

Sunny times for businesses as pedestrian numbers up 92% after Monkstown facelift

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Village is DMURS compliant, and mobility and age friendly with tactile paving, signalised crossing points, seating, high quality lighting, increased pedestrian footways, disabled parking spaces and improved footpath gradients



Atkins has announced that it has successfully completed the Monkstown Village Improvement Scheme for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC).

Pedestrian counts at certain key crossing points before and after the works show that pedestrian activity has increased by 385 per cent. Overall, pedestrian volumes are up 92 per cent, highlighting that people are choosing to walk to and through Monkstown rather than drive, which is sustainable and a boon for local businesses

Maintaining special identity

Monkstown, which lies within an architectural conservation area, is characterised by historic buildings and a unique heritage of 19th century houses. The Monkstown Village Public Realm project proposed to enhance the village, maintaining its special identity, and strengthening its economic performance by creating a better public realm for all.

This was created through physical improvements and repurposing of public infrastructure, such as roads, footpaths, lighting and so on. This public realm project sought to enhance the wellbeing of DLR's citizens, incorporating corporate objectives, including age friendly design and enhanced accessibility.

Since the completion of the works, there has been a transformative change: traffic-calming measures enhance road safety; improved conditions for pedestrians and cyclists encourage a healthier lifestyle, and better access for mobility and visually impaired persons enhances their social engagement.

Volume of pedestrians has doubled

The volume of pedestrians has doubled, and local businesses are benefiting from the high quality design.

Bob Hannan, senior architect, DLRCC, said: "Prior to its regeneration it was a busy village and the centre for local life, but was dominated by traffic and severed by a large carriageway, with poor pedestrian facilities.

"The project proposed to enhance the village, maintaining its special identity and strengthening its economic performance by creating a better public realm for all users."



The project aimed to anchor life physically in the village and reinforce Monkstown's unique character and sense of place, while future proofing it as a place of enjoyment and wellbeing. The project also sought to underpin the economic capacity and performance of local businesses, relative to larger retail centres and out of town developments.

Traffic calming introduced to improve road safety

A traffic calming area was introduced to improve road safety. The improved public realm area now makes it easier to move around the village and cross the road, particularly where access was constrained due to steep slopes.

The introduction of a contra-flow cycle track and cycle stands provides safer cycling conditions and additional permeability. Tactile paving and signalised crossing points provide safe facilities for visually impaired persons. At-grade crossing points and enhanced path levels improve access to the village for mobility-impaired persons.

The project also aimed to restore the architectural and cultural heritage of the village and in doing so the conservation and refurbishment of 'the Ring' back to its original form, which dates back to circa 1868, has contributed significantly to regaining its place of prominence and status within the overall village setting.



Significant improvement in visual appearance of village

There is a significant improvement in the visual appearance of the village, which is leading to greater use by pedestrians. Pedestrian counts at certain key crossing points before and after the works show that pedestrian activity has increased by a significant 385 per cent.

Overall the pedestrian volumes are up 92 per cent, highlighting that people are choosing to walk to and through Monkstown rather than drive, which is sustainable and a boon for local businesses.

The village is DMURS compliant, and mobility and age friendly with tactile paving, signalised crossing points (with audio push buttons) at grade crossing points, seating, high quality lighting, increased pedestrian footways, disabled parking spaces and improved footpath gradients.

Atkins were appointed in January 2016 by DLRCC to deliver and develop the initial concept design through the preliminary, detailed design, construction and handover stages.

In developing the design, Atkins worked closely with DLRCC transportation and architects' departments, both of which had very specific objectives in relation to material types including soft and hard landscaping to create a distinct look and feel for the scheme.

SIAC Ltd commenced construction in May 2017 and completed the scheme in December 2017.

Ursula O'Higgins, technical director, Atkins, project manager for the scheme, said: "This project is a very important addition to the locality, which will greatly enhance Monkstown village centre.

'Create a far more attractive and safer place'

"The overall vision from DLRCC was to improve the village centre for the people of Monkstown by creating an environment that is a far more attractive and safer place in which to shop, visit, do business, and pass the time of day.

"This vision has been realised and the benefits of the scheme to the local and wider community have far exceeded the expectations of the entire project team."

Conor Geraghty, resident engineer, DLRCC, said: "The Monkstown Village Improvement scheme is being well received by the local community and is having a very positive impact on the area.

"Pedestrian and cycle numbers are greatly increased and it is obvious that the place function of the village has improved. People are meeting and congregating around the benches, in the Ring area and around the village generally. This wasn't an option before the works and is a very positive outcome."

Oliver Scott, contracts manager, SIAC Ltd, said it was delighted to have worked closely with DLRCC and Atkins "in delivering this high-profile and very successful scheme".

