

## REPORT TO THE SOUTH EAST AREA COMMITTEE MEETING: 11TH MARCH 2024

**LAW: Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) - Part VIII Applicant: Dublin City Council, South East Area Office**

**Location:** Library Square, Ringsend, Dublin 4

**Proposal:** LAW: Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) - Part VIII

Pursuant to the requirements of the above, notice is hereby given of the proposal to extend and refurbish Ringsend Library and to carry out improvements to the surrounding public realm at the above location. Works to the Library include a single storey extension which wraps around two sides and rear of the existing building preserving the front elevation, and which includes the demolition of the lean-to ancillary structure to the rear. The new extension increases the building footprint from 247m<sup>2</sup> to 544m<sup>2</sup>, comprising universal access to a new entrance foyer relocated to the northern facade which includes a buggy store and public disabled access WC to the north and meeting room, flexible exhibition space, and children's area to southern half of the extension. It is proposed to restore stepped access to the Library front door as part of building conservation, to be used as emergency exit door only. Provision is also made for staff office space, meeting rooms, a canteen, WC and various plant space. At roof level a green/blue roof and solar panels will be introduced in line with the DCC Development Plan 2022-2028.

Works to the public realm include re-alignment and reduction of road levels to allow the creation of a new controlled pedestrian crossing from Library Square to St. Patrick's Villas; relocation of Dublin Bus stop No.356; provision of segregated inbound and outbound bicycle lanes; re-paving works to the Library Square plaza and the surrounding public realm generally; the introduction of a suite of new street furniture to include bench seating, bicycle parking, litter bins and wayfinding as required; feature planting with specimen trees and provision of SUDS drainage benefit; feature lighting to enhance the new environment; relocation of 'The Door' sculpture to a central location within the plaza. Along Fitzwilliam Street works include re-alignment and reduction of the vehicle carriageway to 3.1m; repositioning of the universally accessible parking space adjacent to the medical centre; clear definition of the pedestrian and vehicular spaces by introducing raised kerbs including a 1.2m pedestrian refuge zone along the southern & western facade of the proposed library extension; It is proposed to limit the vehicle length allowed to access Fitzwilliam Street to 8m.

**Location:** Library Square, Ringsend, Dublin 4

**Plan Ref no:** LAW 4881/23

The proposed Part 8 development was presented to the South East Area Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The proposals were put on public display from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The plans and particulars of the scheme were available for inspection on Citizen Space, the City Council's online consultation portal, at the Civic Offices, Wood Quays and South Central Area Office public counter and at Ringsend Library. The closing date for submissions and observation was 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024. It is the intention of the South East Area Office to present this Part 8 to the City Council at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The approval of a Part 8 is a reserved function of the City Council.

### **Site Notices**

In place and legible at time of site inspection.

### **Site Description**

The site relates to Ringsend Library which is a detached seven-bay, single-storey Art Deco public library, built c.1937. It is located at Fitzwilliam Street, Ringsend and the site measures 0.47 ha in total.

The village of Ringsend is flanked to the west by the river Dodder and to the North by the river Liffey. Ringsend Park is to the east with Irishtown located to the south. The village is relatively well catered for in terms of public amenities with Ringsend Park, Irishtown Stadium and all its sports facilities, and the Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre to the north of the site.

### **Scope of Development**

The proposed Part 8 development comprises:

- A single storey extension which wraps around two sides and rear of the existing building preserving the front elevation, and which includes the demolition of the lean-to ancillary structure to the rear. The new extension increases the building footprint from 247m<sup>2</sup> to 544m<sup>2</sup>, comprising universal access to a new entrance foyer relocated to the northern facade which includes a buggy store and public disabled access WC to the north and meeting room, flexible exhibition space, and children's area to southern half of the extension.
- Restore stepped access to the Library front door as part of building conservation, to be used as emergency exit door only. Provision is also made for staff office space, meeting rooms, a canteen, WC and various plant space.
- At roof level a green/blue roof and solar panels will be introduced.
- Works to the public realm include re-alignment and reduction of road levels to allow the creation of a new controlled pedestrian crossing from Library Square to St. Patrick's Villas;
- relocation of Dublin Bus stop No.356; provision of segregated inbound and outbound bicycle lanes; re-paving works to the Library Square plaza and the surrounding public realm generally;
- the introduction of a suite of new street furniture to include bench seating, bicycle parking, litter bins and wayfinding as required; feature planting with specimen trees and provision of SUDS drainage benefit; feature lighting to enhance the new environment; relocation of 'The Door' sculpture to a central location within the plaza.
- Along Fitzwilliam Street works include re-alignment and reduction of the vehicle carriageway to 3.1m; repositioning of the universally accessible parking space adjacent to the medical centre; clear definition of the pedestrian and vehicular spaces by introducing raised kerbs including a 1.2m pedestrian refuge zone along the southern & western facade of the proposed library extension; It is proposed to limit the vehicle length allowed to access Fitzwilliam Street to 8m.

## **Content of the Submission**

The following documentation was submitted:

- Existing Floor Plans, Sections and Elevations
- Proposed Floor Plans, Sections and Elevations
- Roads Plan & Profile x 2
- Road Cross Section Fitzwilliam Street
- Demolition Plan
- Landscape General Arrangement Zone 1
- Landscape General Arrangement Zone 2
- Landscape Section Elevations
- Indicative District Heating Route
- Mechanical & Electrical Plan Layout
- Road Safety Audit Stage 1
- General Arrangement
- Autotrack Coaches
- Autotrack Refuse Truck/Fire Truck
- Typical Cross Sections
- Traffic Signs and Road Markings
- Road Mainline Cross Sections
- Road Cross Sections
- Landscape Masterplan
- Landscape Section Elevations
- Landscape Details
- Outline Demolition & Construction Waste Management Plan
- Building Lifecycle Report
- Lighting Report
- Architectural Design Statement
- Outline Construction Management Plan
- CGI Views
- EIA Screening Report
- Building Survey Condition & Conservation Report
- Climate Action & Energy Statement
- Landscape Design Report
- Engineering Report
- Sustainability Report
- Arboricultural Impact Report and drawing.
- Tree Survey & Constraints

## **Zoning and Policy**

Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 Context:

### Zoning

The site is located in an area zoned objective 'Z4' within the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP), with the accompanying land-use objective to 'provide for and improve mixed services facilities'. Library uses (community facility) are permissible under the Z4 zoning.

### Policy

## Chapter 5 - Quality Housing and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

The supporting text states 'The Dublin City Library Development Plan 'Libraries Unlimited: A Strategic Direction for Dublin City Libraries 2019-2023' recognises the pivotal role of public libraries across the city in enabling the Council to deliver information and services in support its citizens, visitors and workers. The Council currently operate 23 no. library branches across the city and as the role of the library service continues to evolve and develop, it will be important that they continue to meet the needs to local communities. The Council will continue to support the development and enhancement of library facilities in the city'.

**QHSN59 - City's Library Service** - To continue to develop and improve the city's library service to meet the needs of local communities by supporting the implementation of the Libraries Unlimited: A Strategic Direction for Dublin City Libraries 2019-2023.

**QHSN60 - Community Facilities** - To support the development, improvement and provision of a wide range of socially inclusive, multi-functional and diverse community facilities throughout the city where required and to engage with community and corporate stakeholders in the provision of same.

## Chapter 12 – Culture

**Policy CU25 – Libraries** - Support the expansion and growth of libraries as key community and cultural assets within communities; including in providing key spaces for communities to use for cultural and arts events, music, classes, history and experiences and services for people experiencing unemployment including job seeking skills and online learning and training

## Chapter 11 - Built Heritage and Archaeology

**BHA2 - Development of Protected Structures\*** - That development will conserve and enhance Protected Structures and their curtilage and will:

- (a) Ensure that any development proposals to Protected Structures, their curtilage and setting shall have regard to the 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2011 published by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- (b) Protect Structures included on the RPS from any works that would negatively impact their special character and appearance.
- (c) Ensure that works are carried out under supervision of a suitably qualified person with expertise in architectural conservation.
- (d) Ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure and/or its setting is sensitively sited and designed, and is appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout and materials.
- (c) Ensure that the form and structural integrity of the Protected Structure is retained in any redevelopment and ensure that new development does not adversely impact the curtilage or the special character of the Protected Structure.
- (d) Respect the historic fabric and the special interest of the interior, including its plan form, hierarchy of spaces, structure and architectural detail, fixtures and fittings and materials.
- (e) Ensure that new and adapted uses are compatible with the architectural character and special interest(s) of the Protected Structure.
- (f) Protect and retain important elements of built heritage including historic gardens, stone walls, entrance gates and piers and any other associated curtilage features.
- (g) Ensure historic landscapes, gardens and trees (in good condition) associated with Protected Structures are protected from inappropriate development.
- (h) Have regard to ecological considerations for example, protection of species such as bats.

\*Whilst Ringsend Library is not currently included in the RPS, nor the NIAH, as this area of the city has not yet been surveyed by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, this building is considered by the CO to be of Regional Significance and would likely be expedited towards addition to the Record of protected Structures (RPS).

**Policy BHA4 - Ministerial Recommendations** To have regard to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) rating of a structure and any associated Ministerial Recommendation in the assessment of planning applications\*.

\*Whilst Ringsend Library is not currently included in the NIAH, as this area of the city has not yet been surveyed by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, this building is considered by the CO to be of Regional Significance and would likely be expedited towards addition to the Record of protected Structures (RPS).

**Policy BHA9 - Conservation Areas** to protect the special interest and character of all Dublin's Conservation Areas – identified under Z8, Z2 zoning objectives and denoted by red line conservation hatching on the zoning maps. Development within or affecting a Conservation Area must contribute positively to its character and distinctiveness and take opportunities to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area and its setting, wherever possible.

Enhancement opportunities may include:

1. Replacement or improvement of any building, feature or element which detracts from the character of the area or its setting.
2. Re-instatement of missing architectural detail or important features.
3. Improvement of open spaces and the wider public realm and reinstatement of historic routes and characteristic plot patterns.
4. Contemporary architecture of exceptional design quality, which is in harmony with the Conservation Area.
5. The repair and retention of shop and pub fronts of architectural interest.
6. Retention of buildings and features that contribute to the overall character and integrity of the Conservation Area.

#### BHA11 Rehabilitation and Reuse of Existing Older Buildings

(a) To retain, where appropriate, and encourage the rehabilitation and suitable adaptive reuse of existing older buildings/structures/features, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and streetscape in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.

(b) Encourage the retention and/or reinstatement of original fabric of our historic building stock such as windows, doors, roof coverings, shopfronts (including signage and associated features), pub fronts and other significant features.

(c) Ensure that appropriate materials are used to carry out any repairs to the historic fabric.

#### BHA15 Twentieth Century Buildings and Structures

(a) To encourage the appropriate development of exemplar twentieth century buildings and structures to ensure their character is not compromised.

(b) To encourage the retention and reinstatement of internal and external features that contribute to the character of exemplar twentieth century buildings, such as roofscapes, boundary treatments, fenestration pattern, materials, and other features, fixtures and fittings (including furniture and art work) considered worthy of retention.

#### BHA18 Historic Ground Surfaces, Street Furniture and Public Realm

(a) To protect, conserve and retain in situ historic elements of significance in the public realm including milestones, jostle stones, city ward stones, bollards, coal hole covers, gratings, boot scrapers, cast iron basement lights, street skylights and prisms, water troughs, street furniture, post boxes, lampposts, railings and historic ground surfaces including stone kerbs, pavement flags and setts and to promote conservation best practice and high standards for design, materials and workmanship in public realm improvements within areas of historic character, having regard to the national Advice Series on 'Paving: The Conservation of Historic Ground Surfaces' (2015).

(b) To maintain schedules of stone setts, historic kerbing and historic pavers/flags, and associated features in the public realm, to be protected, conserved or reintroduced (Appendix 6 and to update and review these schedules during the period of this development plan.

The proposal is deemed to be consistent with the policies and objectives outlined in the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028.

### **Relevant Planning History**

None.

### **Observations/Submissions**

Twenty third party observations have been received. The main issues raised are summarised as follows:

- Concerns on increased noise and disturbance during construction and from increase of vehicles.
- Would rather see the building retained as is
- Proposal will restrict deliveries and have a detrimental impact on the commercial viability of the store (Tesco). Request a swept path analysis is carried out and 13.5m vehicle is used.
- Want to see segregation being provided along the full length of the cycle tracks.
- Safety issues for St Patricks Villas House. Previously damage as result of vehicles losing control on the bend. Protective measures are needed i.e. raising the footpath for safety of the houses.
- Light pollution from vehicular lights.
- Dry bicycle storage units should be provided for local residents.
- Parking restrictions will impact our business and could impact on employment.
- Existing trees should be retained.
- Flood risk concerns.
- Big improvement to the area - will support the local economy, community and environment.
- Design to deter motorbikes/scooters should be considered.
- Railings should be kept.
- Fire exit may become blocked by waste and street debris.
- Pedestrians should be prioritised over cars.
- Design is well thought out and good to see "practical" things like buggy storage for library users and the green roof.
- Would be good to see some extra lighting, a water refill station and a few picnic benches.

### **Interdepartmental Reports**

Archaeology: No objection but recommend a condition for Archaeological Monitoring, as per section 3.7 of the *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (1999), be attached to any grant of planning permission for this application in order to preserve or preserve by record archaeological material likely to be damaged or destroyed in the course of development.

Drainage Division: No objection subject to conditions.

Transport Planning Unit: No objection subject to conditions.

### **Prescribed Bodies / Consultees**

Irish Water: No submission received.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland: The proposed development falls within the area for an adopted Section 49 Supplementary Development Contribution Scheme Luas Red Line

Docklands Extension (Luas C1) under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. If the above application is successful and is not exempt, please include a condition to apply the Section 49 Luas Line Levy  
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage: No submission received

### **Planning Assessment**

This Part VII application is for demolition of an existing lean to ancillary structure to the rear and construction of a proposed single storey extension which will wrap around the two sides and rear of the existing building, preserving the front elevation of the original structure. Whilst the footprint of the building would increase from 247m<sup>2</sup> to 544m<sup>2</sup>, the extension would remain below the ridge of the existing building keeping it as a focal point in the site and avoiding any over dominant impact.

The design of the extensions adds a contemporary feel to the building, whilst also being harmonious to the original structure. The use of brick would be in keeping with the existing library building and other buildings in the square and the finer design details are considered to link the old and new development together well. The size and design of the proposed extension is considered to enhance the existing library building and is seen as a positive addition that will optimise the use of space surrounding the building.

Given the single storey nature and orientation of the proposed extensions, they would not give rise to any detrimental loss of light or loss of privacy to the apartments located directly behind the library. A Lighting Scheme has also been submitted which provides for low level public realm lighting on the walkways and roads increasing safety in the area.

This application follows on from a Pre Part 8 Submission where engagement with a number of consultees was carried out and any issues or comments were addressed at that stage. The Drainage Division have responded to this submission and have raised no concerns subject to conditions.

The proposed development is located within the Zone of Archaeological Constraint for the Recorded Monument of Ringsend and the Archaeology Department have also raised no objections subject to a condition for Archaeological Monitoring to be carried out.

The Transport Planning Division have assessed the application and provided the following comments;

*'The proposed development has been the subject of extensive engagement with Transportation Planning and other divisions across Environment & Transportation over several years.*

#### Street Design

*A controlled crossing and reconfiguration of the bend on Bridge Street / Irishtown Road (R802) are proposed as a means of reducing traffic speeds and enhancing pedestrian priority along identified desire lines. Additional works to enhance pedestrian priority include raising of the crossings at the junctions at both ends of Fitzwilliam Street. The existing vehicular access / egress arrangements on Fitzwilliam Street will remain.*

*A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been submitted. The recommendations set out in the audit have been incorporated into the scheme as appropriate. A Stage 3 Road Safety Audit should be undertaken prior to the opening of the completed development to traffic.*

#### Cycle Lanes

The existing carriageway on Bridge Street (R802) accommodates advisory cycle lanes on both sides of the street. The outbound cycle lane terminates at the informal parking area adjacent to St. Patrick's Villas. The proposed development includes for the upgrade and extension of these cycle lanes, which would now terminate at the junction with Fairview Avenue. The inbound and outbound sections on R802 to the east of the site would be upgraded to segregated cycle lanes.

Part of the planned Ringsend to College Green S.4 active travel project would be routed along the northern boundary of the site, from St. Patrick's Villas to Bridge Street. Additionally, the planned Dodder River Greenway S.1 active travel project will provide a two-way cycle route along Fitzwilliam Quay, Bridge Street and Thorncastle Street, to the northwest of the site. As the design of these schemes has not been finalised, there is no basis on which to change the proposal design to accommodate the active travel schemes.

This division welcomes the proposed improvements to cycle lane infrastructure, and notes the proposals will complement planned active travel infrastructure in the surrounding area.

### Cycle Parking

The proposed development includes for the provision of 32no. cycle parking space (16no. cycle stands) distributed throughout the improved public realm along Fitzwilliam Street. The proposed design would necessitate the removal of existing single space cycle stands in Library Square to the north of the existing Library (5no.) and within the public realm on St. Patrick's Villas at the northeast corner of the site (5no.). The development therefore offers a net gain of 22no. short stay / visitor cycle spaces.

Table 1 of Appendix 5 of the City Development Plan requires the provision of 1no. Cycle parking space per 5no. staff and 1no. visitor space per 100 sq.m. Having regard to the scale of the proposed library, the quantity of cycle parking proposed is acceptable. All cycle spaces should be in the form of Sheffield stands and should be designed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 'Cycle Design Manual, 2023'.

### Bus Mobility

The existing outbound bus stop on Bridge Street to the north of the site (stop no. 356) will be removed from its current location at the bend adjacent to St. Patrick's Villas, to a new location west of the Fitzwilliam Street junction. The removal of the bus stop from its current location facilitates enhanced pedestrian priority at the proposed controlled crossing from the square to St. Patrick's Villas. This division offers no objection to the revised location of the bus stop. Final details of the revised bus stop location should be agreed with DCC Traffic and the NTA.

### Car Parking

Some informal on-street parking is provided within the site along the east side of Bridge Street the R802, adjacent to St. Patrick's Villas. Controlled (time-plated pay-and-display) parking is provided on Fitzwilliam Street. The proposed development would reduce car parking provision on these streets. 5no. spaces will be provided in a single indented bay to the front of St. Patrick's Villas, while 2no. bays on Fitzwilliam Street will accommodate some 6-7 spaces (including 1no. accessible parking space), in addition to a designated loading area.

It is noted that the proposed reduced quantity of car parking has been informed by extensive consultation with local stakeholders and reduced to an agreed upon level. The reduction in car parking is welcomed by this division noting the accessible location of the site, and is considered to contribute positively to the pedestrian environment. It is noted that the proposed additional planted buffer areas have been designed to avoid impeding visibility towards approaching traffic for vehicles exiting Fitzwilliam Street, as per recommendation 3.5 of the submitted Stage 1 Road Safety Audit.

### Construction Management

An Outline Construction Management Plan has been submitted with the application. This document sets out that construction is expected to take place over an 18-24 month period. Fitzwilliam Street will be closed for a c. 12 week period to allow for construction works, with

*this closure planned to take place during summer. No other major constraints to traffic on surrounding roads are envisaged. An average of 8 truck trips per week to / from the site are anticipated during the excavation works (c. 4 months). No car parking for construction staff will be provided. Staff will be required to use paid parking facilities if driving, and will be encouraged to travel by public transport or bicycle, with covered cycle parking provided on site.*

*A detailed Construction Management Plan including a Construction Traffic Management Plan should be submitted to the Planning Authority for agreement prior to commencement of development.'*

Therefore the Transport Planning Division have no objections to the proposals subject to conditions.

Overall, the proposal is in accordance with the Z4 zoning objective for the site and is acceptable from a design and amenity perspective. It is recommended that the proposal be approved subject to compliance with conditions.

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

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report prepared by ROD determined the proposed site is outside, but adjacent to two Natura 2000 Sites, namely South Dublin Bay SAC, and South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA. Due to its separation from the Natura 2000 Sites by roads, residential areas and a park, it is not likely to have a negative impact on the Natura 2000 Sites, and therefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the proximity to the nearest European sites, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and 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**

The EIA Screening Report carried out by ROD Engineers has determined that the proposed development does not exceed the thresholds that trigger the mandatory requirement for EIA and subsequently the proposed development is deemed to be a sub-threshold development.

The proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of its characteristics, location, size or potential impacts and does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be undertaken.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Elected Members approve the proposed development, subject to compliance with the conditions.

### **Conclusion**

The South East Area Office recognises that the Planning Authority considers the proposed development to be consistent with the provisions of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022 - 2028 and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The proposal has been developed having carried out detailed consultation with the Council's internal Departments and the general public. **Accordingly, it is the South East Area Office's intention to bring this Part 8 to the City Council for approval at the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**