



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-322651-25

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| Development | All-weather pitch, gravel track, and associated works |
| Location | Saint Olafs National School, Balally Drive, Dundrum, Dublin 16, D16E067 |
| Planning Authority | Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council |
| Planning Authority Reg. Ref. | D24A/0797/WEB |
| Applicant(s) | St. Olaf's National School |
| Type of Application | Permission |
| Planning Authority Decision | Grant permission with conditions |
| Type of Appeal | Third Party |
| Appellants | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dermot and Lucinda Murrihy2. Cathriona McLoughlin |
| Observer(s) | None. |
| Date of Site Inspection | 25 th July 2025 |
| Inspector | Suzanne White |

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Appendix 1

Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

Form 2: EIA Preliminary Examination

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site forms part of the grounds of St Olaf's National School, which is located on the eastern side of Balally Drive in the Dundrum area of South Dublin. The application site (0.129ha) comprises an existing open area of grass and hardsurface which forms part of the school yard and an internal access road and is located towards the front of the school site (c.1.15ha). The school buildings, which are 1-2 storeys in height, are set back from Balally Drive. There is an existing line of mature trees along the site frontage which are not included in the application site. Two vehicular access points serve the school from Balally Drive. Of these, the northernmost entrance provides access to an existing staff car park. There is also a separate pedestrian entrance from Balally Drive.
- 1.2. The surrounding area is residential in character, comprising predominantly 2 storey semi-detached dwellings to the west, south and southeast. To the east (rear) of the school is an area of public open space, beyond which is the Drummartin Link Road. A pedestrian/cycle link adjoins the school site directly on its western and northern boundaries, providing access to the public open space and to Kilmacud Luas stop, which is approximately 350m walking distance from the school entrance on Balally Drive. The Luas line itself runs east-west to the north of the school site.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development as submitted comprised:
- Construction of a proposed all-weather 'astro' surface sports pitch. The pitch would be 400m x 200m in size. A 2.4m high weldmesh fence and gates would surround the pitch. Note: the fence details submitted also show a 3m height fence. Ball stop netting of 6m height and 2.5m width would be installed at both ends of the pitch.
 - A 2.0m wide gravel walking track would surround the astro pitch. This would be enclosed by a 1.2m height weldmesh fence.
 - 3no. additional parking spaces in the staff car park. These would replace part of the existing access road.

- Other works: existing asphalt internal access road removed and reinstated with grass; 1no. tree removed to facilitate the pitch and walking track; and associated drainage works.

2.2. Following a further information request from the Planning Authority, further information was submitted on the 9th April 2024 and included the following revisions to the proposals:

- Omission of the 3no. additional car parking spaces in the staff car park.
- Existing bin store relocated to north to facilitate provision of a fire tender access route.
- Proposed retaining structure of 0.25m height added along the eastern side of a realigned fire tender access route.
- Maintenance and pedestrian gates added to the northwest side of the all-weather pitch/gravel track.
- Pedestrian gate and gravel path added between Balally Road and the proposed walking track.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

Decision

Planning permission GRANTED subject to six conditions, by order dated 6th May 2025.

3.1.1. Conditions

Condition 2 restricted the hours of use of the sports facilities to 9am to 10pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 6pm Saturday and Sunday.

Conditions 5 & 6 required tree protection measures to be implemented and the retention of a qualified Arborist for the period of construction activity.

Planning Authority Reports

3.1.2. The application was subject to a further information request. The main points of the planner's reports are set out below:

Report dated 26th November 2024

- the subject site is zoned Sustainable Neighbourhood Infrastructure 'SNI' with the objective 'to protect, improve and encourage the provision of sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure' under which 'sports facility' is permitted in principle. The principle of development is considered acceptable.
- The Planning Authority considers that the proposed all-weather pitch will not result in any undue overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing impacts upon the surrounding properties, that the height of proposed fencing/ballstop netting structures are acceptable in location, scale and height, and that the addition of the proposed walking/running track is considered to be an acceptable and efficient use of this part of the subject site.
- Note presence of mature trees on southwest boundary which would minimise the visual impacts of the supporting structures, ballstop nets and fencing.
- Further information required in respect of: the proposed days/hours of use, users and any need for lighting; omission of the 3no. parking spaces, access, a Transport Impact Statement and Traffic Management Plan; drainage requirements for the astro pitch and parking areas; Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan.

Report dated 6th May 2025

- Some discrepancy identified with regard to proposals to allow community use of the sports facility between the original and further information submissions. Use of the facility by community groups is acceptable to the Planning Authority.
- Further information received has addressed the issues raised in respect of transport, drainage and arboriculture, subject to conditions.
- Concludes that the proposed development would not adversely impact on residential amenity or adjoining properties, would not significantly detract from the character of the surrounding area and would be in accordance with the relevant policy and provisions of the County Development Plan 2022-2028.

3.1.3. Other Technical Reports

- Transport Planning: car parking standards are based on the number of classrooms. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, Transport Planning are not in favour of the proposed increase in parking. The removal of a paved section of internal carriageway would restrict emergency vehicle access and increase the travel distance for users of the accessible parking spaces. Transport Impact Statement required to assess the impact of the proposed astro pitch on the surrounding road network. Traffic Management Plan required, including measures to encourage users to travel by sustainable modes and measures to avoid nuisance parking and obstruction of the surrounding public roads/footpaths/driveways etc especially during non-school use. Following receipt of further information, no objection raised, subject to conditions relating to protection of the public road, implementation of the proposed measures set out in the Outline Traffic Management Plan and restriction on hours of use to between 08.50 and 16:00.
- Drainage (incorporating comments following receipt of further information): no objection subject to conditions relating to surface water runoff management.
- Parks and Landscape Services (incorporating comments following receipt of further information): several trees on site with significant interest. The loss of these trees would negatively impact the biodiversity and visual amenity of the area. Recommends conditions relating to: implementation of arboricultural plans (particularly tree protection measures) and retention of an arborist for the duration of the construction works.

Prescribed Bodies

None.

Third Party Observations

Forty (40) submissions were received by the Local Planning Authority in relation to the application of which 16no. raised concerns in relation to the proposed

development. I consider that the substantive planning issues raised correlate with those raised by the Third Parties to this appeal (see Section 7 below).

4.0 Planning History

D04A/0034: planning permission granted for works to boundaries of existing school site comprising new boundary fencing to north west and to north east school boundaries, erection of new railings to boundary at Beeches Road and construction of new vehicular entrance from Balally Drive.

D06A/0933: planning permission granted for the erection of a single temporary prefabricated classroom.

D07A/0539: planning permission granted for two temporary prefabricated classrooms.

D08A/0686: planning permission granted for the erection of a two-storey extension to provide a library and two mainstream classrooms on the ground floor and 3 new mainstream classrooms on the first floor.

D19A/0155: planning permission granted for the erection of two 80 sqm temporary prefabricated classrooms adjoining the existing school building.

D22A/0168: application withdrawn in respect of proposed construction of a two-storey extension to the north side of the original building at Olaf's National School consisting of two general classrooms and two special needs rooms on the ground floor and two general classrooms, one special needs room and a disabled accessible toilet on the first floor. The total floor area of the proposed extension is 448sq.m.

D23A/0022: planning permission granted for the construction of a two-storey extension to the north side of the original building at Olaf's National School consisting of two general classrooms and two special needs rooms on the ground floor and two general classrooms, one special needs room and a disabled accessible toilet on the first floor. The total floor area of the proposed extension is 448sqm.

D23A/0288: planning permission granted for the construction of a single storey extension to the east side/rear of existing school, consisting of 2 no. offices and all associated site works.

5.0 Policy Context

Development Plan

The applicable plan is the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan, 2022-2028, under which the site is located on lands zoned 'SNI' (Sustainable Neighbourhood Infrastructure) with the objective '*to protect, improve and encourage the provision of sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure*'.

Chapter 4: Neighbourhood – People, Homes and Place

Policy Objective PHP2: Sustainable Neighbourhood Infrastructure - It is a Policy Objective to:

- Protect and improve existing sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure as appropriate.
- Facilitate the provision of new sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure that is accessible and inclusive for a range of users consistent with RPO 9.13 and RPO 9.14 of the RSES.
- Encourage the provision of multi-functional facilities, space and lands in the delivery and/or improvement of sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure.

Policy Objective PHP5: Community Facilities - It is a Policy Objective to: Support the development, improvement and provision of a wide range of community facilities throughout the County where required. Facilitate and support the preparation of a countywide Community Strategy.

Policy Objective PHP7: Schools - It is a Policy Objective to protect existing schools and their amenities and ensure the reservation of primary and post-primary school sites in line with the requirements of the relevant education authorities and to support the provision of school facilities and the development / redevelopment of existing schools for educational and other sustainable community infrastructure uses throughout the County.

Policy Objective PHP15: Healthy County Plan - It is a Policy Objective to support and facilitate the creation of a healthy County in accordance with the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Healthy County Plan 2019-2022.

Chapter 9: Open Space, Parks and Recreation

Policy Objective OSR5: Public Health, Open Space and Healthy Placemaking - It is a Policy Objective to support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) 2016, to increase physical activity levels across the whole population thus creating a society, which facilitates people whether at home, at work or at play to lead a more active way of life (consistent with RPO 9.16).

Policy Objective OSR9 – Sports and Recreational Facilities - It is a Policy Objective to promote the provision, and management of high quality sporting, and recreational infrastructure throughout the County, in accordance with the National Sports Policy 2018-2027, and dlr Space to Play: a new approach to Sports Facilities Strategy', 2017-2022, to ensure that the particular needs of different groups are incorporated into the planning and design of new facilities.

Policy Objective OSR10: Protection of Sports Grounds/Facilities - It is a Policy Objective: To ensure that adequate playing fields for formal active recreation are provided for in new development areas. That existing sports facilities and grounds within the established urban area are protected, retained, and enhanced. To increase the number of playing pitches in the County. To maximise the use of playing pitches in the County and for playing pitches to be utilised seven days a week, subject to protecting adjoining residential amenity.

Chapter 12: Development Management

12.3.2.1 Development within Sustainable Neighbourhood Infrastructure Lands. This section sets out criteria for development on lands with a 'SNI' zoning objective including:

- demonstrate how the proposed development will protect and/or improve existing SNI facilities and uses;
- maintain the recreational value of the overall SNI zoning objective lands by retaining 20% or more usable open space (unless derogation applies);
- should incorporate measures to improve public use of the site and/or facilities;
- be well designed having regard to the site context, landscape features etc;
- should be compatible with or complement the existing SNI facilities and uses;
- protect the existing amenities enjoyed by the existing SNI use;

- should seek to share facilities as appropriate e.g. car parking, pitches.

It is also a requirement that all development proposals demonstrate sufficient spatial capacity remaining to accommodate the future needs of the existing SNI facility.

Section 12.3.2.5 School Development

In assessing planning applications for new schools/extensions of existing schools, the Planning Authority will have regard to: overall need; site location relative to catchment, outdoor space provision and future expansion needs; design; traffic and transport impact; routes to and from school; cycle facilities; safe access and adequate car parking layout to facilitate drop off/pick up; signage, lighting & boundary treatments; impact on local amenities and out of school hours uses/dual functioning of school facilities; School Travel Plan; Dual function of sports facilities/halls etc. outside of school hours will be encouraged where the use of such facilities will be of a benefit to the wider community, however any outside hours usage of the school should not be to the detriment of adjoining residential amenities. Full details of all anticipated uses outside of school hours should be provided with the planning application.

Section 12.4 Transport: includes sub sections relating to car parking standards; cycle parking standards; accessibility to sports facilities; emergency access.

Section 12.8.11 Existing Trees and Hedgerows – requires the submission of Arboricultural Assessments for sites that contain trees or other significant vegetation. The retention of existing planted site boundaries will be encouraged.

Section 12.9 Environmental Infrastructure: includes subsections relating to air pollution; noise pollution and noise nuisance; construction management plans; and hours of construction.

Natural Heritage Designations

The appeal site is not located in or immediately adjacent to a designated European Site, a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) or a proposed NHA.

6.0 EIA Screening

The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for environmental impact assessment (refer to Form 1 and Form 2, in the Appendices of this report). Having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development and the types and characteristics of potential impacts, it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. The proposed development, therefore, does not trigger a requirement for environmental impact assessment screening and an EIAR is not required.

7.0 The Appeal

Grounds of Appeal

Two third party appeals were received from residents of Balally Drive. The grounds of appeal can be summarised as follows:

1. Dermot and Lucinda Murrihy, 133 Ballally Drive
 - *Failure to address traffic congestion and safety risks.* Frequent issues during school drop-off and pick-up times of vehicles blocking residential driveways, double parking, speeding and stopping in the middle of the road, blocking traffic flow and posing safety risks. These issues have been acknowledged by the school previously. The proposed additional parking and extended use of the pitch is expected to generate additional evening traffic along a narrow residential road, which will intensify existing problems. The Transport Impact Statement conclusion of 'negligible impact' is inaccurate in the context of existing issues and raises serious questions about its validity and independence. Independent, site-specific traffic and parking assessment and concrete and enforceable traffic mitigation strategies sought. Appendix 3 of the grounds of appeal includes photos to illustrate the traffic and parking issues. Appendix 4 includes emails from the school to the school community regarding parking issues locally.
 - *Failure to provide legally required public notice.* Two site notices were indicated on the site layout plan but only one was displayed. No site notice

was displayed at or near the school's main entrance. The validity of the application is questioned. A formal objection on this issue was submitted to the local authority but does not appear to have been addressed.

- *Misrepresentation and Lack of Transparency.* A letter (included as Appendix 6 of the grounds of appeal) to residents stated that the development was not a commercial venture and was only for pupils wellbeing, whereas the application documents indicate use by external clubs. Question why the school has been allowed to use the facility until 10pm on weeknights. Question whether lighting is intended but not shown.
- *Incompatibility with zoning or residential amenity.* Late night usage, potentially with lighting, introduces noise, light pollution and traffic is injurious to residential amenity and is inconsistent with the zoning objectives. Risk of establishing a precedent for expanding non-educational activities on lands zoned for school and institutional uses. Absence of conditions regarding third-party or community access introduces uncertainty.
- *Failure to adequately consider community and equality impacts.* Submitted AA and EIA reports do not include assessment of social and community impacts. No dedicated reports on noise, light pollution, traffic or general disruption were provided. Needs of vulnerable members of community including those with disabilities have been overlooked.
- *Mismatch with foundational teaching outcomes.* The proposed development could potentially conflict with objectives such as SN7, which seeks to support inclusive education. The development could divert limited school land away from urgent special educational needs provision.

2. Cathriona McLoughlin

- *Traffic and safety impacts not properly addressed.* The number of students attending the school has increased significantly over the last number of years, with a corresponding increase in traffic and parking on Balally Drive. Regular obstruction of traffic and creation of dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists during school drop-off and pick-up times. Concern raised about

disruption to local residents and safety risks arising from evening use of the facility. Photos are attached to illustrate the points made.

- *Failure to adequately assess community impact.* No community impact assessment or detailed noise/light/traffic disruption reports provided.
- *Non-compliance with statutory site notice requirements.* No site notice was erected at or near the school's main entrance, consequently the application may be invalid.
- *Potential precedent and change of use.* Use by external groups could set a precedent for further intensification of non-school activity on education zoned land. The planning conditions do not restrict/clarify the terms of community or third party use.
- *Environmental concerns/drainage risk.* Lack of detail in the SuDS solution regarding long-term effectiveness.
- *Misalignment with Core Educational Objectives.* Potential conflict with development plan objectives to support inclusive education by utilising space for recreational infrastructure instead of inclusive education facilities.
- *Contradictory public statements and lack of transparency.* A letter circulated by the school (attached) stated that the facility was not a commercial venture, whereas the planning application documents state that it would be available to local groups. Concern as to why the school requested usage hours up to 10pm on weeknights and whether lighting is intended to be installed. Lack of public consultation.

Applicant Response

A response was received from the first party, which may be summarised as follows:

- *Traffic and safety impacts.* The submitted outline Transport Impact Statement (TIS) was prepared in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland guidance and based on site surveys carried out for a comparable facility. The TIS identifies that the pitch use is expected to result in negligible traffic impact on surrounding streets during school hours given that pupils will already be attending the school. The level of vehicular trips generated by the use of the

pitch by third parties is expected to result in negligible traffic impact. The measures outlined in the Traffic Management Plan were required by condition to be implemented by the school.

- *Community impacts.* The school consulted the local resident's associations of Balally and Wedgewood at the time of applying for grant funding and received their support (letters attached). The facility will be open to the public and suitable for use by the elderly – particularly the walking path. The school developed a sensory garden in 2023 which is open year-round.
- *Statutory notice.* The notice was erected at the main school entrance and near the Luas walkway. This was validated by DLR County Council.
- *Potential precedent.* The provision of multi-functional facilities is supported by the DLR Development Plan. The proposed amenity would have enormous benefits to both the school and its surrounding community. There are a lack of recreational/sporting facilities in this area.
- *Incompatibility with Zoning or Residential Amenity.* The proposed use of the sports facilities is solely for school-related activities. There is no third-party, commercial, or general community use.
- *Environmental concerns/drainage.* The proposed drainage strategy complies with Section 10.2.2.6, Policy Objective EI6: Sustainable Drainage of the DLR Development Plan. All surface water runoff will be managed on-site through infiltration. The design includes sufficient storage capacity to accommodate the 1-in-100-year storm event plus climate change. The longterm effectiveness of the SuDS solution is supported by a maintenance plan in accordance with best practice.
- *Misalignment with Core Educational Objectives.* The existing grass area cannot be used for play/break times for large parts of the year due to ground conditions. An astro surface will make the area useable year round. The existing recreational space and proposed astro area would not compromise the school's ability to provide appropriate facilities for Autism or Special Educational Needs and can complement and enhance inclusive educational provision.

- *Contradictory public statements.* There are no contradictory statements. The letter from the school included a grammatical error in relation to the submission/outcome of the application. Primarily, the pitch is for school use but in line with the DLR Development Plan, the school would encourage the provision of multi-functional facilities. Lighting is not applied for.

Planning Authority Response

The Planning Authority response refers the Board (Commission) to the previous Planner's Report. It is considered that the grounds of appeal do not raise any new matter which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would justify a change of attitude to the proposed development.

Observations

None.

Further Responses

None received.

8.0 Assessment

Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the report of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Traffic and Parking
- Impact on adjoining residential amenity
- Other issues

I note that consideration was given to other relevant matters as part of the Local Planning Authority's assessment of the application, including: visual amenity;

impacts on residential amenity by way of overshadowing and overbearance; arboricultural impact and emergency access. The Planner's Report considered that the proposed development was acceptable in reference to the objectives of the Development Plan regarding these matters, subject to conditions, and I concur with that assessment.

8.1. Principle of development

- 8.1.1. The site is zoned 'SNI' (Sustainable Neighbourhood Infrastructure) with the objective 'to protect, improve and encourage the provision of sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure'. Land uses listed as 'permitted in principle' within this zoning according to Table 13.7 of the Development Plan include open space, sports facility and education. The stated use of the proposed all-weather pitch and gravel path is for school use.
- 8.1.2. I note that the grounds of appeal raise concern that the use of the proposed sports facility by users external to the school could result in a change of use of the facility, may be incompatible with the zoning of the lands and may create a precedent for further intensification of non-school activity on education zoned land. In this regard I note that the existing use of the site is as outdoor space associated with the school and the primary use of the proposed development, as set out in the application documents, will be for school use. I do not consider that the potential use of the facilities outside of school hours would result in a change of use or negative precedent. In this regard I note that the dual use of school facilities, such as those proposed, by the community outside of school hours is supported by Section 12.3.2.5 of the Development Plan.
- 8.1.3. I consider that the proposed development is permissible in principle having regard to the zoning objective of the lands, subject to accordance with other objectives of the Development Plan, which are considered below.

8.2. Traffic and Parking

- 8.2.1. The grounds of appeal refer to existing issues of congestion, traffic safety and disruption to local residents arising from traffic associated with the drop-off and pick-up of children at the school. They express concern that the potential use of the

proposed facilities after school hours and at weekends could generate additional evening traffic at these times which would result in these same issues being experienced by local residents in the evening and at weekends.

- 8.2.2. The initial report of the Local Authority's Transport Planning Section sought further information in relation to traffic impact, specifically in the form of a traffic impact statement, to detail the proposed intensity of use and quantify any additional resultant vehicular trips to the school grounds. They also sought the submission of a traffic management plan to include measures to encourage users to travel to the site by active and sustainable travel modes and avoid nuisance parking and obstruction of the surrounding public roads/footpaths/driveways etc.
- 8.2.3. As part of their further information response, the applicant submitted a Traffic Impact Statement and Outline Traffic Management Plan.
- 8.2.4. The school use is established on the site and I note from the submitted documentation that it has undergone a period of expansion in pupil numbers in recent years. The enrolment at the time of the application was 575no. pupils. The school website states that the number of full time staff for the 2024/2025 academic year was 39no. (48no. staff are listed in total). The subject proposal would not increase pupil or staff numbers at the school.
- 8.2.5. The school has 37no. in-curtilage parking spaces for staff use only and there are 8no. parking spaces on-street along the street frontage. It is stated that there are 35no. uncovered sheffield stands (70no. spaces) on site, which are located just inside the front boundary wall. The site is located c. 5-6minutes walk from Kilmacud Luas stop. The school site is located on the DLR Active School Travel 'Mountains to Metals' cycle route, which links with the 'Sea to Mountains' route at Drummartin Road.
- 8.2.6. The proposed all-weather pitch and walking path would replace an existing part grass/part hard landscape area of the school yard, which is described by the applicant as being prone to waterlogging. On the day of my site visit, I noted that the grassed area was uneven and slopes downwards slightly from south to north.
- 8.2.7. The Traffic Impact Statement (TIS) submitted by the applicant includes a survey of the use of an all-weather pitch at a similarly sized school, St. Mary's NS, Mt. Eden Road, Donnybrook to inform estimated trip generation for the proposed

development. The survey identified that no additional trips or traffic was generated by use of the pitch during school periods. After school training sessions involving pupils created no additional trips, though some collection trips were delayed to a later time. The all-weather pitch at St Mary's is used by a boys soccer club on three evenings mid-week from 5.30-8.30pm. The survey observed that; most trips were by foot, bike or scooter; a high proportion of the cars that arrived at the start of the session stayed for the duration (parents/guardians were involved in or watching the training); a maximum of 19no. cars were in the car park on site at any point during the session. The TIS applied these observations to the proposed development scenario and concluded that school use of the facilities would not result in additional trips, while use out of hours would have a negligible impact on traffic in surrounding streets and on parking locally.

- 8.2.8. With regard to the use of the all-weather pitch and gravel path for school-related activities, including after-school sports, I consider that these activities would not result in a material increase in trips and related congestion and parking pressure locally. This is because the children involved would already be in school and, for after-school activities, the collection-related trips would just be delayed. With regard to the potential use of the facilities by external groups, I would agree with the observation in the TIS that the size of the pitch limits the number of players that can use it at a given time and is therefore a limiting factor on potential trip generation. The proposed pitch dimensions of 40m x 20m would be comparable to a 5-a-side pitch, albeit that larger numbers could use the pitch for training. In comparison with the trip generation of the school itself, I would expect the number of trips generated by use of the all-weather pitch in the evenings and at weekends to be much lower, having regard to its capacity. I would also expect that the existing car park at the school (37no. spaces) would be sufficient to cater for evening/weekend use of the pitch, noting also the availability of 8no. spaces on street outside the school. I note that the Local Authority's Transport Planning Section in their report at Further Information stage stated that the TIS was 'noted and accepted'. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not result in a material increase in traffic congestion or parking pressure locally and would therefore be acceptable in terms of traffic and parking impacts.

- 8.2.9. The applicant submitted an Outline Traffic Management Plan as part of their further information response. The Plan recommends the introduction of a one-way route for drop-off and pick-up to manage traffic during these periods. The Local Authority Transport Section report stated that the Plan was 'noted and accepted', subject to a condition attached to any grant of permission requiring that the measures set out in the Plan were implemented. However, given my conclusions above that the proposed development will not generate additional trips during drop-off and pick-up times, I do not consider that such a condition would be relevant to this proposed development and reasonable in this case.
- 8.2.10. With regard to the safety issues raised by the third parties, I note that these stem from concerns regarding potential increased traffic generation. Given my conclusions above that traffic associated with use of the facilities in the evenings and at weekends would be significantly lower than traffic associated with the school use itself, I do not consider that the proposed development would result in increased traffic safety risk. In this regard, I also note the commentary in the Outline Traffic Management Plan which identifies that pedestrian and cycling infrastructure locally is of a good quality.

8.3. Impact on adjoining residential amenity

- 8.3.1. In addition to traffic nuisance, considered above, the third parties raise concerns with regard to potential impacts on residential amenity arising from late night usage of the facility, lighting, and noise.
- 8.3.2. There is no proposed lighting indicated on the submitted plans or stated in the description of development for the application. I am satisfied therefore that there will be no impact in terms of light spill or glare arising from the proposed development.
- 8.3.3. Condition 2 of the Planning Authority's decision restricts the hours of use of the facility to 9am to 10pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 6pm Saturday and Sunday. As part of their further information response, the applicant stated that the pitch is intended primarily for school use, the hours of which would be 08.50 to 16.00 Monday to Friday, and that there are no plans for third party use at the present time. The Planning Authority Planner's Report recommended these hours in order to

facilitate dual use of the pitch by the community, whilst also protecting adjacent residential amenity. Although the Transport Planning Section at further information stage recommended more limited hours, I consider that it has been demonstrated that the use of the pitch and gravel track after school hours would not result in an unacceptable impact on traffic congestion or parking locally. Having regard also to the capacity of the pitch, the minimum separation distance to the nearest residential dwelling of c.25m and the nature of the use which does not involve any amplified noise, I consider that the proposed development will not result in any unacceptable impact on residential amenity in terms of noise and disturbance, subject to a condition regulating the hours of use. In this regard, I consider that hours similar to those specified by the Planning Authority would be appropriate, though allowing for an earlier start time of 0830.

8.4. Other issues

Procedural matters

- 8.4.1. The grounds of appeal allege that one of the two site notices indicated on the site layout plan was not displayed. I note that the local planning authority did not raise any issue in this regard and the application was validated and processed through to a decision to grant. I note that 40no. submissions were received by the local authority in respect of the application. I am satisfied that the concerned parties were not prevented from making representations. The above assessment represents my de novo consideration of all planning issues material to the proposed development.

Consultation

- 8.4.2. The third party grounds of appeal raise concerns at both a lack of pre-application consultation with residents by the applicant and inconsistencies in the description of the development as set out in the application documents and the content of a letter issued by the applicant to residents during the application process. In this regard, I note that there is no legislative requirement for the applicant to undertake public consultation before submitting an application and that any application will be assessed on its merits, based on the information submitted.

Environmental concerns/drainage risk

- 8.4.3. The grounds of appeal raise concern that there is a lack of detail in the SuDS solution proposed, particularly regarding its long-term effectiveness. I note that the applicant has responded that the proposed drainage strategy complies with Section 10.2.2.6, Policy Objective EI6: Sustainable Drainage of the DLR Development Plan, that all surface water runoff will be managed on-site through infiltration; the design includes sufficient storage capacity to accommodate the 1-in-100-year storm event plus climate change and its longterm effectiveness is supported by a maintenance plan in accordance with best practice. I note also that no objection was raised by the Local Authority's Drainage Section to the proposed drainage design, revised at further information stage. I consider that the proposed drainage design is appropriate to the nature and scale of development proposed, subject to a condition requiring that the detailed design of the drainage system is agreed with the local planning authority prior to commencement of any development.

Conflict with Development Plan Objectives relating to inclusive education

- 8.4.4. The third parties raise concern that the proposed development may be in conflict with development plan objectives which support inclusive education by utilising limited school land for sports and recreation facilities rather than special educational needs provision. In this regard, I note that the proposed all-weather pitch and walking track would occupy part of the existing school yard, providing a facility which will be usable year round. In my view, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy Objective PHP7: Schools, which seeks to protect existing schools in line with the requirements of the relevant education authorities and supports the development/redevelopment of existing schools for educational and other sustainable infrastructure uses. I do not therefore consider that the proposed development is in conflict with relevant Development Plan objectives.

9.0 AA Screening

- 9.1. Having regard to the modest nature and scale of the proposed development, which relates to the provision of an all-weather pitch, gravel track and associated works within an existing school site, its location in an urban area, and absence of

connectivity to European sites, it is concluded that no Appropriate Assessment issues arise as the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

10.1. Having regard to the modest nature and scale of the proposed development, it is concluded on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. I recommend permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the existing school use of the site and to the nature, scale and layout of the proposed all weather pitch and gravel track, it is considered that the proposed development, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, would be compatible with the Zoning Objective 'Sustainable Neighbourhood Infrastructure (SNI)', which seeks 'to protect, improve and encourage the provision of sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure', would not injure the visual or residential amenities of the area and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience. The proposed development would therefore be in accordance with the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028 and with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

13.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars submitted on the 9th April 2025, except as may otherwise be required in

order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The use of the proposed all-weather pitch shall be restricted to between 0800 and 2200 Monday to Friday and 0900 and 1800 on Saturdays and Sundays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity.

3. During the operation of the all-weather pitch, the existing school staff car park shall be made available for parking of users' vehicles.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety.

4. The fencing around the perimeter of the all-weather pitch shall be a maximum of 2.4m in height.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

5. The disposal of surface water shall comply with the requirements of the Planning Authority for such works and services. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit details for the disposal of surface water from the site for the written agreement of the planning authority.

Reason: To prevent flooding and in the interests of sustainable drainage.

6. (a) The developer shall engage the services of a qualified Arborist to supervise the implementation of all the recommendations in the Arboricultural Report (April 2025) and the Tree Removals and Protection Plan, submitted on the 9th April 2025.

(b) Prior to commencement of development, all trees, groups of trees, hedging and shrubs which are to be retained shall be enclosed within stout fences not less than 1.5 metres in height, in accordance with the submitted Tree Removals and Protection Plan. This protective fencing shall enclose an area covered by the crown spread of the branches, or at minimum radius of two metres from the trunk of the

tree or centre of the shrub, and to a distance of two metres on each side of the hedge for its full length, and shall be maintained until the development has been completed.

(c) No construction equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought onto the site for the purpose of the development until all the trees which are to be retained have been protected by this fencing. No work shall be carried out within the area enclosed by the fencing and, in particular, there shall be no parking of vehicles, placing of site huts, storage compounds or topsoil heaps, storage of oil, chemicals or other substances, and no lighting of fires, over the root spread of any tree to be retained.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to protect trees and planting during the construction period.

7. Site development and building works shall be carried out between the hours of 0700 and 1800 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and between 0800 and 1400 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times shall only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written agreement has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of property in the vicinity.

8. All necessary measures shall be taken by the Applicant and Contractor to:

- i. prevent any mud, dirt, debris or building material being carried onto or placed on the public road or adjoining properties as a result of the site construction works;
- ii. repair any damage to the public road arising from carrying out the works;
- iii. avoid conflict between construction activities and pedestrian/vehicular movements on the surrounding public roads during construction works.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety and orderly development.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Suzanne White
Planning Inspector

2nd September 2025

Appendix 1

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

| | |
|---|--|
| Case Reference | ABP-322651-25 |
| Proposed Development Summary | All-weather pitch, gravel track, and associated works. |
| Development Address | Saint Olafs National School, Balally Drive, Dundrum, Dublin 16, D16E067 |
| In all cases check box /or leave blank | |
| 1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required. |
| 2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP. | State the Class here |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3 | |
| 3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required. | |

| | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required) | <p>Class 10(b)(iv) Infrastructure projects. Threshold: urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere. (In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)</p> <p>The proposed development is in a built-up urban area. Therefore, the threshold is 10 hectares. The proposed development would be accommodated on a site of approximately 0.129 hectare. Therefore, it is ‘subthreshold’, and a mandatory EIA is not required.</p> |

| 4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)? | |
|---|---|
| Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3) |
| No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3) |

Inspector: Suzanne White **Date:** 02/09/2025

Appendix 2

Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

| | |
|---|--|
| Case Reference | ABP-322651-25 |
| Proposed Development Summary | All-weather pitch, gravel track, and associated works. |
| Development Address | Saint Olafs National School, Balally Drive, Dundrum, Dublin 16, D16E067 |
| This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith. | |
| Characteristics of proposed development | <p>The development proposed is the construction of an astro pitch and walking track with associated fencing, ballstop nets, drainage and associated works.</p> <p>The standalone development has a modest footprint and does not require the use of substantial natural resources, or give rise to significant risk of pollution or nuisance.</p> <p>The development, by virtue of its type and scale, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, or is vulnerable to climate change. It presents no risks to human health.</p> |
| Location of development | The development is situated in a densely populated urban area on brownfield land and is located at a remove from sensitive natural habitats, designated sites and landscapes of significance identified in the DLRCDP. |
| Types and characteristics of potential impacts | Having regard to the modest nature of the proposed development, its location relative to sensitive habitats/features, likely limited magnitude and spatial extent of effects, and absence of in combination effects, there is no potential for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Act. |
| Conclusion | |
| Likelihood of Significant Effects | Conclusion in respect of EIA |
| There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. | An EIAR is not required. |

Inspector: Suzanne White **Date:** 02/09/2025