“Madam – I refer to John Burn’s article of May 18th regarding the Rathmines Swan Leisure Centre’s need for an extension.

The Rathmines Initiative played an important part in developing the plan to replace the old swimming pool on the site, the genesis of the Swan Leisure Centre. Unfortunately, part of the original plans couldn’t be completed, namely, a joint development with the city council and Herman White’s site next door, developing the site for apartments and selling part of the site to Dublin City Council.

This included the acquisition of a house next door that at the time was owned by the Legion of Mary (until 2004), along with the development of a public plaza. Sadly, this plan fell through at the last minute, and the size of the Swan Leisure Centre is now much smaller than originally planned.

I am one of the many “walking wounded” senior citizens who attend exercise classes there. I am certainly not a “gym bunny” as John Burns describes. These classes are essential therapy to maintain mobility and help us live independent lives. Demand for classes is so great that they are booked out within minutes of booking opening time. Many older people lose out.

The Swan Leisure Centre also provides accessible facilities so people with disabilities can swim or use the gym. There is an autism hour every Friday, and the centre also offers specific swimming lessons for people with neurodiversity.

Rathmines doesn’t have any other publicly owned halls. A community hall was included in the original plans, but because of the loss of part of the originally proposed site, the community lost out.”