

**CONSERVATION REPORT ON THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION
AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN, BELFIELD, DUBLIN 4**



diagrammatic plan of Roebuck Castle and proposed buildings

This report has been carried out Robin Mandal Architects instructed by Reddy Architecture + Urbanism, on behalf of University College Dublin, the applicant for a proposed development on the site.

It forms part of a response to a Pre-Application Consultation Opinion issued by An Bord Pleanála in connection with the proposed development, Case Reference TC0001

Its aim is to address the conservation issues raised in items 2 and 3 of the Pre-Application Consultation Opinion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive summary	2
Introduction	3
Context of the application	4
Description of the revisions to the design	4
Assessment of the revisions to the design	8
Summary	8
Appendix A: Extract from original EIS, with residual impact assessments	9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed development that is the subject of this application forms part of an overall master plan for the overall future development of University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4.

While no works are proposed as part of the development to either of the two protected structures, one of which – Roebuck Castle- is a recorded monument, the proposed development does have an impact on their settings.

This report seeks to address the issues raised by An Bord Pleanála in its Opinion that followed a Pre-Planning Application.

The original assessments that formed part of the Environmental Impact Statement varied for each individual element of the impact assessment. Its final conclusion was that the overall impact of the proposed development, when mitigation measures were taken into account, was neutral, moderate and permanent. The balance, from the heritage viewpoint has to be struck between preserving the existing environment and developing new models that, by necessity, are contrasting.

With the further consideration given to the treatment of Blocks F1 and F2 in terms of the detail design of the façades and the landscaping to Roebuck Road, the author considers that the residual impact of the proposed development remains neutral, moderate and permanent.

INTRODUCTION

This report is set out as part of a response to a Pre-Application Consultation Opinion issued by An Bord Pleanála, Case Reference TC0001. The proposed development is 512 student accommodation units (3006 no. bed spaces) in 7 no. blocks including student facility centre, 994 car parking spaces and all associated site works. It is an application for strategic housing development.

Architectural conservation issues were addressed in the context of the Environmental Impact Statement, Chapter 14 – Architectural and Cultural Heritage.

Following the Pre-Application Consultation, An Bord Pleanála noted a number of issues to be addressed. These included items 2 and 3 relating to the protected structures on the site, as follows:

“Item 2

Further consideration of the architectural conservation issues, in the form of an architectural conservation report and justification of potential impacts of the design of the proposed Blocks F1 and F2, given their proximity to Roebuck Castle Protected Structure.

Design decisions should address elevational treatment, height and separation distances and should be informed by the requirement to protect the character and setting of the protected structure. Further consideration in the architectural conservation report should include consideration of all protected structures on the subject site.

This may require possible amendment to the documents and/or design proposals submitted.

Item 3

Further consideration is required in respect of the documents (design rationale and detailed drawings/design proposals) relating to Block F2, adjacent to Roebuck Road.

This consideration should address potential impacts and should provide a detailed/robust planning rationale regarding scale, height, extent of elevations and elevational treatment.

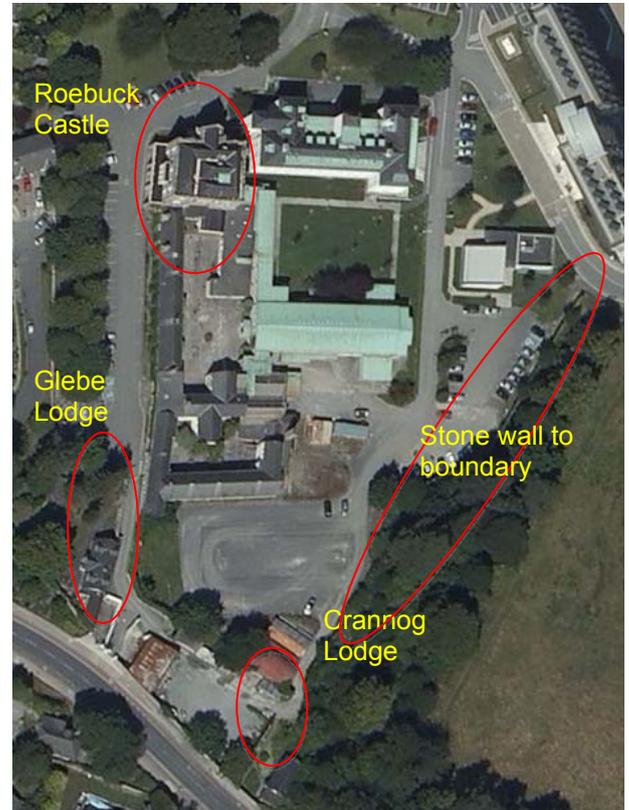
Further consideration of these issues may require an amendment to the documents and/or design proposals submitted.”

Roebuck Castle is a protected structure (DLR 217) under the 2016 - 2022 Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan, as is Glebe Lodge (DLR 236). Roebuck Castle is also encribed in the Record of Monuments and Places, reference DU 022-017.

This report seeks to address the conservation aspects of the two items above. It should be read in

conjunction with the other documents submitted by the design team in response to the Pre-Application Consultation Opinion.

In the original section of the EIS, the author identified, described and assessed the four elements of conservation interest in the vicinity of Roebuck Castle. It is not intended to replicate that information in this document.



aerial view of the site, with the protected structures on the left hand side and the two other elements of conservation interest on the right

The impacts of the proposed development were assessed for these four elements, as was the impact of the proposed development on the overall historic setting of Belfield Campus.

In responding to the Pre-Application Consultation Opinion, the architects have revised elements of the design, so as to address the issues raised. These include detailed revisions to the design of façades, elevational treatments and landscaping proposals for the site, particularly as they relate to blocks F and F1.

This report reviews those revisions and re-assesses the resulting impacts. Perhaps the most challenging design decisions are based around the scale of the proposals as they address Roebuck Road and the two single storey buildings that form the edges of that frontage – the Crannog, which is not a protected structure, and the Glebe, which is a protected structure.

CONTEXT OF THE APPLICATION

The planning of the proposed development is a part of the University College Dublin Master Plan, which includes the lands at Roebuck Castle. The proposed development of student accommodation is central to that Master Plan.

The existing scale of new buildings within the campus reflects their functions, with academic buildings being of a certain scale and residential buildings being of varying scales. The recent student accommodation to the north-east of Roebuck Castle is of a scale similar to that proposed in the current application.

context of the site at Roebuck Castle

The issues raised in the Pre-Application Consultation Opinion in the context of Roebuck Castle primarily concerned the following:

1. The relationship between the proposed development and the protected structure and recorded monument of Roebuck Castle,
2. The relationship of the proposed buildings at the southern end of the site to the protected structure of The Glebe and to the existing building of The Crannog, and
3. The relationship of the proposed development to the Roebuck Road.



view of the site from Roebuck Road, looking east

DESCRIPTION OF THE REVISIONS TO THE DESIGN

1. Roebuck Castle

The existing student residences that adjoin Roebuck Castle are some 5 metres distant from the eastern elevation of the Castle. The proposed new buildings are some 12 metres away and are of a similar height. They therefore allow for a better setting for Roebuck Castle.

existing and proposed buildings at Roebuck Castle



The elevational treatment has been revised by the architects, to provide a more neutral palette of colours to reflect the tone of Roebuck Castle.



revisions to palette of materials (above and below)



The creation of a courtyard to the south of the Castle allows for a considerably better aspect to appreciate its importance.

proposed view of the south of Roebuck Castle

2. Existing buildings to the south of Roebuck

These buildings have been described in the relevant part of the EIS, so it is not intended to repeat those descriptions. The Glebe is a protected structure (DLR 236) and the Crannog is not. Both are effectively single-storey buildings, with dormer windows/rooflights to rooms in their roof spaces.



The Glebe from Roebuck Road



The glebe from the east



the Glebe from the north

As can be seen from the photographs above, the protected structure of The Glebe is screened off and isolated from the public areas of the site. In consultation with the architects, we consider that the opportunity to increase the visibility of this building would be beneficial to its appreciation.

The original documentation did not include this potential opening up of the vistas to The Glebe from both within the applicant site and from Roebuck Road.

The space between The Glebe and The Crannog is currently an amalgam of semi-derelict buildings, yards and unpleasant ground surfaces. The proposed development allows an opportunity to address the relationship of the two existing building to be retained to each other as well as to create a public space across which the buildings could be read as a set-piece.



view from The Glebe to Roebuck Road



view from The Glebe to The Crannog



view to the Crannog, looking east



view to the Crannog across the yard area



view of the enclosing wall of the Crannog



view of the Crannog, looking south east



view into the Crannog from the north



view of the Crannog, looking north east



view of the eastern wall fragment



view of the north west corner of the Crannog



view from the Crannog to The Glebe

Following the Pre-Application Consultation Opinion, the architects have redesigned the spaces between the two existing buildings and the proposed new building at this location. The intention is to create a public space that allows the existing and proposed buildings to interact.

This area is one of the most sensitive in terms of the relationship between the old and the new. The juxtaposition of the contrasting scales is challenging and the architects have revised the layout of the external spaces and the elevational treatment of the proposed building in this location.

In the words of the architects:

“It is acknowledged that the new buildings, including Block F2, are much larger in scale than the cottages. We note that the University has no significant presence onto Roebuck Road and this is an opportunity to declare the presence of the University at this location. It is not considered feasible that new development should match the scale of the cottages. In contrast, the new buildings are to provide an orientation point, a beacon along Roebuck Road, celebrating this new Southern Campus Entrance. We have reviewed the comments of the Local Authority and the Board in relation to this entrance and would note the following:

We have designed Block F2 to mark the new entrance with an archway in the main vertical structure, located specifically at the area where the sites topography lends itself to a tall structure. This 7 storey element is intended to denote the entrance to the University and visually signify the threshold to the campus. The context of the cottages is compromised, but it is submitted that the cottages context is now that of a progressive 21st century University Campus and this single storey scale is no longer appropriate.”

3. Relationship to Roebuck Road

The architects' comments above also apply to the presentation of the proposed development to Roebuck Road. The existing frontage is of a high wall, that screens the campus from public view.

With the proposed development, this screening is no longer appropriate and a more significant entrance, which allows for the varying scales of the buildings in the area, is appropriate.

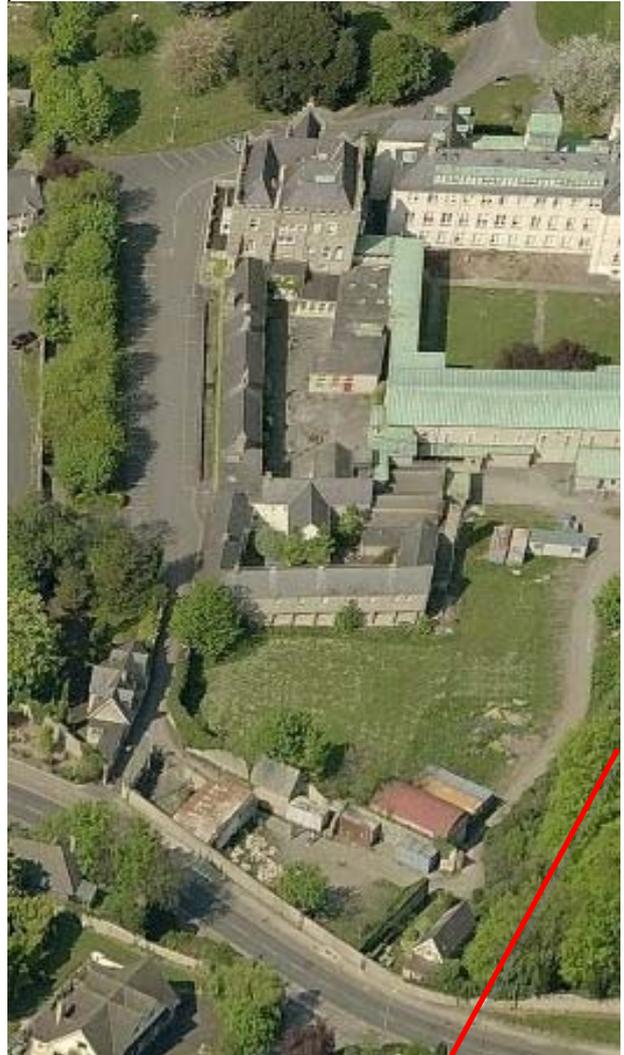
The existing streetscape along Roebuck Road varies from parkland, to single- and two-storey buildings, to the mixed development of five storeys at the junction of Mount Anville Road.



view of the site, looking to five storey development



protected structure to the west of the site



Roebuck Road frontage in the context of the Castle, with the approximate line of the road reservation for the M50 extension shown in red

The intention of the combination of the revisions to the elevational treatment and landscape treatment to Roebuck Road is to form a new scale and orientation at that location that reflects its importance the university. This context will alter radically if the proposed roadway is constructed along the road reservation for the M50 extension.

ASSESSMENT OF THE REVISIONS TO THE DESIGN

SUMMARY

The descriptions above should be read in conjunction with the documents submitted by the members of the design team. Following the Pre-Application Consultation Opinion, the changes described above have been made to the proposed development. These revisions alter the impacts of the proposals when compared to the original documentation.

The author sets out below his re-assessment of the impact of the proposed development below.

1. Roebuck Castle

The impact of the revised proposals on the setting of Roebuck Castle is neutral, moderate and permanent.

2. Existing buildings to the south of Roebuck

The impact of the revised proposals on the setting of The Glebe Lodge is neutral/negative, moderate/significant and permanent.

The impact of the revised proposals on the setting of The Crannog Lodge is neutral/negative, moderate/significant and permanent.

The impact of the revised proposals on the combined setting of the two existing buildings is neutral/negative, significant and permanent.

The impact of the revised landscaping proposals on the combined setting of the two existing buildings is neutral/positive, significant and permanent.

The residual impacts of the revised proposals on the overall setting of this part of the site is neutral, moderate and permanent.

3. Relationship to Roebuck Road

The impact of the revised proposals on Roebuck Road is neutral, significant/moderate and permanent.

Note: The terms used above are defined as follows:

Permanent: Effects lasting more than sixty years.

Significant: An effect, which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.

Moderate: An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends.

Negative: A change, which reduces the quality of the environment.

Neutral: A change, which does not affect the quality of the environment.

Positive: A change which improves the quality of the environment.

The proposed development is of a scale and density that is necessary for the satisfactory utilisation of the resources of University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4.

The biggest challenge to the setting of the protected structures and the recorded monument is the volume of the proposed construction contrasted to the scale of the existing buildings. This is less an issue with the Castle itself, as its scale is significant. For the smaller protected structure of The Glebe, as well as for the non-protected Crannog, the question of scale poses more challenges.

The balance, from the heritage viewpoint has to be struck between preserving the existing environment and developing new models that, by necessity, are contrasting.

In that context, the author considers that the overall impact of the proposed development, following the revision proposed by the design team, is neutral, significant and long-term.

Robin Mandal

12th August 2017

APPENDIX A: EXTRACT FROM ORIGINAL EIS, WITH RESIDUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

14.5.1 Residual Impacts

Residual Impacts		
<i>Feature & Nature of Impacts</i>	<i>Mitigation Measures</i>	<i>Residual Impact</i>
<p>Roebuck Castle – Alterations to grounds and aspect from the east and south. The impacts of the proposed development are neutral / negative, moderate and permanent.</p>	<p>Retention of existing trees, additional screening and comprehensive landscaping; test trenching in the vicinity of the castle.</p>	<p>Residual impacts following mitigation are neutral, moderate and permanent.</p>
<p>The Stone Wall – The repair and protection of the remnant walls have a positive, slight and long-term impact. The impact of the proposed development on the setting of the walls is neutral, moderate and long-term.</p>	<p>Retention, repair and maintenance of the boundary walls as part of the construction programme. Record survey prior to development.</p>	<p>Residual impacts following mitigation are neutral, slight and long-term.</p>
<p>The Glebe Lodge – The impacts of the proposed development are negative, significant and permanent.</p>	<p>Landscaping plan, record survey of existing lodge and test trenching in locations to be decided.</p>	<p>Residual impacts following mitigation are neutral / negative, significant / moderate and permanent.</p>
<p>The Crannog Lodge – The proposed development has a negative, significant and permanent impact on the lodge..</p>	<p>Landscaping plan, record survey of existing lodge and test trenching in locations to be determined.</p>	<p>Residual impacts following mitigation are neutral / negative, significant / moderate and permanent.</p>
<p>The Overall Setting – The overall impacts of the proposed development on the setting of the four elements described above are neutral / negative, moderate and permanent.</p>	<p>Comprehensive landscaping plan and tree planting, maintenance and repair programmes, record surveys of remaining structures, record surveys of 20th Century buildings proposed to be demolished and test trenching in selected areas.</p>	<p>Residual impacts following mitigation are neutral, moderate and permanent.</p>
<p>The Setting of the Belfield Campus– The overall impacts of the proposed development on the setting of the Campus are neutral, significant and permanent.</p>	<p>Comprehensive landscaping plan and tree planting. Development to be carried out in accordance with the long-term masterplan.</p>	<p>Residual impacts following mitigation are neutral / positive, significant / moderate and permanent.</p>