



Development	Replacement of 1 no. illuminated 7.35m x 3.35m advertising display with 1 no. digital 6.28m x 3.4m advertising display and permanent decommissioning of 3 no. 6.3m x 3.5m advertising displays facing Wilton Road
Location	Victoria Cross, Wilton Road, Cork, Co. Cork.
Planning Authority	Cork City Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2544360
Applicant(s)	JCDecaux Ireland Ltd.
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Split Decision
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	JCDecaux Ireland Ltd.
Observer(s)	Carmel Ryan
Date of Site Inspection	25 th May 2026
Inspector	Jennifer McQuaid

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site is located c.2.4km west of Cork City Centre and 1.6km north of junction 4 of the South Ring Road (N40). The site lies on the western side of Wilton Road (R641), which forms part of a major radial/arterial route into Cork City Centre from the west/southwest. It is immediately adjacent to a five-storey block, which forms part of Victoria Station Student Accommodation Complex.
- 1.2. The first advertising display is located to the west of Wilton Road and in front of the Farranlea Hall Student Accommodation. This is 17m² in area.
- 1.3. The second advertising display is also to the west of Wilton Road and is in front of Victoria Station Student Accommodation. This site is 42m². The advertising display is sited on a diagonal alignment and is of timber construction. The advertising display is positioned to the back of the site boundary, and there is a low stone wall to the east and north. At the northwest corner there is a gate which was padlocked. Within the site and along the stone wall there are small utility boxes.
- 1.4. Wilton Road is two lanes of traffic travelling south to Dennehy's Cross and one lane travelling north to Victoria Cross. There is a pedestrian crossing approximately 100m to the north.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development will consist of:
 - The replacement of 1no. illuminated 7.35m x 3.35m advertising display with 1no. digital 6.28m x 3.4m advertising display at Victoria Cross, Wilton Road Cork (adjacent Victoria Station, Student Accommodation)
 - Demolition of a boundary wall and all associated site work and services
 - Permanent decommissioning of 3no. 6.3m x 3.5m advertising displays facing Wilton Road, Victoria Cross, Cork (adjacent to Farranlea Hall Student accommodation, Victoria Cross, Cork)

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Split Decision

Grant

1. The permanent decommissioning of the 3no. existing advertising displays adjacent to Farranlea Hall student accommodation shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars submitted with the planning application on 03.12.2025, save as may be otherwise required by the following conditions.

Reason: To clarify the plans and particulars for which permission is granted.

2. Within 6 months of the date of this decision the developer shall remove, decommission and extinguish the licence for the advertising display adjacent to Farranlea Hall Student Accommodation, Wilton Road, Cork. Details of the existing advertising displays to be removed, including location map and photographs of the structure, and a dated photographic record shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within one month of its removal. Any future proposed advertising use at this location shall be subject to a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interest of orderly development and visual amenity.

Refusal

1. The site is zoned ZO 01 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods with the objective to protect and provide for residential uses and amenities. The proposed development would be located adjacent to existing and proposed residential units. It is considered that to permit a digital advertising display of the nature and scale proposed would detract from the residential amenities of the area to an unacceptable degree, would set an undesirable precedent for other similar proposals and would contravene the zoning objective. The proposed development would, therefore, seriously injure the residential amenities of the area and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. The site of the proposed digital advertising display is at a prominent location on the west side of Wilton Road, between Victoria Cross to the north and

Dennehy's Cross to the south. Wilton Road is a busy urban route, with two lanes of traffic travelling southbound to Dennehy's Cross and one lane of traffic travelling north to Victoria Cross. Wilton Road has heavily trafficked junctions, high level of cross traffic movements due to lane changing and cross junction movements, a pedestrian crossing near the site and high pedestrian traffic. It is considered that the proposed development by reason of its type, size and location would represent a distraction to road users travelling south on Wilton Road and will increase the risk of accidents on this stretch of road. The proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard. It is also considered that the proposed development would be premature pending the final design and layout of Cork Luas and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

- The proposed decommissioning is being applied for to address a previous refusal by ABP under planning reference 300109-17 for visual clutter and impact on visual amenities of the area. There is merit in its removal from the public realm and streetscape in the interests of visual amenity. There is no objection to the decommissioning of this advertising display. It is recommended that permission is granted for this aspect of the application, to achieve the decommissioning in the short term, it is recommended that a condition re time to remove the advertising display is attached.
- The land use of advertising display is acceptable as concluded by the inspector of Planning file ABP-300109-17.
- The proposed demolition of a boundary wall is not clearly set out. It may be the removal of "existing timber fence" which is shown on the elevation 1 – existing A drawing (PL100).
- There are some material changes in the application when examined against the previous application on the site. These include changes to type of advertising display, slight changes to the position of the advertising display and the removal of advertising display to the south. In addition, there are

material and significant changes to the immediate area of the site, the character and land use of nearby sites. Since the assessment of the previous application, two sites across the road were permitted from change of use from commercial (car showroom and car service centre) to residential uses. A student accommodation building is under construction to the east on the car service centre site. Permission was granted in September 2024 for a student accommodation building to the northeast; the car dealership on this site has ceased operating, and its signage has been removed.

- Due to the change in position and height of the proposed digital advertising display, and notwithstanding that these are north facing windows, the advertising display could result in loss of daylight into these windows/rooms and in reduced visibility from within the building. The character of the area is changing with increased residential uses. There is a 5-storey student accommodation building under construction on the opposite side of the road, which has not been noted or accounted for in the application. The windows on the west elevation of this student accommodation block serve kitchen/dining/living areas and bedrooms – all habitable rooms. Permission has been granted for a 6-storey student accommodation block to the northeast in 2024. The advertising panel will be digital with a change in image after 10 seconds for 20 hrs daily. Despite the proposal to have luminance at 300 cd/sqm at nighttime and a curfew, the proposal has the potential to have a negative impact on the amenities of the student accommodation to the east outside of the curfew hours and increased impacts on existing student accommodation. The digital advertising display would have a greater impact than the existing externally illuminated paper advertising display. It is an objective of the CDP to preserve and protect residential amenity. It is recommended that permission is refused on the grounds of contravening the zoning objective, detracting from residential amenity and potential to set an undesirable precedent.
- The previous planning application was refused on traffic safety grounds from ACP. Traffic section recommend refusal on traffic safety grounds.

- Visual amenity shall comply with section 11.200 of the CDP. There are concerns regarding the impact on the visual amenity of the area. There is no merit in seeking further information on outstanding matters having regard to the refusal recommendation on traffic safety and residential amenity grounds. As the application proposes the removal of the existing advertising display to the south at Farranlea Hall, to which there is no objection, and there is a reduction in overall signage due to the change of use on the adjoining sites to the east, there is no need to recommend a refusal reason on visual amenity
- Luas Cork is proposed light rail line running from Ballincollig to Mahon Point, connecting key destinations such as MTU, Cork University Hospital, UCC, Cork City Centre, Kent Station, Cork Docklands, Blackrock and Mahon and the emerging preferred route on Wilton Road. There is potential for requirement of land take for the provision of a footpath. The position of part of the site and advertising display would seem to be within the existing boundary and the proposed new boundary. The proposed development may be premature pending the final design and layout of Cork Luas on Wilton Road.
- The Senior Executive Planner concurs with the recommendation including the modification of refusal reason 2 to reference to the prematurity of the development pending the determination of Cork Luas Line.
- Senior Planner noted the reports of the Senior Executive Planner and Executive Planner and concurs with the recommendation to split the decision.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Traffic: Refusal recommended. The location of the proposed development is on a busy urban route the R641 with one traffic lane travelling in a northbound direction towards Victoria Cross and two traffic lanes travelling in a southbound direction towards Dennehy's Cross. As you approach the sign from Victoria Cross travelling from north to south, there is a pedestrian crossing approximately 110m in advance, followed by a heavily trafficked junction to the east at Orchard Road, Farranlea Road junction to the west and a minor junction at Millview road to the west. In addition, there are multiple accesses and high pedestrian traffic due to the high level of student accommodation in the area. Due to the high level of cross traffic movements

due to lane changing and cross junction movements, there is a concern that the changing digital advertising display is a road safety hazard, a distraction to drivers and will increase the risk of accidents on this stretch of road.

- Environment: No objection subject to conditions.
- Infrastructure/Bus Connects: Discussed verbally, no objection from BusConnects.
- Infrastructure/CorkLuas: Discussed verbally, potential for impact on CorkLuas and emerging route corridor.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- None

3.4. Third Party Observations

One third party submission was received. The following issues were raised:

- Residential and Visual Amenity: light overspill into bedrooms, potential to create unacceptable disturbance due to visual prominence and brightly illuminated, visual clutter, contravene development plan.
- Ownership: no letter of consent provided by owner, maps and letter from solicitor submitted.
- BusConnects: the permanent decommissioning of the advertising display should not constitute any concession to use a digital display.
- Precedent for Refusal: Planning reference 17/37533.

4.0 Planning History

ABP Ref: 300109-17 (Plan Ref: 1737533): Permission refused for the replacement of 1no. 48 sheet illuminated static advertising display with 1no. 48 sheet (6.4m wide x 3.35m high) Premiere internally illuminated advertising display.

1. Having regard to:

- The provisions of the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021, in particular policy 16.121 which seeks to control advertising billboards in order to protect the amenities of the city,

- The pattern of development in this prominent area, which already includes a concentration of outdoor signage and to
- The nature and scale of the proposed internally lit LED sign,

It is considered that the proposed development would exacerbate the visual clutter of signage at this location and would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area and would contravene the Development Plan. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The proposed development would be located immediately adjacent to a modern residential block of student accommodation. It is considered that to permit a sign of the nature and scale proposed would detract from the residential amenities of the area to an unacceptable degree and would set an undesirable precedent for other similar proposals. The proposed development would, therefore, seriously injure the residential amenities of the area and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3. Having regard to the prominent location of the sign on a busy urban route in the general vicinity of major road junctions, the Board is not satisfied that the proposed illuminated LED sign would not unduly distract the attention of road users thereby increasing the risk of accidents. The proposed development would, therefore, endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard.

In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation to grant permission, the Board noted that the area already has a number of large-scale advertisements and hoardings and that these detract from the visual amenity of the area and also detract from the character of the residential blocks. The Board did not agree that the proposed more modern and technologically advanced sign would address this issue or provide an uplift to the visual amenities of the area. The Board also gave more weight to the protection of the residential amenities of the area and was not satisfied that by its nature the proposed sign would not have a greater potential to distract road users and increase the risk of accidents.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

Cork City County Development Plan 2022-2028

The site is located in zoning objective 1: To protect and provide for residential uses and amenities, local services and community, institutional, educational and civic uses.

ZO 1.1: The provision and protection of residential uses and residential amenity is a central objective of this zoning. This zone covers large areas of Cork City's built-up area, including inner-city and outer suburban neighbourhoods. While they are predominantly residential in character these areas are not homogeneous in terms of land uses and include a mix of uses. The vision for sustainable residential development in Cork City is one of sustainable residential neighbourhoods where a range of residential accommodation, open space, local services and community facilities are available within easy reach of residents.

ZO 1.2: Development in this zone should generally respect the character and scale of the neighbourhood in which it is situated. Development that does not support the primary objective of this zone will be resisted.

Chapter 11 refers to Shop Fronts, Advertising & Security Signs

Section 11.195 refers to Fascia Signage & illuminative & Projecting Signs

As a general principal fascia signs and projecting signs should be simple in design, not excessive in illumination or size. The following basic guidelines will be applied in assessing planning applications:

1. Plastic derived fascias with product advertising and internally illuminate fascias will not be permitted;
2. Projecting signs should be of 2.4m clearance above street level;
3. Internally illuminated signs shall be restricted;
4. The design of illuminated signage should be sympathetic to the building on which it is to be displayed;

5. Overall illuminated of fascia signage or shop fronts of distinctive architectural features should be discreet and limited to spot-lighting, up lighting or disguised minimalist strip lighting;
6. The daytime appearance when unit will also be considered;
7. The use of banners, flags, billboards and other forms of advertising will be strictly controlled in the City Centre;
8. Product advertising on canopies will not be permitted.

Section 11.196 refers to Advertising Hoardings (Billboards)

Excessive outdoor advertising will be strictly controlled. New advertising hoardings and billboards will generally not be permitted. Permanent cross street banners/advertisement symbols will not be permitted in any location within the City unless an agreed timetable for use has been approved by Cork City Council. Tri vision signage will not be permitted.

Section 11.200 refers to Digital Advertising/Signage

The use of digital advertising and signage is playing a more prominent role in urban environments, including the replacement of paper advertisements. While it can play a positive role in displaying public information, there is a need to control digital advertising and signage in terms of its design and location to prevent visual clutter particularly in areas such as historic parts of the city (Architectural Conservation Areas etc.) predominately residential and high amenity areas such as waterways. It can also have adverse impacts on public and traffic safety.

As well as the above the following criteria should be considered as part of applications for digital advertising/signage:

1. Details of material, finishes and colours;
2. The maximum luminance of the advertisement display during night-time hours (darkness) should not exceed 300 cd/sqm;
3. No more than one advertisement to be displayed every ten seconds, changed by means of a fade transition of the display.

Permitted Uses

12.4 While the primary objective of each land use zoning is clearly stated, the various uses listed are intended as a general guide and are not an exhaustive list. Land uses open for consideration may be acceptable where the Planning Authority is satisfied that:

- They would not have a detrimental impact on the primary land use zoning objective;
- They would be consistent with the relevant objectives and criteria set out in this Plan; and
- there would not be any significant adverse impacts on-site or on the surrounding environment.

12.5 In exceptional circumstances there may be uses that are not referenced in this Plan; these will be considered on their own merits in accordance with the primary land use zoning objectives concerned.

12.6 Where developments or uses are proposed that are ancillary to the dominant or main use of a site or development, such proposals will be considered on their own merits.

Non-conforming uses

12.8 Land use zonings are used as a tool to shape the City's development strategy, and therefore may not always reflect established land uses. As a result, there are uses throughout the City that do not conform with the land use zoning objective for the area.

12.9 Where such non-conforming uses are legally established, their reasonable expansion or improvement within their curtilage will be considered on their own merits provided there is no serious detrimental impact on the primary land use zoning objective for the area or environment, having regard to other relevant objectives of this Plan.

Chapter 4 refers to Transport and Mobility

5.2. **Natural Heritage Designations**

The site is not located within a designated site. The nearest of relevance are:

- Lee Valley pNHA (site code: 000094) is located approximately 1.2km west of the subject site.
- Cork Lough pNHA (site code: 001081) is located approximately 1.3km east of the subject site.
- Blarney Bog pNHA (site code: 001857) is located approximately 4.4km northwest of the subject site.
- Cork Harbour SPA (Site code: 004030) is located approximately 4.9km east of the subject site.
- Shournagh Valley pNHA (site code: 000103) is located approximately 5km northwest of the subject site.
- Douglas River Estuary pNHA (site code: 001046) is located approximately 5km east of the subject site.

6.0 EIA Screening

- 6.1. The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (or Part V of the 1994 Roads).

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

The grounds of appeal have been received from the applicant. The concerns raised are:

- Residential Amenity: The proposed development seeks to upgrade an established advertising display in accordance with CDP Cork City Council's policy for Advertising Structures Sections (11.194, 11.196 and 11.200) and would not detract from the residential amenities of the area. The subject site is beside a busy roadway, which dominates the land use and character of the site, more than the student residential accommodation. Given that the existing and proposed display faces the roadway, it clearly has no relationship to the residential zoning. The proposed digital display would be of high-quality design in accordance with section 11.197 of the CDP and actually have less

impact on residential amenity, as it can be more accurately controlled than the traditional paper display format with downward lighting. The digital display can be turned off for “Curfew Hours between 2am and 6am. Also, in accordance with Digital Advertising/Signage Policy section 11.200 the maximum luminance of the advertisement display during night-time hours (darkness) can be controlled so as to not exceed 300cd/sqm. In accordance with Section 11.194 the proposal to decommission 3no. displays reduces “visual clutter” along this stretch of roadway. JCDecaux will only remove these displays on foot of permission to upgrade the existing display to Digital.

The application addresses the core rationale for the Board’s refusal by removal of 3no. 48 sheet displays on Wilton Road. Cork City Council’s decision actually will only serve to ensure that the existing displays are kept in place in perpetuity as it is unviable for JCDecaux to remove these old format displays without the net benefit of value that comes from revenue from a modern digital display.

- Visual Amenity: The proposed development addresses ABP’s previous reason for refusal under planning ref. 1737533, ABP ref. 300109-17 at the site by significantly reducing “visual clutter” by removing a number of large-scale advertisements and hoardings on this stretch of roadway.
- Traffic: The proposed replacement digital advertising display will not endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard and it not consistent with previous planning decisions by An Coimisiún Pleanála, Dublin City Council or Dun Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council in respect of traffic safety issues. No report from the Engineer to determine if the refusal is based on engineering expertise. It appears that the planning authority did not read the technical planning report submitted or chose to ignore it. Previous permissions granted by the Coimisiún which emphasis that the Coimisiún fully accepts digital displays (with appropriate conditions) do not give rise to any increase in traffic safety issues. Photographs submitted for other advertisements along Clonliffe Road, Dublin, Milltown, Dublin 6, Loughlinstown on the N11. The proposed replacement digital advertising display will not have any negative impact on traffic safety from the existing paper advertising display.

- History: A historic photo submitted from c. 1956 showing several advertisement structures, two of which are sited diagonally on either side of a commercial forecourt. It is therefore clear that the advertisement structure in this location is pre-1963 and actually predates the student accommodation blocks.
- Precedence: A number of examples submitted for decisions by ACP and Dublin City Council where it was held that a proposed digital display would not have a negative impact on the residential amenity of the area zoned Z1 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods where the objective is “to protect, provide and improve residential amenities”.
- Ownership: The applicant sought legal advice and Branigan Fields LLP legal advice confirms that JCDecaux has an entitlement to access its lands over the access road. It is confirmed that JCDecaux is in full control of that site and empowered to implement the permission and decommissioning condition in full.
- The applicant accepts the following conditions:
 - No more than one advertisement shall be displayed every 10 seconds;
 - Only static images without movement shall be displayed;
 - Maximum illumination between dusk and dawn shall not exceed 300 candelas/m²;
 - The Digital display can be turned off for “Curfew” Hours between 2am and 6am; and
 - 3 large displays on Wilton Road will be decommissioned on foot of permission for a digital display.
 - Within 6 months of the date of this decision the developer shall remove, decommission and extinguish the licence for the 3no. advertising structures adjacent Wilton Road (adjacent Farranlea Hall Student Accommodation). A dated photographic record of its removal shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within one month of their removal. Any future proposed advertising use at this location shall be subjected to a prior grant of planning permission. Reason: In the interest of visual

amenity. It is emphasised that both the application site and decommissioning site are in the ownership and full control of JCDecaux, so in effect there is no licence to extinguish. No other advertising company can use this site. JCDecaux is therefore able to honour such a condition in full.

7.2. Applicant Response

- As above.

7.3. Planning Authority Response

- The Planning Authority notes the non-availability of the Planning reports on the Cork City Council's Citizens portal. The applicant and their agent are advised that the Planning Authority reports are available by contacting the Planning Department.
- The Planning Authority maintains that with regard to Planning Application 25/44360, it has carried out its duties accordingly in terms of the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), and that its split decision on the planning application 25/44360 is consistent with the provisions of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- The Planning Authority has no further comments to make on this application.

7.4. Observations

An observation was received from the owner of Farranlea Hall student accommodation. The following concerns were raised:

- Precedent for refusal: Permission was refused under planning reference ABP-300109-17 as the proposal would exacerbate the visual clutter of signage at the location, seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, and contravene the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021. Additionally, the Board Direction notes that to permit a sign of this nature and scale would detract from the residential amenities of the area to an unacceptable degree and would set an undesirable precedent for similar proposals. The Board was also not satisfied

that the proposed LED sign would not unduly distract the attention of road users thereby increasing the risk of accidents.

- **Ownership:** it appears from the appeal submission that the applicant has changed its position from being the “owner” of the site to having “access to it, for the purpose of carrying out works on the property and in connection with carrying out the business of the company”. The appeal goes on to state that their legal advice confirms that JCDecaux “has an entitlement to access its lands over the access road” and that “JCDecaux is in full control of that site and empowered implement the permission and decommissioning condition in full”. No documentation has been submitted with the appeal and no material to support this claim. Carmal Ryan/CAC Limited is the owner of the land on which the JCDecaux Limited signs are placed. Letter and land registry/folio details by Nancy O’Driscoll Solicitors submitted. The applicant requires consent of the landowner to make the application.
- **Residential amenity:** The are bedroom windows facing onto Wilton Road and would be directly impacted by the proposal. Concerns were raised that the level of illumination particularly during evening and night-time hours, would result in light overspill and visual disturbance, thereby adversely affecting residential amenity. While a curfew on advertising between 2am and 6am is proposed, it is considered that this does not adequately mitigate the impact, given the site’s location within a residential area. The CDP Objective 11.200 notes that digital advertising should be controlled in the city in order to avoid general nuisance to the public and residents. In addition, the CCDP states that internally illuminated signage should be restricted and designed to be sympathetic to its surroundings. The proposed development would intensify advertising within an established residential area, to the detriment of existing and future occupiers. As such, it is not considered sympathetic to the receiving environment, conflicts with the CDP.
- **Proposed BusConnects Cork Sustainable Transport Corridor and Luas Cork:** To facilitate the BusConnects corridors land acquisition and boundary changes will be required along a number of routes, including along Wilton Road and Dennehy’s Cross. Should these changes proceed, the site

boundaries of existing properties along Wilton Road would shift eastwards/westwards and the three existing 6.3m x 3.5m advertising displays would likely require removal in any event.

In addition, proposals for the Luas Cork include a route serving Dennehy's Cross, with a current alignment along Wilton Road adjacent to the subject site. The significance of this project is reflected in the decision of Cork City Council Under Ref: 25/44360, which states: "It is also considered that the proposed development would be premature pending the final design and layout of Cork Luas and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area".

7.5. Further Responses

- None

8.0 Assessment

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

- Residential Amenity
- Traffic
- Landownership
- Appropriate Assessment
- Water Framework Directive

8.2. Residential Amenity

8.3. The Planning Authority refused permission for the replacement of 1no. illuminated 7.35m x 3.35m advertising display with 1 no. digital 6.28m x 3.4m advertising display as the site is zoned ZO 01 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods with the objective to protect and provide for residential uses and amenities. The proposed development would be located

adjacent to existing and proposed residential units. It is considered that to permit a digital advertising display of the nature and scale proposed would detract from the residential amenities of the area to an unacceptable degree, would set an undesirable precedent for other similar proposals and would contravene the zoning objective. The proposed development would, therefore, seriously injure the residential amenities of the area and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- 8.4. The grounds of appeal state that the proposed development seeks to upgrade an established advertising display in accordance with CDP Cork City Council's policy for Advertising Structures Sections (11.194, 11.196 and 11.200) and would not detract from the residential amenities of the area. The subject site is beside a busy roadway, which dominates the land use and character of the site, more than the student residential use. Given that the existing and proposed display faces the roadway, it has no relationship to the residential zoning. The proposed digital display would be of high-quality design and have less impact on residential amenity, as it can be more accurately controlled than the traditional paper display format with downward lighting. The digital display can be turned off for "Curfew Hours between 2am and 6am. Also, in accordance with Digital Advertising/Signage Policy section 11.200 the maximum luminance of the advertisement display during night-time hours (darkness) can be controlled so as to not exceed 300cd/sqm. In accordance with Section 11.194 the proposal to decommission 3no. displays reduces "visual clutter" along this stretch of roadway.
- 8.5. The observation received states that while a curfew on advertising between 2am and 6am is proposed, it is considered that this does not adequately mitigate the impact, given the site's location within a residential area. The potential for light overspill and associated disturbance remains a significant concern. The CDP Objective 11.200 notes that digital advertising should be controlled in the city in order to avoid general nuisance to the public and residents. In addition, the CCDP states that internally illuminated signage should be restricted and designed to be sympathetic to its surroundings.
- 8.6. I have assessed the proposed development; the applicant proposes to decommission 3no. 6.3m X 3.5m advertising displays facing onto Wilton Road. The decommissioning and removal of the existing 3no. advertising displays will reduce visual clutter along Wilton Road and improve the visual amenity along Wilton Road and to the front of Farranlea Hall

and it will open up the view into and out of Farranlea Hall apartments. Therefore, I welcome the proposed decommissioning of the 3no. advertising displays.

- 8.7. In regard to the replacement of 1no. illuminated 7.35m x 3.35m advertising display with 1no. digital 6.28m x 3.4m advertising display which is located on the northern corner of Farranlea Hall site and faces north onto Wilton Road. The existing display has been in existence for several decades and was in place prior to the construction of Farranlea Hall student accommodation. The proposed display will extend to approximately 5.8m above ground level and will be mounted on a perforated steel panel in place of the existing timber fence. The removal of the fence will reduce the level of screening to the windows behind the display by approximately 0.83m. This will improve natural light penetration to the ground and first-floor windows of the student accommodation.
- 8.8. I note the refusal by CCC which stated the proposal would detract from the residential amenities of the area to an unacceptable degree, would set an undesirable precedent for other similar proposals and would contravene zoning: ZO 01 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods with the objective to protect and provide for residential uses and amenities. However, in my opinion, as the proposal involves the replacement of an existing illuminated advertising display with a digital display this would not detract from the residential amenity as the modern digital display is essentially replaces like for like but with more controls in terms of lighting and operating hours. The applicant has stated that if permission is refused, the subject advertising display and the proposed 3no. displays for decommissioning will be retained and can be done so as there is no query regarding the planning status of the existing displays. The reduction in the number of advertising displays and replacement of 1 no. display with a slightly smaller digital display will improve the overall visual amenity of the area and reduce the impact to residential amenity for the residents of Farranlea Hall student apartments. The proposed new digital display is slightly smaller and allows for more natural light into the lower ground floor units on Farranlea Hall. The lighting of the display will be controlled and comply with The luminosity of the digital advertising display will comply with Professional Lighting Guide 05 (PLG 05/23): Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays, published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP), operating below the recommended maximum of 300 candelas per m². In addition, the applicant is willing to power down the display between the hours of 2am to 6am, therefore reducing the impact on resident during the nighttime in accordance with CDP Objective 11.200 As the location is urban, I note street

lighting to the front of the subject site, therefore, I do not consider that any additional lighting will negatively impact the residents of Farranlea Hall any more than what is currently experienced, in addition, the display is facing away from the Farranlea Hall and not directly into the living areas of the apartments. I note the proposed permitted apartment scheme (currently under construction) directly across the road from the subject site, the proposed development will be located approximately 20 metres from the subject advertising display and there is a heavily trafficked three laned regional road located between the subject site and the proposed apartments. Therefore, given the separation distance and the location of a busy road between the subject site and the proposed apartments, I do not consider that the proposed advertising display will negatively impact the residential amenity of the adjacent residents.

8.9. Having regard to the nature of the proposed replacement advertising display and the decommissioning of the existing 3no. advertising display, the overall visual clutter will be significantly reduced and the proposal for 1no. digital display will improve the overall appearance of Wilton Road. In addition, having regard to the location of the advertising display which will reduce the overall size from that currently on site and improve the display with modern technology including the reduced lighting, operating below the recommended maximum of 300 candelas per m². In addition, the applicant is willing to power down the display between the hours of 2am to 6am, therefore reducing the impact on resident during the nighttime hours and the separation distance to the existing and proposed apartments, I do not consider that the proposed development will negatively impact residential amenity in the area or set a precedence for similar type development as this is the replacement of an existing advertising display. There is an overall planning gain in decommissioning the existing 3no. advertising displays and replacing 1no. display with a digital display.

8.10. **Traffic**

8.11. The Planning Authority refused permission as the proposal is at a prominent location on the west side of Wilton Road, between Victoria Cross to the north and Dennehy's Cross to the south. Wilton Road is a busy urban route, with two lanes of traffic travelling southbound to Dennehy's Cross and one lane of traffic travelling north to Victoria Cross. Wilton Road has heavily trafficked junctions, high level of cross traffic movements due to lane changing and cross junction movements, a pedestrian crossing near the site and high

pedestrian traffic. It is considered that the proposed development by reason of its type, size and location would represent a distraction to road users traveling south on Wilton Road and will increase the risk of accidents on this stretch of road. The proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard. It is also considered that the proposed development would be premature pending the final design and layout of Cork Luas and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- 8.12. The grounds of appeal state the proposed replacement digital advertising display will not endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard and it is consistent with previous planning decisions by An Coimisiún Pleanála, Dublin City Council and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. No report from the Engineer to determine if the refusal is based on engineering expertise. Photographs submitted for other advertisements along Clonliffe Road, Dublin, Milltown, Dublin 6, Loughlinstown on the N11. The proposed replacement digital advertising display will not have any negative impact on traffic safety from the existing paper advertising display.
- 8.13. The observation states the proposed BusConnects Cork Sustainable Transport Corridor and Luas Cork requires land boundary changes along Wilton Road and Dennehy's Cross. The site boundaries of existing properties along Wilton Road would shift eastwards/westwards and the three existing 6.3m x 3.5m advertising displays would likely require removal in any event. The proposal would be premature pending the final design and layout of the Cork Luas. Having regard to the existing high levels of traffic on Wilton Road, together with the planned upgrades of sustainable transport infrastructure, it is submitted that the site on Wilton Road is not an appropriate location for digital signage and permission should not be granted to facilitate same.
- 8.14. I have reviewed the comments from the Area Engineer of CCC which outline that the R641 (Wilton Road) is a busy urban route with high level of cross traffic movements due to lane changing and cross junction movements and raised concerns that the changing digital advertising display could create a road safety hazard, a distraction to drivers and will increase the risk of accidents on this stretch of road. I have carried out a site visit, and I recognise that the R641 is an extremely busy section of road with turning junctions north and south of the subject advertising display. However, I further note that there is no junction or pedestrian crossing immediately adjacent to the advertising display.

- 8.15. Furthermore, I consider as the advertising display has been in existence for decades, the proposed replacement to a digital advertising display will not negatively impact traffic on the R641. Due to the location of the advertising display on the western side of the R641, only traffic travelling south using the two lanes on the R641 on the other side of the road and will have a visual view of the advertising display, any traffic travelling north, the advertising display will be located behind them, therefore offering no view to the advertising display. Therefore, I do not consider that the proposed replacement of an existing advertising display with a digital display will negatively impact road users along the R641 due to the limited visibility to traffic travelling south and the lack of pedestrian crossings or junctions in close proximity to the subject site.
- 8.16. In regard to the proposed Cork Luas line, I note no formal report was received from Infrastructure/CorkLuas and that verbal discussions took place which highlighted potential impact on the Cork Luas emerging route corridor. I have reviewed Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) website in relation to Cork Luas, Luas Cork Public Consultation Preferred Route 2026 Book 2 – Cork City West, Map 33 which states the retaining wall at Farranlea Hall boundary (to be developed in future design stage), therefore the advertising display may be impacted or require relocation. The proposal is currently at Stage 3 Preferred Route Public Consultation, there are six more stages until the proposal starts operation which includes design, preparation of Railway Order planning application and statutory public consultation, approval of railway order planning application, construction tender process, five-year construction programme and final start operation. I consider given the that the Luas Cork is currently at Stage 3 in the process and the work involved and the timescales, the proposed Luas Cork is not estimated to be completed any time in the near future. There is no definite timeline but is it reportedly not expected to be in operation until 2036. Therefore, I consider given that there is an existing advertising display on site, it is reasonable to permit a temporary permission for 5 years to the applicant to replace the existing advertising display with a digital display. Therefore, in 5 years' time, there will be a more definite status and design for the proposed Luas Cork, and the Planning Authority can reassess the proposal in terms of the Cork Luas line at that time.
- 8.17. Having regard to the location of the replacement digital advertising display on a regional road at a significant distance from any junction or pedestrian crossing and the limited visibility to traffic travelling south on the Regional Road R641 Wilton Road, I do not consider that the replacement digital advertising display will unduly distract or impact traffic

safety along the regional route. In regard to the Luas Cork corridor, I acknowledge that a preferred route corridor has been advertised and that the existing boundary wall adjacent to the subject advertisement may be impacted, however, I consider given the timelines involved with the proposed Luas Cork line and the fact that there is an existing advertising display on site, it is appropriate to recommend temporary permission for five years and to review the status of the Luas Cork with any structure at that time.

8.18. **Landownership**

8.19. In terms of the legal interest, the observation received raised concerns in regard to ownership of the subject site, I am satisfied that the applicants have provided sufficient evidence of their legal intent to make an application. Any further legal dispute is considered a Civil matter and are outside the scope of the planning appeal. In any case, this is a matter to be resolved between the parties, having regard to the provisions of s.34(13) of the 2000 Planning and Development Act.

9.0 **AA Screening**

9.1. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is not located within a designated site. Cork Harbour SPA (Site code: 004030) is located approximately 4.9km east of the subject site. The proposal consists of permission for replacement of advertising display with digital advertising display and permanent decommissioning of advertising display facing Wilton Road. No nature conservation concerns were raised by the appellant.

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Scale and size of the development.
- Distance to the nearest European site
- The lack of connections to the SPA & SAC.

I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed & retention development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Likely significant effects are excluded and

therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

10.1. The subject site is located c.2.4km west of Cork City Centre and 1.6km north of junction 4 of the South Ring Road (N40). The site lies on the western side of Wilton Road (R641). The proposal consists of permission for replacement of advertising display with digital advertising display and permanent decommissioning of advertising display facing Wilton Road. No concerns were raised in relation to water deterioration.

I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seeks 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. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Scale and size of the development.
- Distance to the nearest waterbody
- The lack of connections to the waterbody

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.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. I recommend a grant of permission subject to the reasons and considerations below:

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 12.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development including the decommissioning of 3no. existing advertising displays, the established and permitted use of the subject site, the dimensions of the existing structure at this location to be replaced, and having regard to section 11.200 of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028, it is considered that, subject to conditions, the proposed development would comply with the zoning objective ZO 01 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 and will not impact the visual amenity, residential amenity or traffic safety for the area. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

13.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by the planning authority on the 3rd day of December 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The period during which the development hereby permitted may be carried out shall be five years from the date of this Order.

Reason: Having regard to the nature of the development and the proposed Luas Cork Line the Commission considers it appropriate to specify a period of validity of this permission in of five years.

3. Within six months of the date of this decision the developer shall remove, decommission and extinguish the licence for the advertising display adjacent to

Farranlea Hall Student Accommodation, Wilton Road, Cork. Details of the existing advertising displays to be removed, including location map and photographs of the structure, and a dated photographic record shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within one month of its removal. Any future proposed advertising use at this location shall be subject to a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interest of orderly development and visual amenity.

4. The cycle time for the display of the advertisements shall not be less than 10 seconds.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and traffic safety.

5. Notwithstanding the exempted development provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, or any statutory provision amending or replacing them, any change to the display panel, including any increase in the number of posters to be displayed, the scrolling mechanism or the internal/external illumination, shall not be carried out without a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: To enable the planning authority to assess the impacts of any such changes on the amenities of the area or traffic safety.

6. The proposed development shall incorporate the following:
 - (a) The maximum luminance of the advertisement display between dusk and dawn shall not exceed 300 candelers per square metres (sd/m^2). The luminance level of the display shall be subject to review by the planning authority and following review; adjustments or amendments shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Authority.
 - (b) Only static images without movements shall be permitted, that is, no animation, flashing, three-dimensional effects, noise, smoke or full motion video shall be permitted without a grant of planning permission.
 - (c) The digital display shall be turned off for "curfew" hours between 2am and 6am.

Reason: To ensure the signs do not have any adverse effect on the amenity of the area or road safety.

7. All public service cables for the development, including electrical and telecommunications cables, together with support structures shall be located discreetly within the structure. Details shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

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 me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

Jennifer McQuaid

Planning Inspector

2nd June 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-500908-CC-26
Proposed Development Summary	Permission for development at Victoria Cross, Wilton Road, Cork (adjacent Victoria Station, Student Accommodation). The development will consist of the replacement of 1 no. illuminated 7.35m x 3.35m advertising display with 1 no. digital 6.28m x 3.4m advertising display at Victoria Cross, Wilton Road, Cork, (adjacent Victoria Station, Student Accommodation) demolition of a boundary wall and all associated site works and services and permanent decommissioning of 3 no. 6.3m x 3.5m advertising displays facing Wilton Road, Victoria Cross, Cork (adjacent to Farranlea Hall student accommodation, Victoria Cross, Cork).
Development Address	Victoria Cross, Wilton Road, Cork, Co. Cork.
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q.2.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
(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)	
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR	

If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____

Date: _____