



Parks Section, Community & Cultural Development Department

**Proposed Development of An All-Weather Pitch at  
Oatlands College, Mount Merrion, Blackrock, Co.  
Dublin  
PC/PKS/02/23**

**Part 8 Report**

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Revision:

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## 1. Introduction

The following report is a summary of the main features of the proposed development, comprising the construction of an all-weather pitch and ancillary facilities at Oatlands College. It is proposed that the facilities will be used by the schools (and other local schools), Monday-Friday until 18:00 and by the local clubs Monday-Friday from 18:00-22:00 and at the weekends from 09:00-21:00. This proposal is one of the Recommended Areas for Development as outlined in the DLRCC Sports Facilities Strategy 2017-2022, Space to Play. The development of all-weather pitches in school grounds would allow greater access to the facilities in existing publicly owned lands while also benefitting the local schools, reducing the need to fence off areas in the public parks where space is at a premium. Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council will enter into a License Agreement with the land owner and the school for the construction and management of the facility. This report summarises the information given in the associated drawings and any ancillary reports.

## 2. Site Location and Scope

The site – the subject of this Part 8 - is located in the existing Oatlands College grounds, Mount Merrion, Blackrock County Dublin. The site outlined in red on drawing no. 2352-01 comprises an existing grass playing pitch located to the west of the Oatlands College and east of Oatlands Primary School. The proposed all-weather pitch (135m x 86m) shall include third generation synthetic surfacing, floodlighting, fencing, retaining walls, ballstop netting, temporary changing facilities, tree planting and all ancillary works. The site as outlined in red on the site location plan is approximately 1.65 Hectares.

## 3. Planning Context

### 3.1 Zoning:

The zoning for this site is Objective TLI – To facilitate, support and enhance the development of third level education institutions. Under this zoning, a Community Facility and a Sports Facility are both permitted in principle.

### 3.2 Policy:

The development will tie in with the relevant national and regional policy as well as the following specific policies outlined in the County Development Plan 2022-2028;

#### Policy Objective OSR9 – Sports and Recreational Facilities

It is a Policy Objective to promote the provision, and management of high quality sporting, and recreational infrastructure throughout the County, in accordance with the National Sports Policy 2018-2027, and dlr Space to Play: a new approach to Sports Facilities Strategy', 2017-2022, to ensure that the particular needs of different groups are incorporated into the planning and design of new facilities.

#### Policy Objective OSR10: Protection of Sports Grounds/Facilities

It is a Policy Objective:

- To ensure that adequate playing fields for formal active recreation are provided for in new development areas.
- That existing sports facilities and grounds within the established urban area are protected, retained, and enhanced.
- To increase the number of playing pitches in the County.
- To maximise the use of playing pitches in the County and for playing pitches to be utilised seven days a week, subject to protecting adjoining residential amenity.

#### Policy Objective PHP13: Equality, Social Inclusion and Participation

It is a Policy Objective to promote equality and progressively reduce all forms of social exclusion that can be experienced because of gender, gender identity, marital status, family status, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, homelessness and membership of the Traveller Community and promote active participation consistent with RPO 9.1 and RPO 9.2 of the RSES.

#### Policy Objective PHP15: Healthy County Plan

It is a Policy Objective to support and facilitate the creation of a healthy County in accordance with the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Healthy County Plan 2019-2022.

#### Policy Objective PHP14: Age Friendly Strategy

It is a Policy Objective to support and facilitate the implementation of the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Age Friendly Strategy 2016-2020. The dlr Age-Friendly Strategy 2022-2026 was noted by the Council in November 2022.

#### Policy Objective T19: Carparking Standards

It is a Policy Objective to manage carparking as part of the overall strategic transport needs of the County in accordance with the parking standards set out in Section 12.4.5.

#### Policy Objective EI6: Sustainable Drainage Systems

It is a Policy Objective to ensure that all development proposals incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

#### Policy Objective EI15: Light Pollution

It is a Policy Objective to ensure that the design of external lighting schemes minimise the incidence of light spillage or pollution in the immediate surrounding environment and has due regard to the residential amenity of surrounding areas.

### 3.3 Strategy:

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council has adopted the following additional strategies that are pertinent to the proposed development:

#### Space to Play – Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Sports Facilities Strategy 2017-2022:

The strategy sets out a logical, deliverable pathway for the optimum use of existing, and the development of new public sporting and physical activity facilities within the County. Section 9 of this strategy specifically identifies partnerships with schools to develop sporting facilities as the time that the facilities would be used presents for an ideal overlap with the needs of sporting organisations. This has also been identified in section 16 – Recommended Areas for Development. Section 16.3 states ‘It is recommended that future provision of required floodlit all weather surfaces be explored as a three way partnership between schools, clubs and the Council. The security, land and time overlap would create optimum conditions for efficient use and the best value return for all parties...’

## **4. Nature & Extent of the Proposed Development**

The proposed all weather pitch will be designed as an inclusive and flexible facility. It will be certified in accordance with the FAI/IRB & GAA requirements to ensure the facility is used by as many sporting groups as possible. The existing grass pitch is being used by the schools and some

clubs for training. In wet weather, the pitch can get saturated and be deemed unplayable. An all-weather pitch with floodlighting will allow this area to be used much more intensively by the schools and local clubs. The provision of existing school car parking reduces the cost of the infrastructure required for such a facility. The nature and extent of the proposed development is outlined below. This description of the proposed works should be read in conjunction with the supporting drawings and reports.

#### Generally:

The facility will be built using proven methods of construction and proven materials to the highest standards of workmanship and quality. The design and construction methods will take account of future maintenance requirements and in as far as possible, use materials that has been or can be recycled. The facility will include storage areas for portable goalposts and a spectator area for viewing matches. A path will be provided for access to the floodlighting columns, fencing and netting on two of the boundaries to the pitch.

#### Pitch Construction:

The existing ground will be levelled to create a level plain with falls and crossfalls. Concrete retaining walls will be constructed largely along all boundaries to take account of the current sight levels. The pitch will be surrounded on all sides by precast kerbs and the build-up will consist of a free draining stone. Upon levelling the stone, the shockpad and synthetic turf will be installed with the synthetic turf infilled with sand and natural infill or rubber.

#### Drainage:

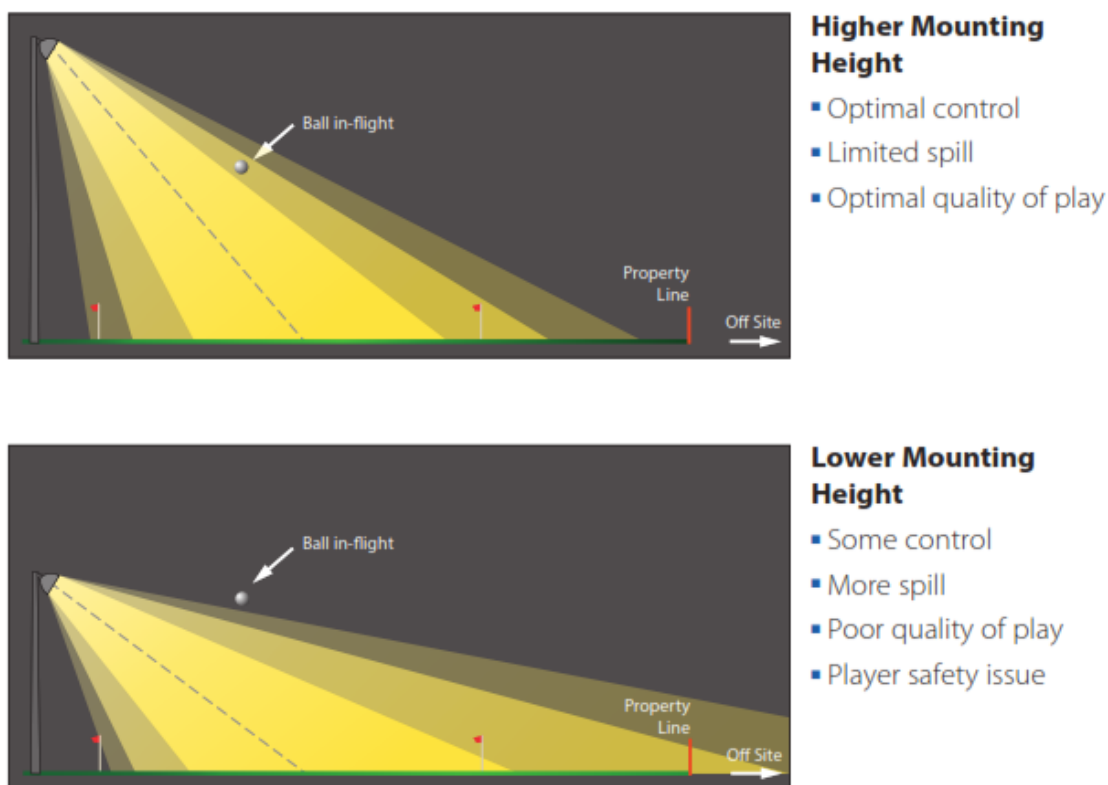
The proposed drainage for the all-weather pitch includes installation of 100mm perforated lateral drains at 8m centres and directed to an attenuation system via collector drains (225mm diameter) that will be installed around the perimeter of the pitch. The attenuation system is to be located along the southern boundary of the pitch and has been designed so that attenuation will be provided to store volumes for a 1.0% AEP (1:100 year) storm event including an allowance for 20% climate change (attenuation volume = 424m<sup>3</sup>). The attenuation system outflow will be controlled by a hydrobrake connected to the existing surface water drainage system serving the existing grass pitch. The hydrobrake outflow will be restricted to Q<sub>bar</sub> which has been calculated based on the site specific soil conditions, as such the proposed discharge into the existing surface water network will match the existing discharge in accordance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GDSDS). Site specific investigations were carried out (including trial pits and BRE365 Digest soakaway tests). The results of the site investigations confirmed that the permeability of the subsoils was extremely poor and that the shallow subsoils were saturated during excavation. As such, a SOIL type 4 has been assumed for the calculation of Q<sub>bar</sub> due to the extremely poor infiltration characteristics. The final design of the attenuation system and SW outfall will be subject to final agreement of the Water & Drainage Section.

#### Floodlighting:

The floodlighting design undertaken uses the latest floodlighting design technology to reduce the impact of light spill on adjoining lands, trees and hedgerows. The floodlighting for the pitch has been designed to achieve an average light level of 500 lux which is suitable for competitive hurling. The other potential sporting uses (soccer, gaelic football, rugby) require 250 lux level so this system can be dimmed and this lighting level will be most commonly used. The lighting design uses 6no. 21m high galvanised steel columns similar to those used in the all-weather pitches throughout the county.

Choosing the appropriate number of columns and column heights is key to the overall quality of the lighting design. Based on the size of the pitch, the sport being played, the competition level,

and the application of the floodlighting system (televised or non-televised); column numbers and height requirements must be accurately assessed to ensure the aiming angle of the floodlight onto the pitch is at an appropriate degree to maintain good playability, control glare, and reduce spill light on adjoining properties and roadway. See the diagram below:



The luminaires will be LED which are much more energy efficient than the metal halide alternative. Associated civil works (ducting, foundations for columns, installation of mini pillars etc) will be undertaken whilst all electrical controls and switches will be brought to the pre-fabricated changing rooms. A three-phase power connection and associated ESB substation may be required, and this will be located in close proximity to the sports hall.

The lighting design has been prepared in compliance with the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers Lighting Guide 4: Sports Lighting (CIBSE LG4) & the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP), Guidance Note for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2021 and Guidance Note for Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK GN08:2018. All lighting has been designed to be bat sensitive. The lights will provide only the amount of light necessary for the task in hand and shield the light given out in order to avoid creating glare or omitting light above the horizontal plane. The lighting design and report has been undertaken by MUSCO Lighting and is included as an appendix to the main Part 8 report (see appendix 8).

The permitted timing for the floodlighting will be from 16:00 until 22:00, Monday to Friday and from 16:00 until 21:00 Saturday and Sunday. The design of the lighting scheme minimises the incidence of light spillage or pollution in the immediate surrounding environment and has due regard to the residential amenity of surrounding areas.

#### Fencing & Netting:

The pitch will be surrounded on all sides by 3m high galvanised and powder coated steel mesh panel fencing. This will be supported by 3m high galvanised and powder coated steel posts with 6m high galvanised and powder coated steel posts at regular intervals where supporting additional 3m of netting. The 6m high fencing is set back along part of the southern boundary and a 1.2m high mesh panel fence installed for spectator viewing. Pedestrian and maintenance gates will be installed at appropriate locations.

#### High Ballstop Netting:

Ballstop netting will be installed at either end of the GAA goals for 45m. The ballstop netting will be supported by galvanised steel uprights to the full height of 14.5m. These are being installed to reduce the risk of balls or sliotars entering adjoining properties and the schools. The total fence height at these locations is 14.5m including the 3m of mesh panel fencing/retaining walls.

#### Synthetic Surfacing:

The pitch will be surfaced with a third generation synthetic turf infilled with silica sand and either natural infill (cork or similar) or SBR recycled rubber. Below this synthetic turf will be a shockpad which will reduce the impact of any falls and prolong the lifetime of the synthetic turf. The pitch will be tested to FIFA/IRB & GAA certified standards for use by a large number of different sporting groups. Permanent line marking will be in place for GAA (white) and soccer (yellow).

#### Retaining Walls:

Given the slope of the site and the requirement to maximise the size of the pitch, retaining walls will be constructed around much of the perimeter of the pitch. These will be either pre-cast concrete or another suitable system. The height of the retaining walls varies but the maximum height is 3m.

#### Prefabricated Changing Rooms:

Timber clad prefabricated changing rooms will be installed towards the south east of the pitch. The units being installed will be no greater than 3.5m high and consist of changing rooms with toilets, a referees room and office/comms room for the administration of the facility.

#### Access:

New access steps and a ramp will be installed at the eastern part of the site which will be the primary access point into the pitch for club usage. An accessible access ramp will also be provided from the changing rooms to the pitch along the eastern boundary.

#### Parking:

There are currently in excess of 76 car parking spaces on site which is considered adequate to cope with the estimated usage given the overlap with school peak times. During night time school events, the car parking will be jointly managed between schools and the operator of the pitch. Existing school bicycle stands can be used by users of the pitch and additional bicycle stands will also be installed. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council will actively work with club users to encourage more sustainable modes of transport and to refrain from parking in nearby housing developments. A traffic & parking report has been undertaken and is appended to this Part 8 report (see appendix 7). All recommendations (counter measures) as outlined in the traffic & parking report will be implemented as part of this project.

Screening & New Planting:

The all-weather pitch will be further screened on the southern boundary by planting suitable woodland species (mostly native) some of which will be semi-mature size. The existing tree-line along the northern boundary will also be further planted with suitable woodland species.

Refillable Water Fonts:

A refillable water font will be placed adjacent to the temporary changing facilities.

Construction Management:

- The hours of construction associated with this proposed development will be 07:00 – 19:00 Monday to Saturday. At all times during the works, the public roadway will be maintained in a neat, tidy and safe condition. Any damage to the public road as a result of the proposed development will be made good. Any construction and demolition waste emanating from the building process on site shall be managed in accordance with best practice. All site construction activities and staff facilities (including car parking) will be accommodated within the proposed development site.
- No discharge during the construction period of cementous materials or residues thereof or of lime, sand, silt or other deleterious material shall be allowed to enter the watercourse. Stockpiles of construction materials such as sand, gravel or other erodible materials shall be covered with sheeting to prevent washout of fines during rainfall and that no storage of any construction materials will not take place within 15m of watercourse. All oils, lubricants and fuels used during the construction phase shall be securely stored in bunded areas. All earth moving activities shall be conducted carefully so as to avoid material entering surface water streams. Early seeding of areas of bare soil shall follow earth-moving works to prevent wind blow carrying sediment to waters.
- Construction access will be via Oatlands College only. Any construction compound will be within the site boundary.
- The method of construction will be standard earthworks open excavations. The excavations adjacent to existing boundaries has been minimised by keeping the wall foundations on the pitch side of the wall. The volume of material to be cut and filled is approx. 7,000m<sup>3</sup>.
- For efficiency purposes, it would be preferable for the works to commence in Spring or Summer to reduce the risk of wet ground. The following is the likely phasing of the works;
  - Removal of any trees, scrub or hedgerows, etc (outside of the nesting season).
  - Topsoil strip, bulk earthworks (cut & fill), retaining walls, formation preparation, etc.
  - Ducting and foundations for floodlights and ballstop netting as well as ESB substation works, etc.
  - Drainage system along with attenuation area and overflow to surface water drainage system, etc.
  - Sub-base preparation, fencing and paths/steps/ramps, etc
  - Shockpad, synthetic turf and infill, etc
  - Tree planting, reinstatement, etc.



## 5. Climate Action Considerations:

The climate related impacts of these facilities have been strongly assessed throughout the design process against the National Policy on Climate Action and more specifically the DLR Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024. The details of climate action are outlined below;

Energy: All lighting including floodlighting will be LED with facilities for dimming lights as required. In addition, the floodlighting design has been developed in collaboration with the project ecologist to reduce any impacts on the ecology. A refillable water font is being provided.

Transport: Additional bike stands will be provided. A parking and traffic report has been undertaken which identifies sustainable travel options.

Flood Resilience: Natural field drainage will be replicated on site to encourage infiltration into the ground. Additional trees are also being planted around the perimeter of the site which will also attenuate additional surface water.

Nature Based Solutions: Trees will be planted to improve air quality, sequester carbon and attenuate surface water. The use of a natural infills will be strongly considered.

## 6. Environmental Impact Assessment Screening:

The Council carried out a preliminary examination of the proposal in accordance with Article 120(1)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). Based on the nature, size and location of the development, the Council considered on the basis of that there was significant and realistic doubt regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment. Consequently, and in accordance with Article 120(1)(b)(ii) of the Regulations (as amended), the Council caused an EIA screening report to be prepared (by CAAS Ltd) based on the information that is specified in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended for the purposes of a screening determination.

Taking account of the findings of the EIA screening report, the Council has determined that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development for the reasons set out in the EIA Determination. As a result the proposal does not need to be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and no Environmental Impact Assessment Report needs to be prepared for it.

The EIA screening report and determination are appended to this Part 8 report (as appendices 1 and 2).

## 7. Appropriate Assessment – Screening Statement:

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended the Council caused Altemar Ltd to undertake Appropriate Assessment screening to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the European Sites, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site(s). As required under Regulation 42(7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended, the County Council has made a determination following screening that an Appropriate Assessment is not required. The proposed development is not directly, connected with or necessary to the management of sites as European sites and it can be concluded, on the basis, of objective information, that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects is not likely to have a significant effect on the European sites identified and listed in the

AA Screening Report prepared by Altemar Ltd. This determination is based on information supplied by Altemar Ltd including the Wintering Bird Survey as detailed in the Report. From this AA screening exercise, it has been determined that no significant likely effects may arise on any European sites as a result of the proposed development in combination with other plans and projects, through surface water, land and air, and groundwater pathways. This assessment was undertaken in the absence of mitigation measures. The project screened out for Appropriate Assessment based on the location of the works, the nature and the scale of the works.

The AA screening report and determination are appended to this Part 8 report (as appendices 3 and 4).

**8. Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA):**

An ecological impact assessment has been undertaken by Altemar Ltd (environmental consultants) and the report is included as an appendix to the main Part 8 report (see appendix 5). All recommendation as outlined in this report will be implemented as part of the proposed development.

**9. Tree Survey & Report:**

A full tree survey, impact analysis and constraints plan have been undertaken by Arborist Associates Ltd. These are included as an appendix to the Part 8 report (see appendix 6).

**10. Traffic and Parking Assessment Report:**

A traffic and parking assessment report has been undertaken by Traffico and is included as an appendix to the Part 8 report (see appendix 7). All recommendations as outlined in table 4.1 of this report will be implemented or further considered

**Reports:**

Appendix 1: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Appendix 2: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Determination

Appendix 3: Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 4: Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

Appendix 5: Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

Appendix 6: Tree Survey & Report

Appendix 7: Traffic & Parking Assessment Report

Appendix 8: Lighting Design

**Drawings (list):**

2352-01 Site Location Map

2352-03 General Arrangement Plan

2352-05 Pitch Layout

2352-06 Changing Rooms

2352-08 Fencing Details 01

2352-09 Fencing Details 02

2352-10 Elevations

2256-DOB-00-SI-DR-C-0020 - Proposed SW Layout

2256-DOB-XX-SI-DR-C-0140 – Concrete Steps Details

2256-DOB-XX-SI-DR-C-0150 - Proposed Site Sections 1

2256-DOB-XX-SI-DR-C-0151 - Proposed Site Sections 2