

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION OFFICERS REPORT

RE: SD22A/0035 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

LANDS WITHIN ST MARYS PRIORY, OLD GREENHILLS ROAD, TALLAGHT, DUBLIN 24

Appraisal

A request for significant further information was issued, however it should be noted that on assessment of the initial planning application the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer concluded that the proposed development was not acceptable and therefore recommended a refusal for the following reasons -

- *Concerns remain in that the character of the Protected Structures will be significantly affected by the proposed Nursing Home and Independent Living Accommodation blocks as the new build will completely dominate this part of the site due to its proposed, height, scale and mass which will be visible within The Priory Demesne and along Old Greenhills Road. 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 the curtilage of a Protected Structure or New development within or in close proximity to an ACA in line with SDCC County Development Plan (2016-2022) and the Tallaght Local Area Plan 2020.*
- *It is considered that the proposed design with the use of contemporary materials and building elements found within the existing building stocks tries to address the issue of a contemporary design within a historic site. However, given that the issue of building height, mass and dense form of the proposed blocks, the overall impact cannot be negated by the design elements and finishes alone. 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 for the intended use. A lower scale development providing different levels and design styles would allow for a high quality unique development within the curtilage of a Protected Structure, historical setting and within such close proximity to a village centre.*
- *It is felt that given the location of the site adjoining the Priory Complex and in such proximity to the village centre any new development at this location should provide an identifiable contemporary addition, adding the architectural interest to the adjoining Priory and Tallaght Village. It should be noted that Block A, Block B and Block C are the same overall design, which does not allow for variation and unique building types that can add to the character and identity of the site.*
- *It is considered that the proposed blocks are dense and require redesign to allow a more subtle and mixed architectural type to reflect a more village/community feel development. There is reference to a "Village Hub" with regard to the location and connection of the associated facilities with the Nursing Home and Independent Living for Older People, however this is not reflected in the overall design of the proposed development. The proposed use on the site is ideal in terms of its location to Tallaght Village and other facilities but the design and layout of the proposed Nursing Home and in particular, the Independent Living Accommodation needs to be more cognisance of the proposed type of development in providing a development that is more suited to this use.*
- *It is proposed to insert a new entrance within the existing original boundary wall of the Priory. It should be noted that in order to provide a new entrance and justify the removal of an original boundary feature a scheme that addressed the concerns and allows for a development which is sensitive to the site context and one that delivers a suitable type at this location is required. Currently this is not the*

case and therefore a compromise between allowing a section of the original boundary wall to be removed to facilitate the proposed development cannot be considered based on the current scheme.

- *Allowing a new entrance at this location will only be considered when a proposed development is deemed to make a contribution to Tallaght Village and the adjoining Protected Structure site in providing for a visually attractive and smaller scale scheme and sustainable development.*

The above concerns and issues raised formed part of the RFI and a number of discussions with the Area Planner took place on foot of informal further information being submitted by the applicant. On assessment of the draft RFI submission the undersigned considered that the revisions continued to fail in providing a sensitive development within the curtilage of Protected Structures (Tallaght Priory under Map Ref. No. 269, St. Mary's Dominican Priory RPS Ref. 270 and St. Mary's Dominican Church, RPS Ref. 273).

The following advice was provided to the Area Planner at the time in relation to the draft RFI "the scale and majority of the design of the nursing home building may be acceptable with some revisions to design. The status of the nursing home as the primary building on the site with independent living units reading as ancillary and functional, contributing to 'village hub' character. Within the site, it is important that the independent living units are arranged as distinct blocks connected by a network of open spaces...concerns remain also about the bulk of some of the buildings and breaking up this mass into smaller perimeter blocks with defensible spaces would allow a shift in the overall character and type of development given the site context. The visibility of the blocks from outside the site and the layout and character of the development within the site continues to be an issue and needs to be addressed.....My initial concerns still remain as detailed in my report".

In response to the RFI requested and the comments provided on the draft RFI the overall design concept has been modified. The key features of the design concept include the elements listed below and the Councils Architectural Conservation Officers assessment will be based on the concerns already raised and if the proposed modifications and redesign provide an improved scheme in response to the site context.

- Creation of a new residential living and care facility design specifically for Older People to include independent Living Units and a Nursing Home along with social, welfare and healthcare facilities suited to the future residents and local residents.
- Development layout designed to create a 'village hub' whereby all new buildings are arranged around a central Public Open Space area with the independent living units and nursing home having their own shared and private Open Spaces with pedestrian walkways connecting to each.
- The new Nursing Home will act as the main feature of the development contrasting with the smaller scale Independent Living Units.
- The new independent Living Units will be designed specially for Older People including those with mobility issues.
- The design for the buildings to provide a clear contrast between the new Nursing Home and the Independent Living Units building to ensure a suitable degree of visual interest and variety while creating a high quality and unified appearance of its age.
- Use of materials chosen to reflect those in the adjacent Priory Buildings and provide a quality, modern aesthetic and character as well as provide a suitable degree of variety within the development.
- Building heights will be subservient to those in the adjacent Priory Lands (no higher than 4-storey).
- Building detail to project a modern sharp appearance and contemporary style thus adding architectural interest and contrasting with the original Priory buildings with references to

aspects of the stone colonnade to front of the Nursing Home reflecting the architectural detail of the Priory Church.

- Creation of a new opening and entrance to the development with view into and beyond to the Priory thus adding visual interest for members of the public along Old Greenhills Road.

The revised proposal now includes the following modifications;

- Omission of Block B entirely and provision of a central and easily accessible public open space area situated at the entrance to the development.
- Replacement of Block A with a single and two-storey mixed height development.
- Replacement of Block C with a single-storey development (Block B)
- Independent Living Units on the ground floor have direct external entrance and on the first floor are accessed via an open staircase and balcony arrangement.
- Review of external appearance with design modifications to ensure variety of character between the Independent Living Units and Nursing Home whilst maintaining an overall contemporary aesthetic to contrast with adjacent Priory Buildings.

The design concept which now includes a number of positive elements is welcomed and addresses the main elements as previously advised by the undersigned. It is considered that on foot of the detailed RFI some much needed consideration has been given to the overall layout and design of the proposed Nursing Home and in particular to the Independent Living Units. The revised and modified development has removed an entire block and replaced one of the initial larger blocks with a mix of single and two-storey units. The overall feel and character of the site has improved dramatically from the initial application where the building design now reflects the proposed use as Independent Living Units.

The modifications and redesigned elements allow for a more appropriate scheme which is now considered to be of much lower impact. The buildings have been redesigned and reduced in bulk, mass and height and are laid out to provide a parkland and neighbourhood/village hub setting. The design, scale and height of the Nursing Home and Independent Living Units allows the development to sit sensitively adjoining the architecturally rich Priory Demesne without compromising the overall visual aesthetics. The modified development provides an identifiable contemporary addition at this location which now adds to the architectural interest of the adjoining Priory Lands and Tallaght Village Architectural Conservation Area. The revised site layout achieves a parkland type setting by providing public access to and public usage of public open space areas adjacent to the development.

Recommendation

It is considered that the modified and redesigned scheme submitted in response to significant RFI allows for a more appropriate scheme which is considered to be of much lower impact with regard to the adjoining Protected Structure site and site context.

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable with the following conditions attached:

1. A Schedule of materials and finishes should be provided as although details are provided on the drawings it is considered that the final palette of materials and finishes for the entire development should be submitted, thereby confirming final material finishes and colours. This should include full details on materials and finishes for all elements and samples and images should be provided.

Reason: To ensure the proposed development is of high quality, reflects the overall design ethos detailed in the modified design and that material finishes and colour are cohesive with the adjoining Protected Structure site.

2. With regard to the proposed new entrance off Old Greenhills Road. A Method Statement for the demolition of the section of wall should be submitted. Where the section of wall is removed the existing boundary wall should be made good using traditional methods and materials, details of which should be included in the methodology. Salvage stone should be considered for reuse within new boundary elements for the proposed development.

Reason: To ensure the original boundary wall is made good in accordance with good conservation practice.

3. Prior to development details of the boundary treatments confirming final design and materials along the south and west of the site where the development adjoins the Priory Lands should be submitted for agreement.

Reason: To ensure the appropriate boundary treatment is provided adjoining a Protected Structure site.

The above conditions should be submitted to the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer (Ms. Irenie McLoughlin) for agreement and written approval prior to the commencement of development.

Irenie McLoughlin
Architectural Conservation Officer

Date: 14th December 2022