

LIFFEY VALE HOUSE & GARDENS

INTRODUCTION

Liffey Vale lies between Anna Livia Bridge in Chapelizod and the War Memorial Gardens west of Islandbridge. The site is bound on the north by Chapelizod road and on the south by the River Liffey. The River Liffey is the defining aspect of the space. Within 3km of the city centre, Liffey Vale forms a perfect location for formal and informal recreation and is of significant ecological and historical interest.

The Liffey Vale area provides an extremely attractive riverside setting to anglers, walkers, cyclists and watersports activities from the immediate areas of Chapelizod, Islandbridge, Ballyfermot and Inchicore and the wider city. The unique collection of rowing clubs on the northern bank reflects the national importance of this stretch of the river with the War Memorial Gardens one of the most important cultural element within the Liffey Valley catchment area.

The site and adjacent lands possess significant ecological and recreational assets, the principle asset being the river and its immediate green environs. On the north bank of the river the land is generally flat to gently sloping, a number of fishing decks are also present. The eastern side of the site comprises of an open plot owned by the Department of Defence which adjoins the derelict building of Liffey Vale and the remnants of its semi walled gardens and orchards. The eastern boundary comprises of non-native trees and shrubs which boarder onto playing fields owned by the OPW. This strip of land was historically known as the Long Meadows, which formed part of the original Royal Deer Park until 1680. Much of the Long Meadows were used as allotments in the twentieth century.

Liffey Vale House (a Georgian House and Protected Structure ref. 1346) is situated on the northern banks of the River Liffey at Longmeadows (see Fig. 1 below). The house and gardens, which are derelict, are in the ownership of Dublin City Council, and are currently inaccessible to the public. A conservation plan and a feasibility study were previously commissioned by DCC which examined the potential opportunities for conservation improvements. The Parks Department have in recent weeks appointed a Conservation Architect Led design team to develop and oversee the implementation of proposals for the regeneration of this important structure and surrounding grounds. The restoration of the derelict Georgian building and associated gardens of Liffey Vale House & Garden will incorporate interpretation of the River Liffey and the riverine environment, a cafe and bus drop off point, educational outdoor spaces incorporating the existing small wetland and woodland area close by, thereby establishing Liffey Vale as the focal hub for a planned wider valley park route.



Blackwood Associates were appointed as design team lead following a tendering competition and will work closely with stakeholders to develop and gain consensus on the proposals.

The proposed development sits within the wider context of the separate upgrading by DCC of the adjacent Liffey Valley Park, (outlined in red in Fig. 2 below) and the design and installation of a new pedestrian bridge at Lutyens War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge by the OPW.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The design objectives for this project is as follows -

Liffey Vale House and Gardens will become the focal hub of the proposed 'River Liffey Trail' and associated parkland. DCC wishes to sympathetically renovate the historic character of the original pre 1756 Liffey Vale house. These plans include the introduction of tea rooms, an indoor and outdoor education and events space, celebrating the history of the Liffey and the unique biodiversity within the area.

Due to the enclosed nature of the orchard and historic formal design of the gardens surrounding Liffey Vale House it is envisaged that Liffey Vale gardens will be restored to the original herbaceous cottage style. In addition the development of a renovated wetland area with an informative ecological trail within the environs of Liffey Vale House (see Fig 1 below) would be of great benefit as an education resource for schools as well as encourage elements of eco-tourism and providing a unique setting for local leisure.



Fig 1 Site Extents

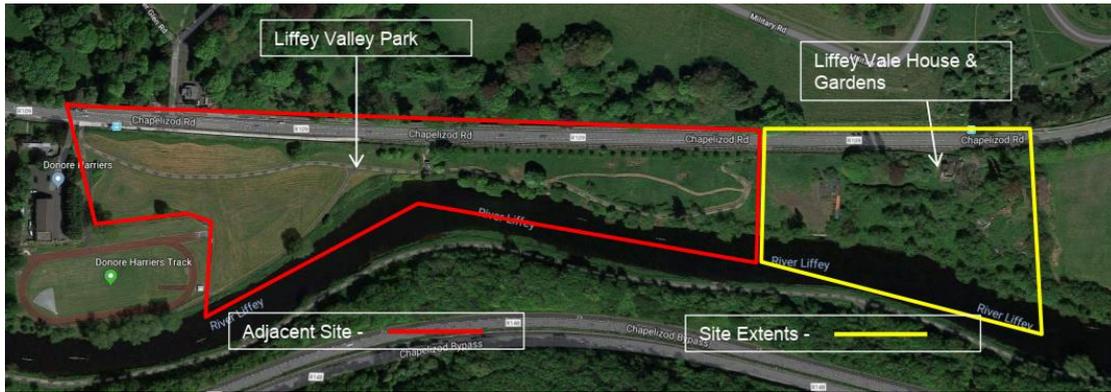


Fig 2 Site Extents and Adjacent Site

The Parks Department will also develop proposals for the adjacent Liffey Valley Park and ensure there is a coordinated approach to any landscape proposals developed by DCC for the adjacent site.

Within the brief set by DCC for Blackwood Associates will undertake a structured and comprehensive non-statutory consultation process to provide a balanced scheme to meet as best as possible the objectives of the scheme. To this end a number of stakeholder workshops will be organised in the coming months to which a range of stakeholders will be invited. These will include an invitation to all Elected Representatives from Area, the PPN, local residents, local businesses, internal City Council departments etc.

Following this process of consultation it would be the intention to bring Part 8 proposals to the Area Committee.

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