport modes;
- The proposed development will include a minimum of 60% of the total roof area as a green roof in accordance with development plan requirements;
- The upgrading works to the building façades represent a planning gain on the site, with the existing buildings exhibiting a dated and untidy appearance;

- The proposed development seeks to increase the density on an under-utilised site within a built-up area, proximate to quality public transport links and existing facilities, thus providing a successful response to an opportunity site.
- The revised proposals contained within the appeal submission address the concerns of South Dublin County Council and planning permission should be granted in this instance.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- 6.2.1. A response was received from South Dublin County Council on 7th February 2020. The Planning Authority confirms its decision and notes that the issues raised in the appeal have been covered in the Planning Officer's report.

6.3. Observations

- 6.3.1. None.

7.0 Assessment

- 7.1. In my opinion, the changes which are proposed to the development by way of the appeal submission are material and would be more appropriately addressed by way of a revised planning application. Notwithstanding the foregoing, my assessment considers the amended scheme for the benefit of the Board.

- 7.2. I am satisfied that the main issues for consideration in this case include:

- Principle of the Development
- Land Ownership
- Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses
- Compliance with Development Management Standards
- Visual Impact
- Vehicular Connections
- Pedestrian and Cycling Connections
- Site Masterplan Proposals

- Part V

7.3. Each of these issues is addressed in turn below.

7.4. **Principle of the Development**

- 7.4.1. The site is subject to land use zoning “RES” (Existing Residential) which has the objective “to protect and/or improve residential amenity”. Residential land uses are permitted in principle under this zoning objective. The redevelopment of this brownfield site would be in accordance with National Policy Objective 3b of the NPF, which seeks to deliver at least 50% of all new homes within the existing built-up footprints of the five main cities and their suburbs, to secure more compact and sustainable growth patterns in urban areas. The proposed development is also supported by Policy RPO 4.3 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region, which supports the consolidation and re-intensification of infill/brownfield sites to provide high density development, which is co-ordinated with the delivery of infrastructure, including public transport projects.
- 7.4.2. The proposed development would deliver 86 no. apartment units on a site located within walking distance of the settlement of Clondalkin to the north-west and the Luas red line to the south-east, in addition to being served directly by inbound and outbound Dublin Bus routes. As such, the site is well-located in terms of public transport connections and proximity to an established service centre. The neighbouring lands to the north and west of the site are primarily residential in character, and as such, the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes, would be in keeping with the established character of the area. As such, I consider that the proposed development is acceptable in principle in this instance.

7.5. **Land Ownership**

- 7.5.1. The third-party submission from SIAC BP asserts that the application red line boundary at the south-eastern corner of the site, encroaches on lands under their control. In response to the foregoing, the applicant’s agent submits that the applicant’s land ownership extends across the existing fence line at this location, and as such, an error has not been made on the planning application drawings. A copy of 2 no. title maps in support of this position are included in Appendix O of the appeal. I note that the planning application documentation also includes correspondence from Lemman Solicitors, who confirm that the applicant has a right to access the subject

site via a shared entrance with the SIAC BP site, as highlighted in yellow on the accompanying Land Registry maps.

7.5.2. In comparing the title maps and the Site Location Map (Drawing No.3.1.002) provided with the planning application, I consider that a discrepancy does arise at the southern/south-eastern site boundary where the subject site adjoins the neighbouring SIAC BP site. In using the club house in the Round Tower GAA site to the west as a reference point, I consider that the application red line boundary as illustrated on the planning drawings, extends further south compared with that shown on the title maps. As such, in my opinion, the red line boundary appears to extend into the adjoining SIAC BP site as identified in the third-party submission.

7.5.3. However, I further note that the site boundary discrepancy relates to an existing landscaped belt along the shared boundary which is proposed to be retained under this planning application. As such, given that no substantive works are proposed in this location, I am satisfied that the applicant has sufficient legal interest to carry out the proposed development in the event planning permission is granted.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, I would draw the Board's attention to the provisions of Part III, Section 34(13) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), which states that a person shall not be entitled solely by reason of a permission under this section to carry out any development.

7.6. Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses

7.6.1. The subject site and the SIAC BP asphalt production facility utilise the same shared vehicular entrance off the Monastery Road/Woodford Hill roundabout, with individual entrances subsequently provided to both sites. The access arrangements remain unchanged under this application.

7.6.2. SIAC BP have lodged a third-party submission in relation to the proposed development. It is submitted that the facility operates on a 24-hour/7-day week basis and that the proposed development may give rise to an increased number of nuisance and environmental complaints from future occupants. SIAC BP further submit that the planning application documentation has not described how potential conflicts between the existing and proposed uses may be mitigated.

7.6.3. I note that South Dublin County Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) considered that the site location poses a risk of long-term noise exposure due to its

proximity to the N7 and M50 and the directly adjacent industrial site. It was considered that the future occupants of the development would be exposed to long-term health impacts of this noise, if the proposed development is not designed and constructed to a standard which mitigates the level of noise through its façade. The EHO further noted that there is a stack emission source in the industrial site, which could impact the proposed development, based on wind and weather conditions.

- 7.6.4. The planning application documentation did not include any assessment of the potential for residential amenity impacts to arise on foot of the adjoining industrial use. However, noise and air quality concerns have been addressed in the appeal submission, by way of an Air Quality Assessment Report prepared by Enviroguide Consulting and an Acoustic Review prepared by Dalton Acoustics.
- 7.6.5. The acoustic assessment notes that the southern elevation of the existing Block C is closest to the **noise** sources of the adjoining SIAC BP site, the N7 national primary route and the M50 motorway. To assess the baseline noise environment, noise measurements were undertaken at 2 no. locations on the 2nd floor of Block C at the south-eastern (NML1) and south-western corners (NML2) of the block. Measurements were undertaken over a 2-day period. **Vibration** levels within the existing block were also measured over a 2-day period in the general location of NML1.
- 7.6.6. The assessment notes that traffic noise is negligible at the nearest elevation of Block C to the N7 and M50 roadways, with traffic noise from local roads noted to be intermittent. As such, traffic is determined not to be a dominant source of noise at this location. Identified noise sources from operations in the adjoining site include the low hum of machinery/plant, general vehicle movements with reversing sirens, personnel on site and a speaker system. Other noise sources included dogs barking, aircraft movements and the electricity generator of Round Towers GAA Club.
- 7.6.7. The cumulative measurement of all noise present at the proposed development location are 53 dB LAeq (16-hour) daytime and 49dB LAeq (8-hour) night-time. These levels exclude the Round Towers electricity generator, which the assessment confirms does not create an undesirable scenario for domestic dwelling development as per BS4142:2104. The 16-hour daytime LAeq including the generator is 57dB.

- 7.6.8. The noise results are stated to comply with the Draft South Dublin County Council Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 for desirable low levels of <50dB(A) Lnight and <55dB(A) Lday and with the Dublin Agglomeration Noise Action Plan 2018-2023. On foot of the foregoing, no noise mitigation measures are deemed necessary for the proposed development.
- 7.6.9. The vibration transmission results for Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) and Vibration Dose Value (VDV) to assess the potential affects from the adjoining SIAC BP site are identified as being negligible when compared with relevant standards. As such, no mitigation measures are suggested with respect to vibration impacts.
- 7.6.10. The Air Quality Assessment Report notes that the key potential source of **emissions to air** that could impact on the standard of air quality for public health at the subject site is the adjoining SIAC BP site. The assessment notes that SIAC BP has a statutory obligation and duty of care under the Air Quality Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) to operate in a manner to prevent any emissions to air that are deleterious to the interests of the public health of the occupants of any adjoining properties, regardless of whether these are commercial or residential.
- 7.6.11. In preparing the Air Quality Assessment Report, Enviroguide Consulting reviewed a Planning and Environmental Statement which accompanied a recent application on the SIAC BP site (SDCC Reg. Ref. 19A/0063). This review determined that emissions from the asphalt plant/emissions stack are routinely monitored on an ongoing basis in accordance with recognised best environmental practice, with all emissions being below recognised emission threshold values. It is also noted that a 5-year waste permit on the SIAC BP site contains conditions regarding the prevention of odour/dust/nuisances and the undertaking of dust monitoring. Based on the foregoing, it is submitted that there should be no emissions to air that would impact air quality for prospective residents of the proposed development.
- 7.6.12. While air quality monitoring was not undertaken on site, the assessment notes that baseline air quality for the closest monitoring stations at Tallaght and Ballyfermot indicate an Air Quality Index for Health (AQIH) of 1 and a status of “good air quality” at both locations. As such, it is submitted that the current baseline air quality in the vicinity of the subject site is good.

7.6.13. The results of ambient air quality monitoring for 2 no. 24-hour monitoring periods for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} undertaken on the SIAC BP site in 2018 were also reviewed (Planning Reg. Ref. SD19A/0063 refers). The monitoring was undertaken at 2 no. locations, including at the south-eastern corner of the current application site, and at the shared entrance adjacent to the Woodford Hill/Monastery Road roundabout. The recorded results were noted to be less than 50% of the Irish Standards that are protective of human health, with the max. concentrations of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} being within the range for an AQIH Air Quality Index of 1 and AQIH status of “good air quality”. The monitoring results also noted that the 27m height of the SIAC stack was above the minimum 12 m height required for adequate dispersion of emissions and that regardless of the proposed changes to the operations at the SIAC BP site, there would continue to be no impacts on air quality. Based on the foregoing, Enviroguide Consulting conclude that there will be no potential air quality issues for prospective residents of the proposed development.

7.6.14. In my opinion, the undertaking of air quality monitoring within the subject site would have been a preferable approach in support of this planning application. However, notwithstanding the foregoing, I consider that the desktop review of the available baseline information which has informed the Air Quality Assessment as submitted with the appeal is a reasonable approach, having regard to the date of the air quality monitoring on the adjoining SIAC BP site and the results which were obtained.

7.6.15. Thus, having reviewed and considered the information which accompanies the appeal in relation to potential noise and air quality impacts on the future occupants of the proposed development, I am satisfied that no such impacts would arise which would unduly impact on the residential amenity of the site.

7.7. **Compliance with Development Management Standards**

7.7.1. The development standards for apartments are set out in the “Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (2018). The compliance of the proposed development with the relevant standards is considered further below.

7.7.2. In considering the **overall floor area** of the proposed development, I note that a total of 86 no. apartments are proposed, including 69 no. 1-bedroom units; 5 no. 2-bedroom/3-person units and 12 no. 2-bedroom/4-person units.

- 7.7.3. The 1-bedroom apartments range in size from 45.3 m² to 61.8 m²; the 2-bedroom/3-person units are 66.6 m², while the 2-bedroom/4-person units range in size from 73.6 m² to 81.8 m². As such, all proposed units meet the minimum overall floor area requirements. Having reviewed the schedule of areas, I am also satisfied the majority of the units exceed the minimum floor area standards by 10%.
- 7.7.4. The proposed development includes 80% 1-bedroom apartments, and as such, does not comply with the **unit mix** specified in the 2018 Guidelines, with a max. of 50% such units allowed.
- 7.7.5. The applicant's Design Statement identifies that the proposed development will allow the local aging population to downsize and create other housing opportunities in the area. It is stated on page 16 of the appeal submission, that the proposed development is in accordance with H10 Objective 1 of the SDCC Development Plan 2016-2022, which is "to ensure that new residential developments provide for a wide variety of housing types, sizes and tenures in line with the Interim South Dublin County Council Housing Strategy 2016-2022". In supporting this assertion, the applicant's agent submits that the development will contribute to a mix of unit types in an area which is predominantly characterised by housing units. In my opinion, the applicant's agent has misinterpreted this development plan policy, which requires new housing developments to include a variety of unit types, rather than facilitating a unit mix on a wider, area basis.
- 7.7.6. Correspondence from CBRE is included in Appendix J of the appeal, which notes that there has been a strong, recent demand for 1 and 2-bedroom units in this area. A copy of the 2016 census results for the Clondalkin-Monastery Electoral Division is also included, which identify the tenure, number of persons per household, number of rooms per household and the housing type in this area. In my opinion, these enclosures do not provide sufficient justification for the proposed unit mix, which does not comply with the maximum number of 1-bedroom units allowed.
- 7.7.7. The number of **units per core per floor** in this instance ranges from 2 – 12, which complies with the maximum number permitted under the 2018 Guidelines. The section drawings which accompany the application also indicate that the minimum **internal ceiling height** is achieved or exceeded in all instances.

- 7.7.8. The schedule of areas does not confirm the **storage space** provision for each apartment unit. While South Dublin County Council's Planning Officer identified that 19 no. of the units did not meet the minimum storage requirements, I note that all units meet or exceed the minimum overall floor area requirements. The applicant's agent notes on page 15 of the appeal that, while some storage areas are accessed from other habitable areas, their floor areas are accounted for separately. Thus, I am satisfied that the internal storage provision for the apartment units is acceptable.
- 7.7.9. I further note that provision has not been made for the storage of bulky items outside of the individual apartment units. In my opinion, this issue could be resolved at basement level or an alternative location elsewhere within the site. In my opinion, this matter could be addressed by way of condition if planning permission is granted by the Board.
- 7.7.10. A total of 53% (46 no.) of the units are **dual-aspect** which complies with the minimum Guidelines requirement of 50%. In considering this issue further, I note that the proposed development includes a total of 40 no. (47%) single-aspect units, including 26 no. units in Block A; 9 no. units in the atrium, and 5 no. units in Block C. I note that 7 no. of the single-aspect units in Block A and the atrium are north-facing. These units do not overlook any significant amenity space which would serve to mitigate their aspect, and as such, do not comply with the requirements of the 2018 Guidelines.
- 7.7.11. I also have concerns regarding the **availability of light** within 10 no. of the units on the north-facing elevation of Block C (unit nos. 1C, 5C, 6C, 10C, 11C, 16C, 17C, 21C, 22C and 26C). While the units are dual-aspect, I note that the sole window serving the living room/kitchen area in each unit is positioned behind the winter garden, which may result in low levels of light within these spaces, particularly on the lower floors of the block. I have similar concerns in relation to 15 no. single-aspect units on the west-facing elevation of Block A (nos. 3A, 4A, 5A, 11A, 12A, 14A, 20A, 21A, 22A, 32A, 33A, 34A, 44A, 45A and 46A).
- 7.7.12. South Dublin County Council's Planning Officer also expressed concerns regarding the south-facing units of Block C, given their proximity to the mature evergreen trees at the southern site boundary. I consider that these concerns are reasonable, given that a set-back of between 8 – 13 m arises at this location based on my examination

of the Proposed First Floor Plan (Drawing No. 3.1.204). I note that a daylight/sunlight assessment has not been provided in support of the application, which I consider to be a significant omission in this instance.

- 7.7.13. In examining the **aspect/privacy** of the apartment units, South Dublin County Council's Planning Officer also expressed concerns in relation to unit nos. 1A and 1AT at ground floor level, which have habitable rooms overlooking a communal open space, with no privacy measures provided. Concerns were also raised in relation to the outlook of unit no. 1A, which although dual aspect, would have views of the car park and communal area. Similar concerns were noted in relation to unit nos. 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A and 6A which were considered to have a poor outlook, with views of the car park and access road to the south. It was further considered that the location of the bicycle store directly beside unit 8A would offer a poor outlook and potential disturbance to residents.
- 7.7.14. I considering the foregoing, I agree that the provision of ground floor units which abut communal open spaces and car/motorcycle/cycle parking areas, would likely result in an unacceptable level of disturbance to the occupants of these units. As such, I have concerns regarding the orientation / aspect of a number of the apartment units and, in my opinion, planning permission should be refused on this basis.
- 7.7.15. The **private amenity space** comprises individual winter gardens for each apartment unit. The winter gardens for the 1-bedroom units range in size from 5 m² to 6 .9 m²; those for the 2-bedroom/3-person units are 6.1 m² and for the 2-bedroom/4-person units range from 7 m² to 9. 3 m². A total of 81 no. of the proposed winter gardens have a minimum width of 1.5 m in compliance with the Guideline requirements.
- 7.7.16. The remaining 5 no. winter gardens at the south-western corner of Block C (unit nos. 4C, 9C, 15C, 20C and 25C) are triangular shaped, with depths which vary between 0.1 m and 2.2 m. In my opinion, this configuration would render a significant portion of each of these individual spaces unusable. I note that this issue has arisen on foot of the proposed retention of the existing building footprint and could have been resolved by regularising the south-west elevation of this block or reconfiguring the internal layout of the proposed units. In my opinion, the sustainability benefits which may arise on foot of the retention and refurbishment of the existing office blocks are

not sufficient to justify a reduced standard of residential amenity for the future occupants of these units.

- 7.7.17. In considering the **communal open space** provision, I note that the schedule of areas which accompanies the application states that a total of 2,256.5 m² or 26% of the site area comprises “public open space”. In my opinion, the term “communal open space” is a more accurate description, given that these spaces will serve future residents of the scheme.
- 7.7.18. The 26% communal open space figure relates to the entire site area within the red line boundary, including the proposed roof gardens and the landscaped spaces at ground floor level. It is unclear if the landscaped belts at the north, west and southern site boundaries are included in this figure. In my opinion, these areas would not function as usable open spaces having regard to their size/configuration and the nature of the landscaping. The overall figure also includes the roof gardens to Blocks B and D which were submitted by way of separate planning applications.
- 7.7.19. In the context of the current application, I note that “landscaped public open spaces” of 859.2 m² are proposed on the roofs of Block A, the atrium and Block C. The schedule of areas indicates that 2 no. ground floor open spaces of 85.5 m² and 533 m² are also proposed (Area 1 and Area 2 respectively). These ground floor spaces are not clearly identified on the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Drawing 3.1.101) which annotates “Landscape Area 1” to the rear of the atrium and Block A, with a further linear “Public Open Space 1 Landscaped Area” identified in the central area of the site to the north of Block C. The stated area of these spaces on the Site Plan drawing does not correspond to the schedule of areas. The extent of these spaces is also not clearly demarcated on the Proposed Site Layout Plan.
- 7.7.20. Based on the proposed unit mix, a total communal open space requirement of 459 m² would arise in this instance. Notwithstanding the overall communal open space figures which are proposed, I consider that the ground floor spaces are of poor quality. The layout is dictated by the footprint of the retained office blocks, which in my opinion, results in a series of marginal, piecemeal spaces. The Landscape Masterplan indicates that the ground floor communal open space will comprise 3 no. individual lawns. The area adjoining the eastern façade of Block C is proposed as a planted space of trees /shrubs, and as such, I consider this area would not function

as a usable amenity space. No play spaces are proposed for children, but I consider that this matter could be resolved by condition in the event An Bord Pleanála decides to grant planning permission in this instance.

- 7.7.21. The 2018 Guidelines note that designers must ensure that the heights and orientation of adjoining blocks permits adequate levels of sunlight to reach communal amenity space throughout the year. I note that a daylight/sunlight analysis or shadow diagrams have not been provided as part of the planning application to confirm that these open spaces would receive an adequate amount of light. In my opinion, the linear space to the north of Block C is likely to be overshadowed for a significant portion of the day given the proposed height of the adjoining blocks. The proposed landscaped space which wraps around the south-eastern corner of Block A is also likely to experience overshadowing.
- 7.7.22. The Parks and Landscape Department of South Dublin County Council shared my concerns and noted that the microclimate generated by tall buildings can lead to increased air current at ground levels, with the tunnelling effect of air between buildings magnifying this effect. This Department also considered that the proposed lawn areas would be overshadowed for much of the year, leading to dark, windy areas that are uninviting, especially during the winter months.
- 7.7.23. While it is noted that the communal open space at roof level exceeds the minimum area requirement, I note that the 2018 Guidelines state that such spaces offer a satisfactory alternative, where climatic and safety factors are fully considered. Section 8.14 of the applicant's Design Statement states that the relevant requirements can be achieved throughout the proposed development, but no further details are provided in this regard. I further note that the roof gardens are intended to function as green roofs for the purposes of SuDS. The Parks and Landscape Department of South Dublin County Council notes that green roofs do not constitute usable open space, and as such, cannot be considered as part of the open space provision for the development.
- 7.7.24. Given the height of the proposed residential blocks and that the roof gardens are intended to serve as the primary communal amenity spaces for future residents, I consider that insufficient details have been provided to demonstrate that these spaces are appropriate for the purposes of meeting the communal open space

requirements of the development. As such, I consider that planning permission should be refused based on the quality of the proposed communal open space.

- 7.7.25. No **public open space** is proposed on the site. While I acknowledge that the SDCC development plan requires that 10% of the site area in new residential developments shall be provided as public open space, I do not consider that this omission alone would warrant a refusal of planning permission in this instance.
- 7.7.26. A total of 188 no. **car parking** spaces are proposed, including 118 no. surface level spaces and 70 no. spaces at lower ground floor level. The 2018 Guidelines state that a reduced overall car parking standard should be considered in suburban locations served by public transport or close to town centres or employment areas. I note that the subject site is served directly by inbound and outbound Dublin Bus routes and is within 1km walking distance of the Luas red line. Section 8.3 of the Design Statement confirms that parking to serve Blocks A and C will be at a rate of 0.75 space per 1-bedroom unit and 1 space per 2-bedroom unit, with 1 no. visitor space for every 5 no. units. This results in a total of 86 no. car parking spaces to facilitate the proposed development. In my opinion, this level of car parking would be acceptable. I note that the Roads Department of South Dublin County Council also had no objection in this regard.
- 7.7.27. A total of 64 no. **bicycle parking** spaces are proposed to serve the development. The spaces comprise Sheffield stands which are located to the front of the proposed atrium and the separately proposed Block B. The 2018 Guidelines require that 1 cycle storage space be provided per bedroom, with visitor parking required at a rate of 1 space per residential unit. Based on the proposed unit mix, a requirement for 199 no. bicycle parking spaces would arise.
- 7.7.28. The Roads Department considered that the bicycle parking provision would meet the development plan requirements of 1 space per 5 units for residents and 1 space per 10 units for visitors. Based on this standard, a need for 26 no. spaces to serve Blocks A and C would arise. Given that 64 no. spaces proposed, I consider that the bicycle parking provision is acceptable in this instance.
- 7.7.29. The proposed development does not include a **childcare facility**, which I consider acceptable having regard to the proposed unit mix. I note that the applicant's Design Statement identifies 15 no. crèche/pre-school facilities within 3.5km of the subject

site. While it is stated that there is spare capacity in these existing facilities, I note that the number of available spaces has not been confirmed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is considered reasonable to assume that any childcare requirement could be accommodated within the existing facilities, given the limited number of family-sized units which are proposed within the development.

7.7.30. An Operational **Waste Management Plan** prepared by Enviroguide Consulting accompanies the application. It is confirmed that the layout and design of the apartment units will ensure there is adequate provision for the temporary storage of segregated materials, with adequate space in the kitchen to facilitate a 3-compartment bin for waste segregation at source. It is proposed to provide 3 no. enclosed bin compounds at ground level, including a total of 42 no. bins to serve the 3 no. phases of development. Separate bins will be provided for the bi-weekly collection of green, brown and black waste. The compounds are proposed in the north-west corner of the site, adjacent to the surface car parking in the central area of the site and adjacent to the eastern elevation of Block C.

7.7.31. In my opinion, there is the potential for noise and odour impacts to arise to the apartment units above bin compound no. 2, which abuts the eastern elevation of Block C. As such, I consider that this compound should be relocated to mitigate these impacts. This matter can be addressed by planning condition in the event planning permission is granted in this instance.

7.7.32. I consider that the location of the remaining 2 no. compounds is acceptable. In my opinion, the number of individual bins required to serve the development could be agreed by way of condition, should the Board grant planning permission for the proposed development.

- **Amended Scheme**

7.7.33. The proposed extension to Block A has been omitted from the amended scheme submitted for the consideration of the Board. The total number of apartment units is reduced to 69 no. including 50 no. 1-bedroom units, 10 no. 2-bedroom/3-person units and 9 no. 2-bedroom/4-person units.

7.7.34. In reviewing the **overall floor area** of the units, I note that the 1-bedroom apartments range in size from 45.3 m² to 61.8 m²; the 2-bedroom/3-person units range from 64.3 m² to 66.6 m², while the 2-bedroom/4-person units range in size from 80.2 m² to 81.8

m². As such, all units meet the minimum overall floor area requirements. Having reviewed the schedule of areas, I am also satisfied the majority of units exceed the minimum floor area standards by 10%.

- 7.7.35. The proposed development includes 72% 1-bedroom apartments, and as such, the amended scheme does not comply with the **unit mix** specified in the 2018 Guidelines.
- 7.7.36. I note that the number of **units per core per floor**, the **internal ceiling heights** and the **internal storage** provision for each unit comply with the 2018 Guidelines. As previously identified, I consider that the provision of a separate storage area for bulky items could be addressed by condition in the event the Board grants planning permission for the amended scheme.
- 7.7.37. The amended scheme includes 40 no. **dual-aspect** units and 29 no. single aspect units, which complies with the minimum Guideline requirement of 50% dual-aspect units. I note that 4 no. of the single-aspect units in the proposed atrium are north-facing. As previously identified, these units do not meet the Guideline requirements in terms of their outlook.
- 7.7.38. In considering the **availability of light** within the revised scheme, I note that Average Daylight Factor Analysis (ADF) has been undertaken for a selection of units within the amended scheme as contained in Appendix L of the appeal. A selection of units has been assessed, including those on the southern elevation of Block C and the north-eastern and south-eastern corners of Block A. While colour diagrams of the analysis are included in Appendix L, the numerical results for 1 no. unit only (no. 8C) are discussed on page 42 of the appeal. It is submitted that this sample unit provides details of how the results for each of the units has been calculated. It is further submitted that each of the units meets the recommended ADF requirements for dwellings with supplementary lighting.
- 7.7.39. While the units appear to meet the ADF standards for kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms based on my visual inspection of the drawings contained in Appendix L, I note that numerical results to support the assessment have not been provided, which I consider to be a significant omission in this instance. I further note that no analysis has been undertaken for the north-facing, single-aspect units in the proposed atrium

or the single-aspect west-facing units in Block A. In my opinion, these units should have been included in the assessment given their orientation and configuration.

7.7.40. While I note that the ADF modelling has taken account of the evergreen trees along the southern boundary of the site, I continue to have concerns regarding the outlook of the apartment units on the southern elevation of Block C, particularly at the lower floors, due to their proximity to the significant mature trees along this boundary.

7.7.41. In considering the **aspect/privacy** of the apartment units further, I note that the proposed ground floor landscaping has been modified to provide additional privacy screening/landscaped areas and elevated planters adjacent to the ground floor apartment units, including unit nos. 1A and 1AT, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A and 7A. The previously proposed car parking adjacent to the western and southern elevations of Block C and the bicycle parking adjacent to the northern elevation of the atrium have also been removed. The applicant's agent submits that the design strategies which have been implemented in this instance, will improve the outlook from the proposed units, as well as the overall outlook and setting of the scheme.

7.7.42. I agree that the revised proposals would improve the privacy of the ground floor apartment units, thus improving the residential amenity standards for future occupants. In the event the Board considers that a grant of permission may be warranted for the amended scheme, I recommend that the details of the proposed landscaping should be agreed by way of condition, given the limited information on the proposed landscaping strategy which has been provided with the appeal.

7.7.43. In reviewing the **private open space** to serve the amended development, I note that the internal layout of units nos. 4C, 9C, 15C, 20C and 25C has been modified to achieve a minimum winter garden depth of 1.5 m. As such, the Guideline requirements in relation to such spaces is now achieved in all instances.

7.7.44. The ground floor level **communal open space** has been increased on foot of the omission of the proposed extension to Block A, the omission of Block D as refused permission by South Dublin County Council and the reduced surface carparking as illustrated on the Proposed Masterplan Layout (Drawing No. 3.1.100 Rev. A refers). The applicant's agent submits that communal open space of 13.8% of the site area is provided at ground level, with 23.5% provided at both ground and roof level. It is submitted that the main areas of communal open space are accommodated at roof

level, in addition to the surface level spaces. It is suggested that a play space can be accommodated at ground floor level by way of condition, if deemed appropriate by An Bord Pleanála.

7.7.45. In reviewing the Proposed Site Layout Plan which accompanies the appeal (Drawing No. 3.1.101 Rev A) I note that the communal space which is proposed to the east of Block B has been improved, with more usable space provided and the surface car parking at this location now removed. While the appeal submission does not confirm the total area of the space provided in this location, I identify an area of 1,008.5 m² based on the figures quoted on the drawing. I note that the quantum of open space to the south of Block A has also been increased on foot of the proposed omission of surface level car parking at this location.

7.7.46. While I consider that the open spaces to the north of Block C and to the south of Block A would continue to experience overshadowing due to the height of the adjoining blocks, I further consider that the revised communal open space would be acceptable, given the quantum now proposed at ground floor level. I agree that a children's play space could be provided by way of condition in the event the Board considers a grant of planning permission may be appropriate for the amended scheme.

7.7.47. The proposed **car parking** has been reduced to 138 no. spaces (including 5 no. universal access spaces). Based on a parking rate of 0.75 space per 1-bedroom unit, 1 space per 2-bedroom unit and 1 no. visitor space for every 5 no. units as previously deemed acceptable by the Roads Department of South Dublin County Council, a requirement for 71 no. spaces would arise. As such, I am satisfied that the reduced car parking provision would be sufficient to facilitate the amended development.

7.7.48. The proposed **bicycle parking** has been reduced to 32 no. spaces. A requirement for 21 no. bicycle spaces would arise to facilitate the 69 no. apartment units based on development plan standards. As such, I am satisfied that the reduced bicycle parking provision would be acceptable in this instance.

7.7.49. The **waste management** arrangements have been amended to include 2 no. bin compounds with 24 no. bins. The compound which was proposed adjacent to Block C has been omitted, with that proposed to the east of Block B, now relocated further

to the east within the site. In my opinion, the location and design of the waste storage facilities is acceptable. I consider that the number of individual bins required to serve the development could be agreed by way of condition in the event planning permission is granted in this instance.

7.8. Visual Impact

- 7.8.1. Refusal reason no. 1 of the Planning Authority's Notification of the Decision to Refuse Permission states, inter alia, that the proposed development would be visually obtrusive and would adversely impact on the visual amenity of the site and the character of the wider area, by reason of its height, bulk, massing and scale. The Planning Authority was also not satisfied that the proposed development complied with the criteria set out in Section 3.2 of the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities (December 2018).
- 7.8.2. In considering the height of the existing blocks, I note that Block A is 5-storeys in height; the atrium and Block B are 4-storeys in height; while Block C is 4-storeys over an under-croft level. The proposed development seeks to replace the existing 4th floor of Block A and provide a new 5-storey extension to the front. The extension has a wider footprint than the retained element of Block A, with a stated width of 23.583 m, and will serve to decrease the set-back of this block from the site boundary at Monastery Road to 5.775 m. An additional floor of development is also proposed to both the atrium and Block C.
- 7.8.3. Block A will have an overall height of 19m above ground level, the atrium will have an overall height of 18.07 m, while Block C will have an overall height of 24.25m. I note that the subject site is elevated above Monastery Road, which will increase the perceived height of the blocks in views of the site from the adjoining public domain.
- 7.8.4. The scale and massing of the proposal is discussed in Section 7.3 of the Design Statement which accompanies the application. It is stated that various design strategies have been used to reduce the overall massing of the buildings, including the use of a variety of building materials and glazing proportions, green walls, varied roof profiles and the use of a plinth arrangement at the ground and 1st floor levels to the north and west elevations of the proposed Block A extension.
- 7.8.5. The Design Statement includes a map which identifies taller buildings of 4 – 7+ storeys in height in the wider vicinity of the site, extending from Newlands Cross to

the south-west, the Red Cow roundabout to the south-east, Clondalkin Retail Park to the north-west and Parkwest Business Campus/Cherry Orchard to the north-east. Photomontage views of the proposed development are also included. It is also submitted that there is a clear precedent for an increased building height under the extant permission for a mixed-use scheme on the site (SD10A/0064; ABP Ref. PL06S.237700 refers). The applicant's agent also notes that an additional floor of accommodation to the existing development has already been deemed appropriate by South Dublin County Council (Planning Reg. Ref. SD08A/0616/EP refers).

- 7.8.6. I acknowledge that the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018) confirm that, in suburban/edge locations, an effective mix of 2, 3 and 4-storey developments should be included, which integrate well with existing neighbourhoods. The Guidelines also state that developments of 4-storeys or more in height can be accommodated alongside existing larger buildings or along wider streets. In this instance, there is a pre-existing building height of 4-5 storeys, and as such, the site already accommodates an increased scale of development, compared with the lands in the immediate vicinity, with the residential developments to the north of Monastery Road being predominantly 2-storeys in height. I further acknowledge that the site has an area of 0.865 ha, and as such, is not unduly constrained by neighbouring developments in seeking to increase the height of the existing buildings.
- 7.8.7. Block C is located to the rear of the site, and in my opinion, is largely screened from the proposed Blocks A and B to the front. In this context, I consider that an additional floor to Block C would have no undue visual impact on the site or wider area. In reaching this conclusion, I acknowledge that an additional floor of development was previously permitted to Block C by the Planning Authority. I also consider that the additional floor which is proposed to the atrium would be acceptable having regard to the pre-existing building heights on the site. I also acknowledge the building heights permitted under the extant permission on the site (Planning Authority Reg. Ref. SD10A/0064; ABP Ref. PL06S.237700 refers) as illustrated on the Proposed Contextual Elevation 1.1 (Drawing No. 3.1.302).
- 7.8.8. However, I consider that the proposed 5-storey extension to the front of Block A, would have an overbearing appearance on the character of the streetscape, arising from the elevated nature of the site and the reduced set-back which would arise from

Monastery Road. While the Design Statement includes photomontage images of the proposed development, I note that proximate and distant street level views of the development have not been provided. In my opinion, limited supporting information has been provided to demonstrate how the proposed extension would successfully integrate into the character of the wider streetscape. The proposed extension to Block A has a width of 23.583 m and while I acknowledge that a variety of design strategies are proposed to reduce the massing of the block, in my opinion, the approach is not particularly successful. As such, I consider that planning permission should be refused based on the massing and overbearing appearance of the proposed extension to Block A and its limited set-back from Monastery Road.

- **Amended Scheme**

- 7.8.9. In seeking to address the Planning Authority's concerns regarding the height, bulk, massing and scale of the development, the proposed 5-storey extension to the north of Block A has been omitted. I note that Block D is also omitted from the site Masterplan proposals, which reflects the decision of South Dublin County Council to refuse permission for this phase of development. The applicant's agent submits that the reduced massing and scale of the proposal will protect the visual amenity of the site and the character of the area.
- 7.8.10. It is further submitted that although the building heights are greater than those prevailing in the area, the proposal relates to existing buildings which are to be retained and adapted to provide residential accommodation, with the exception of the additional floor to Block C. In the interests of clarity, I note that planning permission is also sought for an additional floor to the existing atrium. It is also submitted that the existing buildings are not of architectural merit and that the upgrading works to the building façades represents a planning gain at this location.
- 7.8.11. In my opinion, the omission of the proposed 5-storey extension to Block A would significantly reduce the scale, massing and overbearing appearance of the proposed development. While I continue to have concerns regarding the various façade treatments which are proposed to break up the massing of the block, I consider that the proposed replacement floor to Block A and the additional floors which are proposed to the atrium and Block C, would be acceptable having regard to the height of the existing buildings on the site.

7.9. Vehicular Connections

- 7.9.1. Reason no. 5 of South Dublin County Council's Notification of the Decision to Refuse Permission states that the proposed intensification of vehicular traffic would lead to unacceptable levels of traffic congestion on the adjoining road network to the detriment of traffic safety. The proposal would also result in poor access for pedestrians and cyclists due to the shared entrance, without proper infrastructure leading to unsafe conditions and traffic hazards. As such, the proposal was considered to be contrary to Policy 5 Traffic and Transport Management of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022.
- 7.9.2. The planning application includes a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) as prepared by ORS. The assessment considers the impact of the 3 phases of development which are proposed on the site (Blocks A, B, C and D), including a total of 181 no. apartment units.
- 7.9.3. The TTA identifies that: (1) the Monastery Road L1019/Woodford Hill roundabout currently operates with free-flow traffic; and (2) the junction assessment for 2021, 2026 and 2036 with the proposed development in place, indicates that the roundabout will operate within capacity, with virtually no queuing occurring. It is stated that any potential queuing that may occur, will dissipate relatively quickly, with no adverse effects on the surrounding road network. The assessment concludes that the proposed residential development will not be a significant traffic generator and will not adversely impact on the operation of the public road to which it connects.
- 7.9.4. The Roads Department of South Dublin County Council prepared 2 no. reports on this application (20th November 2019 and 6th December 2019). I note that the same assessment is generally contained in both reports. However, the initial report noted no objection to the proposed development subject to 6 no. conditions, while the latter recommended that planning permission be refused based on traffic congestion.
- 7.9.5. In making this recommendation, the Roads Department noted that the Monastery Road/Woodford Hill roundabout will operate with 41.9% reserve capacity in the predicted year of 2035. However, it is stated that local knowledge would indicate that although the L1019 Monastery Road capacity will not be reached, the Woodford Hill and Woodford Walk roads, will be further congested as a result of the proposed development, as the controlling arm of the roundabout is the Monastery Road

eastbound lane. It is stated that lengthy queues are experienced on the Woodford Hill road in the a.m. and p.m. peaks, which will be exacerbated by the increased traffic on Monastery Road on foot of the proposed development. I note that the report does not confirm whether this “local knowledge” is based on the results of any traffic assessments or surveys at this location.

7.9.6. A response to this refusal reason has been prepared by ORS as included in Appendix N of the appeal. The response summarises the results of the TTA which accompanied the application and notes that increased traffic entering the roundabout from the proposed development, will create a natural break in traffic entering the roundabout from Monastery Road (west), which in turn, will increase opportunities for Woodford Hill traffic to enter the roundabout.

7.9.7. Based on the information which set out in the TTA and the appeal, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not result in unacceptable levels of traffic congestion on the adjoining road network to the detriment of traffic safety. As such, I do not consider that it would be reasonable to refuse planning permission on this basis.

- **Amended Scheme**

7.9.8. The vehicular access arrangements to the site remain the same under the amended scheme. The proposed circulation route within the site also generally remains the same, albeit with the modification of the surface car parking layout on foot of the omission of the proposed extension to Block A and the omission of Block D. I note that updated Autotrack drawings are included in Appendix P of the appeal, which demonstrate that fire tender and refuse vehicle access can be satisfactorily achieved.

7.9.9. Given that the number of vehicles entering / leaving the site would be reduced on foot of the reduced number of residential units, I remain satisfied that the amended development would not result in unacceptable levels of congestion on the surrounding road network.

7.10. **Pedestrian and Cycling Connections**

7.10.1. The sole existing pedestrian entrance is located within the northern site boundary opposite the Block A atrium and comprises a stairway access to Monastery Road. It

is proposed to upgrade the pedestrian entrance, by including a lift platform from street level to ground floor level within the site.

- 7.10.2. While the “Existing Site Layout Plan” (Drawing No. 3.1.003) appears to indicate that a footpath extends along the length of the northern site boundary and either side of the shared internal access road, these connections were noted to be absent during my site inspection. These connections are also indicated on the “Proposed Site Layout Plan” (Drawing No. 3.1.101) but the application does not clarify whether the applicant has entitlement to implement these connections. I further note that no pedestrian or cycling connections are proposed on the internal access route within the site, with vehicular movements only facilitated along the surface level routes.
- 7.10.3. The Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit which accompanies the application notes that “there are no dedicated locations for pedestrians to cross within the site and no designated routes for pedestrians to travel from the site entrance to any point throughout the site, without walking along the internal road network. This could lead to instances where pedestrians are on the road in random locations with the potential for pedestrian-vehicle collisions to occur. This poses a significant risk of injury to pedestrians”. The audit recommends that uncontrolled crossing points be installed on the internal road network, but I note that this recommendation is not reflected on the proposed Site Layout Plan.
- 7.10.4. The Roads Department of South Dublin County Council recommended that a 2m wide footpath be constructed along the northern frontage of the site, extending eastwards from the pedestrian crossing to the Monastery Road/Woodford Hill roundabout. An additional ground floor level pedestrian link onto Monastery Road was also recommended. It was also considered that a footpath should be constructed along the internal access road, extending from the roundabout as far as the eastern edge of the first block (Block D), while the provision of clear pedestrian routes throughout the development was recommended as wayfinding for pedestrians.
- 7.10.5. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, I consider that the proposed access to the site for pedestrians and cyclists has not been adequately resolved. In reaching this conclusion, I note that the enclosed schedule of areas identifies a total occupancy of 438 persons across the 3 no. phases of development.

As such, the proposed development would result in a significant increase in pedestrian and cycling movements at this location.

7.10.6. While I note that a section of the internal access road is outside the red line boundary, I consider that this route would likely become a desire line for pedestrians and cyclists exiting the site in an easterly direction. In this context, I consider that the absence of segregated pedestrian and cycling connections along this route would be unacceptable, resulting in potential conflicts with vehicles within the site, and with HGVs travelling to/from the adjoining SIAC BP site. I also agree that an additional pedestrian entrance onto Monastery Road and an extended footpath along the southern boundary of the public road would be appropriate, to ensure safe pedestrian movements within and around the site. As such, I consider that planning permission should be refused for the proposed development based on the inadequate pedestrian and cycling connections and the potential for conflicts to arise with vehicular traffic.

- **Amended Scheme**

7.10.7. An amended site plan layout is proposed as illustrated on the Proposed Masterplan Layout – Phasing Block Plan (Drawing No. 3.1.100 Rev A). Dedicated pedestrian connections have been provided between the surface car parking, the individual residential blocks and the pedestrian entrance at the northern site boundary. I consider the amended layout has improved pedestrian permeability within the site. However, I note that a segregated pedestrian route has not been provided along the entire length of the internal access road or along the front site boundary at Monastery Road. As previously discussed, I consider that the omission of such connections would result in an unacceptable form of development and the potential for conflicts with vehicular traffic.

7.10.8. The amended scheme proposes a cycle ramp rising from east to west along the northern site boundary at Monastery Road and terminating in the location of the existing pedestrian entrance. A bicycle channel is proposed to be incorporated into the pedestrian entrance, with details suggested for agreement by way of a compliance submission. While I acknowledge that the proposed cycle route would improve access to the site for cyclists, I note that the proposed route is outside of the redline boundary, with no details provided in the appeal as to how this infrastructure

may be delivered. I further note that the existing grass verge between the public road and the fencing to the front of the application site is limited in width, and as such, it is unclear whether sufficient space is available to implement a cycle connection on the southern edge of the public carriageway at this location.

7.11. Site Masterplan Proposals

- 7.11.1. Refusal reason no. 6 of South Dublin County Council's Notification of the Decision to Refuse Permission was based on the absence of an overall masterplan or framework for the RES zoned lands, which, in conjunction with the 2 no. concurrent planning applications within the red line boundary and the extant planning permission on part of the site and the adjacent lands to the east, would represent undesirable, haphazard, piecemeal, un-coordinated development and would set an undesirable precedent for similar type of development in the area.
- 7.11.2. South Dublin County Council's Planning Officer considered that the granting of planning permission in this instance, would result in a scenario where neither the currently proposed development, nor the extant permission for a mixed-use scheme could be fully implemented, given the overlap between each of the red line boundaries. In my opinion, the current application could be fully implemented, notwithstanding the discrepancy in the red line boundary at the south-eastern site boundary as previously discussed. I acknowledge that a revised planning application would be required for the remaining lands as they relate to the extant permission as identified by the applicant's agent.
- 7.11.3. In my opinion, the development of the subject site would be appropriately addressed by way of a single planning application, given that the entire development is intended to function as one residential scheme, with shared access arrangements, communal open space and parking. Thus, I agree that the current application represents a piecemeal approach to the development of the site as identified by the Planning Authority. Notwithstanding the foregoing, I do not consider that this is a material planning consideration which would warrant a refusal of permission in this instance.

7.12. Part V

- 7.12.1. South Dublin County Council's Planning Officer noted that no internal report was received on this application from the Housing Department. In the event planning permission was granted, a condition requiring compliance with Part V was

recommended. The applicant's agent submits that the proposed development can avail of the Part V exemption afforded under Section 96 (13) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

7.12.2. In considering this matter, I note that Section 96(13)(b) of the Act confirms that social and affordable housing requirements do not apply to the conversion of an existing building or the reconstruction of a building to create one or more dwellings, provided that 50 per cent or more of the existing external fabric is retained. Given that the current application seeks permission to retain the existing office blocks and upgrade the external fabric to facilitate a change of use to residential, I consider that the proposed development would be exempt from Part V requirements in the event the Board grants planning permission.

7.13. **Conclusion**

7.13.1. I acknowledge that the site is zoned for residential purposes and is well located in terms of its proximity to an established service centre and public transport connections. I further acknowledge that the redevelopment of this brownfield site would accord with the objectives of the NPF which seek to increase residential densities on such sites, thus facilitating more compact forms of urban development.

7.13.2. While the sustainability benefits of retaining and refurbishing the existing office blocks are noted, I consider that the unit mix, including a high proportion of 1-bedroom units, the aspect/configuration of a number of apartment units, the form and layout of the communal open space, and the access arrangements, have not been adequately resolved to ensure that a high standard of residential amenity will be achieved and to ensure safe movements for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

7.13.3. I further consider that the proposed 5-storey extension to Block A would have a significant negative visual impact on the site and the character of the streetscape, due its bulk, height, set-back and elevated position above the public road. As such, I consider that planning permission should be refused in this instance.

7.14. **Appropriate Assessment**

7.14.1. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development for which permission is sought, comprising the conversion of existing office buildings into 86 no. residential units and associated development, and the location of the development relative to Natura 2000 sites, no appropriate assessment issues arise, and it is not considered

that the development would be likely to have a significant effect, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on a European site.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1. I recommend that planning permission be refused for the proposed development.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

9.1. Having regard to the prominent location of the site and its elevated nature above the adjoining public road, it is considered that the proposed 5-storey extension to Block A, by reason of its design, bulk, massing and limited set-back from the northern site boundary, would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, would be out of character with the streetscape and would set an undesirable precedent for future development in this area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

9.2. The proposed development, by reason of the over-provision of 1-bedroom apartment units, the inclusion of single-aspect north facing units, the absence of appropriate privacy screening to the ground floor level units and the poor quality communal open space, would conflict with the minimum standards recommended in the "Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" published by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in March, 2018, and as such, would result in a poor standard of residential amenity for future occupants. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

9.3. Having regard to the proposed site access arrangements, which do not include dedicated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to serve future occupants of the residential scheme, it is considered that the proposed development represents an inappropriate form of development, which would create an unacceptable conflict between vehicular traffic and pedestrians and cyclists and would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Louise Treacy
Planning Inspector

21st December 2020