

# Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

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for proposed

## All-Weather Pitch at Oatlands College, Mount Merrion, Blackrock

**for: Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council**

County Hall  
Marine Road  
Dún Laoghaire  
Co. Dublin



**by: CAAS Ltd.**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
24-26 Ormond Quay Upper  
Co. Dublin  
D07 DAV9



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## Document Control

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<b>prepared by</b>	Paul Fingleton and Clodagh Ryan	Various dates to 19 April 2023
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Appendix I – Competency of Authors

## 1 Introduction

CAAS Ltd. has been appointed by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) to prepare this Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for the proposed an all-weather pitch at Oatlands College Mount Merrion, Blackrock (the proposed development). This report has been prepared to form an opinion as to whether or not the proposed development should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and if so, whether an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should be prepared in respect of it.

The screening assesses the proposed development with reference to the EIA legislation<sup>1</sup> including the EIA Directive, and Planning and Development legislation<sup>1</sup>. It also has regard to relevant parts of:

- *EIA Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding sub-threshold development*, 2003, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment*, 2018, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- *OPR Practice Note PN02 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening*, 2021, Office of the Planning Regulator
- relevant EU Guidance including *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive*, 2015, EU and *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects - Guidance on Screening*, 2017, EU.

The first step involves a review of the characteristics of the development to find out if it corresponds to any type (class) which is subject to the EIA requirements as set out in the legislation. If it does correspond to any such type and does not equal or exceed a specified threshold (ref s5 Sub-threshold development) then the second step is to carry out a 'preliminary examination' to establish the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The outcome of the preliminary examination determines the subsequent steps of the screening process which may involve sub-threshold project considerations and review against prescribed criteria for determining whether the development should be subject to EIA.

The information on the proposed development, as used for purposes of this report, including a written description, was provided by DLRCC.

The following sections of this report cover:

- The proposed development (s2)
- The legislative basis for EIA (s3)
- Project type (s4)
- Sub-threshold development (s5)
- Preliminary examination (s6)
- Conclusion (s7)

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<sup>1</sup> see section 3 for details

An overview of the authors' competency is provided in Appendix I.

## 2 The proposed development

The proposed development comprises:

- An all-weather pitch comprising earthworks & formation preparation,
- Retaining walls, drainage,
- Sub-base preparation,
- Shockpad & synthetic turf,
- Fencing & netting,
- Ballstop netting,
- Floodlighting,
- Prefabricated buildings,
- New access steps & paths,
- Tree & woodland planting and
- All ancillary civil, building and landscaping works

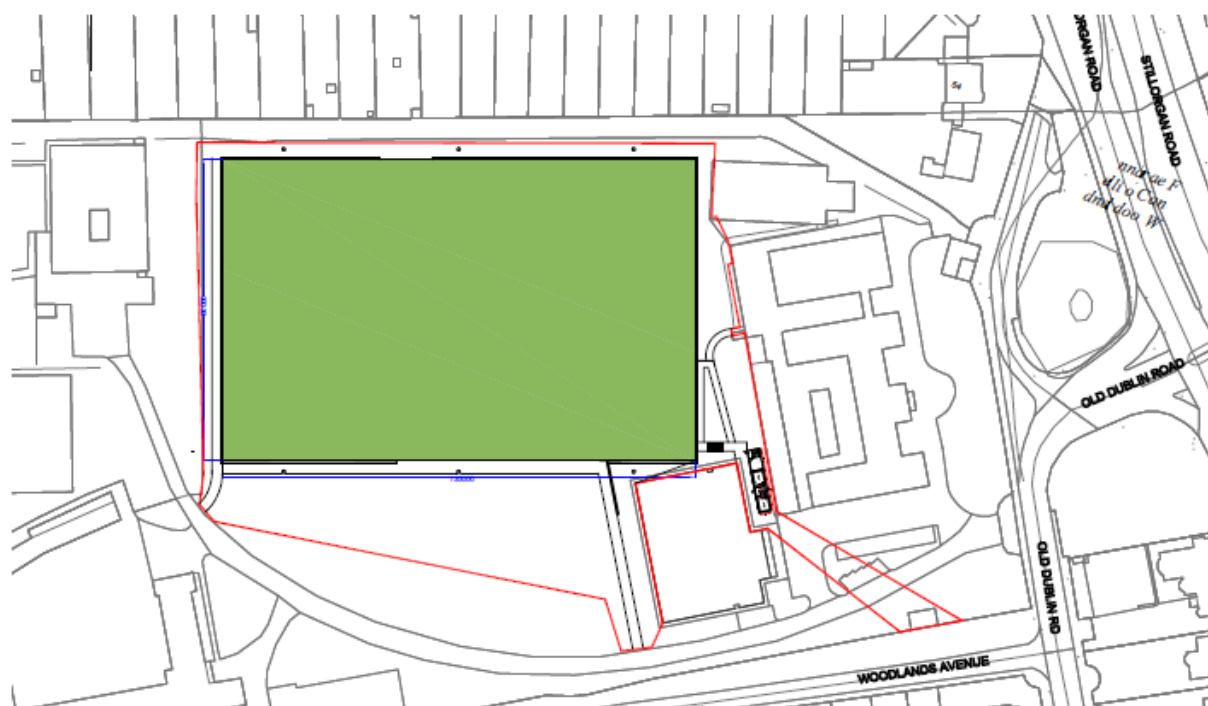
The total proposed site area is approximately 1.65 ha.





**Figure 1 Site location map**

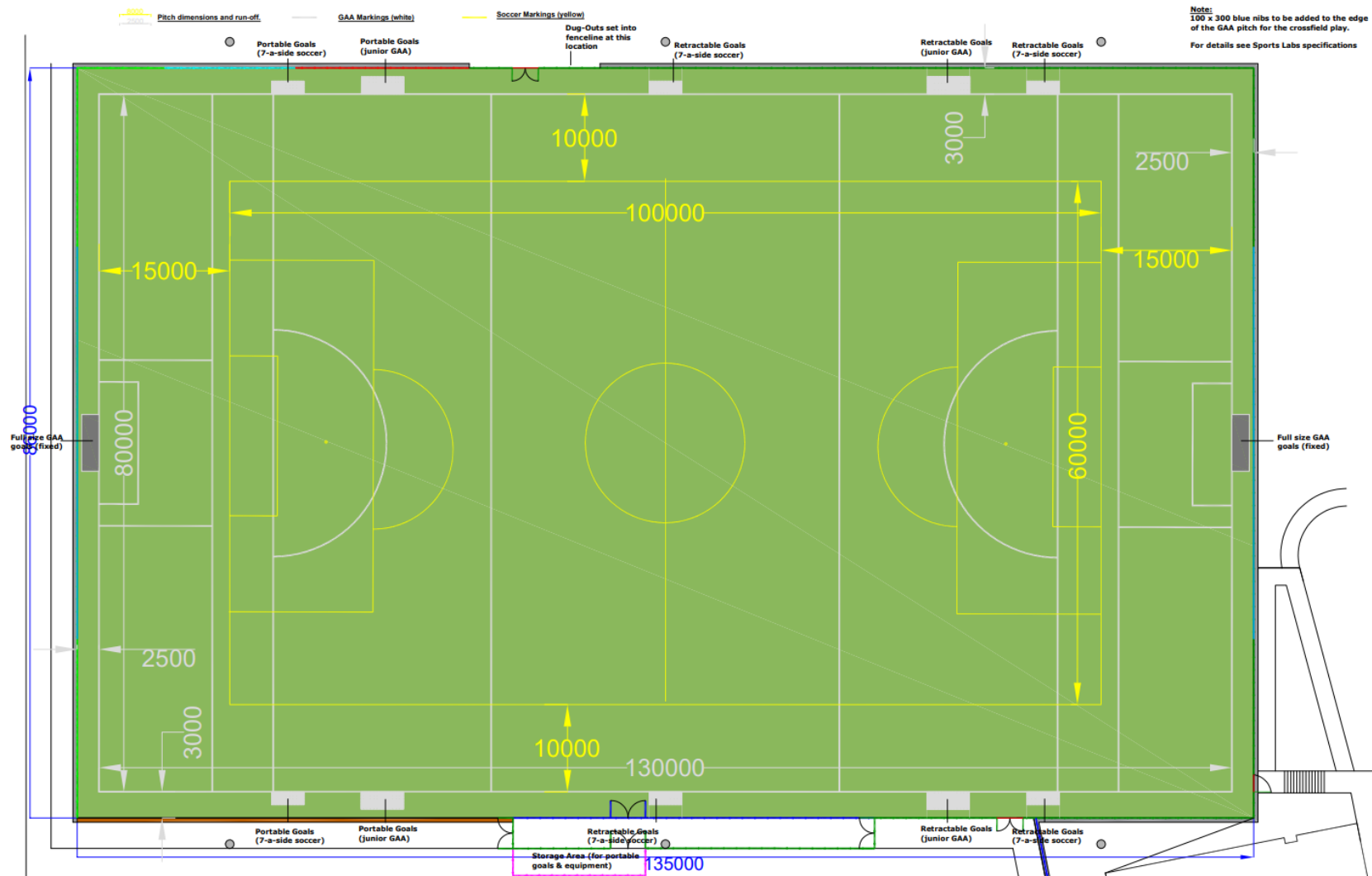
Source: Google maps (site boundary includes construction compound and is approximate)



**Figure 2 Site plan**

Source: DLRCC (See accompanying drawing set for full scaled versions of all drawings)







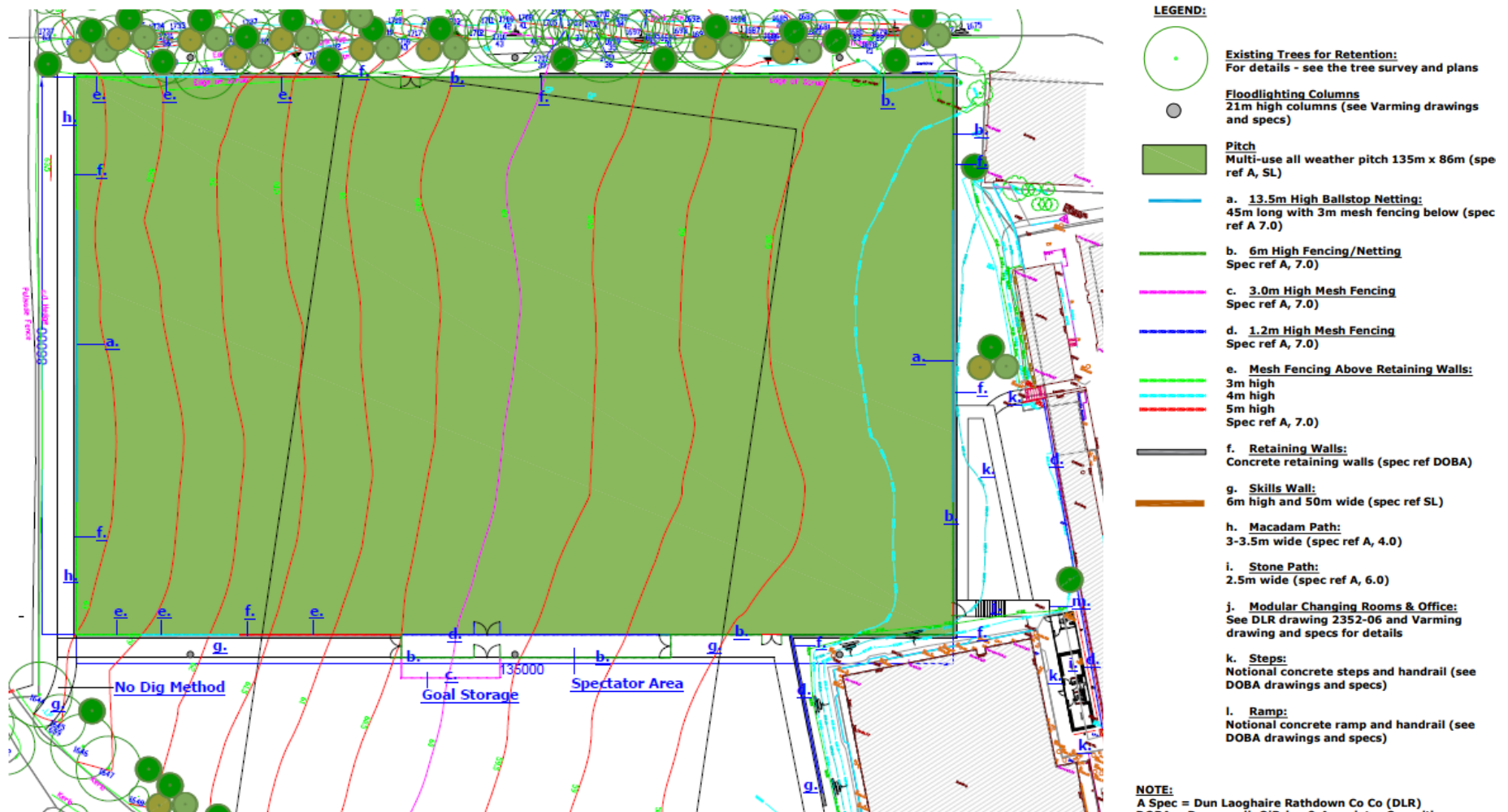
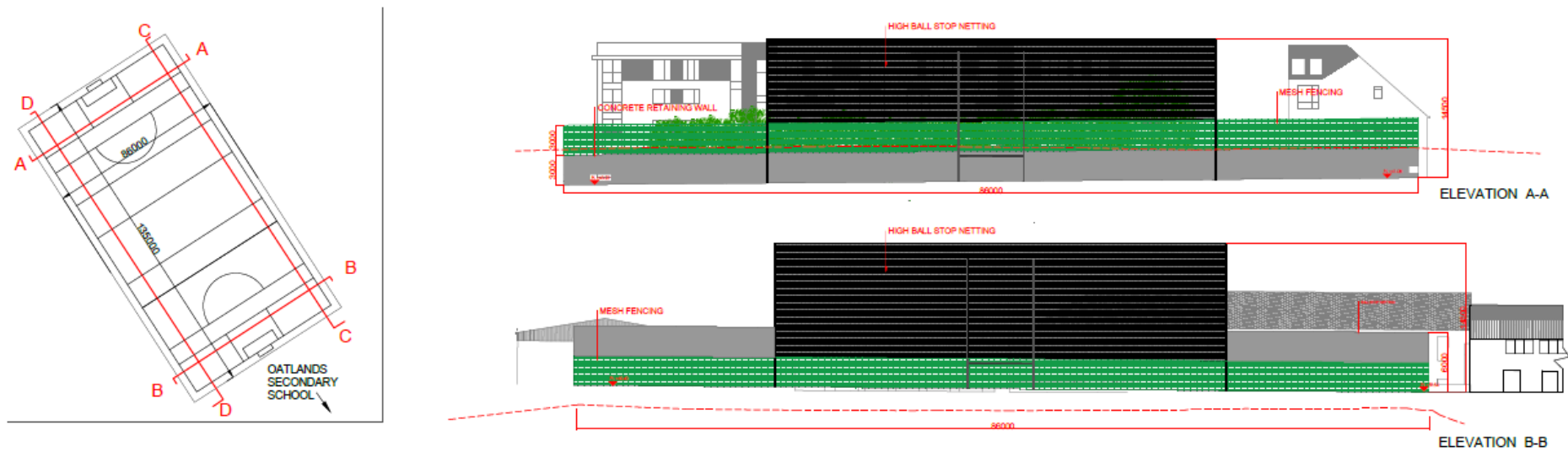


Figure 4 General arrangement Plan

Source: DLRCC (See accompanying drawing set for full scaled versions of all drawings.)

**NOTE:**  
 A Spec = Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co Co (DLR)  
 DOBA = Donnacadh O'Brien & Associates Consulting Engineers (civil & structural)  
 Varming = Varming Consulting Engineers (electrical)  
 SL = Sports Labs Ltd (sports specialist)

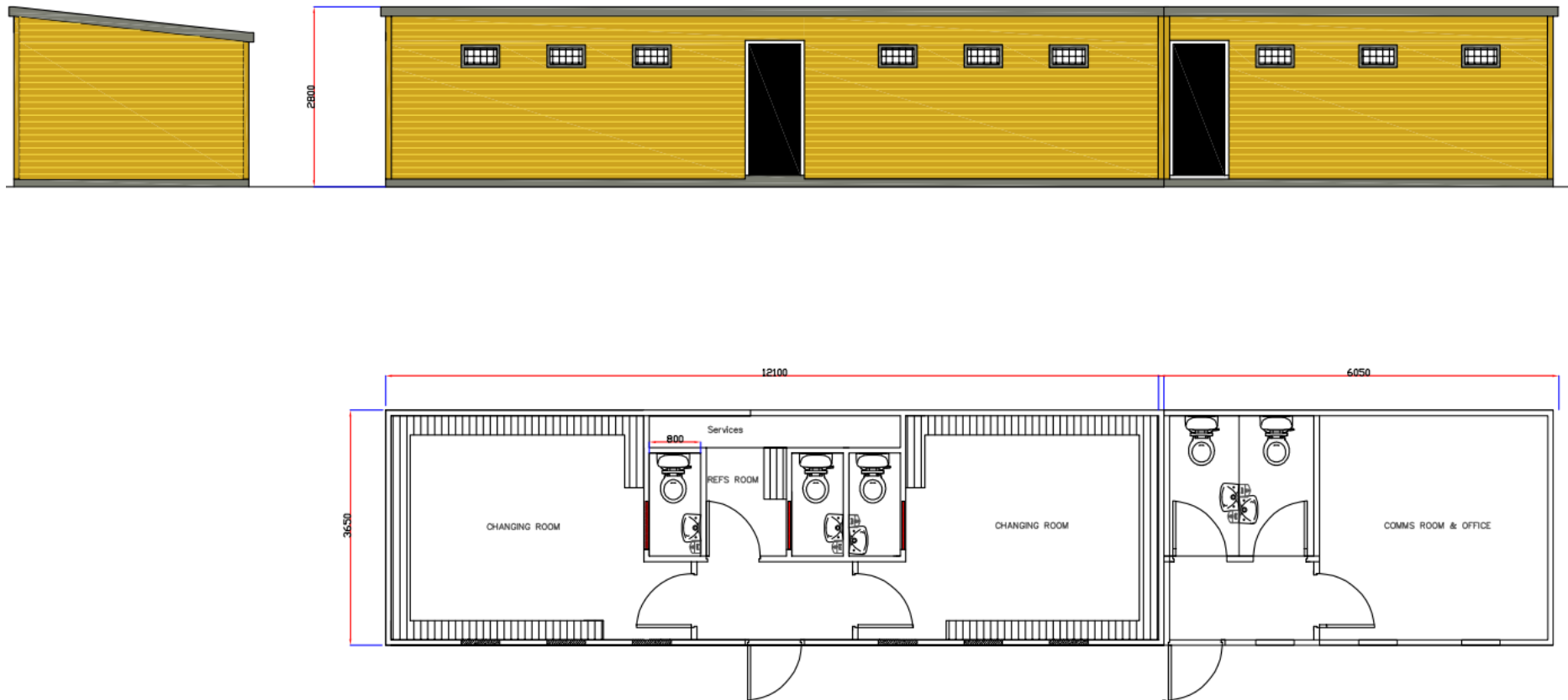
Existing survey is shown in background for context purpose only. For details of proposed levels, see DOBA drawings.



**Figure 5 Elevations A-A and B-B**

Source: DLRCC (See accompanying drawing set for full scaled versions of all drawings.)





**Figure 7 Pre-fabricated changing units**

Source: DLRCC (See accompanying drawing set for full scaled versions of all drawings.)

### 3 Legislative basis for EIA

EIA requirements derive from EU Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. The Directive has been transposed into various Irish legislation of which the following is the most relevant to this development.

- Planning and Development Acts 2000-2020 (Part X)
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. 600/2001) as amended
- European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 296/2018)

Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, lists projects included in Annex I of the Directive which automatically require EIA. For projects included in Annex II of the Directive, Part 2 of Schedule 5 provides thresholds above which EIA is required.

### 4 Project type

In the first instance it is necessary to determine whether the proposed development corresponds to any project type that is subject to EIA requirements.

The prescribed classes of development for the purpose of Section 176 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. The proposed development, a floodlit all-weather playing pitch and associated works, does not correspond to any class of development prescribed within Part 1 of Schedule 5 and so it is necessary to consider whether it corresponds to any class prescribed within Part 2 of Schedule 5.

Potentially relevant project types (or classes) prescribed for EIA purposes in Part 2 of Schedule 5 are listed in the table below, with commentaries of their applicability to the proposed development. Criteria prescribed in the legislation for changes or extensions are included.

Project class / threshold	Comment	Is EIA required on this basis?
<b>Planning and Development legislation</b> S.I. 600/2001, Schedule 5, Pt 2		
Project class 10. <i>Infrastructure projects (b)</i>		
<p><i>(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.</i></p> <p><i>(In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)</i></p>	<p>Commission guidance<sup>2</sup> lists a range of projects, stating that these or other projects with similar characteristics can be considered to be ‘urban development’. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shopping centres</li> <li>• Bus garages</li> <li>• Train depots</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Sports stadiums</li> <li>• Cinemas</li> <li>• Theatres</li> <li>• Concert halls</li> <li>• Other cultural centres</li> <li>• Sewerage or water supply networks</li> </ul> <p>The closest of these to the subject proposal is ‘sports stadiums’. While the proposed project includes an all-weather sports pitch, it does not include other characteristics of sports stadiums such as a grandstand, large-scale indoor facilities, public address systems or any new car parking areas. The proposed project can therefore be considered as not corresponding to or having similar characteristics to a sports stadium or any of the other projects listed in the Commission guidance.</p> <p>It is considered that this proposal does not fall into the ‘urban development’ project type (type 10(b)(iv)).</p>	No

<sup>2</sup> Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive, 2015, EU



Project class / threshold	Comment	Is EIA required on this basis?
Project type 12. <i>Tourism and leisure projects (e)</i>		
<i>Theme parks occupying an area greater than 5 hectares.</i>	<p>Regarding interpretation of the meaning of this project type, Commission guidance<sup>3</sup> states: -</p> <p><i>(ii) Sports stadiums would in principle be covered by Annex II(10)(b) ‘urban development projects’.</i></p> <p><i>However, certain Member States can decide in their national environmental impact assessment systems that sports stadiums fall within the ‘theme parks’ category. Compliance with the Directive will be ensured, irrespective of which Annex II category is considered applicable, provided that such projects do not escape from the scope of application of the Directive.</i></p> <p>As discussed in relation to project type 10(b)(iv) above it is considered that this proposal does not correspond to or have similar characteristics to a sports stadium. It can thus be considered that this proposal also does not fall into the ‘Theme parks’ project type (type 12(e)).</p>	No
Project type 13. <i>Changes, extensions, development and testing</i>		
<p><i>(a) Any change or extension of development which would:-</i></p> <p><i>(i) result in the development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule, and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) result in an increase in size greater than-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>- 25 per cent, or</i></li> <li><i>- an amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold, whichever is the greater</i></li> </ul>	As the changes covered by the proposal will not result in the development being of a listed class, criterion (i) is not met. Therefore, project type 13(a) is not applicable.	No

The above review against the potentially relevant classes shows that the proposed development does not correspond to any project type listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive, 2015, EU*

## 5 Sub-threshold development

Article 92 of the Regulations of 2001, as amended define: 'sub-threshold development' as:

*development of a type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 which does not equal or exceed, as the case may be, a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development.*

Annex III of the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended) as transposed into Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended - sets out criteria for review of sub-threshold projects to determine if they should be subject to EIA. These criteria include characteristics, location and potential impacts. As the proposal does not correspond to any type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5, it is not a sub-threshold development.

## 6 Preliminary Examination

Article 120(a)(1) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, requires that -

- (a) *Where a local authority proposes to carry out a sub-threshold development, the authority shall carry out a **preliminary examination** of, at the least, the nature, size or location of the development.*
- (b) *Where the local authority concludes, based on such preliminary examination, that—*
  - (i) *there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall conclude that an EIA is not required,*
  - (ii) *there is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, the information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination, or*
  - (iii) *there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall—*
    - (I) *conclude that the development would be likely to have such effects, and*
    - (II) *prepare, or cause to be prepared, an EIAR in respect of the development.*

As the proposed development is not a sub-threshold development, the requirement to carry out a preliminary examination does not apply.

## 7 Conclusions

The proposed all-weather pitch at Oatlands College, Mount Merrion, Blackrock does not correspond to any project type that is subject to EIA requirements. It is not a sub-threshold development and no

preliminary examination or further stages of EIA screening are required to be followed for it. It does not need to be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and no Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required for it.

This conclusion is based on an objective review of the characteristics of the proposed development against the requirements of the relevant legislation and has had due regard to the relevant guidance.

## Appendix I - Competency of Authors

**Paul Fingleton, the lead author**, has an MSc in Rural and Regional Resources Planning (with specialisation in EIA) from the University of Aberdeen. Paul is a member of the International Association for Impact Assessment as well as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. He has over twenty-five years' experience working in the area of Environmental Assessment. Over this period, he has been involved in a diverse range of projects including contributions to, and co-ordination of, numerous complex EIARs and EIA screening reports. He has also contributed to and supervised the preparation of numerous AAs and AA screenings.

Paul is the lead author of the current EPA Guidelines<sup>4</sup> and accompanying Advice Notes<sup>5</sup> on EIARs. He has been involved in all previous editions of these statutory guidelines. He also provides a range of other EIA related consultancy services to the EPA. Paul is regularly engaged by various planning authorities and other consent authorities to provide specialised EIA advice.

**Clodagh Ryan, Environmental Assistant** has a BSc in Environmental Management, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2021. Clodagh liaises with various government agencies and local authorities in order to assimilate the environmental baseline information that is used in EIAs and AAs and assists in the preparation of the various EIA and AA related documentation.

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<sup>4</sup> *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, EPA, 2022

<sup>5</sup> *Advice notes on current practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, EPA, 2003