

5.1 CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the development at Greenfields is the first of what will mark an evolution of the current Swords Business Park, which given its previous zoning and location is a low density mono-use car-dependant industrial area, into a mixed-use district with high-density office, residential and retail developments. This has been given added impetus with the alignment of the MetroLink line in close proximity (Seatown stop, c. 400m from the site) as well as its strategic location between Swords town centre to the west and the north-south corridor of the M1 (E01) Motorway to the east on the northern approach to Dublin City and Airport. It can be argued that this site is located closer to the amenities of Swords town centre than many of the existing residential neighbourhoods to the west of the town centre.

This development is cognisant of the shift that is occurring in the wider context from traditional industry to a knowledge and technical services economy, with significant growth in population and new housing alongside employment, which is a continued area of focus for future planning. Key changes involve increased residential development, a focus on creating a sustainable and vibrant community, and improvements to infrastructure like public transport and pedestrian/cycle networks.

The development seeks to take advantage of this potential, and setting a precedent in creating an assemblage of blocks that respond positively to their prominent location, which is highly visible from the M1. The rhythmic and rigorous arrangement of Blocks A, B and C along the north with the undulating scale of Blocks D and E to the south provide a striking composition. The simple modern aesthetic and quality finishes will ensure that the scheme will be durable in terms of lifecycle and appearance.

It is anticipated that this development would act as a catalyst for further quality development in this Metro Economic zone reinforcing the core of Swords town centre into the future.



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APPENDIX A. Key Indicators

This section addresses a preliminary assessment of the proposed development according to the 4no. key indicators for Quality Design and Placemaking set in the Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January 2024).



4 key indicators for Quality Urban Design and Placemaking. Source: Appendix B of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Local Authorities.

Key Indicators & Checklist		Response
SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT MOVEMENT		
Will the plan or development proposal establish a highly permeable and legible network of streets and spaces within the site that optimises movement for sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and public transport)?		Yes – the site will be fully permeable, with a network of pedestrian routes running across the development connecting each of the 5 blocks as well as providing connections from points of access around its perimeter, s illustrated above in urban design concept diagrams and images. A main access route runs east-west beneath blocks A, B and C connecting each of their main cores for example. Permeability across the site will contribute to accessing the proposed public open spaces and creating an inclusive community
Have opportunities to improve connections with and between established communities been identified and responded to with particular regard to strategic connections between homes, shops, employment opportunities, public transport, local services and amenities?		Yes – the site layout being fully permeable provides for connections to the childcare facility in Block A and commercial/ retail use in Block E. These are located to the western interface of the site, flanking the main entry point at the point of arrival from Swords town centre to the west.
Are streets designed (including the retrofitting of existing streets adjacent to or on-route to the site, where appropriate) in accordance with DMURS to calm traffic and enable the safe and comfortable movement of vulnerable users?		Yes – internal street network and links to external adjacent roads will be designed in accordance to DMURS. Vehicular access within the development is kept to a minimum, purely to access the undercroft parking and at-grade parking. Both these areas are accessed separately, eliminating any possibility of routes being used as rat-runs by vehicular traffic.
Has the quantum of parking been minimised (in accordance with SPPR4 where relevant) and designed and located in a way that seeks to reduce the demand for private car use, promote sustainable modes of transport and ensure that the public realm is not dominated by parked vehicles?		Yes – parking will be provided in a ratio of 0.422 no. Spaces per apartment, accommodated both via a under croft parking structure and at grade. Please refer to the site statistics for detail.
MIX OF LAND USES (VIBRANT CENTRES AND COMMUNITIES)		
Is the mix and intensity of land uses appropriate to the site and its location and have land uses been distributed in a complementary manner that optimises access to public transport, amenities and local services via walking or cycling?		Yes – the proposed development includes mix and location of land uses in line with the MRE zoning in the Fingal Development Plan, complementing and enhancing the mix of uses that will be served by the MetroLink infrastructure; Seatown station c. 400m to the west of the site.
Have a diverse and varied range of housing types been provided to meet local and projected needs (having regard to the Housing Need Demand Assessment), supplemented by an innovative range of housing typologies that support greater housing affordability and choice?		Yes – mix provides for range of different typologies and unit sizes, as informed in the schedule of accommodation provided; Overall mix proposed, 60 no. 1-bedroom units (20.8%), 200 no. 2-bedroom units (69.2%), 29 no. 3-bedroom units (10%).
Will the plan or development proposal supplement and/or support the regeneration and revitalisation of an existing centre or neighbourhood, including the adaption and re-use of the existing building stock in order to reduce vacancy and dereliction (where applicable) and promote town centre living (where applicable)?		Yes – the proposed development seeks to rejuvenate and introduce residential on a currently unutilised site located close to the town centre of Swords and associated high-frequency public transport. This will help to provide a genuine mix of uses within the immediate area.
Is the regeneration and revitalisation of an existing centre or neighbourhood supported by the enhancement of the public realm so as to create a more liveable environment, attract investment and encourage a greater number of visitors (where applicable)?		Yes – The proposed development seeks to create a new neighbourhood as part of what would be a mixed-use district immediately to the east of Swords town centre located beside a new transformative high-frequency public transport route (MetroLink).

Key Indicators & Checklist	Response
GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE (OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE)	
Has the plan or development proposal positively responded to natural features and landscape character, with particular regard to biodiversity, vistas and landmarks and the setting of protected structures, conservation areas and historic landscapes?	Yes – the development site comprises significant clusters of existing trees, originally planted to provide screening along its western flank. The proposed development seeks to retain and integrate these trees as well as the individual willow tree centrally located in the site into the layout.
Have a complementary and interconnected range of open spaces, corridors and planted/landscaped areas been provided, that create and conserve ecological links and promotes active travel and healthier lifestyles?	Yes – the site layout creates a series of open spaces and courtyards between the buildings themselves or between blocks and tree planting. These complement the proposed pedestrian routes that reverse the development.
Are public open spaces universally accessible and designed to cater for a range of active and passive recreational uses (taking account of the function of other spaces within the network)?	Yes – the spaces are fully accessible to all users each with a different character. The communal space on the podium over the undercroft parking is accessed via lift and stair.
Does the plan or development proposal include integrated nature-based solutions for the management of urban drainage to promote biodiversity, urban greening, improved water quality and flood mitigation?	Yes – Replicating the natural characteristics and providing amenity/biodiversity has been achieved in the SuDS elements included in this application. A full SuDS treatment train approach has been implemented including intensive green roofs, permeable paving to all parking spaces, tree pits, bio-retention areas, silt-trap/catchpit manholes, hydrobrake limiting flow to the drained area Qbar greenfield rate, stone lined voided arch retention storage and open detention basins
RESPONSIVE BUILT FORM	
Does the layout, orientation and scale of development support the formation of a coherent and legible urban structure in terms of block layouts and building heights with particular regard to the location of gateways and landmarks, the hierarchy of streets and spaces and access to daylight and sunlight?	Yes – the strategic approach to layout and massing in the proposed development is to provide a distinctive sense of place and a self-sustaining diverse multi-generational community that grows in harmony with its environment. Favouring living, in addition to working and recreation activities, the development responds to different use requirements through a legible hierarchy of routes which have been designed to facilitate connections through the area and wider community mainly prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, as previously outlined. The blocks and spaces between are orientated to maximise access to natural daylight and sunlight.
Do buildings address streets and spaces in a manner that will ensure they clearly define public and private spaces, generate activity, maximise passive surveillance and provide an attractive and animated interface?	Yes – Buildings and uses are organised to clearly define and fully overlook all the open spaces and streets within the development
Does the layout, scale and design features of new development respond to prevailing development patterns (where relevant), integrate well within its context and provide appropriate transitions with adjacent buildings and established communities so as to safeguard their amenities to a reasonable extent?	Yes – The layout, scale and design features have all been carefully considered from the outset of the design, taking specific regard to the prevailing context. The site seeks to establish a built form and height that is appropriate to a new urban neighbourhood.
Has a coherent architectural and urban design strategy been presented that will ensure the development is sustainable, distinctive, complements the urban structure and promotes a strong sense of identity?	Yes – the proposed development envisages an attractive variety of heights and geometries across the different apartment blocks containing a range of typologies, from 1 to 3-bedroom apartment typologies. The overall built form responds to a legible urban structure and addresses a hierarchical and pedestrian-focused street network which, in addition to the central public open space and will create a new compact and inclusive neighbourhood with a unique sense of place. Please refer to images and diagrams provided above illustrating compliance with this indicator.

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