

Landscape / Townscape & Visual Assessment

**Application No.1 for Substitute Consent
Application No.2 for Further Development**

For
Tara Hall
Balscadden Road, Howth
Co. Dublin

Applicant:
John Roe

May 2026

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LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE & VISUAL ASSESSMENT

1.Introduction

The landscape/townscape and visual assessment of the completed development is a means of appraising the effect the works have had on the receiving environment in terms of the quality both physically and visually. This report sets out the context, identifies potential receptors and assesses the likely landscape and visual effects of the development.

This Report has been completed by Mr Mark Boyle (B.Agr.Sc.(L.Hort) MLArch, MILI) Director & Senior Landscape Architect of Murray & Associates Landscape Architecture.

2. Study Methodology

Landscape impacts are defined as changes in the fabric, character and quality of the landscape as a result of the development (*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* - 3rd Edition, by The Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Assessment published by E&FN Spon, 2013). This includes direct impacts on landscape receptors and greater effects that can alter the wider distinctiveness of the landscape. Landscape receptors are the physical or natural resource, special interest or viewer group that will experience an impact. The sensitivity (of a landscape receptor) is the vulnerability to change. The extent of the landscape impact has been assessed by professional evaluation using the terminology defined as per Tables 1,2, 3, and 4.

The terminology in the following tables is based on the criteria set down in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Landscape impacts are assumed to be permanent.

Table 1 – The Significance of Landscape Impact (based on ratings from the EPA Guidelines, 2022)

Extent	Description
Level 1 Imperceptible Effects	An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences. There are no noticeable changes to landscape context, character or features.
Level 2 Not significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the landscape but without noticeable consequences. There are no appreciable changes to landscape context, character or features.
Level 3 Slight Effects	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the landscape without affecting its sensitivities. There are minor changes over a small proportion of the area or moderate changes in a localised area or changes that are reparable over time.
Level 4 Moderate Effects	An effect that alters the character of the landscape in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends. There are minor changes over some of the area (up to 30%) or moderate changes in a localised area.
Level 5 Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the landscape. There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over a substantial area (30-50%) or an intensive change over a more limited area
Level 6 Very Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the environment. There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over a substantial area (50-70%) or a very intensive change over a more limited area
Level 7 Profound Effects	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics. There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over an extensive area (70-100%) or a very intensive change over a more limited area

Visual impacts relate solely to changes in available views of the landscape and the effects of those changes on people viewing the landscape, or “the change in the appearance or view of the built or natural landscape and urban areas” as stated in Recital 16 of the EIA Directive. They include the direct impact of the development on views, the potential reaction of viewers, their location and number and the impact on visual amenity. The intensity of the visual impacts is assessed by professional evaluation using the terminology defined as per the tables below.

Table 2 – Significance of Visual Effect (based on ratings from the EPA Guidelines, 2022)

Extent	Description
Level 1 Imperceptible Effects	There are no noticeable changes to views in the visual landscape.
Level 2 Not significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the visual environment but without noticeable consequences. The proposal is adequately screened due to the existing landform, vegetation or constructed features.
Level 3 Slight Effects	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the visual environment without affecting its sensitivities. The affected view forms only a small element in the overall visual composition or changes the view in a marginal manner.
Level 4 Moderate Effects	An effect that alters the character of the visual environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends. The proposal affects an appreciable segment of the overall visual composition, or there is an intrusion in the foreground of a view.
Level 5 Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the visual environment. The proposal affects a large proportion of the overall visual composition, or views are so affected that they form a new element in the physical landscape.
Level 6 Very Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the visual environment. The proposal affects the majority of the overall visual composition, or views are so affected that they form a new element in the physical landscape.
Level 7 Profound Effects	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics. The view is entirely altered, obscured or affected.

Table 3 – Quality of the Landscape and Visual Impact (EPA Guidelines 2022)

Extent	Description
Neutral Effect	Neither detracts from nor enhances the landscape of the receiving environment or view
Positive Effect	Improves or enhances the landscape of the receiving environment or a particular view
Negative Effect	Detracts from the quality of the landscape or view

Table 4– The Duration of Landscape and Visual Effects (EPA Guidelines 2022)

Extent	Description
Momentary	Effects lasting from seconds to minutes
Brief	Effects lasting less than a day
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less
Short-term	Effects lasting one to seven years
Medium-term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
Long-term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
Permanent Effects	Effects lasting over sixty years.
Reversible Effects	Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration.

Please note: "Momentary" and "Brief" Effects as defined in the EPA Guidelines (2022) are not considered relevant to landscape & visual assessment as effects of such short duration are extremely unlikely to generate appreciable effects.

The landscape and visual assessment methodology has been utilized in conjunction with a professional evaluation of the completed works to determine the degree of impact.

The term *study area* in this report refers to the site itself (i.e. the extent of the planning application) and its wider landscape context, both physically and in terms of character. This broader area typically extends for approximately 1 km or more in all directions to establish an understanding of the overall landscape setting.

For the visual assessment, the extent may extend beyond this area where views of the site are available; however, given the scale of the development, the majority of potential visual effects arise within the immediate surroundings.

The methodology employed for this landscape and visual impact assessment was as follows:

1. Identifying Baseline Conditions: Desktop survey of detailed maps, aerial photography and other information relevant to the study area.

2. Characterising the Landscape & Identifying Sensitive Receptors: Site survey and photographic survey to determine landscape character of the general study area and specific landscape of the site and to identify the sensitivity of receptors that have potential to be affected by changes in the baseline conditions.

3. Assessing the magnitude of changes to the Baseline Landscape & Visual Environment: In determining visibility, views to and from the development are assessed with reference to the height, form, finishes, and design of both the completed and proposed works and their relationship with the surrounding setting. Verified photographs have been prepared by specialist 3D Design Bureau to illustrate representative views that are typical of those available within the area and to demonstrate the scale of the works within both the immediate and wider landscape. A series of representative viewpoints taken from locations around the dwelling informs the visual component of this assessment. The photography on which the following assessments are based is provided in Appendix 2 and 3.

4. Assessing the Significance of Effect Considering Sensitivity of Receptors and Magnitude of Effect: Assessment of the potential significant impacts of the proposed scheme utilising the plan and elevation drawings of the scheme and Verified Views to determine the main impacting features and the degree to which these elements would be visible in relation to the baseline environment.

Specific Considerations from the EPA Guidance 2022

The EPA Guidance 2022 suggests that the following should be considered in Landscape and Visual Assessment, and these are considered in the assessment where relevant:

Visual Effects:

- Context
- Character
- Significance
- Sensitivity
- Views & Prospects

Landscape Amenity:

- Public access
- Public amenities
- Recreation
- Tourism

The Landscape:

- Landscape Appearance and Character
- Landscape Context
- Historical Landscapes

2.1 Terminology:

Landscape impacts are defined as changes in the fabric, character, and quality of the landscape as a result of the development. This includes direct effects on landscape receptors and greater effects that can alter the wider distinctiveness of the landscape. Landscape receptors are the physical or natural resource, special interest or viewer group that will experience an impact. The sensitivity of a landscape receptor is its vulnerability to change.

The extents of landscape effects are assessed by firstly establishing the baseline conditions by classifying baseline data according to its importance and sensitivity as per Table 6. Secondly, an evaluation of the landscape impact on the baseline environment is undertaken using the terminology defined in Tables 1, 3 and 4.

The UK Landscape Institute's Technical Information Note *Townscape Character Assessment* (2018) recommends that where a development is within or dominated by built elements that the term 'Townscape' is used instead of 'Landscape'. Therefore, for the purposes of this study the term 'Townscape' will be applied, and the term 'Landscape', wherever used, should be read as being equivalent, describing the urban fabric of the city and the built environment and any landscape elements such as trees within that context.

2.2 Significance & Sensitivity of the Local Landscape and Visual Amenities:

In landscape and visual assessments, one of the key factors is the sensitivity of a landscape to change, where the proposed development will inevitably result in adding a new element to the landscape. The publication *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (2013) defines sensitivity as: "A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor."

Sensitivity refers to the inherent sensitivity to change of the landscape resource, as well as the visual sensitivity in terms of views, visibility, number and nature of viewers and scope to mitigate visual impact.

During the initial research and evaluation, a typology was developed based on the fieldwork and research into the site. These categories will help to identify the sensitivity of the existing receptors.

Table 5: Baseline Evaluation – Sensitivity of Landscape Receptor (developed by the author for the with reference to fieldwork and research)

Landscape typology / Receptor	Category
ACA and/or Urban Landscape associated with listed or protected buildings	IV
Key Public Urban Spaces/ Historic Character Street/ Local Parks/ Tourist Attractions/Routes, Mature trees in the public realm, Local Landmark	III
Local Streets, Residential landscapes	II
Degraded urban townscapes/ streetscapes, Arterial Roads	I
A low-quality landscape, e.g. Industrial landscape, etc.	Not sensitive

Table 6: Baseline Evaluations – Sensitivity of Visual Receptors (developed by the author with reference to fieldwork and research)

Receptor	Category
Listed Views in Relevant Planning Documents Views from Key Public Urban Spaces Good quality / extensive views from listed buildings, within 50m	IV
Local receptors within 100m of the site (residential properties, nursing homes, residential care units, schools, cemeteries, tourist accommodation, tourist facilities, parks) with direct views of the development Publicly accessible viewpoints identified in the study with high-quality views or within a high-quality visual environment.	III
Local receptors within 100m of the site with oblique or compromised views of the development, or more than 100m from the site with existing high-quality views, or from a primary pedestrian route. Existing views from elevated viewpoints, within 1.5 km	II
People travelling through the area.	I
People working in the area.	Not sensitive

The significance of effects can be measured as a function of the magnitude of change and the sensitivity of the receptor. This allows for the following Table to be compiled that acts as a guide-point for the assessor. It is important to note that the assessor's professional judgement, common sense and experience are also factors in ascribing rational judgements for the significance of effects.

Table 7: Level of Impact resulting from combination of Sensitivity Rating & Magnitude of Change

	Magnitude of Change				
Sensitivity	Very High	High	Medium	Low	No appreciable change
Very High (IV)	Profound	Very Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight
High (III)	Very Significant	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight
Medium (II)	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight	Not Significant
Low (I)	Moderate	Moderate	Slight	Not Significant	Imperceptible
No sensitivity	Slight	Slight	Not Significant	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

3.Description of Baseline

3.1 Site Character & Context

The site in question is located at Balscadden Road, Howth, northeast of Dublin and lies within the jurisdiction of Fingal County Council. Tara Hall is located toward the end of Balscadden Road, set slightly inland from the adjacent coastal cliffs and the Irish Sea. Significant surrounding landmarks include Howth Harbour and village, approximately 1km west of the site, and Howth Head Peak, 400 metres southeast. The house itself dates from the mid-19th century and is a three-bay, two-storey-over-lower-ground-floor and garden-level dwelling. Following the demolition of a previous extension over three levels, a contemporary extension which is substantially complete, has been constructed on the northern elevation, these are the works relating to application no.1 for substitute consent. The dwelling is positioned on a sloping site, with access at upper ground level from Balscadden Road and garden level to the north. Views extend north and east across the sea towards Ireland's Eye and west towards Balscadden Bay and Howth Harbour. Landscaping within the site's grounds includes a tarmac forecourt to the west of the dwelling which provides vehicular access and parking, stone steps which facilitate transition between the ground/entry level and garden level and expansive areas of lawn which extend to rubble stone boundary walls along the cliffs edge. The site is open in character to its northern and western sides with a stone boundary wall delineating the dwelling from Balscadden Road and some intermittent tree planting abutting the roadway to the eastern side which provides light screening. At garden level, there are some small areas of planting to the east of the house as well as some scattered tree cover. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, with the nearest dwelling located immediately across the road to the south. Dwellings in the immediate surrounds are generally set within their own grounds, with some more established residential estates located further west at Nashville Park. For further information regarding the architectural heritage of the dwelling, please

refer to the 'Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment' submitted by Historic Building Consultants as part of this application.



3.2 Planning Context

(1) Final County Development Plan 2023-2029

The Fingal County Development Plan 2023–2029 provides the primary planning policy framework for the site. Within the context of this LVIA, the most relevant aspects of the Development Plan relate to Protected Structures and Zoning Objectives.

Tara Hall is not included on the Record of Protected Structures, and no part of the property is identified as a protected structure under the current Plan.

According to the Fingal County Development Plan zoning map, the site is located within the HA – High Amenity zoning designation. The vision for this zoning objective is:

“To protect these highly sensitive and scenic locations from inappropriate development and reinforce their character, distinctiveness and sense of place. In recognition of the amenity potential of these areas, opportunities to increase public access will be explored.”

This zoning emphasises the need to conserve the landscape character of the area and to ensure that any proposed development is sensitively integrated within the high-amenity setting.

(2) Howth Special Amenity Area

The site is located within the Howth Special Amenity Area (HSAA), designated under the Howth Special Amenity Area Order 2000. For the purposes of this LVIA, the key considerations arising from the HSAA designation relate to landscape character protection, development guidance, and the sensitivity of the wider setting.

The HSAA designation recognises the exceptional scenic, ecological, and recreational value of the Howth Peninsula. The designated area extends over approximately 547 hectares and encompasses significant landscape features including Ireland's Eye, extensive heathlands, shingle beaches, coastal cliffs, and wooded residential areas along the southeastern slopes of the peninsula.

The HSAA Order places strict controls on new residential development within the designated area, and new standalone housing is generally not permitted. The works subject to this application relate solely to an extension to an existing dwelling and therefore do not constitute new residential development.

Policy 3.12 of the Howth Special Amenity Area Order provides specific guidance for such development within the HSAA. And states:

“An extension to an existing building should generally match the character of the existing structure.”

This policy highlights the need for any new development or alteration within the HSAA to be sympathetic to the context.

(3) Natura 2000

The site is largely separated from the qualifying interests of European-designated Natura 2000 sites, namely Howth Head Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Howth Head Coastal Protection Area (SPA) however there are areas of both which overlap the sites boundary. For the purposes of this LVIA, the key considerations relate to the sensitivity of these nearby designated areas and the requirement to ensure that development does not give rise to indirect or cumulative effects.

The Howth Head SAC is designated for its nationally important heathland and coastal habitats, while the Howth Head Coast SPA supports key breeding seabird populations associated with the peninsula's cliffs and coastal environment.

The proximity to these designated sites reinforces the need to consider potential visual or landscape-related impacts that could influence the setting of these designated areas or the ecological processes they support. Careful integration of the development within the surrounding landscape is therefore necessary to maintain the wider environmental context in which the Natura 2000 sites exist.

4. Development Description

Two applications are being made to An Coimisiún Pleanála; application no. 1 for substitute consent, and application no. 2 for further development. The following is the description of the application for substitute consents.

The retention of demolition at lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor levels and the substantially constructed part two/part three storey extension at the north elevation of the existing dwelling and a new on-site Sepcon wastewater treatment plant with sand polishing filter and percolation area.

Application no. 2 is for permission under section 37L of the Planning and Development Act 2000 with the following description:

The completion of the construction of a part two/part three storey extension with proposed modifications at the north elevation of the existing dwelling including setting back the east elevation at lower ground and ground floors, the removal of newly installed window opes and reinstatement of previous window opes (1 no. at ground floor level and 2 no. at first floor level) at the north elevation, and associated development works including surface water drainage upgrades with SuDS devices.

5. Visual Characteristics of The Completed Works

5.1 Description of the Completed Works

The works completed to date include the demolition of elements at lower ground, ground, and first-floor levels to the north of the existing dwelling, the construction of a part two- / part three-storey extension in this location, and a new on-site Sepcon wastewater treatment plant with sand polishing filter and, percolation area.

5.2 Visual Characteristics of the Completed Works

The completed works comprise a part two- / part three-storey extension to the north elevation of the existing dwelling following demolition of the previous non-original rear extension over three levels. The extension is positioned to the side of the original house and reads as a contemporary architectural element alongside the traditional structure.

The extension incorporates a predominantly glazed façade with full-height window openings and slender framing, set within a rectilinear form with a flat roof profile. Vertical and horizontal glazing elements contribute to a clean, modern appearance. The extension sits below the main ridge height of the existing dwelling, with the original pitched roofline remaining the dominant visual element.

External finishes include rendered wall elements consistent with the existing dwelling and triple-glazed windows. The extension contrasts in materiality and form with the original house while remaining visually subordinate in height.

The new wastewater treatment system has been discreetly positioned to the west of the house alongside the retaining wall to the car parking apron above. The percolation area is laid out in the lawn to the east of the house. Neither has any material visual impact.

6. Visual Characteristics of the Further Works (Application No.2)

6.1 Description of the Proposed Works

A number of alterations are proposed to the fenestration of the façade to more closely reflect the house's original design. These include the removal of three sets of recently installed glazed double doors and their replacement with windows to the original design and width. In addition, it is proposed to set back the eastern corner of the lower ground floor level extension by 200mm and the eastern corner of the proposed ground floor by 700mm. The proposed works also include the installation of vertical railings for fall protection to the external terrace at first floor level. Finally, surface water drainage improvements are proposed through the addition of 2 no. rainwater butts that will discharge to 2 no. SuDS planters.

6.2 Visual Characteristics of the Proposed Works

The proposed alterations largely maintain the existing scale, height, and overall form of the extension. The replacement of glazed double doors with windows of the original design and width improves the proportions and appearance of the façade, resulting in a more consistent and visually balanced elevation. Setbacks of 200mm at the eastern corner of the lower ground floor and 700mm at ground floor level introduce a subtle articulation of the built form, softening the massing and enhancing the visual integration of the extension without materially altering its overall appearance. The introduction of vertical railings to the external first-floor terrace is integrated into the overall façade composition and results in a small, positive contribution to the visual character of the façade.

The proposed SuDS measures are discreetly located at lower levels within the property thus resulting in a neutral contribution to the visual character of the site.

Please refer to the drawings below for further information.

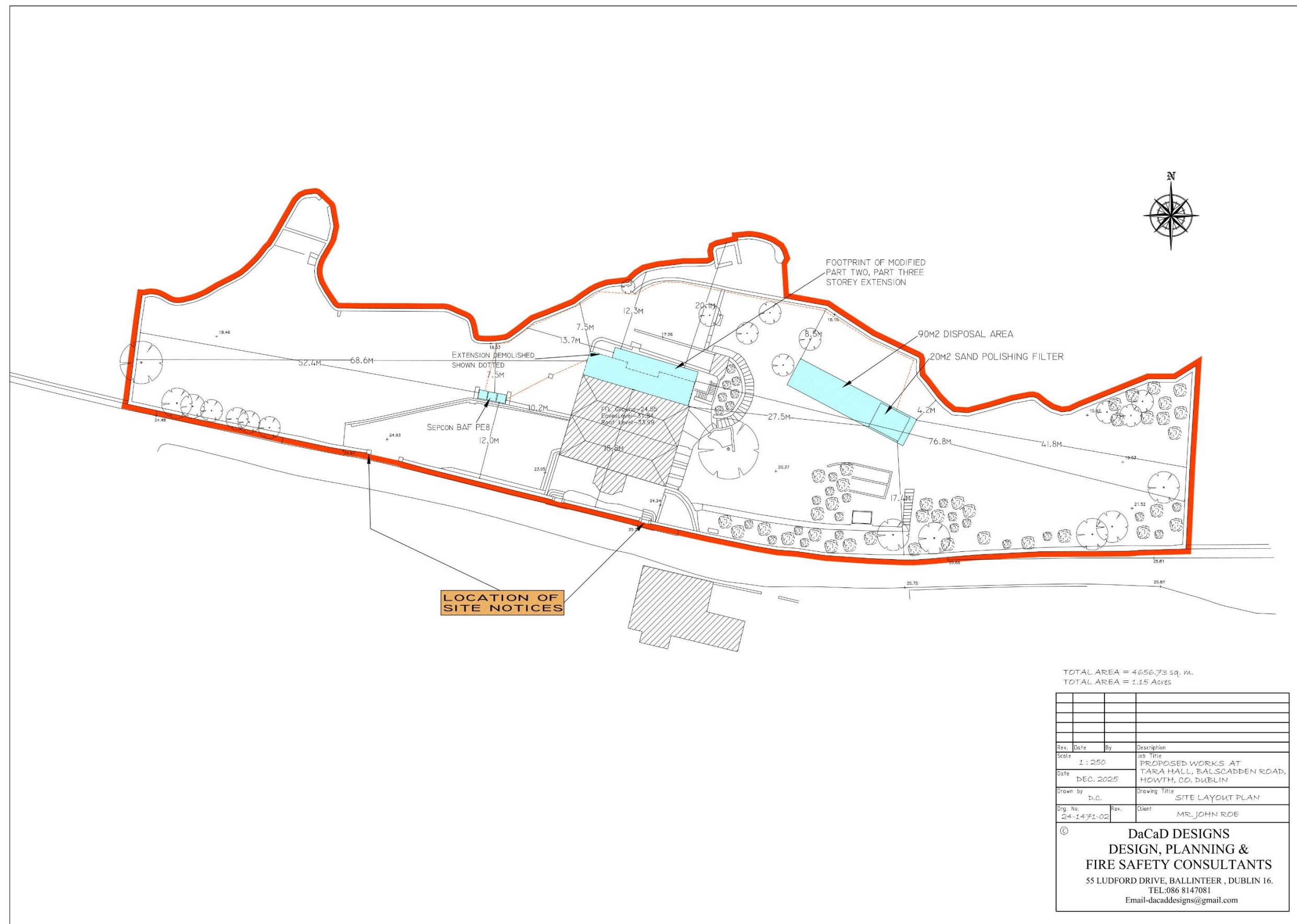


Fig.3 Proposed Site Layout Plan with Redline Boundary

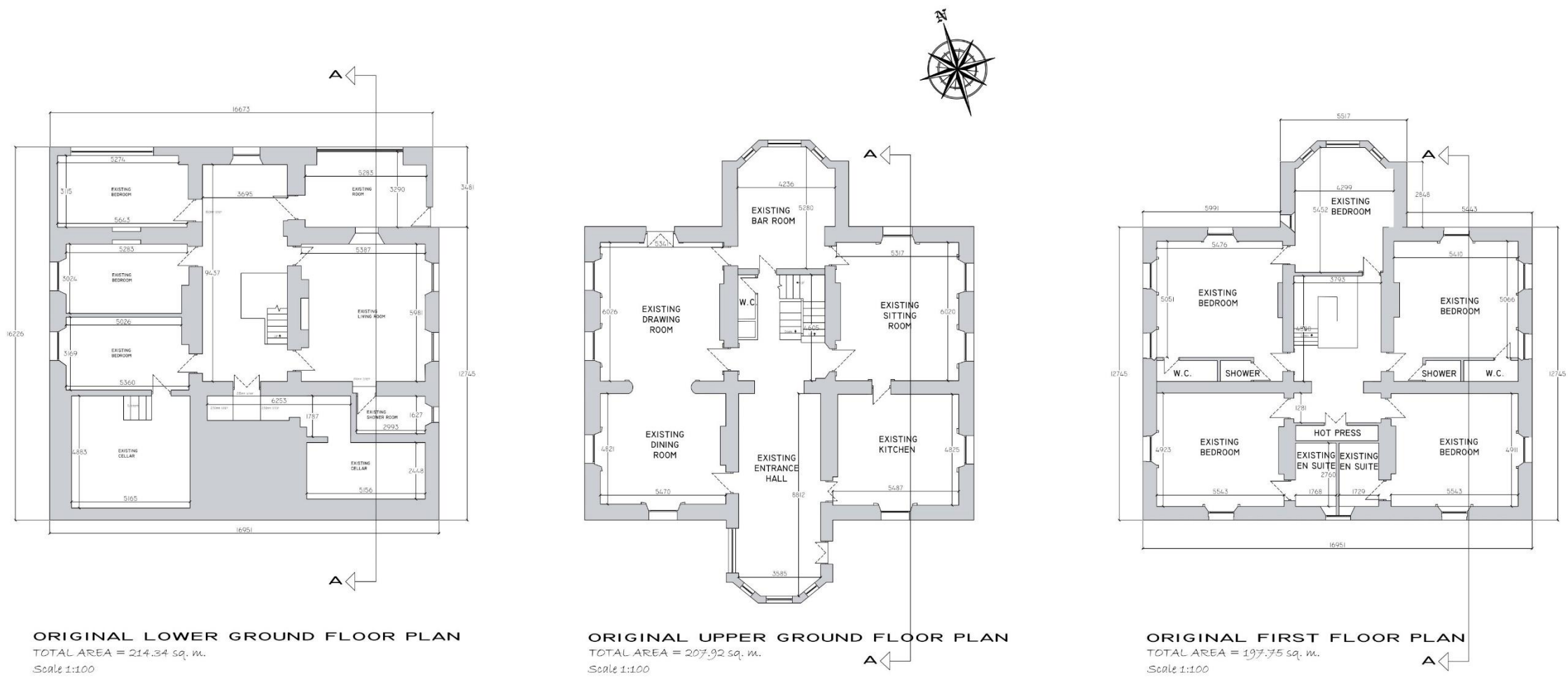


Fig.4 Original Elevations prior to commencement of works





Fig.6 Proposed Elevations per Further Development (Application No. 2)



TOTAL AREA = 620.01 sq. m.

Rev.	Date	By	Description
Scale	1 : 100		Job Title
Date	DEC. 2025		PROPOSED WORKS AT TARA HALL, BALSADDEN ROAD, HOWTH, CO. DUBLIN
Drawn by	D.C.		Drawing Title
Drwg No.	24-1471-03	Rev.	Client
			MR. JOHN ROE
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Fig.7 Original Floor Plans prior to commencement of works



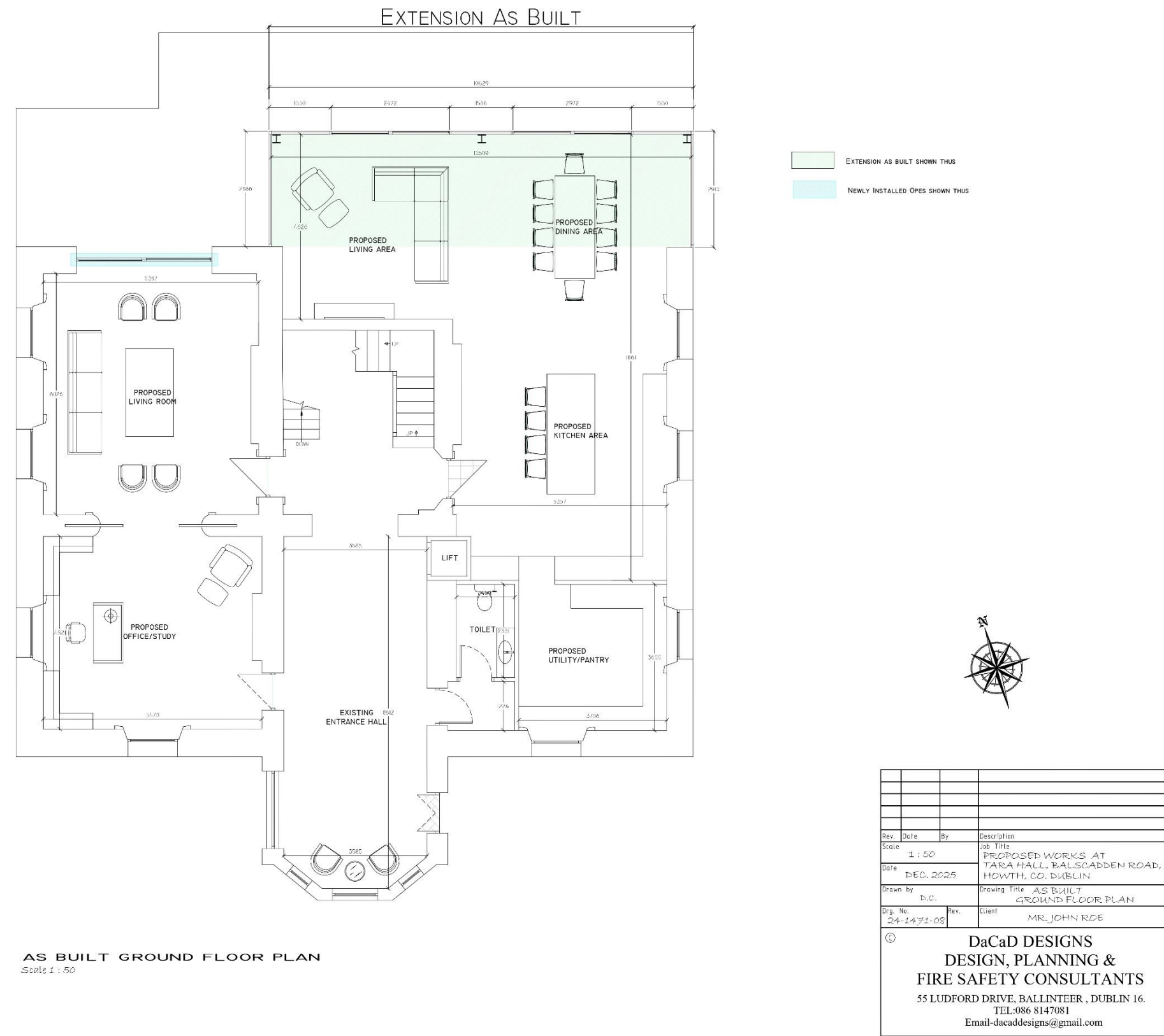


Fig.9 Ground Floor Plan in application for substitute consent (application no. 1)

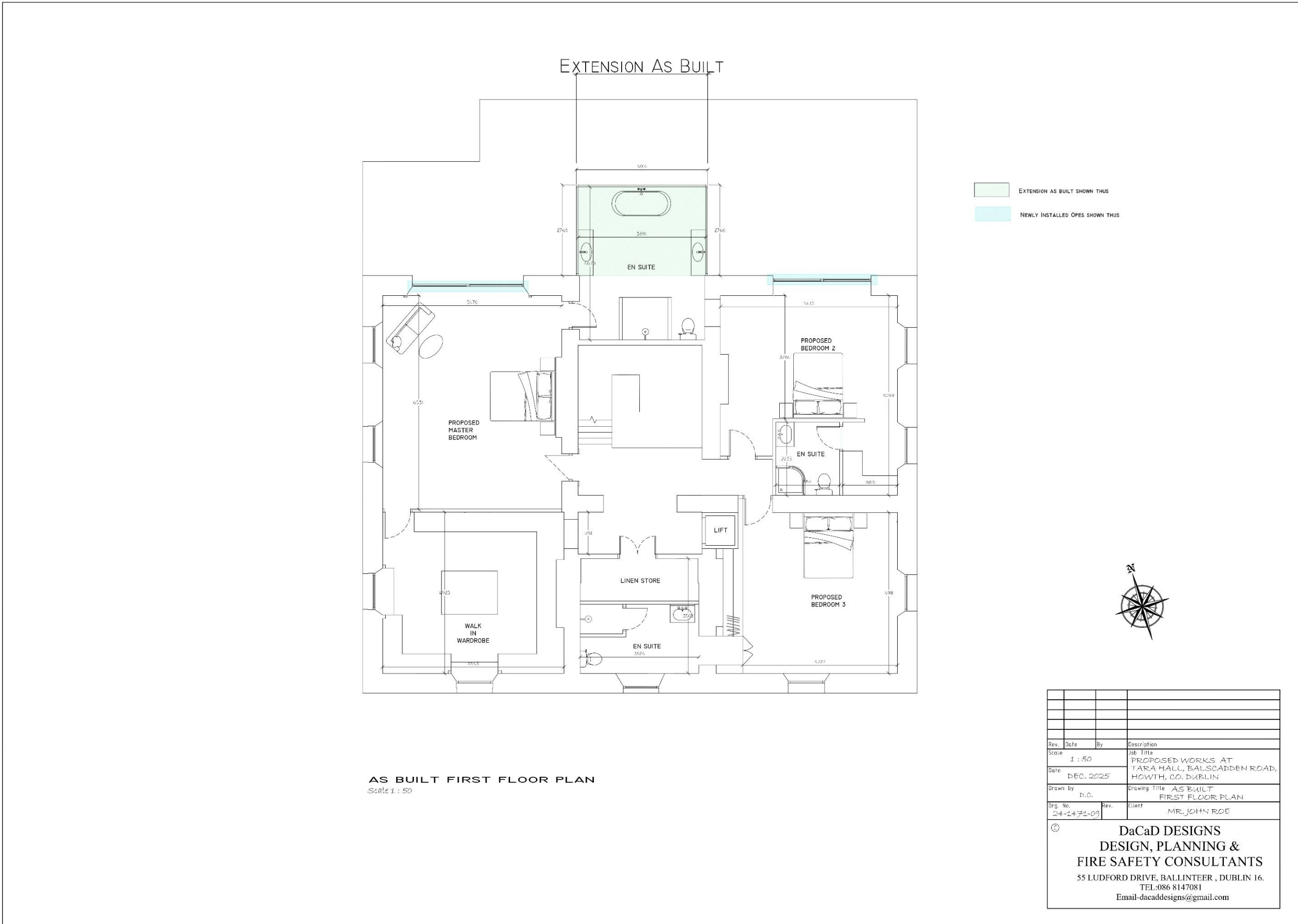
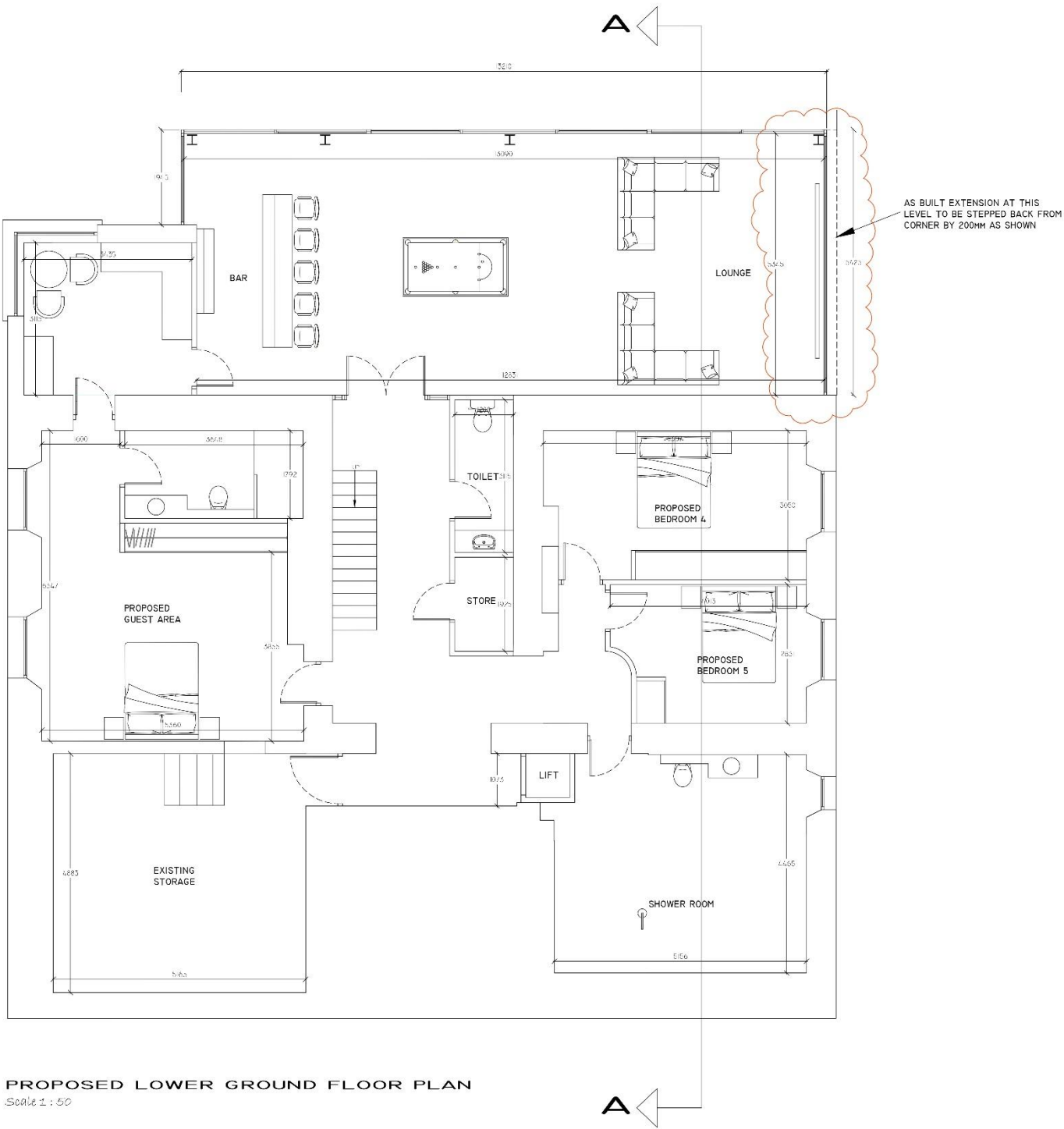


Fig.10 First Floor Plan in application for substitute consent (application no. 1)



Rev.	Date	By	Description
Scale	1 : 50		Job Title
Date	DEC. 2025		PROPOSED WORKS AT TARA HALL, BALSADDEN ROAD, HOWTH, CO. DUBLIN
Drawn by	D.C.		Drawing Title
Drg. No.	24-1471-11	Rev.	Client
			MR. JOHN ROE
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Fig.11 Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan per Further Development (Application No. 2)

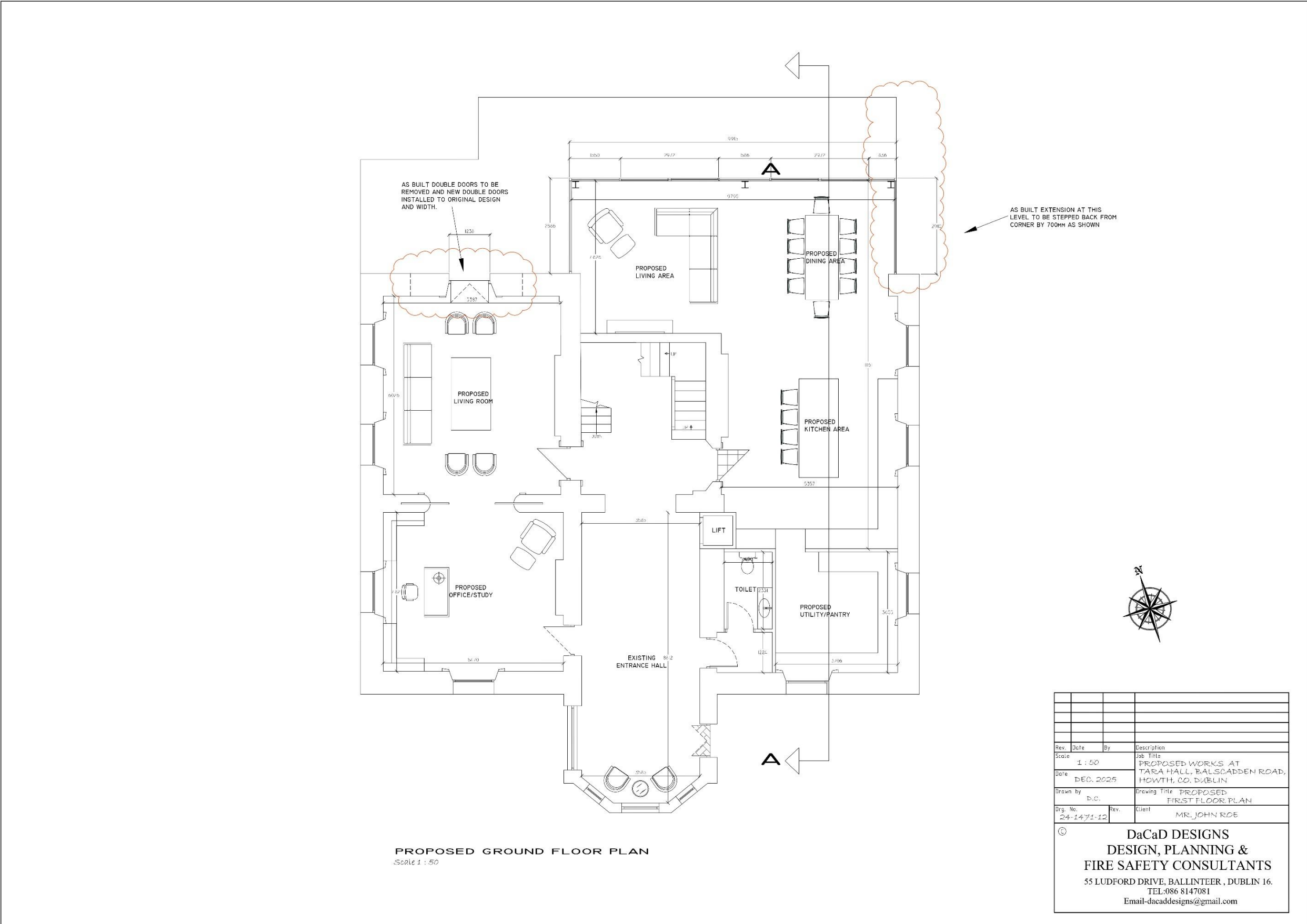
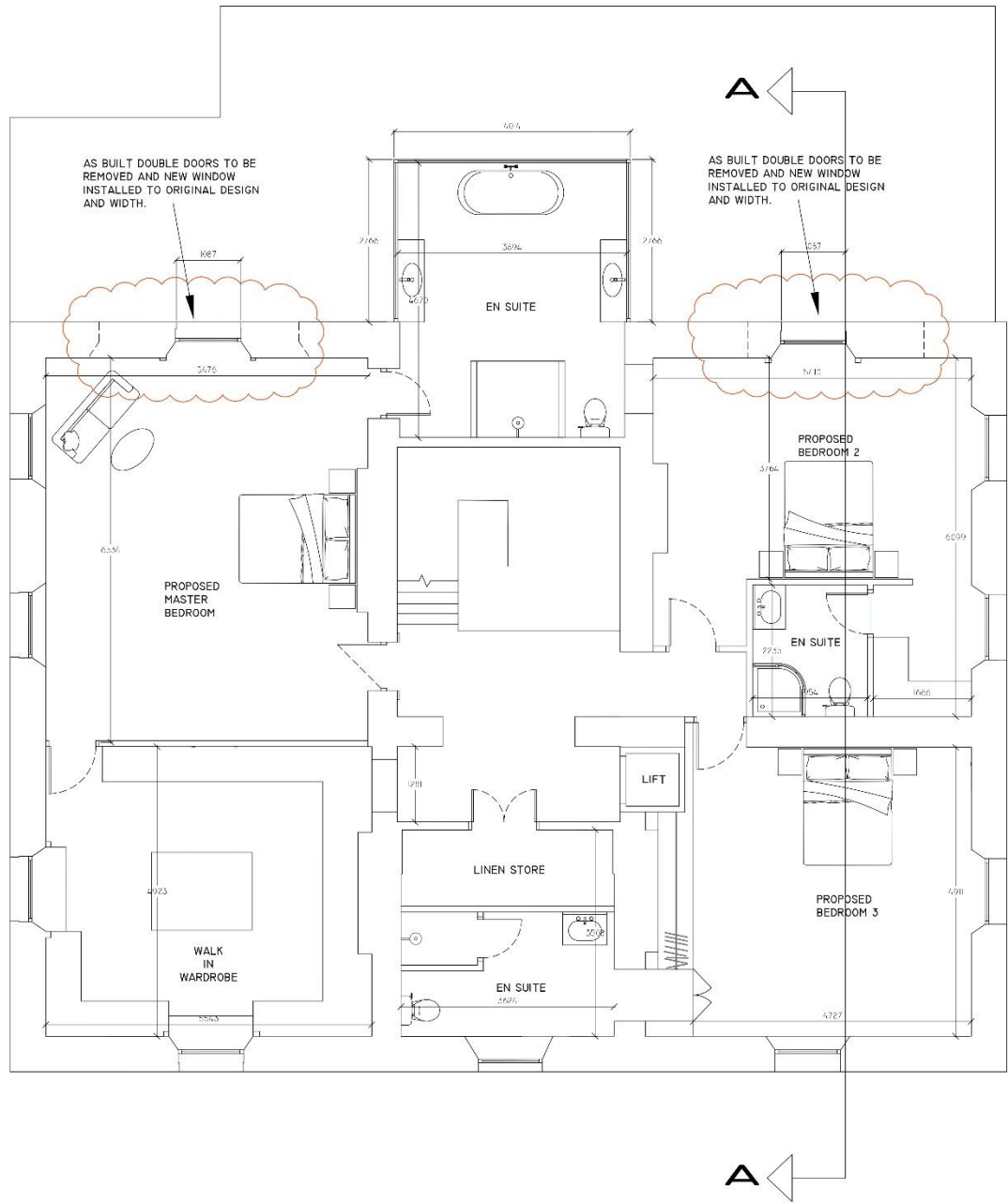


Fig.12 Proposed Ground Floor Plan per Further Development (Application No. 2)



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
Scale 1 : 50



Rev.	Date	By	Description
Scale	1 : 50		Job Title
Date	DEC. 2025		PROPOSED WORKS AT
Drawn by	D.C.		TARA HALL, BALSADDEN ROAD,
			HOWTH, CO. DUBLIN
Dwg. No.	24-1471-13	Rev.	Drawing Title
			PROPOSED
			FIRST FLOOR PLAN
		Client	MR. JOHN ROE
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FIRE SAFETY CONSULTANTS			
55 LUDFORD DRIVE, BALLINTEER, DUBLIN 16.			
TEL:086 8147081			
Email-dacaddesigns@gmail.com			

Fig.13 Proposed First Floor Plan per Further Development (Application No. 2)

7. Identification & Sensitivity of Receptors

A selection of representative viewpoints surrounding the site have been identified based on its immediate context and relevant planning considerations. Photographs from publicly accessible locations have been used to illustrate both the completed and proposed works and assess their visual influence. The photographs and viewpoints included have been provided by specialists 3D Design Bureau and are presented in Appendix 2 and 3 of this report to assist in understanding the scale and visibility of the works in their context. A summary of receptor sensitivity and visual effects is provided in Tables 8 and 9.

Given the scale of the works, the most relevant views are those from Balscadden Road, nearby residential properties, and selected public routes in the surrounding area. Sensitivity refers to the inherent sensitivity of the landscape resource to change, along with the visual sensitivity of viewers in terms of viewing distance, viewing frequency, and the character of the outlook. In this case, potentially sensitive receptors include nearby residents, pedestrians and road users on Balscadden Road, recreational users of local walking routes and amenity areas and occasional marine users.

(1) Residents

Nearby residents on Balscadden Road and surrounding properties may obtain direct or partial views of the works subject of both applications. Views occur within an existing residential context, and the scale and nature of the alterations sit within the established built form of the area. There are no neighbouring dwellings located immediately to the east or west of the property that would otherwise experience clear views of the existing extension. Waste water treatment plant, or the proposed works and SuDs measures. The nearest dwelling to the south, located upslope on Balscadden Road, retains views of the original principal elevation of Tara Hall, with the completed and proposed works positioned on the lower, seaward side of the site and therefore outside the main line of vision. As such, the established outlook from this neighbouring property remains effectively unchanged, with no material alteration to its visual amenity.

(2) Pedestrians, Cyclists and Road Users

Pedestrians, cyclists and motorists travelling along Balscadden Road experience views of the dwelling while moving past the site. These views are predominantly brief and transient in nature, occurring from a slightly elevated public route where boundary treatments and the road alignment filter visibility. The as-built extension for substitute consent sits at the lower level of the site, and the upper portion is perceived within the established pattern of residential development along the road albeit the as-built works are unfinished. The wastewater treatment plant is hidden 'below' on the lower level of the site with the percolation area situated in the garden area to the east. A similar scenario will arise in respect of the further development in application no. 2 with the proposed changes to the as-built extension largely indistinguishable from the substantially completed extension with the exception that the extension would be finished and railings mounted across the extremity of the external terrace. Given the passing nature of views and the absence of sustained vantage points in close proximity, the as built and proposed works will be experienced as part of the existing streetscape.

(3) Recreational Users (including Cliff Walk)

Recreational users in the area primarily follow established walking routes to the south and southeast of the site, including the popular Howth cliff paths and coastal tracks overlooking Balscadden Bay. These routes are orientated toward the coastline and elevated vantage points, rather than toward the northern façade of the dwelling where the works are located. Given this orientation, combined with the intervening topography, the as-built extension and the proposed extension are not visible from these recreational paths. Furthermore, the changes to the side garden to accommodate the percolation area will be largely indistinguishable from the existing condition. As such, no change arises for recreational users, and their experience of the coastal landscape remains unaffected. Views are also available from Howth Harbour and the beach at Balscadden Bay. While these locations face toward the northern side of the property, the separation distance is substantial and the dwelling forms part of the wider pattern of residential development on the slopes above the bay. At this distance, the as built and completed extension works do not read as a distinct element and there is no

change to the visual experience or the appreciation of the coastal landscape from these public vantage points.

(4) Marine Users (Boats / Kayaks etc.)

Occasional marine users, such as recreational boaters or kayakers in Howth Harbour and the wider bay, may obtain very distant views toward the northern side of the Howth peninsula. At this distance, individual residential properties form part of a wider cluster of built development on the lower slopes, and the works subject of both applications are not discernible as a separate element. There is no potential for focused or sustained viewing from the water, and no change arises to the coastal character or the experience of marine users.

8. Magnitude & Quality of Change to the Landscape/Townscape

The as built and proposed further development introduce a contemporary extension to the north elevation of the property, incorporating a primarily glazed façade and flat-roof form that contrasts with, yet sits alongside, the traditional architectural style of the original dwelling. The extension is set on a sloping site, occupying the lower ground level as the land falls away from Balscadden Road. As a result, the upper portion of the extension is only glimpsed from limited points along the public road, while the lower portions remain screened by topography, boundary treatment, and the existing building form.

From Balscadden Road, the original roofline, chimney features, and principal elevation continue to dominate the visual impression, with the newer elements (Existing to be retained and proposed further development) recessive in scale and visibility. Neither version of the rear extension breaks the skyline, alters the coastal profile, or introduces visually prominent built form into the wider landscape. Instead, it is absorbed into the established pattern of residential dwellings on the northern slopes of Howth Head.

The wastewater treatment system and percolation area do not impact the landscape/townscape of the area. Further, the proposal for SuDS devices and the reinstatement of 3 no. window opes on the rear elevation also won't impact the landscape/townscape and will not be visible beyond the rear of the site.

Overall, the change to townscape character is limited in scale, localised in extent, and visually subordinate to the original dwelling and surrounding context. The completed works sit comfortably within the existing residential setting and do not materially alter the established character of the area.

9. Likely and Significant Impacts

The as-built works per application no.1 and the further proposed works per application no.2. form part of an established residential setting and do not materially alter the pattern, scale, or character of development along Balscadden Road. Owing to their siting at a lower ground level and the screening effect of the existing dwelling, boundary wall, and vegetation, views from the public road are limited to occasional glimpses of the upper glazed element, with the principal historic elevation remaining the dominant feature in near-range views. The as-built works for substitute consent are unfinished and that is evident from the localised view of the extension from the east at Balscadden Road.

From key public vantage points, including coastal and recreational routes, the dwelling continues to read as part of the wider cluster of residential properties on the northern slopes of Howth Head. At these distances, the works both as built and proposed, are not perceptible as a distinct element and do not influence the coastal skyline, settlement pattern, or scenic qualities that contribute to the Special Amenity Area designation.

No additional overlooking or visual intrusion arises, and existing residential amenities are maintained. The character, composition, and visual experience of the locality remain intact, with the completed and proposed works integrated into their surroundings without adverse effect.

The completed extension and SuDs measures in application no.2 will give rise to no significant visual or townscape impacts and the established character and amenity of the area will be preserved.

Appendix 1: Viewpoint Location Maps





Appendix 2: Verified Views (Application No.1 for Substitute Consent)



Viewpoint 1 (Application for substitute Consent) – View to Eastern Façade of Dwelling from Balscadden Road



Viewpoint 2 (Application for substitute Consent) – View of main entrance gate from Balscadden Road



Viewpoint 3 (Application for substitute Consent) – View of western elevation from boundary wall at Balscadden Road



Viewpoint 4 (Application for substitute Consent) – View from Balscadden Beach east towards dwelling



Viewpoint 5 (Application for substitute Consent) – View from Howth Harbour Pier South towards dwelling

Table 8: Landscape / Townscape Assessment Summary of Results – Application No.1 Substitute Consent							
Verified View Ref.	Location	Nature of Receptor	Key Visual Factors	Degree of Sensitivity	Nature of Effect, Description	Magnitude of Change	Predicted Effects
V1	View to Eastern Façade of Dwelling from Balscadden Road	Townscape/ coastal streetscape, oblique view	View travelling west along Balscadden Road toward the property. The upper portion of the dwelling and the completed glazed northern extension are visible above intervening vegetation. The lower building levels sit significantly below the road and are screened by garden vegetation and the sites sloping topography. The view is experienced in motion, with primary focus directed along the roadway and toward wider coastal views.	Medium	The completed works are partially visible but remain recessive in the context of the overall building form. The original roofscape and massing remain the primary visual elements, with the coastal landscape and seaward views remaining visually dominate in the scene.	Low	Negligible to Slight, Neutral, Long-Term. From this location, the completed works are perceptible but integrated within the existing built form. Views remain strongly focused on the coastline and wider harbour setting. No adverse effect on townscape character or visual amenity is anticipated
V2	View of main entrance gate from Balscadden Road	Townscape / streetscape, near-range residence frontage view	The completed works located on the northern elevation are only partially visible from this position, with the entrance gates obscuring any direct views and the level difference between the road and lower ground floor level making the extension appear visually recessive. The primary visual focus from the street remains on the existing stone boundary wall, entrance pillars, gate and original massing.	Medium	No notable visual change occurs from this location, as the completed extension is almost entirely concealed by the existing built form and boundary treatment, with only a very small portion of the roofline of the lower ground floor extension visible. The property's streetside character and its contribution to the local streetscape remain unchanged.	Low	Neutral No Effect The view continues to be defined by the existing dwelling and site boundary treatments, with no perceptible alteration to the streetscape or local visual environment. No impact on townscape character or amenity arises from this viewpoint.
V3	View of western elevation from boundary wall at Balscadden Road	Townscape/ Coastal roadside view	Elevated roadside position with expansive coastal views. The original form of the house remains dominant in this view. The extension on the north-facing elevation is partly visible but visually recessive due to the level difference from the road and its subtle materiality. Broader sea views and coastal landform remain the principal visual focus.	Medium	A very small proportion of the completed extension at ground floor level is visible but is nearly wholly obscured from view by the level difference from the street and existing stone balustrades lining the driveway.	Low	Slight, Neutral, Long-Term From this location, the extension is perceptible but subordinate to both the host building and coastal setting. The wider landscape character and scenic qualities remain unaffected, and no adverse impact on townscape or visual amenity is anticipated.
V4	View from Balscadden Beach east towards dwelling	Coastal landscape / Seascape, recreational users	Wide coastal panorama experienced at shoreline level. The dwelling is visible at long distance atop the cliffside. The view is largely dominated by the sea and coastal landforms of Howth Head. Built form present in the scene appears scattered and screened by the cliffside vegetation.	High	Tara Hall is partially visible at long distance, positioned mid-slope along the cliffside. The subject dwelling is perceived as part of a loose cluster of cliff-edge houses, with its western elevation partially screened by intervening vegetation and the cliff topography. At this viewing distance, the completed works are read within the context of the existing built form, with limited discernible detail. The separation between the receptor and the site means that finer elements of the works are not readily perceptible.	Low	Slight, Neutral, Long-Term The completed alterations form a small component within an extensive coastal panorama. Visual focus remains on the coastal landform, open water and headland massing, with the dwelling playing a secondary visual role. Recreational amenity and scenic quality remain unaffected. No adverse visual impact or townscape change is anticipated.

Table 8: Continued							
Verified View Ref.	Location	Nature of Receptor	Key Visual Factors	Degree of Sensitivity	Nature of Effect, Description	Magnitude of Change	Predicted Effects
V5	View from Howth Harbour Pier South towards dwelling	Coastal landscape / recreational marine viewpoint.	This view presents a broad coastal panorama dominated by open water, sky and the landform of the headland. The subject dwelling is clearly visible on the coastal slope and reads as a distinct residential building within the wider scene. While identifiable, it occupies a very small proportion of the overall view and is visually moderated by surrounding vegetation, topography and the scale of the landscape setting. Built elements recede in influence when compared to the larger seascape context and open coastal character.	High	Although the dwelling is clearly identifiable within this coastal panorama, this visibility is an established condition; the house already formed a noticeable feature in the view prior to the works. The completed works do not introduce any meaningful increase in visual presence or add significant additional visual weight. From this distance, the overall form and profile of the building reads much as before, with no discernible change to its silhouette or massing. The wider landscape setting—characterised by open water, sky and the prominent coastal headland—continues to dominate the scene. As a result, the perceptibility of the dwelling remains essentially unchanged, and the natural coastal landform retains visual primacy within the view.	Low	Negligible to Slight, Neutral, Long-Term. The view remains predominantly defined by natural coastal character, with no significant alteration to scenic quality, amenity value or landscape composition expected to arise from the development.

Note: This assessment only addresses the as-built extension and the proposed works to modify it and reinstate the three window opes on the north elevation per the further development application. The other works relating to the wastewater treatment plant, percolation area, and SuDS measures won't affect the landscape/townscape of the area.

Appendix 3: Verified Views (Application No.2 for Further Development)



Viewpoint 1 (Application No.2 for further development) – View to Eastern Façade of Dwelling from Balscadden Road



Viewpoint 2 (Application No.2 for further development) – View of main entrance gate from Balscadden Road



Viewpoint 3 (Application No.2 for further development) – View of western elevation from boundary wall at Balscadden Road



Viewpoint 4 (Application No.2 for further development) – View from Balscadden Beach east towards dwelling



Viewpoint 5 (Application No.2 for further development) – View from Howth Harbour Pier South towards dwelling

Table 9: Landscape / Townscape Assessment Summary of Results – Application No.2 For Further Development							
Verified View Ref.	Location	Nature of Receptor	Key Visual Factors	Degree of Sensitivity	Nature of Effect, Description	Magnitude of Change	Predicted Effects
V1	View to Eastern Façade of Dwelling from Balscadden Road	Townscape/ coastal streetscape, oblique view	View travelling west along Balscadden Road toward the property. The proposals introduce only very slight visual difference to the already completed works. The addition of window framing reduces the overall volume of glazing to the extensions facade whilst vertical railings are introduced to the external terrace which make it very slightly more visually prominent above the line of screening vegetation.	Medium	The further proposals present only very slight alterations to the already completed works and so as per the previous assessment of viewpoint 1, the works remain recessive in the context of the overall building form.	Low	Negligible to Slight, Neutral, Long-Term. From this location, the proposed works are perceptible but integrated within the existing built form. Views remain strongly focused on the coastline and wider harbour setting. No adverse effect on townscape character or visual amenity is anticipated
V2	View of main entrance gate from Balscadden Road	Townscape / streetscape, near-range residence frontage view	The proposals to the northern elevation are only partially visible from this position, with the entrance gates obscuring any direct views and the level difference between the road and lower ground floor level making the extension appear visually recessive. The addition of railings to the external terrace does not increase the visual prominence of the extension to any notable extent.	Medium	No notable visual change occurs from this location, as the completed extension is almost entirely concealed from view by the existing entrance gate and built form, with only a very small portion of the roofline and railings to the external terrace perceptible.	Low	Neutral No Effect The view continues to be defined by the massing of the existing dwelling to the middle ground and presence of the main entrance gate and boundary wall to the foreground, with no perceptible alteration to the streetscape or local visual environment. No impact on townscape character or amenity arises from this viewpoint.
V3	View of western elevation from boundary wall at Balscadden Road	Townscape/ Coastal roadside view	Elevated roadside position with expansive coastal views. The original massing of the house remains dominant in this view. The extension on the north-facing elevation is partly visible but visually recessive due to the level difference from the road and its subtle materiality, the addition of railings to the external terrace makes the proposed works only slightly more perceptible from this viewpoint, however the expansive sea view remains the principal visual focus.	Medium	A very small portion of the completed ground floor extension is visible; however, it is almost entirely screened from view due to the level difference from the street and the existing stone balustrades along the driveway. The proposed railings to the external terrace above make the the northern elevation only slightly more perceptible from this viewpoint, however they do not carry any notable visual weight and read as an integrated element of the overall building form.	Low	Slight, Neutral, Long-Term From this location, the extension is perceptible but subordinate to both the host building and coastal setting. The wider landscape character and scenic qualities remain unaffected, and no adverse impact on townscape or visual amenity is anticipated.

Table 9: Continued							
Verified View Ref.	Location	Nature of Receptor	Key Visual Factors	Degree of Sensitivity	Nature of Effect, Description	Magnitude of Change	Predicted Effects
V4	View from Balscadden Beach east towards dwelling	Coastal landscape / recreational marine viewpoint.	Wide coastal panorama experienced at shoreline level. The dwelling is visible at long distance atop the coastline. The view is largely dominated by the sea and coastal landforms of Howth Head. Built form present in the scene appears scattered and screened by the cliffside vegetation.	High	At this viewing distance, the proposed works continue to be read within the context of the existing building, with only limited discernible detail. The separation between the receptor and the site ensures that finer elements, including minor additions such as terrace railings, are not readily perceptible and do not materially influence the overall visual composition.	Low	Slight, Neutral, Long-Term The proposed alterations form a small component within an extensive coastal panorama. Visual focus remains on the coastal landform, open water and headland massing, with the dwelling playing a secondary visual role. Recreational amenity and scenic quality remain unaffected. No adverse visual impact or townscape change is anticipated.
V5	View from Howth Harbour Pier South towards dwelling	Coastal landscape / recreational marine viewpoint.	This view presents a broad coastal panorama dominated by open water, sky and the landform of the headland. The subject dwelling is clearly visible on the coastal slope and reads as a distinct residential building within the wider scene. While identifiable, it occupies a very small proportion of the overall view and is visually moderated by surrounding vegetation, topography and the scale of the landscape setting. Built elements recede in influence when compared to the larger seascape context and open coastal character.	High	The proposed amendments, including the introduction of railings to the external terrace, are barely perceptible at this distance. These elements do not materially alter the form, silhouette or visual presence of the building and read as minor detailing within the overall composition. The building continues to sit comfortably within the landscape and does not draw increased attention within the view.	Low	Negligible to Slight, Neutral, Long-Term. The view remains predominantly defined by natural coastal character, with no significant alteration to scenic quality, amenity value or landscape composition expected to arise from the development.

Note: This assessment only addresses the as-built extension and the proposed works to modify it and reinstate the three window opes on the north elevation per the further development application. The other works relating to the wastewater treatment plant, percolation area, and SuDS measures won't affect the landscape/townscape of the area.

10. Conclusion

This LVIA has assessed the visual and landscape effects associated with the as built (Application No. 1) and proposed modified extension (Application No. 2) at Tara Hall, Balscadden Road, Howth. The assessment included representative public views from the adjoining road network and from publicly accessible coastal locations.

Due to the sloping nature of the site, the works both completed and proposed are positioned at a notably lower ground level relative to Balscadden Road. As a result, any alterations are screened from street-level views by the existing stone boundary wall, roadside vegetation, and the massing of the original dwelling. From the majority of proximate public vantage points both the completed and proposed works are only slightly perceptible.

From more distant shoreline viewpoints, the dwelling appears as a small component of the wider residential cluster on the headland. At these distances, the as built and proposed works are not individually discernible and do not influence the coastal skyline, settlement pattern, or scenic quality of the wider view.

Where visible in closer-range views, both versions of the extension present as recessive lower-level additions that respect the building's original form and do not interrupt the established roof profile or key visual characteristics of the property. The works, as built and proposed sit comfortably within the existing setting and do not detract from the character of the Howth Head landscape.

Overall, the magnitude of change is assessed as negligible to low across all receptors, resulting in no significant effects on landscape character or visual amenity.

End.

11. References

The following sources were used to inform and structure this assessment:

- Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive).
- The National Landscape Strategy (NLS) for Ireland 2015-2025.
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency (2022 (EPA Guidelines 2022)).
- Draft Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2015)
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (GLVIA), published by the Landscape Institute.
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, 2018, published by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
- Technical Information Note on Townscape Character Assessment, 2016, published by the Landscape Institute.
- Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) Technical Guidance Note 2/19, published by the Landscape Institute.
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland Publication no. PE-ENV-01101, published December 2020: Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of Specified Infrastructure Projects - Overarching Technical Document
- *Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029*. Adopted 22 February 2023; effective 5 April 2023. Fingal County Council, Dublin.
- *Fingal County Council (Howth) Special Amenity Area Order (Confirmation) Order, 2000 (S.I. No. 133/2000)*. Dublin: Fingal County Council.