



THORNTON O'CONNOR
TOWN PLANNING

Response to Fingal County Council's Opinion

**In Respect of an Application for
Permission for a Large-Scale Residential
Development at a Site fronting Swords
to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry,
Swords, Co. Dublin**

**Submitted on Behalf of Bartra Propco
No. 23 Limited**

September 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On 27th March 2024, Thornton O'Connor Town Planning on behalf of Bartra Propco No. 23 Limited submitted a pre-application LRD consultation request to Fingal County Council. The purpose of this document is to provide a summary response to the specific information requested by Fingal County Council in their Notice of LRD Opinion (Ref. LRD0025/S2) dated 23rd May 2024, further to a meeting held on 23rd April 2024 with Fingal County Council and the Applicant/Design Team.

This Notice states that it is the Planning Authority's determination that the documents submitted with the request to enter into consultations require further consideration and amendment to constitute a reasonable basis for an application for Large-Scale Residential Development. The Planning Authority have set out key issues /areas that must be addressed in the application documents that could result in the proposal constituting a reasonable basis for making an application.

A response to the items raised in the Planning Authority's Opinion is set out throughout this document.

1.1 Summary of Development

The full description of the proposed development is as follows:

"Bartra Propco No. 23 Limited intend to apply for permission for development for a Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) at this c. 0.8731 Ha site fronting the Swords to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin. The site is bounded to the west by open space, with Seamount View Housing Estate further beyond, to the south by the R106, to the east by an access road to the Applegreen Service Station and to the north by Swords Business Park.

The development's surface water drainage network shall discharge from the site into the existing manhole located along the access road to the east of the site. The development site area and drainage work area will provide a total application site area of c. 0.8792 Ha.

The proposed development will principally consist of: the construction of 123 No. residential units (55 No. one bed apartments and 68 No. two bed apartments). The development will be provided in a courtyard block arrangement ranging in height from part 4 No. to part 5 No. storeys. The proposed development has a gross floor area of c. 10,291 sq m.

The proposed development will also provide: vehicular access from the access road to the east; 24 No. car parking spaces; bicycle parking spaces; motorcycle parking spaces; pedestrian/cycle entrances at the south-west and north of the site, and along the western boundary connecting into the adjoining open space; a footpath and bicycle path around the south, east and north of the site perimeter and a shared cycle/pedestrian path along the western boundary; balconies and terraces facing all directions; hard and soft landscaping; boundary treatments; green roofs; lift overrun; PV panels; lighting; ESB substation; switchroom; plant; and all associated works above and below ground."

2.0 RESPONSE TO THE FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL OPINION

Item to be Addressed	Response
1. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justification and rationale are required with regards to the residential nature of the scheme. While residential is permitted in principle, significant consideration is needed regarding the 'MRE' zoning of the site and how this proposal will comply with the vision and objective of this zoning. The objective is to facilitate opportunities for high-density and mixed-use employment generating activity and commercial development and support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development within the Metro and Rail Economic Corridor. The previous approvals on the site contained a significant quantum of mixed uses. 	<p>The <i>Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029</i> ('<i>Development Plan</i>') states that for lands zoned as 'MRE-Metro and Rail Economic Corridor', the objective is to <i>"facilitate opportunities for high-density mixed-use employment generating activity and commercial development, and support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development within the Metro and Rail Economic Corridor"</i>. The <i>Development Plan</i> lists 'Residential' as a use that is permitted in principle on lands zoned as MRE and the vision for these lands is to:</p> <p><i>"Provide for an area of compact, high intensity/density, <u>employment generating activity with associated commercial and residential development</u> which focuses on the MetroLink, or rail or light rail stations <u>within settings of exemplary urban design, public realm streets and places, which are permeable, secure and within a high-quality green landscape</u>. Landmark buildings will provide strong quality architectural features, which respect and enhance the character of the area into which they sit. The designated areas will form sustainable districts which possess a <u>high degree of connectivity and accessibility</u> and will be developed in a phased manner subject to the necessary provision of social and physical infrastructure."</i> [Our Emphasis]</p> <p>Furthermore, it is noted that Section 2.2.11 of the <i>Development Plan</i> highlights that c. 43,000 Ha of zoned land in Fingal is divided between 22 No. zoning objectives, with the Metro and Rail Economic Corridor included in this listing as a zoning objective that can provide for residential use.</p>

The residential nature of the development and provision of public open space remains as what was submitted at the LRD Pre-Planning Stage, with no commercial use proposed. However, as discussed in detail below, Thornton O'Connor Town Planning are of the opinion that the proposed Large-Scale Residential Development on the MRE zoned lands is appropriate and suitable, and fully complies with the site's zoning objective having regard to each of the following headings:

1) Commercial / Retail Development Already Provided on the Previous Landholding

The zoning objective refers to the provision of mixed-use development on lands zoned 'MRE'. We note that the subject site previously formed part of a larger landholding comprising the Applegreen Service Station to the east. The subject scheme does not include commercial units, however, the other part of the original landholding, the Applegreen site, has provided the commercial element for this landholding, freeing up the subject site to provide residential units in line with the site's zoning objective.

2) Vacancy of Previously Permitted Commercial Units

The Applicant considers that if the proposed development included non-residential floorspace, then there would be a high potential of vacancy without an identified end-user, and the provision of residential accommodation is more appropriate given the need to provide significantly more housing on appropriately zoned and accessible land, as required in national planning documents.

Another key point to note is that in the most recent application at the site, the Planning Authority raised the following concern in their Request for Further Information:

4.
The applicant or developer is requested to demonstrate demand for the occupation of the five commercial units on the ground floor of Block A in order to avoid vacancy and to ensure active ground floor uses along this busy road frontage.

We further note that the sale of the site came with restrictive covenants that do not allow commercial uses similar to those on the Applegreen site, i.e. convenience retail and café, further limiting potential viable uses on the site.

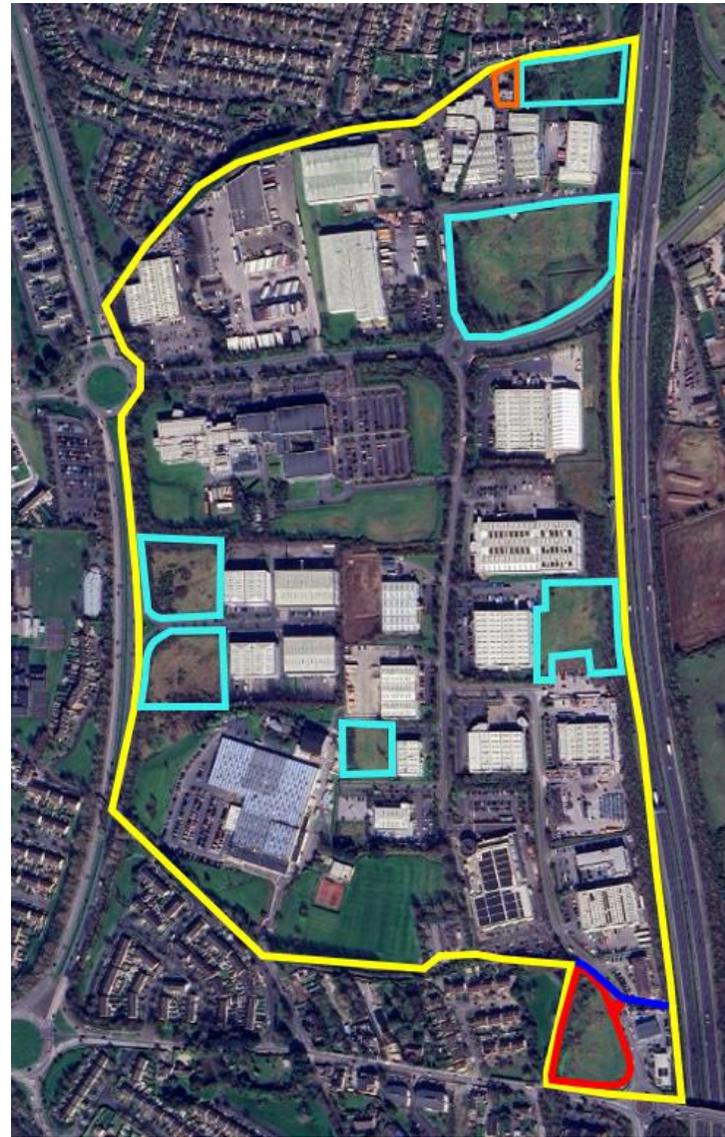
3) Capacity of MRE Zoned Lands to Provide Residential Development

There is already a very significant quantum of employment generating activity and commercial development present on the entire MRE zoned lands to the north of the subject site, within Swords Business Park. The only residential content present is one single dwelling along the northern boundary of the zoned lands. It is also noted that there are no existing or planned residential developments on these northern MRE zoned lands.

Due to the significant quantum of commercial/industrial uses already existing on the MRE zoned lands to the north, and the lack of any residential content on these lands, it is considered that there is capacity to provide a development comprising wholly of residential units. The proposed development will “*support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development*” when taking into consideration the wider MRE lands, in accordance with the zoning objective and vision.

4) Possibility for Future Residential Development on the Remaining Undeveloped MRE Zoned Land to the North of the Subject Site

The below image illustrates all of the undeveloped land (outlined in light blue) within the MRE Zoning (outlined in yellow). Lands north of the dark blue line are within Swords Business Park. Also identified in the image is 'Annsbrook House' (outlined in orange) located to the north of Swords Business Park, which is the only residential property on the MRE zoned lands. The remaining developed land in Swords Business Park comprises wholly of commercial / industrial / manufacturing / office units, with no residential aspect evident.



Any future development on the remaining greenfield lands in Swords Business Park is likely to reflect the existing commercial activities due to their central and prominent location in the Business Park. Even if some degree of residential development was to be provided on these greenfield lands, it would still constitute an “*appropriate quantum of residential development*” across the wider MRE zoned lands.

The subject site is not located in Swords Business Park and is situated along the R106 where the dominant land use is residential.

Therefore, having regard to the above, it is considered that the subject site would be more appropriate and suitable to facilitate any quantum of residential development than the remaining undeveloped MRE zoned lands to the north.

5) Fingal County Council Have Permitted Planning Applications for Developments Consisting Solely of Residential on Other MRE Zoned Lands

Having reviewed Fingal County Council’s Online Planning Register and the Interactive Map of the *Development Plan*, there has been 3 No. planning applications Granted Permission for solely residential development on MRE zoned land. These applications are discussed in detail below.

- ABP Reg. Ref. TA06F.313317: 255 No. Built-to-Rent Units & a Creche at a Site Between Swift Square and Sports Surgery Clinic, Northwood Avenue, Santry, Dublin 9.

The proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) comprised 255 No. Build-to-Rent (BTR) units and a creche.

At the time of submission, the site was zoned 'ME - Metro Economic Corridor' in the *Fingal Development Plan 2011-2027*, which has since been updated to the MRE zoning in the current *Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029*. The ME lands had a similar zoning vision and objective to the updated MRE lands in that the zoning supports the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development.

The Planning Inspector noted in their Report the following comment made by Fingal County Council regarding the principle of development:

"The proposed residential development may be permitted in principle under the ME zoning objective at the development site. The development would be acceptable in principle, would be compatible with the overall policies and objectives for this zone, would not have undesirable effects, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area."

In assessing the principle of development of the proposed BTR scheme, the Planning Inspector of An Bord Pleanála noted the following:

"The proposed residential, childcare and open space land uses are all permitted in principle under the relevant ME Metro Economic zoning objective. I am satisfied that the proposed development is generally consistent with the overall vision for the ME zoned lands at this location, as per Objective SANTRY 5, given that it will provide high density residential development and improve connectivity in the area, subject to the retention of the existing trees on the site as considered below."

This SHD was granted permission by An Bord Pleanála and is currently under construction.

➤ **FCC Reg. Ref. F15A/0440: 374 No. Residential Units & a Creche at Santry Demesne, off Northwood Avenue, Santry, Dublin 9.**

The proposed development sought to amend a previous planning application (Reg. Ref. F04A/1562/E2) to replace 5 No. logistic warehouses, 23 No. office buildings and an amenity building with 246 No. apartment units, 128 No. houses and a creche. At the time of submission, the site was zoned 'ME - Metro Economic Corridor' in the *Fingal Development Plan 2011-2027*.

In assessing the complete removal of employment generating activity and commercial uses at the site and its replacement with solely residential units and a creche, the Planning Officer stated the following:

"The applicant has applied for modifications to the permitted development such that the commercial element will be omitted and replaced with residential. It is considered that the proposed development while a significant modification to the previous permission providing housing in lieu of commercial development, is acceptable in principle. Residential development is permitted within the land use zoning objective for this site and the Santry Demesne currently supports a significant mixed use development, including a significant number of apartment units.

While a local area plan has not been prepared for these lands, it is considered that the proposed development is in keeping with the character of the area and would not prejudice the preparation of a local area plan in the future in that development has already been permitted on this site. While the development proposed has altered from commercial to residential, it remains in accordance with the ME

zoning and is in keeping with the character of the developed lands in the vicinity of the subject site. It is not considered that a revised EIS is required given that the modifications do not reach the thresholds set out under Item 13 Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development regulations.

ME zoned lands provide for an appropriate mix of commercial and residential development along the Metro Economic Corridor. Considering the development of the Northwood and Santry Demesne lands to date, it is considered that the proposed development will provide for an adequate quantity of residential development in accordance with the ME zoning.” [Our Emphasis]

The Planning Officer concluded their assessment as follows:

“The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle in terms of its location and is considered to be acceptable in terms of the ME zoning that applies to these lands. The proposed development will contribute to the vibrancy of the area and provide for an additional mix and variety of housing types.”

The proposed Residential Development was granted permission by Fingal County Council. This development is now fully constructed and occupied and is better known as ‘Cedarview’.

➤ **FCC Reg. Ref. F15A/0054: 62 No. Residential Units at the Junction of Ballymun Road and Santry Avenue, Dublin 9.**

The proposed development sought to provide a total of 62 No. residential units comprising 32 No. houses and 30 No. apartments. The site was zoned ‘ME - Metro Economic Corridor’ in the *Fingal Development Plan 2011-2027*.

In assessing the proposed development comprising wholly residential content on the ME zoned lands, the Planning Officer stated the following:

“The subject site is zoned ‘ME’ which allows for a range of uses including Residential development. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with this zoning objective.”

The proposed Residential Development was granted permission by Fingal County Council. This development is now fully constructed and occupied and is better known as ‘Northwood Green’.

As is evidenced above, Fingal County Council and An Bord Pleanála have been previously disposed to planning applications comprising wholly residential development on ME zoned lands (updated to ‘MRE’ in the *Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029*). The 3 No. applications discussed above are located in an area comprising mixed development, including residential and retail, business and industrial parks, similar to that of the subject site.

The MRE zoned lands surrounding the abovementioned applications comprise a higher quantum of residential development compared to the MRE zoned lands north of the subject site which only includes a single dwelling. Evidently, there is capacity for the MRE zoned lands to provide wholly residential development whilst still maintaining the commercial and employment generating activity, in accordance with the zoning objective and vision for MRE lands.

6) The Proposed Design and Layout of the Development is in Accordance with the Vision for MRE Zoned Lands

The proposed development accords with the 12 No. urban design criteria set out in the *Best Practice Urban Design Manual (2009)*, as demonstrated in the accompanying *Architectural Design Statement* prepared by Coady Architects. Please refer to same for further information. In summary, the urban design strategy will ensure the proposed development is sustainable, distinctive, will complement the urban structure and promote a strong sense of identity for the area.

Currently, the subject site does not offer any public open space or connectivity, and offers little high-quality landscaping (existing site is overgrown). The proposed development seeks to improve the permeability and connectivity in the area through the provision of numerous pedestrian and cyclist routes and access points, including a new connection to the proposed public open space in the northern portion of the site and a connection route into the existing public park to the west of the site. The proposed landscape strategy will significantly improve the visual appearance of the site, create an enjoyable space for existing and future residents, and enhance the biodiversity of the site.

The layout of the site has been designed to address all sides of the site in terms of building frontage. This ensures there will be passive surveillance on all pedestrian and cyclist linkages and the public open space, creating a safe space for people to use.

We note that the previously granted application on site (FCC Reg. Ref. F17A/0714 & amended under F19A/0521) did not offer any form of public open space and only provided two pedestrian linkages to the public park to the west of the site. Despite the lack of permeability, connectivity and

	<p>public space in the previous applications, Fingal County Council and An Bord Pleanála (in the second application) did not raise any concerns in their assessment. Evidently, the proposed development offers a high degree of connectivity and accessibility compared to the previously granted permissions on site.</p> <p>7) <u>Concluding Remarks</u></p> <p>The significant lack of existing or potential future residential development on the MRE zoned lands north of the subject site indicates that there is capacity for development comprising wholly residential content. This has not been contested by either Fingal County Council or An Bord Pleanála in deciding to grant permission previously for development principally comprising residential content on MRE zoned lands. The subject proposal is of a high-quality urban design, provides a large quantum of landscaped public open space, and provides permeable and accessible linkages through the site for wider connectivity.</p> <p>Therefore, as demonstrated above, the quantum of residential development proposed is appropriate and is wholly in accordance with the MRE zoning objective and vision for the subject site.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mix of units is considered inadequate, with the proposed provision of 55 no. 1- bedroom apartments (44.4%) and 69 no. 2- bedroom apartments (55.6%) and there are no 3 or 4 bedroom apartments (0%). This mix should be reconsidered as part of any future planning application and an appropriate rationale for the unit mix should be provided with reference to the Fingal Housing Strategy and national guidelines. 	<p>The proposed mix of units has been amended to include some 2-bed, 3-person units. As such, the proposed 123 No. apartment units will comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 55 No. 1-bed, 2-person units (44.7%); - 6 No. 2-bed, 3-person units (4.9%); and - 62 No. 2-bed, 4-person units (50.4%).

It is considered that the proposed unit mix of just 1-bed and 2-bed units is acceptable given the current demand for smaller units in urban areas as expressed in the *National Planning Framework*, as well as the existing housing stock in the area that comprises predominantly larger units.

Section 6.6 of the *National Planning Framework* states:

“Between 2018 and 2040, an average output of at least 25,000 new homes will need to be provided in Ireland every year to meet the needs for well-located and affordable housing, with increasing demand to cater for one and two-person households.”

Section 6.6 further highlights that:

“Currently, 7 out of 10 households in the State consist of three people or less, with an average household size of 2.75 people. This is expected to decline to around 2.5 people per household by 2040. Household sizes in urban areas tend to be smaller than in the suburbs or rural parts of the country. In Dublin city, one, two and three person households comprise 80 percent of all households³⁶. Yet, the stock of housing in Ireland is largely comprised of detached and semi-detached houses with three to four bedrooms.”

Evidently, as per the above, National Planning Policy emphasises the need to provide smaller sized housing units in order to respond to the lack of housing supply in accessible locations and to cater for people seeking affordable housing options.

In addition to the explicit demand for smaller size housing units, the below table provides the results of the Census 2022 survey¹ and demonstrates that there is an undersupply of 1-and-2-bed units across both Fingal and Swords Town. At just 3.67% out of the total housing stock in Swords Town and 3.87% across Fingal, there is clearly a deficit in the supply of 1-bed units. Evidently there is a sufficient supply of 3-bed units, equating to 45.81% of the total housing stock in Swords Town and 38.84% in Fingal.

Unit Size	Swords Town		Fingal	
	No. of Bedrooms	% of Total Bedrooms	No. of Bedrooms	% of Total Bedrooms
1-Bed	501	3.67%	4,163	3.87%
2-Bed	2,486	18.22%	20,652	19.19%
3-Bed	6,250	45.81%	41,796	38.84%
4-Bed	2,943	21.57%	25,994	24.16%
5-Bed+	432	3.17%	6,021	5.6%
Not Stated	1,031	7.56%	8,973	8.34%
Total	13,643	100%	107,599	100%

Furthermore, we note that the area surrounding the subject site comprises mainly 2-bed+ apartments, duplexes and houses, with little to no 1-bed units available. Therefore, the introduction of a new and smaller housing size to the area will provide an affordable option for people looking to downsize or start off on the property ladder.

In conclusion, having regard to the explicit requirement of the *National Planning Framework* to provide smaller size units in urban and accessible locations, as well as the evident undersupply of smaller size units currently

¹ Census 2022 Interactive Map – ‘Permanent Private Households and Number of Persons in Permanent Private Households’ (www.visual.cso.ie)

	<p>provided in both Swords Town and Fingal, the unit mix for the proposed application is unequivocally acceptable.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justification is required for the proposed density of 142 units per hectare. Swords is categorised as a Key town within the Metropolitan Area and it should be demonstrated how this proposed density accords with the provisions of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) for a site at this location. 	<p>Table 3.8 of the <i>Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024</i> ('Compact Settlement Guidelines') sets out the definitions for terms used to define the accessibility of a site which in turn will determine the density a proposed residential development should be. It is our opinion that the site is defined as a 'High Capacity Public Transport Node or Interchange' as it accords with the following criterion:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Lands within 1,000 metres (1km) walking distance of an existing or planned high capacity urban public transport node or interchange, namely an interchange or node that includes DART, high frequency Commuter Rail¹¹, light rail or MetroLink services; or locations within 500 metres walking distance of an existing or planned BusConnects 'Core Bus Corridor'²² stop."</i></p> <p>(Footnote 11: "10-15 minute peak hour frequency")</p> <p>Appendix A of the <i>Compact Settlement Guidelines</i> provides the following definition for a transport 'node or interchange': <i>"Places of convergence and interchange between different forms of transportation."</i></p> <p>The subject site is located c. 800-metres / 10-minute walking distance to the proposed 'Swords Central Station', which is included in the MetroLink project. Adjacent to the future station is bus stop Nos. 5079 and 5074, both of which provides bus services operating approximately every 10-15-minutes at peak hours. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed MetroLink</p>

	<p>Station and existing adjacent frequent bus services falls within the definition of a transport 'node or interchange'.</p> <p>In terms of the prescribed density for the proposed development, based on the location of the site within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, as identified in Appendix E of the <i>Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy</i> by the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (subject site falls within the Electoral Division of Swords - Seatown), as well as the definition of the subject site as an 'High Capacity Public Transport Node or Interchange' defined under Table 3.8 of the <i>Compact Settlement Guidelines</i>, the site can be classified as a 'Metropolitan Towns (>1,500 population) - Centre and Urban Neighbourhoods' where densities of 50–150 dwellings per hectare ('dph') shall generally be applied in the centres and in urban neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Towns.</p> <p>Therefore, the density of the proposed development of 141 dph is wholly in accordance with the density range set out for the subject site in the <i>Compact Settlement Guidelines</i>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity is required in any application with regards to the provision of residential amenity facilities/services and their quantum. The proposed development description refers to the provision of ancillary residential amenities. A drawing illustrating their location and an associated quantum table should be provided for ease of assessment. A clear comparison to that previously permitted under F19A/0521(ABP-307526-20) versus the proposed development should also be included. 	<p>In this regard we refer to paragraph 4.6 of the <i>Apartments Guidelines</i>:</p> <p><i>"Communal or other facilities within apartment schemes should be subject to negotiation and agreement with the developer as part of the planning process. They should not generally be imposed as requirements by the planning authority in the absence of proposals from and/or the agreement of an applicant. The provision of such facilities is likely to have significant implications for management and maintenance costs for future residents."</i></p>

	<p>As such, it is considered that the proposed quantum of internal amenity space for the residents, totalling to c. 79 sq m, is adequate. This represents a significant improvement compared to the previously permitted scheme, which did not include any communal amenity space. The amenity space is proposed at ground floor level in the south-eastern portion of the building which will be beneficial as an entry point and node for socialising, interaction and integration.</p> <p>In addition to the proposed internal residential amenity facility, a large quantum (c. 932 sq m) of communal open space that exceeds the minimum requirement (c. 745 sq m) set out in the <i>Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> ('Apartment Guidelines') is also proposed.</p> <p>The design of the proposed development prioritises residents' well-being by incorporating thoughtfully designed communal areas that foster social interaction. This enhancement not only meets current standards but also creates a more liveable and community-oriented environment for residents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A justification and rationale for no childcare provision is required. This omission of any childcare provision should be reconsidered and an appropriate quantum of childcare provision is considered a requirement in any future planning application. 	<p>A <i>Childcare Demand Assessment</i> has been prepared by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning and is submitted herewith. Please refer to the <i>Childcare Demand Assessment</i> for a full analysis of the existing and future supply and demand for childcare facilities in the local area. The following analysis was made:</p> <p><i>"The subject development comprises 123 No. units, of which 68 No. units can reasonably accommodate families. The potential childcare uptake of the proposal is likely to be 4 No. places, and the local childcare network has an indicative maximum capacity of 963 No. spaces. The Fingal Planning Register indicates significant future</i></p>

	<p><i>pipeline of an additional 407 childcare places within Swords in the coming years. While the survey did identify a limited vacancy in available childcare places in January 2024, given the minimal childcare demand generated by the proposed development, alongside the shifting age profile and demographic needs of the population, as well as planned new facilities in Swords, it is considered that additional childcare facilities at this location would not be necessary, and can be effectively absorbed by the existing and planned facilities network."</i></p> <p>As such, the <i>Childcare Demand Assessment</i> concluded the following:</p> <p><i>"In our opinion, there is sufficient existing provision of childcare infrastructure in the vicinity of the subject site (i.e., within c. 2 km radius) to support the proposed development. As the above survey demonstrates, there is an adequate supply of facilities within walking available to local residents offering a higher-than-average per capita ratio of childcare places. While there was no material level of vacancy identified within existing childcare facilities <u>the size of the proposed development is unlikely to impact on the quality of services and facilities currently available in the locality.</u>" [Author's Emphasis]</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An AA Screening Report should be provided with any future application. 	<p>An <i>Appropriate Assessment Screening Report</i> has been prepared by Enviroguide Consulting and is submitted herewith.</p>
<p>2. DESIGN AND LAYOUT</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The same site strategy has been presented as at Stage 1 of the LRD process, where concerns were raised about the suitability of this strategy on the site. At the time it was noted the massing and 	<p>Please refer to Table 3.2 in the <i>Architectural Design Statement</i> prepared by Coady Architects for the response provided for this item.</p>

position of the block on the site is inferior to that previously granted for the site. There are concerns with;

- i) 3 sides of the building face on to roads or carparking, with only 1 side benefitting from the park to the west.
- ii) Units in the north block are facing north as access deck has been placed on the sunny southern side – these units have no connection to either the inner courtyard or the park to the west. This is a missed opportunity.
- iii) The position of the Car parking slices the site in two not allowing for flow or connection between the open space and the building.
- iv) The position of the building appears to be too hard / close to the roundabout. Appropriate buffers / setback for residential use in this area do not appear to have been provided.
- v) The uniform height around the courtyard presents a large mass – while the massing has been broken to some extent by the elevational treatment the proposal is not sympathetic to context.
- vi) Some different treatment of the western block, as this faces onto a quiet pedestrian route, with an opportunity for lower heights or own door access, presents a missed opportunity.

Given these concerns revised proposals are required as part of any application that illustrate a break up of the massing and provide for height variation of the proposed five storey elements of the proposal. Considerations for the integration of all elements of the proposal to the streetscape should be carefully considered. Further attention is required to the corner expression at the roundabout, the corner section should read as a strong elevation at this dominant location. There should be a greater set back from the

<p>roundabout to give the residential units facing the roundabout more privacy and allow for a more purposeful public realm and greening of this important corner. Material details should be provided and should include a wider range of brick or stone and colour to break up the mass of the building and better integrate the development in its surroundings. The quality required for a development at a corner location and at the entrance into Swords from the east should be of the highest standards, including the balcony details which should be enclosed rather than clip-on and should be carefully considered to complement the scheme and ensure usability.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residential units shall meet the minimum open space requirements as per the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines. In the current proposal, it is noted that Unit 426 has a private amenity space of 6.8 sqm instead of the minimum 7 sqm. 	<p>As demonstrated in the submitted floor plans and <i>Housing Quality Assessment</i> prepared by Coady Architects, all apartment units meet and, in some cases, exceed the minimum private open space requirement. Additionally, it is noted that 58% of the 123 No. units exceed the minimum apartment floor area by 10%.</p> <p>The private open space for unit No. 426 has increased from 6.8 sq m to 7 sq m to accord with the minimum requirements set out in the <i>Apartment Guidelines</i>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity is required with regards to the submitted Daylight and Sunlight Report and if this has assessed the trees on the park site to the west and their impact on the proposed development. Furthermore the unit numbers listed in the sunlight access results table do not correspond with the apartment unit numbers as indicated in the submitted floor plans and this should be reviewed. There also appears to be a disparity between the comment that only 4 units are below the sunlight access criteria 	<p>The trees on the west of the site have been included within the analysis. Tree details as included within the model, are based on a tree survey as carried out by CMK Hort & Arb Ltd. The tree survey indicated tree size, type and location. The results seen in Section 7.2 '(E) Internal Daylight Testing Results' of the <i>BRE Daylight & Sunlight Assessment</i> prepared by J.V. Tierney & Co account for the tree details.</p>

<p>and yet illustrations show that no windows on the northern elevation will receive the minimum 1.5 hours of direct sunlight on 21st March. A rationale for the units which do not meet the criteria for daylight results as well as a detailed executive summary of a revised Daylight and Sunlight Report should be submitted as part of any future application.</p>	<p>In terms of the sunlight access results table, the methodology as per Section 3.1.10 of "BRE 209", i.e. The BRE Guidance, states the following in terms of how this criterion is carried out "<i>For dwellings, at least one habitable room, preferably a main living room, should meet at least the minimum criterion</i>", i.e. 1.5 Hours. Therefore, only one space per apartment needs to be in compliance which is why the results are referenced in terms of Unit Number, instead of room name. These Unit Number references align with the naming convention as submitted with this application.</p> <p>The illustrations indicating failures on the northern elevation, in some cases have other rooms, i.e. bedrooms or kitchen/ living /dining rooms which are either south, east or west facing and would be in compliance. Therefore, the majority of units have at least one space in compliance.</p> <p>There are instances whereby this criterion could not be met, including 16 No. units in the proposal. Due to the natural design constraints seen with apartment developments, failures in minute numbers are unavoidable. The failing units for this scheme, using this methodology, are all units which are facing north, are adjacent to large trees or have an access deck above them. The rationale being for these units, is that they have access to balconies, amenity area access, dual aspect layout and well-proportioned apartments. Any of the north facing units which are below the criteria have a direct view onto public open space.</p>
<p>3. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING SECTION</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carparking: The proposed carparking provision of 24 spaces is well below the maximums permitted by the standards of the Fingal County Development Plan and the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Local Authorities'; and the Transportation Planning Section consider 	<p>The car parking standards set out in the <i>Development Plan and Compact Settlement Guidelines</i> for the location of the subject site are a <u>maximum</u>, not a minimum.</p> <p>As stated in Section 14.17.7 of the <i>Development Plan</i>:</p>

the quantity to be excessively low for this location, and we strongly recommend that it is brought closer in-line with the maximums permitted in the guidelines, and that the applicant provide a further detailed rationale and justification for the proposed car parking provision.

“A reduced car parking provision may be acceptable where the Council is satisfied that good public transport links are already available or planning and/or a Management Mobility Plan for the development demonstrates that a high percentage of modal shift in favour of the sustainable modes will be achieved through the development.”

As stated in Section 5.3.4 of the Compact Settlement Guidelines, car parking ratios “should be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated at locations that have good access to urban services and to public transport”.

The car parking provision for the development has been developed based on a number of key site-specific characteristics, including proximity of the site to the future MetroLink Swords Central Station, existing bus services and the local amenities and services in Swords which are all within walking distance.

As demonstrated in the accompanying *Mobility Management Plan*, the last CSO Census (2022) data indicated that 35% of residents use their own car to travel to work and education facilities in the Electoral Division of Swords-Seatown (which the subject site is located in). As discussed in the *Planning Report* submitted herewith, the area surrounding the subject site is primarily made up of low-to-medium-density housing that were constructed many years ago. Since then, there has been a significant increase in public transport investment, such as the new MetroLink and BusConnects services. Additionally, there has been a strong focus on upgrading and improving infrastructure to promote more active travel in communities. As such, it is anticipated that the modal split for the area surrounding the subject site will experience a decline in car dependency and will experience more sustainable movements through and increase public transport usage and active travel.

	<p>A comprehensive Parking Strategy has been prepared which sets out the approach and justification to the quantum of car parking proposed. Please see the accompanying <i>Traffic & Transport Assessment</i> and the <i>Mobility Management Plan</i> for further details.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In regard to bicycle parking, the proposed quantity of 193 long stay spaces and 62 'short stay' spaces is generally acceptable; however, the quality and diversity of type of provision is lacking and should be further developed to provide a diversity of the type of detail, to allow for a certain quantity of fully enclosed bike lockers, cargo bikes, electric scooters, storage lockers etc., to cater for all types of users. The need for a high quality and diversity of bike parking provision is compounded by the very low level of carparking being proposed. The detail should be very clearly demonstrated, including dimensions of the rooms and all equipment proposed, including data sheets for any stacking systems proposed, details of passive surveillance achieved, security measures for access control, and details demonstrating the clear and convenient and unobstructed access to each location. The applicant should also strongly consider providing larger bicycle storage rooms in order to meet this critical requirement of a high standard of bicycle parking. 	<p>The proposal submitted at LRD Pre-Planning Stage to Fingal County Council proposed a total of 229 No. residents (long-term) bicycle spaces, including 3 No. cargo spaces and 33 No. foldable bike lockers, and 62 No. visitor (short-term) spaces to cater for 124 No. apartment units. The long-term spaces were proposed in 3 No. bike stores in the western, south-western and south-eastern portion of the building.</p> <p>The quantum, quality and type of bicycle spaces proposed has been revised to respond positively to Fingal County Council's Opinion.</p> <p>The development will provide high quality, secure and innovative bicycle parking provision in accordance with the bicycle parking standards set out in the <i>Compact Settlements Guidelines</i> and <i>Apartment Guidelines</i>, which requires 1 No. space per bedroom for residents and 1 No. space per 2 No. bedrooms for visitor parking (<i>Apartment Guidelines</i> only).</p> <p>Some 274 No. residents parking and 130 No. visitor parking spaces are proposed to cater for the development, totalling to 404 No. Spaces.</p> <p>The visitor parking spaces will be provided in various locations across the site in the form of Sheffield stands.</p> <p>The residents bicycle parking is proposed in 4 No. bike stores at ground floor level of the building, and 2 No. stores are in the southern extent of the courtyard. The bike stores are equipped for a mix of bicycle parking types</p>

	<p>including standard, larger/heavier cargo, e-bike charging spaces as well as stacked lockers that can store foldable bicycles and additional ancillary equipment such as scooters and helmets. A bicycle maintenance hub will also be provided in one of the bike stores.</p> <p>In total, there will be 176 No. stacked spaces (88 No. two-tier racks), 10 No. standard spaces, 4 No. cargo spaces, 15 No. e-bike charging spaces, 69 No. foldable bike lockers and a bicycle hub. It is therefore considered that the proposed development provides a more diverse range of bicycle space types to cater for various types and sizes of bicycles, as well as providing additional locker space for the storage of ancillary equipment, compared to the proposal submitted at Opinion Stage. Please refer to Section 4.8 of the <i>Planning Report</i> and the submitted plans prepared by Coady Architects for further details on the bicycle stores.</p> <p>The location of the bike stores in different areas of the building and their entrances along both the outer envelope of the building and within the courtyard, provides convenient access and ensures there will be excellent passive surveillance for the safety of residents.</p> <p>It is considered that the revised quantum, quality and range of bicycle parking spaces proposed is a significant improvement to what was proposed at the LRD Pre-Planning Stage.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In regard to the proposed pedestrian and cycling infrastructure; the detail of the public footpath and cycle facilities surrounding the proposed development, with a 2m cycletrack and footpath proposed, is generally an acceptable approach; however the detail should be further developed and, the following included at a minimum: 	

i)	The proposed details at the location of the existing uncontrolled pedestrian crossings at the existing roundabout.	The 'Roads General Arrangement' Drawing (Drawing No. 'B1054-OCSC-XX-XX-DR-C-0110') has been updated to include the existing crossings and includes a short, shared space section to allow pedestrians to navigate across the cycle track safely.
ii)	The proposed details of the levels of the cycle track and footpath in relation to the road carriageway, including details of cross-sections at all critical areas.	A cross section is provided in the Drawing No. 'B1054-OCSC-XX-XX-DR-C-0111' prepared by OCSC.
iii)	The details of how it terminates at the Swords Industrial Estate end.	The 'Roads General Arrangement' Drawing (Drawing No. 'B1054-OCSC-XX-XX-DR-C-0110') indicates that a drop kerb is provided to facilitate cyclists transitioning on road at this location.
iv)	The Transportation Planning Section has strong concerns that the proposed new cycle lane would attract illegal ad-hoc carparking; and we have a preference that the applicant explore the possibility of including measures to discourage 'ad-hoc' carparking on the cycle lane, such as an upstand kerb or bollards etc.	A cross section is provided in Drawing No. 'B1054-OCSC-XX-XX-DR-C-0111' prepared by OCSC which confirms that a full height 125mm upstand kerb is proposed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In regard to the general layout of the site, the existing road layout at the proposed new vehicular entrance, including the existing 'turning head' should be included on all site layout drawings, including the 'Roads General Arrangement'. The Transportation Planning Section has a preference that the applicant explore the possibility of including measures to discourage 'ad-hoc' carparking at this existing 'turning head'. 		<p>The existing road layout at the proposed new vehicular entrance, including the existing 'turning head' is included on the Roads General Arrangement drawing prepared by OCSC Consulting Engineers (Drawing No. 'B1054-OCSC-XX-XX-DR-C-0110')</p> <p>A comprehensive parking strategy has been developed for the site and includes specific measures for preventing any unauthorised parking at the site including a clamping system in operation which will be appropriately communicated and signed within the development. The surface materials proposed are also intended to reinforce the differing uses of spaces.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Stage 1 Road Safety Audit should be completed and submitted by the Applicant with any further Planning Application, in compliance with the TII Publication 'Road Safety Audit GE-STY-01024'. 	<p>A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been completed by a suitably qualified, independent third party (Traffic Road Safety Engineering). The layout has been updated in accordance with this and the report submitted with this application.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In regard to the proposed 'Car Club' spaces; the applicant describes in the submitted 'traffic assessment & parking strategy' that it is proposed to provide 2 No. car club space in the development car parking facility. While this is a welcome proposal, the Transportation Planning Section recommend that the applicant further explores this proposal with the commercial operators that provide this service to verify that there is strong potential for the service to be provided at this location. 	<p>The Applicant has engaged in discussions with YUKO Toyota Car Club who have advised they would be interested in coming on board to service the development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access for Emergency Service Vehicles: The applicant should confirm the access arrangements required in regard to the Building Regulations Technical Guidance Document B. 	<p>Access for the development frontage to the east and west is provided via the adjacent roads. Swept path analysis showing a 12m fire tender with a turntable ladder accessing the site to the required location, as co-ordinated with the project fire consultant and architect, is shown in OCSC Drawing No. 'B1054-OCSC-XX-XX-DR-C-0142'.</p>
<p>4. PARKS AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DIVISION</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing trees: Full consideration must be given to the retention of existing trees (in particular Tree no.s 564, 465, 566, 567, 568) along the western boundary and any proposals for undergrounding overhead wires, public lighting and hardfacing. 	<p>Existing tree Nos. 564, 566 and 567 are to be retained as part of the proposed development. It is not feasible to retain tree No. 568 due to the requirement of a turning area for emergency vehicles and bin lorries. Tree No. 565 is recommended for removal due to its very poor condition. The other two trees on site (tree Nos. 569 & 570) are to be removed to facilitate the required drainage pipes (refer to Drawing No. 'B1054-OCSC-XX-XX-DR-C-0500' by OCSC Consulting Engineers for location of such pipes) and the new footpath and cycle lane along the southern boundary. It is considered that an</p>

	<p>appropriate balance has been achieved between retaining as many trees as possible whilst adhering to required planning policy to provide compact growth and higher density development in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>In terms of the existing overhead wires, J.V. Tierney & Co have prepared a drawing that proposes to bring the overhead ESB power line underground and away from the tree line along the western boundary and from the proposed building itself. This is outlined in the attached drawings MOU-JVT-ZZ-SI-DR-E-6000 (existing) and MOU-JVT-ZZ-SI-DR-E-6001 (proposed). Details of undergrounding the power lines are to be agreed upon with ESB prior to the commencement of development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Open Space (quantity): The area to the north is acceptable in principle as Public Open Space while the area along the west is too narrow to consider as public open space but instead is considered Environmental Open Space. The required Public Open Space for this site is 12-15% of the development site area. Clarity on the area (in square metres) of the proposed Public Open Space to the north. The area of Public Open Space must be outlined with a thin line as opposed to block colour. 	<p>In response to the Council’s Opinion, the strip of open space along the western site boundary has been transformed to environmental open space, albeit it plays an important role in providing a pedestrian and cycle route through the site. The 589 sq m of open space is to provide visual amenity for residents of the development and members of the public traversing the site. The substantial quantum of proposed meadow grassland and woodland will contribute to biodiversity net gain and introduce new flora and fauna to the site.</p> <p>The proposed 1,142 sq m of public open space is contained in the northern portion of the site and represents 13% of the site area. This accords with the 12-15% requirement for public open space as set out in Table 14.12 and Objective DMSO52 of the <i>Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029</i>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Open Space (quantity): The area of proposed Public Open Space including the proposed play area to the north has very reduced passive supervision at ground level due the location of the carpark spacing. Consideration should be given to improving 	<p>It is considered that the proposed public open space in the northern portion of the does not have a “<i>reduced passive supervision at ground level due the location of the carpark spacing</i>”. The location of the public open space and car park has been thoroughly considered in order to provide future residents</p>

this passive supervision at this level. If the Public Open Space is to be located here - it should be an enclosed park for safety of children etc.

with safe and convenient car parking close to the apartment building, following the guidelines of the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*, as well as a large quantum of enjoyable public open space for future residents and the wider community to use.

As discussed in the accompanying *Architectural Design Statement*, alternative layouts for the public open space and car parking were considered and it was concluded that any other layout would result in the car parking being less convenient and less overlooked by residents and being provided along the street edge which does not provide an attractive public realm, and the public open space would be reduced by 30% due to the requirement for fire tender and maintenance access. Please see the below image taken from the *Architectural Design Statement* which details the justification for the proposed car parking and public open space layout.

Car parking interactions

Option A (24Spaces) Reduces the green buffer between the parking and the streetscape. **Option B (24Spaces)** Reduces significantly the Public Open Space area



The location and layout of the proposed public open space is such that it can be easily accessed by future residents of the development and wider community, as well as employees of Swords Business Park and the Applegreen Station. Due to the numerous linkages and routes proposed throughout the site, particularly the route through the public open space to the north, the extent of pedestrian and cyclist movement will ensure a high-level of passive surveillance on the public open space. Additionally, the distance of the apartment building to the public open space will ensure there

	<p>will be 'eyes-on-the-street' for the safety of residents and the wider community.</p> <p>Despite the public open space receiving a high-level of passive surveillance, as recommended in the Council's Opinion, the proposed public open space will be enclosed with a 1.12-metre-high solid round-bar railing along majority of the perimeter, with the existing palisade fencing running along the western boundary retained, as illustrated in Drawing No. '23FG03-DR-0500' by Áit Urbanism + Landscape. Access to the public open space will be provided via 3 No. entrances that are equipped with a mechanical self-closing gate. The proposed boundary treatments will ensure the safety of people who use the public open space, whilst still being able to provide permeable connections in the local area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Provision: Clarity is required on the quantum of play provision in relation to this development. 	<p>A total of 330 sq m of play space is to be provided for the proposed development. Details of the proposed play space is discussed in the <i>Landscape Report</i> prepared by Áit Urbanism + Landscape.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services and SuDS: Cross sections of SuDS to be clearly shown on the landscape plans. Details of any head walls and manholes to be clearly shown on landscape plans - (in particular in relation to an area to be used as a kickabout area) (Slopes for SuDS to be 1:5). Greater consideration should be given on proposed tree planting and proposed services (There appears to be conflict in the current drawings). A combined landscape, public lighting and services drawing is required. This drawing shall include constructed trees pits (of a minimum rooting volume of 16 cubic metres). A statement shall be included noting that the arborist, landscape architect and engineers have consulted with each other in relation 	<p>Drawing No. '23FG03-DR-0405' prepared by Áit Urbanism + Landscape illustrates a section through the kickabout area in the public open space, which will also serve as a detention basin. As per the section drawing, the requirement for a 1.5 slope for detention basins is adhered to.</p> <p>Drawing No. '23FG03-DR-0210' prepared by Áit Urbanism + Landscape illustrates the combined landscaping, services and public lighting proposal, demonstrating full co-ordination between all consultants.</p>

<p>to this combined landscaping public lighting and services drawing.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed tree planting along roads: The proposed street tree planting must be in constructed tree pits of a minimum rooting volume of 16 cubic metres. These constructed tree pits should be clearly shown on the landscape plan. Lamp standards (7 metre separation distance to be indicated between existing and proposed trees and lamp standards) must be shown on this drawing also. The mature height and spread of proposed trees shall be shown on the landscape plan. This is to ensure that sufficient room is made available for the future growth of these proposed trees. 	<p>All tree planting proposed is within substantial soft landscape areas and does not require constructed tree pits. The locations of the proposed trees have been co-ordinated with the proposed public lighting to avoid any conflicts. The public lighting column locations are illustrated on the Landscape Masterplan submitted herewith (Drawing No. '23FG03-DR-0200').</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to adjoining Public Open Space: Consideration should be given to an alternative style of entrance into the existing open space which is wheel-chair accessible and cargo bike e.g. staggered entrance. 	<p>The proposed kissing gate along the western boundary has been amended to ensure full accessibility for wheelchair users and cargo bikes. Please see Drawing No. '23FG03-DR-0500' for further details.</p>
<p>5. WATER SERVICES SECTION</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant has submitted a Pre-Connection Enquiry Form to IW (CDS24000501) and received a response letter dated 11 March 2024 for 130 units. The letter confirms the feasibility of the wastewater connection of the proposed development to the IW foul drainage network without the need for any upgrades. The applicant is required to engage further with IW and to secure a Statement of Design Acceptance in advance of submitting the full LRD application. 	<p>A Statement of Design Acceptance has been received from Irish Water and is submitted as part of this application. Please see Appendix I of the accompanying <i>Engineering Services Report</i> for the Statement of Design Acceptance.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant has submitted a Pre-Connection Enquiry Form to IW (CDS24000501) and received a response letter dated 11 March 	<p>A Statement of Design Acceptance has been received from Irish Water and is submitted as part of this application. Please see Appendix I of the</p>

<p>2024 for 130 units. The letter confirms the feasibility of the water connection of the proposed development to the IW water supply network without the need for any upgrades. The applicant is required to engage further with IW and to secure a Statement of Design Acceptance in advance of submitting the full LSRD application.</p>	<p>accompanying <i>Engineering Services Report</i> for the Statement of Design Acceptance.</p>
<p>6. HOUSING DEPARTMENT</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full Part V proposal should be included. 	<p>As part of the proposed development, 24 No. residential units will be transferred to the Planning Authority to comply with Part V of the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)</i>. A Validation Letter has been received from Fingal County Council's Housing and Community Department. Please see the accompanying documentation for further details.</p>

3.0 CONCLUSION

It is our professional planning opinion that the aforementioned responses with the supporting technical reports address the specific items raised in Fingal County Council's Opinion. We trust that this document fully responds to all of the points raised by Fingal County Council in their Opinion and we submit that the proposed development represents the proper planning and sustainable development of this currently underutilised site.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Thornton".

Patricia Thornton
Director
Thornton O'Connor Town Planning