

# SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCILS

## ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION OFFICERS REPORT

RE: SD22A/0401 – SCHOLARSTOWN HOUSE, SCHOLARSTOWN ROAD, DUBLIN 16.

### Protected Structure

Scholarstown House is referred to in the Council's Record of Protected Structures - Schedule 2 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 under Map Ref. No. 322. Under Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, the term 'structure' means "*any building, structure, excavation, or other thing constructed or made on, in, or under any land, or any part of a structure so defined, (a) where the context so admits, includes the land on, in or under which the structure is situate, and (b) in relation to a protected structure or proposed protected structure, includes (i) the interior of the structure, (ii) the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, (iii) any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and (iv) all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures*". Therefore, the entire site is a protected structure, including all existing buildings on site including their exteriors, interiors, fixtures and fittings. The Protection also extends to the lands of the site and as such come under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

### Appraisal

The proposed development consists of the following; Demolition of the 4 existing shed structures on site within the curtilage of the protected structure; Retention and conversion of Scholarstown House (Protected Structure) into two residential units comprised of 1 two bed and 1 three bed units served by private open space in the form of ground floor terrace; The proposed works to Scholarstown House include but are not limited to internal re-configuration; Re-location of the staircase to its original location within the house; Removal of non-original features including the closing up of non-original openings; Creation of a new door opening within the existing alcove, and the blocking up of a window opening both located on the northern elevation; Construction of an apartment block ranging in height from 3 to 5 storeys containing 74 apartment units comprised of 32 one bed apartments, 33 two bed apartments, and 9 three bed apartments all served by private open space in the form of balconies and/or ground floor terraces; The proposed development also includes 100sq.m of residential amenities and facilities consisting of but not limited to a reception, communal amenity room and parcel room;

A pre-planning meeting took place between the applicant/agents and the Planning Authority including the undersigned. On foot of pre-planning meetings/discussions the overall design and type of development and impacts on the Protected Structure were discussed. The proposed height and its location and separation to the Protected Structure was highlighted. The overall use and incorporation of the Protected Structure into the development was also discussed at pre-planning. It is extremely important for the longevity of the Protected Structure and viability of use that this is given full consideration. Separation distance and setting of the protected structure were also discussed and how the existing house would sit within the site and overall visual impacts of same.

### Proposed works to Protected Structure

Scholarstown House is a Protected Structure (RPS Ref. 322) as detailed above. The proposed residential development is located within the curtilage of Scholarstown House. It is proposed to convert the protected structure into two residential units comprising of 1 two bed and 1 three bed units.

An Architectural Impact Assessment has been completed and submitted as part of the planning application which provides details on the historic development of the site and existing house and under Appendix 2 A Conservation Method Statement. An assessment of the existing house has been provided in order that its architectural and historical significance is understood. The property having been damaged by fire and rebuilt in 1909 and is the structure which exists today. The property is a modest early 20<sup>th</sup> Century structure with good proportions and presence within its existing setting and associated outbuildings. It is proposed to retain all original material within the new proposals, however in order to facilitate the subdivision of the existing house into 2 no. dwellings new or enlarged openings are proposed along with revisions to the original floor plan and other related works.

A room by room assessment of the proposed changes is provided with regard to overall impact. On assessment of the level of works proposed the undersigned considers the majority of the work to have modest/minimal impacts. However, there are some areas of alterations and revisions to the original layout and insertion of additional services where negative impacts are likely.

The following items proposed need to be addressed as part of a request for Additional Information: -

- It is considered that where original windows are proposed to be blocked up alternatives should be considered, or alternative designs considered in order to provide a solution and the retention.
- Removal of original architectural features is not acceptable and where this has been indicated, mitigation measures or alternative floor plans should be provided in order to negate the removal of architectural features.
- Where additional services are proposed details shall be provided on how services i.e., bathrooms and w/c will be integrated and how these will be ventilated etc.
- The Conservation Methodology provides details on the architectural elements for repair which is very helpful in directing the works in accordance with best conservation principles and practice. There are no details included on any proposed energy efficiency works to the protected structure. Clarification should be sought with regard to any such works.

It is considered that in addition to the Conservation Methodology a Schedule of Works should be provided for each floor in order to specify all the works to include; interventions/revisions, conservation repairs and routine maintenance. A Schedule of Works and Method statement for the specific elements should also include how the items listed above will be dealt with as part of the entire scope of works to the protected structure.

### Outbuildings

It is proposed to demolish all of the existing Outbuildings. The outbuildings have been included in the Architectural Impact Assessment and survey drawings of the existing buildings have been provided. On assessing the existing Outbuildings and details provided, it is felt that the Building D should be re-examined with regard to its retention and adaptive reuse as part of the overall development. It is considered that the retention of an original early 19<sup>th</sup> century outbuilding would provide additional architectural interest and character to the site and will support the association with Scholarstown House and the overall setting of the original site. It was advised during the pre-planning meeting that the original outbuildings should be considered with regard to possible retention for reuse or using the footprint and architectural elements of the outbuildings in the design of the new build allowing a sensitive building type and link with the Main House.

### Proposed residential development within the Curtilage of Protected Structure

The proposed apartments are located within the curtilage of the Protected Structure (Scholarstown House, a Protected Structure, RPS Ref. 322). The vista to the Protected Structure has been retained which is welcomed. The residential apartments block ranging in height from 3 to 5 storeys containing 74 apartment units are mainly located along the south end of the site with one building forming a backdrop to the Protected Structure.

As part of the pre-planning discussions the height of the proposed apartment block was raised with regard to the Protected Structure and overall site context. At the pre-planning meeting a concept design for the scheme was presented, however the design concepts and ideas with regard to changes in design, heights and roof profiles which the undersigned had given positive feedback on is not shown in the scheme now proposed.

The mass, scale and height of the proposed apartment block is too overbearing on the site as the dense form is concentrated along the site in one form and is not broken up sufficiently with separation, different roof profiles providing different heights and different architectural forms and materials in order to provide a more suitable backdrop and building type against the setting of the Protected Structure.

It is considered that the overall design, mass and height should be reconsidered and revised in order to find a greater balance between the existing and new development. It is noted that the height has been reduced where the new block forms a backdrop to the protected structure, however, not enough has been done in relation to the overall design to the adjoining block to provide a building type that doesn't completely overshadow and dominate the protected structure and site context.

Given the concerns raised above it is recommended that Additional Information be requested in order to find a more suitable and sensitive building type/design for the proposed new development on the site. Additional information is also required in order to address the concerns and issues raised in relation to the subdivision of the Protected Structure and demolition of the existing outbuildings.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above assessment, it is considered that following Additional Information is required in order to address the items listed:

1. On assessment of the level of works proposed the undersigned considers the majority of the work to have modest/minimal impacts. However, there are some areas of alterations and revisions to the original layout and insertion of additional services where negative impacts are likely.

The following items proposed need to be addressed as part of a request for Additional Information: -

- It is considered that where original windows are proposed to be blocked up alternatives should be considered, or alternative designs considered in order to provide a solution and the retention.
- Removal of original architectural features is not acceptable and where this has been indicated, mitigation measures or alternative floor plans should be provided in order to negate the removal of architectural features.

- Where additional services are proposed details shall be provided on how services i.e., bathrooms and w/c will be integrated and how these will be ventilated etc.
- The Conservation Methodology provides details on the architectural elements for repair which is very helpful in directing the works in accordance with best conservation principles and practice. There are no details included on any proposed energy efficiency works to the protected structure. Clarification should be sought with regard to any such works.

It is considered that in addition to the Conservation Methodology a Schedule of Works should be provided for each floor in order to specify all the works to include; interventions/revisions, conservation repairs and routine maintenance. A Schedule of Works and Method statement for the specific elements should also include how the items listed above will be dealt with as part of the entire scope of works to the protected structure.

2. On assessing the existing Outbuildings and details provided, it is felt that the Building D should be re-examined with regard to its retention and adaptive reuse as part of the overall development. It is considered that the retention of an original early 19<sup>th</sup> century outbuilding would provide additional architectural interest and character to the site and will support the association with Scholarstown House and the overall setting of the original site. The original outbuildings should be considered with regard to possible retention for reuse or using the footprint and architectural elements of the outbuildings in the design of the new build allowing a sensitive building type and visual link and association with the Protected Structure.
3. Although separation has been provided in providing limited but designed setting to the Protected Structure, it is considered that by virtue of the height of the proposed apartments the Protected Structure is completely overshadowed. The mass and scale of the apartment block which completely surround the Protected Structure to the rear as a backdrop and to the side, is overbearing and causes negative visual impacts. In order to less the visual impact the overall height, scale and mass of the 5-storey element needs to be reduced and overall design revised.
4. It is considered that the overall design, mass and height should be reconsidered and revised in order to find a greater balance between the existing and new development. It is noted that the height has been reduced where the new block forms a backdrop to the protected structure, however, not enough has been done in relation to the overall design to the adjoining block to provide a building type that doesn't completely overshadow and dominate the entire site.

5. As previously advised during pre-planning discussions the block form needs to be broken up in different heights and different treatments with some separation between to provide separate block forms. The outbuildings should be considered with regard to adaptive reuse and reflecting the outbuildings in the design ethos of one or two blocks or using the original footprint to provide additional new building where the existing corrugated shed is located. The elevational treatment and materiality should reflect a more rural and agricultural style of building type that would connect visually to the existing protected structure and provide high quality design and character to the site.

**Irenie McLoughlin**  
**Architectural Conservation Officer**

**Date: 9th December 2022**