



Visual Impact Assessment

(To be read in conjunction with Architects Report)

for

**Proposed development of 10 dwellings including 1 live-in artist's studio with gallery
& associated site works**

at

Junction of Barrack Lane & Dublin Road, Lusk, Co. Dublin

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1. Planning Objectives:

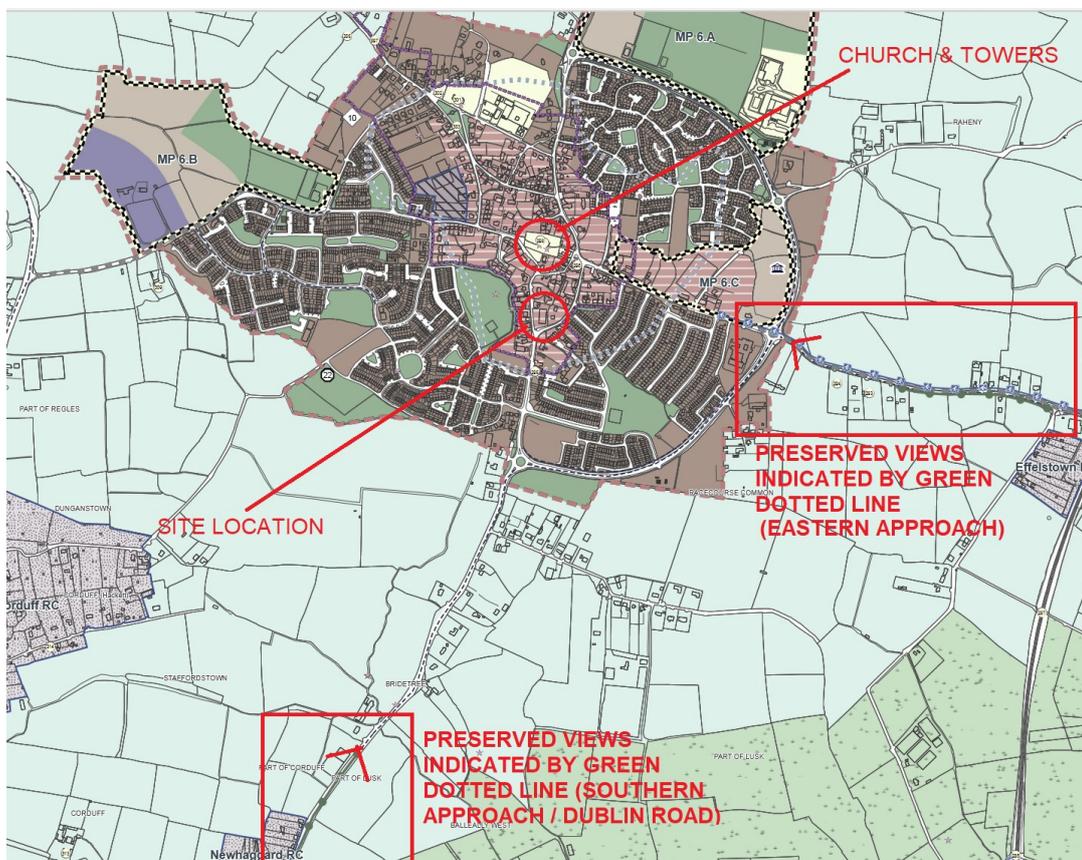
As noted in the Architects Report, the design process has been directly guided by the relevant Planning Objectives as set out in the Fingal Development Plan (2017-23) and the Visual Impact of the proposal has been considered from the earliest stages of design.

The **Development Plan / Lusk Objective 2** notes:

‘Maintain the valued distinctive views of the monastic site from all approach roads in to the town, from significant areas of open space and from surrounding areas.’

The **Development Plan / Lusk Objective 3** notes:

‘The development of the key garage site shall not, unless special justification is made, exceed three storeys in height. In any event developments shall be designed in such a manner so as not to compromise the important views of the former St. MacCullin’s Church when approaching from the south.’



Fingal Development Plan Map / Sheet 6 A Lusk (Extract)

2. Types of View:

The **Development Plan Map / Sheet 6 A Lusk** (Refer extract above) highlights Preserved Views as approaching Lusk from each of the primary directions. Lusk has a strong rural character and one becomes aware of the town as approaching along roads lined with trees, hedges and fields.

The medieval church tower (Including an early Christian round tower) to the centre of Lusk's Historic Core is a National Monument (RMP No DU008-010003), a Protected Structure (RMP No 0298), and the most recognisable feature of the town's skyline as one approaches from the south. The former mid-19th century church associated with the tower is a Protected Structure (RMP No 0297) – It does not have National Monument status however it is linked to the tower.

The church tower's recognisable form on the skyline makes a significant contribution to the unique character of Lusk and any new development of such a scale that would compete with the tower in this context would not be appropriate.

As one enters and moves about the town, views of the church and towers become visible at varying points and at unique angles depending on the observer's viewpoint relative to local buildings and trees and the natural curvature of streets. These occasional framed views or oblique glimpses of the historic structure within the townscape are both appropriate and desirable in terms of the town's medieval street pattern, natural evolution and unique interest.



Elevation of Proposal onto Dublin Road with Church in Background

3. Long Distance Views:

The proposed building has been designed to be significantly lower than the church and towers, which sit on an elevated site to the centre of the Historic Core, and so it has no visual impact as one approaches the town from a distance along the Dublin Road (Or from any other direction).

As outlined in the contextual elevation above, the highest point of the proposal (Topographical level 32.590) is approximately 20 metres lower than the towers (Topographical level 52.667) and 7.5m below the ridge line of the church roof (Topographical level 40.238). In this context the proposed building will not be visible along the southern approach from a distance.



Distant View of Church Tower on Southern Approach - Proposed Building Not Visible



Closer View of Church Tower on Southern Approach - Proposed Building Not Visible

4. View at Entrance to Town:

As one gets closer to the town, the long-distance views of the National Monument disappear, and the local buildings, trees and hedgerows become the primary experience as one approaches the southern roundabout.



View as Approaching Southern Roundabout – Ecclesiastical Site / Proposed Building Not Visible



View as Exiting Southern Roundabout – Ecclesiastical Site / Proposed Building Visible

As one passes through the roundabout and enters the town from the south, a view opens up again towards the ecclesiastical site and one also sees the proposed building for the first time in its context.

The proposed building (Highlighted in blue) sits below the church structure, which is on an elevated site, and back a respectful distance from the historic tower, thus maintaining a distinctive urban axis at one of the primary entrances into the town.

5. Existing Views Within Town:

A survey of views of the church and towers within Lusk was carried out by the Fingal Planning Department in 2008. It highlights a variety of views from different points within the town and along primary routes towards the church. The southern approach indicates a number of views as one approaches along the Dublin Road, up Barrack Lane, and onto Church Road before arriving at the church grounds.



1 - View along Dublin Road



2 - View entering Barrack Lane



3 - View along Barrack Lane



4 - View entering Church Road

As one moves towards the ecclesiastical site from the south, the church and towers tend to become visible, then disappear behind buildings and trees and then become visible again depending on where one stands within the existing streetscape. The most successful views are framed or cropped by distinctive building forms and trees/hedges which are in character with the Architectural Conservation Area. The existing car showroom (Image 1 above) however, is completely out of character with the ACA and does little to strengthen the townscape or establish an appropriate setting of a suitable quality for the National Monument in the background.

6. Proposed View Within Town:

In the above context, the proposal is to replace the existing car showroom with a new building of a suitable quality and density for its context, while emphasising the street-line and opening up a considered view of the ecclesiastical site. As one draws near to the proposed building, which incorporates urban residential use along with an artist's studio and gallery space, it rises up with enough presence to act as a signpost to the Town Centre, while creating a high quality 'framed' view of the church and towers in the background. Although the church roof is not part of the National Monument, the proposed building holds back significantly from the towers to clearly show their relationship to one another.



View Approaching the Site

As noted in the Architectural Report, the overall building form has been broken into a series of smaller elements with steeply pitched gable roofs, in order to reflect building forms in the town. It has been designed to have a strong visual presence with high quality materials including natural stone, zinc and render.

The stonework to the two and a half storey elements will be chosen to compliment / harmonise with typical rural buildings in the locality (Panels of stonework can be prepared for agreement prior to construction) whereas the overall colour scheme is restrained and mainly consists of white and varying tones of grey so that the building does not visually detract from the historic church towers in the background.

A good-sized public open space is provided along Barrack Lane with native trees, hedgerows, paving and seating and which will contribute to the openness and historic character of the area. The newly planted deciduous trees will be specified so that they have an appropriate foliage density and do not grow above the eaves level of the church building as viewed on the main approach.

7. Visual Impact Summary:

From the foregoing sections it is clear that the proposed building has no visual impact on long distance Preserved Views which remain completely unaffected as one approaches Lusk from the south.

As one enters the town, the building becomes visible in the mid-distance and there is a slight visual impact on the existing condition. The proposal is however, still very much subservient to the National Monument in the background and in fact provides a grounding presence which marks the boundary of the Town Centre and Historic Core which one is approaching. This contrasts with the poorly considered car showroom building which is badly sited and under-scaled at this important juncture of the inner townscape.

As one draws near to the proposed building it rises up in height relative to the church structure and National Monument in the background and there is a moderate visual impact on the existing condition in that part of the church roof becomes obscured due to the effect of perspective. The view of the National Monument Tower and its junction with the church roof however, remains completely unaffected by the proposed building at all stages along the approach from the south.

Also, as explained previously it is natural and desirable, as one enters into and moves about a town with a medieval street pattern, that distinctive views of historic structures become appropriately framed at key intervals as this adds to the unique interest of such structures and towns.

In summary the proposed building does not detract from the existing visual amenity of the National Monument as experienced from different viewpoints along the southern approach but actually enhances its setting and so protects and increases its special interest and the character of Lusk as a whole.