

PROPOSED COMMUNITY FACILITY AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT SUSSEX STREET AND EBLANA AVENUE, DÚN LAOGHAIRE, CO. DUBLIN.

ARCHITECTS REPORT

March 2026

Context for the Proposed Development

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council proposes to build a 55nr. Unit Apartment Building and Community Facility at the former site of the Boylan Centre, Sussex Street, Dún Laoghaire and 4nr. terraced houses at 10 Eblana Avenue, Dún Laoghaire.

Investment in community infrastructure is essential for the health, social wellbeing and economic prosperity of communities and is intrinsic to their wellbeing. Cultural, civic and community infrastructure plays an important role in bringing people together, promoting social cohesion, helping to form friendships and social support networks, and in helping communities to develop life skills and resilience. All these attributes are essential elements in the creation and maintenance of strong communities. The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Community and Culture Infrastructure Audit Report has identified the need for a local, flexible community hub of approx. 350sqm for Dun Laoghaire Town Centre, in the short to medium term, to meet the needs of older person groups, family and child resource and youth groups through the provision of workshop and meeting space.

The most recent Housing Needs Demand Assessment undertaken by DLR Housing Department confirms a significant demand for one- and two-bedroom homes in Dún Laoghaire, alongside universally designed homes that meet the needs of people with disabilities and those who are aging. DLR are committed to the principles set out in the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022–2026 and the County Development Plan 2022–2028. The objective of this project is to provide much needed energy efficient housing in a high-quality, universally designed and age-friendly community within a short distance of the resources and amenities of Dún Laoghaire town centre.

Site Location and Description

The subject site is located off Sussex Street and Eblana Avenue and has an approximate area of 0.25Ha. This site is bounded by Sussex Street to the East, Eblana Avenue and neighbouring residential units to the north, the St Michael's Hospital Grounds to the West and an access road to the south.

The application site is currently vacant, containing a 850m² single storey building formally utilised for community use in the form of a 680m² multipurpose hall with café and office facilities providing youth and community welfare supports. The building also contained a commercial use in the form of a 170m² commercial printers. The building has been vacant for 24 months.

The site also contains a 320 m² two-storey building at 10 Eblana Avenue which forms part of a two-storey terrace of buildings to the south of Eblana Avenue. An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment carried out in 2024 by Historic Building Consultants and is included in the supporting documentation enclosed with the Planning Bundle. It found that *'there is nothing that survives of the original internal character of the hall at 10 Eblana Avenue and the exterior not of special interest other than a limited historical value.'*

The site currently has vehicular access off Sussex Street from the east on an on-curtilage parking area. The site also currently accommodates 25nr. surface parking spaces including one accessible parking space around the periphery of the site accessed off Sussex Street and a southern access road.

The subject site is within 5-minute walk (300m) from high quality public transport, Dún Laoghaire DART station, and in close proximity to the services and amenities available in Dún Laoghaire Town Centre.

The site topography gently slopes down from south to the north. The site is made up largely of building fabric and hard standing; with c30m of planter beds along the eastern boundary facing onto Sussex Street.

Site Zoning and other Objectives

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-28

This site is zoned under Objective MTC on Map 3 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028:- *"To protect, provide for and-or improve major town centre facilities"*.

On the same map, Specific Local Objective 10 of the County Development Plan 2 notes:- *"To retain, improve and encourage the provision of sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure facilities."*

Interim Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan

Chapter 17.5.5 of the Interim Framework Plan identifies The Boylan Centre and St. Michaels Hospital as one of a number of projects that are key to achieving the objective of reconnecting the Town Centre to the Waterfront.

Objective 6 of the Interim Urban Framework Plan is *Identify and encourage redevelopment of key sites at present under-utilised e.g. Hospital Lands and the Boylan Centre, sites at the Harbour and the site of the Dún Laoghaire Further Education Institute.*

Objective 12 notes: *Any redevelopment of the Boylan Centre shall ensure some element of community facility uses (This should be informed by the community audit).*

Description of the Proposed Part 8 Development

Proposed demolition of community building at 10 Eblana Avenue and demolition of community and commercial building and removal of on-street parking at 10 Sussex Street. Construction of a new community facility and housing development comprising of 39nr. 1-bed apartments, 16nr. 2-bed apartments and 4nr. 3-bedroom houses and provision of 1nr. accessible parking space, an accessible drop-off area, 66nr. cycle parking spaces and all associated site works on Sussex Street and Eblana Avenue, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Principles of Development

As noted above, the development site is subject to zoning objective 'MTC', which seeks *'To protect, provide for and-or improve major town centre facilities'*. Under this zoning objective, Residential and Community Facility developments are 'Permitted in Principle'; as outlined in Chapter 13 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028.

It is proposed to provide a 350m² community facility, as defined in Chapter 13 of the County Development Plan, on the ground floor of the proposed development. The building will be used for community activities organised primarily by the local community and to which the public may be admitted on payment of a charge or free of charge.

It is also proposed to provide residential housing and apartment development, therefore its use is in accordance with the primarily 'MTC' zoning objective of the subject site. This is also in accordance with the Interim Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan

Also noted, there is a Specific Local Objective for the site *"To retain, improve and encourage the provision of sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure facilities."*

The redevelopment of this underutilised site will significantly improve the local visual and residential amenity. A community function, previously provided on the site by the Boylan Centre, will be retained in the proposed development, providing a multi-faceted social function within the local and wider community for social, recreational and leisure, cultural, and civic needs. The urban realm proposals include landscaping and seating interventions along Sussex Street to provide pleasant places to sit, rest and socialise along the pedestrian artery linking Georges Street and the Dart. This continues the pattern of seating interventions established on Georges Street and continued more recently along the pedestrian link to Harbour Square.

The Dún Laoghaire 2040 A Spatial and Economic Study for Dún Laoghaire Town identifies the site as a *'key town centre site is currently underutilised and would suit a mixed-use development'*. Table 3.1 of this study notes *'Redevelopment of the hospital lands, the Boylan Centre and the former VEC building on Eblana Avenue to include retention of existing hospital and community uses together with a mix of complementary uses, a network of new streets and public spaces with a tight urban grain, variety in architectural language and design and unit sizes to encourage variety of uses and functions.'*

The proposal includes retention of the existing community use and does not disadvantage any future development of the hospital lands and VEC building and includes public realm interventions, as mentioned previously.

Housing Provision

The development will comprise 59nr units, comprising 39nr. one-bedroom apartments and 16nr. two-bedroom apartments and 4nr. three-bedroom terrace houses. The apartments are contained in a seven-storey mixed-use block which also houses a community facility at ground floor level. The apartment block is accessed from the access road bounding the site to the south; 3nr. wheelchair liveable one-bedroom units with own door access are also accessed from this road.

The 4nr. terrace houses are three-storey with the upper floor set back to maintain the eaves height of the adjoining buildings. There is a private amenity area to the rear of each house and a second-floor balcony space. All upper floor apartments have balconies, and the ground floor wheelchair liveable units have terraces to the rear. Dual aspect is achieved in 32% of the units, in compliance with the Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2025.

The houses and apartments are in compliance with the standards outlined within the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Design Manual for Quality Housing 2022, Planning Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2025 and Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007.

Universal Design

The Community facility can expect to accommodate users with a wide range of ages and abilities and has been designed to comply with *Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach* published by the National Disability Authority and the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. In addition to this, and in accordance with Policy Objective PHP17, a Changing Places Bathroom has been included in the community facility to enhance the health, safety, comfort and dignity of someone who may need extra support and additional equipment during personal care tasks.

As part of the implementation of the objective in *Housing for An Ageing Population* the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage developed the ASSIST tool, a GIS mapping solution to aid Local Authorities in decision-making for identifying suitable sites for purpose-built housing for older people. The ASSIST tool assessed sites based on the proximity of certain key desirable resources, amenities and relevant facilities such as supermarkets, health-care facilities and community facilities. The assessment tool first analyses the site's proximity to key constraints which are the primary 'must-have' criteria that sites should fulfil in order to be considered for selection for older persons accommodation. The site assessment indicated the development site is very suitable for older person accommodation and that the provision of Universally Designed and wheelchair liveable residential units is justifiable, and in line with *Policy Objectives PHP30: Housing for All and PHP36: Inclusive Design & Universal Access*.

This approach is in line with the commitment to the principles set out in the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022–2026 and the County Development Plan 2022–2028, which call for compact, accessible communities close to transport and services. It also aligns with the dlr Housing and Disability Strategic Plan 2021–2026, which emphasizes the urgent need for town-centre accommodation designed to universal design standards, as highlighted by the DLR Housing & Disability Steering Committee. By integrating universal design and prioritizing smaller units, this development will not only provide homes but create a vibrant, inclusive community where individuals of all abilities can thrive.



Density

Policy Objective PHP18: Residential Density cites that - *'It is a Policy Objective to: ... Increase housing (houses and apartments) supply and promote compact urban growth through the consolidation and re-intensification of infill/brownfield sites having regard to proximity and accessibility considerations, and*

... Encourage higher residential densities provided that proposals provide for high quality design and ensure a balance between the protection of existing residential amenities and the established character of the surrounding area, with the need to provide for high quality sustainable residential development.'

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) set out national policy on achieving sustainable densities. Table 3.1 of the Guidelines identifies appropriate density ranges for different urban typologies.

For City Urban Neighbourhoods—which includes compact medium-density residential neighbourhoods, town centres, strategic development locations, and lands proximate to high-capacity public transport nodes in Dublin and Cork—the Guidelines recommend residential densities in the range of 50 to 250 dwellings per hectare (net).

Given its location and proximity to public transport, educational and employment centres, the Boylan Centre site in Dún Laoghaire is appropriately classified as an *Urban Neighbourhood* and is therefore suitable for higher-density residential development.

Appendix B of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines (SRDCS) outlines the method for calculating net residential density in mixed-use schemes. The development achieves a density of 227uph and a Net Density of 242uph when calculated using the SRDCS Guidelines.

The proposed development meets the relevant housing policy objectives of Policy Objective PHP18 of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the densities called for under the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).

In line with Policy Objective PHP27 and paragraph 12.3.3.1, the unit mix proposed in the development has regard to the specific needs of the DLR Housing Department. It is a Policy Objective to encourage the establishment of sustainable residential communities by ensuring that a wide variety of housing and apartment types, sizes and tenures is provided throughout the County in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) and any future Regional HNDA. The most recent Housing Needs Demand Assessment undertaken confirms a significant demand for one- and two-bedroom homes, alongside universally designed homes that meet the needs of people with disabilities and those who are aging. This proposed development responds directly to these priorities, ensuring inclusive, accessible housing options that enable independent living and long-term sustainability.

Building Heights

The DLR Building Height Strategy notes in Policy Objective BHS 1- Increased Height, *It is a policy objective to support the consideration of increased heights and also to consider taller buildings where appropriate in the Major Town Centres of Dún Laoghaire [...] and in suitable areas well served by public transport links (i.e. within 1000 metre/10 minute walk band of LUAS stop, DART Stations or Core/Quality Bus Corridor, 500 metre/5 minute walk band of Bus Priority Route) provided that proposals ensure a balance between the reasonable protection of existing amenities and environmental sensitivities, protection of residential amenity and the established character of the area.*

The Development Site is located within Dún Laoghaire Town Centre, in an area with a range of building heights from two to seven storeys. Between George's Street and the southern access road to the south is a principle commercial area and is largely two- and three-storey buildings. The building heights along Sussex Street rises from two- and three- storeys up to a building height of five-storeys with a set-back sixth-storey at the Niche Living development. The building height on the St. Michael's Hospital grounds are largely four- storey, with the highest building on the site, the 'Nurses Building' adjoining the development site at a height of seven-storeys. Finally, the building heights on Eblana Avenue range from two-storey to four-storey.

The proposed apartment block is seven-storeys in height, referencing the building height established by adjoining St. Michaels 'Nurses Building'. The fifth and sixth floors have been set back from Sussex Street to reduce the perceived height of the building onto Sussex Street to five storeys, in reference the building heights established by the Niche Living development.

On southern side of Eblana Avenue, a two-storey building height is established by the existing terrace house along the road. The proposed 4nr. terrace houses have a set-back upper floor and terrace, so that the eaves height of the adjoining buildings is maintained.

Visual Impact Assessment

The primary mass of the apartment building is located along the south-east and south-west boundaries of the site, facing Sussex Street and the southern access road and is strategically located to mitigate against potential overshadowing on existing structures. The Daylight and Sunlight Assessment of the development, completed by Digital Dimensions and included in the supporting documentation, notes that *"there will be a reduction to daylight and sunlight availability to a small number of the neighbouring properties. Any impact will be in line with emerging trends and building heights for urban areas."*

The height of the apartment building references the adjacent Nurses building structure, completing an urban block and integrating with the existing development patterns established by developments in Harbour View and on Marine Road.

The ground floor community facility is articulated by an alternative elevational treatment, utilising a rainscreen cladding, differentiating it from the residential element of the proposal and emphasising the entrance civic areas. This elevational treatment also forms the backdrop to the landscaped seated areas, encouraging those using the community facility to inhabit the areas as an extension of the public space. These landscaped interventions reference the seated areas provided on Georges Street and along the pedestrian link to Harbour Square, and will encourage greater engagement with the public realm along Sussex Street, making it safer and more accessible to the community regardless of age or ability.

As a result of carefully considered massing, layout and separation distances to surrounding properties the proposed development will not have a significant negative impact on the existing residential amenities in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing appearance.

Materials

The proposed development will be constructed with a modest palette of good quality, robust and easily maintained materials. The façades of the apartment building facing onto the public road will be predominantly high-quality brickwork in reference to character of the facades seen along Georges Street and Sussex Street.

The front façade of the terrace houses will be predominantly through colour render, to align with the character of the adjoining properties and other buildings seen on Eblana Avenue. The second-floor set-back façade will be metal-clad to create a visual distinction between it and the lower façade to reinforce the existing eaves level datum and promote continuity in the streetscape.

Brickwork and rendered masonry are selected for their durability and low maintenance, and align with the Development Plan's emphasis on materials that respect local character and contribute to visual coherence.

Aluclad windows are proposed for the fenestration on all elevations. These windows combine the robustness and weather resistance of aluminium with the warmth and sustainability of timber, ensuring longevity and energy efficiency. Slim profiles and deep reveals will provide articulation and shadowing, enhancing the building's visual depth.

In compliance with the DLR County Development Plan Green Roof Policy 2022, Green Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2028 and Biodiversity Action Plan 2009 over 70% of the Apartment block will be covered with an extensive grass roof having a minimum substrate depth of 80mm or 60mm beneath a sedum blanket. Photovoltaic panels will also be located on the roof, but will be positioned away from the green roof to mitigate fire risks.

Parking Provision

The application site is in a central location in Dún Laoghaire, close to retail and residential amenities and the train station and in an area with enforced parking controls; making it an ideal candidate for a car-free development.

As noted previously, under the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2024 the site has been identified in Chapter 3 as a *City - Urban Neighbourhood*, a highly accessible urban locations with good access to employment, education and institutional uses and public transport. Under the guidelines, Objective SPPR 3 - Car Parking notes that *'It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that: In city centres and urban neighbourhoods [...] car-parking provision should be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated.'* Due to the sites close proximity to public transport, recreation, cultural, commercial and retail spaces, no parking is proposed to be provided for the Residential Development.

Section 12.4.5 of the DLR County Development Plan 2022–2028 sets out Car Parking Standards for the county. Section 12.4.5.1 *Parking Zones* notes Major Town Centre areas of Dún Laoghaire and Dundrum together with the Blackrock District Centre areas being allocated within "Parking Zone 1". This zone generally comprises areas characterised as having access to a high level of existing and planned public transport services (rail and bus) with good interchange potential; a high level of service accessibility, existing and planned, by walking or cycling; and a capacity to accommodate high density retail, office and residential developments. Table 12.5 sets out maximum car parking standards in Zone 1 for all uses, including residential. However, there are no minimum or standard car parking requirements.

Section 12.4.5.2 *Application of Standards* states that: *'In certain instances, in Zones 1 and 2 the Planning Authority may allow a deviation from the maximum or standard number of car parking spaces specified in Table 12.5 or may consider that no parking spaces are required.'* The proposed provision of zero parking spaces for use by the residential facility is in accordance with the County Development Plan, as adopted, and the Compact Settlement Guidelines.

It is proposed to provide 1nr. Accessible parking spaces and an Accessible drop off space for the use of the Community Facility in close proximity to the main entrance.

In accordance with the DLR Bicycle Standards 2018 - Parking Requirements for Apartments, provision for 55nr. long stay bicycle parking spaces, along with 1nr. cargo bike space, have been provided in a secure and covered area to the north of the apartment building, the equivalent of just over 1no. parking space per house and apartment. It is also intended to that further cycle parking will be provided, subject to monitoring of use of existing capacity, in the form of wall mounted stacked-over-sheffield cycle parking.

11nr. short stay bicycle parking spaces are provided on Sussex Street through 6nr. Sheffield stands.

Open Space Provision

The development site is located close to residential amenities and Public Parks. It is a 5-minute walk from Dún Laoghaire Harbour, Myrtle Square and the children's playground and The Lexicon Park. The People's Park and playground and the Dún Laoghaire Baths is a 10-minute walk.

A 500m² landscaped courtyard area is located to the north of the apartment block providing high-quality Communal Open Space in the form of a secure and usable outdoor space which is accessible for less mobile and older people. The proposals also include for 417 m² of Private Open space provided in the form of min. 1.8m deep balconies and ground floor landscaped terraces for the Wheelchair Liveable Units. The areas provided are in accordance with the Design Manual for Quality Housing 2022 and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2023.

Conclusion

The site is primarily zoned Objective 'MTC', Major Town Centre. The proposed development will revitalise and maximise the use of a valuable town centre site by providing a community amenity and high-density residential accommodation to persons of a range of ages and needs.

The proposed development will enhance the character of the surrounding area and be in accordance with relevant policy and the provisions of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan, 2022-2028. The proposed development will, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Appendix A – Relevant Policy

Chapter 2 - Core Strategy

- *Section 2.3.6 Housing Target for the Core Strategy*
- *Policy Objective CS11 – Compact Growth*

Chapter 3 – Climate Action

- Section 3.4.1.1 Policy Objective CA5: Energy Performance in Buildings
- Section 3.4.1.3 Policy Objective CA7: Construction Materials
- Section 3.4.2.1 Policy Objective CA10: Renewable Energy

Chapter 4 – Neighbourhood – People, Homes and Place

- Section 4.2.1 Sustainable Communities and Neighbourhood Infrastructure
- Policy Objective PHP5: Community Facilities
- Policy Objective PHP14 – Age Friendly Strategy
- Section 4.3.1 Delivering and Improving Homes
- Policy Objective PHP17: Changing Places Bathrooms
- Policy objective PHP18 – Residential Density
- Policy Objective PHP20 – Protection of Existing Residential Amenity
- Section 4.3.2 Housing Choice
- Policy Objective PHP25 – ‘Housing for All – A new Housing Plan for Ireland, 2021’
- Policy Objective PHP26 – Implementation of the Housing Strategy
- Policy Objective PHP27 – Housing Mix
- Policy Objective PHP30 – Housing for all
- Policy Objective PHP31 – Provision of Social Housing
- Section 4.4 Place
- Policy Objective PHP35 – Healthy Placemaking
- Policy Objective PHP36 – Inclusive Design & Universal Access
- Policy Objective PHP37 – Public Realm Design

- Policy Objective PHP41 – Safer Living Environment
- Policy Objective PHP42 – Building Design & Height

Appendices

2. Housing Strategy and HNDA
3. Development Management Thresholds
5. Building Heights Strategy
7. Sustainable Drainage System Measures
17. Interim Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan

Other Documents

Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines

The following ministerial guidelines are also considered relevant:

- ‘Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, 2024
- ‘Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments’, 2022 (as updated)
- ‘Guidelines on Urban Development and Building Heights for Planning Authorities’, 2018 (as updated).
- ‘Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets’, 2013. (as updated)
- ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (including the associated ‘Technical Appendices),’ 2009.
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities - Best Practice Guidelines for Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities (DEHLG), 2007.