

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION OFFICERS REPORT

RE: SD22A/0322 – LANDS AT FORMER MCEVOYS PUB, MAIN STREET, NEWCASTLE, CO. DUBLIN

Architectural Conservation Area

Newcastle Village is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area in accordance with Part IV of the Planning and Development Act (2000) as such related policy is included in South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Appraisal

This is an application for the Demolition of all existing derelict structures on the site and the construction of 18 residential units provided in 2 separate blocks; Block 1 will be 3 storeys high and will contain 12 units; Block 2 will be two storeys high and will contain 6 units; The 18 units consist of 6 one bed apartments, 6 two bed apartments, 3 three bed duplexes and 3 three bed apartments; Ancillary development including reusing existing vehicular access/egress off Hazelhatch Road, providing a new vehicular egress (only) onto Main Street, car and cycle parking, open space, landscaping, boundary treatment (including existing stone wall at east side of the site to be partially removed, along with gates, with main portion of wall repaired and lowered), footpaths, circulation areas and all associated site works.

The former McEvoy's Public House was a thatched roof vernacular cottage at the corner of Main Street and Hazelhatch Road. The existing structure was a landmark due to its location and in particular due to its thatched roof and vernacular style. Unfortunately, the original building was severely damaged by fire in 2004 and due to structural issues, the structure was beyond repair in its current state and therefore was removed from the RPS as it had lost all of its special architectural elements. However, the location of this site is important as it is the main approach heading into Newcastle Village and is part of the historic core adjacent to St. Finian's Church of Ireland Church and other sites/structures of architectural and historical significance in providing Newcastle Village with its unique character.

It should be noted that a previous application for the site was submitted during 2006 under Reg. Ref. SD06A/0026 which was for a mixed-use development and redevelopment of the public house and restaurant. This application was considered acceptable from an architectural conservation perspective as the development was small scale and the overall design and materials reflected the overall site context within the historic core of Newcastle.

As detailed above Newcastle Village is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area and therefore any new development within the ACA should be appropriate within the overall site context and sit sensitively within the historic core and ACA. The overall design should be detailed in a Design Rationale as part of an Architectural Impact Assessment.

Proposed Development

The proposed development will be highly visible given its location as a corner site along the roadside of Main Street. It will be highly visible on approach along Main Street and from the historic core of the Village and also on approach entering the Village and ACA.

The proposed development consists of 2 blocks which are 3-storey and 2-storey apartments/duplexes, which are set along the roadside of Main Street. The development is being described in the visual impact assessment report as a gateway building into the Village. However, given the proposed height and block form the proposed development fails to address the site context and its close proximity to the historic village core and any visual impacts within the Architectural Conservation Area.

The block form and height proposed does not reflect the building type and finishes within the Village area. Although reference has been made to the Newcastle LAP (Objective G124, LUD5, BF10 and BF11) it is felt that the proposed development fails to address or reflect the objectives. A Gateway and Landmark feature are referenced in the LAP under specific objectives for this site. It is considered that providing a landmark and gateway building, does not prescribe 3-storey, large block forms which provide no link or context setting or design elements that reflect its location at the entrance to the historic core and Village.

The overall design of the proposed new apartment blocks does not reflect a contemporary new build within a Village Setting and within an Architectural Conservation Area. The fenestration, corner detail and proposed material finishes also fails to reflect or take design interest or elements from the existing village and its existing building form and type. In its current form the proposed development is not in keeping within its site context and has failed to provide a sensitive development at this key location.

Recommendation

Given the issues and concerns detailed within the appraisal above. It is considered that the proposed development is not acceptable and should therefore be refused for the following reasons:

1. It is considered that the proposed development fails to be sensitive within its proposed location and does not reflect the most suitable layout or design. The proposed development by nature of its height, form and overall design directly impacts on the visual integrity of the Village setting and character of the Architectural Conservation Area. The proposed development dominates the end of Main Street and causes a directly visual impact on the adjacent Protected Structure site St. Finians Church of Ireland Church (RPS Ref.225).

A lower scale development providing different levels and design styles would allow for a high-quality unique development within the historical setting of the village core and within an Architectural Conservation Area.

2. The overall visual impact of the proposed development will directly impact on the character of the village setting and character of the ACA. The consequences of the proposed development may result in a diminished quality of character, which fails to address and adhere to existing policies for development within an Architectural Conservation Area and in accordance with SDCC County Development Plan (2022-2028) and the Newcastle Local Area Plan 2012.

3. It is felt that given the location of the site in such proximity to the historic village core that any new development at this location should provide an identifiable contemporary addition, adding to the architectural interest within the ACA and adjacent to a number of Protected Structures. In particular the proposed development fails to address its close proximity to St. Finian's Church of Ireland Church (RPS Ref. 225) and the original Village Green. It should be noted that proposed blocks along Main Steet do not allow for a unique building type that would add character and identity to this corner site.

Irenie McLoughlin
Architectural Conservation Officer

21st September 2022