

## **Architect's Design Support Statement**

**Proposed extensions to existing Autistic Spectrum community facility operated by St. Michaels House in an existing bungalow at 61 Dublin Road, Swords, Co. Dublin, K67 R6W8, including revised site boundaries incorporating a new car park (on lands within overall approximate site area of 0.168 hectares), and associated infrastructure, site works, landscaping, tree planting, remedial management of existing trees and boundary treatment.**

**23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021**

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## 1.0 Background

St. Michael's House is a registered charity which provides a range of services for 1,500 people with learning disability throughout Dublin City and County. They currently own a site on Seatown Road, Swords upon which there is a local day care centre. Fingal County Council require this site for inclusion in a larger development. In return they are proposing that the day care service be relocated to a new building on a site beside No.61 Dublin Road.

Founded in 1955, St. Michael's House is a community based voluntary organisation providing services to almost 2,000 children and adults with a disability in the greater Dublin Area. Their adult day services, to which this project pertains, are provided in line with government policy as outlined in New Directions. It is envisaged in this policy that services will be delivered to people, in so far as is possible, in their local community and availing of local facilities. St. Michael's House has provided such services in Swords for over 30 years and has many established links in the local community with employers, educational establishments, leisure facilities and public services generally. They currently operate 5 adult day centres in Swords providing services to 42 people, the majority of whom are from Swords.

The service that will be accommodated in this proposed new building will be replacing the existing building at Seatown Road, Swords. This will allow for an expansion of the facility that currently exists to continue to serve the local community. There is increasing demand for St. Michael's House services and they envisage further development in Swords in the coming years.

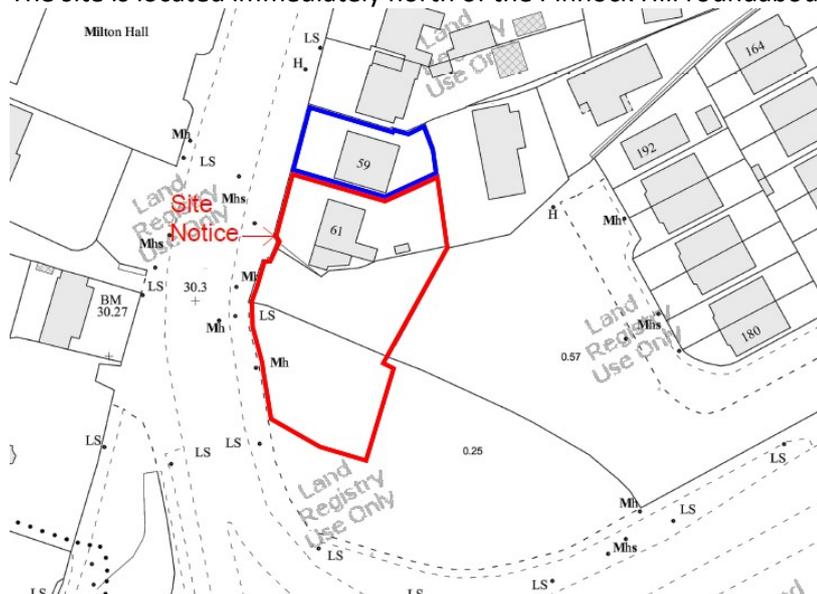
## 2.0 Pre-Planning Consultations

St. Michael's House's Design Team held several pre-planning consultation meetings with officials in Fingal County Council in preparing these proposals for the relocated day care service.

## 3.0 The Site

### 3.1 Site Location

The site is located immediately north of the Pinnock Hill roundabout on the R132.



OS Map reproduced under licence no. CYAL50165754

The site is outlined in red.

An adjoining property, which is owned by St. Michael's House, is outlined in blue.

### 3.2 Zoning



**Extract from Fingal Zoning Map**      Brown = RS Residential      Green = OS Open space  
The Tree Symbol in OS area references a Specific Objective of the development plan:  
'Protect and preserve trees, woodlands and hedgerows'.

No.61 Dublin Road and the existing adjoining car park to the south are zoned RS Residential. The woodland between the car park and the Pinnock Hill roundabout is zoned OS Open Space. It is proposed to confine the new building to area zoned RS and to locate a proposed parking area to service the requirements of the building and the services provided therein in the area zoned OS.

A combination of retained planting, new replacement planting, a better mix of trees and improvements in woodland management are proposed to improve resilience and sustain the woodland and hedgerows at this important location.

### 3.3 Description of Site

- The area of the site = 1,680sq.m. (0.168 hectares).
- The site comprises (A) an existing bungalow at 61 Dublin Road (which accommodates an existing Autistic Spectrum Day Care Unit), (B) an open space to the south of the bungalow which is currently used as a car park and (C) part of the woodland adjoining the Pinnock Hill roundabout.
- Rendered concrete block walls and pillars define the front (west) site boundary of the bungalow at No.61 Dublin Road. A concrete block wall defines the rear (east) boundary. There is a vehicular/pedestrian entrance from the public footpath.
- The car park road boundary is defined by a painted concrete block wall, a wire fence and vehicular entrance gate. A concrete block wall defines the rear (east) boundary. The car park boundary to the woodland (to south) is defined by a metal palisade fence and earth bank.
- The part of the woodland which is within the proposed site does not currently have any physical boundary. It will be defined by a proposed fence on the red line site boundary shown on the attached plans.
- There is a wide footpath along the front boundary of the site.
- There is a public open space to the east, adjoining the rear boundary of No. 61 Dublin Road and the existing car park area.
- There is a bungalow on the east side of the boundary with Nos. 59 and 61 Dublin Road which has been extended as far as the boundary of the subject site.

- While No. 59 Dublin Road does not form part of the subject site it is owned by St. Michael's House, where it is used as a local day care centre.



**Site Frontage onto Dublin Road**



**Site viewed in the direction of the Pinnock Hill Roundabout**

### **3.4 Adjoining Premises:**



**No. 59 Dublin Road is owned by St. Michael's House where they run an existing local day care service**

## **4.0 Surveys and Reports**

### **4.1 Topographical Survey**

Precision Surveys prepared the attached topographical survey drawing of the site.

### **4.2 Ecologist's Report on the Survey of Large Mammal Activity**

The attached report was prepared by Faith Wilson, Ecological Consultant. This report outlines a number of mitigation measures.

### **4.3 Habitats Directive Assessment Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

The attached report has been prepared by Faith Wilson, Ecological Consultant. It is concluded that there will be no negative impacts on the qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the proposed development. The report finds that the proposed development will not, either individually or cumulatively in combination with the other identified plans and projects, adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site. It determined that it was possible to rule out likely significant impacts on any Natura 2000 site and therefore it was not deemed necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

### **4.4 Archaeology**

The attached report on *An Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment* has been prepared by Rubicon Heritage Services.

They reported that the results of their impact assessment indicate that the proposed development will not have any impact on any known archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage sites. The development site as a whole is not considered to be a site of high or particular archaeological potential, but there is still a small possibility that unknown sub-surface archaeological features may be present which could be uncovered by development groundworks.

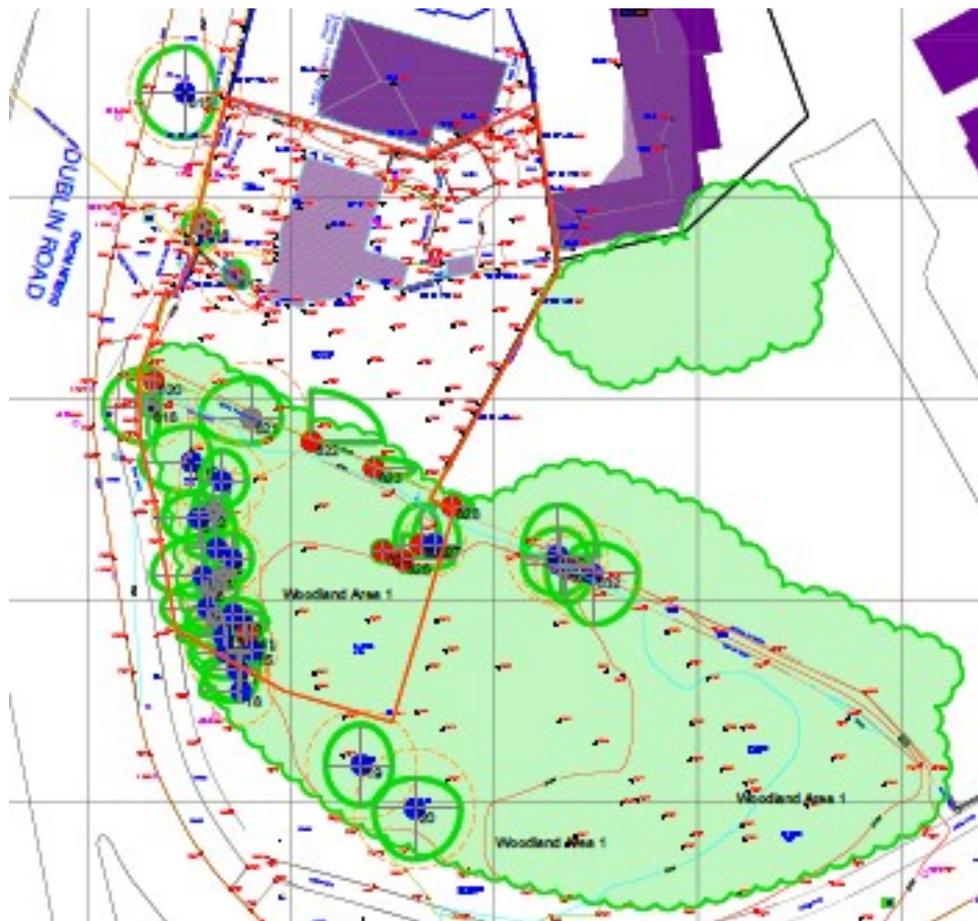
They recommended that all ground reduction should be subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring, under licence, by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

### **4.5 Arborist's Report**

The attached report and associated drawings were prepared by Andrew Worsnop of The Tree File Consulting Arborists. They highlight that the trees in the woodland were planted too close together and that the woodland has not been properly maintained. The woodland should have been maintained with trees being thinned out to allow retained trees proper conditions for growth. The trees have grown tall, competing for light, with the result that the trunks have not developed to sufficient thicknesses for strength to avoid damage by wind. The report includes preliminary management recommendations and a woodland management plan.



The trees in the woodland were planted too close together



Extract from Arborist's Tree Constraints Plan

## 4.6 Engineer's Site Services Report including Traffic and Access

Eamonn Doyle & Associates prepared the attached Site Services Report, Site Services Layout Plan and Sight Lines, Site Access and Road Markings Plan.

There are two existing vehicular entrances to the site. It is proposed that one of these entrances will be used for the existing Autistic Spectrum Day Care Unit which is accommodated in the existing bungalow on No.61 Dublin Road. The other entrance will be used for the proposed new building which will accommodate the day care service which is being relocated from Seatown Road and for access to the proposed car park. It is anticipated that the car park will be used by staff and visitors for both buildings.

The retention of the two entrances is required for the following reasons:

- There are distinct services being proposed with different service user profiles which need to be kept separated from each other.
- The existing bungalow will be used specifically for people with Autism.
- The new building will be used for other service users.
- Security of the people using the services is paramount. There would be a flight risk, for service users, if two entrances were open at the same time or if both services were to use the one entrance. To prevent this a fence is proposed in the forecourt to separate access to both buildings. However, a gate will be incorporated in this fence to allow staff/visitor access to and from the car park for those using the existing bungalow.
- Section 5.5 below shows the number of staff and people who will be using the two buildings/services. Traffic to the building will be mostly confined to mornings and afternoons. Service users will be delivered by mini-bus at around 9.00am in the mornings and collected around 4.00pm daily.

There is an existing road traffic sign located in the grass verge outside the site which obscures the views to and from the two existing entrances to the site. We propose that Fingal County Council relocates it to improve visibility to and from the entrances to the site.

Level/ramped access will be provided on all pedestrian routes on site to cater for people with disabilities.

Level access will be provided for people with disabilities to all entrances to the buildings.

## 5.0 Proposed Development

### 5.1 Description of proposed development:

Relocation and enhancement of a facility providing community centred services for adults with an intellectual disability from St. Michael's House, Seatown Road, Swords, Co. Dublin, by extension of an existing Autistic Spectrum community facility operated by St. Michaels House at 61 Dublin Road, Swords, Co. Dublin. The development includes:

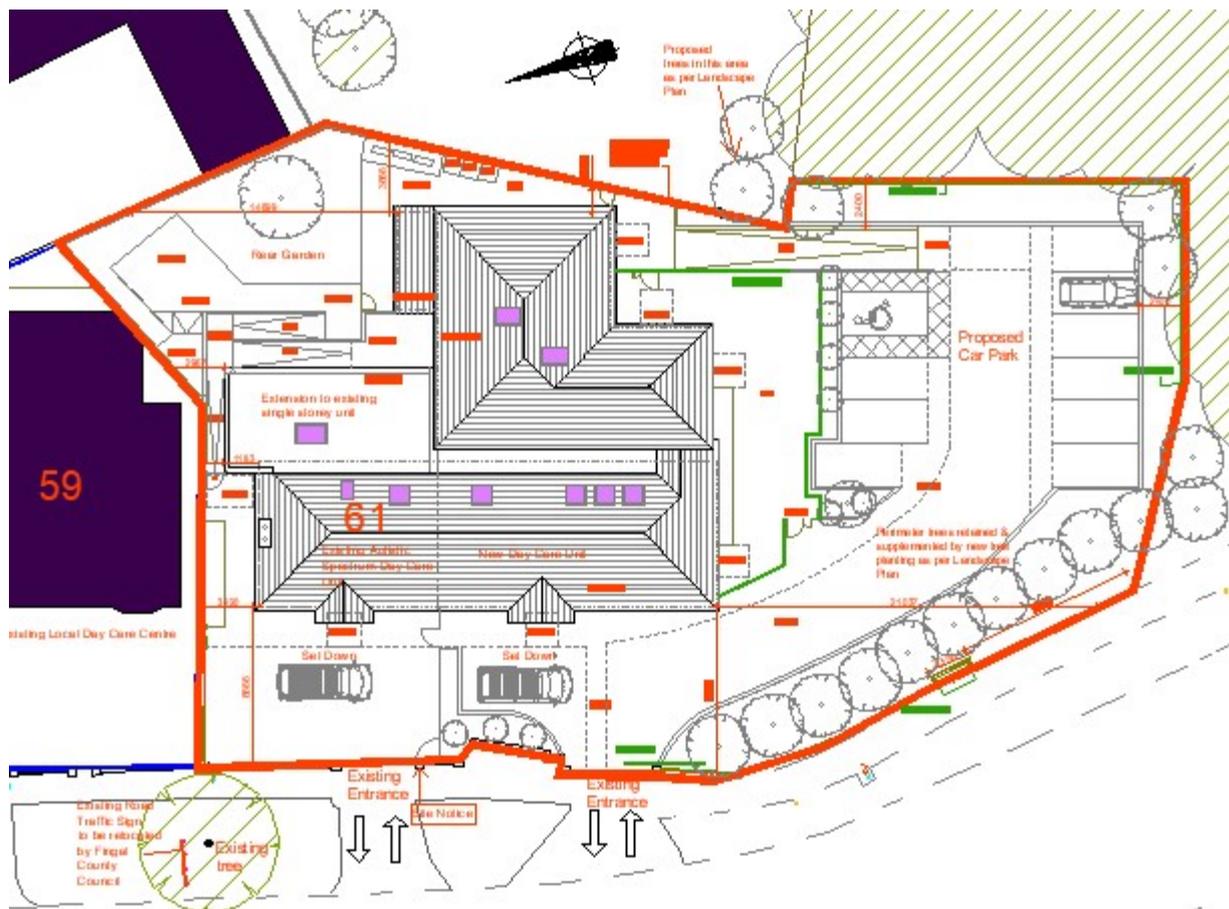
- (a) Demolition of a single storey garage conversion at the side of the existing bungalow.
- (b) Construction of a single storey extension and rooflights to the rear of the bungalow.

- (c) Construction of a part single, part two storey, extension with rooflights to the side of the existing bungalow to accommodate the enhanced, community centred services for adults with an intellectual disability relocated from Seatown Road.
- (d) Revised site boundaries incorporating a new car park, associated infrastructure, site works, landscaping, tree planting, remedial management of existing trees and boundary treatment.

**5.2 Floor areas:**

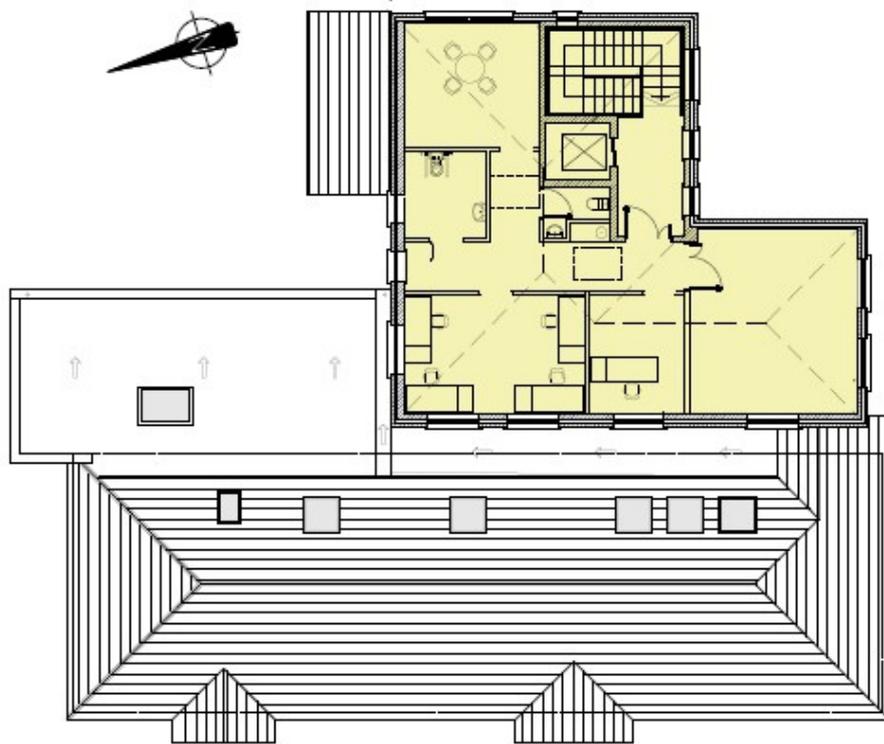
Area to be Demolished	=	24.5 sq.m.
Proposed New local day care building	=	414.6 sq.m.
Area of (bungalow) to be retained	=	84.5 sq.m.
Proposed extension to bungalow	=	<u>39.1 sq.m.</u>
Total floor area proposed and retained	=	538.2 sq.m.

**5.3 Proposed Site Plan:**



The site area within the red line boundary = 1680 sq.m

### 5.4 Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans:



## 5.5 Proposed Occupancy Level:

It is proposed that the buildings will be used by the following number of people:

### Proposed New Day Care Building:

Ground Floor – Staff	= 5
Service Users	= 11
First Floor – Staff + Service Users	= 15

### Existing Bungalow + Proposed Extension: (Autistic Spectrum Day care)

Staff	= 11
Service Users	= 9

## 5.6 Approach to the Design:

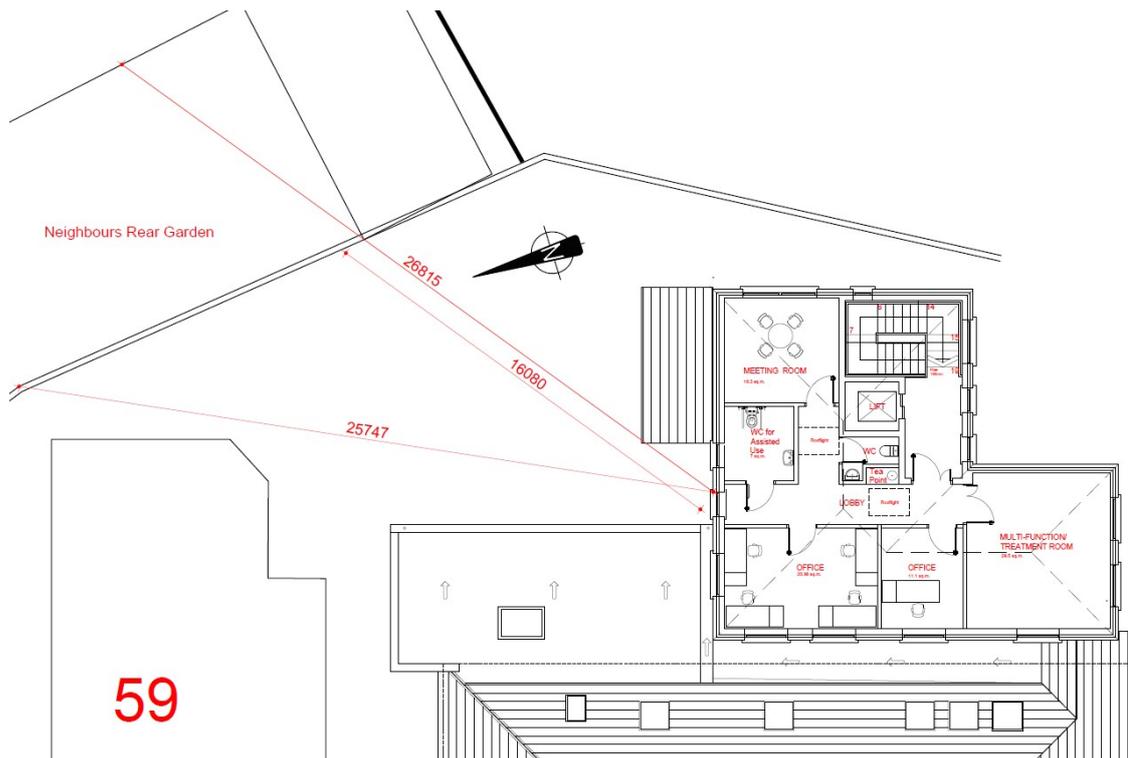
- a) The design has been informed by the needs of the people with learning disabilities who will be availing of St. Michael's House services. The buildings will be fully accessible to wheelchair users and to people with other disabilities.
- b) The proposed buildings will be in harmony with nearby existing buildings in terms of scale, form and massing.
- c) The proposed buildings will be located on the part of the site which is zoned for residential use. The proposed car park and garden will be located within the part of the site which is zoned for open space.
- d) The proposed car park will be fenced off for security of service users.
- e) The garden on the south side of the proposed new building will take advantage of sunlight. It will also be fenced off from the car park for the security.
- f) The landscape proposals have been designed by '*ait Urbanism and Landscape*' to create an attractive and appropriate environment for the development. It is proposed to provide a 5m. buffer zone of native tree clump and woodland planting outside the southern and eastern boundaries of the site.
- g) Management recommendations for the woodland have been included in the Arboricultural report and in addition to the landscape proposals these will represent an improvement on the existing situation.
- h) Vehicular and pedestrian access will be from Dublin Road, using the two existing entrances.
- i) Materials will be in keeping with adjoining houses.
- j) Overlooking of the existing house to the North-East of the site will be addressed by orientation of windows in the proposed new building and their distance from the neighbour's house, boundary and rear garden.

## 5.7 Engineer's Drainage Proposals

Eamonn Doyle & Associates included drainage proposals in their report referred to in 4.6 above. A copy of the percolation test and BRE 365 Report, carried out by David Ryan, Percolation Tests.ie, Planning Assessments & Land Surveys, are attached to the Engineer's Report.

## 5.8 Overlooking

Overlooking of the house and private garden of the North-East of the site will be addressed by orientation of first floor windows in the proposed new building. Opaque glass will also be provided to the toilet on the first floor. The windows on the north side, to the lobby and front office on the first floor, will be obliquely oriented, relative to the existing house at the rear, so that they will look towards the side of No.59 Dublin Road. The lobby window will be more than 26 metres from the nearest visible part of the back wall of the neighbour's house and more than 16metres from the nearest part of the neighbour's rear garden. The window to the office will be even further away from the house and garden.



**Avoidance of Overlooking**

## 5.9 Scale and massing

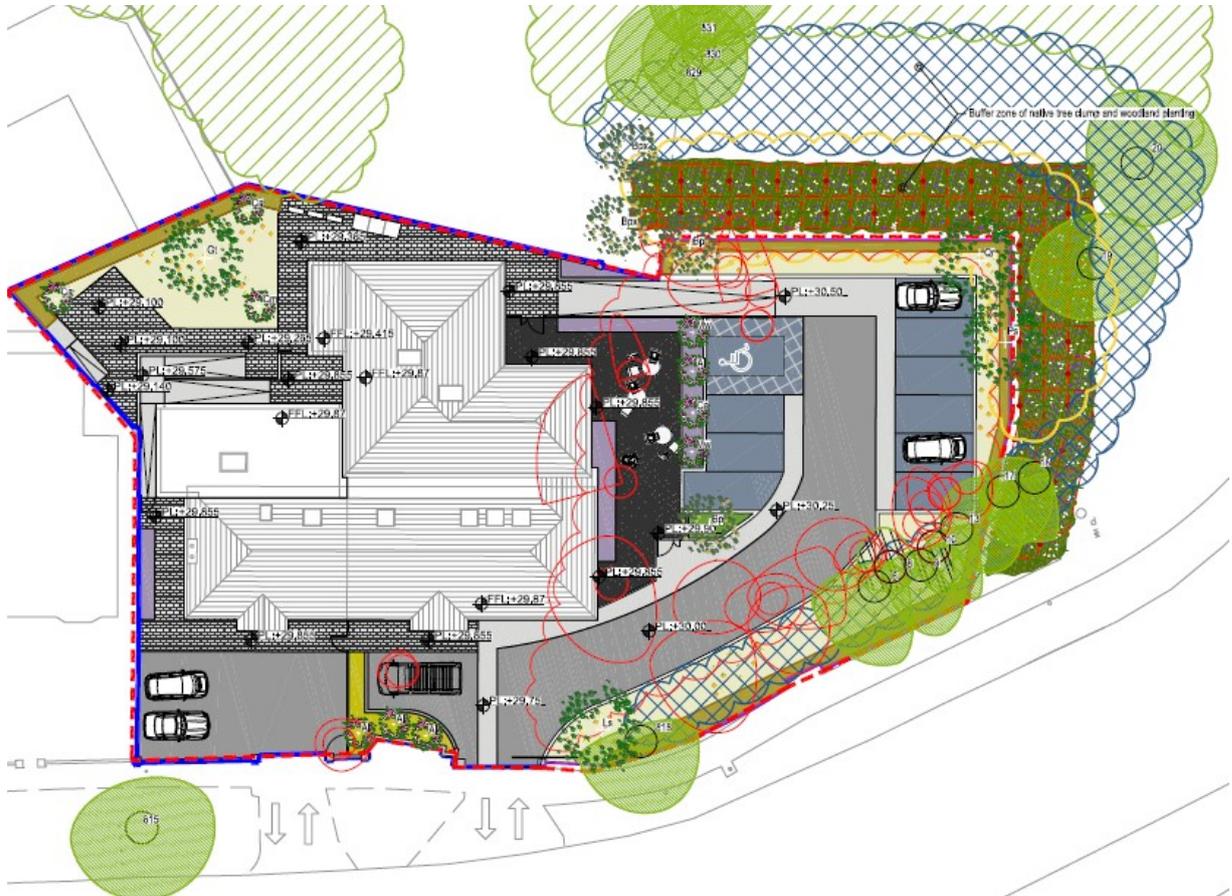


**Front Elevation**

The front part of the proposed new building will be single storey to match the scale and height of the existing bungalow. The rear part of the new building will be two storey and it will be set back so it will fit in comfortably with existing buildings

## 5.10 Landscape Proposals

ait Urbanism and Landscape designed the landscape proposals which are described in their attached report.



Extract from ait urbanism + landscape Plan



Extract from Architect's Drawing No. 2031:P03

Screening of the proposed building and car park will be achieved by new tree and hedge planting on the boundaries. In addition the proposed car park will be protected by a mesh fence.

## 5.11 Heat/Energy Conservation

- The building will be designed to maximise current sustainable building technology.

## 6.0 Development Plan Standards

The building has been designed to comply with the standards in the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- This development will respond to an urgent need to relocate the existing St. Michael's House day care service to allow Fingal County Council to develop a site at Seatown Road, Swords. This development will provide an important community service provided by St. Michael's House servicing the Swords area including appropriate on-site support.
- The Archaeologist Consultants reported that "proposed development will not have any impact on any known archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage sites. The development as a whole is not considered to be a site of high or particular archaeological potential, but there is still a small possibility that unknown sub-surface archaeological features may be present which could be uncovered by development ground works". Their report recommends that all ground reduction should be the subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring.
- The Ecologist's Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment concluded that "there will be no negative impacts on the qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the proposed development". The report also "finds that the proposed development will not, either individually or cumulatively in combination with the other identified plans and projects, adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site".
- The proposed development will require the removal of part of the woodland which is in poor condition and is not sustainable. The landscape proposals included in this application will represent an improvement on the existing situation, incorporating an appropriate combination of retained planting, new tree and hedge planting as well as maintenance measures in the tree management plan. The combined landscape measures will provide a more sustainable woodland and offer appropriate screening, privacy and attractiveness to the overall development.
- The Arborist reported that "The tree survey noted management issues relating the woodland block to the south of the site. The woodland area is artificial and dense, an issue that has led to suppression, elongation and a widespread predisposition to mechanical damage and failure of individual trees.....It is intended to create a "buffer" zone between the proposed car park and the remainder of the woodland that combines tree removal with replacement new plants, as well as tree management. The overall intention will be to create a robust woodland edge that presents the minimum of threat and maximum sustainability"
- There is a Special Objective to protect and preserve trees and woodlands in the Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023. The development proposal includes the removal of some trees which is necessary to support the development of an essential community service in the area. The proposal also includes a combination of new replacement planting and a proposal for a tree management plan for the woodland. The woodland has suffered from a lack of management and the Tree Management Plan is an important step in sustaining and improving the woodland.
- The proposed development exceeds current minimum design standards and complies with objectives of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023.



MICHAEL MOHAN

## Appendix: Schedule of Documents

Discipline	Document	Drawing No.	Scale
Land Surveyor: Precision Surveys	Topographical Survey	11812	1/200
Michael Mohan Architects	Architect's Design Support Statement O.S. Site Location Map		1/1000
	<u>Architect's Survey Drawings:</u> Existing Site Plan	2031:S01	1/200
	Existing Plans, Elevations and Sections	2031:S02	1/100
	<u>Architect's Proposed Drawings:</u> Proposed Site Plan	2031:P01	1/200
	Proposed Plans, Elevations and Sections	2031:P02	1/100 1/100 &
	Proposed Contiguous Elevation, Roof Plan & Overlooking Mitigation Plan	2031:P03	1/200
ait urbanism + landscape	Landscape Plan & Report	20FG06-DR-200A	1/250
Eamonn Doyle Associates Consulting Engineers	Site Services Report: Pre-Planning Stage		1/50 &1/15
	Site Services Layout Plan Site Lines, Site Access & Road Markings	20-085:01B	
		20-085:02B	1/200
The Tree File Consulting Arborists	Arboricultural Report		1/400
	Tree Constraints Plan		1/400
	Tree Impacts Plan		1/400
	Tree Protection Plan		1/400
Faith Wilson Ecological Consultant	Survey of Large Mammal Activity Habitats Directive Assessment Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment		
Rubicon Heritage Services	An Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Report		
St. Michael's House	Letter confirming Registered Charity Status. Charity Ref. No. CHY 5692		