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18th August 2022

RE: Planning Report for Part 8 Change of use of Theatre building / facilities to North Cork Local Enterprise Office (LEO) offices, New Street, Mallow.

To whom it concerns.

The proposed development is for a Change of use of Theatre building / facilities to North Cork Local Enterprise Office (LEO) offices, New Street, Mallow. The subject floor area covers the entrance corridor, rehearsal spaces, foyer, exhibition area, box office and toilet facilities, at ground floor level.

The proposed floor area consists of entrance and corridor, reception area, internal corridor (colonnade) with 3 no. offices, stores and copying room, kitchen, toilets and meeting room. Works involve internal walls to form new spaces including sub division of some spaces. external works involve removal of metal security gate and rail above with new automatic sliding door (glazed). Works are not significant in nature, but will convert corridor into a truly internal space as opposed to a partially enclosed 'elongated porch.'

The site is located to the north of Mallow Town Centre and fronts onto New Road. The site forms part of the ground floor of the Tower Mixed Use scheme which comprises some commercial space on the ground floor and apartments overhead. The existing development on this site is mixed use residential and commercial of up to 5- storeys over basement parking. It was constructed in circa. 2004 under Reg. No. PD55046/04 and subsequent amendment applications. The theatre complex on the ground floor never operated as a theatre and has remained unused since initial construction.

The office will provide a 'First Stop Shop' approach, an essential local resource, staffed with professional people with business training, to assist budding entrepreneurs and existing businesses in Mallow Town and the wider North Cork Area. It will provide a connection for the public & business community into Cork County Council, Enterprise Ireland and all appropriate State agencies combining the expertise of Enterprise Ireland in job creation and business development with the broad reach of Cork County Council. 6 The Office will provide essential business knowledge, training and supports to micro and small businesses.

County Development Plan 2022

The proposed development is located in Mallow town centre, and is subject to the land-use policies of the Cork County Development Plan 2024. Mallow is a designated key town in the Southern Regional Assembly's, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

County Development Plan: Core Strategy

The vision for Mallow is to sustainably strengthen the employment led growth and town centre led regeneration of Mallow as a regional economic driver, leverage its strategic location and accessibility on inter-regional road and rail networks to build upon inherent strengths.

Mallow has an allocated population target of 15,351 for 2028. As part of the Council's commitment to deliver compact growth within the town, a new focus is placed on the better utilisation of the existing building stock, prioritisation of brownfield and under-utilised land ... that can contribute positively to Mallow's housing stock

The core strategy recognises the need to protect and consolidate existing critical employment locations that have underpinned Cork's economic successes to date, while developing new employment locations and opportunities to serve current and future generations.

Objective CS 2-4. Greater Cork Strategic Planning Area, "recognises the importance of the role to be played by Mallow as a Key town in the implementation of the Nat Planning Framework and RSES to focus growth in North Cork and ; promote its development as a major centre of employment and population where there is a high standard of access to educational and cultural facilities; and to provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure that the expansion of Mallow can be achieved without having adverse impacts on the receiving environment."

Objective CS 2-7. The strategic aim of Mallow is "to sustainably strengthen employment led growth and town centre led regeneration of Mallow as a regional economic driver" and "to support and develop the role of Mallow as an important retail centre while ensuring the vitality and vibrancy of its town centre is retained and enhanced."

It is considered that the proposed development to re-use vacant, street-side, ground floor unit accords with the above objectives and the identification of a 'permanent/ long term' LEO office is beneficial to the local business community.

The site is located within Objective MW-T-01 Town Centre lands, "To promote the Town Centre as the primary area for retail and mixed-use development, encourage sensitive refurbishment / redevelopment of existing sites and promote public realm improvements. Take appropriate consideration of the Architectural Conservation Area."

It is considered that the proposed development will put into use the vacant ground floor to office-based employment. Generating activity on and surveillance of the street and accords with the objective.

Parking

It is considered that the proposed development is very well located, proximate to existing and planned commercial, community and public transport services.

CDP car parking standards for non-residential uses are maximum standards. Provision for offices is 1 space per 17sq.m., plus 10% for visitor parking. Cycle parking is 1 space per 200sq.m. GFA. No parking has been identified within the proposal. No details have been submitted regarding existing parking facilities within the entire complex and whether or not spaces have been leased from Management Co. NO details of staffing has been submitted.

The principle of reduced parking provision may encourage more people to travel by alternative means to private car. Given the context of the site's location and townscape form, the provision of

additional car on-street parking, in particular, would be injurious to townscape qualities. Furthermore, re-allocation of space at the expense of pedestrians, which would be contrary to the concept of townscape enhancement and 'placemaking'.

Given the centrality of its location, the availability of existing on-street parking, the potential for shared parking with adjoining uses (by agreement), the provision of public transport options (bus and rail) and the planned cycle network, the constraints of the site, the non-provision of dedicated carparking facilities would be considered to be acceptable in this instance.

Staff numbers/ staff visitor capacity

6 no Staff with 6 no. work stations are to be provided. Implementation of blended working policy and the nature of the roles carried out, makes it unlikely that all 6 work stations will be fully occupied at all times. There are 6 No. designated underground car-parking spaces, with controlled access, available to staff. The floor area is c. 265sq.m. gross floor area.

The proposed offices are not normal public offices insofar as visitors, normally 1-2 at any one time, are received primarily by appointment. If travelling by car visitors will park locally.

There will be infrequent training sessions organised for a maximum 12/15 people. There is public parking in front of Dunnes/Courthouse & long stay car parking at Muddy Hill & Carmichael Lane (three minutes from the proposed Offices). The availability of this parking will be communicated to prospective attendees. The provision of parking exceeds maximum standards but as it is existing parking is deemed to be acceptable. Provision to reduce parking in the future would be welcomed. However, the lack of provision of cycle parking is inappropriate and should be addressed at CDP standard of 1 space per 200sq.m. gross floor area. Cycle parking stand could be accommodated on footpath or within entrance colonnade.

Water Services

Foul and storm water will connect to the existing public system. The collection and disposal of storm water will not be altered. No significant additional water supply demands or wastewater loadings will be envisaged above the permitted theatre use. Some new sewer infrastructure will be constructed to serve extensions. Small loadings from the new kitchenette. Given the existence and capacity of the town's storm water drainage network serving the site, there is no significant risk of major silt or hydrocarbons spills on risk to the River Blackwater. Area Engineer should be consulted to confirm details. There will be no change to the toilet layout(s).

Fire Safety and Disabled Access Certification should be sought.

Flood Risk Assessment

The site is located outside of a flood risk zone.

Appropriate Assessment

The site is located within a screening assessment zone for the Blackwater River SAC (site code: 001720). A Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination has been prepared by the Heritage Unit, concluding that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on qualifying interests and conservation objectives for the Natura 2000 sites and that an Appropriate assessment is not required.

Conclusion

I have reviewed the Part 8 proposal, design drawings, appropriate assessment screening report; I am satisfied that the change of use and minor works accords with the land-use objectives of the County Development Plan 2024 and represents proper planning and sustainable development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Watt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Thomas Watt
Senior Planner