



Parks & Landscape Services Section, Municipal Services Department

**Proposed Development of Myrtle Square &
Convent Lane, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
PC/PKS/01/20**

Part 8 Report

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1. Introduction

The following report is a summary of the main features of the proposed development of a new public square at Bloomfields (Myrtle Square) and upgrade of Convent Lane.

2. Site Location and Scope

The site is located in the heart of Dun Laoghaire Town between St. Michaels Hospital and Bloomfields Shopping Centre and the lane running parallel to Georges Street alongside the shopping centre. The site outlined in red on the site location map consists of Convent Lane and the space partially occupied by numbers 35-37 Georges Street, paved roads, car parking and loading bays.

The proposal is to demolish the three buildings (35-37 George's Street), reconfigure the space and introduce a new civic plaza named Myrtle Square in reference to a historic property called Myrtle Lodge, which was located where Bloomfields shopping centre is today. Through traffic and car parking will be removed and disabled car parking will be re-located in close proximity. The square will provide a much-needed landmark public plaza and destination for the town and its visitors. It will provide a welcome space to linger, congregate and hold community events, characterised by trees and planting, an abundant provision of public seating to allow people enjoy the sunny aspect, an opportunity for play and/or exercise, public drinking water and a piece of art or sculpture to define the place as Dún Laoghaire.

A new canopy will pick up on the building line along George's Street. The canopy will act as an anchor in the space, provide cover during poor weather and as a backdrop for future events. The structure will be lofty, transparent and double as a frame for ornamental climbing plants such as wisteria. The laneway will become a shared area, reading with a uniform surface from the Mews building to Bloomfields on the other side. Deliveries will be restricted to early morning and residential access will be from Convent Road only.

3. Planning Context:

3.1 Context:

The site is located in the centre of Dun Laoghaire Town with many retail units, office space and residents in close proximity. As part of the Dun Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan 2016, a 'Civic Space' is proposed at Bloomfields. The Urban Framework Plan has set out a clear and coherent vision to assist and guide the ongoing development that will contribute to the physical regeneration of Dún Laoghaire Town.

3.2 Zoning:

The site zoning is Objective MTC – To protect, provide for and/or improve major town centre facilities. Under this zoning objective Open Space and Cultural Use is 'permitted in principal' and the development of a civic plaza would also be entirely consistent with this zoning. There are a number of policies within the County Develop Plan (CDP) 2016-2022 which support this project and these are outlined in section 3.3 below. The Specific Local Objectives (SLOs') in close proximity to the site will be supported through development of this Part 8. This proposal is entirely consistent with the Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan 2016 and the County Development Plans 2016-2022.

3.3 Policy:

The development of Myrtle Square and greening of Convent Lane will tie in with the relevant national and regional policy and the following specific policies as outlined in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council County Development Plan 2016-2022;

Policy ST4: Accessibility

It is Council policy to support suitable access for people with disabilities, including improvements to buildings, streets and public spaces

Policy ST5: Walking and Cycling

It is Council Policy to secure the development of a high quality walking and cycling network across the County in accordance with relevant Council and National policy and guidelines

Policy ST6: Footways and Pedestrian Routes

The Council will continue to maintain and expand the footway and pedestrian route network to provide for accessible pedestrian routes within the County in accordance with best accessibility practice.#

Policy ST10: Street Lighting

It is Council policy to provide and maintain street lighting on the public road/footway/cycleways throughout the County in accordance with commonly accepted best practice.

Policy RET4: Major Town Centres

It is Council policy to maintain the two Major Town Centres - Dún Laoghaire and Dundrum as the primary retail centres in the County. This will be reflected in the nature and scale of retail and services permitted in these centres and by the range of complementary leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities located there.

Policy OSR7: Trees & Woodlands

"It is Council policy to implement the objectives and policies of the Tree Strategy for the County - "dlr Trees 2011 – 2015" - to ensure that the tree cover in the County is managed and developed to optimise the environmental, climatic and educational benefits which derive from an 'urban forest'".

Policy OSR 14: Play Facilities

"It is Council policy to support the provision of structured and unstructured play areas with appropriate equipment and facilities throughout the county and to ensure the needs of all age groups and abilities – children, teenagers, adults and older people – are facilitated in the public parks of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown".

Policy E18: Sustainable Drainage Systems

It is Council policy to ensure that all development proposals incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).#

Policy E120: Air and Noise Pollution

It is Council policy to implement the provisions of National and EU Directives on air and noise pollution and other relevant legislative requirements in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate

Policy EI 21: Light Pollution:

It is Council policy 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.

Policy CC5: Limiting Emissions of Greenhouse Gases

It is Council policy to support National and International initiatives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases.

Policy UD3: Public Realm Design

It is Council policy that all development proposals, whether in established areas or in new growth nodes, should contribute positively to an enhanced public realm and should demonstrate that the highest quality in public realm design is achieved.

Policy UD7: Urban Tree Planting:

It is Council policy to promote urban tree planting throughout the County in accordance with the provisions of 'dlr TREES: A Tree Strategy for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown 2011 – 2015' and to preserve existing trees where possible and appropriate.

4. Nature & Extent of the Proposed Development:

The proposed development is to provide a landmark public plaza and upgrade of Convent Lane as a pedestrianised zone with provision for events to include; the removal of through traffic, the loading bays and car parking, the re-location of the disabled parking spaces and taxi rank, minor re-configuration of Georges Street Lower at various locations, minor reconfiguration of the Convent Road/Convent lane junction, re-configured and controlled access for deliveries, the demolition of numbers 35-37 Georges Street to create Myrtle Square with a large feature canopy structure, planters incorporating trees, underplanting and integrated seating, a feature play unit, greening of Convent Lane through soft landscaping and tree planting, bin storage, relocation of services as required, callisthenics play zones, public lighting, sustainable urban drainage and all ancillary building and civil engineering works. 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.

Demolitions:

- Demolition of existing buildings 35-37 Georges Street. A detailed report has been undertaken on these buildings concluding that they are not of great

architectural merit, are in very poor condition and would require substantial investment should they be re-used as retail or commercial units – see appendix 4 for details.

- There is potential to carefully deconstruct the front facades of the buildings and find a reuse for the material. This will be reviewed at a later stage in the project design.
- These buildings occupy a large footprint within the overall space. It is acknowledged as the most strategic location to create a civic space within the town.

Site Clearance:

- Removal of existing block paving, bollards, trees, signage, hard surface space, etc.

Removal of Through Traffic & Car Parking:

- Relocation of taxi rank to Georges Street loading bay after 12pm and re-location of disabled parking spaces to Georges Street and Convent Road.
- Removal of all car parking spaces and loading bays.
- Removal of all through traffic from Georges Street except for deliveries (between 22:00-10:00 only), two-way traffic from Convent Road for access to properties on Convent Lane and for home delivery service. This solution will be monitored following the completion of the project, in light of Covid-19 and any further changes required to traffic movements in Dun Laoghaire. This solution may require changing/altering at some stage in the future.

Note: A detailed parking and traffic survey took place from Friday the 3rd to Sunday the 5th July from 7am to 7pm. The scope of this survey included parking beat surveys, junction turning counts and traffic counts within the vicinity of the project. As expected, the parking occupation rate was high and this is considered to be the case because of the convenience parking adjacent to the Bloomfields Shopping Centre. However, this has resulted in a space that is inhospitable for pedestrians due to the prevalence of motor vehicles. A high rate of illegally parked vehicles was evident throughout the survey. The removal of these convenience on-street parking spaces and emphasising the priority of pedestrians and cyclists is an action of the DLR Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024. Recent developments in Blackrock Village have identified improvements for many retail units as a result of prioritising pedestrians and cyclists. Furthermore, the Bloomfields centre has in excess of 500 car parking spaces located in a multi-storey carpark and across the three days surveyed, there were an average of 226 spaces available in this car park. A detailed

parking survey report is included as an appendix to the main Part 8 Report (see appendix 8).

Myrtle Square:

- A new canopy will pick up on the building line along George's Street. The canopy will act as an anchor in the space, provide cover during poor weather and as a backdrop for events. The structure will be lofty, transparent and double as a frame for ornamental climbing plants such as wisteria. The silhouette of the structure echoes the gable fronted houses seen around the town.
- Raised planters at a height of 450mm with extensive civic scale seating integrated into the planter walls. Additional planted beds flush with the finished surface to encourage surface water run-off to be attenuated and for natural irrigation.
- Events space with integrated utilities in the canopy and planter walls.
- Surfacing to be a combination of granite paving, resin bound aggregate surfacing and exposed aggregate concrete. Hit & miss paving to be introduced to remove surface water and add to the greening.
- Play feature consisting of a climbing frame and slide to be located adjacent to the entrance to Bloomfields.

Convent Lane:

- Shared surface laneway with pedestrian/cyclist priority and space for cafes/retail & restaurants to open onto the street from the Georges Street side. Before it meets the main delivery area, the lane will form a mini plaza framed with planting to form the space.
- Greening of the laneway through flush planted beds, hit and miss paving and extensive tree planting
- Integrated bin storage units for the small and large wheelie bins constructed of sheet metal or timber
- Callisthenics exercise units to animate the space and make use of the wide lane.
- Surfacing to consist of a combination of granite, exposed aggregate concrete and resin bound aggregate.
- Granite bollards as required to protect buildings from vehicular movements.

Georges Street:

- Georges Street will be slightly re-aligned where it meets Myrtle Square to provide a chicane and ramp. Two trees will flank either end of the intervention and a civic scale bench will back onto the boundary wall of the hospital.
- A chicane and notification signage will be installed at the Corner of Wellington Street and Georges Street to signal the removal of the through road.

Planting:

- Tree planting, intermediate level planting as well as groundcover planting in the square, and throughout the project area will assist in the sequestering of carbon dioxide, filtering airborne particulate matter and attenuating run off during rainfall. The trees will sit as a grove creating a new foil to the space.

Services:

- Utilities and other services will be diverted and upgraded as required. Provision will be left for connections to services at the edge of the properties of Convent Lane to allow for development at this location. Power and water will be integrated into the planters, canopy or lighting poles for markets and events.
- A re-fillable drinking water fountain will be installed at an appropriate location.

Drainage:

- Much of the surface water that falls on the ground shall be directed to soft landscaping beds through channel drainage or the natural falls on the site. Many of these soft landscaping beds will be rain gardens or similar. An underground attenuation tank will also be constructed to comply with the requirements for full attenuation on site. There will be a high level overflow to the surface water network on the site and a hydrobreak will be installed to limit the flow to 2 litres/second/hectare. #
- The drainage has been designed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GSDSDS) with attenuation in soft areas where possible. Surface water design has been undertaken using best practice and integrated Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in order to replicate the natural characteristics of rainfall run-off from the proposed development. As well as attenuating the water on site, the quality of the surface water will be improved while also providing an amenity through good quality integrated design. Surface water drainage will be designed so that attenuation will be provided for the 1.0% AEP (1:100 year) storm event.#

Bike Stands:

- Extensive bike and e-bike stands to be integrated into the scheme as well as provision for the shared bike schemes. Covered bike parking will also be considered.

Public Lighting:

- Low energy LED lights will be integrated into the scheme using the uprights of the canopy and various poles for catenary lighting. All lighting will be 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. All lighting details will be agreed with Roads Maintenance Section prior to the commencement of any works. #

Materials:

- Generally materials used here will be high quality and similar to those used elsewhere in Dun Laoghaire including the Metals, the Seafront and the Peoples Park. This will ensure a common language and uniformity leading to a stronger sense of place for Dun Laoghaire.

Smart:

- Smart, interactive technology is to be integrated into the lighting and other elements of the scheme.

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#

Other:

- Opportunities for permanent sculpture to be reviewed at detail design stage.

5. Design Statement:

The design of the scheme has been undertaken by DLR Parks with input from an internal service departments. A design statement has been developed which outlines the reasons for responding to the site in the manner in which it has been done. The Design Statement is included as an appendix to the main Part 8 report (see appendix 3).

6. Climate Action Integration:

The design is strongly aligned to all aspects of the National Policy on Climate Action and more specifically the DLR Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024. A separate Climate Action Integration Report has been undertaken and included as an appendix to the main Part 8 report (see appendix 9).

7. Environmental Impact Assessment Screening:

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening is required in order to form an opinion whether or not the proposed development should be subject to an EIA, and if so, whether an EIAR should be prepared in respect of it. The EIA screening concludes that there is no requirement for an EIA to be carried out and no requirement for an EIAR to be prepared. The EIA screening has been undertaken by CAAS Ltd and is included as an appendix to the main Part 8 report (see appendix 2). All recommendation as outlined in this report will be implemented as part of the proposed development.

8. Appropriate Assessment – Screening Statement:

The proposed development is subject to the Guidance for Planning Authorities on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, November 2009) and S.I. No. 476 of 2011 Planning and Development (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2011. This requires that screening is carried out for all projects to examine if any affects are likely on Natura 2000 Sites, that is, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and

Special Protection Areas (SPAs). A Screening Report has been prepared by CAAS Ltd (September 2020) which concluded that a full Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment is not required. Therefore, in accordance with SI 476, 2011, Section 250, Planning and Development (Amendment) No. 3 Regulations 2011, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has determined that an Appropriate Assessment is not required. The AA Screening Report is included as an appendix to the main Part 8 report (see appendix 1). All recommendation as outlined in this report will be implemented as part of the proposed development.

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Reports:

Appendix 1: Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 2: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 3: Design Statement

Appendix 4: Buildings Report

Appendix 5: Tree Survey

Appendix 6: Computer Generated Images

Appendix 7: Parking Survey Report

Appendix 8: Bat Survey

Appendix 9: Climate Action Integration Report

Drawings:

Drawing	Number	Revision
Site Location Map	2471-01	0
Existing Site Arrangement	2471-02	0
General Arrangement	2471-03	0
Drainage & Levels Plan	2471-04	0
Lighting Plan	2471-05	A
Sections Sheet 1	2471-06	A
Sections Sheet 2	2471-07	A