

Planning Report



**Proposed Self Storage Facility and Small cafe
at
Liffey Valley
Dublin 22**

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to describe the planning and design context for the proposed development of a self-storage facility and cafe unit on a site extending to c. 0.72ha located at Liffey Valley, Dublin 22. The report highlights the evolution behind the proposed development, frames the proposal in the context of the Development Plan and outlines the appropriateness of the development for the subject site.

A previous application for permission was refused permission and the design team has worked closely with the relevant departments in South Dublin County Council to provide an appropriate design response to the location, including to the N4 and to the Liffey Valley internal road structure and to neighbouring buildings.

2.0 Brief Description of the Proposed Development

2.1 Site Location

Liffey Valley, and the site, is located just off the junction of the M50 and N4, which is mid-way along the M50 at a convenient and busy area. The location is approximately 8km west of Dublin City Centre between the well-established suburbs of Lucan and Palmerstown. It is in close proximity to expansive residential suburbs such as Castleknock, Clondalkin and Leixlip and is therefore home to a wealth of associated amenities. This location has become a significant retail destination in Dublin, easily accessed by car and by Dublin Bus who operate 16 routes to and from the area. The shopping centre is one of Dublin's largest and has recently undergone a significant expansion with the addition of space to provide more retail stores, a large cinema and extra restaurant and café units. It is surrounded by retail parks and outlets which provide synergy to the area as destination retail.

The surrounding suburbs are ever expanding, with the recent development of Adamstown in Lucan and the announcement of the Balgaddy-Clonburriss Strategic Development Zone. This SDZ area is due to accommodate approximately 8,500 new homes and up to 21,000 additional population and was formally adopted in June 2019.



Fig 2.1 Site Location, Aerial View

2.2 Site Context

The Liffey Valley Major Retail Centre core developed area occupies approximately 30.4 ha and is located approximately 8 km from Dublin City Centre southwest of the free flow junction between the M50 and the N4 (Galway/Westport) road. The Liffey Valley Town Centre has developed progressively since the mid 1990's to comprise and enclosed shopping centre, with multiplex cinema; office complex; retail parks; hotel; public house; motor mall; supermarket complex; and other leisure uses; with an associated internal Liffey Valley ring road system. A decision to grant permission for a significant expansion of the core area is currently on appeal to An Bord Pleanála (ABP Ref. 310119).

The commercial sector was developed in a linear form extending from Fonthill Road to the north of Quarryvale Park and along the southern side of the N4, as far as the main roundabout on the ring road system. In that area exists the hotel; bar/restaurant; motor mall; commercial offices; creche; and an area that was previously reserved as a potential residential core in the 2008 Liffey Valley LAP.

While the Liffey Valley Lap was in effect until 2018 in 2016 the SDCDP placed a single zoning objective covering the entire area, designating it a major retail centre, which effectively eliminated future residential development within the commercial/retail sector (no longer permitted/open for consideration in the associated land use matrix). Therefore, the proposed development is located in a developed commercial sector and is an appropriate

addition to the mix of commercial activities permitted and open for consideration under the major retail centre zoning applicable to the lands.

This site is directly bounded to the north by the N4, the south by the Liffey Valley estate road system and the Volkswagens office building; to the east by the Johnson & Johnson office building; and to the west by Giraffe Childcare and a greenfield site.

The site measures approximately 0.72 hectares and is irregular in shape wrapping around the Giraffe Childcare site and with a relatively flat topography, sloping gently towards the N4 from the internal estate road. It has frontage of approximately 88m to the estate road between Giraffe Childcare and Johnson & Johnson office building as well as frontage of approximately 92m directly to the N4 at its northern boundary. It has a good profile and can be seen from the main thoroughfare in a complex of edge building forms and prominently from the estate road roundabout. It is in close proximity to a number of car showrooms as well as a mix of other commercial and food uses, as shown on CKA drawing 20-04/201.

The proposed development comprises the construction of a 3-storey over open basement building alongside the N4 corridor, to provide a gross total floor area of self-storage space of approximately 8495m² self-storage warehouse, with a graduated scale to the internal estate road with contrasting finishes and incorporating cafe unit of 124.5 sqM and external seating facing onto the internal estate road. The total building envelope has approximately 8620m² gross internal floor area, with staff and customer parking and associated landscaping and drainage works.

The proposed development is made up of the following:

Self-storage space of approximately 8254m² self-storage warehouse,

Ground floor Cafe unit of 124.5m² GFA,

Reception , WCs, ancillary staff facilities, Offices, Kitchen at ground and first floor level.

Total 241.6m²

Front ground level occasional car parking and deliveries with additional undercroft car parking at the open basement level

Associated landscaping , boundary treatment and site development works.

Vehicular entrance from Liffey Valley estate road system, within the applicant's control.

The site measures 0.72 ha

2.3 Planning Context

The Liffey Valley complex was originally developed on foot of a masterplan to develop the core of a large multi-faceted town centre including population, industry/commerce and anchored by a major shopping centre located at the intersection of the M50/N4. The sector in which the proposed development is located was to accommodate commercial and residential uses and early development included commercial, hotel, car sales main dealers etc. and a crèche, but no residential development. These land uses and the associated road structure have established the context, as set out in the planning permission history below, into which the proposed development must merge as an infill development.

The subject property was previously zoned for office in the statutory Liffey Valley Local Area Plan 2008. The statutory zoning for the entire area was changed to 'Major Retail Centre' under the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022, which is now under review.



Fig 2.2 Aerial view of site



Fig 2.3 Existing View of the site from East



Fig 2.4 Existing View of the site from South West
(Giraffe Childcare on far left of photo)



Fig 2.5 Existing View of the site from N4 travelling West

3.0 Previous Planning History

3.1 Relevant Recent Planning History

Planning Application: **Reg. Reference: SD20A/0286 Application Date: 04-Nov-2020**

Permission refused for four reasons, including: -

1. Potential traffic hazard due to lack of access over access, car parking provision and requirement for Traffic & Transport Assessment (TTA);
2. Insufficient justification for the retail element;
3. Insufficient justification for a building of the scale, design and appearance in the context of the site and the surrounding area;
4. Insufficient information regarding existing trees, hedges and vegetation.

In addition, an issue was raised in relation to the surface water strategy for drainage of the developed site area, including measures to be implemented at the construction and operational stage to prevent any pollution of local surface waters, with construction carried out in accordance with a site-specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

3.2 Amended Proposed Development

The applicants took into account the reasons for refusal and the assessment carried out by the planning authority in relation to the previous proposed development. A TTA has been undertaken by NRB, consulting transportation engineers. The retail element has been removed and replaced by an ancillary café facility with associated external area. The design, scale, materiality and appearance of the building have been altered after consultation with the planning authority. Environmental concerns have been addressed.

Pre-Application Consultation :

A 1st pre-application consultation was conducted via a remote meeting held on 25th March 2021 (Ref PP022/21). The planning authority was represented by the planning, roads, drainage and public realm sections of the departments within SDCC.

The revised proposal discussed addressed the reasons for refusal given by the planning authority. It was indicated that the presentation to the Liffey Valley Estate Road system and streetscape relationships required further attention. Subsequently, further iterations of the building design and materials were submitted to SDCC. These are all noted in section 5 of this report.

3.3 Liffey Valley Planning History Context

3.3.1 ABP Ref. PL.06S.247283 (SD16A/0027)

ABP refused permission for a development consisting of a mixed leisure, entertainment, commercial and retail extension to the existing Liffey Valley Centre. The proposal incorporated the provision of an ice rink designed for international standard ice related 3 activities and the provision of a new east west street for reasons relating to traffic congestion, particularly in relation to the N4 and M50. It was considered the proposed development would be premature pending the resolution of traffic congestion.

Decision- Refuse Permission

3.3.2 Reg Ref S99A/0948

New office business centre development at Lucan/Clondalkin Town Centre, Liffey Valley, Quarryvale on site of 3.48 hectares bounded by N4 Lucan Road, Western Parkway, Coldcut Road, Greenford Housing Estate, Quarryvale Park, to include 4 no. office buildings of gross floor area 17,194.7 sqM. no. amenity building containing crèche, gym, shop, juice bar of gross floor area 1916 sqM. 2 no. sub-stations gross floor area 68 sqM. Associated car parks, bus stops, bus shelters, set down areas for taxis, access roads, service areas, roof mounted plant areas, landscaping and associated works.

Decision- Grant Permission 16/08/2000

3.3.3 Reg Ref S01A/0332

Lands at Lucan/Clondalkin Town Centre, Liffey Valley, Quarryvale, Dublin 22. bounded by N4 to the north and by Bothar na Life and Ascal na Life to the south.

Alterations and additions to existing planning permission Reg. Ref. S99A/0948 and shall include the provision of 604m² of additional office space at ground, first, second and third floor levels and an additional fourth floor level of 1123m². Also the provision at semi-basement level for no. 32 car parking spaces and an additional 44m² of sub-stations, plant rooms and auxiliary areas, associated external landscaping, car parking, access roads and auxiliary works.

Decision- Grant Permission 03/10/2001

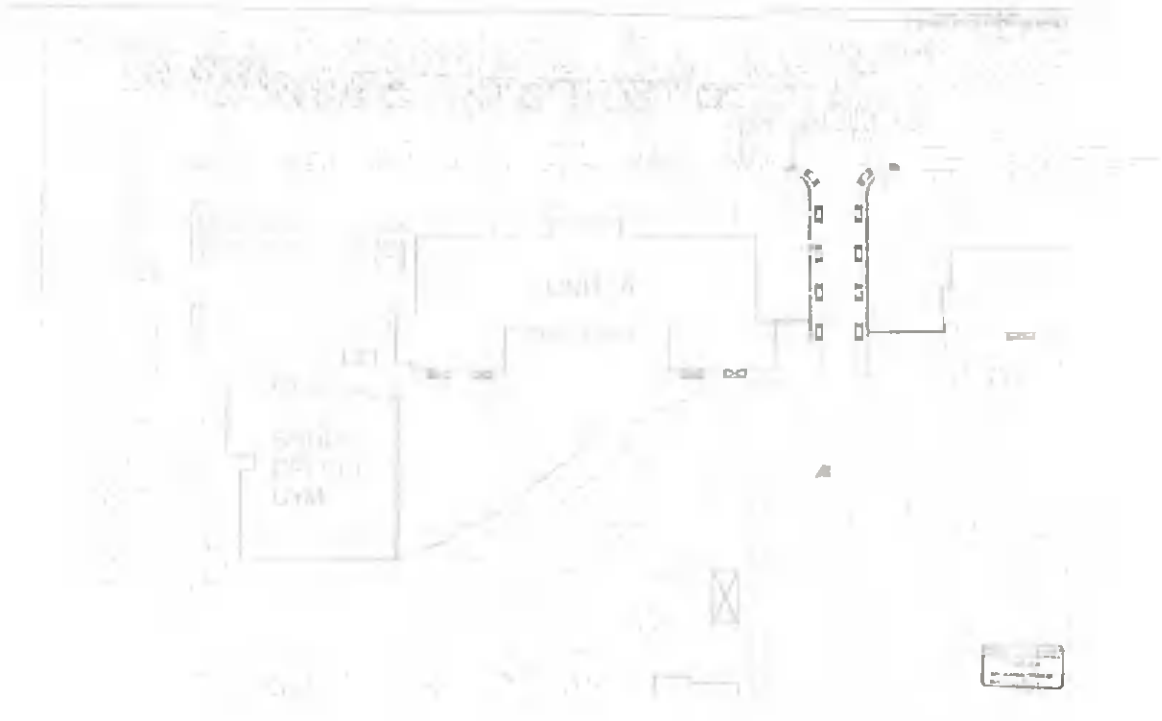


Fig 3.1 Site plan for planning application reg ref S01A/0332

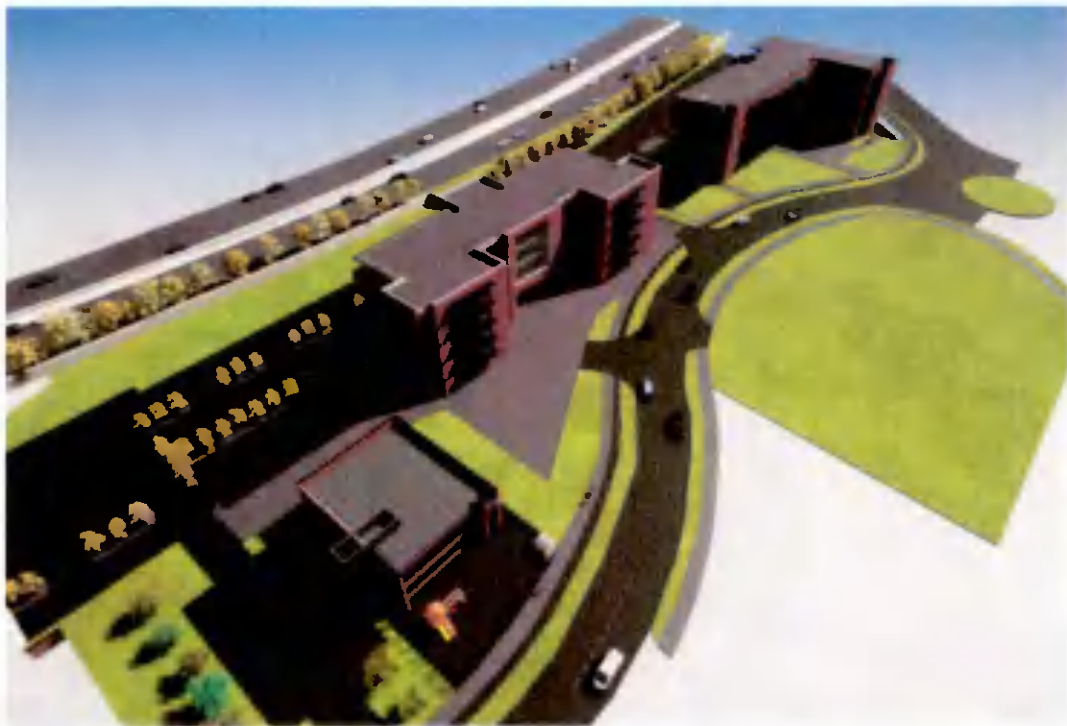


Fig 3.2 Aerial 3-d image for planning application reg ref S01A/0332
(3-d render by CKA)



Fig 3.3 View from Crèche for planning application reg ref S01A/0332
(3-d render by CKA)

3.3.4 It is this permission (reg ref S01A/0332) which is most relevant as it relates to the application site and also set a precedent in terms of Height, Bulk and Scale. We have used the height of the proposed office building in this application, which also reflects the height of the adjacent Johnson and Jonson Building, as a guide to the height of our proposed development. In addition, its general shape and massing give us some strong clues as to the preferred form of development.

3.3.5 It is interesting and important to note that following the granting of the permission reg ref S1A/0332, which was never built, there were no further applications on this site, or the adjacent sites to the west for a period of 19 years, which resulted in the sites laying undeveloped and un-used for all that time.

Our client has now purchased the site due to its location, size and visibility, all qualities which are critical to a Self Storage facility and which this site manages to deliver.

4.0 Planning Context

4.1 Liffey Valley Town Centre Local Area Plan 2008

The Liffey Valley LAP was readopted and was in force until March 2018. The LAP is now out of date and is superseded by the policies and objectives, including zoning, of the SDCDP 2016-2022, which is the superior statutory plan.

However, the lands are zoned MRC in the SDCDP 2016-2022, which contains a Matrix for suitable land uses.

The subject lands are zoned Objective 'MRC' within the current South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022. The objective for lands zoned MRC is *'to protect, improve and provide for the future development of a Major Retail Centre.'*

Liffey Valley Shopping Centre is designated as a Major Retail Centre. This reflects the Level 2 Retail designation under the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008 - 2016, the established regional shopping centre use of the site and allows for complementary leisure, retail warehouse and commercial land uses.

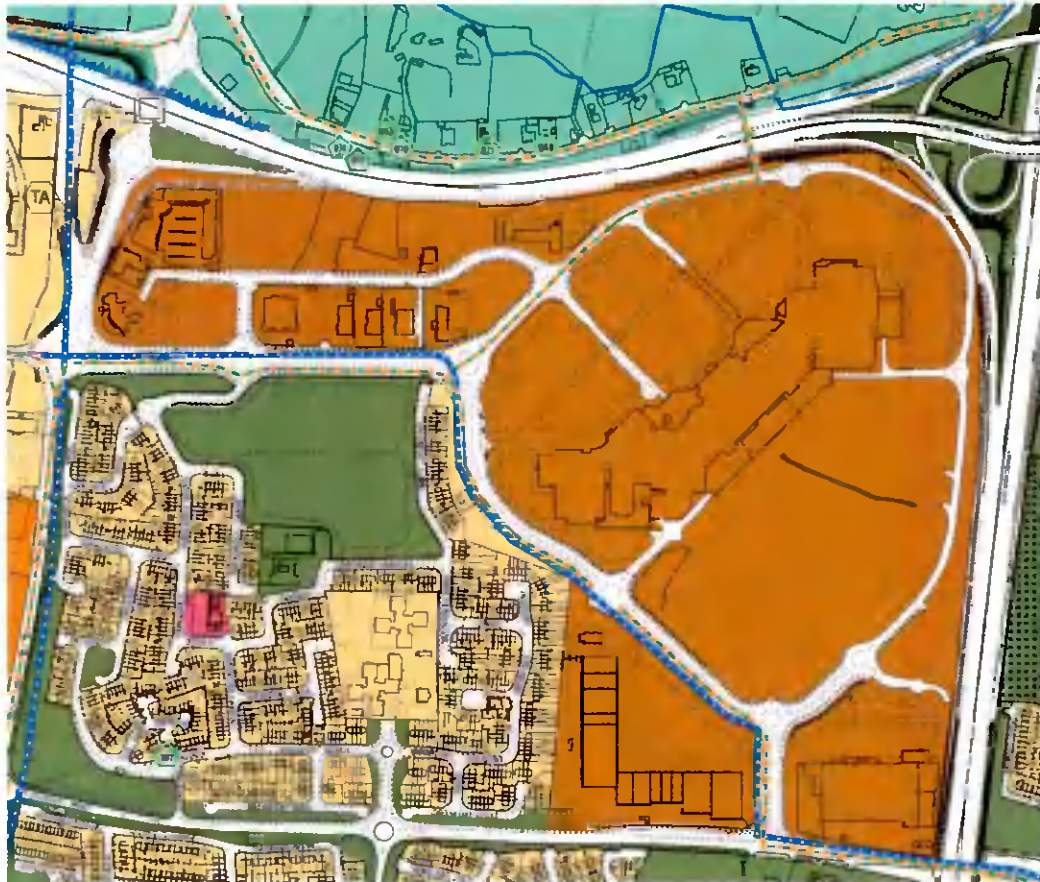


Fig 4.1 Zoning Map South Dublin County Development Plan (SDCDP) 2016-2022

Use Zoning Objectives



Objective MRC

To protect, improve and provide for the future development of a Major Retail Centre

4.2 Use classes related to zoning objective

Permitted in Principle

Advertisements and Advertising Structures, Betting Office, Car Park, Childcare Facilities, Enterprise Centre, Funeral Home, Garden Centre, Hotel/Hostel, Motor Sales Outlet, Offices less than 100sqM, Off-Licence, Open Space, Petrol Station, Public House, Public Services, Recreational Facility, Recycling Facility, Restaurant/Café, Retail Warehouse, Service Garage, Shop-Local, Shop-Major Sales Outlet, Shop-Neighbourhood, Veterinary Surgery, Wholesale Outlet.

Open for Consideration

Allotments, Crematorium, Cultural Use, Doctor/Dentist, Education, Health Centre, Hospital, Industry-Light, Nightclub, Offices 100 sqM - 1,000 sqM, Outdoor Entertainment Park, Place of Worship, Primary Health Care Centre, Social Club, Sports Club/Facility, Stadium, Transport Depot, Warehousing.

4.3 Assessment

Future potential development is dictated by the existing land structure and the MRC zoning land use matrix in the SDCDP

Whilst self-storage is not specifically noted in the use matrix, and not defined in the development plan "Warehousing" is and we would refer to the precedent set for planning application reg Ref. SD15A/0254 wherein self-storage was deemed to be open for consideration and where permission was ultimately granted for the much larger self-storage facility.

The particular location is ideal for self-storage, located as it is close to a major junction on the M50 and with a very large catchment area of residential suburbs and commercial activity, both immediately adjacent and within an easy drive of the centre. Self-Storage is a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland, but a growing one and this proposed development adds to the mix of activities available in the area and utilises a site which has lain dormant for almost 20 years since the previous planning application was granted.

There is a substantial amount of land available for development in and around the Liffey valley area, and our application site lies in an area which has been developed over the years into a mix of car showrooms, office buildings, restaurants and a hotel but with a substantial amount of undeveloped land. It is a low intensity use which will have little impact on the Traffic .

A self-storage facility will provide the height and massing to be able to match the adjoining blocks along the N4 frontage. The building scale is graduated to provide an appropriate transition to the 'public ' level- so locating a café with external space at ground floor level helps to make a more compatible interface in the planning sense.

5.0 Detailed Description of the proposed development (Design Statement)

5.1 Section 11.2.1 (Design Statements) of the development plan requires that :

All medium to large-scale development proposals (10 dwellings and above and/or commercial, retail or community developments of 1,000sq.metres and above, or as otherwise required), shall be accompanied by a Design Statement. The Design Statement should consist of:

Site Analysis

Concept Plan and/or Masterplan

Statement based on the design criteria set out in the relevant National Planning Guidance documents listed in Section 11.2.0 and/or tables 11.17 and 11.18 as outlined below.

5.2 Site Analysis.

The site is located within the Liffey Valley Shopping centre / Business park, on the northern edge adjacent to the N4. It is accessed from an internal access road which runs parallel to the main access road to the Liffey Valley Shopping centre. It is within a commercial zone which includes Offices (Johnson & Johnson, Volkswagen), Car Showrooms, Drive Thru' Restaurants and a Hotel. The site slopes gently from South to North towards the N4. The eastern boundary of the site is bounded by an access road which gives access to the lower part of the site and the upper part of the site will be accessed off the estate road.

The site is irregularly shaped, with over 90m frontage to the N4 and a min depth of 42m (to the western crèche boundary) and a median depth of appx 72m. (max 90, min 53). The southern boundary, formed by the access road is curved and narrows towards the south-east corner. Other boundaries are reasonably regular. The site to the west is a greenfield site and there is an existing 2-storey crèche to the Southwest of the site. To the east is located a 5 storey over basement Office block, which provides the main context for the proposed development. The sites to the immediate west of the application site are undeveloped and have been for many, many years. Our client has only recently purchased the site, which has lain undeveloped for over 20 years which is in itself an indication of how difficult the property market is in this particular part of the Liffey Valley estate, especially when one considers that planning was granted 20 years ago for a large office block which was never developed and there have been no applications on this site or the adjoining plots in the intervening period other than the application refused earlier this year..

The site couldn't be classified as urban and given the adjoining land uses, the typical urban design concerns such as connectivity, hierarchy, space-making and creation of private and semi-private space aren't of critical importance. In fact, given the type of building proposed and its function, the detailed design of a standalone building is more important as is the way it interacts with adjoining roads and sites.

The site of the proposed facility at Liffey valley is very prominent as seen in particular from the N4. The office block on the adjacent site, Johnson and Johnson, is very prominent on this stretch of the N4 given its height and location. There are 4 lanes of traffic travelling westward on this stretch of the N4 resulting in large volumes of traffic passing the site at all hours of the day.

The northern boundary of the application site is quite close to the N4 and is formed by a block wall, appx 2m high, with trees/vegetation on the roadside. Further westward, the adjoining site is vacant.

Between the application site and the Hotel located at the bottom of the slip road off the N4(which is the primary route to Liffey Valley Shopping centre) the only building visible is the rear of a Toyota Car Showroom which contributes little to the busy vehicular environment of the N4.



Fig 5.1 View of Toyota Garage and Hotel from N4

When looking at the design of the proposed facility, we needed to respond to its context of adjacent 6-storey office, which is long and linear in shape, and also to address the busy N4 road. There were some site constraints- we didn't want to get too close to the N4 boundary but were much more restricted in the southern boundary due to the sharp curve in the road which narrowed the site considerably towards the east.

The presence of the Giraffe Childcare crèche in the Southwest corner, giving the site an irregular shape here, also restricted where we could locate the building, as we wanted to achieve a reasonable set back from the crèche and adjoining boundaries. The design does take into account the impact on the adjoining crèche, with facades set back and no real impact from overshadowing as the proposed development is to the North of the Crèche- early morning shadow is possible, but as the crèche playground is situated to its south, the over shadowing from the crèche itself would be more critical. There is no direct overlooking into the crèche site.



Fig 5.2 Site analysis diagram

5.3 Proposed Design Concept

5.3.1 Previous Proposal

As noted in section 3, a previous planning application for a self-storage facility was refused in early 2021. We have taken on board the reason for refusal, and have consulted on a couple of occasions with the Planning Department in order to develop a design that meets their criteria – with the result that the building has been considerably redesigned, particularly with regard to the ‘street’ frontage onto the Estate road.



Fig 5.3 Previous Application



Fig 5.4 Current Application

In general terms, we are addressing the reasons for refusal of initial scheme (reg ref D20A/0236) as follows :

Reason 1.

The proposed emergency access would rely on access via a site that is outside of the control of the applicant and currently used as an access way for the dropping off and pick up of children attending an existing childcare facility.

Proposed Action : Emergency access way to be used only in the event if required by emergency vehicles, a barrier is provided at bottom of ramp. (Proof of RoW available on request). Reduce Car parking. Submit TIA with revised application.

Reason 2.

The applicant has failed to provide sufficient justification for the retail element of the proposal in terms of the potential impact on the vitality and viability of the nearby Liffey Valley Core Retail Area.

Proposed Action : Omit Retail element. Add café to provide animation and add to the mix of uses.

Reason 3.

The applicant has failed to provide sufficient justification for a building of this scale, design and appearance within the context of the site and surrounding area. The proposed structure, by reason of its excessive scale, bulk and poor design would result in an incongruous and visually prominent feature that would detract from the visual amenity and character of the Major Retail Centre zoned area.

Proposed Action : Redesign the proposed unit. See design strategy below.

Reason 4.

Having regard to the lack of information submitted in relation to existing trees, hedges and vegetation within the site and their protection and the excessive amount of hard standing proposed, the proposal would result in a poor-quality landscape and environment.

Proposed Action : Include Landscaping proposal with revised planning application. The Landscaping plan will allow for retaining the few trees on the Boundary, as per the previous application- there are no other trees on the site but we will propose new landscaping and planting to help soften the appearance of the building.

5.4 Interaction with SDCC

The process of redesigning the Unit involved a number of submissions and discussions with SDCC, starting with our initial pre-planning submission in March 2021:

"Based on the comments in the Planner's report, the main issue which needs careful consideration is the Design of the building and how to address 'its excessive scale, bulk and poor design'".

A building of this type, is by its very nature , a large, somewhat 'dumb' volume. with little in the way of ornament, interest or relief. It's a building for storing stuff, nothing more complex than that so requires no windows, no exceptional spaces, and no expression of its function. Given the comments noted in the Planner's report, we need to address this potential conflict between programme and planning to produce a building which works well in its context but also fulfils its function.

Our first action is to break down the volume of the building both vertically and on plan- i.e. different heights, setbacks etc. whilst trying to retain most of the floor area we had previously looked at.

In volume terms, we have redesigned the singular volume to allow for a number of different roof levels with pitched roof profiles, giving the impression of a cluster of a number of different buildings.

These volumes/roof shapes echo the Sureweld premises which are located appx 400m away on the opposite side of the N4 - see enclosed pic - this building is very prominent, almost iconic even , on this stretch of the road, a simple but strong shape .

By breaking the building down, it is much less 'dominant', particularly on the side facing the estate road but also significantly to the side facing N4. There's also a notional idea of looking like 'agricultural' buidings which would be recognisable to anyone driving past.

We would look at inserting a number of projections or recesses onto the facades, again to try and break up the large volumes and give visual interest .

We have reduced the amount of car parking at the ground level, and also at the basement level, where we have added back storage area. We have pulled the building lane back from the N4.

We feel that our revised design is a credible attempt to try and reduce the visual impact of the self storage facility, the principle of which has been accepted on this site by the Local Authority.

Based on that submission, a Pre-Planning meeting was held (virtually) on 25th March 2021 and below are the Minutes of Pre Planning Application meeting as issued by SDCC, (we have noted actions against comments made by SDCC participants). It was clear from the meeting that how we addressed the estate road was critical to the potential success of the application.

The meeting focussed on the reasons for refusal from application SD20A/0286, with each reason discussed in turn.

Access and Roads

- *Pedestrian permeability and access would be important*
ACTION ___ Front façade brought forward, café provided, paved pedestrian areas to allow free flow .
- *TIA may be required as proposal over 5,000sqm*
ACTION ___ Submitted
- *New entrance – need to check this is acceptable with Liffey Valley management, outline whether bus stop and cycle lane will be retained.*
ACTION ___ Entrance moved away form Bus Stop
- *Shared access would require permission from adjoining landowners.*
ACTION ___ Client has Rights of Way and access , these can be provided on request
- *Car parking spaces - 10% electric and 5% mobility impaired.*
ACTION ___ Provided
- *Bin storage – show collection routes and access*
ACTION ___ Shown
- *Construction Traffic Management Plan and Construction Waste and Demolition Plan would be required.*
ACTION ___ To be provided before construction commences if permission granted.
- *Car parking – appears to be within limits*
ACTION ___ None required
- 4. *Provide background information on the storage element in your planning report, similar examples, who would use it, what type of goods would be stored there – just so the use is clear*
ACTION ___ Noted below

5. *Submit justification and rationale of why use is acceptable in terms of zoning objective and for this location.*

ACTION Provided

6. *Build interchange into rationale.*

ACTION Taken account in redesign

Scale, design and appearance

• *Would need a design statement justifying the scale and design – 11.2.1 of CDP, over 1,000 sqM*

ACTION Provided

• *Visual Impact Assessment*

ACTION see Photomontages and Drawings

• *CGIs and photomontages – long and short views*

ACTION see Photomontages and Drawings

• *Noted that mass of the roof would be broken up more.*

ACTION Volumes broken down in all directions

Encouraged to explore whether corporate colours are needed on entire building

ACTION Corporate colours to N4 only

• *Could different colours on front elevation facing Liffey Valley SC be different to reduce visual impact.*

ACTION Corporate colours to N4 only, lighter colours, mix of materials facing Liffey Valley

• *Look at buildings either side of the site and their design/appearance.*

ACTION Building redesigned to take account of their massing& volumes

• *Views up and down the street, should be comfortable to walk and cycle along street.*

ACTION Building redesigned to take account of street views, 2 storey curved volume to Estate road, softened with Brick and Timber fins, building stepped back rom road

• *Views from N4 not as prominent.*

ACTION Building redesigned to take step back on estate road side, elevation cranked to provide interest, glazing provided to front and side elevations

- *Green roof would be welcomed*

ACTION Provided

- *Soften elevation by childcare facility.*

ACTION Building redesigned to take account of street views, 2 storey curved volume to Estate road, softened with Brick and Timber fins, building stepped back from road and crèche

A number of other technical issues were raised, including Landscaping, Drainage and Lighting and these have also been addressed in the re-design.

Subsequent to that first meeting, we made a further submission, with a revised design ,by e-mail on 15 June 2021 :

Further to our virtual pre-planning meeting on 25th March, we have revised our scheme to take on board the comments and suggestions raised at the meeting

We feel we now have a scheme which addresses many of these concerns, particularly in relation to how the building addresses the 'Estate Road'

We have sculpted the ground and first floors to follow the line of the road, in a gentle curve, with at one end a coffee shop, the U Store it offices and reception in the middle and a decorative screen at the corner closest to the Johnson & Johnson building. Above these 2 floors is a floating /projecting curved canopy which forms a dynamic and visually strong element and also draws the eye away from the upper floors.

With regard to the coffee shop, we felt that we needed something there that will animate the facade and the landscaped area. It has a large glazed area as well as a terrace outside, which will lead to activity and visual interest in the area close to the Crèche.

Its hard, with the U Store It brief/accommodation to provide any animation and we know you were very keen on making this facade as 'friendly' as possible, to really soften and animate it- hence the Coffee shop.

The number of surface car parking spaces at this level is substantially reduced and we propose extensive landscaping both hard landscaping for the terraces at either end but also with a large number of trees forming the curve at the site boundary.

In essence, we have tried to create a street elevation along the Estate Road boundary.

We have kept the upper levels of the U Store it facility away from the crèche and have stepped the volumes generally so that the form and size of the unit is broken up- we have also done this, to a lesser extent, on the N4 side.

This approach allows for green roofs throughout.

At basement level, we have provided the bulk of the car parking and in addition have shown a secure classic car storage area.

Following further discussions with Tracy McGibbon, we made some further amendments , which is more or less where the scheme is now :

*Colour of cladding facing Estate road lightened, non-corporate colours (other than to N4)
Black/brown brick cladding to 2 storey curved element facing Estate Road, to try and harmonise with the adjacent Crèche and J & J building.
More glazing to upper levels, pergola type projection at upper floor*

The above describes the interaction which the design team have had with South Dublin Co Co, which was very positive and allowed us to develop and fine tune the revised design.

5.5 General Design Principles

By its very nature, a self-storage facility is going to be a large building with little or no openings and of simple, industrial type construction. Opportunities for architectural expression are limited but important as the challenge is to create a building that manages to rise above its mundane and simple brief and create a building of interest.

The brief was to provide a building with simple floor plates to allow for fitting out for self-storage units (typically between 2.5 sqM to 100sqM but normally between 5 and 10 sqM) or possibly for short-term business storage, which means allowing for a greater height than would normally be the case. In this case it would entail storing goods on a short-term basis for businesses who may need a short term excess storage capacity or where the intended recipient isn't yet in a position to receive the goods. This is an important part of the business, which allows customers great flexibility in their warehousing requirements/supply chain management. There is currently a shortage of warehouse/logistics space and providing this kind of flexibility is critical to the supply chain, allowing for storage of consignments form time to time rather than having to own/rent and entire warehouse.

In the expanding metropolitan context, this kind of short-term storage service is critical. In addition, the huge increase in the number of people working from home has created a need to free up space in people's homes for Home Working Space, and often this can be a room previously used for ad-hoc storage – the availability of small units to store these items frees up space to create comfortable working environments in houses and apartments. It is unlikely this need will diminish anytime soon. In fact, the business is expanding rapidly with all existing facilities being close to capacity and there is a pressing need for new facilities,

with even recently opened units filling up rapidly- demand is great, driven partly by the requirement for home working and partly by the lack of storage available in Apartments.

The U Store It business itself is well established, with 7 facilities in Ireland, including its newest Unit at Ballymount, which was granted permission by South Dublin County Council in late 2016 and is now fully operational. It is very visible from the M50 and the adjoining roads thanks to its bright blue and yellow colour scheme. Another facility in Finglas is located close to the M50/M2 junction, which again is highly visible from the M50.



Fig 5.5 U Store It unit at Ballymount, seen from the M50



Fig 5.6 U Store It unit at Finglas North, seen from the M50



Fig 5.7 Proposed U Store It unit seen from the N4

These units share a common thread, which is that they have very good visibility from nearby major roads but also are located adjacent to important junctions on the M50- something the proposed Liffey valley site replicates in both respects.

This accessibility is critical as it allows for easy and quick access to the units for customers who may be coming from a distance away- and realistically most will be travelling by car.

Given the nature of our brief and the nature of the site, we needed to find a way to make a large, relatively simple box into something a bit more interesting. We also needed to respond to its context of the adjacent 6-storey office block, which was long and linear in shape and also to address the busy N4 road.

We took account of the existing adjacent office building in terms of general location as well as referencing the previously approved office block on the site. In fact, that particular application did drive a number of design decisions, most particularly the height but also the decision to have a long frontage on to the N4 and to keep a simple shape (which we then broke down to allow for different treatments to different boundaries).

Facing the N4, the building is finished in blue Kingspan cladding with a yellow band- the corporate colours of U Store It and which have been used successfully at the Ballymount Interchange of the M50 where the recently constructed U Store It unit has become something of a Landmark (indeed, this was encouraged by the Planners). This gives a great visual identity for the unit, but facing the Estate road and the main shopping centre

interchange, it was agreed following discussions that a softer, subtler, less 'Vibrant' colour could be more suitable. To this end, we have used a light grey cladding panel for the upper floors, and for the 2 storey Curved element, which is the key component of the Southern Elevation, we have used a dark brick, which will complement the cladding but also give a more human scale and feel to this façade, using recognisable materials including Glazing, canopies and awnings. To supplement this we have shown vertical timber fins at either end of the curve, to allow for screening (to the crèche) and to add visual interest

The blue and yellow colours present quite a strong visual image to the N4, so need a simple, powerful shape to reflect that. We initially looked at a fairly standard rectilinear box, but further design development led us to 'cranking the elevation to the N4 in an uneven manner such that the shorter section is turned to face the westward travelling traffic and the longer section is more aligned with the Traffic travelling eastward on the far side of the N4. This gives the façade a dynamism which is added to by extending the plane of the façade at either end. To reduce the apparent bulk, we have dropped the height of the parapet above this N4 facing façade and the higher parapet behind forms a more regular shape. Where required to break up the facade, high quality glazing is provided.

There is no doubt that this proposed development at Liffey Valley would present a very strong appearance to the N4 and it could be argued that it has the potential to become a landmark in itself with its strong and simple form finished in strong colours.

On the Southern facade, we were faced with a number of different design challenges . in particular how to reduce the apparent bulk of the building onto the quieter, more discreet estate road, but also how to address the street in an architecturally appropriate manner and how to ensure a positive and pleasant pedestrian experience along the length of the southern facade/boundary.

The first challenge was to reduce the bulk of the volume facing south, and how to layer between the 2 storey 'street' facade and the 6 storey Block facing the N4- we have done this by means of set backs, separate volumes and recesses as well as controlled placing of glazing and the use of non-orthogonal shapes. The intention is that the curved form of the 'street' façade, containing the café, reception, loading bays and capped by a cantilevered canopy and with plenty of glazing and activity will draw the eye downwards, allowing the simple upper floors to recede visually, helped by their restrained colour. The timber fins at either end are meant to soften the junctions, particularly with the Crèche boundary. In essence, the curved façade is dominant visually thereby reducing the impact of the self-storage upper floors.



Fig 5.8 Proposed U Store It unit seen from the Estate Road (East)

The 2 gable ends are articulated by vertical strip glazing to the staircases, and at night time these will be softly lit creating a distinct look onto the N4 from each direction.

A corporate colour patch of signage is located on the eastern of the south elevation, as per our discussions with the planners and it stands as a contrast to the large areas of grey cladding.

Access to the ground floor car parking /unloading area is from the estate road, which in order to be as safe as possible we have located offset in the southern boundary to avoid the Bus stop (currently not in use) – given the need for street frontage, parking is limited in this location so it is restricted to visitors and clients who are loading/unloading at the loading bays.

Internally, the layout of the facility is simple, with 3 escape staircases located strategically and 2 large lifts located centrally. These lifts are either accessed from the south (under a covered loading bay) at Ground floor level or from the North (at basement/undercroft level). The intention is that the applicant will fit out the unit internally with self-storage units. A wheelchair accessible WC is located on the ground floor accessible from the reception and lift lobby. The previously proposed retail unit has been replaced with a café and associated outdoor area to provide appropriate scale, finishes and animation to the estate road.



Fig 5.9 View towards Café

5.6 Scale and Density

5.6.1 Section 11.2.7 of the development plan deals with Building height as follows:

The appropriate maximum or minimum height of any building will be determined by:

- The prevailing building height in the surrounding area.
- The formation of a cohesive streetscape pattern – including height and scale of the proposed development in relation to width of the street, or area of open space.

In terms of its height and proportion, it is actually quite similar to the adjacent office block, and it is designed to address the N4 rather than turn its back as many of the car showrooms do. This site has been vacant for well over 20 years and the proposed use represents an opportunity to bring a new use to the surrounding business and retail park. It is a scale and form that is suited to the site and we would refer to the Guideline (section 11.2.7 Building Height) contained in the Development Plan, which states that:

The appropriate maximum or minimum height of any building will be determined by: The prevailing building height in the surrounding area. The formation of a cohesive streetscape pattern – including height and scale of the proposed development in relation to width of the street, or area of open space.

The adjoining N4 road to the north is a 4-lane dual carriageway, 33m wide with another standard single carriageway road immediately north of the N4. The proportional height of

the building to the road is an important design criterion. as noted in the guidelines and the shape and form of the building allow for the correct proportionate response to the context.

5.6.2 The *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines 2018* were published in December 2018.

The Guidelines recognise that *“increasing prevailing building heights therefore has a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in our urban areas, particularly our cities and large towns through enhancing both the scale and density of development and our planning process must actively address how this objective will be secured”*.

In summary, the guidelines promote a default height objective of at least four-storeys in the subject location, coupled with appropriate density. The Guidelines take precedence over blanket height limitations in Development Plans. The guidelines recognise that *“it is Government policy that building heights must be generally increased in appropriate urban locations.”*

5.7 Landscaping and Boundary Treatment

Currently, the site is a Greenfield site, bounded on its 3 internal sides as follows:

Southern boundary – grass bank appx 8-900mm high.

Western Boundary- fence to crèche, open to adjacent site

Eastern boundary - steps, stepped retaining wall, small hedges bordering sloped access road.

Northern boundary - On its boundary with the N4 there is a rendered block wall (appx 2m high) and some relatively tall trees on the roadside.

For the proposed development we intend to retain the wall/trees to the N4 and supplement with it with planting at the northern edge of the site in order to soften the impact of the existing wall.

The Southern boundary will be opened up and high-quality paving provided at both the self-storage reception and in particular outside the café, where a covered seating area will be provided.

The Eastern boundary will be retained as is with a new paved access and external staircase on the internal side of the boundary.

The western boundary will be retained much as existing, particularly as we have no control over the Crèche boundary, and they will need to retain their existing Palladin fence for security reasons.

5.8 Utilities and Infrastructure.

The proposed development will connect to the existing mains public network for surface water and fouled drainage purposes. The proposed car park will allow for the maximisation of sustainability by incorporating SUDS. For full details please refer to GDCL report and drawings which accompany this application.

6.0 Transport

6.1 Public Transport Provisions.

The site is well served by Public Transport and benefits from being adjacent to the Lucan QBC located along the N4 to the north of the site which runs from Lucan to the city centre, providing a connection with the Luas, Intercity and suburban Rail services at Heuston Station and Connolly Station. An Bord Pleanala has recently granted permission for a Bus-interchange facility at Liffey Valley (ABP Ref. 306251).

The Lucan QBC accommodates a large number of Dublin Bus services including the following direct routes to the Liffey valley Shopping Centre: -

- 26 From Merrion Sq
- 40 From Charelstown Shopping Centre
- 40b From Parnell St

Walkable Routes to Liffey Valley Shopping Centre (from/to QBC) Nearest stop Lucan Road:

-

- 25 From Merrion Sq towards Lucan (Dodsboro)
- 25a From Merrion Sq towards Lucan (Esker Church)
- 25b From Merrion Sq towards Adamstown Rail Station
- 25x From UCD Belfield to Lucan
- 66 From Merrion Sq to Maynooth
- 66a From Merrion Sq towards Leixlip (Captains Hill)
- 66b From Merrion Sq towards Leixlip (Castletown)
- 66e From Merrion Sq towards Maynooth
- 66x From UCD Belfield towards Maynooth
- 67 From Merrion Sq to Maynooth

6.2 Cycling Provision

Refer to NRB report

6.3 Car Parking

Refer to NRB report

6.4 Mobility Management Plan

Section 11.4.6 from SDCC Development Plan 2016-2022 states the following:

A Workplace Travel Plan or Mobility Management Plan, outlines a series of measures to encourage sustainable travel modes and reduce car borne traffic within a development. Initiatives might include proposals to encourage cycling and walking, car sharing (including car clubs), car-pooling, flexible working hours, cycling and public transport use. The National Transport Authority (NTA) guidelines on Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans note that:

“International experience has shown that a methodical and planned approach to targeting commuting and visitor patterns at an organisational level, can pay major dividends in terms of promoting sustainable travel.”

Workplace Travel Plans are required for larger sized developments as defined in Table 11.25.

All Workplace Travel Plans are required to be prepared in accordance with the Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans - Guidance for Local Authorities published by the NTA. Mobility Management Plans are required for all new schools or for existing schools where 25% or greater expansion in classrooms is proposed.

Table 11.25: Thresholds for the submission of Workplace Plan
(extracted from the Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities).

Land Use	Workplace Travel Plan Statement	Indicative Number of Jobs	Standardised Workplace Travel Plan	Indicative Number of Jobs
Offices/Financial	>500sqm	25-100	>2,000sqm	>100
Retail/Shops	>600sqm	25-100	>2,500sqm	>100
Industrial	>2,500sqm	25-100	>6,000sqm	>100
Leisure		25-100		>100 or >100,000 visitors per annum
Hospitals/Medical Centres		25-100		>100 or >100,000 visitors per annum
Warehousing	>2,500sqm	25-100	>10,000sqm	>100

Fig 6.1 Threshold for Mobility Management Plans (taken from SDCC Development Plan 2016-2022)

The Self-Storage facility will have no more than 4-5 employees on site at any one time. Therefore, the proposed development comes below the threshold required for the submission of a Mobility Management Plan /Workplace Travel Plan.

7.0 Energy Efficiency/Sustainability

Energy efficiency is an important consideration for planning applications. Major developments should maximize energy efficiency and support the transition to a low carbon future and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings and encourage the use of renewable resources.

It is recommended that for all commercial developments of over 1,000 sqM. or developments of over 30 residential units, an Energy Statement should accompany the planning application outlining the anticipated energy performance / CO2 emissions of a proposal and detailing consideration of renewable technologies and extra energy efficiency measures.

Conlon Engineering Ltd, a firm of Mechanical and Electrical Consulting Engineers have prepare a report outlining the sustainability measures to be taken and it accompanies this report.

8.0 Appropriate and Environmental Assessment

8.1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, and its distance from any Natura 2000 site, it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 site individually or in combination with other plans or projects and therefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

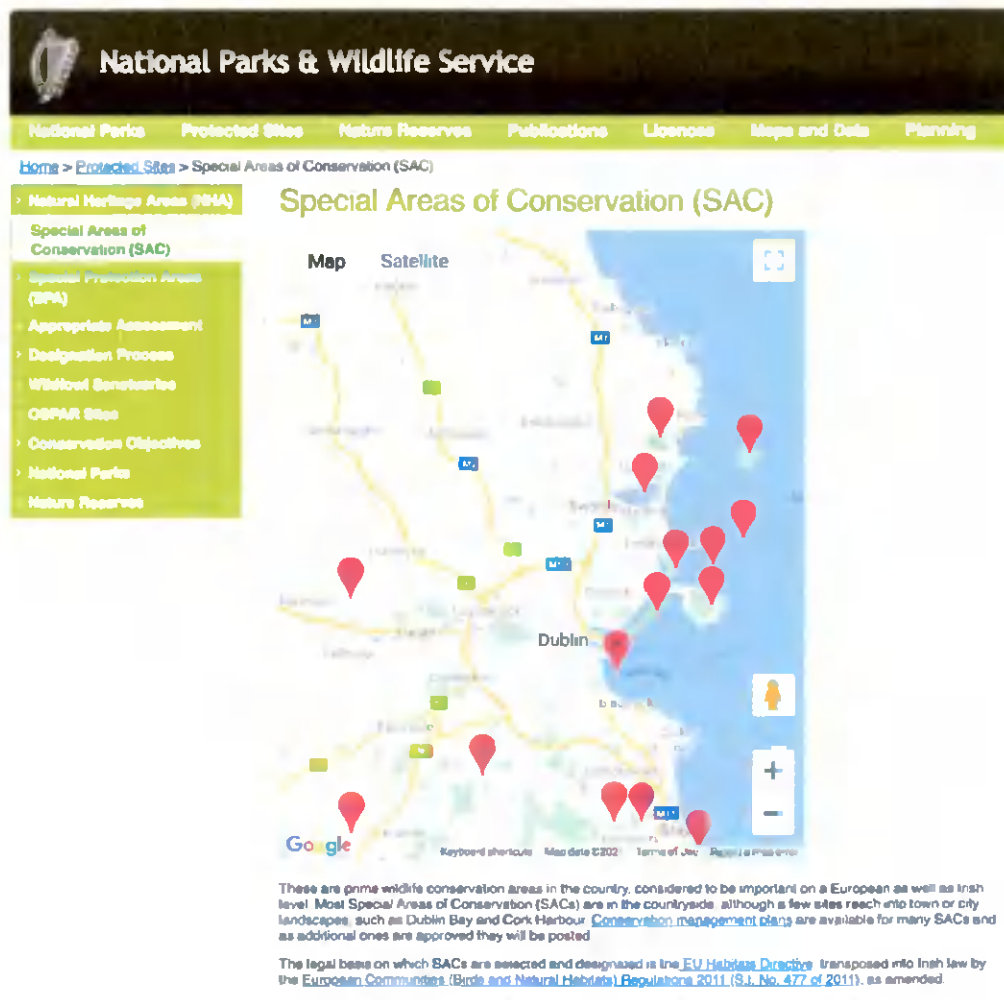


Fig 8.1 Map showing closest Special Areas of Conservation

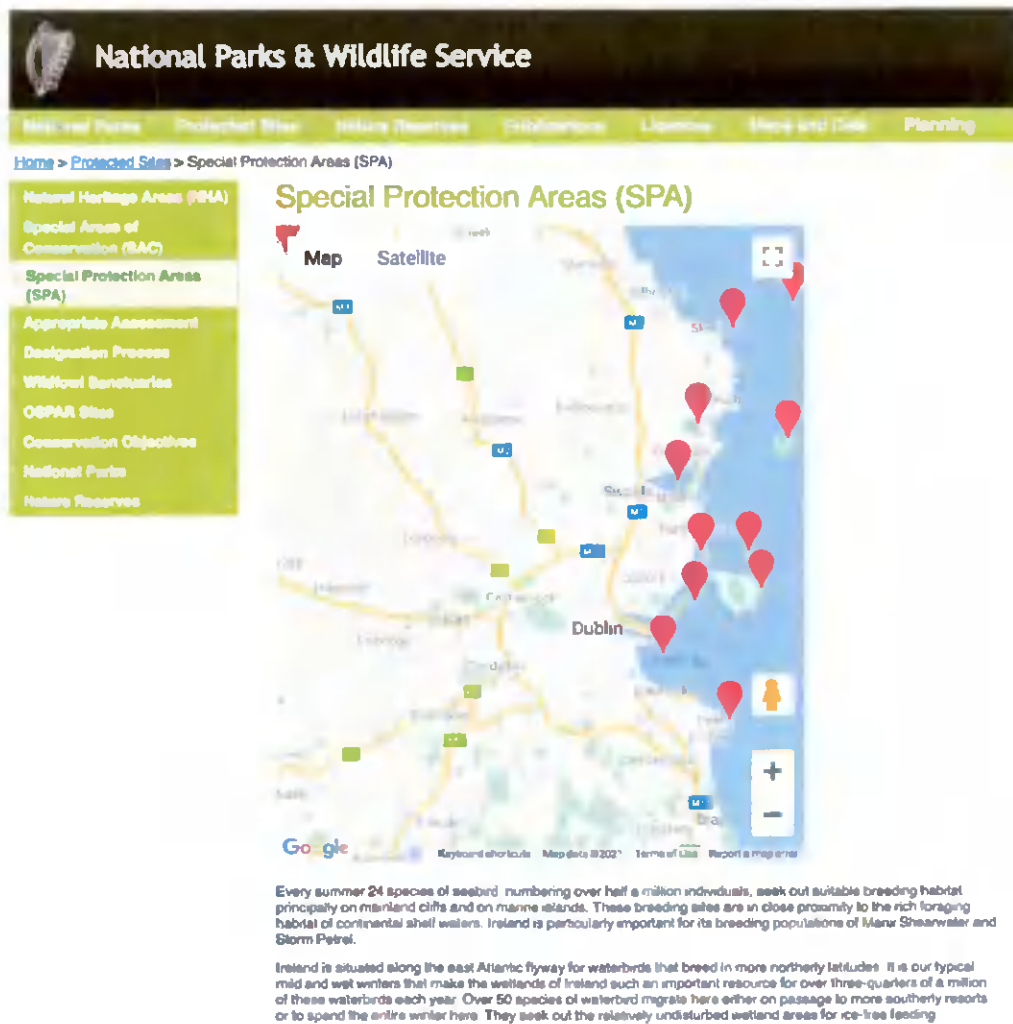


Fig 8.2 Map showing closest Special Protection Areas

8.2 Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, it is not considered that there are any significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development- see assessment below.

Appropriate Assessment Screening

8.2.1. Will there be any impact on an Annex 1 habitat?

NO. The site is remote from any relevant SACs, Natura 200 and SPAs.

8.2.2. Will the development cause a reduction in the area of the habitat or Natura 2000 site?

NO. The site does not physically connect to the Natura Sites and will have no impact on the size of the habitat.

8.2.3. Will the development cause direct or indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality and supply, soil compaction) in the Natura 200 site?

NO. All Foul and Surface water Drainage connect to the existing infrastructure. Refer to GDCL drawings and Report.

8.2.4. Will the development cause serious or ongoing disturbance to species or habitats for which the Natura 2000 site is selected (e.g. increased noise, illumination and human activity)?

NO. The site is remote from the Natura 2000 site and will not cause any disturbance to habitats or species.

8.2.5. Will the development cause direct or indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of population on the Natura 2000 site?

NO.

8.2.6. Will the development interfere with mitigation measures put in place for other plans or projects?

NO.

9.0 Flood Risk Assessment

9.1 The OPW flood maps and report (see below) indicate that there is no history of flooding on the site, nor for any area within a considerable distance from the site. Based on a review of the available evidence, the risk of flooding to the site is considered low and no further actions are required.

Past Flood Event Local Area Summary Report



Report Produced: 14/10/2021 15:33

This Past Flood Event Summary Report summarises all past flood events within 2.5 kilometres of the map centre.

This report has been downloaded from www.floodinfo.ie (the "Website"). The users should take account of the restrictions and limitations relating to the content and use of the Website that are explained in the Terms and Conditions. It is a condition of use of the Website that you agree to be bound by the disclaimer and other terms and conditions set out on the Website and to the privacy policy on the Website.



Fig 9.1 OPW Flood report in respect of site

10.0 Conclusion

The overall vision of the subject lands at Liffey Valley is for the provision of a self-storage and café facility that provides a high-quality environment for the prospective employees and customers, while providing an attractive frontage to the N4 and in particular providing a high quality surrounding to the estate road , with a well articulated street frontage, high quality landscaping and varied activities, creating a pleasant and positive setting for the public and customers alike . The proposal complies with national and local planning policy and will be of benefit to the wider Liffey Valley/Clondalkin area.

The scale of the proposal is suitable given its location facing the N4 and in close proximity to the M50/N4 interchange and the adjacent 6-storey office block. The design and materials present a striking and attractive image but where required are sensitive to the immediate context , addressing each condition in a well thought out and appropriate manner.

Carew Kelly Architects
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