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## 86 & 88 Botanic Road

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Dublin Simon Community work to prevent people becoming homeless and support people who are without a home to close the door on homelessness securing and providing long term housing across Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan where 7,000 people and families are without a permanent home.

We provide a wide range of support, tenancy sustainment services and, as an Approved Housing Body (AHB) provide long term permanent housing. We supported 7,600 people and families last year. Since the beginning of last year in Dublin Simon Services (January 2018 to June 2019):

- 1,990 people and families were prevented from entering homelessness.
- 3,593 adults and children supported to move out of homelessness into 1,500 plus secure homes.
- 900 people are provided with a permanent home in a Dublin Simon property.

### Property

In early 2019, we acquired 86 & 88 Botanic Road for the purposes of providing long term independent housing. The property was purchased on the open market using funds from wills, bequests and private donations and on advice demonstrated value for money. These properties are made up of 14 self-contained units within two period buildings, comprising of 6 x 1 bed Apartments and 8 x Studios.

- The property will comply with necessary Health and Safety and other relevant regulations, legislation and standards before occupancy. Some Health & Safety works have already been completed, while others are currently outstanding. All units will be fitted with kitchen and bathroom facilities, including one kitchen which was in a state of disrepair and will be replaced.
- DCC planning officials have visited the property during the week of 26th November, and following their inspection have determined the use of the properties as apartments/studios for independent living is lawful and does not require planning permission. The timber cabins at the rear of the property will not be used.
- The security system which includes CCTV, intercom and fob key is in place for easy access and is consistent with Dublin Simon and sector standards.

### Tenants

The apartments can accommodate single men and women, and couples. Depending on the ratio of singles and couples, occupancy will be 14 to 18 people. We will commence a phased occupation of the property not before the 16th December to ensure some tenants will occupy the property before Christmas and all meetings with councillors and residents are completed.

Tenants will be registered homeless and will be on Local Authority housing waiting lists. All tenants will be interviewed, eligibility and estate management assessed and Pre-Tenancy Training will be completed by all tenants, in line with standard Approved Housing Body and Local Authority practice. This long term independent housing is not linked to other developments such as Ushers Island or Chester House, Phibsborough.

Tenants will be considered housed; this will be their home, as such they will pay rent and be afforded the rights and responsibilities of all tenants, as determined by Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

All tenants are encouraged to engage in local community services and amenities. Tenants requiring any support will be referred to the appropriate service if requested.

Each tenant will have a key to their home and primarily use the front entrances. Rear entrance will only be used for bicycle entrance/exit and bin access.

### Property Management

The property will be managed by Dublin Simon Community Facilities Team, to ensure the standard of the property is maintained, and our Housing Management Service (the Landlord) working within RTB Guidelines. HIQA compliance/remit does not apply to this building as it is residential, independent long term permanent housing. The property is covered under Dublin Simon Community's insurance and liability, and operates in compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. Dublin Simon will commence structured engagement

on a quarterly basis with the two local residents associations ACA and IDRA, in the first 6 months to ensure relationship is established.

For neighbourhood queries or issues with the property the Housing Management Service (HousingManagementService@dubsimon.ie or 01 635 4812) is the point of contact.

#### FAQ:

1. Can Simon describe what they mean by their description of the type of housing they propose as there is no mention of this type of housing on their website? For example, what is the proposed capacity of the property and what is the type of accommodation that they would be offered room only, beds with shared facilities, self-contained flat? How many beds will be in this property?

**86 & 88 Botanic Road will be used as long term independent housing. This property was purchased with 14 self-contained units over two period buildings, composed of 6 x 1 bed Apartments and 8 x Studio apartments. The apartments can accommodate single men and women, and couples. Depending on the ratio of singles and couples, occupancy will be 14 to 18 people. All units will be fitted with full kitchen and bathroom facilities.**

2. Where will the proposed residents of this property be coming from where are they housed at present? Usher house to close in the first quarter of January and is Phibsborough also going to close for the renovation project.

**Tenants will be registered homeless and will be on Local Authority housing waiting lists. This is long term independent housing and not linked to other Dublin Simon developments.**

3. What type of client will use the service? Is this just a service that offers people a bed for the night or what is proposed, the title of the facility is very loose and not informative. The community has not a deep mistrust of Simon Community and the way they are using public funds and they fear a change of use will be proposed once they move into the property.

**This is long term independent housing. Tenants will be considered housed; this will be their home, as such they will pay rent and be afforded the rights and responsibilities of all tenants, as determined by Residential Tenancies Board. Dublin Simon Community have no plans to change the use of the property as tenants will be in long term tenancies.**

4. What is the proposed opening date for the facility?

**We will commence a phased occupation of the property after the 16th December to ensure some tenants will occupy the property before Christmas and all meetings with councillors and residents are completed.**

5. Will there be 24-hour staffing at the property or assistance for the residents? If so, what qualifications will the staff have? Is a Nurse/Doctor in attendance for those with complex needs.

**As this is long term independent housing there is no staffing requirement. Pre tenancy training will be completed by all tenants. All tenants are encouraged to engage in local community services and amenities such as budgeting, advice and healthcare, as required. Tenants requiring any support will be referred to the appropriate service if requested.**

6. Will intoxicated individuals be allowed to reside or continue to reside at the property? What is the level of tolerance, it is a very dangerous situation putting individuals together that may have had previous altercations?

**As this is long term independent housing our responsibility as a landlord rests within the remit of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). A landlord intervenes in items such as non payment of rent, anti social behaviour or interference with the property.**

7. Is random drug and alcohol testing proposed to be carried out at the property by urine analysis.

**As this is long term independent housing and private tenancies, all tenants have their rights as per RTB guidelines which all Approved Housing Bodies are subject too.**

8. St. Teresa Place extension road will not be used as an entrance to the property. There are two front doors to the property surely these entrances would be enough for people to go about their daily business. The rear access is not ideal for clients of Simon as it is a dimly lit small road which could lead to them being targeted by unscrupulous dealers who as always ready to move in and prey on the vulnerable and may try to entice them back to a life of addiction for their personal financial gain. What would Simon Community's views be on this point? I think that to make people go in a back gate is a total lack of respect for the individuals and inappropriate.

**The boundary wall and gate at the rear of the property were installed by the previous owner in order to complete the terms of the acquisition of the property when property boundary was questioned. Each tenant will have a key to their home and primarily use the front entrance. Rear entrance will only need to be used for bicycle entrance/exit and bin access.**

9. What would be the purpose of the two wooden cabins/sheomra type buildings at the rear of the property? Would these be removed? The need to be removed, as what purpose will they serve.

**Yes, they will be removed as their use is not required.**

10. Will there be a security company on site? Do Simon work with a security firm or do they leave up this to staff that will be trained in this field?

**Dublin Simon Community do not have security companies on any of our services or similar housing i.e. long term independent housing with tenancies.**

11. What is the level of Simons public liability for the facility? Both internally and externally.

**The property is covered under Dublin Simon Community's insurance and liability, and operates in compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements.**

12. Do they have a community impact report? Will they be responsible for damage to the property of residents and safety of residents? What is their policy on tolerance of antisocial behaviour of their proposed residents? We do a regular clean up of the area and we have photographed the outside of several of the premises and they are littered with syringes, bottles, refuse and a lot of people appeared to have been congregating in fact the residents were told by a staff member to come back at 4 and then you would really see the full picture.

**A community impact report is not required. All tenants and landlords have legal responsibility, Dublin Simon Community takes this responsibility seriously in investigating and acting accordingly within legislation.**

**Tenants are responsible for their actions and any impact on property. There are requirements of the tenancy that there is no anti social behaviour. Anti social behaviour is not tolerated. Upkeep of**

**the property is tenant's responsibility, Dublin Simon have routine estate management checks on all properties.**

**Upon investigation the photos supplied of the outside of several premises are misleading, as they were not taken at Dublin Simon Community locations. No residents congregate outside Dublin Simon properties.**

13. Why are Simon so reluctant to meet with residents and answer questions in an open forum? It is not acceptable, the secrecy, disrespect for a community that a Company can have this attitude.

**We have endeavoured to meet all councillors on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec for follow up meeting with IDRA and ACA, and to meet with any members of the local community by 16<sup>th</sup> December. We are working to make 86 & 88 Botanic Road home for some people in time for Christmas.**

14. How was the purchase of this 1.8million property and its renovation funded? This is a very big question, as a community we have been doing a lot of investigation into Simon Community, they are a property fund, a management fund, and allow people to participate in a fund to avoid a tax loophole. To spend this amount of money on a property that they themselves have deemed not fit for purpose is questionable. They get paid for clients by the DCC/HSE and have a revolving door policy I do not see how this is in any way helpful to allow people to recover. There is an immense amount of money being paid out for a service that is mediocre at most.

**The purchase of 86 and 88 Botanic Road was supported by collections, donors, wills and bequests. Dublin Simon Community provides homeless services and housing in Cavan, Louth, Monaghan, Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Meath, as such we don't not have a property/management fund and there is no opportunity for any donors to avoid paying tax on contributions. These apartments demonstrate good value for money to move people who have been made homeless into long term independent housing (see attached Dublin Simon Community statement issued Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec).**

15. In the present climate with such a homeless situation at crisis level was it prudent to spend such vast amounts of money on a property surely less expensive properties and investment in services and treatment would be more beneficial to those in need. There needs to be a review of this system, the current way money is being spend and the services offered are not fit for purpose.

**These apartments satisfy our requirement for long term independent permanent housing for tenants and compare very favourably with studio and one bedroom apartments on the open market. The DCC Planning and Property Development Department has confirmed that the proposed use of 86 and 88 Botanic Road each consisting of seven self contained residential units is lawful and does not require planning permission.**

- 16 How many of these people will be Garda vetted.

**Tenants allocated to long term independent housing whether by AHBs and Local Authorities are Garda vetted.**

16. Will the DHRE be assisting Simon Community with the running of this project?

**Dublin Regional Homeless Executive have no involvement in the delivery of these long term independent housing units.**

17. Are HIQUA also going to maintain a role in assuring this project is run in to the proper standards?

**As this is long term independent housing HIQUA does not have a role or responsibility.**

18. Will community GARDA be involved?

**Community Garda have no role policing long term independent housing other than standard community duties.**

19. They have apologised to three different groups since 2016, the properties purchased in Limerick, La Verna Aisling House and now Glasnevin, how many more apologies are Simon Community going to make. These are historical issues on an annual basis. I presume they are outsourced to deal with a problem that the Government have failed miserably to do and look where outsourcing has gotten us in the past. There needs to be much more governance, transparency and monitoring in place for these types of Companies, I am unable to call it a Charity as they are getting much more than they give to these people they supposedly help.

**While we are not aware of properties purchased in Limerick, we have no involvement in Aisling House. Dublin Simon withdrew our interest in La Verna (July 2019) as it was no longer a viable proposition.**