



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ACP-322972-25

Development	Demolition of building, construction of retail building with all associated site works
Location	Melville, Main Street, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, D15 DC2Y
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	FW25A/0165E
Applicant(s)	Justin Ward
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Observer(s)	1. Anne Leonard 2. Evelyn Eager-Quinn
Date of Site Inspection	5 th September 2025
Inspector	Paul O'Brien

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site contains a single-storey detached house located on the south western side of Main Street, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15. The site is approximately 130 m to the south of the Main Street/ Snugborough Road junction and is immediately opposite Blanchardstown Garda Station. The site is located on the northern part of Main Street. The Snugborough Road Junction was recently upgraded to improve traffic flows on the northern part of Blanchardstown Village.
- 1.2. This almost rectangular shaped site, on a north east to south west axis, has a stated site area of 0.125 hectares. To the north of the site is a residential development of semi-detached houses in Springlawn Heights. To the south are detached houses though some of which have been converted partially/ fully for commercial uses. As reported the Garda Station is located to the east of the site and as a large station it includes a large area of land to the rear in use for car parking and ancillary storage uses.
- 1.3. Main Street Blanchardstown includes a number of large commercial units, and the core area would be approximately 500m to the south east of the subject site. There is a lower density of development in the adjoining area, however large retail units, commercial units and Blanchardstown Centre shopping centre are located approximately 500 m to the north west of the subject site. The subject site could be considered to be in transitional location between the established and historic Blanchardstown village and the retail area primarily characterised by Blanchardstown Centre shopping centre.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development consists of the following:
 - a) The demolition of an existing residential unit with a stated floor area of 114sq m.
 - b) The construction of a shop unit comprising of a basement and two storeys above ground level. The stated floor is given as 662sq m.
 - c) The provision of a roadway in addition to on-site car parking.
 - d) The provision of a new driveway to an adjoining property.

e) All associated site works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Refusal of permission recommended for a single reason, summarised as follows:
The site is zoned TC – Town Centre and RS Residential in the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029. The proposed retail development was considered to have a ‘top-heavy’ design, would be bulky and its massing would appear to be monolithic, would visually compete with the existing visual amenity of the area and would be visually out of character with the existing form of development in the area, whilst failing to integrate with the existing streetscape of Main Street, Blanchardstown. The proposed development would also have a negative impact through its domineering design, through overshadowing and overbearing impact on the private amenity space of no. 38 Springlawn Close located to the rear of the subject site. The proposed development would seriously injure the amenities, depreciate the value of property in the area and would be contrary to policies and objectives of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The Planning Authority report generally reflects the decision to refuse permission for this development. The proposed development was on lands suitably zoned for the nature of scheme proposed and in general the replacement of the existing house with a newbuild development was not considered to be problematic. However, the design was considered to be visually unacceptable and would have a negative impact on the residential amenity of existing residential units with specific reference to No. 38 Springlawn Close. Regard is had to the transitional character of the area, but the impact on existing residential amenity and the character of the area were considered to be serious issues of concern and refusal of permission was recommended.

Note: The reference to 38 Springlawn Close is incorrect in the above, this should be 38 Springlawn Heights. The Commission are advised that any reference to 38 Springlawn Close in the PA reports/ appeal response is incorrect, and it should be 38 Springlawn Heights. This does not impact on the assessment of this development.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Parks and Green Infrastructure Division: No objection subject to recommended conditions.
- Environment – Air and Noise Unit: A noise impact assessment is recommended to be carried out by way of a further information request.
- Public Lighting Section: Any revisions to the public lighting system to be agreed with the FCC Public Lighting Section.
- Transportation Planning Section: Further information requested in relation to the provision of a 4m set back from the near side road edge boundary of the development along Main Street, identify the provision of a minimum of 11 staff lockers for staff who wish to run/ walk/ cycle to work here, and the applicant to demonstrate the provision of a minimum of 11 safe/ covered and secure staff bicycle parking spaces. Cargo bike parking to be provided at 5%.
- Water Services Department: Further information requested demonstrating that the development complies with the requirements of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study, 2005, provide additional details on run-off rates, and provide details on how the Qbar rate was calculated. A list of conditions is included and in terms of flood risk, there is no objection to this development.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

No reports received.

3.4. Third Party Observations

A single observation was received to the original application, and the following points were made:

- Has no wish to remove their hedgerow or to revise the site entrance as proposed by the applicant.
- Concern about privacy as the new access road would be on their side of the site and cars etc. would pass in close proximity to their kitchen window.
- The proposed building is two storey and would overlook their property.
- Noise and pollution during the construction phase and during the operation phase through cars passing their house.
- Concern about traffic congestion which is already a significant issue in the area.
- The footpath outside their house and the subject site is busy with pedestrians.

4.0 Planning History

There are no recent, relevant applications on the subject site.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

The Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 is the operative plan for the area. The majority of the site, including the front garden, the existing house and part of the rear garden is zoned TC – Town and District Centre with an objective to ‘Protect and enhance the special physical and social character of town and district centres and provide and/or improve urban facilities’. The remainder of the site is zoned RS – Residential with an objective to ‘Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity’.

The site is located in an area designated for a Framework Plan - Blanchardstown. Main Street to the front of the site is indicated as a route under the (GDA) Cycle Network Plan.

I note the following chapters/ sections of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 as relevant to this development:

- Chapter 2 – Planning for Growth

Section 2.2.11 refers to the Core Strategy and details are contained within this chapter of the plan. Table 2.10 provides the 'Remaining Zoned Residential Capacity from Fingal Development Plan 2017–2023' with 150 hectares available in the Dublin 15 area including Blanchardstown and with a residential yield of 5,742 units. Table 2.12 provides the 'Total Capacity of Zoned Lands 2023–2029' and which includes the estimated unit capacity and available area at 1,257 hectares. Table 2.14 provides the 'Core Strategy – 2023–2029 Fingal Development Plan' with 90 hectares available in the Blanchardstown – Mulhuddart LEA and a potential for 4,495 units. Note: These details demonstrate the available capacity in Blanchardstown for residential units and in turn there would be demand for supporting business and facilities.

Policy CSP1 – Core Strategy states: 'Promote and facilitate housing and population growth in accordance with the overarching Core Strategy to meet the needs of current and future citizens of Fingal.'

Policy CSP2 – Compact Growth and Regeneration states 'Support the implementation of and promote development consistent with the National Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth as outlined in the NPF and the Regional Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth and Regeneration as set out in the RSES.'

Table 2.19 provides a 'List of Proposed Framework Plans' and which includes Blanchardstown Village. Policy CSP9 – Framework Plans states 'Prepare Framework Plans as required for identified areas to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to development.'

Section 2.6 refers to Retail development.

Section 2.7 provides the 'Settlement Strategy. Tables 2.20 and 2.21 provide the 'Fingal Settlement Strategy'. Blanchardstown is located within the Metropolitan Area.

- Chapter 3 refers to Sustainable Placemaking and Quality Homes

Policy SPQHP5 – Quality Placemaking states:

'Add quality to the places where we live, work, and recreate by integrating high quality design into every aspect of the Plan, ensuring good quality accessible public

realms, promotion of adaptable residential buildings, and by ensuring development contributes to a positive sense of place, local distinctiveness and character.’

- Chapter 7 refers to Employment and Economy

Objective EEO90 – New Retail Development states, ‘Ensure that applications for new retail development are consistent with the retail policies of the Development Plan, in particular with the Fingal Retail Hierarchy, and are assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Retail Planning, including, where appropriate, the application of the Sequential Approach, and requirements for retail impact assessments and transport impact assessments for retail developments which due to their scale and/ or location may impact on the vitality and viability of major town, town, local and village centres, while having regard to the impact such directions/ developments may have on the existing businesses operating within the area.’

Section 7.5.4 refers to Retail and the Retail Hierarchy is set out in Table 7.2. Blanchardstown Town Centre is a Level 4 centre and ‘These centres should generally provide for one supermarket ranging in size from 1,000–2,500 sq m with a limited range of supporting shops (low order comparison), supporting services, community facilities or health clinics grouped together to create a focus for the local population. This level of centre should meet the everyday needs of the local population and surrounding catchment.’

Objective EEO96 – Level 4 Centres states ‘Ensure the development of Level 4 Centres as sustainable, vibrant and prosperous Small Towns, Village Centres and Local Centres performing at a level within the Fingal Retail Hierarchy to meet the retailing needs of immediate local populations and catchment populations.’

Objective EEO97 – Retail Provision in Level 4 Centres states ‘Where a gap in the retail provision of a Level 4 Centre is identified and established, facilitate appropriately scaled improvements to the retail offer and function in Level 4 Centres and ensure their sustainable development by enhancing the existing Centre for each and directing new retail opportunities into the Centres.’

Objective EEO98 – Ensure Sufficient Retail Offer in Level 4 Towns and Centres states ‘Ensure that the Level 4 Small Towns, Village Centres and Local Centres

have a retail offer that is sufficient in terms of scale, type, and range without adversely impacting on or diverting trade from the higher order retailing locations.'

Note: The Planning Authority report refers to this site as within a Level 2 Centre, from my assessment of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029, specifically Table 7.2: Fingal Retail Hierarchy, the Level 2 area applies to the MC zoned lands of Blanchardstown specifically around the Blanchardstown Town Centre retail area. Level 4 refers to Blanchardstown Village and lands zoned TC and which includes the subject site.

- Chapter 13 refers to Land Use Zoning

Objective ZO2 – 'Transitional Zonal Areas' states: 'Have regard to development in adjoining zones, in particular, more environmentally sensitive zones, in assessing development proposals for lands in the vicinity of zoning boundaries.'

- Chapter 14 refers to Development Management Standards

Objective DMS05 – Design Statement is required in the case of a development in excess of 5 residential units or which provides 300sq m of retail/ commercial/ office development floor space in an urban area. Full details of the requirements of the design statement are provided in this objective.

Section 14.4.4 refers to Town and Village Centres

Section 14.4.5 refers to Shopfront Design and Table 14.1 provides Shopfront Design Guidance and Table 14.2 provides a Shopfront Design Checklist. Objectives DMS08 to DMS011 refer to design and shopfront details.

5.2. National Guidance

- Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)
- Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)

Also

- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS, 2019 update)

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

- The Royal Canal pNHA (Site Code 002103) is approximately 1.02km to the south of the subject site.
- The South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (Site Code 004024) is approximately 10.2km to the south east of the subject site.

5.4. 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.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The First Party Appeal raised the following:

- Background to the proposed development and the proposal would see the appropriate use of a vacant, under-utilised and suitably zoned site in an established urban area. The development would release residential zoned lands for use and the site would improve the streetscape and public realm in the village centre. The proposed development would allow the release of centrally located town centre zoned site for development as a nursing home – ABP Ref. 321644-24 refers.
- A full overview of the site and relevant planning details are provided. The site is zoned for TC – Town Centre use. The existing single storey house is not visually prominent.
- Details are provided of pre-planning consultation with the Planning Authority.

- The site is located within a Level 4 centre – Blanchardstown village and not a Level 2 centre. Different objectives from the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 are relevant in this case.
- Fingal County Council have not commenced the Blanchardstown Village Framework Plan to date. The proposed development will provide for a sustainable form of development on a brownfield site. It would also allow for the redevelopment of an underused site within Blanchardstown Main Street – Justin’s Flowers site.
- Refers to the PA report and that the building line is consistent with that of the existing building line.
- A design statement in accordance with DMS05 was provided with the application and details how the development will integrate with its setting.
- No.38 Springlawn Heights is significantly higher than the subject site and is set back from the proposed development.
- The proposed development, scale, height and design are justified by the appellant in their appeal report, in the context of the existing character of the area and the relevant requirement of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029. It is reported ‘that the appeal site does not occupy a highly visible location along Main Street and that the proposed development would not appear visually prominent in the streetscape..’.
- In terms of impact on existing residential amenity, it is agreed with the PA that it is no. 38 Springlawn Heights that may be impacted by the proposed development. Impacts identified by the PA include visual impact and loss of sunlight to the rear garden. It is considered that the PA did not consider the issue of topography, and the impact would be reduced due to the difference in heights between the site and the adjoining property.
- The applicant has carried out a detailed Daylight and Sunlight Assessment and is included in Appendix B of their appeal. The following is noted in summary:

Study A – Skylight access – Assessed through use of Vertical Sky Component:
Assessment indicates a marginal effect with only a negligible impact with the development in place. A reasonable level of skylight would continue to be

received within No.38 Springlawn Heights. Details in Table 1 of the applicant's report.

Study B – Sunlight access – Assessed through the Annual Probable Sunlight Hours (APSH) and Winter Probable Sunlight Hours (WPSH) analysis: Negligible impact on the annual and winter probable sunlight hours. Appropriate receipt of sunlight would continue to be received here. Details in Table 2 and Table 3 of the applicant's report.

Study C – Impact on amenity space: 84% of the rear garden would receive at least 2 hours of sunlight on the 21st of March in accordance with the relevant guidance. Details in Table 4 of the applicant's report.

- In summary, the submitted report indicates that daylight and sunlight results will exceed the required standards in accordance with the relevant guidelines. In turn the results indicate, due to the high level of correlation between daylight/ sunlight receipt and other factors such as overbearing, that the residential amenity of this house will not be adversely affected by this proposed development. Any overlooking issues can be addressed through the fitting of obscured glazing at first floor level where relevant.
- Other issues addressed include the impact from general disturbance associated with car parking and the external service area. Suitable boundary treatment will be provided here and the difference in ground levels will also reduce the potential impact from these areas on adjoining properties. The nature of the development, a flower shop/ general merchandise store, is unlikely to adversely affect the residential amenity of the area.

In conclusion, the applicant requests that the decision of Fingal County Council be overturned and the Commission grant permission for this development. The appeal is supported with site location plans and photographs.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

The Planning Authority request that the decision to refuse permission be upheld. Conditions are listed in the event that permission is granted for this development.

6.3. Observations

Two third party observations were received as follows:

A. Leonard: Resident living adjacent to the subject site, in Knocknagow. Concerns include:

- Impact on her property from a proposed access road.
- Loss of privacy as the area is currently characterised by bungalows and also traffic passing her house would impact on privacy.
- Noise and pollution from delivery trucks and visiting cars to the subject site.
- Potential for increased traffic congestion in an area already impacted by traffic.

E. Eager-Quinn: Resident living adjacent to the subject site in No. 38 Springlawns Heights. Concerns include:

- Procedural issues raised including the impact on adjoining properties, who may not be aware due to the (valid) position of the site notice.
- The provision of a commercial unit would impact traffic. The site is in close proximity to the upgraded Snugborough Road junction. Traffic is already heavy in this area.
- Increase in nuisance due to the location of the car park and access area but also through increased activity, opening hours into the evening and also through car fumes.
- Loss of privacy through the scale and location of this development in close proximity to existing houses. The removal of trees would also impact on privacy.
- Concern about the development of a basement level that may impact on the foundations of their house.
- The development would give rise to overshadowing and overbearing on their house.
- There has been a lack of consultation between the developer and existing residents in the area.
- Negative impact from the development on personal wellbeing.

The observation is supported with a number of photographs.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. I consider that the main issues in this application are as follows:

- Context of Development
- Design and Visual Impact
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Transportation, Traffic, Parking and Access
- Infrastructure and Flood Risk
- Other Matters

7.2. Context of Development

- 7.2.1. The proposed development is for the demolition of an existing bungalow and for the construction of a two storey over basement level commercial unit. The applicant has provided a Design Statement that details how this development will integrate with its setting, and this is considered further in Section 7.3 of my report.
- 7.2.2. The majority of the site is zoned TC – Town Centre and the proposed development of a retail unit is in accordance with this zoning objective. The existing bungalow is not of a quality worth its preservation and there are numerous such units in the Blanchardstown/ Dublin 15 area. The vehicular access to the site will also function as a road that allows for the opening up for development of lands to the rear of the site, the development of these lands does not form part of this application.
- 7.2.3. I am satisfied that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of the TC zoning that applies to this site. The provision of a retail unit in lieu of a residential unit is considered to be acceptable in this location. The proposed use is acceptable in terms of the Level 4 designation of this part of Blanchardstown village. The rear of the site is zoned RS and the proposed development of these lands in the form of ancillary car parking would not be contrary to the RS zoning and such use is open for consideration.

7.3. Design and Visual Impact

- 7.3.1. As I have reported, the house proposed for demolition is not of a unique quality worth its preservation. The removal of this house would not have an adverse impact on the streetscape. The proposed unit is a two-storey over basement development.

The width of the building is given at 11.58 at its maximum and the height of this flat roof structure is 8.2m above ground level (ground level is given as 58.535m OD). The floor plans of this structure are simple with lift and stairwell on each floor, an accessible wc and storage area forming the remainder of the basement floor plan. Ground Floor and First Floor primarily consist of retail floor space and the lift/ stairwell.

- 7.3.2. From the information provided including in the submitted Design Statement, the proposed unit will be occupied by Justin's Fruit & Veg Shop and Florist which is located further to the south on Main Street. The Design Statement and floor plans/ elevation do not detail how the completed elevations will appear with particular reference to shopfront signage etc. It is not clear from the submitted floorplans where the primary access is to be located, with the front door facing onto Main Street to the north east, but doors to the retail floor space from the south east, north west and south west. None of the floor plans indicate the layout of these spaces and it is not clear what will be sold on either floor, where the cash desk is to be located and if staff facilities are provided for.
- 7.3.3. The proposed design is contemporary in nature with a flat roof two storey over basement unit proposed here. This site is located on the edge of the town centre but is located on the side that is close to the Blanchardstown Town Centre retail area. The site can be considered to be in a transitional zone between the village centre, residential development and the retail area further to the north of the Snugborough Road. The Planning Authority recommended refusal and refer to Objective ZO2 which seeks to ensure that regard is had to transitional zones.
- 7.3.4. I am not satisfied with the proposed design in this location. The unit reads more as a small office block or commercial unit but not as a retail unit. This unit would be more appropriate in a retail park or office park but not on Main Street, Blanchardstown. This is a case of a design of a building located in the wrong place. The proposed site layout and the actual design of the building contribute to my concern about the design of the building in this location. In terms of Objective ZO2, I am not satisfied that the development demonstrates regard for its setting and the transitional nature of this site.

- 7.3.5. The proposed unit is set back from the rear of the existing footpath by 7.9m, it appears that this is done to retain the existing building line here. I consider the building line to be weak on this section of Main Street and the unit could be located closer to the public street. The set back of the building and the landscaping between the front and the footpath would act as a visual barrier and not provide for a suitable street frontage here. I am not convinced that this layout/ design will encourage a greater vibrancy in this section of Blanchardstown village.
- 7.3.6. I therefore consider that the proposed layout and building design are not in keeping with the character of the area and the development fails to adequately integrate with the existing streetscape here. Policy SPQHP5 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2025 seeks to promote and support the use of high quality design in buildings and public realm. I am not satisfied that the development in terms of its design and layout has achieve or met the development plan objective. I therefore recommend that permission be refused for this development.

7.4. Impact on Residential Amenity

- 7.4.1. The Planning Authority included in their reason for refusal concerns about the impact of the development on third parties specifically at 38 Springlawn Heights, which is located to the north west of the subject site. No. 38 is a two-storey semi-detached house located on the end of a cul-de-sac. The boundary with the subject site consists of a block wall and there is landscaping in the form of trees and shrubs on the applicant's side of the boundary. Concerns raised by the Planning Authority included overshadowing and overbearing impacts, which would injure the amenities and depreciate the value of this property. I note these concerns but also consider that there would be a significant impact on the property to the south of the subject site also and these issues have been outlined in their observation.
- 7.4.2. The applicant has provided a robust response to the reason for refusal in terms of impact on residential amenity. In support of their appeal, they have provided a 'Daylight and Sunlight Impact Assessment'. This indicates no issues of concern in relation to receipt of daylight and sunlight with only a negligible impact compared to the existing situation. Impact on their amenity space is also negligible, and the post construction situation would result in the open space more than achieving the minimum required standard for daylight over the specified period. I am satisfied that

the development will not have a noticeable impact on the daylight and sunlight received by no.38 post construction.

- 7.4.3. Drawings no. 500, 501 and 510 provides the front/ rear elevations and their relationship with the adjoining house to the north, no. 38. The top of the flat roof of the proposed building will be lower than that of the house to the north and I therefore consider that it would not result in overbearing on this house. Whilst this building is a two storey structure, there is a single storey section to the north which adjoins no. 38 and this ensures that the development will not be overbearing. Whilst the depth of this building is much larger than that of no. 38, its location on site and use of single storey elements will reduce the perception of bulk. I am satisfied that the impact on no.38 would not be significant.
- 7.4.4. The impact on the house to the south east is noted. Due to location, there would not be any significant impact in terms of loss of daylight, sunlight and impact on private amenity space; the proposed unit is north west of this house and there is a good separation of at least 8.9m between the proposed building and the site boundary to the south.
- 7.4.5. I would be concerned about the lack of detail on the proposed access road and the provision of a new vehicular entrance to this property. As an access to serve this development, it would be acceptable as movements would be limited to opening hours of the business. As an access to allow for the development of adjoining lands, then further details should have been provided as this could result in significant traffic movements along this route in time. The new vehicular access would require the consent of the adjoining landowner to provide this. Either way, the existing boundary with a similar residential unit would be replaced with a boundary with an active roadway that a minimum would be active for most of the day.

7.5. Transportation, Traffic, Parking and Access

- 7.5.1. Site Layout: I have already commented on my concerns about the site layout and the development failing to have appropriate regard to the existing streetscape here. The core retail/ commercial section of Main Street, Blanchardstown has developed with the buildings have a strong frontage with direct frontage to the street. The proposed development through its setback, landscaping and access arrangement does not provide for this and would not be keeping in character with the established

form of development here. I note also the Fingal County Council Transportation Planning Report and their comment on the need for a 4m set back from the near side road edge. Considering the nature of the development in terms of demolition and the construction of a new building here, there should be no need for the proposed access and landscaping arrangements to the front of the site. Wheelchair access should be possible in a simpler arrangement than what is proposed.

- 7.5.2. Access to the lands to the rear: I have also commented on the proposed access road. I would have additional concerns regarding the layout of this. Clearly it is designed for cars/ vehicles to access the lands to the rear of the site, but I am not certain that it allows for good pedestrian/ cycle access. The footpath terminates at the side of the building and to continue this to the boundary in the future may result in the loss of the car parking spaces or at a minimum a loss of some of these through a reconfiguration of this space. There is an area of landscaping to the south eastern section of the site that provides a buffer with the adjoining property and whilst this could be converted to a footpath, that would result in the loss of this buffer area. The applicant has indicated that this strip could be converted into a footpath in their Design Statement.
- 7.5.3. Whilst this application and appeal for the replacement of a house with a new retail unit, the applicant has made clear that the proposal would allow for the future development of the lands to the south west and as such I have had regard to potential impacts arising from this approach.
- 7.5.4. Car and Bicycle Parking: The proposed development provides for eight car parking spaces, one of which is accessible, and the Planning Authority have reported that this is acceptable, and I agree with this. Bicycle parking is proposed to the front of the building, and the applicant has proposed 10 parking spaces. The Fingal Development Plan has a requirement for 22 spaces and there is clearly a shortfall in provision. The Transportation Planning Section have also sought the provision of staff lockers and provision for cargo bicycles. I note that no details have been provided in relation to staff facilities in general, but I am satisfied that if required, the provision of additional bicycle parking and staff facilities could be conditioned, though noting also that a reallocation of floor space may also reduce the need for these.

7.5.5. Conclusion: The proposed layout is considered to be unacceptable and would require a revised layout. I consider the layout to be premature and does not fully consider what would be required to adequately service the lands to the rear with specific reference to pedestrian access. The issues of bicycle parking and staff facilities can be addressed by way of condition if permission is granted for this development.

7.6. Infrastructure and Flood Risk

7.6.1. Water supply: No report was received from Uisce Éireann, I note from their Water Supply Capacity Register, dated August 2025, that there is 'Potential Capacity Available - LoS improvement required' serving this area. Considering the nature and scale of development, this development would not have a significant impact on water supply demand in this area.

7.6.2. Drainage: No report was received from Uisce Éireann, I note from their Wastewater Treatment Capacity Register, dated August 2025, that there is a Green indication that there is available capacity in the Ringsend WWTP.

7.6.3. The Fingal County Council Water Services Department sought further information in relation to surface water drainage. The figures provided by the applicant may not demonstrate compliance with the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study, 2005.

7.6.4. Flooding: No issues of flooding arise in this location.

7.6.5. Conclusion: I note the report from the Fingal County Council Water Services Department, and I am satisfied that this issue can be addressed satisfactorily. I have no concerns regarding the provision of water supply and foul drainage to serve this development.

7.7. Other Matters

7.7.1. Lack of Information: As I have already reported no details are provided for the signage for this building. Normally this would be expected when the occupant is not known, but that is not the case here. The positioning, size and type of signage could have a significant impact on the visual appearance of this building.

7.7.2. Details of opening hours, staff numbers and delivery details are not provided either. These details should be available considering that the business is already in

operation in Blanchardstown. As also noted, no details of the internal layout are provided, and it is difficult to ascertain which is the main/ primary door to this business.

- 7.7.3. Other Issues: I note the submitted documents and the appeal statement. I have identified a number of concerns with this development and many of these can be put down to the fact that the design has had more regard to a means of opening up the lands to the rear rather than providing a design that integrates with the existing streetscape. There is no objection to providing a scheme that has regard to future potential development, but that should not be at the expense of the streetscape/ high quality urban design. The site is suitable for a development of this nature, but the proposed building and layout are not of a suitably high quality for this location failing to demonstrate compliance with Policy SPQHP5 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029.

8.0 AA Screening

8.1. Stage 1 Screening

I have considered the subject development, which comprises the demolition of an existing house and the construction of a retail unit in light of the requirements of S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The subject development is located on Main Street, Blanchardstown, which is an urban area. The site is not within or adjacent to an European designated site and there are no watercourses on or adjacent to the subject site.

I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on:

- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (004024)
- North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006).

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The scale and nature of the development;
- The distance to the nearest European site;

- Dilution effect and indirect nature of any pathways due to development between the subject site and the designated European sites; and
- Taking into account the screening determination of the Planning Authority.

I conclude on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European site(s). No further assessment is required for the project. No mitigation measures are required to come to this conclusion.

9.0 Water Framework Directive

- 9.1. The subject site is located approximately 180m to the east of the River Tolka, but there are no watercourses adjacent to the site, and the subject site overlies the Dublin Ground Waterbody. The proposed development consists of the demolition of an existing house and the construction of a new retail unit on this site.
- 9.2. I have assessed the development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. I have undertaken a WFD Impact Assessment Stage 1: Screening and which is included in Appendix 4 after my report. This assessment considered the impact of the development on:
- Dublin Groundwater Source
 - River Tolka

- 9.3. The impact from the development was considered in terms of the construction and operational phases. Through the nature of the development, and distance to the relevant waterbodies, all potential impacts can be screened out.

Conclusion

- 9.4. I conclude that 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.

10.0 Recommendation

I recommend that planning permission should be refused for the following reasons.

11.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. By reason of its form and industrial-type design, its architecturally undistinguished and standardised appearance and its general layout including excessive setback from the footpath edge, it is considered that the proposed development would be visually unsatisfactory and inappropriate in the context of its prominent location on the northern part of Main Street, Blanchardstown. The proposed development would conflict with the provisions of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 - 2029 for the area in terms of Objective ZO2 which seeks to have regard to transitional areas and Policy SPGHP5 which promotes high quality design and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. The proposed layout is designed to allow for access to lands to the rear/ north west of the subject site in the future. The proposed layout does not adequately allow for this with particular reference to pedestrian access and the proposal as submitted would be premature pending the determination of a suitable road layout making provision for pedestrians, ensuring the provision of adequate car parking for the subject development and whilst also ensuring the protection of residential amenity of adjoining landowners. The proposed development would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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.

Paul O'Brien

Inspectorate

9th September 2025

Appendix 1 - Form 1

EIA Pre-Screening

An Bord Pleanála Case Reference	ACP-322972-25		
Proposed Development Summary	Demolition of building, construction of retail building with all associated site works.		
Development Address	Melville, Main Street, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, D15 DC2Y		
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)		Yes	√
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?			
No	√	No, it is not a class specified in Part 1.	Proceed to Q.3.
3. Does the proposed development equal or exceed any relevant THRESHOLD set out in the relevant Class?			
No	√		Proceed to Q4
4. Is the proposed development below the relevant threshold for the Class of development [sub-threshold development]?			
Yes	√	The relevant Classes are as follows: Part 2: 10(b)(iii) Construction of a shopping centre with a gross floor space exceeding 10,000 square metres. 10(b)(iv) 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.	

		As the proposal is for a retail unit of 662sq m on a 0.125 hectare site, it would be substantially less than the thresholds set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 and would not fall under Class 10(b)(iii)(iv) in respect to retail and urban development.	
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5. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?		
No	√	Preliminary Examination Required
Yes		

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2

Form 2 - EIA Screening Determination

Case Reference	
Proposed Development Summary	Demolition of building, construction of retail building with all associated site works.
Development Address	Melville, Main Street, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, D15 DC2Y
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 (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	The demolition of a house with a stated floor area of 114sq m, provision of a retail unit with a gross floor area of 662sq m, car parking, road access and all associated site works on a site area of 0.125 hectares. An existing house with a stated floor area of 114sq m is proposed for demolition and site clearance will take place. Materials to be used will be standard for a development of this nature. Nuisance will only occur during the construction phase for short periods of time over a temporary period. No risks to human health in terms of accidents and disasters subject to full implementation of Construction Management Plan and Health and Safety requirements on site during the construction phase.
Location of development (The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use,	The subject lands are a brownfield site located within an established urban area. The site is not within or immediately adjacent to a European site. There are no known restrictions on this site.

abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	Construction phase impacts include demolition of existing house, noise, traffic and some nuisance. Will be for a temporary period of time. Operational phase impacts include noise and traffic impacts. Will be as expected in an urban area with an existing dense road network adjacent to the subject site. Completed development will benefit the area through additional retail, local facilities within an established urban area.
Conclusion	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: AA Screening Determination

Test for likely significant effects

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Brief description of project	Demolition of building, construction of retail building with all associated site works. A full description is provided in Section 2.0 of the Inspectors Report.
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	The subject lands, contain a detached bungalow located on lands to the north west of Main Street, Blanchardstown. The development will require demolition of the house and site clearance. Boundary walls and fences to be removed in places and a new access is to be provided to the south east of the site. There are no water courses on or adjoining the site. The area is served by public water supply and foul drainage. Potential Impact Mechanisms include: • Release of dust during demolition and construction phases. • Noise and traffic nuisance during demolition, construction and operational phases. • Pollution of water courses during the construction and operational phase.
Screening report	None
Natura Impact Statement	None
Relevant submissions	None from prescribed bodies in relation to AA.
Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model	

The proposed development is not located within or adjacent to any designated site. therefore, the proposed development would not result in any direct effects such as habitat loss on any European Site.

European Site (code)	Qualifying interests ¹ Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)	Distance from proposed development (km)	Ecological connections	Consider further in screening Y/N
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (Site Code 004024)	• Light-bellied Brent Goose [A046] • Oystercatcher [A130] • Ringed Plover [A137] • Grey Plover [A141] • Knot [A143] • Sanderling [A144] • Dunlin [A149] • Bar-tailed Godwit [A157] • Redshank [A162] • Black-headed Gull [A179] • Roseate Tern [A192] • Common Tern [A193] • Arctic Tern [A194] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	10.2km to the south east.	No direct hydrological connections. There is an indirect hydrological pathway to this SPA via foul wastewater drainage. Foul water from the development will be directed through the existing public foul network and processed at Ringsend WWTP prior to discharge into Dublin Bay following treatment. Plant is within capacity and no mitigation measures are required.	Y
North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006)	• Light-bellied Brent Goose [A046] • Shelduck [A048] • Teal [A052] • Pintail [A054] • Oystercatcher [A130] • Golden Plover [A140] • Grey Plover [A141] • Knot [A143] • Sanderling [A144] • Dunlin [A149]	14km to the south east.	No direct hydrological connections. There is an indirect hydrological pathway to this SPA via foul wastewater drainage. Foul water from the development will be directed through the existing public foul network and	Y

	• Black-tailed Godwit [A156] • Bar-tailed Godwit [A157] • Curlew [A160] • Redshank [A162] • Turnstone [A169] • Black-headed Gull [A179] • Shoveler [A857] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]		processed at Ringsend WWTP prior to discharge into Dublin Bay following treatment. Plant is within capacity and no mitigation measures are required.	
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Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites

There is an indirect hydrological connection to South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA and North Bull Island SPA, further consideration of these sites is required.

AA Screening matrix

Site name Qualifying interests	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*	
	Impacts	Effects
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (004024)	Direct: None, due to distance and scale of development. Indirect: There is an indirect hydrological pathway to the SPA via foul drainage. This is routed from the site through the existing public drainage system and is processed at the Ringsend WWTP prior to discharge to Dublin Bay. The plant is with capacity and no effects on the SPA are likely, in the absence of mitigation measures.	Potential damage to the habitats and qualifying interest species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): N	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N	
	Impacts	Effects

North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006)	Direct: None, due to distance and scale of development. Indirect: There is an indirect hydrological pathway to the SPA via foul drainage. This is routed from the site through the existing public drainage system and is processed at the Ringsend WWTP prior to discharge to Dublin Bay. The plant is with capacity and no effects on the SPA are likely, in the absence of mitigation measures.	Potential damage to the habitats and qualifying interest species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): N	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N	
The scale and nature of development combined with the distance to the SPAs would ensure that there is no likelihood of significant effects.		
Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site		
I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (004024) and North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006). The proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European site(s). No further assessment is required for the project.		
No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions.		

Appendix 4: WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING

Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality

An Bord Pleanála ref. no.	ACP-322972-25	Townland, address	Melville, Main Street, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, D15 DC2Y
Description of project		Demolition of building, construction of retail building with all associated site works.	
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,		The site is located in an urban location. The subject site area is 0.125 hectares. There are no watercourses on or adjacent to the site.	
Proposed surface water details		Surface water to be disposed on site/ into the public surface water drainage system.	
Proposed water supply source & available capacity		Public supply.	

Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues		Public supply.				
Others?		N/A				
Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection						
Identified water body	Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
e.g. lake, river, transitional and coastal waters, groundwater body, artificial (e.g. canal) or heavily modified body.	Underlying site	Dublin (IE_EA_G_008)	Good	Not at Risk	N/A	Discharge to Groundwater

		180m to the east of the site.	River Tolka (IE_EA_09T011 000)	Poor	At risk.	N/A	Surface water run-off potential.
Step 3: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.							
CONSTRUCTION PHASE							
No.	Component	Water body receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2.
1.	Site clearance & Construction	Dublin (IE_EA_G_008)	Groundwater	Water Pollution Surface water run-off	Disposal on site through a SuDS designed system and also final	No	Screen out at this stage.

					disposal into the public surface water drainage system.		
2.	Site clearance & Construction	River Tolka (IE_EA_09T 011000)	Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway	Water Pollution Surface water run-off	Disposal on site through a SuDS designed system and also final disposal into the public surface water drainage system.	No	Screen out at this stage.
OPERATIONAL PHASE							

3.	Surface Water Run-off	Dublin (IE_EA_G_008)	Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway	Water Pollution	Disposal on site through a SuDS designed system and also final disposal into the public surface water drainage system.	No	Screen out at this stage.
4.	Surface Water Run-off	River Tolka (IE_EA_09T011000)	Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway	Water Pollution	Disposal on site through a SuDS designed system and also final disposal into the public surface	No	Screen out at this stage.

					water drainage system.		
DECOMMISSIONING PHASE							
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A