

Land Use, Planning & Transportation Department
South Dublin County Council
County Hall Tallaght,
Dublin 24,
D24 A3XC

Date: 1 December 2021

To whom it may concern,

Please find enclosed responses in relation to Question 1(a), 1(b), and 1(c) of the additional information requests in respect of planning ref. SD21A/0148.

Question 1(a): Rationale for the proposed Community Centre

The rationale for the proposed restoration of Katharine Tynan House for community use is based on providing a vital piece of community infrastructure within an appropriate cultural and historical setting with a view to serving both the immediate community and wider South Dublin area. The proposal recognises the need to provide community facilities that promote alternative interests and seeks to adapt historical buildings to ensure their long-term viability. Activities such as the promotion of heritage, culture, literature, and horticultural interests would be well catered for within the proposed development. Hibernia REIT plc has undertaken an extensive consultation process, with both local community groups and schools (*see section "Groups Catered For" on page 3*) in the immediate area, which informed the contents of our proposal and explored all possible uses for the building.

Several uses were proposed during this process, with the seminal suggestion of a building for community use being one. In seeking permission for a community use building, Hibernia wishes to ensure that the building's refurbishment has a positive social gain for the community. The proposed building would provide a multi-functional space that could facilitate a broad range of activities whilst also providing an abundance of outdoor space for social congregation for all age groups. This proposed use ensures its viability all year round in addition to enhancing social inclusion, community participation, local pride, and connection to place.

The literary links of the property to one of Ireland's most celebrated and acclaimed female poets and writers will also assist in ensuring the building's viability with both local people and those from further afield interested in the heritage and historic past of such venues expected to visit the property.

The design of the proposed centre is reflective of successful and vibrant community hubs such as Pearse Museum, Marley House, Ayrfield House in Dundrum, and Ashtown Castle in the Phoenix Park where much of their use is concentrated within the grounds and outdoor space, although the Katharine Tynan House would be on a smaller and more local scale to the aforementioned venues.

The proposal provides for three large interconnecting rooms at ground floor, each with independent access, which can be used for a variety of purposes including providing classroom type settings, meeting rooms and general community space for social congregation. The proposed outdoor courtyard also offers a unique amenity with a sheltered and open landscaped area for socialising and other activities, which, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic provides a safer environment for socialising. Furthermore, this outdoor open area and courtyard could accommodate a range of activities/services not currently available within the locality such as an outdoor market area, food and coffee truck vendors or outdoor art displays in the future.

Hibernia believes that this flexible and adaptable approach to providing buildings for community use will maximise the potential of this space to provide benefit to wider South Dublin. Whilst Hibernia's proposal is for that of a community use building, the rationale is that the refurbished house would be used as a community space for both the local community and wider South Dublin population which focuses on the unique heritage and historical attributes of the site. In seeking permission for community use, this allows for a variety of uses which ensures viability and brings a derelict protected structure back into everyday uses, promotes regeneration and delivers additional community infrastructure within the locality.

Sustainability is a key consideration in the building's design. Requirements shall be met through passive strategies including the reduction of energy demand, the utilisation of energy in the most efficient manner and the introduction of renewables to reduce fossil fuel dependency. These measures will satisfy all requirements of Part L 2017 (NZEB) and BER requirements. On site renewables are to be provided by way of photovoltaic panels located on the roof of the outbuildings only to ensure the historical integrity of the house is protected.

In this regard, we submit that the proposal contributes positively to the realisation of the policies and objectives in South Dublin County Council's Development Plan (2016-2022) including:

E2 Objective 6

"To require, where feasibly practical and viable, the provision of PV solar panels in new public buildings (eg Council buildings, school buildings, hospitals, health centres, community centres, sports facilities, libraries, Garda stations etc), for electricity generation/storage and/or water heating so as to reduce energy costs, minimise carbon emissions and reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels".¹

Policy C1 Objective 5

"To support the provision of new or improved facilities in established areas"²

Groups Catered For

The proposal offers an inclusive space for all members of the community including a variety of local groups, schools, sporting organisations, religious groups, families, youths, men's sheds, ladies' clubs etc. Significant support and expressions of interest in such a community space have been noted throughout community engagement exercises and meetings with local organisations.

The building would be fully accessible to local people, the larger ground floor activity rooms G04 and G05 would be bookable space available to anyone on a first come, first serve basis. G02 would operate as a non-bookable reception/drop in space with seating where members of the community could come to enjoy a refreshment and socialise, access to public toilets are also provided via G02.

At present, the nearby Kingswood Heights Community Centre is only capable of and suited to providing community space for the immediate Kingswood Heights neighbourhood. This contrasts with the unique historical and cultural setting of Katharine Tynan House which will draw in a wider catchment area including the surrounding communities.

Potential Activities Proposed

The design rationale for the building is to provide a flexible and adaptable space for an array of community uses. In this regard, and based on feedback from community engagement, the following activities are proposed:

- educational purposes for all ages
- poetry and literary readings

¹ South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022, p 174

² South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022, p 52.

- horticulture classes
- youth cafés and youth programmes.
- meeting space for local people and organisations
- promotion of Heritage and history of South Dublin
- Indoor/Outdoor Events space
- yoga/Pilates
- meeting space
- general recreation space for children and families in a supervised setting
- art and crafts exhibitions and displays
- studio space for art and craft classes.
- farmers'/Sunday market
- hosting events in celebration of appropriate festivals such as Red Line Book Fest or One Dublin One Book.
- community allotments

In this context, we believe the design approach and activities proposed contributes positively to the realisation of the policies and objectives in South Dublin County Council's Development Plan (2016-2022).

Policy C1 Objective 6

*"To ensure that community buildings are flexible and adaptable and can be used by all age cohorts, including young people (youth programmes, youth cafés, etc)."*³

Policy C1 Objective 7

*"To provide additional youth cafés in areas with high population of young adults and to utilise existing buildings which can be adaptable to youth programme facilities such as local libraries".*⁴

Levels of access for local people

The building and its grounds would be fully accessible to all members of the community during opening hours. The gardens, courtyard and ground floor reception area would be open and available at all times whilst other areas would be bookable space. The seminal idea behind the proposal is opening up a derelict historic building, increasing permeability to a currently inaccessible site and providing high quality outdoor space. The existing agricultural entrance south of the house is suggested to be the entrance for vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access. This entrance has good sightlines for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians entering and leaving the site onto the Ballymount Road. There is an overspill area which can facilitate larger vehicles such

³ South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022, p 52.

⁴ South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022, p 52.

as school buses or buses providing for the disabled or the elderly ensuring the utmost ease of access for all to the site. Cars are also dissuaded from driving up to the front of the house to make it more appealing for pedestrians in addition to avoiding negative visual impact.

The design rationale for the site emphasises a universal design approach for the inclusion of all members of society regardless of age or ability with all amenities wheelchair accessible and capable of catering for an older cohort or those with disabilities.

Both the Ornamental and Walled Gardens will also be fully accessible to all members of the public during the centre's opening hours. Access to these gardens will provide people with opportunities to engage with native species of flora on a wider scale and seeks to encourage connection with the Irish landscape and a sense of biophilia.

Question 1(b): Details of how the proposed community centre is anticipated to operate and be viable in the future given the fact that there is an existing community centre located approximately 600m away from the application site

The proposed refurbishment of Katharine Tynan House is totally unique to and different from the existing community centre located in Kingswood Heights and therefore should not be viewed comparatively. Both the character and offering of the property represents a highly unique communal amenity which would undoubtedly be of benefit to the area. Whilst there is a community centre located approximately 600m away from the application site, it is noted that they would not operate in competition with one another. The level of amenity space that would be provided in the refurbished house, encompasses high quality outdoor space in a landscaped and mature historical setting. This would ensure that Katharine Tynan house offers a highly unique piece of community infrastructure which differs wholly from the existing centre.

The existing community centre in Kingswood comprises a cluster of single storey community buildings and associated car parking. The outdoor space comprises a grass patch with a cement inlay and presents a significantly lower quality green space to the wider community. Community uses in this regard are largely limited to indoor activities and indoor congregation.

The proposed community space at Katharine Tynan House places emphasis on outdoor activity within the courtyard and landscaped and community gardens, whilst also providing indoor space for a broad range of activities which would appeal to those seeking to utilise community space other than traditional "community hall" type settings and for informal, or more intimate type meetings or engagements.

The historical character of the building and its gardens, the literary links to one of Ireland's most acclaimed female writers and poets along with the educational narrative surrounding the site

and its connection to the wider South Dublin area provides for a different type of communal amenity which is currently not available in the locality.

The location of the centre also lends itself to attracting a wider catchment of people from adjoining areas including Kingswood, Belgard, Newlands and South Clondalkin. Additionally, the property is located less than a kilometre from Belgard Luas stop and is served by a quality bus corridor located along the Belgard Road therefore enabling sustainable modes of transport to and from the property and providing ease of access for those traveling from further afield.

The property's locational advantage, physical attributes and historical character would ensure its viability and provide a unique amenity for a wide catchment of people. The existing community centre in Kingswood is that of a local centre which largely only caters to the residents of Kingswood thereby limiting its use or interest to others.

The restoration of the house is not proposed to detract from the viability of the existing centre in Kingswood but rather be an additional and complementary communal amenity which offers additional choice for local people and provides a space for the provision of additional services.

Figures One and Two overleaf offer a visual representation of the distinctive differences between the existing community centre in Kingswood and the proposed communal space at Katharine Tynan House.



Figure One: Existing Community Centre Configuration (Source: Google Maps, 2021, Annotated by Author).



Figure Two: Concept CGI of Restored Courtyard at Katharine Tynan House (Source: Digital Dimensions, 2021).

Question 1(c): Full details of the proposed management arrangements of the community centre.

The management of the building would be provided for by way of a management company that would be established for the operation of the building. It is envisaged that the building would be managed and operated through a building management committee comprising of key stakeholder groups including representatives from both Hibernia and local community organisations. The central objective would be that the facilities are professionally and fairly managed so to ensure that all interested parties have equal access, in this regard the management committee would ensure its equitable use. The committee would be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the buildings operation including staffing and maintenance.

The daily running of the centre would be overseen by a centre/building manager selected by the committee with this likely comprising a combination of paid and voluntary staff members. The building would be staffed at all times during opening hours.

Opening Hours

It is envisaged that the building would operate between the hours of 9:00am and 21:00pm to facilitate both morning and evening groups, classes, and meetings.

Repairs & Maintenance

Repairs and maintenance of the centre would be overseen by the committee and provided by way of a service provider agreement to be agreed and implemented in due course. Planned preventive maintenance would be carried out regularly and would form part of the service provider agreement to be agreed. Regular inspections of the site would be carried out in accordance with the estates management procedures established by the committee. On site staff would be responsible for reporting of maintenance or repairs issues to the service provider who would also respond to emergency/out of hours call outs.

Security

Security arrangements would be provided through a private security company who would also act as the key holder, being responsible for the opening and closing of the gates prior to opening in the morning and after closing each evening. A private security company is currently employed at Newlands Farm which undertakes patrols of the lands and acts as a key holder, it is anticipated that they would assume responsibility for security arrangements and respond to call outs when necessary. Additionally, the site and buildings would be protected by a CCTV and alarm system which is monitored via an offsite control room in order to deter anti-social behaviour on the grounds after hours. The building and its grounds would additionally be secured by a 3m high steel mesh security fence to prevent trespassing.

Cleaning

Cleaning services would be provided by way of a private cleaning contractor. Cleaning hours will be dependent on opening hours and days of operation.

Refuse

Refuse collection would be provided through a private waste management company, a dedicated and secure bin store has been provided for within the design with ease of access for refuse trucks. Segregation of waste would also be catered for on site. It is anticipated that the only waste generated on site would be domestic waste.

Insurances

All necessary insurances would be put in place by the building management committee.

Health and Safety

Stringent safety procedures and protocols would be implemented on the property to ensure the health and safety of staff and visitors. The estate management procedures to be adopted will set out the health and safety standards required on the site. These standards would be regularly audited both internally and externally to ensure compliance. Health and safety standards would firstly be implemented by the onsite staff who will maintain the fire evacuation plan, incident report log and safety plan which will be prepared for the building.

Internal Auditing of safety procedures will be conducted by the buildings management committee in conjunction with their external consultants and insurers. All staff/volunteers and contractors would be provided with training such as fire prevention, first aid and manual handling. All personnel associated with the operation of the proposed building including any volunteers will be trained to use a defibrillator which is to be provided on site.

Staff and Management Training

All staff/volunteers associated with the operation of the building would receive the following training:

- Fire prevention duties
- Emergency procedures, including fire and evacuation drills
- The layout of the building including escape routes
- The location of fire alarm call points, and first-aid fire-fighting equipment

- Fire control techniques including the use of fire extinguishers, fire blankets and hose reels, closing doors and windows to inhibit fire spread, shutting off electricity and fuel supplies where appropriate
- First Aid, Cardiac First Responder (Use of a Defibrillator/CPR).
- Manual Handling

Alignment with the Objectives of the Draft County Development Plan 2022-2028

We note that the Draft South Dublin County Development Plan is currently on public display and due to be adopted by August 2022. A review of the objectives of the draft development plan would suggest that the proposed restoration is supportive of many of the objectives of the draft plan including:

NCBH 1 Objective 1

*“To protect, conserve and enhance natural, cultural and built heritage features, seeking opportunities to identify, retain, protect, and incorporate heritage assets into plans and developments”.*⁵

NCBH 19 Objective 3

*“To address dereliction and to welcome, encourage and support the rehabilitation, renovation, appropriate use and sensitive reuse of Protected Structures consistent with RPO 9.30 of the RSES”*⁶

The proposed sensitive restoration of Katharine Tynan House will see a derelict protected structure restored and refurbished to provide a vital piece of communal infrastructure.

NCBH19 Objective 4

*“To support alternative uses for Protected Structures including former institutional sites in order to provide continued security of the heritage value of these buildings, attendant grounds and associated landscape features. To this end, the relaxation of site zoning restrictions may be considered in order to secure the preservation and conservation of the protected structure where the use proposed is compatible with the existing structure and where the proposed development is consistent with best practice conservation policies and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area”.*⁷

The restoration of Katharine Tynan House proposes a change of use to allow for the building to be used as a cultural and communal hub to serve the local area. The restored house would create a multifunctional community space with a distinctive focus on the promotion of heritage

⁵ Draft South Dublin County Development Plan, 2022-2028, p 80.

⁶ Draft South Dublin County Development Plan, 2022-2028, p 116.

⁷ Draft South Dublin County Development Plan, 2022-2028, p 116.

and literature, along with a broad range of other activities to sustain and promote vibrant communities. Additionally, the adjoining gardens provides a space to act as a community hub for biodiversity initiatives and learning, cultural events and historical events appropriate to the history of the house and its curtilage.

NCBH 22 Objective 1

*“To ensure that development within the county including the council’s own development seeks to retain, refurbish and incorporate historic items and features of interest”.*⁸

Hibernia seeks to retain and enhance the historic curtilage and structure of Katharine Tynan house through its refurbishment and transference into a vibrant community space. The historical and architectural features of the house and its curtilage including gardens and walls would be fully restored to provide a historically appropriate place of local interest.

NCBH 24 Objective 3

*“To encourage and support the delivery of projects that repair and conserve historic structures in accordance with national grant schemes for architectural conservation”.*⁹

Hibernia proposes to sensitively restore and refurbish Katharine Tynan House in accordance with grant schemes for architectural conservation. A built heritage grant has already been awarded to carry out stabilisation works for the scheme and a planning application lodged for its full refurbishment. Hibernia has completed substantial stabilisation and weathering works to the structure already, a grant of permission to refurbish the building will ensure its conservation for future generations.

COS11 Objective 4

*“To facilitate the continued development of arts and cultural facilities throughout the County and to support the objectives and implementation of the South Dublin County Arts Strategy (2016-2020) and the South Dublin County Cultural and Creativity Strategy (2018-2022) and any superseding plans and strategies”.*¹⁰

The refurbishment of the house and its ground will assist in promoting the development of the arts and culture in the county through the provision of additional space for art and cultural events.

⁸ Draft South Dublin County Development Plan, 2022-2028, p 124.

⁹ Draft South Dublin County Development Plan, 2022-2028, p 126.

¹⁰ Draft South Dublin County Development Plan, 2022-2028, p 323.

We trust that the above clarifies all queries and demonstrates the positive social gain the proposed refurbishment of the house and its grounds could potentially have for the local and wider community of South Dublin.

Yours faithfully,

David Courage

David Courage
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Hibernia REIT plc