

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCILS ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION OFFICERS REPORT

RE: SD22A/0153 AI – LORETO ABBEY, GRANGE ROAD, RATHFARNHAM

Appraisal

The initial application was assessed by the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer who recommended a grant of permission with the following conditions;

- The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the details provided in the Methodology as part of the Conservation Impact Assessment and Conservation Strategy. Works shall be carried out adhering to best conservation practice and principles.
- A suitably qualified Conservation Architect should continue to be engaged to supervise and oversee the proposed works to the existing Protected Structures (Loreto Abbey RPS Ref. 253 and Gate Lodges RPS Ref.252), ensuring that all conditions relating to the architectural conservation and status of the existing buildings are addressed and submitted for agreement with the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer as set out below.

South Dublin County Councils Architectural Conservation Officer should be informed when works commenced and should be provided with a final Work Programme in order to facilitate site inspections.

- It is considered that the proposed interventions and works within the existing buildings should be carried out in accordance with the details specified in the detailed Methodology provided as part of the Conservation Strategy and approach. All works should be carried out in accordance with good conservation practice and principles ensuring minimal intervention and no damage or risk to the original built fabric. Those areas being affected by new opes or widening of new opes/interventions or new additions should be made good using the appropriate materials and methods.
- Safety measures should be put in place during the proposed works on site. A Safety Statement should be provided detailing how the existing structures will be protected during demolition works and site clearance/excavation and construction. This should include all Protected Structures including the North Gate Lodge and architectural features within the curtilage. Details should also be included as to how the site will be accessed during the works and location of site set up etc.

A safety statement should be submitted for written agreement with the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer prior to the commencement of development. Once works commence on site the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer should be contacted with regard to inspecting the safety measures put in place to safeguard and protect ALL Protected Structures on site.

- A schedule of materials and finishes should be provided for the proposed new link extensions, prior to commencing development. Materials and finishes have not been indicated. Options were provided as part of the pre-planning with Option B considered to be more appropriate in materials and overall design in this location. This should include full details on materials and finishes for all elements of the proposed development.

The Planning Authority issued a request for additional information and the following Information relating to Architectural Conservation was requested which included a number of AI requests based on the above recommended conditions. The Councils Architectural Conservation Officer has assessed the details and information submitted as Additional Information as such;

AI Request Item 2 – The applicant is requested to submit detailed drawings and CGIs of the proposed glazed link, from all sides.

Response – Detailed drawings and CGIs have been submitted showing the proposed glazed link and connection detail. It is considered that sufficient detail has been provided in this regard. It is considered that the proposals should be carried out in accordance with the details provided ensuring the proposed glazed link and connects are executed as per specification ensuring minimal intervention or loss of original fabric.

AI Request Item 3 – The applicant is requested to submit a schedule of materials and finishes for the proposed new link extensions as materials and finishes have not been indicated. Options were provided as part of the pre-planning with Option B considered to be more appropriate in materials and overall design in this location. This should include full details on materials and finishes for all elements of the proposed development.

A Material Schedule has been submitted providing information and images with regard to those materials and finishes proposed for the different elements of the development. With regard to the materials and finishes proposed for the new link extensions, it is stated in the response that “a certification of specialist design is required for using “Accoya” timber facade under BCAR which is not currently available to the design team”, therefore Option A presented at pre-planning stage is the option now being proposed.

It is proposed to use Aluminium which offers a more consistent quality appearance over time (subject to good design detailing) and may provide greater opportunity for more elegant and minimal detailing at the junctions with the historic structures. Based on the details provided in response to Item 3 and the images/drawings and CGIs provided the undersigned would agree with the quality and profile achievable using Aluminium curtain walling and units. The overall colour and material finish complements the material finishes of the existing buildings and presents a high quality design for this element.

With regard to other finishes and materials it is proposed to use brick for the masonry element of the new Link Building, the design intent is that the brick and mortar will reflect the adjoining granite colour tones of Blocks A and D. The brick sizes and laying patten are proposed to be laid to match the historic Dublin Flemish bound patten as per the Block B Georgian House. This also facilitates a brick pattern lattice to face the new boiler room and provide ventilation via the brickwork.

It is considered that the use of materials and finishes and historic references of design methods as part of the contemporary interventions has been particularly well considered. The overall design ethos and materiality of the proposed and new elements within the Nationally important architectural complex

provides high quality additions, allowing the Protected Structures to be vitalised and accommodate its continued use as a second level school.

AI Request Item 4 – The applicant is requested to submit a window schedule for all historic and original windows in order to justify the proposed upgrading works to include the use of new high performance slim glazing units. Details of the reinstatement of new timber sliding sash windows should be submitted to confirm the overall design, profile and material.

Response – A schedule and drawings have been submitted for all elevations to the existing protected structures and the new additions. The windows schedule for the existing buildings are detailed for each window. Details identify where windows are to be repaired and where inappropriate upvc windows are to be replaced using historical correct types or where glazing will be upgraded.

Existing historic 18th century windows will be protected and repaired, retaining all historic hand-drawn glass in-situ. Existing Block A top floor upvc windows will be replaced with one-over-one timber sliding sashes. Replacement single-glazed float glass removed and replaced with new high performance slim glazing units within the existing timber frames.

It is considered that the level of detail provided as part of the window schedule is very comprehensive and each window is shown on the elevation drawings provided (Sections 1-1 to 6-6). The detail is acceptable. Details of the profile should be submitted for the historic reinstatements and the final paint colour for the windows should be submitted for agreement.

AI Request Item 5 – The new build element proposed at the junction of Blocks B and D facing west (front elevation) in order to provide a clearly visible and identifiable accessible pedestrian entrance into the new circulation link behind requires further detail. This intervention involves the removal at lower ground floor of part of the wall to make an accessible entrance and the addition of a fully glazed 2-storey screen which is designed to align with the Georgian House string course, while being set back and secondary to its corner. It is considered that the need for this intervention is warranted in order to provide accessibility, however the execution and how this intervention will sit at this location is particularly important.

It is felt that specific details on the installation and fixtures etc are required to ensure minimal intervention and high-quality finish. Further images and detailed drawings should be provided ensuring the overall design elements and materials are acceptable.

Response – Detailed Sections have been submitted showing the junction and link to Block B/Pupil Social Area. Further information and images have also been provided as part of the Schedule of Materials. Details submitted are considered to be acceptable.

Conclusion

On assessing the level of conservation works, refurbishment, interventions, thermal upgrading and fire safety works, it is considered that the proposed works and mitigating measures have been well considered to ensure minimal intervention to the original built fabric. The proposal allows for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings within the complex and allows the extended use as part of the existing school. The proposed works also allow the necessary conservation repairs and upgrading to be carried out, therefore ensuring the continued use and protection of Loreto Abbey, which is of National Architectural importance.

The use of materials and finishes and the addition of new elements to link the existing buildings and provide additional areas and circulation allows the continued use of the Protected Structures as part of the continued use.

Recommendation

Based on the above it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable with the following conditions attached:

- The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the details provided in the Methodology as part of the Conservation Impact Assessment and Conservation Strategy. Works shall be carried out adhering to best conservation practice and principles.
Reason: Ensuring works are carried out in accordance with the details provided adhering to best practice and conservation principles.
- A suitably qualified Conservation Architect should continue to be engaged to supervise and oversee the proposed works to the existing Protected Structures (Loreto Abbey RPS Ref. 253 and Gate Lodges RPS Ref.252), ensuring that all conditions relating to the architectural conservation and status of the existing buildings are addressed and submitted for agreement with the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer as set out below.
South Dublin County Councils Architectural Conservation Officer should be informed when works commenced and should be provided with a final Work Programme in order to facilitate site inspections.
Reason: To ensure the engagement of a suitably qualified conservation architect to advise and oversee the works in accordance with best practice.
- It is considered that the proposed interventions and works within the existing buildings should be carried out in accordance with the details specified in the detailed Methodology provided as part of the Conservation Strategy and approach. All works should be carried out in accordance with good conservation practice and principles ensuring minimal intervention and no damage or risk to the original built fabric. Those areas being affected by new opes or widening of new opes/interventions or new additions should be made good using the appropriate materials and methods.
Reason: To ensure works to structures within the curtilage of Loreto Abbey, Protected Structure (RPS Ref. 253 and 252) are carried out according to good conservation practice and principles.
- Safety measures should be put in place during the proposed works on site. A Safety Statement should be provided detailing how the existing structures will be protected during demolition works and site clearance/excavation and construction. This should include all Protected Structures including the North Gate Lodge and architectural features within the curtilage. Details shall include how original architectural features and fixtures will be protected during works. Details should also be included as to how the site will be accessed during the works and location of site set up etc.

A safety statement should be submitted for written agreement with the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer prior to the commencement of development. Once works commence on site the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer should be contacted with regard to inspecting the safety measures put in place to safeguard and protect ALL Protected Structures on site.

Reason: To ensure the Protected Structure and all associated features are being safeguarded during the proposed development and appropriate safety measures are put in place to prevent any possible damage.

- It is considered that the level of detail provided as part of the window schedule is very comprehensive and each window is shown on the elevation drawings provided. The detail is acceptable. Details of the profile should be submitted for the historic reinstatements and the final paint colour for the windows should be submitted for agreement. The existing historic glass is to be retained and requires protection during the proposed development. Safety measures should be detailed within the Safety Statement to include this item.
Reason: To ensure the correct reinstatement of historic windows using the traditional methods and materials and to ensure the finish paint colour is considered within the overall scheme.
- It should be requested that copies of the condensation risk analysis and the study for options for thermal upgrading works should be submitted and that a record should be kept, and photographs of all thermal upgrading works in order to present a case study of good thermal upgrading and works to historic structures as part of climate change policy.
Reason: In the interest of sharing information and providing case studies of good practice and use of materials for energy upgrading works for Protected Structures in addressing climate change policy.

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: 16th May 2023