



Parks & Landscape Services Section, Municipal Services Department

**Proposed Development of a Running Track  
& Associated Facilities at St. Thomas Estate,  
Tibradden Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16 in  
Proximity to a Protected Structure (St.  
Thomas House)  
PC/PKS/01/19**

**Appendix 3 – Conservation Report**

## PART VIII – APPENDIX – Development to Attendant Grounds

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The purpose of this appendix is to set out the impact of the proposed development on its site and immediate surroundings in the context of the proposal's location on the attendant grounds to St. Thomas House, a protected structure. The review will demonstrate that the development has no visual impact on the protected structure, its immediate context and the spaces associated with the protected structure.

### CORE DATA

Building Address	St. Thomas Estate Kilmashogue Whitechurch Dublin 16.
Building Owner	Dundrum South Dublin Athletic Club
OS Map Reference	3454-B (Scale 1:2500) ITM Centre Point Co-Ordinates: 714580, 725243
Local Authority	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
Brief Description	The attendant lands of St.Thomas House

The reference protected structure is St. Thomas, a two-storey, three-bay Georgian country house dating from late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The house is set on approx. 4 acres and the curtilage includes a walled garden, outhouses, farmyard buildings and original estate boundary walls.

Multiple and extensive alterations have been carried out at certain periods in the history of the principal building, many original features remain, and the building is generally in fair condition.

Some of the farm buildings have been converted into residential use and, as they are occupied, are in reasonable condition although much altered (particularly the elevations). Unoccupied farm buildings include a barn and a forge as well as a range of storage buildings which are all in poor condition.

#### SUBJECT SITE

The subject site lies to the south of the protected structure and is in the form of 2 large agricultural fields with a shallow slope to the south east and running from the Tibbradden road to the eastern boundary with Ballinascorney Golf Club.

The Subject site is bounded to the south by a smaller field and following this Stillorgan Rugby Club training pitches (permitted and to be constructed) To the west lies a residential dwelling house and garden.

Previous  
Applications

Planning

**DLR – P/1319/15** Change of Use and development of St. Thomas House and lands for sports and recreation use.

#### **SPECIFIC LOCAL OBJECTIVE – Development plan SLO 158**

*'To support and promote the sporting and amenity use of the lands known as St. Thomas Estate, Tibbradden Road, Whitechurch - towards the development of facilities and activities which would integrate with the wider community and established regional parklands and promote the development of athletics by Dundrum South Dublin Athletic Club in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown'*

### **HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT LANDS**

The availability of good farming land in sheltered valleys and the proximity of the commercial centre of Dublin City meant that this area of county Dublin was always well populated and reasonably prosperous. St. Thomas is one of many country houses which were developed here by the landed gentry and the more prosperous merchant classes in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Marlay House, The Hermitage (St. Enda's) and Tibbradden are all examples of the country seats developed by the landowners in the area. Other significant buildings such as Killakee House, Cloragh and Larch Hill are no longer standing.

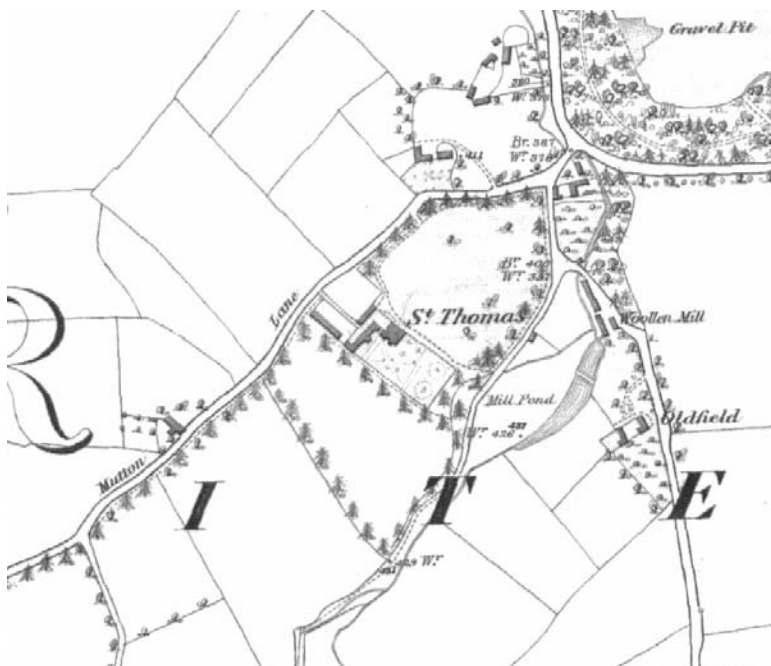


Figure 1 Extract from Ordnance Survey 6" map of 1837

On the Ordnance Survey 6 inch map of 1837, St. Thomas appears as a substantial property with a walled garden laid out to the Southeast of the house and three ranges of farm buildings, set in two distinct farmyard enclosures, to the Northwest. The house is approached via a tree-lined driveway accessed from Mutton Lane (Tibbradden

Road). A small gate lodge is visible on the map adjacent to the entrance but is not described as such on the map. The house, farmyards and small parkland to the front of the house are all shaded indicating the demesne, but the extent of farmland attached to the estate is unclear.

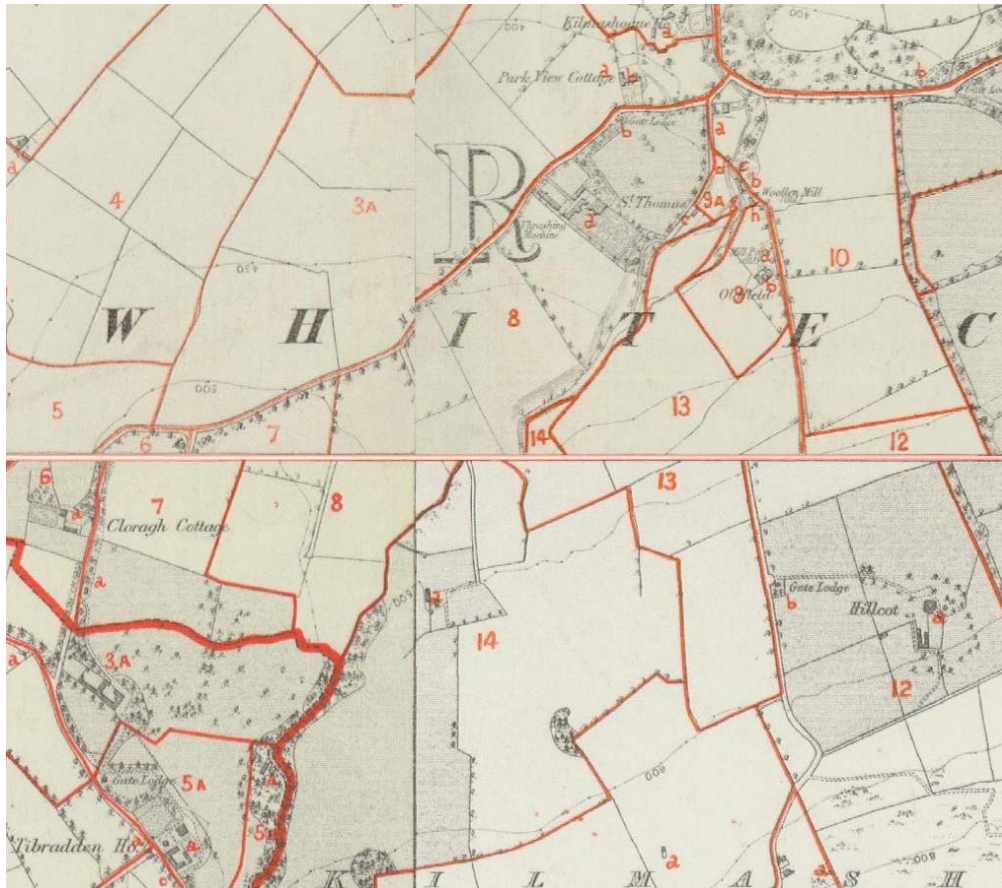


Figure 2 Extract from Griffith Land Valuation Map of 1848

The Griffith Land Valuation map shows the extent of the estate in 1848. The demesne is as per the Ordnance Survey map of 1837 and the attendant grounds consist of three large fields to the southwest of the principal building which stretch from Mutton Lane (Tibradden Road) to the stream which runs along the eastern boundary of the estate.

A small cottage to the east of the laneway which bounds the estate on the eastern side is part of the estate but the plot to the northeast of this, is associated with the mill and is not part of the estate in 1848.



Figure 3 Extract from Ordnance Survey Map of 2013

The development of the M50 motorway in the late 1990s has had a major impact on the demesne of St. Thomas. As can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 2013, the motorway has been cut through the original parkland to the front of the house thus significantly altering the prospect from the house. The gate lodge and the original estate boundaries to the northeast of the estate have been lost. Spoil from the development of the M50 has been piled up along the new front boundary of the estate creating a very high “berm” along the northern edge of the site and completely altering the site levels. The new boundary wall is formed with un-rendered concrete block. A small ornamental pond has been developed in front of the house. This is not part of the original setting and it has been suggested that it was formed in order to deal with the surface water run-off caused by the altered ground levels in this area.

The most westerly ranges of farm buildings have been lost at some stage in the twentieth century although the enclosing walls of the farmyard areas remain intact. The attendant lands to the south are no longer a function of the estate and are now almost entirely separated from the immediate context of the house and its grounds.



## CURRENT CONTEXT AND CONDITION



*Figure 4 - View East of subject site. St. Thomas House and grounds to the LHS. Tibbradden road running to the bottom of the frame.*

The attendant fields to the south of the gardens of the protected structure are an undersigned landscape which was used for farming. The eastern edge of the site drops significantly to a river valley area where a partially design landscape is in place in the context of the river bank and legacy access driveways and boundaries.

The subject site is split by a low ill-defined hedgerow and palisade fence. The site levels are unaltered, sloping upward following the natural slope of the landscape to the south.

There are two predominant standings of trees on the attendant lands. To the northern edge lies a stand of mature beech. These trees are approaching end of natural life and a number have fallen. To the north west corner of the subject lands a better formed stand of mature trees lies. All of these standings are to be retained in full.

### DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The proposal is to construct a 400m athletics track and adjoining indoor sports facility building. The development is located some 80M to the south of the walled garden edge and farm outbuildings of the protected structure.

It is proposed to design the landscape around the track and building to increase tree coverage and density, to model and berm the landscape to provide walkways and running tracks connecting to the rear of the protected structure. It is proposed to adjust the M50 era motorway wall and realign the gated entrance to St. Thomas House.

It is proposed to introduce a new public realm shared surface pedestrian and cycle route aligned to the Tibbradden road and alter the stone wall boundary along the line of the attendant lands.

## CONSERVATION IMPACT

In our opinion, the proposed Sports and Recreation use for the property can be successfully accommodated without adverse impact on the character the attendant grounds.

The use of the subject site as a training facility for multiple sports users will involve the development of cross-country running trails and shorter "track" areas along with areas for training for field events such as long jump and high jump. We consider that the development of these facilities will be low impact and the character of elements of the designed landscape such as the stream and wooded area, the walled garden and the rear meadow can be successfully preserved alongside the new use for the site.

The proposal will require the successful management of vehicular access and the incorporation of adequate car parking facilities within the site. While this will have an impact on the setting, we consider that these facilities will be successfully and discreetly accommodated without adverse impact on the protected structure at all. We note that the prospect from within the house is already much altered by the development of the motorway and associated upgrading of local access roads to the North, and by the large and overgrown walled garden and planting to the south.

## CONSERVATION APPRAISAL

This Conservation Appraisal is an analysis of the attendant grounds of St. Thomas House, based on the criteria and guidelines set out in the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht '*Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' (2011), Chapter 13, *Curtilage and Attendant Grounds*

This will form the basis of a Conservation Dossier for the Site which will be expanded upon at each stage of the project and will be used to inform the development proposals and architectural design at each phase of development.

The following analytical and investigate works are being undertaken at present:

A comprehensive record survey of the site boundaries and features including a measured survey and record photography. It is to be noted that there are no other built structures, or original designed landscapes within the attendant grounds

## PROPOSED WORKS

Development works proposed as part of this application are for the construction of a large multisport track and sports building with associated carparking, access roadways, shared surfaces and pathways.

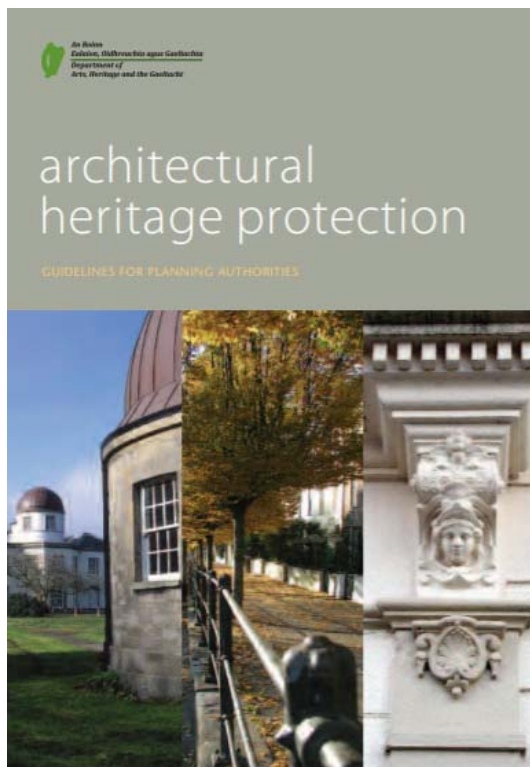
The following is a list of the particular works proposed as part of this planning application and the conservation impact in each case:

	PROPOSED WORKS	COMMENTS / MITIGATION	IMPACT
1	Development of Shared surface pathway along the Tibradden road.	It is proposed to develop a 3.5m wide shared surface pathway to allow full safe pedestrian access along this section of the Tibradden Road. This includes a number of different conditions dependent on the respective level differences between the subject site and the public roadway.	The works are proposed in an area of the grounds that has been much altered following the development of the M50. The works involve the removal of a section of the modern motorway wall and re-alignment of the entrance drive condition to St. Tomas House.  The works involve the reduction in height of the stone boundary wall to the attendant lands to the Tibradden road and the formation of a new public pathway elevated from the roadway.
2	New Carparking provision and vehicular access to the attendant lands	The modification and enlargement of an existing farm gate to allow safe access and egress of cars including facilitation of sightlines and setback of the site boundary. The car park provision to incorporate both set down and parking facilities for 140 cars.	Removal of the rubble stone boundary wall in the immediate adjacency to the gate. Formation of a new entranceway and set back pedestrian shared surface.  This car park area is grassed at present. However, a gravel surface is proposed for the car park which will be fully permeable and in keeping with the agricultural/parkland nature of the proposal  Provision will have to be made for cars at some location on the site and the location proposed is conveniently located for access to all buildings yet shielded from view by the existence of the reduced wall and mature trees.
3	Development of New Sports Facility Building	The front of the development set back some distance from the site edge and at single storey level only. Materiality to reference farm building arrangement with a small 'ports Stableyard' to act as a screen to the larger two storey hall gable.  The building set back at an angle to embed the long depth of the building within the landscaped contour.	From the public realm of Tibradden road the development proposal will not be generally visible when approached from the north – moving uphill along the Tibradden road. When approaching the site from the elevated south, the development will be visible but this is mitigated by its level placement and with the use of green roofing to that aspect. The proposed landscape berming and planting regime to the southern side of the site will further screen the development.



			The built structure will not be generally visible from St. Thomas House and lands due to the walled garden context to the south of the structure.
4	Development of 400M Athletics Track	The large agricultural field area is well suited for the provision of the track. It is proposed to level the area such as to screen the track from the higher ground to the south by cutting to the landscape and forming new bermed ground to the south-eastern edge,	<p>The track will not be generally visible on approach from the north to the south due to its level setting. The track will be visible from the elevated ground to the south of the site, however this will be mitigated by the extensive replanting regime proposed.</p> <p>It should also be noted that the works include for the undergrounding of overhead electrical lines which will be of some amenity gain to the visual context of the site.</p>

## STANDARDS



All works to attendant grounds are to be carried out in accordance with current best practice with regard to material usage and, in particular, in accordance with the following publications:

- *Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2011.*
- *Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Advice Series*

With reference to the above guidance the development is reviewed against the relevant section for Attendant grounds on the site:

### 13.7 Development within the Attendant Grounds

**13.7.1** *It is essential to understand the character of a site before development proposals can be considered.*

*Where attendant grounds of particular significance are proposed for development, a conservation plan could be prepared in advance of any planning application which would identify the significance of the site and locate*

*areas within the designed landscape, if any, which could accept change and development and those areas which could not without damaging the architectural heritage of the place.*

We note that the attendant grounds to St. Thomas House are not of particular significance. The Griffith Land Valuation map shows the extent of the estate in 1848. The Demesne is as per the Ordnance survey map of 1837 and the attendant grounds consist of three large fields to the southwest of the principal building. These fields are fully separated from the defined walled garden and outbuildings and do not have a direct relationship with the house.

**13.7.2 When dealing with applications for works within the attendant grounds of a protected structure, a visit to the site should be considered an essential part of the assessment. The planning authority should consider:**

*a) Would the development affect the character of the protected structure?*

The character and setting of the protected structure is defined by it's relationship to the immediate context rather than its extended surrounds. The house is nestled into the landscape and not prominent over it. The development is located some 80m to the south of the defined rear boundary of the protected structure and has no interface with it. We consider that it does not affect the character of the protected structure.



*Figure 5 - Aerial looking north over St. Thomas outbuildings noting spoil heap to front and M50 Context. Southern Boundary to attendant lands at lower edge of image*

*b) Would the proposed works affect the relationship of the protected structure to its surroundings and attendant grounds?*

*As noted in the above point, the protected structure is embedded into its immediate landscape. To the north, the relationship of the protected structure is defined by the spoil ground following the development of the M50. This screens and hides the building from the public realm, the building and its forecourt/driveway are only visible on immediate approach.*

The attendant lands and subject site are to the south of the protected structure. A large deep walled garden with a substantial boundary wall and mature landscape provide a significant buffer and screening from the protected structure to the subject site.



*Figure 6 - Approximate view from the front entrance of the proposed development looking north to the walled garden boundary and showing the extent of screening.*





*Figure 7 Boundary Wall to protected structure walled garden as viewed from attendant lands. This is a robust and clear boundary.*



*Figure 8 - Boundary wall to outbuildings as viewed from proposed car parking area. The 4M wall is clearly defined and screens the out-buildings from the attendant lands.*

The protected structure does not have an explicit visual relationship to its attendant grounds.

The proposed works, their placement and siting within the much larger attendant grounds are at such a distance as to be visually and functionally separate from the protected structure. We consider that the development would not affect the relationship between the protected structure and its attendant lands.



*Figure 9 - View looking north with subject site shown in context to southern boundary and screening to adjacent protected structure.*

*c) Would the protected structure remain the focus of its setting? For example, a new building erected between a structure and a feature within the attendant grounds will alter the character of both;*

The Protected structure will remain the focus of its own setting. It is visually, and operationally linked to its immediate garden only. The principal approach-remains unaffected. The visibility of both front and rear facades and immediate context remain unchanged.



*d) Do the proposed works require an alteration of the profile of the landscape, for example, the creation of a golf course? How would this affect the character of the protected structure and its attendant grounds?*

The proposed works do require an alteration of the landscape in the adjustment of levels to the furthestmost field to accommodate the proposed track. There are no material level changes proposed in the attendant lands immediately contiguous to the protected structure. We consider that the distance and separation of those works requiring a change in landscape profile are such that they will not have any contextual or material affect on the protected structure and its immediate context.

*e) Do the proposals respect important woodland and parkland? Do they conserve significant built features and landscape features?*

The proposals do respect existing parkland and woodland. The site extends to the east with a steep fall to a mature river valley with historic and legacy pathways and routes. No works are proposed to these areas. Significant landscape features located in this part of the site are fully preserved.



*Figure 10 - View south within river valley with subject development to Far RHS. No development works proposed here other than site safety clearance and making good.*



*Figure 11 - View south further along river valley showing immediate context of the eastern edge of the site.*





*Figure 12 - Existing defined estate routes and legacy pathways retained. Site clearance and making good repairs only proposed.*

*f) Are there important views of or from the structure that could be damaged by the proposed development?  
Would important vistas be obstructed by new development?*

The nature and placement of the Protected structure is such that it is completely inward looking and affords no views from it beyond its immediate context of front driveway and lawn to the north side, and to the walled garden and screening trees to the south. The protected structure is not visible at any point from the public realm.



*Figure 13 Outline of proposed building of most prominent view from Tibradden Road*

*g) Would distant views of important architectural or natural landmarks be blocked or changed? Would a significant skyline be altered?*

No distant views of important architectural or natural landmarks be blocked or changed.

The proposed development, while significant in size is set into the site in a manner that minimises its bulk and size. It does not break the treeline in view from any point in the public realm.

The development is located on a north facing sloped side to the foothills of the Dublin mountains. It does not impede any important vistas and does not break the skyline from the point of view of the protected structure.



*Figure 14 - Outline of proposed structure from point of view of improved vehicle entrance.*



*h) Even where the proposed development is at a distance from the protected structure, could it still have an impact? This could include tall or bulky buildings interrupting views of or from the protected structure and other features of the designed landscape;*

St. Thomas House is wholly embedded to its immediate landscape. It affords no views beyond its own immediate gardens. The proposed development is not visible from the house and as such may be considered not to have an impact in this regard. In this case the designed landscape would be considered the walled garden/orchard and the abutting farm buildings (now derelict). These are also not affected by the proposed development.



*Figure 15 - View of St. Thomas House from the north elevated mound, showing extent of mature planting and visual separation from immediate surroundings*



*Figure 16 - Elevated view from approximate first floor position of proposed development. This indicates screening from the boundary wall and treescape.*

*i) Where the new works would not be directly visible from the protected structure, would they be visible from the approaches to the structure or from other important sites or features within the attendant grounds? If so, would this be acceptable?*

The new works will not be visible from the approach to St. Thomas House from the north travelling south – up the Tibbradden Road. In deed the house itself is fully enclosed behind a protective motorway screening wall. The new works would be visible approaching St. Thomas house on the Tibbradden road moving south to north, however St. Thomas House itself is screened from this approach and as such there is no situation where the House and the proposed development would be visually associated with each other on this approach. The nature of the attendant grounds as large agricultural fields is that they themselves have no important sites or features themselves.

*j) What effect would the scale, height, massing, alignment or materials of a proposed construction have on the protected structure and its attendant grounds?*

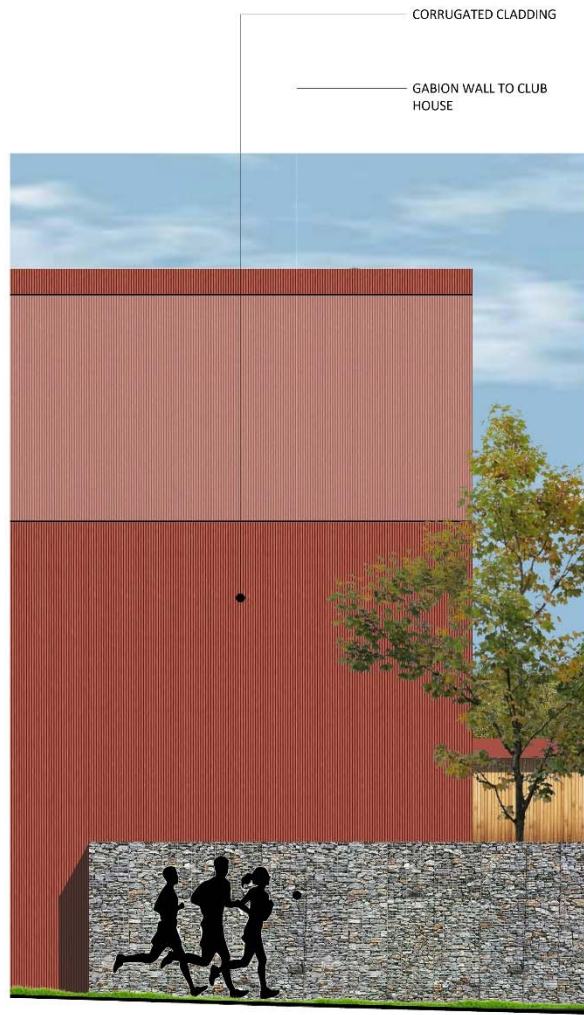
The scale, height, massing and alignment of the development have been carefully considered to reflect the agricultural context and history. The following is of note –

- The development is set back significantly from both the public road edge and the boundary of the protected structure.
- The development presents its gable elevation only to the approach views. The significant long elevations run to the depth of the site and away from the protected structure.
- The massing of the development is offset by using the existing site topography to partially conceal the height of the building.
- The development presents a single storey screened ‘Athletics Stable Yard’ as the first part of the building – visually breaking down the form and mass of the main sports hall.
- The materials proposed include a significant percentage of green roof to the north and west, mitigating the part of the building most visible from higher elevations to the southern approach from Tibbradden Road.
- Gabion walls are proposed to the single storey screening walls with locally sourced stone sympathetic to that used in the surrounding boundary walls.
- Gates and points of access adopt an agricultural aesthetic – large sliding timber gates on rails, to maintain that sense.





TYPICAL BAY - NORTH EAST ELEVATION



GABION WALL TO CLUB YARD - NORTH EAST ELEVATION

The necessary use of modern materials for cladding and covering are moderated by the adoption of an agricultural palette of dull reds/greens/warm greys rather than bright industrial colours. The use of open jointed timber cladding and screening, again borrowed from the agricultural palette, across each of the elevations further softens the scale and mass of the proposed building.



MAIN ENTRANCE - NORTH WEST ELEVATION

NBROCK / COBRIEN  
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