

## **SOUTH CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING 13-09-22**

**PLAN NO: PLANNING REF. NO. 4258/22**

**LOCATION: PROPOSED COIS ABHANN – LIFFEY VALE BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION CENTRE – CHAPELIZOD ROAD**

The proposed Part 8 development (presented to the South Central Area Committee in March 2022) was put on public display from 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022 until the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Plans and particulars of the scheme were available for inspection and on display in the Civic Offices, Wood Quay.

The closing date for submissions or observations was Tuesday 3rd August 2022.

It is the intention of CRES to present this Part 8 to the October City Council Meeting. The approval of a Part 8 is a reserved function of the City Council

### **OBSERVATIONS**

29 third party submissions have been received within the prescribed period. The issues raised are summarised as follows –

#### **General Comments**

- Generally supportive of the scheme.
- Supportive of new amenity for Chapelizod.

#### **Biodiversity and Environment**

- Welcomes biodiversity enhancements and rewilding and opportunity to learn about the plants, animals and birds that live in proximity to the house. I have a son and would like him to know what nature is around him in that area. Also to bring back species that may have been there previously would be good. Interactive learning for kids to teach them about nature and preserving and respecting it.
- Forward thinking approach to the importance of green spaces and what they should look like; educate people that “messy” is more beneficial than overly curated green spaces.
- Welcomes works to riverbank and restoration of Georgian House
- Great opportunity to link up to Liffey Valley Park at Donore harriers with continuing the riverside walk all the way.
- Maybe a small play area outside done with natural products like fallen trees etc in keeping with the biodiversity theme. Be nice in summer. Insect motels, label all plants, flowers and trees with information so they can be identified.
- Minimalist approach should be taken to gardens.
- Welcomes biodiversity initiatives and how they can be used in local communities, learning opportunity for schools and Cafe facilities.

#### **Heritage**

- Restoration of the house can be turned into a valuable resource for future generations.

#### **Access, Cycling and Parking**

- Dublin Bikes stand to encourage people to head up from city centre?
- Cycle parking welcomed but also good car parking to attract more people as well of course, but bike parking and friendliness are crucial.
- Some parking for schools tours and people visiting the area
- A connection across the Chapelizod Road into the Phoenix Park and connection of the riverside walk to the INWVG and the riverside walk on the south side of the Liffey.
- Is there sufficient parking provided - concern for impact on local area in terms of overspill parking and congestion.
- Need for parking spaces for those with limited mobility.
- Upgraded cycle paths in surrounding area- Joining path between Liffey Vale and Liffey Vale Park

#### Other

- Possible impact on rowing and need for more rowing related development.
- Improved street frontage on this part of Chapelizod Road
- It is difficult to see the details of the design.
- Inclusion of outdoor play spaces / play sculptures would be great.
- Free water fountain should be available.
- Access to jetty would be welcomed / opportunity for small mooring.
- The development of the magazine fort and the new commissioned bridge at the war memorial park.
- Strong link to Chapelizod and surrounding area with rotating exhibitions
- The upgrade of Liffey Vale Park to be included as an extension of Liffey vale project to encourage the Children to use the Liffey Vale Park as well.
- Potential to do a nature walk via Liffey vale Park / Phoenix Park / exit using pedestrian gate to Liffey Vale
- Playground?

#### **Internal DCC Departmental Observations**

Standard conditions were set out by a number of internal DCC Departments (including Transport & Environment, Conservation and Drainage) to be met in advance and during site works.

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

##### **Zoning & Policy – Dublin City Development Plan 2016 - 2022**

The site is zoned Z9 'Open Space', with the objective 'To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks'.

#### Protected Structures

Record of Protected Structures (Volume 4 of the 2016-2022 Dublin City Development Plan):

RPS Ref. No: 1346

Policy CHC1: To seek the preservation of the built heritage of the city that makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes and the sustainable development of the city.

Policy CHC2: It is the policy of Dublin City Council to ensure that the special interest of protected structures is protected. Development will conserve and enhance Protected Structures and their curtilage and will:

- a) Protect or, where appropriate, restore form, features and fabric which contribute to the special interest
- b) Incorporate high standards of craftsmanship and relate sensitively to the scale, proportions, design, period and architectural detail of the original building, using traditional materials in most circumstances
- c) Be highly sensitive to the historic fabric and special interest of the interior, including its plan form, hierarchy of spaces, structure and architectural detail, fixtures and fittings and materials
- d) Not cause harm to the curtilage of the structure; therefore, the design, form, scale, height, proportions, siting and materials of new development should relate to and complement the special character of the protected structure
- e) Protect architectural items of interest from damage or theft while buildings are empty or during course of works
- f) Have regard to ecological considerations for example, protection of species such as bats."

The site is located within a Conservation Area.

## **PLANNING ASSESSMENT RESPONSE**

The Planning Authority welcomes the redevelopment of the Protected Structure and the opening up of the site for public use as a centre for learning and education. It is noted that a number of submissions also support the concept and in particular the biodiversity enhancements as well as the works to the Protected Structure.

A number of submissions raise concerns regarding additional parking and traffic issues are noted. The Planning Authority notes that the centre will be used as an education centre and encourages school trips. The Planning Authority supports of sustainable travel to the site given the ethos and concept of the site as a biodiversity site. The site is easily accessible on foot and bicycle and coaches.

### **Conclusion**

The Planning Department supports the proposed development and considers that the scheme put forward is both unique and of high quality in terms of its design. The regeneration of a derelict site at such a unique location on the Liffey banks for recreational and educational use is welcomed.

### **Appropriate Assessment (AA)**

Under Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Regulation 30 of SI NO.94/1997 "European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations (1997) any plan or project which has the potential to significantly impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. This requirement is also detailed under Section 177 (U) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report prepared by CAAS accompanies the current proposal and concludes that there would be no significant negative effects on any Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed development. As a result, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment would therefore not be required.

A statement on the requirement for an appropriate assessment is submitted in conjunction with the documentation. This refers to the nature of the works proposed within the site and concludes that there is no potential for significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites and no assessment is considered necessary.

The Planning Department, as the competent authority, has considered the screening report, has undertaken the Appropriate Assessment screening of the development and has determined that progression to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process (i.e. preparation of a Natura Impact Statement) is not considered necessary. It is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect, individually, or in combination with other plans or projects, on a European site.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

The applicant has submitted an EIAR Screening Report (Prepared by CAAS). The report concludes that the proposed regeneration of Liffey Vale House does not need to be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and no Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required for it.

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development and to the criteria set out at Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended the planning authority does not consider that the development would give rise to significant environmental impacts, by itself or cumulatively with other projects, and therefore it would not require to be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Planning Authority confirms the following -

- a. The proposed development does not materially contravene the current Dublin City Development Plan.
- b. There is no requirement for an Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be carried out.

- c. That the proposed development does not require the production of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (E.I.A.R).
  - d. The site is located within a conservation area and contains a Protected Structure (Liffey Vale House RPS no. 1346)
- b) Part 8 applies as the proposed Part 8 development falls within works outlined under Article 80 (1) of the Planning and Development Regulations, ' Any other development the estimated cost of which exceeds €126,000, except the laying underground of sewers, mains, pipes or other apparatus.'

### **Conclusion**

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022. The proposed development is considered acceptable.

### **Recommendation**

Accordingly, it is recommended that a decision be made by Elected Members of the Council to proceed with the proposed development.

### **CONSULTATION**

The project team undertook an extensive programme of consultation throughout the design development process to ensure a collaborative approach to the design. To this end a number of stakeholder workshops were organised to which a range of stakeholders were invited. These included an invitation to all Elected Representatives from the South Central Area, the PPN, local residents, local businesses, internal City Council departments etc.

The general response to the scheme was overwhelmingly positive and the principle interventions proposed were welcomed. Separately a number of presentations and update reports have been given at Area Committee outlining the developing proposals. These will continue during the detailed design stage.

DCC have engaged proactively throughout the design and planning process for the Liffey Vale Scheme. All workshops were well attended and the views and needs of those in attendance have been incorporated where possible and appropriate.

### **CONCLUSION**

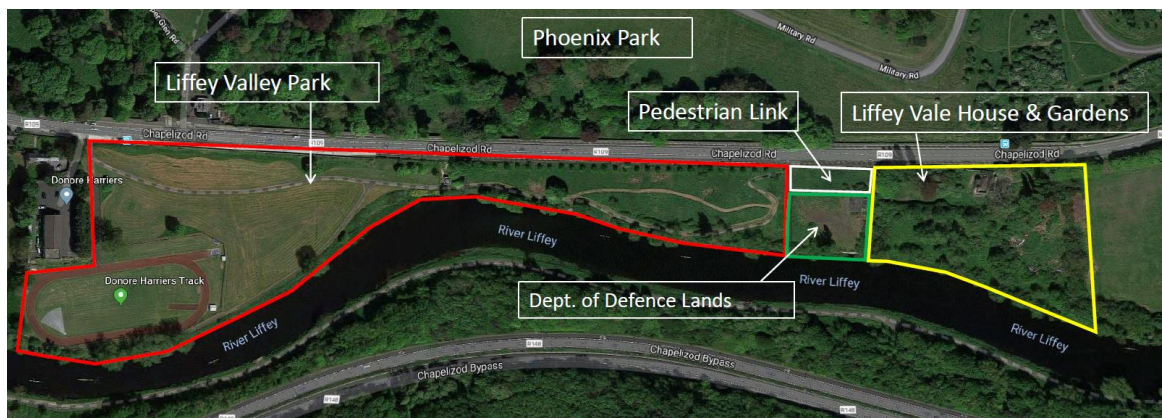
This proposal meets the objectives laid out in the DCC Development Plan as well as the other relevant corporate policy documents. Having considered all the observations, this proposal addresses any concerns raised. It is our intention to bring this Part 8 to the City Council for approval.

### Concept

The proposed development is being led by the Parks Division. Following the completion of extensive surveys and inspections, consultation and the examination of best practice exemplar projects, the proposal is for the redevelopment of Liffey Vale as a site for biodiversity and education, Cois Abhann.

The site will offer the opportunity for all to spend time in nature, and learn about the animals, plants, and ecological systems that thrive in close proximity to the city and along the river's edge. The house and gardens will intertwine to form one unique experience of nature with learning opportunities throughout.

Cois Abhann will include interpretation on biodiversity and the history of the Liffey, a learning space that is large enough for school groups, a small café and public toilets. Cois Abhann can host a range of programmes to visitors focused on biodiversity e.g. Biodiversity workshops, training courses, the Young Environmentalist Awards (with a particular focus on biodiversity) which promotes action projects in young people.



**Site Location**



**Existing Site Condition**

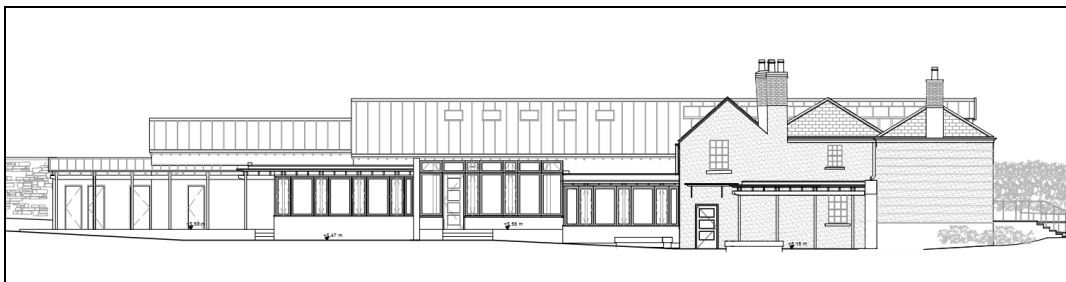




Artist Impression



Artist Impression looking east with new classroom, toilets and café on the left



Section showing historic building, new classroom, café and public toilets





General site layout showing from east to west, new vehicular entrance to Chapelizod Road, new landscape arrangement with paths, rewilding, clearing of ditches, restored house and new classroom etc., new entrance from west to the orchard site, new bus pull in and disabled parking space and new link to Liffey Valley Park and Chapelizod.