



Proposed renovation, extension and reuse of No. 9 George's Place  
and renovation and reuse of the  
former Wash House, Kelly's Avenue, Dún Laoghaire



## **Architects Report**

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## **1. Introduction**

This project is a proposal for the renovation, extension and reuse of No. 9 George's Place, Dún Laoghaire (Protected Structure RPS no. 1958) and renovation and reuse of the former Wash House, Kelly's Avenue, Dún Laoghaire (Protected Structure RPS no. 1959) to provide a Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning. Proposed works will also include alterations to boundary walls and railings and enhancement of the existing courtyard and public realm. These protected structures and the site are in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's ownership.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council received funding under strand 1 of THRIVE - Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme funding, co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027, for an integrated urban study for George's Place and Kelly's Avenue, Dún Laoghaire. The Integrated Urban Study and Public Consultation identified a need for a Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning in the area.

## **2. Site Location and Context**

The two vacant protected structures are located on a corner site at the junction of George's Place and Kelly's Avenue, Dún Laoghaire.

## **3. Planning Context**

### **3.1 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028:**

#### **Zoning:**

- MTC *To protect, provide for and-or improve major town centre facilities.*
- ED Proposed Education Site.
- SLO 31 *To seek the redevelopment of the obsolete area at the Fire Station in accordance with the objectives of the Interim Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan and the forthcoming Dún Laoghaire and Environs Local Area Plan.*

### **3.2 Policy:**

The development will tie in with the relevant national and regional policies as well as the following specific policy outlined in the County Development Plan 2022-2028; SLO 31, as above.

The reuse of these vacant protected structures is in line with Policy Objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 including CA6: Retrofit and Reuse of Buildings

- *It is a Policy Objective to require the retrofitting and reuse of existing buildings rather*

*than their demolition and reconstruction where possible recognising the embodied energy in existing buildings and thereby reducing the overall embodied energy in construction as set out in the Urban Design Manual (Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2009). (Consistent with RPO 7.40 and 7.41 of the RSES).*

#### **4. Nature & Extent of the Proposed Development**

The proposed development provides for the renovation, extension and reuse of no. 9 George's Place, Dún Laoghaire (Protected Structure RPS no. 1958) and renovation and reuse of the former Wash House, Kelly's Avenue, Dún Laoghaire (Protected Structure RPS no. 1959) to provide a Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning. The renovation will consist of upgrading and extending the buildings to improve energy efficiency, provide universal access and to bring the buildings back into use. No. 9 George's Place is a three-storey, four-bay building built in 1831 as a hotel building (c. 484 sqm) with a two-storey lean-to extension to the north-west which is in very poor condition. The detached, two-storey, red-brick washhouse was built in 1915 on a tripartite plan with central staircase (c. 161 sqm).

The proposed works include demolition of the existing non-original, two-storey, lean-to extension to no. 9 George's Place and the construction of a three-storey over lower-ground floor extension to provide a new accessible level entrance from George's Place and universal access to the three storeys of no. 9 George's Place. The extension will provide 4 no. multipurpose rooms, a Changing Places facility, an office and two small roof terraces. The former Wash House building will be renovated and upgraded to accommodate the new use, and an internal platform lift will provide universal access to first floor level. The external courtyard between the two buildings will be retained as a courtyard space to facilitate access and circulation between the two buildings.

Proposed works will include retention, landscaping and enhancement of the existing courtyard between the two buildings, enhancement of the public realm to the front of the proposed new extension to no. 9 George's Place and replacement of non-original boundary wall and railings to the front of no. 9 George's Place. The existing entrance to no. 9 George's Place (accessed by granite steps) will be retained for use and a new accessible main entrance will be provided to the new extension via a level access public realm area at the corner of George's Place and George's Lane. The existing non-original gates to the courtyard onto Kelly's Avenue will be replaced with a pedestrian access gate to the courtyard and a larger gate to be opened for emergency vehicular access only.

The proposed development comprises of:

- Full retrofit and refurbishment of no. 9 George's Place (Floor Area: 484 sqm) to accommodate new use as a Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning with studio spaces, teaching rooms, multi-purpose rooms / meeting rooms and associated social spaces.
- Full thermal efficiency upgrading of both protected structures to best conservation practice.
- Demolition of existing two-storey lean-to extension to no. 9 George's Place which is structurally unsound and in very poor condition (Footprint: 83 sqm, Floor area: approx. 166sqm).
- Construction of a new three-storey-over-lower-ground-floor extension to replace the existing two-storey, lean-to extension to provide universal access to all levels of no. 9 George's Place and to provide new multi-purpose studios and meeting rooms for the Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning with two small terraces at upper level. Extension approx. 11.5 x 10.4m footprint, area c. 315 sqm.
- The Ground Floor extension provides level entrance from street level to a double-height entrance foyer. The ground floor of the new extension is split level to provide access to the existing lower ground floor level of the protected structure. It also provides lift & stair access to the upper floors and contains a multipurpose room and Changing Places facility.
- First floor extension contains a lift & stair core, multipurpose room and glazed link to no. 9 George's Place.
- Second floor extension contains lift & stair core, multipurpose room, office and glazed link to no. 9 George's Place.
- Third floor extension contains lift & stair core, terrace to the rear accessed from the corridor and multipurpose room with small terrace to the front.
- Full retrofit and refurbishment of former Wash House, Kelly's Avenue to include insertion of internal platform lift in Wash House for Universal Access, revised internal layout to accommodate new use and full thermal efficiency upgrading to best conservation practice. A small existing lean-to shed to the rear of the Wash House will be removed.
- The external courtyard between the two buildings will be retained to facilitate access and circulation between the two buildings. It will be landscaped with a pergola overhead and seating to enhance the circulation route between the two buildings.
- External enhancement of the boundaries of the site including retention of the section of original front plinth wall and railings and replacement of the non-original section of front boundary wall and railings with new contemporary plinth wall and railings to match proportions of the original railings to George's Place. Wall, railings

and gate piers to Kelly's Avenue to be retained and non-original gates to courtyard to be replaced with new contemporary gate. This new gate will be a pedestrian access gate to the courtyard and a larger gate to be opened for emergency vehicular access only.

## **5. Thermal Upgrades of the Protected Structures**

The project will be an exemplar of best practice sensitive upgrading of protected structures to improve energy efficiency. This is detailed in the *High-Level Strategy Report for Thermal Upgrades* by Carrig Conservation. Works to improve the energy efficiency will have regard to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's publication on 'Improving Energy efficiency in Traditional Buildings – Guidance for Specifiers and Installers' (2023) and the Irish Standard IS EN 16883:2017 'Conservation of Cultural Heritage - Guidelines for Improving the Energy Performance of Historic Buildings' (2017).

## **6. Design Approach**

The aim of this project is to bring these two vacant protected structures back into use through best-practice energy upgrades and retrofitting and with the insertion of a contemporary extension to provide universal access and high-quality educational spaces. By reusing these existing buildings as a Centre for Lifelong Creative Learning dlr aims to bring vitality to the surrounding area and to enhance the streetscape for all.

The distinctive character of the Wash House (described in more detail in the Conservation Historical Background report) will be retained through its sensitive restoration in line with best conservation practice. The front elevation of the Wash House will be restored with glazing inserted in the blocked-up opes bringing light back into the building and enhancing the front elevation. This glazing has been designed to reflect the original design of the Wash House.

The extension to no. 9 has been designed with a glazed link to eaves level separating the historic building from the new contemporary extension. The clear separation of the protected structure from the extension allows the original form of the former Kelly's Hotel building to be read on the streetscape. The stepping up in height of the extension from the eaves level of the protected structure towards the former Fire station building is sympathetic to the context of the protected structure and reflects the varied heights and forms of the buildings in the immediate area, including the much higher apartment blocks to the south side of George's Place.

The materials of the new contemporary extension include a glazed link connecting to the rendered facade of the protected structure, and a rendered finish to the new facade containing the entrance doors. These materials positioned adjacent to the protected structure

are sympathetic to the finish and character of the 19<sup>th</sup> century former hotel building. The circulation element of the new extension at the corner of George's Place and George's Lane will be clad in a perforated metal cladding with some glazing behind, giving the opportunity to incorporate led design elements into the facade. These led elements could be used as a projected art display within the smart facade. This highly contemporary finish is key to the design approach of clearly identifying the new intervention from the protected structure. The language of the materials identifies this new Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning as an innovative space with a presence on the streetscape that encourages the public to visually engage with the building.

The new extension provides a level, universal and welcoming access to the new Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning with a new public realm area to the front of the entrance with seating and planting. The split-level ground floor of the extension matches the lower ground floor level of no. 9. At this level, a new social space in the protected structure opens onto the courtyard with a pedestrian route across the courtyard to the Wash House. The new pedestrian gate from Kelly's Avenue gives access to this courtyard which will be landscaped and enhanced to have a positive impact on the streetscape. The weigh-bridge in the courtyard is being retained as part of the distinctive character of the setting.

The first and second floors of the extension give access through the glazed link to the first and second floors of no. 9 George's Place. They also provide a multipurpose room to the rear at each level. The top floor of the extension is significantly smaller in size providing access to a multipurpose room and to small terraces to the rear and to the front.

## **7. Conservation Approach**

The conservation, preservation and re-use of these historic buildings will positively enhance the character of the area. The proposed sensitive, appropriate and innovative reuse of the protected structures will follow the principles of best conservation practice. All the proposed works will have regard to the policy objectives set out in Chapter 11 Heritage and Conservation and Chapter 12 Development Management of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028. The following policies and objectives are particularly relevant:

### 11.4.1.2 Policy Objective HER8: Work to Protected Structures

It is a Policy Objective to:

- i. Protect structures included on the RPS from any works that would negatively impact their special character and appearance.
- ii. Ensure that any development proposals to Protected Structures, their curtilage and setting shall have regard to the 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' published by the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- iii. Ensure that all works are carried out under supervision of a qualified professional with specialised conservation expertise.
- iv. Ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure and/or its setting is sensitively sited and designed, and is appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout, and materials.
- v. Ensure that the form and structural integrity of the Protected Structure is retained in any redevelopment and that the relationship between the Protected Structure and any complex of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, or views and vistas from within the grounds of the structure are respected.
- vi. Respect the special interest of the interior, including its plan form, hierarchy of spaces, architectural detail, fixtures and fittings and materials.
- vii. Ensure that new and adapted uses are compatible with the character and special interest of the Protected Structure.
- viii. Protect the curtilage of Protected Structures and to refuse planning permission for inappropriate development within the curtilage and attendant grounds that would adversely impact on the special character of the Protected Structure.
- ix. Protect and retain important elements of built heritage including historic gardens, stone walls, entrance gates and piers and any other associated curtilage features.
- x. Ensure historic landscapes and gardens associated with Protected Structures are protected from inappropriate development (consistent with NPO 17 of the NPF and RPO 9.30 of the RSES).

#### 11.4.1.5 Policy Objective HER11: Energy Efficiency of Protected Structures

It is a Policy Objective to have regard to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's publication on 'Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings' (2010) and the Irish Standard IS EN 16883:2017 'Conservation of Cultural Heritage - Guidelines for Improving the Energy Performance of Historic Buildings' (2017) and any future advisory documents in assessing proposed works on Protected Structures.

#### 11.4.3.1 Policy Objective HER19: Protection of Buildings in Council Ownership

It is a Policy Objective to:

- i. Continue to demonstrate best practice with regard to Protected Structures, Recorded Monuments and other elements of architectural heritage in the ownership and care of the Council.
- ii. Ensure any works are undertaken having regard to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 'Advice Series' publications on how best to carry out repairs and maintain historic buildings and ensure the use of specialist practitioners in the field of conservation.



All works to the protected structures will be carried out in line with best conservation practice and in line with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Architectural Heritage Protection for Planning Authorities (2011), and the Department's Advice Series on the repair of brick work, historic windows, roofs and energy efficiency in historic buildings. The Conservation Historical Background and Photographic Survey Report provide more detailed information on both protected structures.

The methodology will adopt the following sequence in the assessment and development of the conservation works:

- Stabilise deteriorated historic materials and features.
- Protect and maintain historic materials and features.
- Repair (stabilise, consolidate, and conserve) historic materials and features.
- Implement new intervention in accordance with conservation best practice.
- All repair works are to be carried out in accordance with the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011). Original historic fabric will only be replaced where repair is not possible and will be with appropriate like-for-like materials.
- Repairs to the roofs of no. 9 George's Place and the Wash House will be in a natural slate finish to match the existing.
- Repairs and replacement where required of the cast-iron rainwater goods, timber eaves and rafters will be with like-for-like materials. The use of traditional and compatible materials will be used for any repairs to ensure the historic fabric is not negatively impacted by any proposed works.
- The timber sliding sash windows will be retained and repaired by a specialist contractor where possible. Following a condition assessment non-original glass may be replaced with slimline double-glazed units. A secondary glazing solution will be installed as required for a thermal upgrade. Proposed new windows to Wash House will be timber sliding sash with slimline double glazing designed to reflect the original fenestration.
- Alterations and interventions will be executed to the highest conservation standards.
- Original features of architectural and historic interest will be retained, and new work will be readily identifiable as such.
- All works will be carried out to high standards, under the supervision of a qualified professional with conservation expertise. Contractors will have experience dealing with historic buildings.

- External fittings (such as meter boxes, security cameras, burglar alarms) will be sited to minimise their visual impact.
- Works to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations shall be guided by the principles of minimum intervention to the historic fabric. In considering proposals to meet Part M regard should be had to the Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht advice series 'Access: Improving the Accessibility of Historic Buildings and Places', (2011).

## **8. Environmental Impact Assessment Screening**

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening is required in order to determine whether the proposed development should be subject to an EIA, and if so, whether an EIAR should be prepared in respect of it. The EIA Screening has been undertaken by Traynor Environmental Ltd and concludes that there is no requirement for an EIA to be carried out and no requirement for an EIAR to be prepared. The EIA Screening and Determination are included as appendices (see Appendix 1 + 2).

The EIA Screening concludes as follows: *It is concluded having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the subject site, that there is no likelihood of significant effects as a result of the proposed development on the environment (direct, indirect, or cumulatively with other development) and therefore it is considered that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is not required in this instance.*

## **9. Appropriate Assessment Screening**

The proposed development is subject to the Guidance for Planning Authorities on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, November 2009) and S.I. No. 476 of 2011 Planning and Development (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2011. This requires that screening is carried out for all projects to examine if any effects are likely on Natura 2000 Sites, that is, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). A Screening Report has been prepared by Traynor Environmental Ltd. which concluded that a full Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment is not required. Therefore, in accordance with SI 476, 2011, Section 250, Planning and Development (Amendment) No. 3 Regulations 2011, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has determined that an Appropriate Assessment is not required. The AA Screening Report and Determination are included as appendices (see Appendix 3+ 4).

The AA Screening concludes as follows: *It is of the opinion of the authors that an AA of the proposed development is not required as it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information provided in this report, that the proposed development, individually or in*

*combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites. Therefore, this proposed project does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment Process, i.e., a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).*

#### **10. Car and Bicycle Parking**

The proposal does not provide additional parking and does not impact on existing on-street car parking or on the existing on-street disabled parking bay. The reuse of these buildings at a prominent junction in Dún Laoghaire will tie in with existing cycle and pedestrian routes to connect with proposed active travel routes. Secure bicycle parking is included within the scheme. Bicycle parking and bike e-charging are proposed to the side of no. 9 George's Place in a prominent, secure and convenient location at the junction of George's Place and Kelly's Avenue to provide visual encouragement to cycle to the new Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning. The proposed renovation and extension of these buildings aims to bring more vitality to the surrounding area and aims to increase footfall making the area more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

#### **11. Conclusion**

The proposed reuse of these two vacant protected structures as a Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning will facilitate the reuse of existing and historic buildings, contribute to town centre regeneration, and bring added activity and vibrancy to the area.

## 12. Photos of Existing Buildings and Context (See also Photographic Survey Report)



Junction of George's Place and Kelly's Avenue, with rendered façade of no. 9 George's Place fronting onto George's Place and red-brick façade of former Wash House fronting onto Kelly's Avenue.



Existing lean-to extension to be removed and replaced with contemporary extension to provide universal access and multi-purpose creative / educational spaces on each level.



Existing front elevation of Wash House to be restored with windows inserted in blocked-up original opes. Courtyard to be landscaped with pergola overhead between buildings.