25003

revision:	description:	date:
1	Part VIII Report	03/02/2026



PART VIII DESIGN STATEMENT

14-15 Fitzwilliam Quay

Dublin City Council

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1.0 Architect's Design Statement

Project Development

This Part VIII Design Statement has been prepared by desiun Architects on behalf of Dublin City Council in respect of the proposed adaptive reuse and refurbishment of a vacant office building at 14–15 Fitzwilliam Quay, Ringsend, Dublin 4, to provide 15 no. 1-bedroom social housing apartments.

The design has been informed by the Project Brief issued by Dublin City Council (Volume 3.2, March 2025) and by Dublin City Council's Adaptive Reuse Unit guidance for the project. The proposal seeks to deliver high-quality, durable and sustainable homes while retaining and reusing the existing building fabric, in accordance with the objectives of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022–2028.

The proposal arises from a feasibility study undertaken in 2023 to assess the suitability of the existing office buildings at Fitzwilliam Quay for conversion to residential use. The preferred option identified through this process provides for the subdivision of the existing floor plates to accommodate 5 apartments per level, resulting in 15 no. 1-bedroom apartments across three storeys.

Following acquisition of the property by Dublin City Council in March 2024, a multi-disciplinary design team was appointed through the Adaptive Reuse Framework in October 2025. The design team has reviewed the feasibility proposals in detail, with particular regard to:

- Compliance with current housing and apartment design standards
- Flood risk and mitigation measures
- Universal Design and accessibility
- Circular economy and material reuse opportunities
- Energy performance and sustainability

The scheme will be progressed through the Part VIII planning process, with a view to delivering a robust, policy-compliant and exemplar adaptive reuse project.

The following report describes the context and design rationale of the scheme and provides an overview of the development standards that were followed.

Design Team

desiun Architects – Lead, ER, Architectural & PSDP
CORA Consulting Engineers – Civil & Structural Engineering
OCSC Consulting Engineers – Mechanical & Electrical Engineering
Gannon & Associates – Landscape Design
Wave Dynamics – Acoustic Design
McCrae Consulting Engineers – Fire Engineering
Bolger QS – Quantity Surveying

Context

The site is located on Fitzwilliam Quay, Ringsend, Dublin 4, adjacent to the River Dodder and approximately 30m from the river wall. The surrounding context is predominantly residential in character, with a mix of apartment buildings of varying scale and age, and benefits from excellent public transport connectivity and proximity to the city centre.

The Dublin City Development Plan 2022–2028 identifies the area within Land Zone Z1 and acknowledges the importance of adaptive reuse and refurbishment of existing buildings as a key component of compact growth, climate action and housing delivery within the city.

The zoning objective for Z1 is for Sustainable Residential Neighbourhood: 'To protect, provide and improve residential amenities'

The existing building itself comprises two vacant, interconnected three-storey office blocks of loadbearing masonry construction, with brick, stone and rendered façades and a forecourt area to the front formerly used for surface parking.



Image A: Location Maps – aerial view and OS map extract

Design Strategy

The design strategy is underpinned by a "retrofit-first" reuse-led approach, prioritising the retention of the existing structure and fabric wherever feasible. This approach aligns with national and local policy objectives to reduce embodied carbon, minimise demolition waste, and make efficient use of existing urban buildings.

The internal layout has been rationalised to deliver well-proportioned apartments that exceed the minimum floor area requirements set out in the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHPLG, 2018/2020), while acknowledging the inherent constraints of an existing office building.

The front forecourt will be transformed from a car-dominated space into a high-quality communal garden, enhancing residential amenity, biodiversity and visual quality, while supporting sustainable transport through the provision of secure cycle parking.

Adaptive Re-use in Dublin City

The proposed development exemplifies best practice in adaptive reuse within Dublin City, as promoted by Dublin City Council's Adaptive Reuse Unit, established in 2022. The conversion of vacant commercial buildings to residential use is a central mechanism for addressing housing need while simultaneously delivering climate action benefits.

This project contributes directly to the objectives of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022–2028, which seeks to:

- Promote the refurbishment and reuse of underutilised buildings
- Reduce vacancy and underuse within the existing building stock
- Prioritise reuse over demolition
- Support compact urban growth and sustainable communities

The Fitzwilliam Quay project demonstrates how existing office buildings can be successfully adapted to provide high-quality social housing in a cost-effective manner, while retaining the character of the streetscape, and the embodied carbon of the original structure. The project is located within a designated decarbonisation zone and is being delivered as an exemplar climate action initiative by Dublin City Council.

Circular Economy & Material Re-use

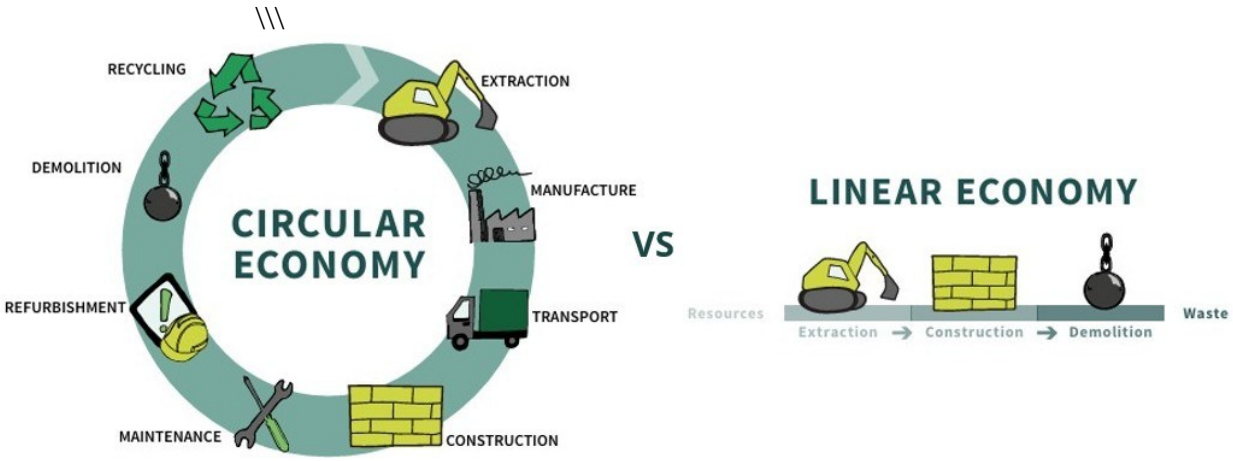


Image B: Circular Economy diagram

In accordance with the Irish Green Building Council (IGBC) Circular Economy Guidance and the Project Brief requirements, the scheme adopts circular economy principles throughout the project lifecycle.

A material reuse audit will be undertaken in advance of soft strip works to identify fixtures, fittings and materials suitable for reuse either within the project or in another project in the locality. Items such as doors, windows, sanitaryware, lighting, ironmongery and selected finishes will be assessed for condition, suitability and potential redistribution.

Materials that cannot be directly reused will be segregated for recycling wherever possible, thereby minimising waste sent to landfill. The design team will maintain an inventory of materials and will assist Dublin City Council in tracking the environmental and economic benefits of this approach.

Within the refurbished building, durable and low-maintenance materials will be specified, with consideration given to lifecycle performance, ease of replacement and future adaptability. This approach supports long-term sustainability, reduced operational costs and alignment with national and local circular economy policy objectives.

Universal Design & Housing Design Standards

All apartments exceed the minimum floor areas for 1-bedroom units as set out in the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (DHPLG, 2018/2020).

The scheme has been developed in accordance with the principles of Universal Design (UD), with reference to:

- Centre for Excellence in Universal Design – Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland
- Part M of the Building Regulations (2010, as amended)

The design seeks to ensure that all apartments are capable of future adaption to meet UD standards, so they are future-proofed to remain usable by people of all ages and abilities. Level access is provided to both building entrances with lifts serving all residential levels. Apartment layouts allow for adequate circulation space, accessible bathroom provision, and future adaptability to meet changing occupant needs. Refer to the enclosed UD checklist which lists each apartment types performance against current UD targets.

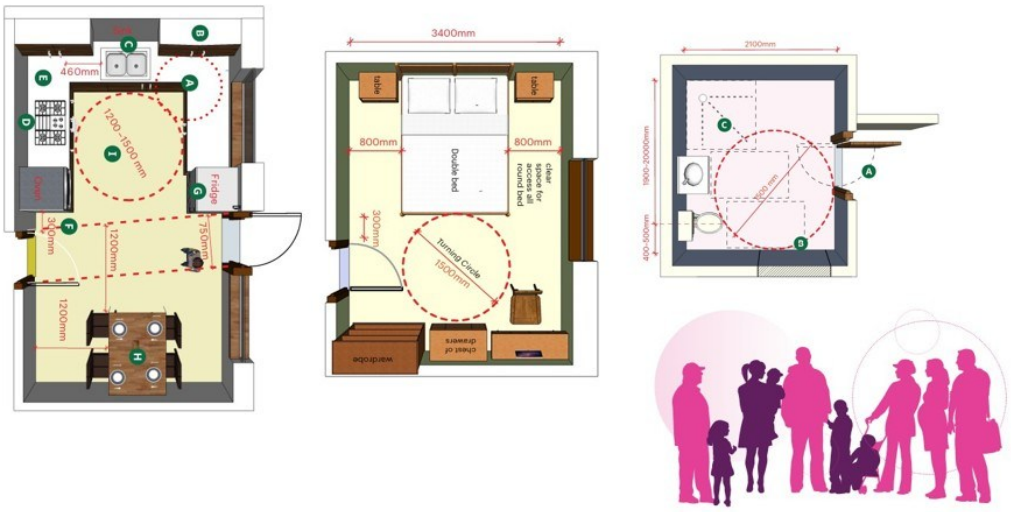


Image C: Universal Design guidance criteria

Transport Accessibility & Central Location to Amenities

Sustainable Transport Context

The subject site at 14–15 Fitzwilliam Quay, Ringsend, Dublin 4 is located within a highly accessible inner-city area with excellent provision of public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure. The central and well-connected location supports a car-free residential development, consistent with national and local policy objectives to reduce private car dependency and promote sustainable modes of transport.

The proposal aligns with the Dublin City Development Plan 2022–2028, which seeks to prioritise sustainable transport, compact growth and reduced car parking standards in highly accessible urban locations, particularly for adaptive reuse and regeneration projects.

Public Transport Accessibility

The site benefits from immediate proximity to a range of high-frequency public transport services and lies comfortably within a 15-minute walk catchment of rail and luas services.

Bus Services:

Fitzwilliam Quay and the wider Ringsend / Grand Canal Dock area are served by multiple Dublin Bus routes providing direct connections to the city centre, Docklands, south city suburbs and key employment areas. Bus stops are located within approximately 300–500m (4–7 minutes' walk) of the site. Routes serving the area include:

- Route 1 – Santry to Sandymount
- Route 47 – Belarmine to Poolbeg Street
- Route 56A – Tallaght to Ringsend Road
- Route 77A – Ringsend to Citywest

These routes provide frequent services to the city centre, educational institutions, healthcare facilities and major employment zones, supporting daily commuting and essential trips.

Rail and Light Rail Services:

Grand Canal Dock DART Station is located approximately 900m (11–12 minutes' walk) north-west of the site, providing high-frequency coastal rail services linking Ringsend with Dublin city centre, south Dublin coastal communities and northern suburbs.

Luas Red Line – The Point / Spencer Dock stops are located approximately 1.2–1.4km (15–18 minutes' walk) from the site, providing direct connections to Connolly Station, Heuston Station and the wider Luas network.

Walking, Cycling and the 15-Minute City



Image D: Travel connections diagram

The site is firmly embedded within a 15-minute city catchment, where daily services, employment, recreation and transport are readily accessible on foot or by bicycle. Key amenities within a short walking distance include:

- Ringsend Village centre – approximately 500m (6–7 minutes' walk)
- Ringsend Park – approximately 700m (9–10 minutes' walk)
- Grand Canal Dock employment and service area – approximately 900m–1km (11–13 minutes' walk)
- Dodder Greenway – immediately adjacent to the site along Fitzwilliam Quay

The site is within a 15-minute cycle of College Green and the wider city core. This level of accessibility supports the principles of the 15-minute city, promoted by Dublin City Council to encourage compact urban living, reduced car dependency and healthier, more sustainable travel choices.

Cycling Infrastructure and Bicycle Parking Provision

Cycle parking provision has been designed in accordance with Dublin City Council Development Plan 2022–2028, Appendix 5, Table 1. Based on the approved unit schedule, the proposal provides:

- 15 no. long-stay parking spaces, calculated at 1 space per 1-bedroom apartment
- 7.5 no. (8 provided) short-stay / visitor cycle parking spaces, calculated at 1 space per 2 apartments

This results in a total cycle parking provision of 23 spaces, comprising sheltered long-stay spaces and conveniently located short-stay visitor spaces. All cycle parking is secure, well-lit, accessible and suitable for a range of bicycle types, including e-bikes. This level of provision meets the required standards and supports modal shift towards cycling, in accordance with Dublin City Council policy objectives.

The site is strategically located adjacent to established and emerging cycling infrastructure, including the Dodder Greenway, which provides a high-quality segregated cycle route linking the site to the wider city and coastal routes, together with on-road and segregated cycle lanes serving the Docklands and city centre.

Car-Free Development

Given the exceptional accessibility of the site by public transport, walking and cycling, and its location within a compact urban area, the proposal does not provide on-site car parking. This approach provides an equitable, sustainable and future-proof model of urban living, and has regard to:

- The Dublin City Development Plan 2022–2028 which supports zero car parking in highly accessible locations
- The proximity to frequent public transport services and everyday amenities
- The adaptive reuse nature of the project within an existing urban building
- Prioritising of high-quality communal amenity space

The removal of car parking from the site enables the transformation of the front forecourt into a landscaped communal garden, delivering enhanced residential amenity, biodiversity and urban greening benefits.

Potential for future drop-off/loading bay

Future alterations to the roadside at Fitzwilliam Quay could be considered should a drop-off or loading bay be required at a later date. The existing street frontage is approximately 4.9–5.5m deep and comprises a grass verge, a single streetlight, and dished kerbs serving two vehicular entrances. Approximately 3m of the carriageway is being reallocated to new cycle infrastructure as part of the River Dodder Greenway, leaving a two-way carriageway width of 5.7m.

There is potential for a future on-street loading bay for maintenance vehicles. The diagram below illustrates a possible parallel loading space measuring 2.8m x 6.0m, suitable for large vans in accordance with DMURS Section 4.4.9 '*On-Street Parking and Loading*' (2019).

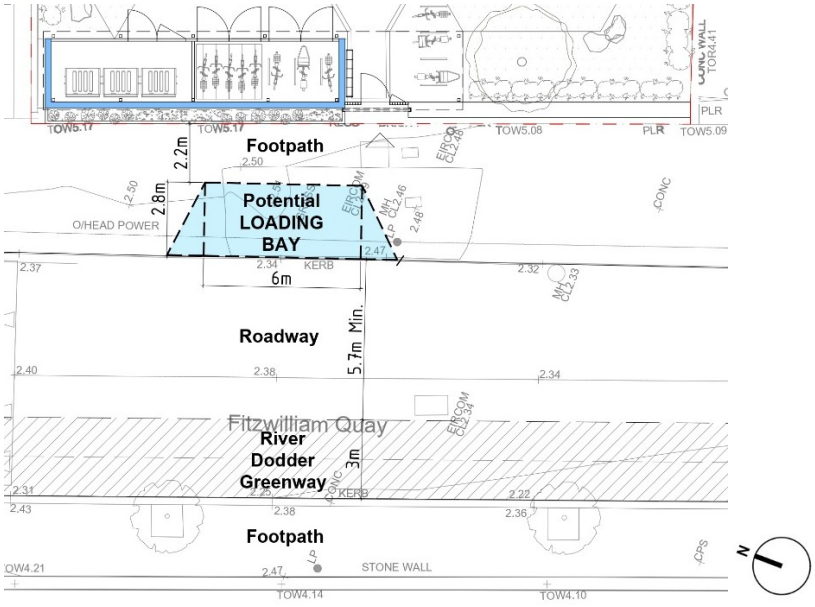


Image E: Diagram of potential loading bay location

A parallel accessible parking space for disabled users (3.6m × 7.0m) cannot be accommodated at present without encroaching on footpath space. An engineered solution would be required to facilitate such a provision. All works outside the red line boundary are excluded from the scope of this application and are shown indicatively for information purposes only.

Landscape Design

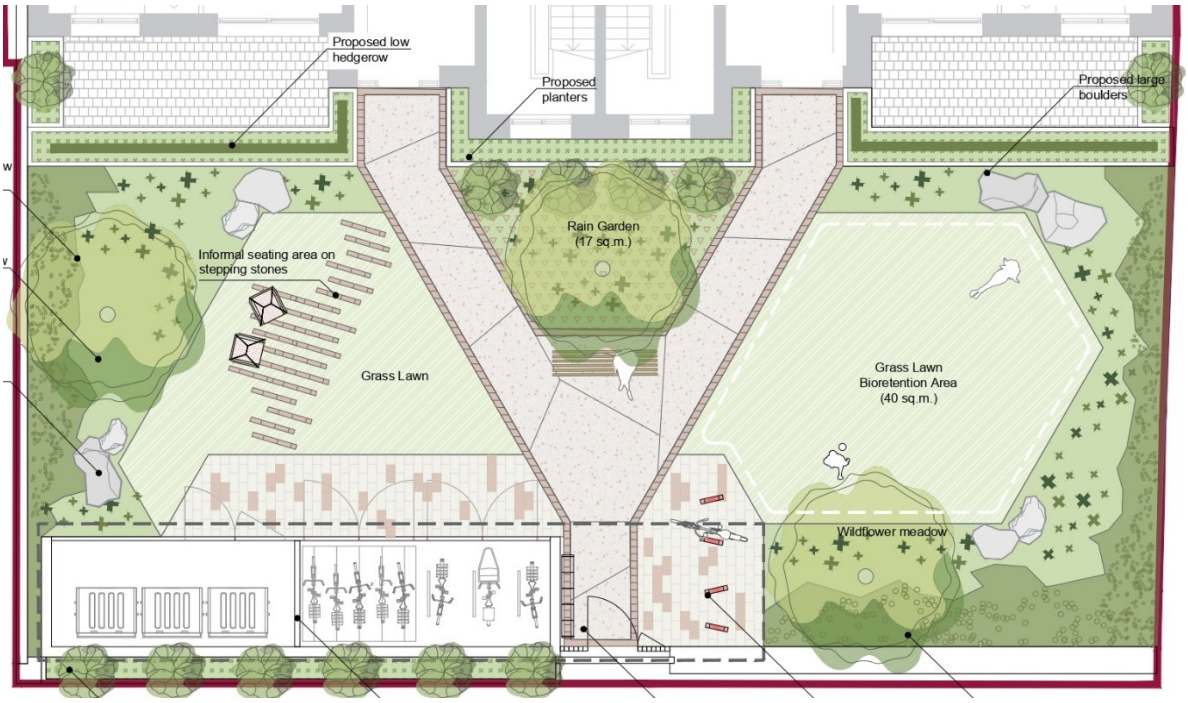


Image F: Landscape Plan - extract

Landscape Design Overview

The landscape proposal forms a key component of the adaptive reuse strategy, transforming the existing hard-surfaced forecourt into a high-quality communal garden and arrival space for residents. Please refer to the enclosed Landscape Site Plan and Landscape Architect's report.

The existing surface car parking area is reconfigured to create a shared landscaped courtyard overlooking Fitzwilliam Quay and the River Dodder. The space provides shared amenity for residents, informal seating areas, clear pedestrian routes to building entrances and encourages passive surveillance of the public realm.

The proposal incorporates SuDS measures, including a rain garden, and permeable paving. A diverse planting strategy includes native hedgerows, wildflower meadow areas, pollinator-friendly species and specimen planting, enhancing biodiversity and contributing positively to the Dodder corridor. The landscape strategy also supports circular economy principles by re-using existing materials on curtilage.

Bicycle, refuse and recycling facilities are fully integrated into the landscape design within a combined shelter structure.

The bicycle store is located to also serve as a flood barrier along the perimeter wall. The structure also softens the site boundary by providing a buffer of greenery to the streetscape with an integrated continuous raised planter.

The provision of a meaningful communal amenity space accords with the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (DHPLG, 2018) and the Dublin City

Development Plan, which support shared amenity solutions in compact urban and car-free developments.

Outdoor Amenity Spaces

The site also benefits from exceptional proximity to a range of high-quality public open spaces and outdoor amenities, which supplement on-site provision, including:

- Dodder Greenway – providing walking and cycling routes
- Ringsend Park – approximately 700m walking distance
- Grand Canal Dock waterfront spaces – within 10–12 minutes walk

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening

The Landscape Architect has prepared an AA Screening which has determined that the project will have no impact on, and will cause no significant harm to, European protected sites (SACs/SPAs).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Statement

The proposed development at 14–15 Fitzwilliam Quay comprises the adaptive reuse and refurbishment of an existing three-storey office building to provide 15 no. 1-bedroom social housing apartments. The project involves a change of use and internal reconfiguration only, with no increase in building height, footprint or gross floor area, and includes the removal of surface car parking to provide a landscaped communal garden, bicycle parking and associated site works. The proposal is sub-threshold for mandatory EIA under Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001–2024 and has been screened in accordance with Article 103 and the criteria set out in Schedule 7, having regard to Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU.

Having regard to the small scale and nature of the development, its location within an established urban area, the reuse of existing building fabric, and the absence of significant environmental sensitivities on site, it is considered that the proposal is not likely to have significant effects on the environment. Potential impacts arising during construction are temporary and can be appropriately managed through standard best practice, while the completed development will deliver positive long-term effects through the provision of social housing, reduced car dependency, enhanced biodiversity and improved public realm.

Accordingly, it is concluded that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required, and that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is not necessary for the proposed development.

Structural & Civil Engineering

Flood Risk Assessment

A Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) has been undertaken in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (OPW, 2009) and associated Departmental Circulars. The assessment considers groundwater, fluvial and tidal flood risk arising from the proximity of the River Dodder (Flood zone B). Refer to the enclosed report prepared by the Civil Engineers.

Appropriate mitigation measures, including demountable flood gates and flood response procedures, have been incorporated into the design, in consultation with Dublin City Council.

The development is considered appropriate in principle at this location, having regard to its adaptive reuse nature, and the proposed mitigation measures.

Suds

Refer to the enclosed drainage report by the civil engineers which describes proposed soakaway measures and the landscape plan which has incorporated these elements into modified planters and a feature rain garden within the communal garden.

Mechanical & Electrical Engineering

Sustainability

Refer to the enclosed drawings and documents by the Mechanical and Electrical Engineers;

- Building Lifecycle Report
- BRE Daylight Analysis

Renewable technologies such as heat recovery ventilation, smart electric radiators and project specific energy strategies such as the sharing of cold-water tanks in the existing attic plant space will be developed in detail at the next work stage. DCC maintenance team will be consulted throughout the specification process to ensure a functional and low-maintenance solution is developed.

Acoustic Design

The internal layouts have been reviewed by the Acoustic Engineer. Refer to the enclosed Stage 1 report for recommendations to be incorporated at detailed design stage.

Fire & Disability Access Certificates

The internal layouts have been audited by the Fire Engineer and the Dublin Fire Prevention Officer. FSC and DAC applications will be submitted in parallel with the Part VIII process.

Site Investigations

The design team have procured the following surveys:

- Topographical Survey
- Utilities Survey
- Conditions Survey (procured prior to DT appointment)
- Asbestos Containing Materials Survey

No ACMs were identified ion site. Refer to the enclosed reports for information.



Overview

The proposed adaptive reuse of 14–15 Fitzwilliam Quay represents a high-quality, sustainable and policy-compliant housing development within an established city-centre location. The scheme prioritises the reuse of existing building fabric, significantly reducing embodied carbon and construction waste, while delivering energy-efficient, adaptable, well-designed homes.

The landscape and public realm proposals transform the existing car-dominated forecourt into a high-quality communal amenity space, enhancing biodiversity, supporting sustainable drainage and contributing positively to the streetscape along Fitzwilliam Quay.

By prioritising reuse, circular economy principles and universal design, the scheme delivers long-term social, environmental and economic benefits, while contributing positively to the streetscape and community of Ringsend.