

## CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE MEETING 09-07-19

**PLAN NO:** PLANNING REF. NO. 2774/19

**LOCATION:** PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT WORKS TO LIFFEY STREET UPPER & LOWER, DUBLIN 1.

The proposed Part 8 development (presented to the Central Area Committee in Feb 2019) was put on public display from 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 until the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Plans and particulars of the scheme were available for inspection and on display in the Civic Offices, Wood Quay.

The closing date for submissions or observations was Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

Thirteen third party observations were received as follows -

Tom Philips and Associates (on Behalf of The Dublin City Traders Alliance Limited) raised concerns that the proposed development should be accompanied by Environmental Impact Assessment Report and that the submitted Traffic and Pedestrian Assessment Report is too limited in its scope and the development would result in a significant impact upon traffic movement in the city;

Billy Reid on behalf of Ilac Shopping Centre felt the proposed development would increase traffic congestion in the area and cause greater delays for delivery vehicles;

Mark Limby (on behalf of Arnott's) felt that the proposed works would result in the customers of the Arnott's car park being re-routed from Liffey St Lower to other side streets, and that the proposed works would increase traffic times and cause delays.

T. Arkins of Dublin 1 was concerned that insufficient consultation with local residents was carried out and that the impact upon traffic movements within the surrounding streets and associated impact upon existing traders was an issue.

Odhran Kelly (on behalf of Nourish Health Stores) welcomed the proposed development.

Niall O' Byrne (on behalf of Balark Trading GP Limited), welcomed the proposed development but requested that the positioning of loading bays on Strand Street be examined as part of the detail design.

Brian Montague, (on behalf of The Winding Stair Group) welcomed the proposed development as it would enliven the surrounding area, while enabling a much better flow of pedestrian traffic.

DublinTown were supportive in principle of the development and requested a trial introduction of the proposed new traffic arrangements. They stressed the importance of the enforcement of the traffic restrictions and use of loading bays are important. They requested that restricting access to Batchelor's Way should be considered, and sought clarification that all emergency vehicles be able to access Henry Street. They also requested that the condition of the pavement along Great Strand Street should be assessed and repaired following the completion of the consented construction projects in the area.

Julie Mulleady (on behalf of JC Decaux) raised concerns that the proposed tree planting scheme has the potential to detract from the visibility of two digital signs in the area.

Jane Hackett of Dublin 12 was supportive of the proposed development

Gary Kearney of Dublin 7 stated that consideration should be given to the type of bollard proposed as they can be used as bicycle stands, which should not be permitted. Planters should be used instead.

Ann Moroney of Dublin 7 was supportive of the development, particularly the proposed provision of additional seating, and raised concerns that the proposed water feature would not be maintained effectively.

Patrick Gorman of Dublin 16 felt that sculpture should be included to which 'love locks' can be attached, thereby reducing the number on the Ha'penny Bridge.

Two further observations were submitted after the six week statutory deadline for observations and were therefore considered inadmissible. The issues raised in the submissions related to material finishes, street furniture etc. These issues had been the subject of discussions in workshops during the design development stage and will be dealt with in agreement during the detailed design stage.

### **Statutory Consultees**

One submission was received from TII who are supportive of the scheme and outlined a number of conditions to be met both in advance and during site works in relation to works in proximity to the Luas line.

### **Internal DCC Departmental Observations**

Standard conditions were set out by a number of internal DCC Departments (including Transport & Environment, Archaeology, Drainage and Wayfinding Way) to be met in advance and during site works.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022**

The area surrounding the proposed works are designated Zoning Objective Z5 - 'to consolidate and facilitate the development of the central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and protect its civic design character and dignity'. It is also noted that the southern end of Liffey Street is located within a conservation area. The site is also located within a Zone of Archaeological Interest.

**Policy SC3:** To develop a sustainable network of safe, clean, attractive pedestrian routes, lanes and cycleways in order to make the city more coherent and navigable.

**Policy MT7:** To improve the city's environment for walking and cycling through the implementation of improvements to thoroughfares and junctions and also through the development of new and safe routes, including the provision of foot and cycle bridges.

**Objective GIO4:** To improve pedestrian and cycle access routes to strategic level amenities while ensuring that ecosystem functions and existing amenity uses are not compromised and existing biodiversity and heritage is protected and enhanced.

## **PLANNING ASSESSMENT RESPONSE**

Following review of all submissions by the Planning Department it is considered that the proposed works to Liffey Street are welcomed at this time. The existing street has a high level of pedestrian activity and the proposed development is likely to offer an opportunity for greater pedestrian comfort and activity in this space. It is considered that the proposed development would result in the improvement and expansion of space available for pedestrians in this area in line with national and city policy which places pedestrians at the top of the movement hierarchy. The proposal will also improve pedestrian safety in the area. Liffey Street is identified as a Phase 1 project in *The Heart of the City*, 2016, the corporate public realm masterplan for the city core. It is a key part of the north-south pedestrian route linking the Grafton Street, Temple Bar and Henry Street areas. Its upgrade will greatly contribute to the City's vision to create a much more pedestrian friendly city core and will provide much-needed pedestrian space in an area of high footfall.

The overall aim of the project is to reinforce the role of Liffey Street as an important pedestrian route linking St Stephen's Green on Dublin's southside to Parnell Street on the northside. The Liffey Street via the Ha'Penny Bridge route hosts one of the busiest pedestrian flows in the City leading from the Merchants Arch and the Temple Bar area (up to 35,000 pedestrian compared to 1000 vehicles use the route on a daily basis). The proposed improvement works will allow more freedom of movement for pedestrians.

The proposed works would consist of minor excavation works and upgrade of existing roads and pavements using high-quality materials. The proposed development will create a new pedestrian plaza (during designated hours) from the junction of Strand Street to the Quays at a distance of 60m along Liffey Street Lower. The same arrangement will be implemented along Liffey Street Upper from Abbey Street to Henry Street. The plaza areas will be open to delivery traffic between 5.30am and 11am. The carriageway in the plaza areas will be raised but delineated from the footway through material finishes, bollards etc. The plaza area finishes will be similar in nature to the existing arrangements on Grafton Street and the nearby Henry Street. The carriage way width between Abbey Street and Strand Street is to be reduced to 3.25 metres but with full height kerbs maintained. The application documentation sets out that the Dublin City Council recommended pallet of materials would be followed including natural stone paving within pedestrian areas, while the carriageway at the junction of Liffey Street Lower and Strand Street would be finished using recycled Dublin Cobbles.

The proposed refurbishment of the Woollen Mills Plaza would include the introduction of a number of designs moves aimed at improving the usability of the area. This would include additional planted areas and public seating to increase dwell time and provide a high-quality area of public open space.

It is noted that concerns have been expressed about the impacts of foliage from new tree locations upon on the legibility of existing Metropanel display units. This relationship will be considered at the detailed design stage by the applicant team in association with the Planning Authority.

The proposed water feature is considered to be visually incongruous with the surrounding area as well as potentially impeding to the movement of pedestrians. It is recommended that as part of the detail design of the proposed scheme, the proposing department should consider the omission of this element.

Concerns have been raised within a number of the third-party submissions regarding the impact of the proposed works on the servicing of neighbouring businesses as well as the potential for having a citywide traffic impacts. In this regard, it should be noted that the proposal would not result in a permanent change to traffic routing as a direct exit onto Bachelor's walk along Liffey St Lower would be maintained, albeit with time restrictions. Furthermore, the current proposal has been reviewed by the Council's Environment and Transportation Department and while it is accepted that the proposed works would have a limited impact on traffic movements in the immediate vicinity of the site, this is deemed to be acceptable considering the low volumes of vehicular traffic moving through the area.

Proposals for Liffey Street Upper will provide an exit route for delivery vehicles onto Henry Street/Mary's Street (during designated hours). This will greatly improve the current circumstances whereby delivery vehicles accessing Liffey Street Upper are forced to U turn on the street and exit onto Abbey Street as the junction with Henry Street is currently blocked.

Concerns have been also raised in relation to the location of loading bay upon Great Strand Street and the potential conflict with recently permitted developments in the area. The relocation of the loading bays on Strand Street will be considered as part of the detailed design stage and therefore it is recommended that this be explored by the design team.

The current proposal is accompanied by an EIA Screening Report, which set out that the proposal has been screened for the requirement for the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The submitted screening report assesses the development as a subthreshold EIA Development and the screening has determined that the characteristics of the proposed development are not considered significant due to the nature, size, scale, and location of the development. It has therefore been concluded that there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out for the proposed development. The planning authority accepts and concurs with this conclusion.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposal, it is considered that the development would not seriously injure the amenity of property in the vicinity and it is considered that the proposed development accords with the City Development Plan and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## **CONSULTATION**

The project team undertook an extensive programme of consultation throughout the design development process to ensure a collaborative approach to the design. To this end a number of stakeholder workshops were organised to which a range of stakeholders were invited. These included an invitation to all Elected Representatives from the Central Area, the PPN, local residents, local businesses, internal City Council departments etc.

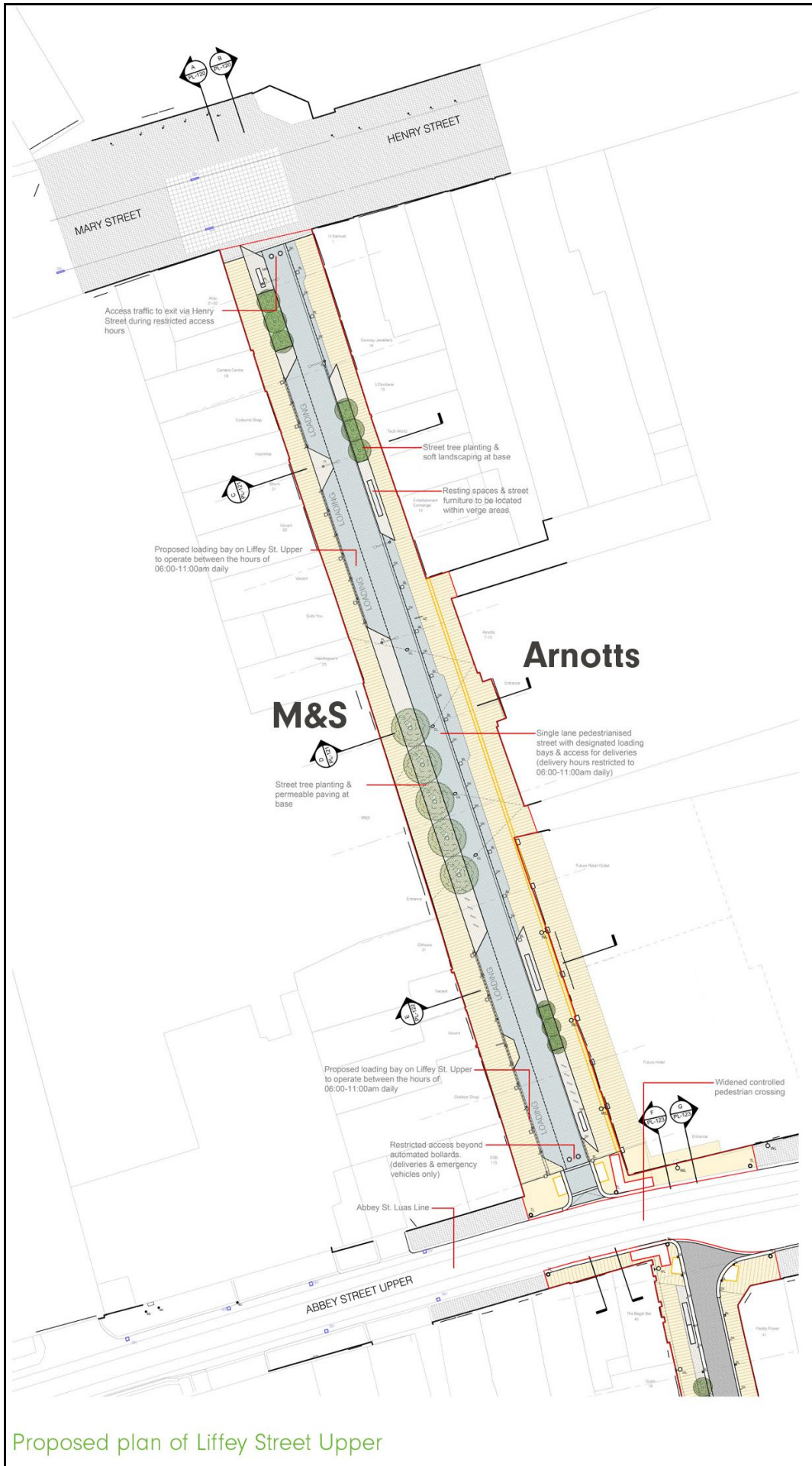
The first workshops in September 2018 were well attended and included elected representatives, local businesses including the Ilac Centre, Arnott's, The Woollen Mills etc., local residents, representatives of the PPN An Garda Síochána, Fáilte Ireland, the Dublin Civic Trust, various City Council departments etc. A second series of workshops was held in November 2018. The design was well received a wide range of issues were discussed.

A further workshop was organised with the PPN Network in January this year to give details of the design development and the Part 8 process. As at all previous workshops the general response to the improvement scheme for Liffey Street was overwhelmingly positive and while some details remained to be agreed the principle interventions proposed were welcomed. Separately a number of presentations and update reports have been given at Area Committee and SPC over the past 12 months outlining the developing proposals. These will continue during the detailed design stage.

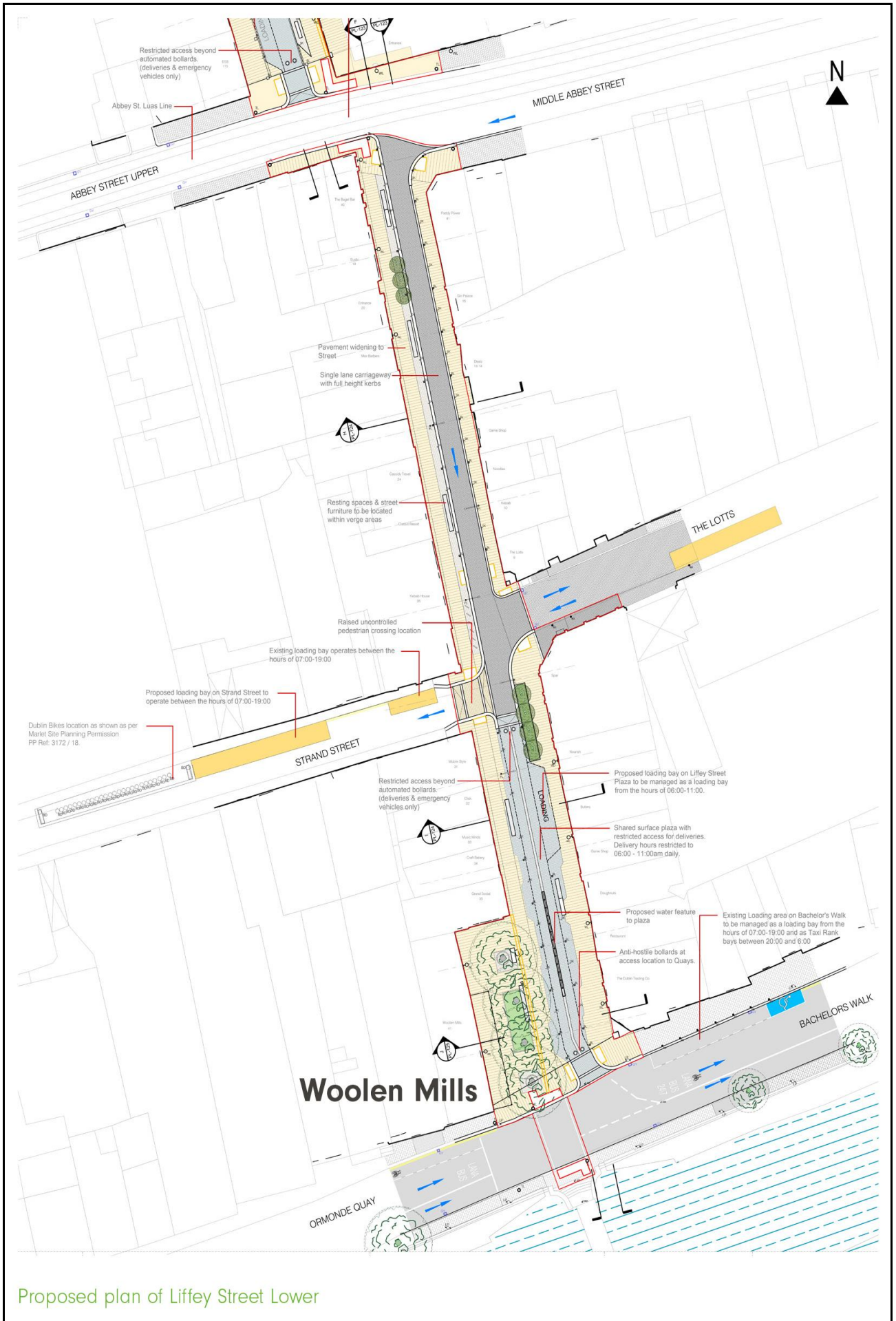
DCC have engaged proactively throughout the design and planning process for the Liffey Street Improvement Scheme. All workshops were well attended and the views and needs of those in attendance have been incorporated where possible and appropriate. There are of course a number of issues that have yet to be dealt with in detail and as is standard these will be developed and agreed during the detailed design stage following receipt of a Part 8 planning permission. These include material finishes (including slip resistance and colour contrasting), the final exact location of street furniture etc. There will be ongoing discussion throughout the detailed design stage on these issues.

## **CONCLUSION**

This proposal meets the objectives laid out in the DCC Development Plan as well as the other relevant corporate policy documents. Having considered all the observations, this proposal addresses any concerns raised. It is our intention to bring this Part 8 to the City Council for approval.



Proposed plan of Liffey Street Upper



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