

7.3 Design Concept

The urban design strategy of the proposed development is laid out around and comprises three key design elements:

- (i) Public plaza
- (ii) Residential block: 6-7 storey with commercial space at ground floor level
- (iii) Senior Living block: 6 storey with commercial space at ground floor level

(i) Public Plaza

The proposed new public plaza is the central design element around which the overall scheme is designed. It is the key Planning component designed to meet South Dublin County Council’s Local Area Plan for Tallaght Town Centre. The plaza is located centrally within the fully pedestrianised concourse which measures 15m. wide and stretches over 90m. in length between Belgard Square East and Belgard Road. Small to mid-scale commercial spaces line either side of the concourse to provide a variety of cafe/restaurant/retail offerings. The plaza or ‘mini square’ is formed in the centre of this new public space, creating a sunny and sheltered outdoor seating space, around which the commercial units, including the artisan type shops, can open out to.

A sculptural planter feature with perimeter seating forms the focal point of the new space and a place to gather.

(ii) Residential Block (Block B)

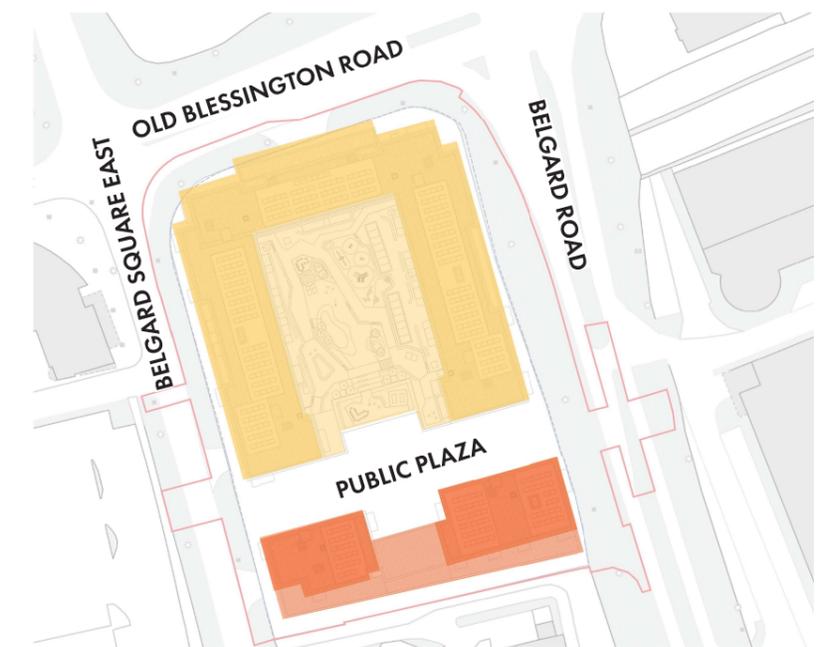
Located on the northern side of the new plaza is the proposed 6-7 storey U-shaped block, designed to provide robust and high quality urban edge to the northern, eastern and western perimeter of the site. The block comprises c. 1,466sq.m. (15,780sq.ft.) of commercial and community floor space arranged around the perimeter of the block at ground floor level, concealing an undercroft car park (which also includes bicycle parking, bin storage etc.) in the centre and accommodating 58 no. car spaces.

Above the car park and non residential units, 150 residential apartments units are arranged around a courtyard within a 5-6 storey U-shaped courtyard structure which is open towards the south to maximise sunlight into the courtyard garden (communal amenity space) at first floor podium level. The apartment block comprises an overall mix of: 4% studios; 16% 1-beds; 48% 2-beds and 32% 3-bed units. Access to the apartments is via 4no. stair/lift cores which are directly accessible from the surrounding streets with direct access to the car park provided also.

(iii) Senior Living Block (Block A)

Forming the southern side of the new public plaza is a linear block with larger sized apartment unit types designed specifically for older persons. This block comprises 2no. 6-storey blocks that are connected by a 2-storey element at ground and first floor levels which is reduced in height to maximise sunlight into the central public plaza space. The internal and external communal amenity spaces for the ‘Senior Living’ residents are accommodated in this connecting 2-storey link structure. These spaces are dual aspect and include a private sunny terrace on the south side at first floor level and a winter garden at ground floor level that opens out to the new plaza space, providing another activity and use for the public plaza.

The 2no. 6-storey blocks contain 49 no. 1 and 2-bed apartment units with 657sq.m. (7,072sq.ft.) retail and commercial space at ground floor, including a pharmacy and a beauty salon, providing an active street frontage along the new public concourse and central plaza area.



Key Plan

7.4 Public Open Space and Proposed New Public Plaza

Pedestrian Concourse

The proposed new pedestrian concourse with its new central public plaza is the primary design element around which the proposed new development is organised. The new route fulfils the tertiary connection across the site that was included in the Tallaght Town Centre LAP, (ref. Chapter 2.2, Access and Movement, Figure 2.1: Route Structure).

Extending 15m. in width, the proposed new concourse runs on an east-west axis, across the full width of the site from Belgard Square East to Belgard Road – a distance of c. 90m. This new concourse will connect the premier shopping precinct 'The Square Tallaght' to the west of the site with the commercial / retail and units in Abberley Square to the east and to 'The Village' neighbourhood a little farther beyond.

Public Plaza

Integral to the design of this new route is the exclusion of all vehicles, with the exception of emergency vehicles only. Keeping this space traffic free allows a new central public plaza to be formed – a new civic space – around which a diverse mix of smaller café and artisan shops can safely open out on to. Careful separation of the massing of the senior living blocks along the southern edge edges prevents overshadowing of this space during the mid-afternoon. This takes advantage of the sunny orientation most of the year round, creating an opportunity for a vibrant mix of uses throughout the day and at night to help encourage evening economy. The main entrance to the communal amenity space of the senior living accommodation is also located centrally off the main plaza space. This helps to further enrich the diverse mix of users who will access and occupy the plaza.

The new plaza measures 520sq.m. (5,600sq.ft.) and is designed to generous proportions, 27.5m x 19m., to allow the opportunity to cater for farmers markets, street art and outdoor performances etc.

Public Open Space: Compliance with Development Plan Standards

The provision of high quality public open space that is appropriately designed, located and maintained is a key element of placemaking. Public open space should have active and passive recreational value and should enhance the identity and amenity of an area.

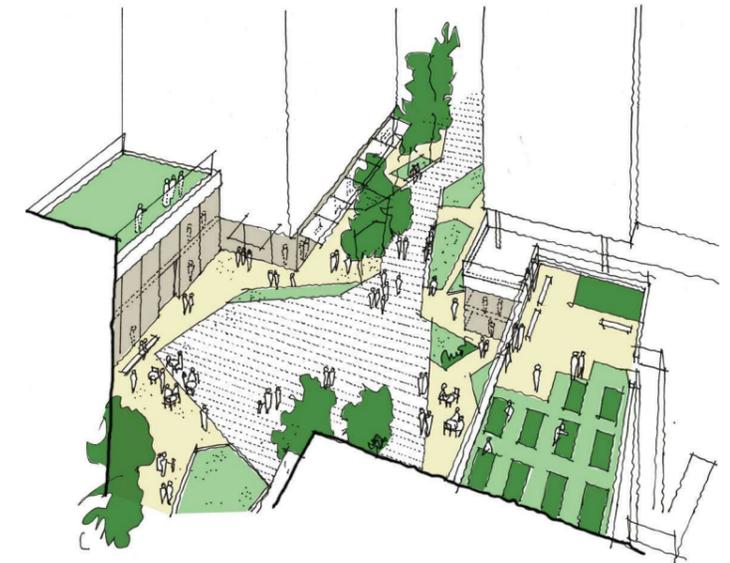
The new pedestrian concourse and public plaza seeks to adhere to the following key policies as set out in SDCC Development Plan, 2022-2028, namely:

1. The five basic principles guiding open space provision as contained in Chapter 8, Community Infrastructure and Open Space:

- Hierarchy
- Environmental Sustainability
- Quantity
- Quality
- Accessibility

2. The relevant Urban Framework Objectives which cover the design of open space:

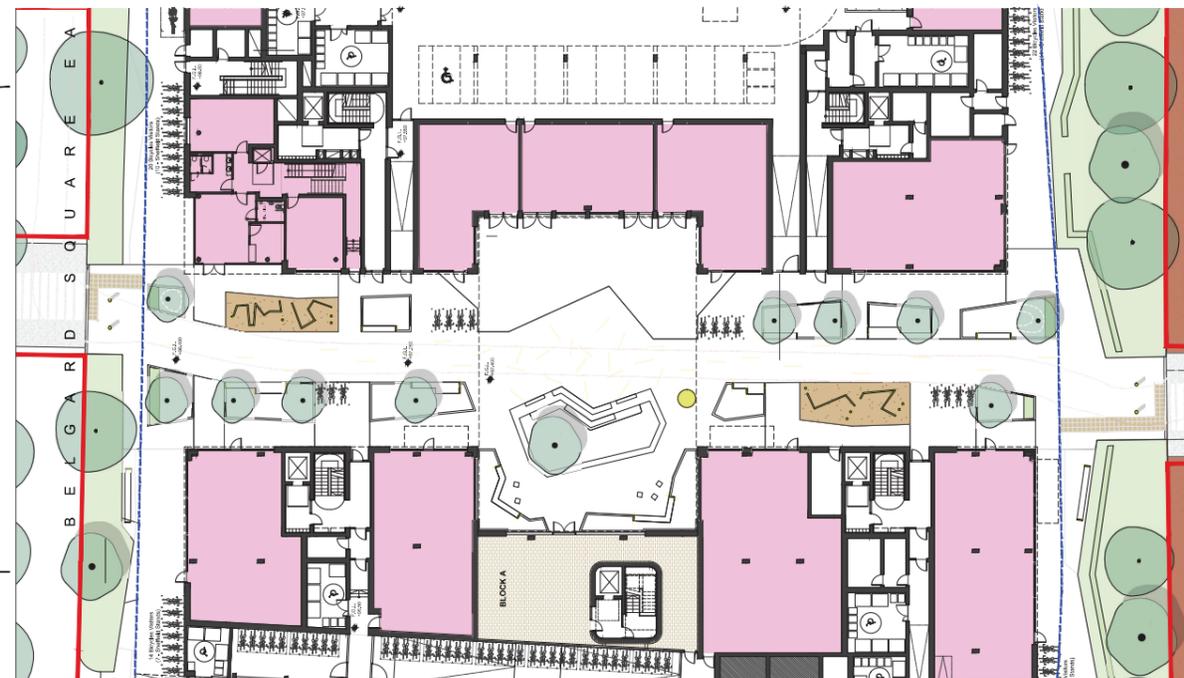
- To promote a mix of uses in a manner that creates a sustainable and active area (Objective UF2)
- To ensure that development is carried out in a design led manner that prioritises place making and accords with the core principles of urban design and the creation of integrated streets (Objective UF3)
- To upgrade and design new streets using an integrated approach to pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular movement and ensure that the movement function of each is reflected by an appropriate design response and design speed (Objective UF5)
- To provide attractive, interesting and well used public realm and open spaces using place making and urban design principles, creating a pedestrian centred environment with active, inviting public spaces and parks. (Objective UF6)



Initial Concept: Public Plaza Sketch



Proposed Public Plaza



Proposed Public Plaza

7.5 Public Realm

The Tallaght Town Centre LAP is reinforced by a strong vision for the public realm and open space of the plan area. Under Chapter 2 (Sect. 2.7 Public Realm and Open Space), the LAP identifies the key elements which need to be addressed to deliver the policy and objectives of the plan. Therefore, in response to this, the proposed public realm design is focussed on successfully delivering the following key elements:

- Interaction between residential and commercial developments
- *the communal main entrance to the 'Senior Living' apartment block is located directly off the main plaza.*
- *the internal and external communal amenity spaces of the 'Senior Living' apartment block are located directly adjacent to and overlooking the central public plaza space.*

- Integration of residential units with the public realm, especially where they are connected to the commercial uses.
- *entrances to two of the four residential stair/lift cores are accessed directly from the public plaza*
- *the pedestrian concourse is designed as a shared surface, to include a direct cycle route from Belgard Road which directly connects to the bicycle storage areas located within the main residential block*
- *the two entrances to the residential stair/lift cores which serve the 'Senior Living' blocks are located directly off the new pedestrian concourse*

- Connections to the wider street network.
- *The proposed pedestrian and cycling crossings which are located at either end of the pedestrian concourse provide safe connections to 'The Square Tallaght' on the west side and Abberley Square and The Village neighbourhood to the east. The design of the proposed public realm has been carefully considered to encourage interaction between residents and the new street/public realm and to foster a strong and identifiable new neighbourhood.*

7.6 Sustainable Neighbourhood Plan: Plan Approach

South Dublin County Council Development Plan, 2022-2028, Chapter 5: Successful and Sustainable Neighbourhoods, sets out the eight key design principles through which the design of successful neighbourhoods can be delivered.

Under Section 5.2.1 a 'Plan Approach', is required to demonstrate how the overarching principles to achieve a successful and sustainable neighbourhood can be integrated as part of the design proposal. How each of the eight key design principles are incorporated into this proposed design is addressed in detail under their own specific headings throughout this report.

However, by way of an overview, the eight principles are summarised below.

7.6.1 Context *ref. SDCC QDP3 Objectives 1-9*

The character and setting of the existing site context are described in detail in Section 2 of this report. How the design of the proposed development responds to the context, specifically in terms of its proposed height; scale, massing, street frontage and materials is set out in detail under their respective headings contained in Sections 7, 8 and 9 of this report.

7.6.2 Healthy Placemaking *ref. SDCC QDP4 Objectives 1-2*

The urban design strategy and design concept for the proposed development is described in Section 7.3 of this report. At the heart of the design is the proposed new public space - the new pedestrian concourse and public plaza and the ambition of this scheme to foster a new, vibrant and safe neighbourhood. The design of the proposed public open space, public realm, new neighbourhood and site connectivity is described in detail in Sections 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 of this report.

7.6.3 Inclusivity and Accessibility *ref. SDCC QDP7 Objectives 8-12*

The previous retail use of the site relied upon a masonry wall around the site to secure it, effectively removing any inclusivity and accessibility across the site. The nature, use and layout of the proposed site development will entirely change this by promoting and supporting:

- a Universal Design Approach to the residential and non-residential development elements of the new development (refer to Section 7.5)
- the provision of quality housing with long-term adaptability (refer to Sections 7.9 and 8.6)
- the principles of universal design (refer to Section 8.5)
- fostering the creation of a new and attractive mixed-use sustainable neighbourhood with a variety of housing types
- the development of a network of pedestrian footpaths and public spaces (refer to Sections 7.4 -7.5)

7.6.4 Public Realm *ref. SDCC QDP6 Objectives 1-9*

Chapter 5, Section 5.2.5 of South Dublin County Council Development Plan, 2022-2028, states:

'A primary aim of this plan is to promote the provision of a high-quality public realm identifying the need for the enhancement of existing and provision of new additional civic and public spaces and parks'.

How the design of the proposed new public realm, and in particular the new pedestrian concourse and public plaza, meet the relevant policy objections 1-9 set out in QDP6 is described in detail in Sections 7.4 and 7.5.

7.6.5 Connected Neighbourhoods *ref. SDCC QDP5 Objectives 1-2*

Chapter 5, Section 5.2.5 of South Dublin County Council Development Plan, 2022-2028, states:

'A key element of healthy placemaking is the need to ensure alternatives to the car in the design of streets and public spaces and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking as active transport modes'.

One of the most important design decisions in the proposed development of this site (and where it differs fundamentally from the original SHD Application) is to eliminate all vehicles (except emergency vehicles from the tertiary connection through the site. This increases pedestrian permeability and improves cycle safety, thereby creating a more compact development to deliver a long term successful and sustainable neighbourhood.

7.6.6 Built form and mix *ref. SDCC QDP7*

The proposed built form, including scale, massing, height and layout is described in Section 6 of this report and in Section 8 – Detailed Design. The mix of uses is set out in Section 7.11 and the residential and commercial mix is described in further detail in Sections 8.4 and 8.6 respectively.

7.6.7 Thriving Economy

As identified in Section 3.3 of this report, this development site is identified as an ‘Opportunity Site’ within the Tallaght Core Retail Area (ref. Chapter 9, Section 9.5 of South Dublin County Council Development Plan, 2022-2028). The proposed quantum and mix of retail/commercial accommodation which is arranged around the building perimeter and the central plaza are addresses the key objectives for the Tallaght Core Retail Area:

- EDE9 Objective 2: To continue to develop Tallaght as a vibrant and sustainable County Town at the top of the County’s settlement and retail hierarchy and improve Tallaght’s importance in regional retail terms.
- EDE9 Objective 3: To facilitate the provision of the highest level and broadest range of retailing in the County in the Core Retail Area of Tallaght Town Centre
- EDE9 Objective 4: To promote the intensification of the Core Retail Area of Tallaght.

In order to encourage a thriving economy, including in the evening, a suitable mix of uses have been carefully considered and integrated into the proposed layout, refer to Sections 7.11 and 7.12 of this report.

7.6.8 Design and Materials

High quality design, materials and finishes are to the forefront of the Architectural design which has been developed by Donnelly Turpin Architects for the development of this site. The design rationale for each design component is set out in Section 8 of this report –Detailed Design.

7.7 Quality Urban Design and Placemaking: Key Indicators

Chapter 4 of The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities includes an overview of the process of design and placemaking and of key indicators of good urban design and placemaking.

Under Chapter 4 of the Guidelines, Policy and Objective 4.2 states:

'It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that the key indicators of quality urban design and placemaking set out in Section 4.4 are applied within statutory development plans and in the consideration of individual planning applications'.

The key indicators referred to in the policy objective are set out in Appendix D of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines. This contains a checklist, intended as helpful prompts to assist refinement of the design included in the Planning Application. The proposed design and how it has been developed is considered under the key indicators below.

1. Sustainable and Efficient Movement

- **Permeability and Legibility:** The design has been organised around the new public pedestrian concourse to promote and optimise sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and public transport).
- **Connections with established communities:** The connectivity strategy is set out in Section 7.8 of this report.
- **Street Design:** The design of the proposed new public plaza and new public realm are set out in Sections 7.4 and 7.5 of this report.
- **Parking:** The quantum of parking has been minimised in recognition of the central location of the site and the close proximity of the public transport links identified in this report and the reports prepared by the Traffic Consultants, NRB Consulting Engineers, which accompany this Planning Application.

2. Mix of Land Uses (Vibrant Centres and Communities)

- **Mix and Intensity of Land Use:** The proposed residential, commercial and community uses have been carefully laid out with due cognisance of the surrounding public transport, amenities and local services.
- **Housing Types:** A diverse and varied range of apartment types is provided as described in Section 7.16 of this report.
- **Regeneration and revitalisation:** The key vision for this proposed design is the opportunity to transform the current derelict site into a new vibrant and sustainable neighbourhood
- **Public realm enhancement:** The primary interventions of the proposed development which will transform the current public realm is described in detail in Section 7.5 of this report.

3. Green and Blue Infrastructure (Open Space, Landscape and Heritage)

- **Landscaping design:** The design rationale for the proposed landscape design and how this is integrated into the overall urban design strategy is set out in the report prepared by Studio Glasú which accompanies this Planning Application.
- **Public Open Spaces and Universal Design Access:** The Universal design Strategy incorporated as part of the design of the public open spaces is set out in Section 8.4 of this report.
- **Biodiversity and Urban Greening:** The biodiversity and urban greening design solutions are set out in the accompanying reports that have been prepared by Studio Glasú to support this Planning Application.

4. Responsive Built Form

- **Urban Structure – Height Scale and Massing:** The impact of the proposed building form, height, scale and massing have been carefully considered on the surrounding context and on the public and semi-private spaces that it has created. This is set out in detail in Sections 7 and 8 of this report.
- **Public and Private spaces:** The variety of proposed activities, how they generate activity and maximise passive surveillance is set out in Sections 7.12 and 7.13 of this report.
- **Site context:** The layout, scale and design features of the proposed new design have been carefully considered as part of the proposed design strategy which is described in Sections 7.1 – 7.3 of this report.
- **Architectural and Urban Design Strategy:** Sections 7.1 to 7.19 of this report provide a detailed description of all of the elements that have been considered to form a coherent architectural and urban design strategy. The primary objective is to achieve a quality urban design which creates a sense of place and provides a new sustainable neighbourhood with its own authentic identity.

7.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

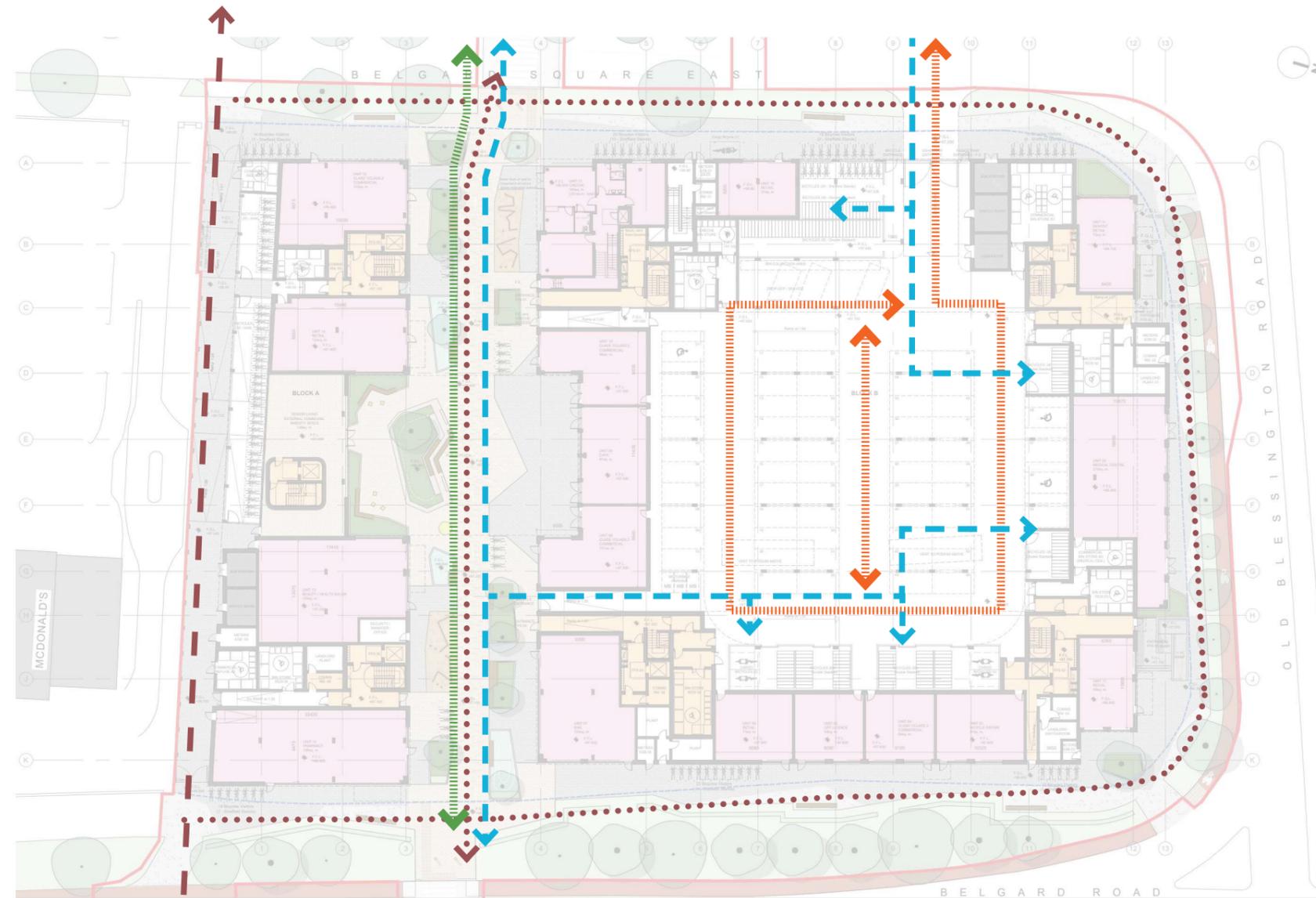
7.8 Connectivity Strategy

South Dublin County Council Development Plan, 2022-2028, Chapter 5: Successful and Sustainable Neighbourhoods, sets out the eight key design principles through which the design of successful neighbourhoods can be delivered.

The proposed design layout recognises the site's strategic importance as a full urban block and its location within the 'The Centre' neighbourhood as described in The Tallaght Town LAP. In response to this, the connectivity strategy seeks to provide the following:

- A new pedestrian concourse (designed as a shared surface suitable for cyclists also) to traverse the site on an east - west axis.
- The addition of two new pedestrian/cyclist crossings located at either end of the proposed new pedestrian route to provide safe passage across Belgard Road and Belgard Square East.
- Direct pedestrian access from the proposed new public plaza to the primary uses across the development, including: retail / commercial units; the car park; bicycle storage / parking; residential lift/stair cores; crèche; main entrance to the senior living accommodation and separate access to the senior living stair/lift cores.
- Vehicular access to the ground floor car park directly from Belgard Square East.
- Direct access to the bicycle storage / parking in the car park from Belgard Square East.
- Separation of all servicing routes to remove vehicles from the proposed new pedestrian/cyclist routes.

The proposed Connectivity Strategy prioritises and promotes cycling and walking. In doing so, the proposed new pedestrian concourse and the public plaza form part of an ambition to provide a wider network of safe and appealing routes for walking and cycling that will connect the existing neighbourhoods of Tallaght. It ensures people can regularly and safely traverse the public spaces during the day and at night time to live, work, shop eat and access the surrounding public transport links.



Connectivity Plan ↓



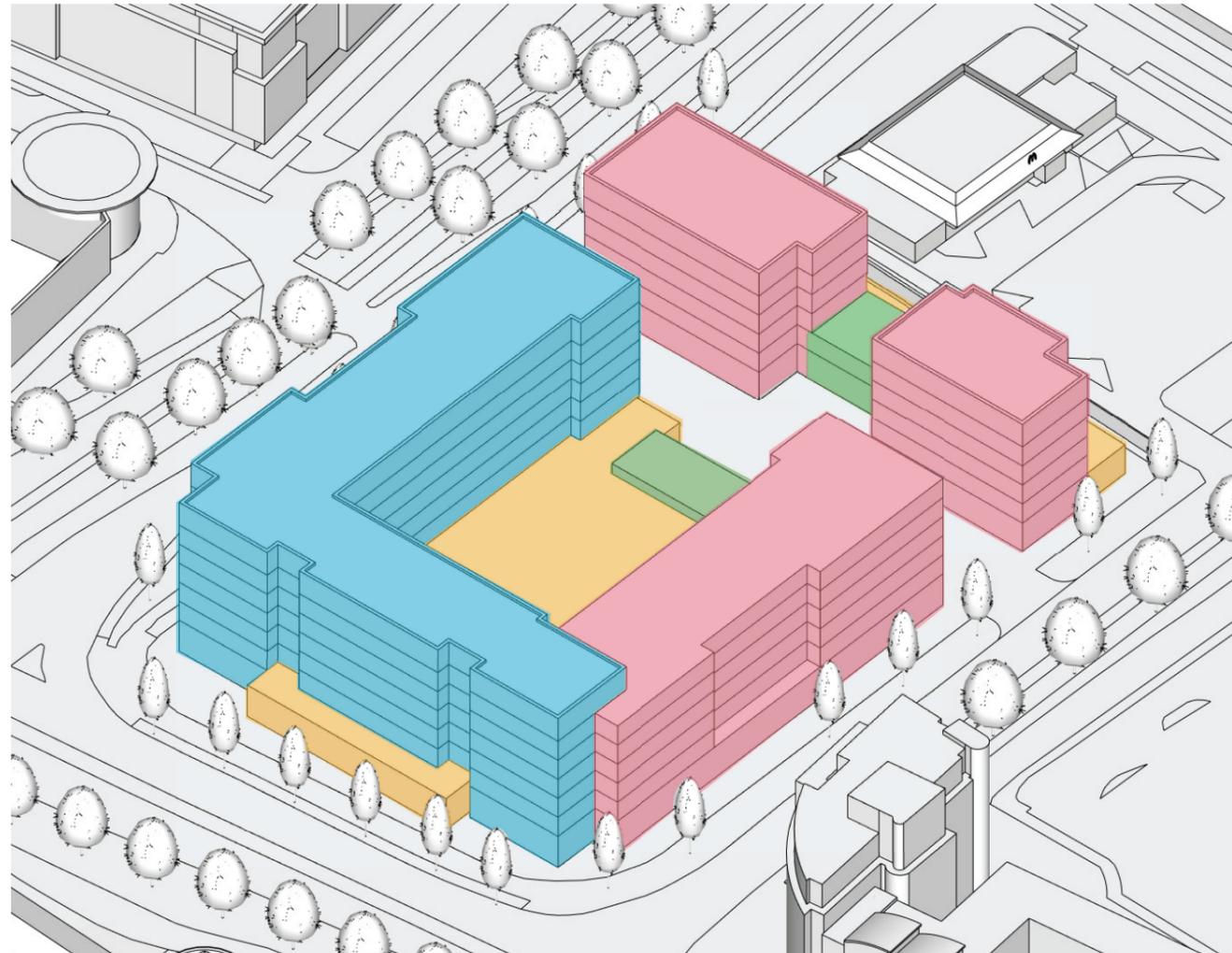
7.9 Scale and Massing

The proposed general scale and massing strategy, for the large part, is typically led by the height recommended in The Tallaght Centre LAP (ref. Chapter 3.2, Fig. 3.3: Overall Urban Structure, The Centre). All of the building heights proposed comply with the LAP.

The proposed U-shaped residential block is 7-storey at its tallest point along its northern and eastern boundary, stepping down to 6-storey along the western edge. In plan, the perimeter of the block steps inward to provide subtle modelling and visual interest when viewed obliquely and approaching along the surrounding primary streets. The U-shaped block is open-ended above podium level to its southern side in order to maximise the southerly orientation of the communal open amenity space for the residential apartment units. A two storey façade conceals the car park below podium level behind and this forms a modest civic scale frontage to the northern edge of the public plaza. Projecting single storey elements are designed as part of the northern and southern elevations to reduce the massing to the streetscape.

The proposed linear block containing the 'Senior Living' apartments is located on the southern side of the proposed pedestrian concourse / public plaza. This building is designed with two 6-storey blocks that are connected at ground and first level only. The taller blocks are separated by over 16m. to help ensure:

- (i) south sun is maximised into the central plaza area, preventing over-shadowing along the proposed pedestrian concourse during the day and
- (ii) the massing of the block is suitably 'broken up' to help create an interesting streetscape which extends over c. 90m. in length.



Proposed Massing Diagram





Proposed Pedestrian Concourse looking West

7.10 Adaptability

The proposed design has been developed to suit its location and meet the needs of all users who will live, work, shop, meet and socialise in the proposed new apartments, shops, cafes, etc. However, it is recognised that in order to accommodate future change, an adaptable building design, or at least certain particular elements of the design, will need to be adaptable to allow for future change. Therefore, the design has been developed with future adaptability options to include:

- none of the internal walls within the apartments will be designed to be load bearing to allow flexibility to alter the layout in the future if this is required.
- the residential apartments have been designed to allow the inclusion of efficient energy appliances, for example, heat pumps, without negatively impacting the current apartment layouts envisaged at the Planning Application stage.
- the commercial units at the ground floor will be designed to allow sub-divisibility of the units and/or future alteration to the dividing walls between units to cater to provide future flexibility for prospective tenants and business owners.
- the internal and sheltered external communal amenity spaces for the 'Senior Living' residents have been designed as open plan to allow the internal layout to change to suit changing needs
- the location and size of the ESB and metering services areas have been designed to be as flexible as possible to accommodate the future addition and / or sub-division of the commercial / retail units.
- car parking spaces have been designed with the future installation of EV charging points
- the access and escape routes from the car park are designed to be separate from the residential lift/stair cores to future proof against any anti-social arrangement in the residential cores and residential common areas.
- the layout of the central public plaza is designed to cater for future public activities, such as a farmers market, that can bring further use and vibrancy to the public spaces.
- the senior living apartment units are all designed to adhere to Universal Design Guidelines.

7.11 Efficiency: Intensity of Development

The proposed development seeks to promote an appropriate use of the land across the extent of the site. The Tallaght Town Centre LAP determines the plot ratio that is permissible on this site and flexibility in relation to an additional gross floor area of up to 20% of the plot ratio is also provided for where a strong design rationale for an increase in height/density will result in a significant public gain.

The description of what constitutes 'public gain', is set out in Section 2.6 of the LAP:

- Dedication of part of the site for public open space including parks and plazas, above the standard 10% requirement for public open space. *The proposed public open space equates to c.13.8% of the site – nearly 40% above the standard 10% requirement.*
- The creation of streets and links that provide access through and access through to a site. *The proposed pedestrian concourse (shared surface) extends to c. 90m long.*
- Upgrades to streets surrounding the site, including works such as street widening, new entranced junctions and crossing points and realignments. *Two new pedestrian/cyclist crossing points are proposed to Belgard Road and Belgard Square East.*
- Provision of community and/or cultural amenities that will positively contribute to the social infrastructure and/or other public domain works or improvements to be agree with the Council. *Hard and soft landscaping upgrades are proposed around the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the site.*

The proposed design elements which all constitute 'public gain' are considered in the Planning Report prepared by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning and combine to contribute to support an increase in the plot ratio and to optimise the efficiency of the design layout on the site. Other efficiency elements in relation to the site are included in the accompanying reports submitted with this application, these include the blue roof and SUDS design; landscaping design and the services elements contained in the sustainability statement.

7.12 Variety: Mix of Activities

A sustainable mix of building uses and activities is an essential requirement to create vibrancy and as well as visual interest. The proposed design offers a diverse mix of activities through the proposed new layout, including:

- mixed range of retail/commercial/community uses throughout
- animated streetscapes around the perimeter of the building as well as along the public plaza with bespoke designed shopfronts to suit their location
- varied range of apartment types as well as residential users (for example, senior living alongside more traditional apartments).
- assorted mix of outdoor communal amenity spaces for residents, including areas to play, garden, socialise and to relax.
- a mixture of outdoor public spaces, including a diversity of materials, landscape design and planting.

7.13 Employment, Economy and Community Use

A total of seventeen commercial and community units totalling 2,123 sq.m. are included as part of this proposed site development. The diverse range of uses include: a medical centre, dentist, cafés/bars, off license, pharmacy, crèche, beauty salon, bicycle repair shop and retail units. Both the quantum and diverse nature of the proposed uses, are intended to meet the key objectives for the Tallaght Core Retail Area as covered in Section 7.6.7 of this report.

The ambition is to provide a range of units that offer commercial and community activities including from **(i)** the early morning (e.g. creche); **(ii)** throughout the day (retail, cafe, medical centre, pharmacy dentist etc.) and **(iii)** during the evening (e.g. bar and off licence).

Of key importance is the requirement to provide an evening economy. The provision of cafes/bars can provide passive surveillance to the proposed pedestrian concourse and public plaza during evening times. Similarly, the overlooking from the apartments above, including the balconies, will add to this passive surveillance and help to discourage anti-social behaviour in the public spaces.

In addition, careful consideration has been given to integrating community use, for example the creche, medical centre and dentists, surgery - all of which contribute positive community and social benefits.

The proposed diverse mix of retail and commercial units will provide a welcome mixture of full and part-time employment for young and old local residents alike as well as to help foster a sense of ownership within the proposed new neighbourhood