# JOHN CRONIN & ASSOCIATES ARCHAEOLOGY | CONSERVATION | HERITAGE | PLANNING

## Scholarstown House, Scholarstown Road, Dublin 16: Proposed Residential Development (Further Information Stage)

### **Built Heritage Response**

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### Contents

Introduction	1
Response to Item 2a	
Response to Item 2b	3
Response to Items 2c and 2d	
Recommendations as a result of the RFI response	.5
Appendix 1: Method statement for installation of services and interventions	6
Appendix 2: Room-by-room schedule of works	. 7

#### Introduction

John Cronin & Associates have been commissioned by Emmaville Limited to respond to Item 2 of a request for further information (RFI) issued by South Dublin County Council in relation to a planning application for a residential development at Scholarstown House (South Dublin County Council Reference: SD22A/0401). This document should be read in conjunction with an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) prepared by John Cronin & Associates in October 2022 and submitted with the planning application along with revised proposals and drawings prepared by C+W O'Brien Architects.

#### Item 2 of the RFI states:

The applicant is requested to submit additional information addressing the following concerns of SDCC's Architectural Conservation Officer:

- (a) The majority of the work appear 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 need to be addressed: -
  - 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.

- (b) 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 19th 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.
- (c) 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.

(d) 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.

In response to the request for further information, John Cronin & Associates have worked with the project architects to address the concerns raised by Ms Irenie McLoughlin, Architectural Conservation Officer with South Dublin County Council. In particular, the design team are proposing modifications to the treatment of new building elements that are respectful of the protected structure. The design team have corresponded with Ms McLoughlin prior to finalising a response to the RFI.

#### Response to Item 2a

In response of the RFI, the proposals have been revised and the original window positions to the rear return have been retained in their original position. In the original application these windows were proposed to be blocked up with some of the openings amended to aid in facilitating the new stairs. The amended scheme works with the existing window openings with glass balustrades introduced as safety mechanisms to separate the users from the windows while providing the benefit of the visual aesthetic and additional day light penetration into the internal space. This maintains the existing external facade fenestration of Scholarstown House.

All existing openings to the elevations of Scholarstown House will be retained. There is one new proposed opening to the ground floor northern elevation. This proposed change has been mitigated by locating the new opening within an internal round-headed alcove to the side of the existing chimney breast ensuring that only the minimum quantity of unremarkable historic masonry will be removed, and the form of the existing recess will be retained. The new doorway will mirror the corresponding recess on the opposite side of the chimney breast which will be converted to a storage cupboard within the new kitchen and dining room at ground level here. The new door opening has been sensitively designed to be sympathetic to the existing arrangement of the north-west side elevation and will allow access to a private amenity space for the new dwelling.

In relation to the removal of original architectural features, it must be noted that the building's interior is unremarkable, particularly within the three-storey rear extension. The three-storey extension to the rear of the main block has been much altered and modified and is devoid of significant historic fabric or decoration. Within the three-storey extension, it is proposed to remove the internal walls and floors including the rear staircase, which is an unremarkable inserted feature. A survey of the interior face of external walls following stripping of plaster is recommended in order to record any potential underlying historic detail. (The existing staircase is clearly a later insertion and is of no inherent heritage significance; the original principal staircase of the house is likely to have been accommodated within the central hallway in the main section of the property. It is proposed to reinstate a staircase within the central hallway within the two-storey front section of the protected structure.)

Furthermore, we take note that the Architectural Conservation Officer has commented that the submitted Conservation Methodology was very helpful in directing the works in accordance with best conservation principles and practice. However, the Architectural Conservation Officer

has requested supplementary commentary in relation to how additional services are to be integrated and how these will be ventilated. An appendix to this document provides commentary and supplementary room-by-room analysis (including where original fabric of note is to be retained).

In relation to measures to improve energy efficiency, the following interventions are proposed:

- Historic timber sliding sash windows (not modern replacement), while not of remarkable historic significance, will be refurbished and upgraded to hold slim, doubleglazed units (<12mm thickness) with discreetly installed draft-proofing in accordance with the previously submitted conservation methodology.
- It is proposed to replace the existing ground floor with an insulated concrete slab containing all required service ducting for the ground floor-level in order to minimise the chasing of masonry walls to bring services down from the first floor-level.

**Appendix 1** of this report includes a method statement for installation of services and interventions within the protected structure (as requested by the RFI). In addition, **Appendix 2** contains a room-by-room schedule of the interventions and works outlined in tabulated form.

We note that the Architectural Conservation Officer described the majority of the works to the protected structure as appearing "to have modest/minimal impacts". However, in relation to the concerns raised to alterations and revisions to the original layout and insertion of additional services, the team have revisited the proposals. In particular, we have revised the proposals so there will be no blocking up of external original window openings. As outlined in the pages that follow, it is proposed to submit revised drawings that demonstrate these changes. It is still proposed to block up three internal openings within the building to facilitate the proposed new residential configuration. However, these interventions will be reversible and, critically, will not have any negative impact on the external appearance of the building.

#### Response to Item 2b

The design team are still of the strong opinion that the existing outbuildings are of no architectural heritage significance. Although extensively altered, the existing outbuildings do retain some early nineteenth-century fabric. However, the irreversible changes to the fragmentary historic remains do not facilitate any meaningful re-use of the buildings within the proposed development. The remaining stone detail provides some limited information on the size and construction of the earlier vernacular buildings which facilitates a better understanding of the site's historic development.

Nevertheless, the design team have revisited the proposals for the apartment building so that architectural elements of the outbuildings are incorporated the design of the new build allowing a sensitive building type and visual link and association with the Protected Structure. The selected use of corrugated sheeting will have a positive impact on the setting of the protected structure and help suggest the former farm use that was accommodated on site.

#### Response to Items 2c and 2d

In response to the commentary issued in the RFI, the project architects have revisited the scale and massing of the apartment block. As outlined in the revised proposals, the massing of the proposed apartment building has been reduced and there are substantive changes to elevation design and materiality. The design team are of the opinion that the existing outbuildings are of no architectural heritage significance but that the selected use of corrugated sheeting will have a positive impact on the setting of the protected structure. The primary design changes as a result of the RFI are as follows:

- Reduced massing to rear/west of Scholarstown House via removal of L04 Fourth floor element in this area and set back introduced to L03 Third Floor with alternative façade material (metal cladding).
- Reduced massing to south of Scholarstown House via removal/reduction of L04 Fourth floor elements in this area and removal of bay windows to L03 Third Floor. Alternative material (metal cladding) to L03 Third Floor.
- Additional privacy to private amenity spaces to Scholarstown House via landscape hedging and also opaque balustrades to balconies of adjoining new build. Modification to balcony positions.
- Alternative façade material (metal cladding) to recessed element which visually breaks up the building massing when viewed from north east.

A computer-generated image prepared by 3D Design Bureau demonstrates how the changes to the massing of new build elements will improve the backdrop and setting for Scholarstown House. The protected structure is the focal element of the development. (A booklet of Aerial Views, CGIs and Verified Views have been prepared by 3D Design Bureau as part of the response to the request of further information issued by South Dublin County Council.)



View from north-east of the revised proposals (Source: 3D Design Bureau)

#### Recommendations as a result of the RFI response

- Works to the Scholarstown House should be supervised by a suitably qualified conservation consultant or professional with proven experience in the conservation of historic properties. Contractors appointed to undertake works to the protected structure shall have demonstrable experience in the conservation, repair and refurbishment of historic properties.
- Works to be undertaken will be in accordance with the Conservation Method Statement outlined in the submitted AHIA and the appendices of this document.
- The gutter in the valley between the main house and the return is blocked with vegetation and requires clearing and ongoing maintenance to reduce the likelihood of water ingress causing damage to the interior. It is recommended that access should be provided to enable regular inspection and maintenance of this vulnerable part of the protected structure.
- Prior to and during the course of planned demolition, a programme of architectural survey should be undertaken by the appointed conservation consultant/professional.
   The scope of survey should include:
  - (a) recording of the interior faces of external masonry walls of the three-storey rear return of Scholarstown House (after the stripping off of internal plaster) in order to record any potential underlying historic detail, and
  - (b) recording of the fragmentary remains of the outbuildings (early fabric will be surveyed with elevational drawings produced of any relevant features in order to record the fragmentary historic fabric)

## Appendix 1: Method statement for installation of services and interventions

All existing openings to the elevations of Scholarstown House will be retained. There is one new proposed opening to the ground floor northern elevation. This proposed change has been mitigated by locating the new opening within an internal round-headed alcove to the side of the existing chimney breast ensuring that only the minimum quantity of unremarkable historic masonry will be removed and the form of the existing recess will be retained. The new doorway will mirror the corresponding recess on the opposite side of the chimney breast which will be converted to a storage cupboard within the new kitchen and dining room at ground level here. The new door opening has been sensitively designed to be sympathetic to the existing arrangement of the north-west side elevation and will allow access to a private amenity space for the new dwelling.

It is proposed to replace the existing ground floor with an insulated concrete slab containing all required service ducting for the ground floor-level in order to minimise the chasing of masonry walls to bring services down from the first floor-level. The timber floor structure to the first floor provides sufficient space between the joists to accommodate required services to the first floor-level. These will be run parallel to the joists where possible with existing notches or holes used to traverse joists with any reinforcement of joists added where necessary. The entire interior of Scholarstown House will be surveyed by a timber decay specialist with joist ends, embedded timbers including lintels and roof timbers around the valley between the front and rear blocks of the building inspected and repaired in accordance with conservation best practice where necessary.

A narrow riser is proposed to be panelled off at the rear of the new stairwell in the entrance hall to accommodate a soil vent pipe (SVP) from ground floor level to roof level. There is no historic plaster cornice or other sensitive detail in this area and there will be no negative impact on original fabric or the historic character of the building. Existing surface-mounted electrical ducting within the ground-level of Scholarstown House will be replaced with ducting rising from the new floor slab to the minimum required height for fittings. These fittings and ducts will be chased into masonry walls where required at ground-level with a preference for services to be incorporated into proposed new stud wall partitions where possible at first floor-level.

The three-storey extension to the rear of the main block has been much altered and modified and is devoid of significant historic fabric or decoration. It is proposed to remove the internal walls and floors including the rear staircase, which is an unremarkable inserted feature. The proposed layout has been redesigned to retain all existing openings in the elevations of the three-storey return. A survey of the interior face of external walls following stripping of plaster is recommended in order to record any potential underlying historic detail. Historic timber sliding sash windows, while not of remarkable historic significance, will be refurbished and upgraded to hold slim, double-glazed units (<12mm thickness) with discreetly installed draft-proofing in accordance with the previously submitted conservation methodology.

### Appendix 2: Room-by-room schedule of works

Table: Room-by-room schedule of interventions and works

Room Ref.	Proposed changes	Assessment of impact	Schedule of interventions and revisions
A-GF01: Entrance Hall	New staircase to be inserted in original staircase location.  Opening to rear return to be blocked up.	The original staircase is no longer extant. The reintroduction of a new staircase at this location will reinstate the original layout of the hallway and is a <b>positive</b> impact.  The blocking up of the opening to the rear is a <b>minor negative</b> impact.	Polystyrene tiles on ceiling to be carefully removed. Existing historic cornice to be retained.  Existing opening between entrance hall and rear part of ground-level to be blocked-up with recessed panel on one or both sides to maintain legibility of historic layout.  New staircase inserted into original location on top of new insulated concrete floor slab with lean-mix perimeter where in contact with historic masonry walls to ensure structural separation.  Internal SVP to be inserted to new panelled riser at rear of stairwell with duct exiting through inline slate ventilator or small cowl placed well above valley gutter between front and rear block of house.
A-GF02: Reception room	Cornice, architraves and fireplace retained.  Small later inserted hatch to rear return blocked up.	The retention of all historic features is a <b>positive</b> impact.  The blocking up of the non-original hatch is a <b>positive</b> impact.	Non-original opening to return to be blocked up.  Existing historic cornice retained.  Existing skirting to be re-fitted following insertion of new insulated floor slab.  Existing fire surround to be retained, flue swept, and capped with proprietary clay (see photograph below) or other durable, ventilated capping. Full air circulation within disused flue will be provided with air intake to discreet, low-level external grill provided through duct built into new floor slab.

Room Ref.	Proposed changes	Assessment of impact	Schedule of interventions and revisions
			Ventilated clay chimney capping inserts  Historic panelled door and surround joinery to be lightly sanded, repaired where necessary and reused where possible.
A-GF03: Reception room	Appropriate door design (see planning drawing PE21023-CWO-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2152) in new opening created in existing arched alcove to northern elevation retaining arch detail.	The retention of all historic features is a <b>positive</b> impact.  Coring of a new duct for air extracted from proposed kitchen will require loss of some unremarkable wall masonry creating a <b>negligible impact</b> .  Creating a new opening is a slight <b>minor negative</b> impact but it is mitigated by locating the opening within the alcove and by the	Existing skirting to be re-fitted following insertion of new insulated floor slab. Any additional skirting to be run to matching dimensions and moulded detail.  Outlet pipe for sink to connect to new SVP within central stairwell  Cooker extractor duct will have discreet grill installed flush with external wall surface to minimise its visual impact.

	Proposed changes	Assessment of impact	Schedule of interventions and revisions
			Discreet metal grill fitted flush with external render finish  Existing fire surround to be retained, flue swept, and capped with proprietary clay or other durable, ventilated capping. Full air circulation within disused flue will be provided with air intake to discreet low-level external grill provided through duct built into new floor slab.
A-GF04: Corridor	Internal walls removed with new layout.  Existing openings on elevations to be retained.	The removal of the internal walls and floors will be a <b>minor negative</b> impact. However, the return is in poor condition internally and of limited historical significance.  The exterior walls with all existing window openings and frames will be retained which is a <b>positive</b> impact.	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed to accommodate new layout.  A survey of the interior face of external walls to the return, following stripping of plaster, is recommended to record any underlying historic detail.
A-GF05: Kitchen	Internal walls and modern kitchen fittings to be replaced with new layout.  Existing window openings retained.	The removal of the internal walls and floors will be a <b>minor negative</b> impact. However, the return is of limited historical or architectural significance.	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed to accommodate new layout.  Existing fire surround to be removed and

Room Ref.	Proposed changes	Assessment of impact	Schedule of interventions and revisions
	Access hatch to be blocked up to A-GF02		fireplace panelled over. Flue will be swept, and capped with proprietary clay or other durable, ventilated capping. Full air circulation within disused flue will be provided with air intake to discreet, low-level external grill provided through duct built into new floor slab.
A-GF06: Bathroom	Internal walls and existing bathroom removed with new staircase inserted.	The removal of the internal walls and floors will be a <b>minor negative</b> impact, however, there is no significant architectural or decorative fabric.	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed to accommodate new layout.  Original plan revised to retain all existing window openings.
A-FF01: Landing	New staircase to be inserted in original staircase location.  Opening to rear return to be blocked up.	The reintroduction of a new staircase at this location will reinstate the original layout of the hallway and is a <b>positive</b> impact.	Existing door opening to return to be blocked up. Any services or fittings will be placed within this and similar blocked openings in preference to chasing original walls.
	Existing door openings to be blocked up and new openings to be created in existing partition walls.  Existing window to front retained.	The removal of sections of the existing partition walls to form new door opes is a <b>minor negative</b> impact but will be mitigated by the retention and reuse of the existing architraves and doors where possible.	l partitions to accommodate new layout. New
	Existing ceiling to be lined with plasterboard if necessary with breathable membrane and insulation installed above.		with other services to rear or stan wen.
A-FF02: Bedroom	New partition walls inserted to sub-divide room into bedroom, ensuite and bathroom.  Existing window openings and cast-iron fire surround retained.	The sub-division of the room is a <b>minor negative</b> impact but necessary to create a workable space. The new layout has been designed to have minimum impact on existing window openings and joinery will be retained where possible.	Bathroom and ensuite serviced by pipes running within floor space and connecting to SVP to rear of stairs. Service ducting and fittings will be placed within new stud wall partitions in preference to chasing original masonry walls where possible.
	Existing ceiling to be lined with plasterboard, if necessary, with breathable membrane and insulation installed above.	Where removed, joinery will be reused in suitable locations within the rooms which is a <b>positive</b> impact.	Existing fire surround to be retained, flue swept, and capped with proprietary clay or other durable, ventilated capping. Full air circulation

Room Ref.	Proposed changes	Assessment of impact	Schedule of interventions and revisions
			within disused flue will be provided with ventilated panel over throat of chimney behind fire surround. The fireplace will be purely decorative – it will not be used for burning materials.
A-FF03: Bedroom	Existing partition wall relocated to facilitate double rear bedroom and single front bedroom.  Window opening and built-in cupboard retained.  Cast-iron fire surround removed.  Existing ceiling to be lined with plasterboard, if necessary, with breathable membrane and insulation installed above.	The removal of the fire surround and coring of external ventilation duct will be a <b>minor negative</b> impact which can be mitigated by reusing the surround elsewhere on site where possible.	Existing fire surround to be removed and the opening panelled over. The flue will be swept, and capped with proprietary clay or other durable, ventilated capping. Full air circulation within disused flue will be provided with air intake to discreet, external grill to duct through base of chimney breast masonry. The fireplace will be purely decorative – it will not be used for burning materials.
A-FF04: Bedroom	Existing partition wall relocated to facilitate double rear bedroom and single front bedroom.  Window opening and built-in cupboard retained.  Cast-iron fire surround removed.  Existing ceiling to be lined with plasterboard, if necessary, with breathable membrane and insulation installed above.	The removal of the fire surround and coring of external ventilation duct will be a <b>minor negative</b> impact which can be mitigated by reusing the surround elsewhere on site where possible.	Existing fire surround to be removed and the opening panelled over. The flue will be swept, and capped with proprietary clay or other durable, ventilated capping. Full air circulation within disused flue will be provided with air intake to discreet, external grill to duct through base of chimney breast masonry. The fireplace will be purely decorative – it will not be used for burning materials.
A-FF05: Landing	Internal walls and stairs removed with new layout.  Existing window opening retained.	The loss of the staircase is a slight <b>negative</b> impact, but it is a simple early twentieth-century stairs and of limited significance.	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed to accommodate new layout.  A survey of the interior face of external walls to the return, following stripping of plaster, is recommended to record any underlying historic detail.

Room Ref.	Proposed changes	Assessment of impact	Schedule of interventions and revisions
A-FF06: Bedroom	Internal walls removed with new layout.  Existing window opening and chimney breast retained.	There is potential to reuse the fireplace from A-FF03/04, thereby retaining them on site.	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed to accommodate new layout.  Existing chimney breast to be retained with potential to use salvaged fire surround from A-FF03/04. Flue will be swept and capped with proprietary clay or other durable, ventilated capping. Full air circulation within disused flue will be provided with ventilated panel over throat of chimney behind fire surround. The fireplace will be purely decorative – it will not be used for burning materials.
A-FF07: Bathroom	Existing window to rear elevation retained.  Internal walls removed with new layout and new stairs.	as the fabric is not of significance.	Original plan revised to retain all existing window openings.  The new stairs will facilitate an appropriate and sustainable new use for the site which will ensure ongoing maintenance of its historic fabric and character.
A-FF08: WC	Internal walls removed with new layout.  Existing window retained.	The changes will not give rise to negative impacts as the fabric is not of significance.	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed to accommodate new layout.
A-SF01: Landing	Internal walls and stairs removed with new layout.  Existing window openings retained.  Existing Ceiling to be lined with plasterboard, if necessary, with breathable membrane and insulation installed above.	The return is in poor condition internally and of limited historical significance. The new layout has been designed to retain all existing window openings. The changes will not give rise to negative impacts as the fabric is not of significance.	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed to accommodate new layout.
A-SF02:	Internal walls removed with new layout.	The return is in poor condition internally and of	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed

Room Ref.	Proposed changes	Assessment of impact	Schedule of interventions and revisions
Bedroom	Fireplace opening to be blocked up and ventilated.	limited historical significance. The layout has been designed to retain all existing window openings. The changes will not give rise to negative impacts as the fabric is not of significance.	to accommodate new layout.
	Existing ceiling to be lined with plasterboard, if necessary, with breathable membrane and insulation installed above.	The layout has been designed to retain all existing window openings.	
A-SF03: Bedroom		The return is in poor condition internally and of limited historical significance. The layout has been designed to retain all existing window	Interior finishes and walls/floors to be removed to accommodate new layout.
	Existing window openings retained.	openings. The changes will not give rise to negative impacts as the fabric is not of	
	Existing ceiling to be lined with plasterboard, if necessary, with breathable membrane and insulation installed above.	significance.  The layout has been designed to retain all existing window openings.	