



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report PL-500066-DF

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<b>Development</b>	<b>Retention of change of use and subdivision to commercial/storage use. Retention of units and all associated site works</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Sweetmans Yard, Folkstown Great, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin</b>
<b>Planning Authority</b>	<b>Fingal County Council</b>
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	<b>F24A/0871</b>
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	<b>Christopher Sweetman</b>
<b>Type of Application</b>	<b>Retention</b>
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	<b>Refuse Retention</b>
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	<b>First Party Normal Planning Appeal</b>
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	<b>Christopher Sweetman</b>
<b>Observer(s)</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Aisling MacNamara</b>

## 1.0 Site Location and Description

1.1. The development proposal relates to a 1.3ha site, referred to as 'Sweetman's Yard', located within the rural area of Folkstown Great to the southwest of Balbriggan, County Dublin. The site contains a number of warehouse/ shed type buildings with external areas for storage of vehicles, unused portacabins, waste, building materials, equipment and other structures. The site is part of a larger landholding containing a residential dwelling which fronts to the road. The site is set back from the road behind the dwelling and is surrounded by agricultural lands. Access to the site is from its northern side via an existing entrance from the R122 Naul road, c 450m from M1 Junction 6 and is located c 1.2km to the west of the Balbriggan built up urban area.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. Permission is sought for the retention of:

- Change of use and subdivision of two existing agricultural buildings to light industrial / commercial / storage uses. The units are occupied as follows:

Building:

Unit 10 (Courier Storage)

Unit 11 (Tool Manufacturer)

Unit 12 (Car Restoration)

Building:

Unit 14 (Vehicle Storage)

Unit 15 (Workshop)

- A new building for light industrial/ commercial / storage uses. The units are occupied as follows:

Unit 3 (Vehicle /Agriculture Storage)

Unit 4 (Furniture Storage)

Unit 5 (Material Storage)

- Ancillary works

The floor space of development to be retained is 742sqm.

Revised site layout proposals were submitted at further information stage showing new proposed storm water attenuation measures, new waste water treatment plant and percolation area and proposed road improvements, landscaping and screening measures, including external storage areas and ancillary domestic storage/welfare buildings serving the overall development site.

## 3.0 Planning Authority Decision

### 3.1. Decision

By order dated 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025, the planning authority decided to refuse permission for retention for the proposal, for one reason:

*“The subject site has been incrementally developed into a business park on an ad-hoc basis; which fails to provide for the high-quality physical environment or high-quality design required by Section 14.15.1 and Table 14.15 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 and, therefore, materially contravenes Objective DMS089 and the vision of the ‘GE’ land-use zoning objective of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029. The development, if retained, would set an undesirable precedent for the ad-hoc development of other business parks on ‘GE’ zoned lands which, both in themselves and cumulatively, would have significant negative impacts on the visual amenities of the County. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.”*

### 3.2. Planning Authority Reports

#### 3.2.1. Planning Reports

- The first planners report of 15/11/2024 recommends further information on 2 items. The assessment indicates building design and landscaping was acceptable and that the development was compatible with existing on the site and would not adversely impact on the visual amenity of the area.

- Further Information was requested on 20/11/2024 as follows:
  - (1) (a) The site is not served by public foul drainage. They are requested to show that the private sewerage system is adequate to cater for the increase in foul loading associated with the application through the submission of an engineering report and in accordance with EPA CoP for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems, (b) show acceptable surface water drainage proposals in compliance with Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) and SUDS;
  - (2) Site developed on ad hoc basis with outdoor storage areas, portacabin structures etc – demonstrate compliance with Section 14.15.1, objective DMS089 and Table 14.15 of CDP in relation to business parks, design and siting.
- The planning authority issued letter on 28/04/2025 agreeing to extension of the period for receipt of FI up to 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025.
- A response to the Further Information request was received on 20/06/2025 as follows:
  - (1) Engineering reports submitted including Site Characterisation Report to EPA 2021 standards, BRE Digest Infiltration Test and SUDS Design reports and drawings showing proposals for new wastewater treatment system and polishing filter (45sqm soil polishing filter and 3PE WWTS) and proposed storm water management system (2 new stormtech systems).
  - (2) Report detailing compliance with section 14.15.1, objective DM089 and Table 14.15.
- The second planners report of 09/07/2025 sets out a consideration of the response and recommends Clarification of Further Information.
- Clarification of Further Information was requested on 15/07/2025 as follows:
  - (1) Submit updated details and proposals in relation to the on site wastewater treatment and disposal system, in relation to sizing, and design of the system.

- (2) The applicant failed to address item 2 – failed to show compliance with section 14.15.1, table 14.15 and objective DMS089 of the CDP.
- Response to Clarification of FI request was received on 19/08/2025 as follows:
    - (1) Updated on site WWTS details including details on loading / occupancy of the development and new updated site characterisation form and drawings. The WWTS is upsized to 90sqm soil polishing filter and 6PE WWTS.
    - (2) Revised drawings and details submitted to show compliance with section 14.15.1, Table 14.15 and objective DMS089 including revised site layout plan showing proposals for dedicated pedestrian and vehicular circulation routes and signage, external lighting to be to Council specifications, new 1.8m hit and miss timber post and panel fencing to screen machinery / plant/ vehicle storage area to south of site, new screened waste storage / recycling area to southwest with 2m solid fence, new planting across the site and to boundaries. The drawings include three existing cabin buildings for domestic storage and welfare WC facilities.
  - The third planners report of 12/09/2025 considers the response. The assessment finds that the response to item 1 is acceptable and that the response to item 2 is not acceptable. The proposed development is not a high quality physical environment or a high quality design as per section 14.15.1 and Table 14.15 by reason of the absence of any lighting proposals, the quality and finishes of the proposed screening (timber), the large extent of hardcore areas to the south and east of the site which appear to be only for ad hoc storage of vehicles and plant, the absence of any signage for each business on the site, inadequate loading / service areas, inadequate setbacks and landscaping buffers to the internal roadway and landscaping proposals generally. The report states that the proposal relies on granted F20A/0226 with no proposed significant alterations however an additional 9 no. business units and 3 no. additional buildings have been added to the site since permission granted – thereby resulting in the ad hoc incremental development

of the business park with failure to provide a high quality physical environment and design. The report concludes with recommendation to refuse permission.

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Air & Noise Officer – no objection (17/10/2024)
- Environment Section (Waste Enforcement & Regulation) – no objection (21/10/2024)
- Parks & Green Infrastructure – no objection (22/10/2024)
- Water Services – report of 01/11/2024 requests additional information in relation to foul sewer and surface water; report of 26/06/2025 indicates that further clarification required regarding the foul waste proposals and no objection to surface water proposals; report of 25/08/2025 indicates that the updated foul drainage proposals are acceptable and no objection
- Transportation Planning – no objection (14/11/2024)

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- Uisce Eireann – no objection

### 3.4. Third Party Observations

None received.

## 4.0 Planning History

- F20A/0226 – Grant Jan 2021 – retention permission for (1) Retention of change of use and subdivision from agricultural building to separate light industrial/commercial and storage use, (2) Retention of existing extension to light industrial/ commercial/ storage unit, (3) Retention of all site and ancillary works in accordance with the lodged plans and documents on this site.

Condition 2 states that the permission relates to the change of use and subdivision of agricultural building to light industrial / commercial and storage use and retention of extension to the building and its use as light industrial / commercial and storage unit and for 5 HGV parking spaces and staff parking.

Nothing in the grant of permission or retention permission shall be confirmed as authorisation for the temporary structures on the site or for the use of the yard for external storage.

Condition 3 states that the layout and boundary treatment of the development shall accord with revised layout drawing received 15/12/2020. The eastern boundary treatment shall be erected within first planting season after grant of permission.

Condition 4 relates to surface water drainage.

Condition 6 relates to the design of the entrance and access (sightlines and gradient), bicycle parking, stormwater and services.

- F04A/0633 – Grant June 2004 – permission for agricultural shed
- F00A/0591 – Grant July 2000 – permission for crop and livestock shed
- F99A/0429 – Grant Oct 1999 – permission for agricultural shed and entrance
- The planners report provides details of enforcement files relating to the site, relating to commercial activity on the site without the benefit of planning permission.

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Development Plan

The Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 applies to the development proposal. The following provisions are of relevance:

The site is within the Balbriggan Development Boundary on lands zoned 'GE General Employment'. The Objective Description is *'Provide opportunities for general enterprise and employment'*. The Objective Vision is as follows: *"Facilitate opportunities for compatible industry and general employment uses including appropriate sustainable employment and enterprise uses, logistics and warehousing activity in a good quality physical environment. General Employment areas should be highly accessible, well designed, permeable and legible."*

Uses that are 'permitted in principle' in this zoning include: Builders Providers/Yard, Industry-General, Industry-Light, Logistics, Road Transport Depot, Vehicle Servicing/ Maintenance Garage, Waste Disposal and Recovery (excluding high impact), Warehousing.

The majority of the site is located within the Coastal Landscape. Balbriggan is within a Historic Landscape Character Study Area.

Section 2.4.3 Framework Plans indicates a proposed Framework Plan is planned for lands at Folkstown Little (FP4.B). The plan states the following: *Following adoption of the Development Plan, a list of Framework Plans to be prepared over the lifetime of the Development Plan will be drafted by the Planning Department based on the Council's priorities and subject to resources.*

#### Chapter 7 Employment and Economy

Policy EEP2 – General Employment Lands Maximise the potential of GE lands, ensuring that they are developed for intensive employment purposes, where appropriate, and which are highly accessible, well designed, permeable and legible.

Objective EEO6 – Regeneration of Obsolete/Underutilised Buildings and Lands Promote the regeneration of obsolete and/ or underutilised buildings and lands that could yield economic benefits, with appropriate uses and subject to the proper planning and development of the area.

Policy EEP9 – Fingal As An Engine For Economic Growth Promote enterprise and employment throughout the County, including along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor, the Metro and Rail Economic Corridor, Swords, Blanchardstown and Balbriggan and work with the other Local Authorities to promote Fingal and the wider mid-eastern region as an engine for economic growth.

Objective EEO12 – Supporting Existing Clusters Support existing successful clusters in Fingal, such as those in the ICT, pharmaceutical, aviation and agri-food sectors, and promote new and emerging clustering opportunities across all economic sectors within the County.

Policy EEP11 – Variety of Employment Lands Consider the allocation of various sizes of land parcels for commercial, office, industrial uses in order to cater for a wide range of employment and enterprise formats.

Objective EEO14 – Permeability in General Employment Lands Encourage high quality sustainable design, permeability and pedestrian and/ or cyclist friendly environments within general employment zoned areas.

Policy EEP20 – Manufacturing Promote the growth of the manufacturing sector in Fingal by responding to the varying needs and requirements of the different components within the sector and by creating high quality built environments offering a range of building sizes and formats, supported by the targeted provision of necessary infrastructure.

Objective EEO35 – Range of Industrial/Manufacturing Units Ensure that a range of industrial and/ or manufacturing units, in terms of size, scale, format and arrangements, is provided for to adequately respond to enterprise requirements in different economic sectors.

Objective EEO37 – Development Standards for Industrial/Manufacturing Buildings Ensure that proposals for industrial and/ or manufacturing buildings demonstrate regard to the relevant development standards.

#### Chapter 14 Development Management Standards

##### 14.15 Enterprise and Employment

This section should be read in conjunction with Chapter 7 Employment and Economy.

The Planning Authority encourages high quality design, materials and finishes and good quality landscaping for all commercial and industrial developments. In assessing planning applications, a number of considerations will be taken into account:

- Conformity with relevant Development Plan land use policies and objectives.
- The mix of uses being proposed particularly in mixed use areas, i.e. areas zoned LC, MC, ME, TC, RV, where development and changes of use need to be orientated towards creating environments that are vibrant and lively.
- The intensity and nature of the proposed use.
- Achievement of an appropriate density and scale of development.
- Provision of open space and high-quality landscaping plans.

- High quality design.
- Potential impact of traffic movement and parking provision.
- Impact on amenities of the surrounding areas.
- Energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the development.
- Waste management measures

#### 14.15.1 Business Parks and Industrial Areas

Business parks and industrial areas in Fingal are intended to provide high quality physical environments for businesses and industry reflecting the character of the County. The principal aims are to achieve high quality design, visual continuity and pedestrian/cycle friendly environments whilst ensuring the functioning of business and industrial locations. It is also considered that good design will assist in the long-term economic viability of these areas.

Objective DMSO89 – Design and Siting of Business Parks and Industrial Areas  
Ensure that the design and siting of any new Business Parks and Industrial Areas, including office developments, conforms to the principles of Design Guidelines as outlined in Table 14.15.

Table 14.15: Design Guidelines for Business Parks, Industrial Areas (Enterprise and Employment lands) – This is attached as an appendix to this report.

## 5.2. **Natural Heritage Designations**

There are no natural heritage designated areas within or in close proximity to the site. The closest heritage site is Kock Lake pNHA c 1.5km from the site.

## 5.3. **EIA Screening**

The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for environmental impact assessment (refer to Form 1 and Form 2 in 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

A first party appeal is received from the applicant. The grounds of appeal are summarised as follows:

- The development is compliant with the standards of the planning authority and is in accordance with the vision and objective of the GE zoned lands. The development is of significance to the local community providing much needed light industry / commercial / storage units and employment opportunities. The development is in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. Request permission be granted.
- The appeal submission includes details of the background to the application and appeal, the decision, details of the proposed development, site description and location and details of the planning history relating to the site.
- Pattern of Growth –The proposal is consistent with the pattern of growth at the subject site which the Council have facilitated through various grants of planning permission. All units are occupied – there is demand for such units at this location. The site provides much needed light industrial / commercial / storage units.
- Request for additional information not related to the refusal reason – The Council sought additional information and clarification of additional information for items that do not relate to the basis of refusal for the application. This contravenes section 5.7 of Development Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The request for additional information did not include any items relating to visual amenity, ad hoc development or non compliance with GE zoning designation and the applicant was not afforded the opportunity to address these matters. The refusal does not pertain specifically to the subject development which is for retention of change of use and retention of a

building, but instead relates to the business park as a whole, which has already been granted permission.

- Contradiction of planning report and refusal reason - There are contradictions between the planning reports and the decision. Any outstanding matters can be agreed by condition. Lighting, signage and finishes of screening could be agreed by condition. Landscaping is consistent with that previously permitted. Note that the Councils environment and parks sections have no objection to the development.
- Zoning objective - Industry -light and Warehousing uses are permitted in principle. Therefore the development is permitted in principle at the subject site. The development is compliant with the zoning objective for the area and is consistent with the overall vision for this zone. The development complies with policy EEP2 and EEO14 in relation to general employment lands. The development proposal is consistent with the following policies and objectives – EEP6, EEP10, EEO12, EEP11, EEO61, EEP26, EEP9.
- Objective used in refusal reason - Objective DMSO89 was quoted in the refusal reason, referring to table 14.15. Compliance with Table 14.15 is set out in the additional information provided by the applicant and is further expanded on in the clarification of additional information. Any matter of concern could be agreed by condition. The parks and green infrastructure division have no objection. The design items pertain to the development as a whole, which is permitted under F20A/0226 not the current proposal which is for retention of change of use of two buildings and the retention of a modest building.
- Planning precedents - There are similar developments in the locality which have been granted permission by Fingal County Council or An Coimisiún Pléanála. The appeal submission contains a review of planning applications relating to the development.

## 6.2. Planning Authority Response

The planning authority has responded to the appeal. The response is summarised as follows:

- The planning authority has no further comment in respect to the appeal.
- ACP are requested to uphold the decision of the planning authority.
- In the event that the appeal is successful, provision should be made in the determination for applying the following:
  - A financial contribution and / or any Special Development Contributions required in accordance with Fingal County Council's Section 48 Development Contribution Scheme.
  - Condition should be included where a tree bond is required.

### 6.3. **Observations**

None

### 6.4. **Further Responses**

None

## 7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all submissions received in relation to the appeal and inspected the site, and having regard to relevant local policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Visual amenity, layout and design

### 7.2. **Principle of development**

7.2.1. The proposed development is for the retention of change of use of two existing agricultural buildings to light industrial / commercial/ storage use and for the retention of a newer existing building and for its use also as light industrial/ commercial/ storage use. The total floor area of all units combined is 742sqm which is to be provided over 8 units which are occupied by companies for warehousing / storage of vehicles, plant, furniture, building materials and auto workshop, precision machining

and tool manufacture and car restoration. The buildings are located within the site of an existing 1702sqm building which received retention permission in 2021 (F20A/0226) for its conversion and extension from agricultural use to light industrial/ commercial/ storage use and which is also separated into units.

- 7.2.2. The site is located on lands zoned in the Fingal County Development Plan (CDP) 2023-2029 as 'General Employment' where the objective is to '*provide opportunities for general enterprise and employment*'. The 'objective vision' sets out details regarding targeted uses – i.e. to '*facilitate opportunities for compatible industry and general employment uses including appropriate sustainable employment and enterprise uses, logistics and warehouse activity....*'
- 7.2.3. The CDP includes many objectives to support and promote development on employment zoned lands (EEP2, EEP9), promote the greater economic use of underutilised buildings (EE06), to promote successful clusters of economic sectors (EE012), to promote the growth in manufacturing (EEP20) and to cater for a range of employment and enterprise formats to provide for all economic sectors (EE035).
- 7.2.4. The site is located on the R122 Naul Road with good roads access to the M1 and Balbriggan town. The development is for warehouse and industrial type uses on lands zoned for general employment use. The proposed uses are compatible with the existing permitted employment uses on the site. The uses occupying the units are 'permitted in principle' under the zoning classification of the CDP.
- 7.2.5. I am satisfied that in principle, the proposed development is a use of development that is in accordance with the zoning objective for the land and in accordance with objectives in the CDP to promote employment growth and development.

### 7.3. **Visual amenity, layout and design**

- 7.3.1. The planning authority refused permission for one reason which states that the incremental ad hoc development of the site fails to provide for a high quality physical environment and high quality design required by section 14.15.1 and Table 14.15 of the CDP and therefore materially contravenes objective DMS086 and the vision for the GE zoning objective and that the development would have a significant negative impact on the visual amenities of the area and would set an undesirable precedent for other ad hoc development of business parks on GE lands.

- 7.3.2. The applicant has submitted an appeal setting out justification for the proposed development and submitting that the proposal is in accordance with the standards of the planning authority and the vision and objective of the GE zoned lands, is consistent with the pattern of growth at the site, raises inconsistencies in the assessment of the planning authority and argues that there is an established precedent for similar development in the area.
- 7.3.3. Firstly I note that the assessment and decision on the application is a matter for the planning authority. The appellants have argued that the development proposal relates to the buildings only and it was unreasonable of the planning authority to consider the impacts on the overall development site which already has permission under F20A/0226. In this regard, I consider that the planning authority's approach was reasonable and that consideration should be given to the capacity and design of the overall site to accommodate the proposed change of use and increase in floor area.
- 7.3.4. The refusal reason states that the proposal materially contravenes objective DMS089 of the CDP. Objective DMS089 states the following: "*Ensure that the design and siting of any new Business Parks and Industrial Areas, including office developments, conforms to the principles of Design Guidelines as outlined in Table 14.15*". The objective refers specifically to the design and siting of any new business parks and industrial areas. The development proposal relates to an existing development and is not a new business park or industrial area. As I do not consider that this objective relates to the proposal, I do not consider that there is a material contravention of this objective.
- 7.3.5. The refusal reason states that the proposal materially contravenes the 'vision' of the land use zoning objective. The GE 'objective vision' is to "*Facilitate opportunities for compatible industry and general employment uses including appropriate sustainable employment and enterprise uses, logistics and warehousing activity in a good quality physical environment. General Employment areas should be highly accessible, well designed, permeable and legible.*"
- 7.3.6. I note here Objective EE037 to ensure that proposals for industrial buildings demonstrate regard to the relevant development standards and also the general provisions of 'section 14.15 Enterprise and Employment' which is to encourage high

quality design, materials and finishes and good quality landscaping for all commercial and industrial developments.

- 7.3.7. Table 14.15 sets out design guidelines for enterprise and employment lands. Many of the design provisions are aspirational in nature, relate more to larger site developments or office/ business parks and do not have relevance to the proposal. That said, I have considered the proposal in light of the relevant parts of the guidelines as follows and have had particular regard to the issues of concern to the planning authority as raised in the planners report. The final planners report raised design concerns in relation to lighting proposals, the proposed screening (timber), the large extent of hardcore areas for storage of vehicles and plant, the absence of any signage, inadequate loading / service areas, inadequate setbacks and landscaping proposals.
- 7.3.8. Access and circulation and pedestrian/ cycle connections,
- 7.3.9. The proposed change of use will result in an increase and change in the nature of traffic movements. The details submitted with the application indicate that the overall development of 15 no. units is to be occupied by 12 no. employees.
- 7.3.10. The development is accessed via an existing entrance from the R122 road. This existing entrance serves the existing permitted development granted under F20/0226. The details under that application show the permitted entrance with sight lines of 145m either direction. The entrance is wide and splayed with plenty of space for larger vehicles. Having visited the site, I observed good sightlines in either direction.
- 7.3.11. The site has developed around its former agricultural use and yard and as such there is currently no formalised road layout. The proposed site layout drawing submitted 19/08/2025 shows proposed works to improve the roads infrastructure on the site including new circulation route and pedestrian paths, pedestrian crossings, signage and line marking. The internal access is designed to minimise conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.
- 7.3.12. The guidelines state that cyclist and pedestrian routes should be separated from vehicular circulation routes as much as possible. No dedicated cycle path is provided however this is acceptable considering the constraints of this existing small

development, the small number of employees and the nature of the business activities being reliant on motorised transport.

7.3.13. The guidelines state that mobility management plans will be encouraged for employee intensive developments. This is not an intensive development and as such a mobility management plan is not required.

7.3.14. The Council's Transportation Section have indicated no objection to the proposals indicating that sightline and access was previously assessed under F20A/0226.

7.3.15. Overall, I am satisfied that the entrance and access arrangements are of a design that can accommodate the additional traffic movements associated with the development without resulting in traffic hazard or obstruction of road users. I am satisfied that the proposals will improve the appearance of the physical environment, improve access and safety of users of the development and that the proposals are in accordance with the design guidelines.

7.3.16. Parking

7.3.17. The site layout plan shows dedicated parking spaces for 20 cars, HGV parking spaces and cycle parking. The parking areas to the west of the site are screened behind fencing. Parking does not dominate the layout and is conveniently located. Parking to the front of units is reserved for visitor or disabled parking. There is adequate space to provide for motorcycles. I am satisfied that the proposals are in accordance with the design guidelines.

7.3.18. Loading / service areas

7.3.19. The planning authority raised concerns that the loading / service areas are inadequate. Table 14.15 states the following in relation to loading / service areas:

- *Loading bays and service dock areas should be located to the rear or sides of buildings where possible, away from the main building entrance, or relatively visible areas.*
- *Where possible, service, loading, generator and waste storage areas should be enclosed within the building.*
- *External loading and service areas should be appropriately screened.*
- *Loading areas should be designed to accommodate vehicular manoeuvring on site.*

- 7.3.20. No designated loading bay or service areas are proposed. However, there is sufficient space on the circulation route for loading and manoeuvring. I do not consider that the proposal contravenes the design guidelines.
- 7.3.21. Building orientation and road frontage, massing and form, building appearance and materials, facades and roofscapes, entrances
- 7.3.22. Table 14.15 sets out detailed design guidelines in relation to the design and appearance of buildings. In this regard, I note that the subject proposal is for the retention of a single building (unit 3, 4 and 5) located on the eastern side of the site. This building is industrial form, maximum ground to ridge height of 6.7m and finished in steel cladding. The form and finish is typical of industrial developments and is in keeping with the existing permitted buildings on the site. The building is set back from the road located to the rear of the existing dwelling and is screened in views from the east by existing and proposed planting.
- 7.3.23. The planning authority have not raised any particular issues with the building appearance.
- 7.3.24. I consider that the design and appearance of the proposed new building is of acceptable design in terms of form, height and materials, integrates into the existing development and would not undermine the visual or residential amenities of the area and that the proposals are in accordance with the design guidelines.
- 7.3.25. Storage (plant, materials and machinery)
- 7.3.26. The planning authority have raised concerns regarding the extent of external space developed in an ad hoc manner.
- 7.3.27. Table 14.15 states the following in relation to storage:
- The storage of plant, materials and machinery should be reserved for the rear of buildings to minimise their visual impact.*
- 7.3.28. The site has developed incrementally over time and across the site there is a large amount of plant and equipment, unused vehicles and storage cabins stored externally. Having regard to the nature of the particular activities on the site, I accept that external storage is required for the operation of the businesses.
- 7.3.29. The site layout drawing shows hardcore area to the south and east for external storage. The hardcore area to the south is located to the rear of the main building

and is to be screened by 1.8m hit and miss fencing. The hardcore area to the east is relatively clear of any existing material and is to be used for new drainage infrastructure. Measures should be submitted to protect the integrity of this drainage infrastructure and to separate this from the storage area – this matter can be addressed by condition.

7.3.30. I consider that the proposal is in accordance with the design guidelines.

7.3.31. Waste/ recycling

7.3.32. Table 14.15 states the following in relation to waste / recycling:

*- All waste and recycling areas should be covered/enclosed and appropriately screened from wind and public view.*

7.3.33. A new proposed enclosure for waste storage / recycling area is near the western car parking area which is to be screened by a 2m solid timber fence.

7.3.34. Should permission be granted a plan should be submitted for the management of waste and recycling associated with the development.

7.3.35. I consider that the proposal is in accordance with the design guidelines.

7.3.36. Ancillary structures

7.3.37. Table 14.15 states the following in relation to ancillary structures:

*- Silos and ancillary structures should be screened as much as possible and located to the sides and rear of buildings.*

*- Where possible materials used for the construction of silos and ancillary structures should match that of the building.*

7.3.38. Drawings are submitted of the existing domestic storage and welfare cabins in the northeast part of the site. These are small single storey portacabins, located at the edge of the development, screened in views by the existing house and hedgerow to the east and have a minimal visual impact. The materials and finish of the portacabins are compatible with the main buildings on the site.

7.3.39. I consider the proposal is in accordance with the design guidelines.

7.3.40. Landscaping and boundary treatment

7.3.41. The planning authority has raised concerns in relation to the landscape proposals. Table 14.15 states the following in relation to landscaping and boundary treatment:

- *Planting of native species is encouraged.*
- *Enhance the visual character of the area by promoting the planting of trees and other shrubbery alongside roadside boundaries.*
- *Where possible, existing vegetation should be preserved, enhanced and incorporated into the landscape design.*
- *The appearance and maintenance requirements of plant and tree selection should be considered.*
- *Boundary treatments should, where necessary, take account of the need to act as noise buffers especially where the building adjoins a busy road or motorway.*
- *Landscaping should be used to emphasis entrances and pedestrian circulation routes.*
- *Boundaries which are visible from the public road (in particular boundaries which project forward past the building line) should be of a high architectural quality.*
- *Palisade fencing to the front of any building line will not be permitted.*
- *The use of retention ponds as an urban design feature within business parks will be encouraged to enhance the campus setting.*

7.3.42. The site layout shows existing boundary hedges to the surrounding lands are to be supplemented with additional planting, new native boundary hedges and new clusters of additional soft planting. I am satisfied that the proposals will screen the development from the surrounding area and will positively impact visual amenity and biodiversity and that the proposal is in accordance with the design guidelines.

7.3.43. The planning authority have raised concerns regarding the design and use of timber in fence screening. There is no design guideline that precludes timber screens. In any case, detailed design details regarding the materials and construction of the screens can be agreed with the planning authority.

#### 7.3.44. Setbacks

7.3.45. The planning authority has raised concerns regarding inadequate setbacks. Table 14.15 states the following in relation to set backs:

*Set backs assist in establishing visual continuity and help create attractive streetscapes, generally:*

*- A minimum 10 m set back comprising hard and soft landscaping should be provided between the building line of every building abutting a main road. This may be reduced, but generally no less than 7m set back, on internal roads.*

*- The set back should provide a landscaped buffer area and should not be used for parking or other business related activity or advertising.*

7.3.46. The subject development relates to the retention of a single building which is set back from an internal circulation route and this is not a main road. The building is set back c 5m to 7m from the vehicular aisle and the area between the aisle and the building is for path and shown in yellow undesignated hatch. The setback is not in accordance with the 7m standard. The guidelines allow for a certain degree of flexibility. The building is set back from the access route. The set back area is not used for parking, business activity or advertising. This is an established site served by a private circulation route. I consider the deviation from the standard is minor and reasonable. I consider that these factors warrant the flexible application of the standard and I do not consider that there is a material contravention of the objective.

7.3.47. Sustainability

7.3.48. Table 14.15 states that buildings should take advantage of solar gain, the application of SUDS and energy conservation strategies should be employed. The proposed development includes upgraded surface water measures designed to SUDS principles and a new upgraded waste water collection and disposal system to EPA Code of Practice standards.

7.3.49. I note also that the Council's Environment section (Waste Enforcement & Regulation), Water Services, Parks and Green Infrastructure Division and Air & Noise Officer have raised no objection to the development.

7.3.50. Signage

7.3.51. The planning authority raised concerns in relation to the lack of signage proposals. Table 14.15 sets out standards for signage. I note that the applicant states that no signage is proposed. The submission of a plan for signage can be addressed by condition.

7.3.52. Lighting, telecommunications, utility and mechanical equipment

7.3.53. The planning authority raised concerns in relation to the absence of detailed lighting proposals. Table 14.15 sets out design standards for lighting. The site layout drawing shows that lighting is to be installed in accordance with Council specifications. I consider that this is acceptable and that this issue can be addressed by condition.

7.3.54. No roof mounted equipment is proposed. The site is already served by electricity and utility services.

7.3.55. Public art

7.3.56. Table 14.15 states that art features are encouraged. This is an aspirational provision. No public art is proposed. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposal, this is acceptable.

7.3.57. Overall conclusion

7.3.58. Having regard to the consideration of the above, I have demonstrated that as per objective EE037, regard has been paid to the development standards set out in Table 14.15. I am satisfied that the proposal will result in an accessible and legible development and the works will improve the physical environment and will safeguard the viability of the development for business. I am satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with the GE objective vision to facilitate employment uses in a good quality physical environment. I do not consider that the proposal materially contravenes the 'vision' of the GE zoning objective.

7.3.59. Furthermore, I do not consider that the proposal would result in ad hoc haphazard development. I do not consider that the development would adversely impact on the visual amenities of the area.

7.3.60. I am satisfied that the development is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7.3.61. Should permission be granted, it is recommended that final design details be submitted for the agreement of the planning authority including a programme for the implementation of works associated with the development.

#### **7.4. Appropriate Assessment Screening**

- 7.4.1. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements of S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is not located within or adjacent to any European site. The closest European site is the North-west Irish Sea SPA located c 2.65km from the site.
- 7.4.2. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have an appreciable effect on a European site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- the modest scale and nature of the development,
  - the location of the development within an existing developed site to be served by foul and drainage measures to acceptable engineering standards and emissions that would not be significantly detrimental to environmental quality,
  - the distance to the Natura 2000 site network and
  - the absence of ecological or hydrological pathways to this network.
- 7.4.3. I consider that 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 and appropriate assessment is therefore not required.

#### **7.5. Water Framework Directive Screening**

- 7.5.1. I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) which seek to protect and where necessary, restore surface and ground water bodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status) and to prevent deterioration. A screening assessment is attached as an appendix to this report.
- 7.5.2. The site is located within the 08 Nanny-Delvin catchment and the WFD 08 2Palmerstown SC 010 sub catchment.
- 7.5.3. The closest river body is the Bracken River MATT\_010 located c 170m to the south. The site overlays the Balbriggan groundwater body. The MATT 010 River has 'poor' status as is 'at risk'. The Balbriggan has 'good' status and is 'not at risk'.

#### 7.5.4. Having regard to the:

- nature of the proposed development,
- proposed measures for the treatment and disposal of foul water via EPA CoP standards,
- proposal to dispose of surface water via new on site storm tech management system (underground disposal and attenuation) in line with BRE Digest 365 and the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study and SUDS design,
- the absence of any significant pathways to a water body,

I consider that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration of any water body or jeopardise any water body in reaching WFD objectives and consequently the proposed development can be excluded from further assessment.

## 8.0 Recommendation

8.1. I recommend that permission be granted for the proposed development.

## 9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to

- the provisions of the Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029, in particular the GE General Employment zoning objective and vision of the site , objective EE037, Section 14.15.1 and Table 14.15 Design Guidelines for Business Parks, Industrial Areas (Enterprise and Employment lands),
- the characteristics and nature of existing permitted development on the site,
- the nature, scale, design and layout of the proposed development,

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development is in accordance with the zoning objective and vision, would not result in haphazard ad hoc development of the site, would result in an acceptable physical environment and quality of design and would not seriously injure the visual or residential amenities of the area, and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and public health .

It is considered that the development hereby permitted is in accordance with the design provisions of Table 14.15 including the provisions relating to lighting, loading, screening, storage, signage and landscaping. The proposal does not provide setback of building line from the internal access in accordance with the minimum standards however this is not a material contravention of the guidelines.

It is considered that objective DMSO89 relates to new business parks and industrial areas and does not relate to the proposed development which relates to a pre-existing development site with permitted employment development. As DMSO89 does not apply to the development proposal, there is no material contravention of the objective.

## 10.0 Conditions

1	<p>The development shall be retained and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars lodged with the application on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and 19<sup>th</sup> August 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 and the development shall be retained and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interest of clarity.</p>
2	<p>Within four months of this order, details and drawings shall be submitted for the written agreement of the planning authority showing the following:</p> <p>(a) Final design details of all upgrade works to the internal road infrastructure serving the development (including materials and finishing of the access road, paths, crossings and parking areas, signage and marking) which shall comply with the detailed construction standards of the planning authority for such works and the design standards outlined in Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS).</p>

- (b) The land dedicated for the purposes of the proposed new foul and surface water drainage infrastructure shall not be used for external storage and design measures shall be submitted showing these areas protected and separated from external storage areas.
- (c) Final design details (including of construction materials and finishes) of structures to screen areas dedicated for the storage of waste/ recyclables and for external storage.
- (d) A plan containing details for the management of waste (and in particular recyclable materials) within the development including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of waste and recyclable materials.
- (e) a plan for signage associated with the development.
- (f) A secure cycle storage facility.
- (g) A plan for public lighting.
- (h) A comprehensive scheme of landscaping which shall include a plan to scale of not less than 1:500 showing: (i) existing trees, hedgerows and shrubs which are proposed for retention as features of site landscaping, (ii) the species, variety, number, size and locations of all proposed trees and shrubs which shall be native species.

All planting shall be adequately protected from damage until established. Any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the external works for the development shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

	<p>(i) A timescale for the phased carrying out of works and completion of the overall development.</p> <p>All works shall be to the design specification of the planning authority for such works.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interests of orderly development, amenity, traffic management and traffic safety and to protect the environment.</p>
3	<p>Drainage arrangements including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the relevant Section of the Council for such works and services.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interest of public health and surface water management.</p>
4	<p>(a) The septic tank/wastewater treatment system hereby permitted shall be installed in accordance with the recommendations included within the site characterisation report submitted with this application and shall be in accordance with the standards set out in the document entitled “Code of Practice - Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent <math>\leq 10</math>)” – Environmental Protection Agency, 2021.</p> <p>(b) Treated effluent from the septic tank/ wastewater treatment system shall be discharged to a percolation area/ polishing filter which shall be provided in accordance with the standards set out in the document entitled “Code of Practice - Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent <math>\leq 10</math>)” – Environmental Protection Agency, 2021.</p> <p>(c) The developer shall submit a report to the planning authority from a suitably qualified person (with professional indemnity insurance) certifying that the septic tank/ wastewater treatment system and associated works is constructed and operating in accordance with the standards set out in the Environmental Protection Agency document referred to above.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interest of public health and to prevent water pollution.</p>

5	<p>The developer shall ensure that the development is served by adequate water supply and shall enter into a connection agreement (s) with Uisce Éireann (Irish Water) to provide for a service connection(s) to the public water supply network.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interest of public health and to ensure adequate water/wastewater facilities.</p>
6	<p>During the operational phase of the proposed development the noise level shall not exceed (a) 55 dB(A) rated sound level between the hours of 0700 to 2300, and (b) 45 dB(A) 15min and 60 dB LAfmax, 15min at all other times , (corrected for a tonal or impulsive component) as measured at any point along the boundary of the site. Procedures for the purpose of determining compliance with this limit shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> To protect the amenities of property in the vicinity of the site.</p>
7	<p>The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.</p>

<p><b>Reason:</b> It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.</p>
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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.

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Aisling MacNamara

26<sup>th</sup> January 2026

## Appendix 1: Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

<b>Case Reference</b>	500066
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Retention of change of use and subdivision to commercial/storage use. Retention of units and all associated site works
<b>Development Address</b>	Sweetmans Yard, Folkstown Great, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin
<b>In all cases check box /or leave blank</b>	
<b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?</b>  (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.
<b>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.  <b>EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.</b>	State the Class here
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
<b>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?</b>	
<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.  <b>No Screening required.</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold.	

<b>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.  <b>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</b>  <b>OR</b>  <b>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</b>	Schedule 5, Part 2, 10 (b) (iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 10 hectares in the built up area.

<b>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)?</b>	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)</b>
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)</b>

Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2: Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

<b>Case Reference</b>	500066
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Retention of change of use and subdivision to commercial/storage use. Retention of units and all associated site works
<b>Development Address</b>	Sweetmans Yard, Folkstown Great, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin
<b>This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.</b>	
<p><b>Characteristics of proposed development</b></p> <p>(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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proposed uses are compatible with other uses on the site,</li> <li>- Modest size and intensity of development</li> <li>- Localised impact on natural resources</li> <li>- Modest production of waste</li> <li>- No significant risk of pollution or nuisance</li> <li>- No significant risk of accidents / disasters to human health</li> </ul>
<p><b>Location of development</b></p> <p>(The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, 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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing developed site with permitted light industrial/commercial/storage use on the site</li> <li>- Local ecology only on site</li> <li>- No built heritage on site</li> <li>- Site is c 200m from stream to south which feeds Bracken river located c 175m from site.</li> <li>- No designated natural heritage sites on or adjoining the site.</li> <li>- Localised impacts landscape.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Types and characteristics of potential impacts</b></p> <p>(Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).</p>	<p>Having regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nature and scale of the development,</li> <li>- lack of significant environmental sensitivities on the site,</li> <li>- absence of significant effects and in combination effects,</li> </ul> <p>there is no potential for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Act.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>	
<b>Likelihood of Significant Effects</b>	<b>Conclusion in respect of EIA</b>
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.
x	

There is significant and realistic doubt regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	
There is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	

### Appendix 3: Water Framework Directive Screening

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING						
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality						
An Bord Pleanála ref. no.	500066	Townland, address	Sweetmans Yard, Folkstown Great, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin			
Description of project	Retention of change of use and subdivision to commercial/storage use. Retention of units and all associated site works					
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,	Agri-industrial developed site. No surface water features on site or in close proximity. Closest stream is c 175m from site					
Proposed surface water details	New storm tech management system (underground disposal and attenuation) in line with BRE Digest 365 and the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study and SUDS design					
Proposed water supply source & available capacity	Public main					
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues	New wastewater treatment and disposal system to EPA CoP 2001					
Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection						
Identified water body	Water body name(s) (code)	Distance to (m)	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 )
River	MATT_010 Bracken River	c 170m	poor 2019- 2024	At risk	Hydromorphology Urban Run-off	none
Groundwater	Balbriggan	underground	Good 2019- 2024	Not at risk		Drainage to ground

**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	Waterbody receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determinati on** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment ? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2.
	Construction related emissions to ground	Balbriggan	underground	pollution	Standard best construction	No	Screened out
OPERATIONAL PHASE							
	Storm water	Balbriggan	underground	pollution	Storm water designed to BRE Digest 365 and Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study	No	Screened out
	Foul water	Balbriggan	underground	pollution	Foul discharge to EPA CoP	No	Screened out

## Appendix 4: Table 14.15 of Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029

<b>Table 14.15: Design Guidelines for Business Parks, Industrial Areas (Enterprise and Employment lands)</b>
<b>Site Design</b>
<p><b>Access &amp; Circulation</b></p> <p>Sites should be designed to minimise conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists.</p> <p>The number of access points to a site should be kept to a minimum.</p> <p>Access points should be designed to provide safe ingress/egress for vehicles and pedestrians.</p> <p>Alignment of opposite entrances is encouraged to promote continuity and provide uniformity.</p> <p>Mobility Management Plans will be encouraged for employee intensive developments.</p>
<p><b>Pedestrian/Cycle Connections</b></p> <p>Site design should accommodate pedestrian/cycle circulation in a safe and efficient manner.</p> <p>Pedestrian and cycle routes should be physically separated from vehicular circulation as much as possible.</p> <p>Intersections where pedestrian/cyclist and vehicles converge should be clearly marked for visual identification by both motorists and pedestrians/cyclists</p>
<p><b>Permeability</b></p> <p>Permeability is influenced by a number of factors including building layout, road layout, setbacks, car parking and landscaping and an integrated approach is required to achieve good permeability.</p>
<p><b>Lighting</b></p> <p>Lighting creates a secure and attractive environment. Lighting can also be a source of pollution and should be designed to eliminate and minimise spill out beyond the site.</p> <p>Beacons, search lights, blinking lights, flashing or changing intensity lights will be discouraged.</p> <p>Lighting should not be used in a manner which would interfere with the safe movement of vehicles or the navigation of aircraft.</p> <p>Lighting should be directed away from adjacent buildings and the public road.</p> <p>Lighting in service areas should be contained within service yard boundaries.</p> <p>Security lighting should be confined to entrances and pedestrian areas and should not project onto the public road.</p> <p>Pedestrian circulation routes and entrances should be adequately lit.</p>
<p><b>Loading/Service Areas</b></p> <p>Loading bays and service dock areas should be located to the rear or sides of buildings where possible, away from the main building entrance, or relatively visible areas.</p> <p>Where possible, service, loading, generator and waste storage areas should be enclosed within the building.</p> <p>External loading and service areas should be appropriately screened.</p> <p>Loading areas should be designed to accommodate vehicular manoeuvring on site</p>
<b>Waste/Recycling</b>

All waste and recycling areas should be covered/enclosed and appropriately screened from wind and public view.

### **Silos and Ancillary Structures**

Silos and ancillary structures should be screened as much as possible and located to the sides and rear of buildings.

Where possible materials used for the construction of silos and ancillary structures should match that of the building.

### **Storage (Plant, Materials, Machinery)**

The storage of plant, materials and machinery should be reserved for the rear of buildings to minimise their visual impact.

### **Set Backs**

Set backs assist in establishing visual continuity and help create attractive streetscapes, generally:

- A minimum 10 m set back comprising hard and soft landscaping should be provided between the building line of every building abutting a main road. This may be reduced, but generally no less than 7m set back, on internal roads.
- The set back should provide a landscaped buffer area and should not be used for parking or other business related activity or advertising.

### **Signage**

All signage should be of an appropriate design so as to be compatible with the character of the area.

All signage should be constructed with a palate of materials consistent with the predominant material and architectural character of the attendant building.

The materials, location, size, colour, height, scale lighting and orientation of signage should not detract from the visual amenity of the area.

Only one free standing 'identification' sign per unit will be permitted in order to avoid the over proliferation of signage. Additional informational and directional signage should be minimised. Where buildings have multiple units only one freestanding 'identification' sign will be permitted.

The following signage will be discouraged: Signs which advertise general products or services, Animated, moving, flashing, rotating or sound-emitting signs, Billboards, Roof mounted signs or signs which project above the ridge height of the building, Internally illuminated awnings, Changeable message signs, Pole mounted signs and Wall signs.

### **Public Art**

Outdoor sculptures, appropriate art work, and special architectural and landscape features are encouraged in the development of individual sites and as features within public areas of estates. Such features help establish and reinforce visual identity and sense of place.

### **Sustainability**

The design and orientation of buildings should take advantage of local climate conditions utilising solar gain and daylight.

The application of SuDS is required during the design phase of all developments.

Appropriate energy conservation strategies should be employed in building design including building shape, mass, orientation and the choice of materials.

**Building Orientation and Road Frontage**

The siting and orientation of buildings should protect and enhance existing views and vistas, make optimal use of sunlight and angles, enhance the character of existing land forms and site features, and strengthen the relationship between buildings.

The layout of buildings should form high quality public spaces with a high degree of passive surveillance.

**Massing and Form**

Contemporary building design will be encouraged. Contemporary architectural treatments, materials and finishes should be incorporated into all aspects of building design.

Buildings in industrial and general business areas should be designed in a manner consistent with adjoining buildings in terms of height and scale.

Where residential areas are adjacent to industrial and business parks consideration should be given to having reduced heights at the abutting part of the site so as to minimise the contrast and impact between the two areas.

Monolithic buildings should be avoided. The mass of large buildings should be broken into groups of clusters or sub-parts where possible to reduce perceived scale.

A mix of building types will be encouraged ranging from incubator units to large units.

Building design should be as flexible and innovative as possible to facilitate the changing needs of occupiers and their processes.

**Building Appearance and Materials and Colour Palette**

Building materials should be aesthetically pleasing and durable.

All buildings should relate visually to one another and uses should be compatible with adjacent uses.

Use of similar architectural elements such as window shapes, roof forms, similar materials, colours and textures help in achieving visual continuity.

Human scale buildings should be encouraged.

**Appearance**

Buildings should be set within landscaped settings with high quality public plazas/spaces formed by high quality buildings.

Landmark buildings will be encouraged at strategic locations to act as focal points.

Buildings should be legible; this can partly be achieved through expressing the position of each floor in the external skin design using techniques like terracing, articulated structural elements, or changing building materials. Belt courses, or other horizontal trim bands or contrasting colours, and or materials can also achieve building legibility.

**Facades**

Facades with a high level of visual interest are encouraged.

The exterior character of buildings should enhance the character of the area and pedestrian/ cyclist and motorists experience.

'Friendly' facades can be achieved using decorative wall surfaces and landscape materials, modular materials such as brick and stone and windows that reveal indoor amenities and activity.

Large expanses of blank walls and mirror glass are not conducive to creating friendly facades and should be avoided where possible.

Visual continuity should be achieved through the use of muted colours.

Generally, the use of dark colours should be reserved for the base of buildings with lighter colours used for the upper levels.

**Roofscape**

Roofscape should add to the visual continuity of business parks and industrial areas.

Roof elements should be simple in form and continuous.

Horizontal and undulating lines are encouraged.

Flat, hipped and mansard roofs will be discouraged.

Exhaust flues, chimneys and vents should be integrated into the building, preferably located to the rear or side of buildings, appropriately screened and coloured to match the overall design of the attendant building

**Telecommunications and Antenna Equipment**

Roof mounted equipment should be designed to blend into their host building. Roof-mounted equipment that will be visible against the skyline should be painted to blend with the sky background as viewed from adjoining roads and buildings.

Roof mounted plant rooms will generally not be permitted. Such plants should be integrated into the overall design of buildings.

Wall-mounted equipment should be mounted as flush to the building as is technically possible and should not extend above the roofline of the building.

Utility screening should be comprised of durable materials. All utility lines (including power and telephone lines) should be installed underground where possible.

**Solar, Utility, Electrical and Mechanical Equipment**

All ground, building, or roof-mounted electric, gas, mechanical units, and similar devices must be properly located to avoid unsightliness or potential safety issues and must be appropriately screened in a manner compatible with the design of the attendant building.

No heating (except solar), air conditioning, electrical, or other equipment may be installed on the roof of any building or structure unless screened with materials compatible with (preferably the same as) the predominant exterior building material.

Electricity substations should not be permitted on public open space.

Electricity substations should be sited at ground level.

Oil tanks, substations, gas meters and other service rooms should be screened and should not be visible from public roads.

**Building Entrances**

Primary entrances should be clearly legible through the use of appropriate materials and scale.

Entrances should be clearly legible.

Entrances should be designed to read as contrasting areas on a building's façade and orientated towards public spaces, either the primary road or internal vehicle drive.

**Parking**

Parking areas should be designed to provide safe and convenient movement of vehicles and limit vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.

Surface car parking should not dominate the layout of development and should be designed as an integral part of each building.

Innovative car parking arrangements are encouraged including basement/semi basement parking and under-croft parking to minimise visual impact.

Parking areas should be appropriately screened and their visual impact softened with the use of planting and landscape features.

Where buildings are showrooms alongside a road, there should be no parking to the front of the building line. Otherwise, parking to the front of buildings should be limited to visitor parking only.

Parking areas should be of semi/permeable surface incorporating the principles of SuDS.

Large expanses of parking is discouraged and should be broken into smaller modules broken by vegetation/landscaping.

Parking areas should be buffered from the road with landscaping, earthen berms, half walls or fences to soften their appearance.

Adequate and secure cycle parking should be provided (Table 14.17).

Motorcycle parking should also be provided within parking schemes.

Some facilities may require checkpoints in order to monitor access. Guardhouses and security huts should be designed and located in a manner that will not conflict with pedestrian/cycle movements or cause traffic queuing. The design of security huts should be consistent with the architectural design of its attendant building

#### **Landscaping and Boundary Treatment**

Planting of native species is encouraged.

Enhance the visual character of the area by promoting the planting of trees and other shrubbery alongside roadside boundaries.

Where possible, existing vegetation should be preserved, enhanced and incorporated into the landscape design.

The appearance and maintenance requirements of plant and tree selection should be considered.

Boundary treatments should, where necessary, take account of the need to act as noise buffers especially where the building adjoins a busy road or motorway.

Landscaping should be used to emphasis entrances and pedestrian circulation routes.

Boundaries which are visible from the public road (in particular boundaries which project forward past the building line) should be of a high architectural quality.

Palisade fencing to the front of any building line will not be permitted.

The use of retention ponds as an urban design feature within business parks will be encouraged to enhance the campus setting.