

CONSERVATION REPORT

2-4 DUBLIN STREET, BALBRIGGAN

FEBRUARY 2023



**Paul Keogh Architects,
Cathedral Court,
New Street,
Dublin 8.**

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TEAM DIRECTORY

Client	Fingal County Council, County Hall, Main Street, Swords County Dublin K67 X8Y2 Tel: (01) 890 5000 Representatives: Aoife Sheridan, Breffni O'Rourke
Architect & Lead Designer	Paul Keogh Architects, Cathedral Court, New Street, Dublin 8. Tel: 01 679 1551 Representatives: Paul Keogh, Paul Maher, Clare Gorman
Project Managers	Turner & Townsend Ashford House, 18-23 Tara Street, Dublin D02 VX67 Tel: (0)1 400 3300 Representatives: Denis Galvin, Almas Sabitov, Catherine McAteer
Civil and Structural Engineers & Mechanical and Electrical Consultant	Hayes Higgins Partnership, The Glass House 11 Coke Lane Smithfield Dublin 7 Tel: (0)1 6612321 Representatives: Donal Higgins, Stephen Geary
Quantity Surveyors	Nolan Construction Consultants The Village Campus Waterford Road Kilkenny Tel: 01 660 9155 Representative: Robert Nolan, Barry Sweeney

1.0 Introduction

1.01 Foreword

This Conservation Report has been prepared and compiled by Paul Keogh Architects in consultation with other design team members, as part of a submission for proposals at 2-4 Dublin Street Balbriggan on behalf of Fingal County Council. The report examines the property and history and seeks to identify the importance of the building in architectural terms and the impact of the proposals on the structure. The documents accompanying the planning application consists of this conservation report, the schedule of rooms and a photographic record, all of which should be read in conjunction with the drawings prepared by Paul Keogh Architects and Hayes Higgins Partnership, Consultant Engineers.

1.02 Process and Methodology

The *Our Balbriggan Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Assessment*, and the *Balbriggan Town Core Architectural Conservation Area: Statement of Character* documents provided by Fingal County Council along with other historic information, such as historic maps, were consulted to determine the history of the buildings and surrounding historical context.

Turner & Townsend undertook opening up works which were followed by site inspections by the design team to determine structural condition and hidden fabric. The significance of the buildings was determined. Design team meetings were attended to discuss conservation issues. Following on from this, the proposals were assessed in terms of their impact on the buildings.

2.0 Summary

2.01 No. 2 Dublin Street is a protected structure and No. 2-4 Dublin Street fall within an Architectural Conservation Area. The significance of the building is derived from its architectural, historic and urban value within the town of Balbriggan.

The site, shown outlined in red on the attached site plan, is formed of no. 2 Dublin Street, an early nineteenth century Victorian-era townhouse, and no.4 Dublin Street, a modern lean-to retail unit. The site is bordered by residential and commercial properties of varying scales as well as the Balbriggan Courthouse, George's Square and Town Library. The proposed development consists of a change of use and full refurbishment of No. 2 Dublin St (a protected structure) as workspaces, in line with conservation practices, and redevelopment of No. 4 (the attached retail unit), as a Creative Hub and Gallery Space.

The proposed development comprises alterations and renovations to the protected structure of no.2 Dublin Street to improve the functionality of the building and improve fire safety and accessible connections to the proposed structures on the site. The outer envelope, roof and external walls, windows and doors are all to be repaired and refurbished to the highest conservation standards.



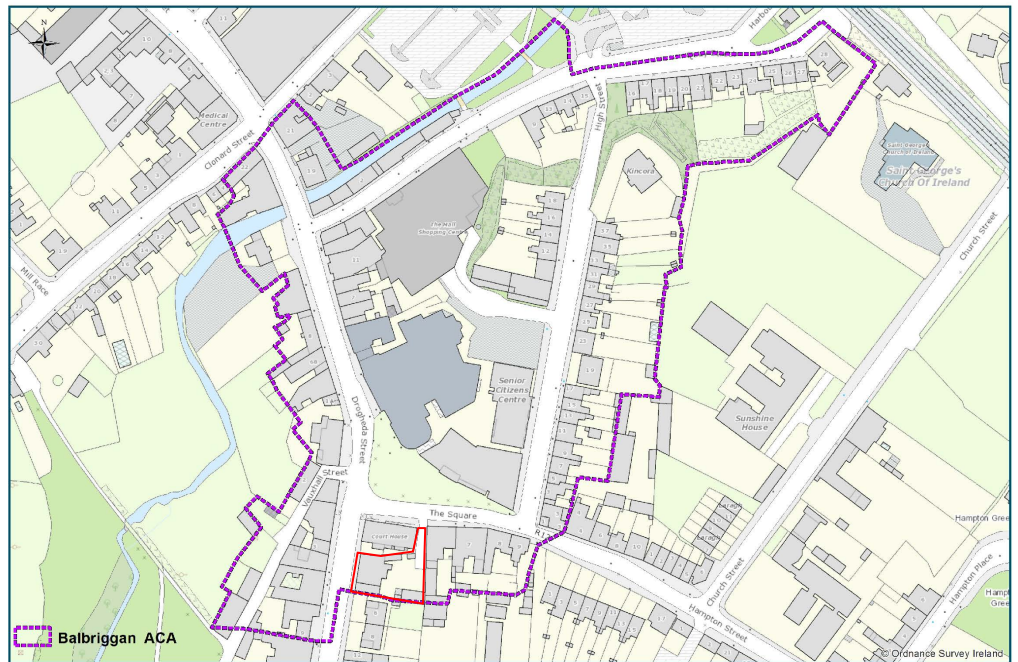
Site Location Plan



Site Plan

The insertion of new mechanical & electrical services facilities throughout will utilise existing service runs through the floor build up where possible to minimise the impact on historic fabric. The repair and restoration works to existing sash windows will conserve and restore character to the façade. Repair and replacement works to existing roofs, valleys and parapets, including wall plates and rafters throughout; and insertion of new roof light above first floor staircase landing. Repair works to surviving elements of historic fabric including staircases, balustrades, cornices, door cases, panelling will enhance the character of the interior.

The alterations proposed to the structure, if carried out in accordance with the attached directions and good conservation practice will have a positive effect on the character of the structure in that repairs undertaken will prolong the building's life.



Balbriggan ACA 2020

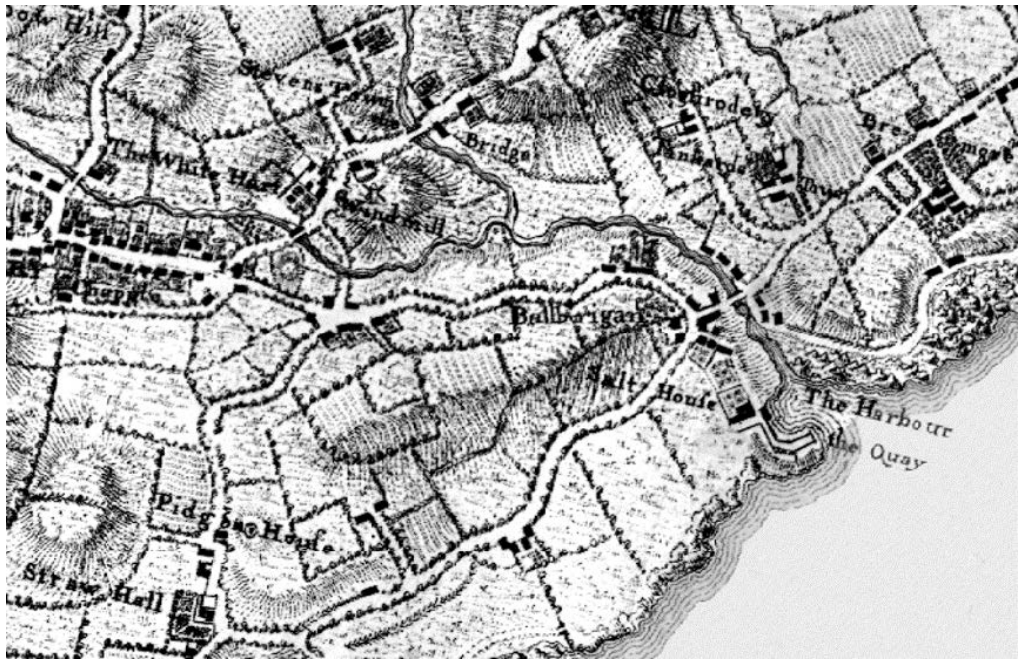


Postcard of early 20th-century George's Square.

3.0 Historical Background

3.01 Historical Context

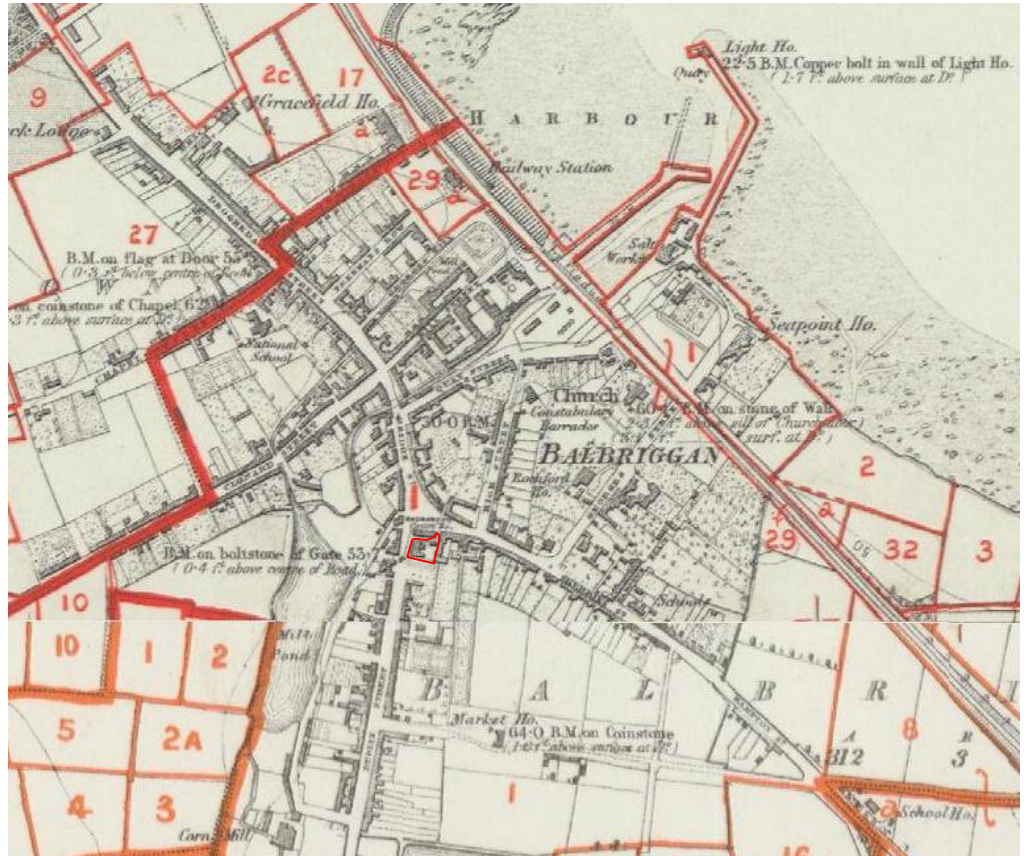
John Rocque depicts the developing town of Balbriggan in 1760 with recognisable elements of its contemporary plan. Subsequent mapping marks the town's progress into the twentieth century. The filling-in of the inner harbour, the massive viaduct over and the completed station are illustrated on the 1860's revised sheets. The Courthouse (RPS 0042) is mapped on George's Square, and was constructed by the Board of Works in 1844 to the designs of Alexander Tate, who was appointed the first county surveyor for the northern district of Dublin the following year. Also evident is the house at No. 2-4 Dublin Street (RPS 0058), which was owned in the mid-1980s by the McKeon family who possessed deeds dating to back 1745.



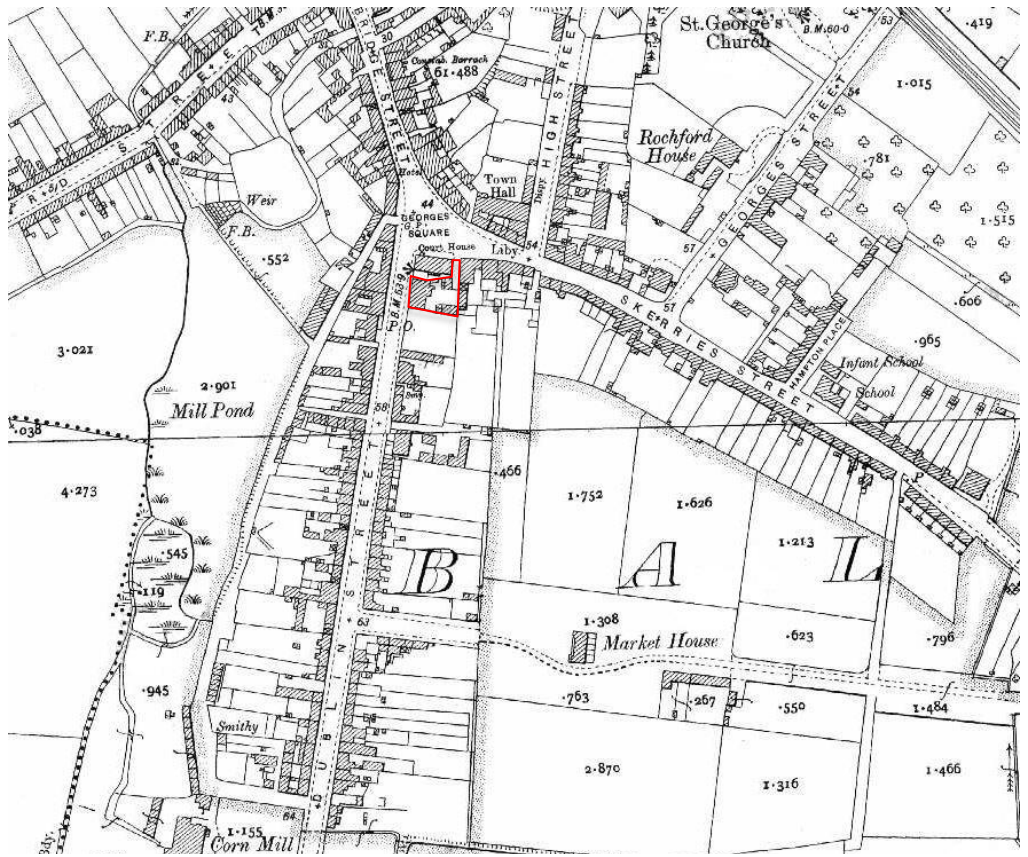
John Rocque, Actual Survey of the County of Dublin, 1760



Map, 1840



Map 1867



OS Map, 1906

3.02 No. 2-4 Dublin Street

The façade of this mid nineteenth-century residence affords no glimpse of any earlier fabric which might have existed at this location. The house is unlikely to be that depicted on the 6-inch mapping, where prior to the construction of the adjacent Courthouse the northern gables would have addressed George's Square. The house retains many of its primary architectural features and it is not especially harmed by the later abutting structure to the south, whose modern timber shopfront incorporates finely carved console brackets which presumably have been recycled from another structure.



2-4 Dublin Street, Front Façade

4.0 Architectural Description

4.01 The site is formed of no. 2 Dublin Street, a two storey early nineteenth century Victorian-era townhouse. The west-facing front façade addressing Dublin Street is handsomely proportioned. The front entrance has stepped access as a result of the slope of Dublin Street, falling from right to left across the front façade. The entrance door is slightly asymmetric with decorative pillars and arched fan light.

Roof: M-shaped gable pitched roof with hip and valley staircase projection to rear has non-original slate roof. Stacks: Rendered chimney stack with clay pots. Rain Water Goods: lead flashing to valleys. Cast iron and upvc down pipes and hoppers. Walls: all external walls rendered with plinth course and painted quoining. Windows: Single pane sash windows. Limestone cills. Most windows to the rear are 20th century replacements. Large vertical 3-pane fixed glazed window the rear staircase landing. Doors: hall door is timber panelled door with brass door furniture and decorative pillars, limestone steps and arched over light. Interior: See the photographic and internal schedules in Appendix.

4.02 The main house at no.2 has been extended to the rear with two modern two story additions, one flat roof and one mono-pitched, located on either side of an original stairway projection. At no.4 Dublin Street, a modern lean-to retail unit completes the southern boundary of the site.

5.0 Significance and Protection

5.01 Significance

The Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999 places the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) on a statutory basis and acts as a core database for identifying buildings for protection. The aim of the NIAH is to identify, record and evaluate the Architectural Heritage. The importance rating value codes used by the NIAH are International, National, Regional, Local and Record Only. Local Authorities are asked to include International, National and Regional structures in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). The categories of special interest used are Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical and Social.

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage identifies 2 Dublin Street as follows. Reg No.: 11305016 rating: Regional Categories of Special Interest: Architectural, Artistic. Original Use: House. Date: 1850-1870. Description: Detached five-bay two-storey house, c.1860, with single-bay single-storey lean-to retail outlet to right, c.1960, which also occupies two bays of ground floor. ROOF: M-profile; slate; rendered chimney stacks with clay pots; terracotta roof ridge tiles; cast-iron rainwater goods; concrete tiles to pitched roof. WALLS: Nap rendered and painted plinth course and quoined; dressed corners; rendered lined and ruled walls. OPENINGS: All windows square headed; rendered soffit and reveals; limestone cills; 1/1 timber sash windows; door elliptical headed; cylinder glass fanlight; flanked by rendered and painted; original four panelled door with original brass door furniture reached by two limestone steps.

5.02 Protection

The Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000 introduced two mechanisms for the protection of the built heritage: the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) which replaced the system of listing in operation prior to January 2000, and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). A Protected Structure is a structure that the local Authority considers to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific or technical interest. Any structure having one of these qualities listed above is eligible for inclusion in the RPS. ACAs seek to protect groups of structures and the setting of protected structures.

The site lies within an Architectural Conservation Area and the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 (Sheet 4 Balbriggan) identifies no.2 Dublin Street as a protected structure within the extent of the site.

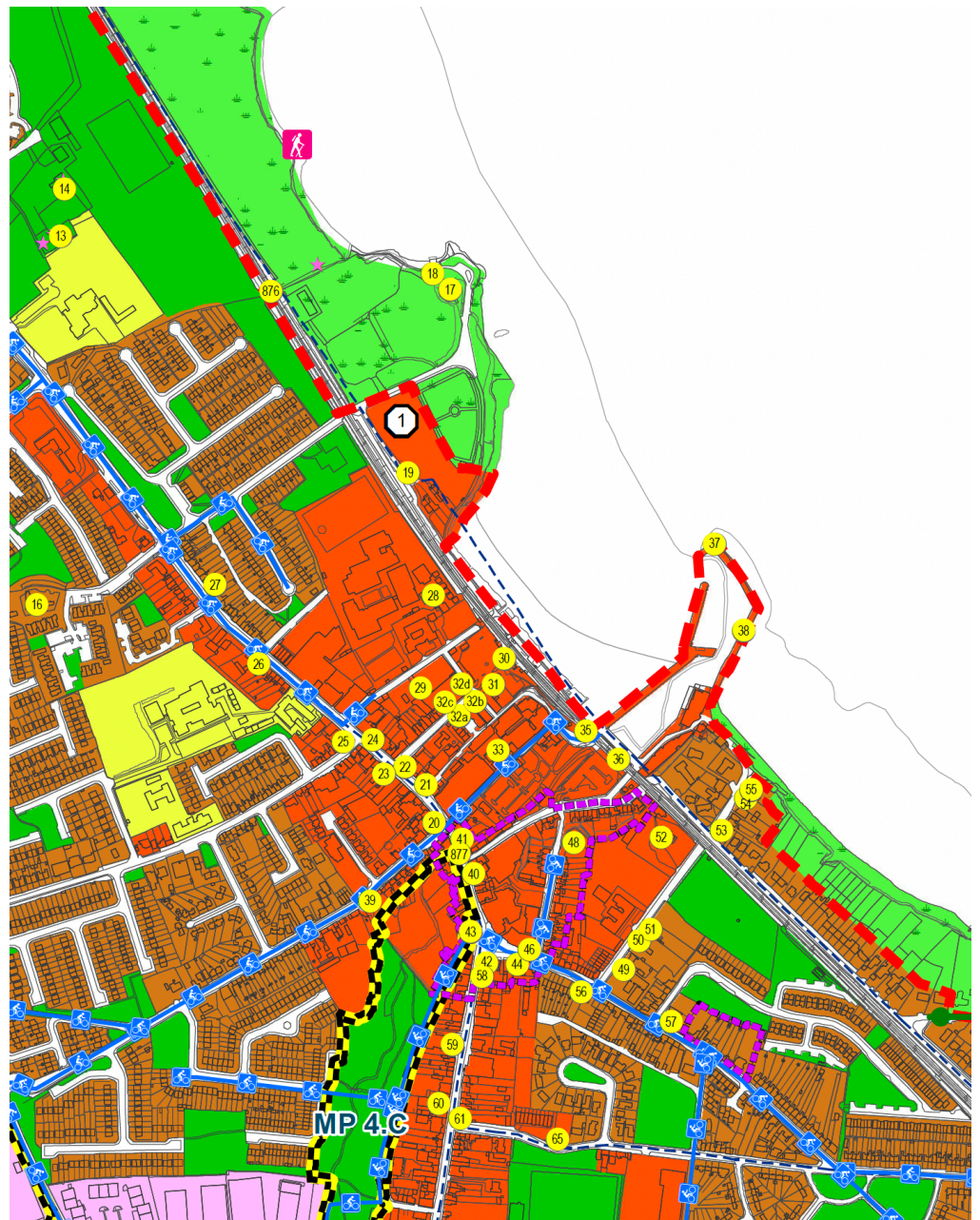
Appendix 2 – Record of Protected Structures indicates:

- 0058 no.2 Dublin Street - Early 19th century house (excluding modern lean-to shop extension)

Adjacent to the site are the following protected structures:

- 0042 Court House, Georges Square - Two-storey stone courthouse on corner site.
- 0044 no.7 Georges Square- 19th century former residence, now offices.

The National Monuments Service historic environment viewer identifies no monuments in the vicinity.



Fingal Development Plan 2017 - 2023 Balbriggan (Protected Structures in Yellow)



Balbriggan Courthouse (0042)

6.0 The Proposed Development

6.01 The proposed development consists of a change of use and full refurbishment of No. 2 Dublin Street as artists' studio spaces in line with best conservation practices, and redevelopment of No. 4 (the attached retail unit), as a Digital Innovation Hub and Gallery Space.

The Victorian era house at no.2 Dublin Street, a protected structure, will be restored to its original condition and configuration, conserving the external envelope, with particular emphasis on the Dublin Street façade, and the historic features and proportions of the rooms internally. Contemporary extensions on either side of the staircase to the rear of no. 2 will be demolished, returning the original form of the existing building.

Principally, the existing building will house the artist studios element of the brief, with each existing room a studio for a single artist, and a new structure in place of the former retail unit will contain the Creative / Innovation Hub. The proposed structure wraps around to the rear of the site making a connection to the existing building, providing a Gallery/Project space, and creating an external courtyard. A combination of a glazed corridor and a colonnade border the courtyard. This is designed to make connections between the artist studios, Innovation Hub workshops, the gallery space, and to aid 'cross pollination' of the respective users. Ancillary spaces such as wc's, storage and communal kitchen are accommodated in the northern side of the courtyard. A gate connecting the laneway and courtyard forms the main entrance to the scheme and point of level access.

The existing building at no.2 Dublin Street provides suitably proportioned studio spaces for artists with good levels of natural light and ventilation. A total of 9 no. artist studios are provided (2 no. of which are wheelchair accessible), 4no. studios on Ground Floor and 5no. on First Floor, which are accessed from the existing staircase.

The proposed development comprises alterations and renovations to the protected structures. Removal of existing non-original ceilings, joinery, fixtures and fittings throughout. Removal and upgrading of existing ground floor slab including damp proofing external walls and blocking up non original opes. Repair and restoration works to existing sash windows throughout; Repair and restoration works to existing roofs, valleys and parapets, including wall plates and rafters throughout. Works to repair surviving elements of historic fabric including staircase, balustrades, cornices, door cases, panelling and fireplaces. Upgrading of mechanical and electrical services throughout.

Façade:

Remove disused services. Carry out repairs to façade as necessary. Cracks to be stitched and rendered. Replastering existing external walls and quoins. Structural repairs to existing walls including works to head and cills to engineer's later detail and specifications. Entrance steps to be cleaned and repaired. Entrance door to be repaired and restored.

Windows:

Original sash windows to be repaired and restored with proprietary draught proofing system. Original glass to be replaced with slim-line heritage double glazed units. Replace rotten sashes to match original existing work. Repair and renew shutters and sashes to match adjoining work. Replace non-original windows with conservation grade sashes to match existing. Window surrounds and cills to be cleaned and repaired.

Ground Floor:

Removing existing ground floor slab. New floor slab to existing building to engineers specification with underpinning as necessary, including radon barrier and damp proofing to external walls.

Upper floors:

Repair and renew structural timbers as required to engineer's later detail and specifications including structural fire protection to comply with TGD part B and TGD part A. Selected timber flooring to architect's later detail and specification. Fire protection is to be installed between floors. Architraves, skirtings are to be conserved in accordance with best practice.

Roof:

Removal of non-original roof tiles and replacement with natural slate, battens and felt to existing building. Repairs to existing wall plates, repair and renew timber roof structure to structural engineers specification, insulation to existing roof. New roof light over staircase landing. New flashings and counter flashings, flashings to existing chimneys; replacement of defective lead valley flashings and lead valley gutters.

Chimneys:

Repair and restore existing chimney stacks. Replace external render where cracked and/or shows plant growth with lime render. Repair and restore existing clay chimney pots.

Rainwater goods:

Retain cast iron and replace upvc with new cast iron fittings.

Internal walls:

Repairs, renewals and reinstatement of existing walls to be constructed generally in lightweight softwood stud walling.

Wall finishes internally:

Retain and conserve all historic lath and plaster work. Replacement plaster work to architect's later detail and specifications. New walls and partitions generally finished in gypsum plasterboard with skim finish.

Ceilings and cornices:

Where possible retain and conserve all historic ceilings and cornices. Replacement ceilings to architect's later detail and specifications. New ceilings generally finished in gypsum plasterboard with skim finish.

Joinery generally:

Retain and conserve original skirtings, panelling, mouldings etc. New joinery to match adjoining work, or otherwise, to architect's later detail.

Existing staircase:

Conserve, repair and strengthen existing staircases to architect/ engineers later detail and specification.

7.0 Conservation Methodology

The specification and methodology is intended to ensure that the works are completed in accordance with good conservation practice and to protect the historic fabric of this protected structure.

7.01 Proposed Works:

The works proposed to the protected structure are indicated in detail on the drawings prepared by Paul Keogh Architects and Hayes Higgins Partnership, Structural Engineers. This conservation methodology incorporated specifications that will be used in contract documents.

7.02 Previous Interventions:

Extensive works and rebuilding were carried out in the buildings over the years as identified in the history and descriptions of the buildings.

7.03 Conservation Methodology:

The proposed conservation work will be carried out in accordance with the principles of the Venice and Burra Charters produced by ICOMOS Australia in 1979 and amended in 1981, 1988 and 1999. This document defines current conservation terminology and makes sensible recommendations for its practice. These include Principles, Processes Preservation, Restoration, Reconstruction, Adaptation and Practice, all of which will be followed. The works

must adhere to the conservation principles set out in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004) and the Departments advice series publications on various elements.

7.04 General Principles:

All features and materials of importance to maintain the structure's character will be retained including features of all ages. It should always be the intent to restrict all interventions to the minimum that is consistent with the established philosophy and the appropriate use, reuse, and continued survival of the building. The philosophy of doing 'as little as possible and as much as necessary' applies here.

It is the objective to carry out works limited to that essential for the survival of the property and its conversion. It is intended in all cases where possible to carry out repairs rather than replace materials. In relation to any new work required to the structure the use of processes that are reversible will be used. Repairs are to be carried out without an attempt to disguise or artificial ageing and new repairs should be discernible without detracting from the structure. It is intended that unsatisfactory alterations that disfigure earlier work of greater merit should be reversed, where feasible. This especially applies to the removal of exposed services. A programme of conservation works shall be carried out in tandem with the proposed development to conserve the historic fabric and bring it to a high standard of repair.

Detailed inspections and investigative works shall be carried out prior to the commencement of the programme of conservation works under the direction of the Conservation Architect who will advise on conservation aspects of the scheme throughout all stages. It is an objective that the highest conservation standards will apply to the contract. As a general principle as much of the original material as possible is to be retained and reused in its present location.

Only appropriate materials and methods of construction and contemporary methods or materials will be used where alternatives do not exist. Where decay occurs, before any restoration is undertaken, a thorough analysis should be made of the defects and the nature of the decay of these materials. Salvaged materials from other sources may be reused such as bricks that have been bedded in lime mortar, and slates. However, there are some issues to be considered in the use of salvaged materials that must be considered, in particular the source of the material, and whether another historic building has been demolished to provide it.

7.05 General Direction to Contractor:

The building is a historic building and great care must be taken at all times to protect any artefacts and any part of the building fabric, fittings etc. that could be damaged due to the works. All works to be supervised by Conservation Architect with experience in conservation/restoration of historic buildings. All contractors/site personnel and their staff will be required to have read this method statement. Detailed daily records including photographs are to be kept of the works at all stages and the Conservation Officer will be kept informed of progress with regular reports.

Provide such protection as is necessary to prevent the further ingress of rainwater and or ground/surface water to the building or staining, splashing etc. Confirm items and elements that are to be protected by contractor before commencement of work. Prepare softwood or other supports protection as required. Buffer or double wrap to all door frames, other carved elements and elsewhere in work zones and approach routes. Scaffolding will be erected as required and dismantled by competent scaffolders.

Extreme care will be taken to avoid any damage to the building fabric by the scaffolding during erection, while in place and when being dismantled. All necessary precautions will be taken to ensure no damage occurs to the building fabric. All services such as drains, water supply etc will be properly blanked off or sealed to prevent damage directly or indirectly to the building fabric. Exposed openings such as doors and or windows will be securely sealed to prevent unauthorised access.

It is not permissible to fix anything such as temporary door frames etc to the building fabric. No contact with the building is allowed and no screwing/fixing to the walls is permitted under any circumstances. Hand operated equipment is only allowed. The use of pneumatic drills, hammers etc is to be carefully monitored and are to be used only if no damage through vibration or otherwise is being caused to the masonry walls and only with the prior approval of the Conservation Architect. The contractor is to take all necessary precautions to protect the building fabric from collapse/damage during the works.

The contractor will be required to prepare a program of work for the approval of the Conservation Architect prior to the commencement of the works, to ensure the sequencing of work is compatible with the fabric. During the course of construction, the property and its elements shall be protected from damage. Retention of existing fabric shall include protection during construction and repair. This will include the protection of joinery materials being wrapped with bubble wrap, the protection of staircases with hardboard and covering of floors with cloth etc. Fire prevention and prevention of water ingress will be determined at the tender stage and agreed at the commencement of work in consultation with the fire consultant. Window casings, windows, door surrounds, doors, cornices, lath and plaster ceilings balusters and fire surrounds etc. should be protected by plywood screens and floors shall be covered with cloth etc.

9.0 Reference Documents

Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023
Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan 2019-2025
Our Balbriggan: Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Assessment
Balbriggan Town Core Architectural Conservation Area; Statement of Character, March 2020
Ordnance Survey Maps, Glucksman Map Library, Trinity College Dublin
Historic Postcards, Fingal Local Studies & Archive Service, Swords, County Dublin

8.0 Appendices

1. Photographic Survey

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Survey