



SDCC Planning Department

County Hall

Tallaght

Dublin 24

15 Feabhra 2024

REFERENCE: SD24A/0004

A chara,

I write in relation to the planning application for single storey extension to front/side of units 2 to 10 and change of use from Retail/Pharmacy to Doctors/Medical use to proposed extended Unit 10 at Ballyowen Shopping Centre, specifically SD24A/0004.

At the outset, I wish to state that Ballyowen Shopping Centre is an important local centre for people in its hinterland. It is somewhere I shop regularly and have done so for over twenty years. It plays many important roles, not least as an employer, a centre for local businesses, but childcare and medical facilities are nearby as well as an active community centre. As such, it is a locus of activity. In principle, any extension or expansion is something I would greet positively, especially one that makes possible provision for expansion of GP services which are sorely needed in the area.

I note that the previous application was granted, but given the expiry of seven years, a new application is merited. However, there has been heightened concern about the general state of the centre and its environs on a few points, which I believe should be factored into the Planning Authority's decision.

Litter management

The litter discarded around the environs of the centre is a constant complaint which I received and has been raised on several occasions. If the centre continues to attract increased footfall, adequate provision must be made for larger capacity bins, a cleansing schedule, and a general litter management plan (including the area around the bottle banks). This is important regarding wider litter issues on Castle Road and Ballyowen Lane, a large amount of which emanates from the centre.

Maintenance and upkeep of car park

The overall car park is in poor repair. There are several potholes of varying sizes, as well as a lack of clear traffic signage on the ground, including widely used pedestrian crossings on the entrance road, and the two access points to the car park. The car park of the centre needs to be resurfaced, and needs to be relined, refreshing all pedestrian crossings, car park spaces and directional signage. This should be a condition of any planned expansion.

c/o South Dublin County Council, Áras an Chontae, Tallaght, Dublin 24 D24 A3XC

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In addition, the boundary wall alongside the entrance road as well as the surface surrounding Ballyowen Castle need to be repaired. The surface is uneven and poses dangers to people with mobility issues, especially those older people who use the post office.

Lighting and safety

The public lighting in the main centre car park is patchy and is often out of order. I am of the view that if increased footfall, pedestrian and car, is attracted then it will be necessary to significantly enhance inward facing lighting in the car park, along the entrance spine, up as far as the pedestrian entrance to Ballyowen Lane. The general centre itself should be audited regarding the provision of public lighting to ensure that during dark evenings, there is no area that is not well-lit.

Supportive of change of use to Medical

I welcome the planned change of use to make provision for additional GP facilities in the area. This is sorely needed in this part of Lucan and wish to make my support for this known.

Access

Consideration should be given to alternative pedestrian access routes to the centre, from the R136 and Castle Road in particular. This would provide permeability but would not impact on existing residential cul-de-sacs.

Community engagement

I believe that it is crucial and to the benefit of all that businesses engage with their neighbours in local communities. There is nothing new about the observations made above – they are often raised with me. However, they have not been addressed. For example, for a long part of December, the lights in the car park were out of order with no notice or awareness given to users of the centre. This cannot be considered satisfactory. I would welcome information signs put around the centre indicating where users can send complaints around various issues in the vicinity.

I realise that this sort of observation is unusual, given the proposed development. I feel there is no other recourse to raise these points, especially since the two requests for a response and engagement from the Lucan, Palmerstown and North Clondalkin Area Committee went unanswered (following motions which I tabled). I am always ready to be constructive and stand ready to meet with the applicants at any time to discuss these concerns and how they may be resolved to the satisfaction of all.

I would encourage the applicants as owners of Ballyowen Castle Community Centre to engage with their neighbours in the local communities regarding the operation of the centre and its services going forward. The applicants can contact me for such engagement using the details on this letter.

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At the very least, I would urge the planning authority to seek additional information from the applicants as to how they plan to deal with the above points. If the centre is successful in increasing footfall if permission is given, it is imperative that there is clarity on how the above points will be addressed. I would encourage representatives from the planning authority to view the site so they can observe the situation for themselves.

Public representatives are exempt from the €20 fee, and I trust this submission is in order.

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Cllr Shane Moynihan

c/o South Dublin County Council, Áras an Chontae, Tallaght, Dublin 24 D24 A3XC

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