

# **SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCILS**

## **ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION OFFICERS REPORT**

**RE: SD22A/0096 Muldowney's Pub, Main St, Rathcoole**

### **Appraisal**

This is an application for the demolition of existing structures on site and the reconfiguration, renovation and extension of 3 no. existing single-storey cottages along Main Street. The reconfiguration and renovation of the existing Muldowney's Pub and the construction of 21 residential units within 2 no. 3-storey blocks to the rear and side of the existing public House. Block A will be located to the front of the site, running parallel to the southern boundary behind the existing cottages which are located along Main Street. Block B is located to the rear of the site, adjacent to Muldowney's Public House. The proposed development is located within the Architectural Conservation Area of Rathcoole Village.

The reuse of the 3 no. cottages along Main Street is a welcomed part of the proposed development allowing retention of these buildings and streetscape character along Main Street. As part of the application an Architectural and Urban Design Statement has been provided which includes a site context and site analysis which is particularly important when providing a design rationale and impact assessment of any proposed new build within an Architectural Conservation Area. The larger single-storey cottage and the two vernacular (3-bay and 2-bay) cottages along with Muldowney's Pub provide streetscape character along this part of Main Street. The existing buildings are single-storey or one and a half storey. Any taller buildings at this location will be highly visible from Main Street. A pre-planning Meeting took place during March 2020 and the possible visual impacts and the requirement to retain the existing single-storey cottages were discussed along with the requirements for any new development within an ACA. The relationship to the existing Church site adjacent was raised and how any development should establish a building line along the north west of the site allowing the integration of the new development on the Church side, thereby linking the new development somehow back into the Main Street.

It is proposed to provide street frontage to the western open space of the development with the Church as the focal point in acting as a key to the sequencing of external space. A new inner street connecting the Main Street to the linear church open space is created and there is a set back of the northern block proposed to provide sufficient circulation space and visibility around the existing Church. The southern block is linked to the existing cottages to create two L-shaped plan block arrangements around two inner squares which form an urban edge to the western open space and church. It is felt at this area that some separation distance is required to the rear of the corner single-storey cottage allowing a graduation of heights and sufficient setback. It is considered that having the 3-storey block directly onto the rear of the corner cottage allows the block to be imposing and completely dominate the single-storey cottages. Varying heights and some separation to delineate the Main Street buildings from the rear block onto the Church site is required to minimise the visual impact.

The block form of the proposed residential units is larger in mass and scale thereby creating more visual impact. The existing Church building although located setback off Main Street still provides architectural interest and character within the village setting. The new development at this location needs to provide a greater level of architectural interest and character. The proposed blocks need to achieve a backdrop of added architectural quality and interest to the rear of the existing single-storey cottages and existing public house.

It is considered that more consideration needs to be given to the materials and finishes in order to address the above. The height of the blocks needs to show different heights and setback to reflect the different building heights, roof levels/types and architectural character and materials of the existing building stock along Main Street and the village core. Block A should be re-designed to ensure the street frontage element is delivered along with achieved visual connection to Main Street at this location, therefore the design should provide variations in height, levels and roof profiles to reflect a typical streetscape which provides visual interest and variety in design/styles.

The overall design of the proposed residential units, additions to the existing cottages and Public House will be easily read as contemporary additions to the existing buildings and Village, however it is important that those elements reflect the site context and surrounding architectural forms. The existing cottages are to be retained and restored with some reconfirmation and refurbishment. The existing cottages are not included on the Record of Protected Structures, however as previously stated that although very simple in architectural style they reflect the very rural character of Rathcoole Village and therefore their retention and reuse are welcomed as part of the proposed development. Details have been provided in the Architectural and Urban Design report in relation to the existing cottages and the existing Public House. It is considered that further detail will be required with regard to a Method Statement and Schedule of works with regard to the conservation repair works and upgrading to ensure the external appearance and retention of original materials are delivered.

There has been considerable pressure for residential development around the Village and the majority is back land development which can be viewed hovering above the existing building line of Main Street. Unfortunately, not all development has been sensitive to the site context and the character of the Village/Main Street. Without regard for the existing scale and massing in the Village core this can lead to a diminish in visual amenity, the overall historic character and architectural integrity of a Village can be impacted on negatively. It is therefore important that a balance between new build and the existing built environment is provided and an overall design that adds architectural quality and character to the existing Village is provided.

### **Recommendation**

It is considered that the following Request for Further Information be sought in order to address the issues and concerns relating to visual impact and overall design of the proposed residential units within the Architectural Conservation Area;

- The southern block is linked to the existing cottages to create two L-shaped plan block arrangements around two inner squares which form an urban edge to the western open space and church. It is felt at this area that some separation distance is required to the rear of the corner single-storey cottage allowing a variation of heights and sufficient setback. It is considered that having the 3-storey block directly onto the rear of the corner cottage allows the block to be imposing and completely dominate the single-storey cottages.
  - Differing heights and some separation to delineate the Main Street buildings from the rear block onto the Church site is required to minimise the visual impact. It is noted that the height of Block A is in line with the height of the existing church, however the block form of the proposed residential units is larger in mass and scale thereby creating more visual impact. The existing Church building although located setback off Main Street still provides architectural interest and character within the village setting.
  - The new development at this location needs to provide a greater level of architectural interest and character. The proposed blocks need to achieve a backdrop of add architectural quality and interest to the rear of the existing single-storey cottages and existing public house.
- It is considered that more consideration needs to be given to the materials and finishes in order to address the above. The height of the blocks needs to show different and varying levels and setback to reflect the different building heights, roof levels/types and architectural character and materials of the existing building stock along Main Street and the village core.
  - Block A should be re-designed to ensure the street frontage element is delivered along with achieved visual connection to Main Street at this location, therefore the design should provide variations in height, levels and roof profiles to reflect a typical streetscape which provides visual interest and variety in design/styles.
  - Block B requires re-design/revisions to once again provide an overall design that will provide architectural interest as a backdrop to Main Street. Some reduction in height and set back will support a varied design. The use of colour and perhaps different materials would also assist in providing architectural merit and quality defining the architectural quality required within the Village, as part of creating new design and architectural character within the Architectural Conservation Area.
- It is considered that a Method Statement and Schedule of Works should be provided detailing conservation repair and upgrading of the existing single-storey cottages to ensure the external appearance and retention of original materials are delivered.

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 South Dublin County Council

24<sup>th</sup> May 2022