

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TEMPLAR PLACE SHD

BALBRIGGAN, CO. DUBLIN

August 2021



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CONTENTS

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Description of proposed development
- 1.2 Scope of report
- 1.3 Assessment methodology

2.0 Receiving environment and heritage context

- 2.1 Statutory context
- 2.2 Brief account of the historical development of the Balbriggan Town Centre
- 2.3 Critical description of the site and environs

3.0 Assessment of significance of the built environment

- 3.1 Architectural conservation area
- 3.2 Existing buildings within site
- 3.3 Protected structures in the vicinity of the site

4.0 Architectural Heritage Considerations

5.0 Summary Description of the Proposed Development

6.0 Impact of proposed development

- 6.1 Proposed physical Interventions
 - 6.1.1 Demolition of existing buildings
 - 6.1.2 Site excavation
 - 6.1.3 Boundary walls
- 6.2 Anticipated impact on ACA
 - 6.2.1 Impact on adjacent streetscapes
 - 6.2.2 Visual impact on structures of heritage interest in the vicinity
 - 6.2.3 Visual impact on wider environs

7.0 Response to ABP Opinion

8.0 Summation

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Molloy & Associates Conservation Architects on behalf of Rhonellen Developments to assess the architectural heritage impacts arising from the proposed residential development on the brownfield site formerly occupied by 'Quinnsworth, later Tesco' in Balbriggan Town Centre, Co. Dublin. The site is centrally positioned within the boundary of the Balbriggan Historic Centre Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). None of the buildings within the applicant site are protected structures.



Fig. 1 Site boundary in Red and structures identified on the RPS shaded in yellow, those included on the NIAH are identified with a green star

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development comprises a Build to Rent (BTR), Strategic Housing Development (SHD) as follows: Demolition of the existing buildings (former shopping centre and associated structures). Construction of 3 no. apartment blocks (Blocks A - C) ranging in height from 3 to 6 storeys (with Block B over 3 no. lower courtyard floors) providing a total of 101 units (19 no. studios, 41 no. 1-beds, 41 no. 2-beds). Provision of Resident Support Facilities/Resident Services and Amenities, 2 no. retail units, car parking (at ground floor), cycle parking, ESB substation/switch room, plant, bin stores, open space, landscaping, boundary treatments, all associated site works and services provision.

1.2 SCOPE OF REPORT

This Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) consists of a visual site inspection, a review of the historical evolution of the site and an architectural appraisal of the extant building fabric in the surrounding environs to establish an understanding of the heritage significance of the site and to identify and assess impacts of the proposed development. Primary heritage considerations within this report include;

- the impact of the proposed development on the character of the town centre ACA in acknowledgement of policy objectives in the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023
- the potential impact of the proposed development on all heritage building in the vicinity
- the visual impact when viewed from significant locations around the town and the potential impact of the proposed development on the wider environs

1.3 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a desktop study of known historical and cartography resources, site inspections with a visual study of the streetscape context and an assessment of the building fabric within the site.

It identifies the heritage significance of the site and describes and evaluates the potential impact that the proposed development may have on the architectural heritage within the site and in the wider urban vicinity.

The assessment of the impact of the proposed development is based on drawings and verified views prepared by MDO Architects, Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Land Planning and Design, ORS Consulting Engineers and D3D Computer Modelling.

2.0 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE CONTEXT

2.1 STATUTORY CONTEXT

The site is centrally positioned within the Balbriggan Historic Town Centre ACA, the boundary of which is identified on Fig. 2 below. There are no protected structures within the applicant site listed on the Record of Protected Structures in the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023, nor are any structures identified on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).

The Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023

Architectural Heritage Objectives in the Fingal County Development Plan are listed below;

Objective CH32: Avoid the removal of structures and distinctive elements (such as boundary treatments, street furniture, paving and landscaping) that positively contribute to the character of an Architectural Conservation Area.

Objective CH33: Promote the sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and re-use of the historic building stock and encourage the retention of the original fabric such as windows, doors, wall renders, roof coverings, shopfronts, pub fronts and other significant features of historic buildings, whether protected or not.

Objective CH34: Seek the retention of surviving historic plot sizes and street patterns in the villages and towns of Fingal and incorporate ancient boundaries, such as burgage plots and townland boundaries, into re-developments.

Objective CH35: Require that proposed infrastructural and public utility works within Fingal do not remove historic street furniture such as limestone or granite kerbs, cobblestones, cast-iron post-boxes, water pumps, milestones and street lighting, except where exceptional need has been clearly established.

Objective CH36: Sensitively design, located and rationalise modern street furniture and elements such as utility boxes, cables, posts, antenna and signage.

Objective CH37: Seek the retention, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the historic building stock and vernacular heritage of Fingal in both the towns and rural areas of the County by deterring the replacement of good quality older buildings with modern structures and by protecting (through the use of Architectural Conservation Areas and the Record of Protected Structures and in the normal course of Development Management) these buildings where they contribute to the character of an area or town and/or where they are rare examples of a structure type.

Within the Development Plan, Fingal County Council provides guidance regarding planning applications in or adjacent to ACAs:

Objective DMS157: Ensure that any new development or alteration of a building within or adjoining an ACA positively enhances the character of the area and is appropriate in terms of proposed design, including scale, mass, height, proportions, density, layout materials, plot ratio and building lines.

Objective DMS158: All planning applications for works in an Architectural Conservation Area shall have regard to the information outlined in Table 12.11. Please refer to Section 6.2.2.4 below entitled 'Summary of anticipated impact on the ACA as adhering with Table 12.11 – 'Direction for Proposed Development within Architectural Conservation Areas' of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023'.

In 2008 an Historic Landscape Characterisation in Fingal (Balbriggan and Environs) was undertaken on behalf of Fingal County Council.

A statement of significance for the Balbriggan Historic Core ACA is currently being prepared by Fingal County Council, but has not yet been published.

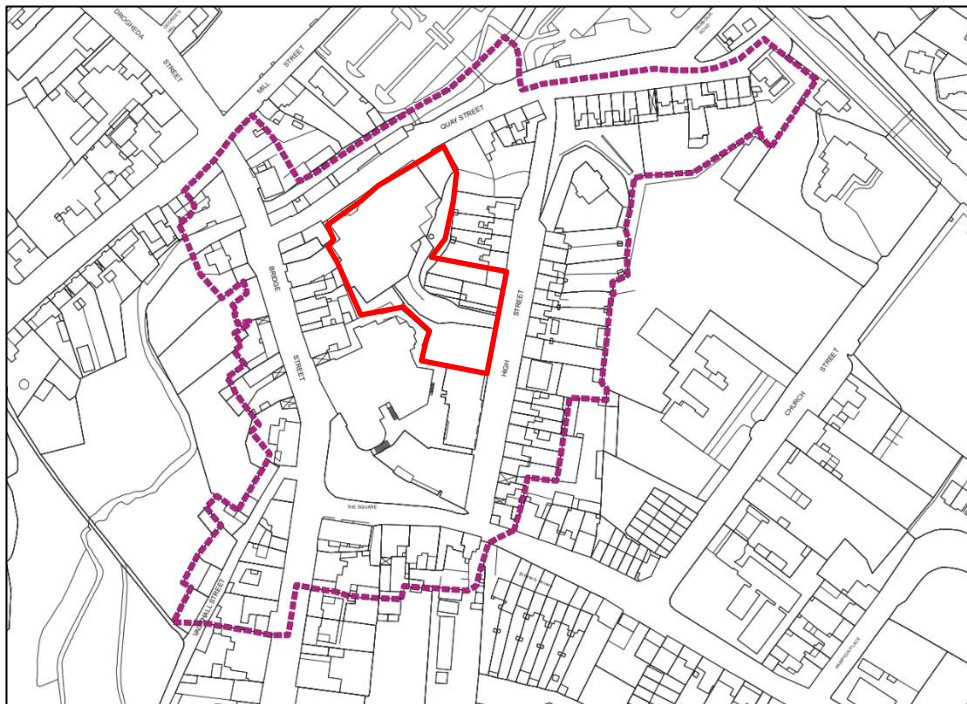


Fig. 2 Map extract from Fingal County Council website with a dashed purple line depicting boundary of Balbriggan Historic Centre ACA, with approximate outline of development site overlaid in red.

Protected Structures

As previously stated, there are no protected structures within the applicant lands. There are a number of protected structures in the vicinity of the site which are identified on Fig.1, above, including No.11 Bridge Street which adjoins the western boundary.

Table 1, below, lists the structures on the RPS in the vicinity of the site and also includes buildings identified on the NIAH.

RPS Reference	Address	Description	NIAH reference	Rating
0040	11 Bridge Street	Early 19th century four-storey-over-basement structure with decorative window mouldings (was RIC Barracks in early 20th century)	11305040	Regional
0041	19 Bridge Street	Early 20th century two-storey over basement commercial building with canopied butchers shop front	11305042	Regional
0042	Balbriggan Courthouse, Georges Square	Courthouse, Mid 19 th century two-storey stone courthouse on corner site	11305038	Regional

0043	1 Georges Sq. (Former AIB Bank)	Former 19th century terraced houses, converted and altered in early 20th century to Munster and Leinster Bank (later AIB), now converted to office use	N/A	N/A
0044	7 Georges Sq., Gerrard L. McGowan Solicitors	Early 19 th century former residence, converted to offices	N/A	N/A
0046	Carnegie Library, Georges Sq.	Early 20th century redbrick Carnegie Free library on corner site with turreted clock tower	11305039	Regional
0048	Kincora, 39 High Street	Mid 19th century Victorian Gothic Revival style building, that was a Police Barracks during the late 19th century, now in residential use	N/A	N/A
N/A	11 High Street	19th century terraced house	11305041	Regional
N/A	Forester's Hall, Corner Quay Street	Corner-sited detached three-bay two-storey over basement house, c.1850	11305015	Regional
0036	Balbriggan Viaduct	Mid 19 th century eleven-arch stone railway viaduct over harbour	11305021	Regional

Table 1: Schedule of structures included in the RPS and/or listed on the NIAH

Relevant Planning History

Planning Reference: F00A/0707

Applicant Name: Balbriggan Shopping Centre

Description: *Demolition of High Street shop units and shopping centre roof top structures and the construction of 41 dwellings in 2/3 storey blocks consisting of 1, 2, 3 bed apartments and duplex apartments, 627 sq.m. offices, 375 sq.m. retail, 741 sq.m. extension to shopping centre facilities, pedestrian retail street, an underground carpark structure for 184 cars and associated landscaping and enabling works. Balbriggan Shopping Centre, Quay Street, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.*

Decision Date: July 10, 2001

Decision: GRANT PERMISSION

Archaeology

There are no known archaeological sites, features listed as Recorded Monuments and Places the within the boundaries of the subject site.

2.2 OUTLINE APPRAISAL OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

Brief Account of the Historical Development of the site

The following text is a review of historical maps and archives to describe the development of the site within the urban landscape of Balbriggan Town Centre.

The present form of Balbriggan town was developed in the mid eighteenth century by the Hamilton family. Alexander Hamilton purchased the land and his son, George Hamilton developed it from a small fishing village to a commercial town centred around a prosperous textile and hosiery industry.¹ This industrial heritage shaped the development of the town and remains evident today in the form of mill buildings, industrial chimneystacks, rows of worker's housing and the railway infrastructure. This period of prosperity funded the construction of the significant civic buildings on Georges Square, due south of the applicant site.

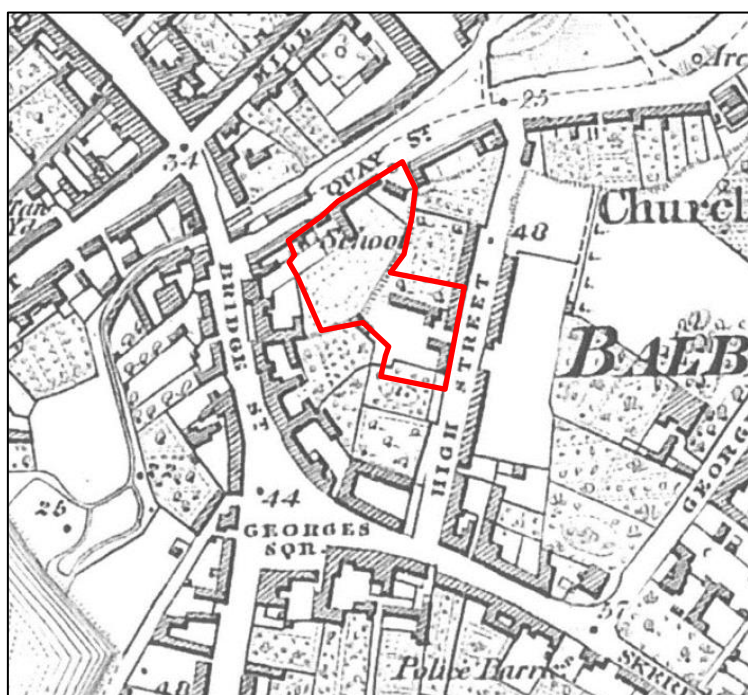


Fig. 3 First edition 6" Ordnance Survey Map (1837-43) with approximate outline of applicant site outlined in red.

The first edition OS Map, Fig.3, for this area was published in 1843 and depicts the subject site, within the triangular parcel of land, between Bridge Street, Quay Street and High Street. George's Square is identified. The subject site is largely undeveloped, and the plot is set out as gardens pertaining to the surrounding residences fronting onto Bridge Street and High Street.

There is a school shown at Quay Street with a yard extending into the centre of the plot, as far as the embankment, where the level of the site rises. A rectangular-plan outbuilding, positioned perpendicular to High Street, aligns with the footprint of the vernacular building on the site, presently in use as a bicycle and angling shop.

¹ The Schools' Collection, Volume 0784, National Folklore Collection, UCD.

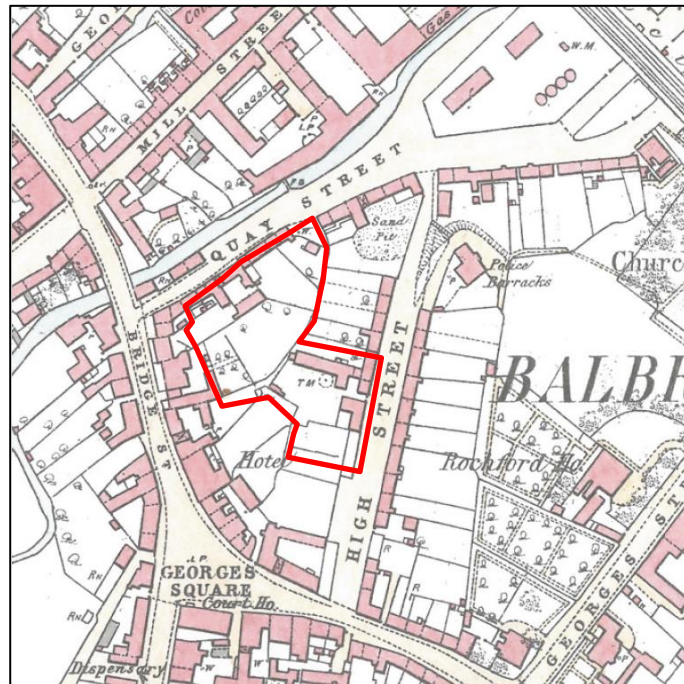


Fig. 4 Ordnance Survey Map Surveyed 1867, Published 1868.

The plot divisions are more clearly depicted on the later 1867 map in Fig. 4 above. The gardens pertaining to the residential terrace on High Street extend to the eastern boundary of the applicant site and this layout has endured to the present day. The junction of Bridge Street and Quay Street has narrowed, due to the construction of a building on the corner site. The police Barracks, presently in use a private residence, known as Kincora, was constructed on the eastern side of High Street.

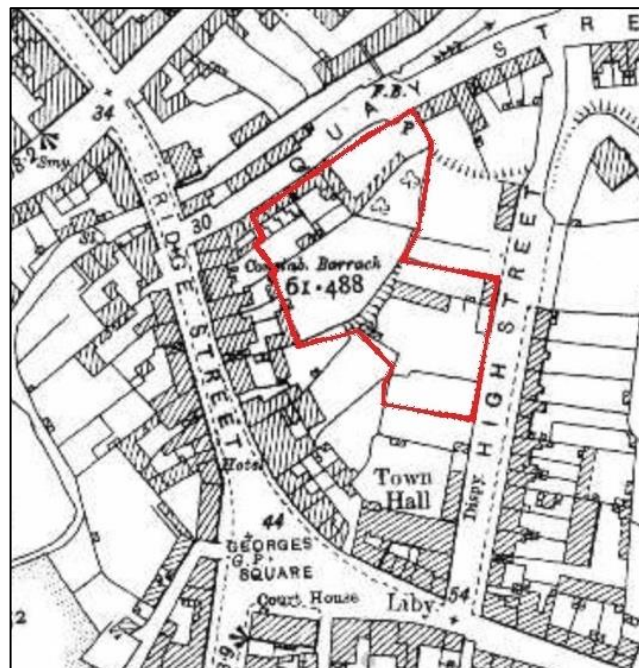


Fig. 5 25" Ordnance Survey Map (Revised 1906) with approximate outline of applicant site outlined in red.

The later 25-inch map depicts the development of the commercial properties on Bridge Street. No.11 is in use as the RIC Barracks. The corner building at the eastern side on the junction of High Street and Quay Street, and a number of structures within the proposed development site fronting onto Quay Street have been removed. The recently constructed Carnegie Library (built 1905) on George's Square and a Town Hall are indicated on the map, due south of the subject site.



Fig. 6 Ordnance Survey Map 1937.

The 1937 map, Fig. 6, depicts a large rectangular plan building on the southern end of the applicant site, and there is a remnant of the façade of that building fronting onto High Street, which is further described in Section 2.3 below. It is proposed to remove this structure to facilitate the proposed development.

The Town Hall and Cinema, identified on the map to the south of the applicant site, were removed c2003 to facilitate construction of a new mixed-use community building and library extension.

Circa 1982, a supermarket trading as 'Quinnsworth' with carpark on the upper level was constructed on the site. This building has been vacant since 2011. It is proposed to remove this structure to facilitate the proposed development.

Between 2003-2006, the lands north of the site were extensively redeveloped with the construction of a mixed-use scheme. A new Library, Community Centre, offices and residential buildings, extension to the Bracken Court Hotel and carpark were constructed. The original Carnegie Library also underwent extensive restoration as part of these works. The public realm in the vicinity of

George's Square was also upgraded using granite setts and kerbstones to delineate the various street surfaces and street-furniture was introduced to create a high-quality public space.

2.3 CRITICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE



Plate 1 Aerial view of the site with approximate boundary outlined in red. Source: Google

The subject site is a brownfield site located within the historic town centre of Balbriggan, with a street frontage on Quay Street to the north, and High Street to the east. The western site boundary is formed by a modern masonry wall and outbuildings pertaining to the Bridge Street properties, are positioned against this wall, but do not rely on it for structural support. The Bracken Court Hotel is positioned to the south and the eastern boundary is aligned with the rear garden wall of the residences which front onto Quay Street and High Street.

There is a significant fall across the site, and the High Street entrance is approximately 10 metres higher than the road level of Quay Street.

The majority of the applicant site is occupied by a 1980's purpose-built supermarket, with a surface car park on the roof. The building is vacant and in poor condition. There is also a vernacular outbuilding orientated in an east west direction on the subject site. This structure is presently in use as a bicycle and angling shop. Both structures are further described in Section 3.2.

The brownfield site is presently under-utilised, and the existing shopping mall detracts from the ACA. Its removal and subsequent proposed redevelopment present an opportunity to repair the urban fabric and positively contribute to the historic town centre.



Plate 2 *The rooftop carpark, at the same level as the High Street entrance, visually detracts from the ACA and the surrounding buildings which overlook it.*

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3.1 ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

The buildings within the ACA vary in scale and form from the civic buildings on Georges Square to the modest terraced cottages along Quay Street and High Street. This diversity brings a rich character to the historic core. The residential buildings have traditional, vernacular forms which sit in pleasing contrast against the monolithic form of the courthouse and characterful Carnegie Library, complete with a turreted clock tower. The heritage character of the streetscapes within the ACA are described below.

Existing Street Character

Bridge Street

The historic maps depict fine grain plots fronting onto Bridge Street. Today, these traditional plots are apparent at the northern end of Bridge Street but have been eroded further south, where a number of plots have been amalgamated to form the present Bracken Court Hotel. The traditional plots typically comprise two-bay, two-storey buildings, punctuated by taller structures with

commercial uses at entrance level. The variation in height along the terrace has the pleasing effect of exposing the gables which feature pitched roofs and characteristic centrally positioned brick chimney stacks.



Plate 3 View of Bridge Street, facing south towards George's Square. Note the stepping of heights and the prominent gables and chimneystacks.



Plate 4 View of the southern end of Bridge Street, at George's Square. The modern hotel development has amalgamated the historic plots and the mansard roof is at odds with the traditional forms.

Quay Street

The traditional buildings, which extend around the corner onto Quay Street, vary between single-storey and two-storey structures and step down with the fall of the street towards the coast. The present structure on the subject site, built in 1982 is a two-storey supermarket with a carpark at roof level and is unsympathetic to the heritage buildings along the street. Further east on Quay Street, there is a terrace of two-storey and single storey residences, one of which has been converted for use as an ice-cream shop. The east-facing gable wall of the existing supermarket building has a negative visual impact on the public realm.

Directly opposite the site, the buildings comprise of modest two storey, vernacular buildings, some of which have been amalgamated and are in use as a casino, with limited activity or fenestration at street level.

The northern side of Quay Street is open, and occupied by a watercourse, a surface carpark with mature tree planting, a playground and access to the beachfront under the railway viaduct.



Plate 5 View of Quay Street looking east from Bridge Street. The existing 1980s building on the site has a negative visual impact on the urban realm.



Plate 6 View of Quay Street looking west towards the Bridge Street junction.

High Street

High Street is a residential street, characterised by terraces of single-storey and two-storey houses. The southern end of High Street opens onto George's Square and the turreted clock tower of the Library is prominently positioned on the corner site. The west side of the street, which falls partly within the subject site is more fragmented, with a modern four storey residential development and a terrace of single storey 19th century residences positioned either side of the applicant site.

The street narrows to a single carriage width as it descends towards the junction with Quay Street and is lined with a random coursed rubble wall. 'Kincora,' a 19th century residence which is positioned on an elevated site to the east of this junction, is included in the Record of Protected Structures, Ref.No.0048 and an historic post-box is embedded in the flanking wall of the entrance piers. Granite kerbstones are intact along the northern end of the street, but none survive in front of the proposed development site.



Plate 7 High Street, looking south towards Georges Square. with two residences opposite the site and contemporary apartments adjoining the southern boundary. The boundary wall of the site is comprised of the front façade of the 1930 widespan building, a rubble wall and wide gated entrance.



Plate 8 High Street, looking north towards Quay Street with 19th century single storey residences on the western side and two-story brick residences on the eastern side.



Plate 9 Kincora, 39 High Street, a mid 19th century Victorian Gothic Revival style building, behind random coursed rubble wall on the east side of the north end of High Street.

Materiality of existing built heritage

Many of the traditional commercial buildings and residences within the town are constructed using calp limestone rubble walls, some of which are rendered. It is possible that some of those buildings that now have exposed masonry walls were originally rendered. The brightly coloured facades of the rendered buildings contribute positively to the traditional character of the main street. The civic buildings, such as the courthouse on Georges Square, are also built using rubble limestone but are more refined, having cut limestone dressings.

Brick is also used extensively within the town; Portmarnock brick is used to great effect on the characterful Carnegie Library, and red brick is also used for the more modest terraced housing and industrial chimneystacks that feature on the town's skyline.

3.2 EXISTING BUILDINGS WITHIN THE SITE

There are two existing structures within the subject site; a 1980's shopping mall and a modified traditional outbuilding.

Former supermarket

The vacant shopping centre, formerly trading as 'Quinnsworth', was constructed c1982 and is of limited architectural interest. The building is insensitive to the historic urban environment and negatively impacts Quay Street, by presenting a dated façade, comprised of multiple bays formed by pilasters faced in split-rib concrete blocks with arched headed openings, onto the street. The gable wall of the Quay Street elevation is unsightly and littered with surface mounted services which are highly visible on approach from Quay Street.



Plate 10 The Quay Street façade of the former supermarket has a negative impact on the ACA.

Vernacular Outbuildings

The traditional outbuilding, presently in use as a bicycle and angling shop, is positioned in the centre of the site, perpendicular to the road with its gable wall presenting onto High Street. It is possible that this structure originally served one of the properties on Bridge Street. The structure was constructed in two phases: the western end of the structure is earlier and was originally a vernacular farm building and appears on the 1837 Ordnance Survey Map. The eastern side of the outbuilding is a late 19th century/early 20th century addition and the substation, serving the now vacant supermarket, is housed within this structure. (*Plate 13*).

The original rectangular form of the building and some of the earlier openings are extant, but the structure has subsequently been heavily modified by the addition of an altered roof profile, infill of original openings, the application of a pebbledash finish, and the construction of single-storey lean-to shelters.

It is proposed to remove this structure to facilitate the proposed development on the site.



Plate 11 Front (south) elevation of modified outbuilding, presently in use as a bicycle and angling shop.



Plate 12 Detail of mid 20th century aerial photograph of the vernacular outbuilding, within the applicant site, with gable front onto High Street.



Plate 13 The gable fronted outbuilding, dating from the early 20th century, fronting onto High Street has been modified to accommodate a substation to serve the former supermarket building.

3.3 APPRAISAL OF EXISTING BOUNDARY CONDITIONS VISIBLE FROM THE PUBLIC REALM

Objective CH32 of the Fingal County Development Plan seeks to avoid the removal of boundary treatments that positively contribute to the character of an Architectural Conservation Area. Accessible site boundary conditions are described below, and boundaries within the site which are presently obscured by excessive vegetation will be subject to further site investigation.

Boundary on High Street (East boundary of proposed development site)

Adjacent the modern apartment building, the eastern site boundary which faces onto High Street comprises of a pebble-dashed wall, with a large opening with heavy timber lintel. This free-standing wall is actually the retained façade of a wide span building, which was constructed on the site in the early 20th century.

Photographic records confirm that this building originally had a single span barrel-vaulted metal-clad industrial roof (*Plate 15*) which corresponds with the profile on the extant section of pebble-dashed boundary wall fronting onto High Street, depicted in *Plate 14* below. This structure is not considered to be of any particular architectural significance.

Further north along High Street, attached to the former façade, there is a 2.5m high random coursed rubble wall with a painted finish. The wall appears to predate the widespan building but is not considered to be of sufficient interest to warrant its retention, to the detriment of the sustainable redevelopment of the site and the creation of a positive urban contribution to the streetscape.

Further north again on High Street, beyond the wide gated entrance to the site, is the gable fronted structure which was previously described in Section 3.2 and shown in Plate 13 above.



Plate 14 The boundary on High Street is partially comprised of the surviving façade of a wide span building, constructed in the 1930's. The profile of the agricultural-style barrel-vault roof is visible in the façade. This wall is not considered to be of particular architectural interest.



Plate 15 Mid 20th century photo of the site, prior to the construction of the present hotel. The industrial building, circled, within the subject site, has subsequently been demolished with the exception of the front façade which now forms part of the site boundary on High Street.



Plate 16 The existing boundary wall on High Street, from south to north (left to right) comprises; a mid 20th century façade, a length of rubble wall (painted), a wide gated entrance and the gable of an early 20th century outbuilding modified to house an ESB substation.

Boundary on Quay Street (North Boundary of Proposed Development Site)

The north eastern boundary wall facing onto Quay Street incorporates fabric from an earlier building. The corner is comprised of random coursed rubble and a brick frontage. It is proposed to retain this standing section of boundary wall and incorporate it into the proposed scheme. See *Plate 17*.

At present, the west side of the northern boundary wall facing onto Quay Street has a gated access between the supermarket and the adjacent building. See *Plate 18*. It is proposed to retain this passageway to facilitate access for the residents into the central courtyard space.



Plate 17 The east side of the northern boundary wall facing onto Quay Street incorporates fabric from an earlier building. It is proposed to retain this fragment in part and incorporate it into the proposed scheme.



Plate 18 The west side of the northern boundary wall facing onto Quay Street has a gated access between the supermarket and the adjacent building. It is proposed to retain this passageway to facilitate residents accessing the central courtyard space.

3.4 PROTECTED STRUCTURES IN PROXIMITY TO THE SUBJECT SITE

As previously described, there are no protected structures within the applicant site boundary. A schedule of protected structures in the vicinity of the proposed development is provided in Section 2.1 above. No protected structures will be physically impacted by the proposed works. Structures which will be visually impacted by the proposed development are described in Section 6.2.2 below.

4.0 ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed development has been designed with due regard for the heritage value of the site. The priority objective is to enhance the character of the ACA, and to positively contribute to the regeneration of the town centre. The development seeks to respect the setting of the protected structures and buildings of heritage significance within the ACA. The scale and massing of the scheme has been considered with the intention of protecting the primary views and vistas of the ACA which include vistas from George's Square, views along the primary streets and views of the railway aqueduct and harbour beyond.

The proposed redevelopment of this infill site will have a considerable impact on the character of the site and the ACA. The scheme presents an opportunity to repair the urban fabric that is visually marred by the 1980's shopping centre. The historic core of Balbriggan comprises a rich and diverse range of building types and form. This contemporary architectural design is intended to positively contribute to the town centre whilst respecting the historic urban grain and complementing the materiality of the existing built fabric.

Previous improvement works to the public realm at Georges Square and along Bridge Street are acknowledged and it is intended to adapt and continue the upgrading of footpaths along Quay Street, which is recognised as having the potential to encourage the pedestrian connection between the town centre and the amenity of the beach front and supports the objectives of Fingal County Council's Public Realm Plan. The proposed development includes provision of an upgraded footpath with granite paving and kerbstones to maintain the integrity of the ACA.

The significance of the structures within the site and along the boundaries have been assessed and where practicable, integrated into the proposed development.

5.0 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development contains a total of 101 residential units and comprises of three residential buildings: Blocks A and C ranging in height from 3 to 6 storeys with Block B over 3 no. lower courtyard floors.

The three residential buildings enclose a central landscaped courtyard, with car parking accessed at grade from Quay Street. The soft landscaping within the proposed courtyard scheme is sensitive to the peculiarities of the steeply sloping terrain and incorporates a series of stepped terraces to

transition from High Street level down to Quay Street, providing a pleasant amenity for the proposed residents.

Shared amenity spaces for the residents are positioned within the entrance level of Block A to generate activity on the Quay Street façade.

The proposed development site is a large plot, centrally positioned with the ACA and its proposed redevelopment will have a transformative impact on the town centre. The heritage impact of the development is described in Section 6.0 below.

6.0 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The impact of the proposed development is described below in terms of physical impacts and impacts on the character of the ACA.

6.1. PROPOSED PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

6.1.1 PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

To facilitate the new development, it is proposed to demolish all existing buildings described in Section 3.2.

6.1.1.1 Proposed demolition of vernacular outbuildings

The removal of the outbuildings is required to facilitate purposeful redevelopment of the site. The building is not a Protected Structure, nor is it included on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). The modest structure is a good, but unexceptional, example of a vernacular farm building. An additional consideration is that the structure has been significantly altered; the gable walls have been modified to increase the height of the upper floor and to alter the roof pitch. The roof structure and linings are modern, and the exterior has been finished with a cement-based, pebble-dashed render. It is considered that the building does not meet the criteria of specialist interest in any of the eight categories as set out in Section 51 (1), of the 2000 Planning and Development Act.

The building attached to the east elevation of this structure was constructed in the early 20th century. The ESB substation serving the former supermarket is presently housed within this latter structure, with metal doors set within the gable on High Street.

The loss of any historic fabric is regrettable, but this must be balanced against the wider benefits of the sensitive redevelopment of the site on the ACA. If this outbuilding were to be retained, the location of the building would negatively impact the well-considered urban design rational of the proposed scheme. The new buildings have been aligned with the established pattern of development to positively contribute to the High Street streetscape. The removal of the building

will facilitate the introduction of a pedestrian access to the site and will also serve as a visual and physical buffer between the proposed development and the single-storey residences on High Street.

As a mitigating strategy and in line with best practice, a complete photo record will be taken of the structures for archival purposes, prior to its removal.



Plate 19 Note the modification to the existing vernacular building. The profile of the gable has been raised and the pitch altered to accommodate a new roof structure.

6.1.1.2 Proposed demolition of 1980's building (formerly trading as Quinnsworth).

This contemporary building, constructed in 1984, is of no architectural interest. It is considered that its removal and subsequent replacement with the proposed development will have a beneficial impact on the site and environs.

6.1.2 SITE EXCAVATION AND GROUNDWORKS

A carpark is required to serve the proposed residential units. The vehicular entrance is positioned off Quay Street, which is the lowest point on the site, taking advantage of the natural level change across the site and minimising the groundworks on site. To reduce the potential visual impact within the ACA, a high-quality landscape podium is provided above the carpark to conceal the parking area and to provide an external amenity space for the residents.



Plate 20 *The existing boundary condition at the rear of the High Street properties. A new concrete retaining wall will be constructed; approximately aligned with this existing boundary.*

Presently, the eastern boundary of the site, behind the rear gardens of the existing High Street residences is comprised of a steep overgrown embankment and a rendered concrete wall pertaining to the former supermarket, which steps in plan (see Plate 20 above). This wall extends to create a protective parapet wall around the surface level carpark. Post demolition of this structure, it is proposed to construct a new concrete retaining wall aligned with the site boundary to form the enclosure of the new carpark, at the level of Quay Street, and to support a landscaped podium above. The base of the existing sloped embankment behind the gardens of the existing properties will be raised with imported fill material and replanted.

The retaining wall beside Block B, adjacent High Street, will be formed using a secant pile wall. Vibration monitoring techniques will be employed during the construction phase to ensure that vibrations from piling are within acceptable limits considering neighbouring structures around the perimeter of the site.

In the event that the excavation uncovers elements of heritage interest, the Conservation Officer will be informed, and a full assessment and conservation strategy will be submitted for approval.

6.2 ANTICIPATED IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE ENCLOSING ACA

6.2.1 GENERAL DESIGN APPROACH

There are multiple physical site constraints impacting the design of the development on this brownfield site; there is a 10-metre difference in levels between the High Street and Quay Street and the lower levels are subject to constraints to eliminate risk of flooding all of which naturally influences potential design proposals. Equal consideration has been given to the sensitivity of the given heritage context. The subject site is an infill development within an ACA; there is a protected structure (Reg 0044) adjoining the western boundary. The submitted design sensitively responds to the challenges imposed by these specific conditions to create a sustainable residential scheme with the potential to positively enhance the historic town core.

The impact of the proposed scheme on the ACA is primarily governed by the proposed use and the approach to massing, scale and height and materiality of the proposed scheme, all of which are described below.

6.2.1.1 *Massing*

The street frontages on both High Street and Quay Street are presently compromised by past interventions or dereliction. High Street is interrupted by a wide vacant plot, with vehicular access to an unused surface carpark, overgrown verges and is visually dominated by the rear of the modern hotel building. On Quay Street, the previous supermarket scheme amalgamated historic plots indiscriminately via the construction of a single homogeneous block. The submitted scheme seeks to improve the quality of the urban design by reinstating an urban grain which is consistent with the historic street patterns. The massing of the proposed development is comprised of three individual buildings. Blocks A and B are aligned with the enclosing streets to maintain the rhythm of the streetscape and reinforce the original building line. The design constitutes a sustainable development which reinstates a fragmented streetscape, and simultaneously utilises the potential of the backland site to create a high-quality, urban, residential scheme.

6.2.1.2 *Scale and Height*

The height of the proposed development is taller than the existing two-storey building that it would replace, however, it is considered that the visual impact is mitigated by the articulation of the building form to harmonise with the existing urban context. The scale of the submitted proposal is consistent with the outline conservation strategy previously outlined and must be considered in context with the positive impacts that the scheme will have on the ACA, described in Section 4.

Block A, on Quay Street, is a 6-storey building, comprised of 4 full floors and two recessed floors above. On account of the natural topography of the site, the structure is effectively concealed on approach from George's Square, due south of the site. Naturally the building is more prominent when viewed from the north, however, the visual impact of the upper two floors of the building, as viewed from Quay Street and the Harbour has been reduced by the introduction of a series of

generous setbacks. Coupled with the change in materiality between the lower and the topmost floors, it is considered that it will be the shoulder height of 4-stories that will be perceived on Quay Street.

Block B, has three full storeys on High Street, with two recessed upper floors. The topmost floors are set back significantly from the building line to minimise the visual impact when viewed from a distance. Similar to Block A, the upper floors are clad with a light reflective material, using zinc cladding and curtain-walling to allow them to visually recede into the background.

Block C, is a modest two storey structure which forms a protective edge to the central landscaped area, without impeding the daylight into the space. This building conceals a variety of ad-hoc boundary walls that would otherwise visually detract from the open space and its modest scale ensures that the adjoining properties to the west and south are not overlooked or overshadowed.

6.2.1.3 Materiality

Within the ACA, there is a rich variety of materials including cut limestone, Portmarnock brick, rubble limestone and render. The palette of materials proposed for use in the new scheme have been selected to complement these traditional materials.

The variety of materials proposed for use within the scheme is intentionally limited; brick and render are proposed for the main body of the building, up to shoulder height, with muted grey tones of the glazing and pressed zinc cladding proposed for the upper levels to soften the visual impact of these set-back floors.

The alternating use of light red coloured brick, buff coloured brick and painted render is proposed to add vertical emphases to the buildings and to effectively recreate the rhythm of the historic plots. Brick has been used as the primary material to integrate with the specific urban context. This design approach is well considered and will harmonise with the existing historical surroundings.

A light-coloured stone cladding is to be applied to the plinth at street level to protect the base of the wall and ensure that the high-quality finish is compatible with street maintenance regimes and endures in the long-term.

6.2.2 ANTICIPATED IMPACT ON THE ENCLOSING STREETSCAPES WITHIN THE ACA

The subject site accounts for a significant proportion of the land within the ACA and it is recognised that the proposed scheme is a pivotal development in that context. The present vacant building has a negative impact on the historic setting, and its proposed replacement with a high-quality residential scheme will have an overall positive impact on the ACA in visual, social and economic terms. The desirability of developing the site is apparent, and it is considered that the

submitted scheme successfully balances the delivery of a sustainable residential scheme whilst protected the character of the historic core.

The streetscapes which enclose the site have distinctive characters and appropriate, site specific design responses are proposed. The impact of the proposed development on the setting of the ACA are described in a street-by-street basis as follows;

6.2.2.1 Anticipated impact on Bridge Street

The CGIs accompanying this submission confirm that the new development will have no impact on the setting of George's Square. Historic views of Balbriggan featuring Bridge Street (*Plate 20*), depict traditional pitched roofs, gable chimney stacks and stepping of the varied building heights. This character has survived in part, though the modern hotel has altered the southern end of Bridge Street.

The proposed development will have no visual impact on the setting of the Bridge Street. (*Plate 21*). Two conditions have lessened the visibility of the proposed development. The first is the presence of the prominent hotel building (Bracken Court Hotel) which will effectively obscure the new development on approach from the direction of George's Square. The second is the natural topography of the site, which falls away dramatically towards Quay Street, where the taller element is positioned.



Plate 21 Historic postcard view of Bridge Street from George's Square c.1910.



Plate 22 Verified view of proposed development from George's Square prepared by D3D. Proposed development is highlighted with a red arrow.

6.2.2.2 Anticipated impact on Quay Street

Views of the new development will be more prominent from Quay Street, as the proposed development is taller than the existing 1980's building. The existing supermarket building detracts from the historic town centre and the proposed redevelopment of this site presents an opportunity to repair the urban fabric.

The Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan (2019-2025) identifies potential improvement works to Balbriggan Town Centre. A primary objective of the Plan is to unlock the potential of the harbour area and to reinforce connections with the main street. The submitted scheme has been designed with due consideration to supporting this objective. On approach from Bridge Street, via Quay Street, there are framed views of the Railway Aqueduct and the harbour area beyond. The redesign of this unassuming street is central to the success of the future regeneration of the area. The submitted scheme proposes to support the objectives of the future development works in a number of ways as follows; by upgrading the public realm, by increasing activity onto the street frontages and by improving the visual appearance of streetscape. The design of these proposals is also aligned with the ACA objective of protecting and enhancing the special character of Balbriggan Town Core.

The proposed building on Quay Street (Block A) has been designed to reflect the fine grain of a traditional streetscape. The materiality of the Quay Street façade varies incorporating brick and render elements to harmonise with the traditional materials evident in the ACA and to retain the legibility of the historic plot delineations. Plate 22 is an early 20th century photograph of the site

which depicts the traditional widths of Quay Street prior to the construction of the supermarket. The proposed façade is modulated, with recesses to introduce depth and shadow to the elevation to emulate this traditional rhythm of historic plots within the streetscape.

The window openings have also been designed with a strong vertical emphasis to complement the composition of the traditional fenestration pattern. The windows sizes are larger than the traditional window openings to meet expectations of modern living standards, but the ratio of solid-to-void has been duly considered to complement the existing built environment.

Careful consideration has been given to the design of the gables of the new development, which will be highly visible on account of the single buildings adjoining the northern and eastern site boundaries. Windows have been introduced to animate the gables and are finished in high-quality, self-finished materials that harmonise with the surrounding built environs and enhance the appearance of the buildings from the public realm.

Articulation of the recessed upper floors reduces the visual impact of the buildings as perceived at close range. The form of the building steps down towards the eastern gable of Quay Street and the upper floors have been set back to minimise the visual impact on the narrow street.

It is considered that the proposed development will have a positive visual impact on Quay Street, adding character to the ACA and will encourage pedestrian movement from the primary street (Bridge Street) to the amenity of the nearby beach. The ground floor elevation on Quay Street is animated by the shared amenity spaces positioned at entrance level to generate activity on what is presently a blank street front. Two retail spaces, with direct access off Quay Street have been incorporated into the scheme to increase activity on this street. Furthermore, expansive glazed areas have been incorporated into the shared amenity spaces. These spaces will be occupied at various times throughout the day and illuminated at night bringing animation to the façade and encouraging pedestrian activity within the town centre.

The substation and the vehicular entrance car park off Quay Street, have been positioned to act as a visual buffer transitioning between the new building and existing residential dwellings to the east of the site. The size of the vehicular entrance to the car park has been minimised to maintain the continuity of the building line. The existing rubble wall fragment of a former building on the eastern boundary of Quay Street will be retained to conceal the gable of the substation.



Plate 23 Early 20th century aerial view of the applicant site. Note the three-story buildings on Quay Street and vertical emphasis of the traditional façades.



Plate 24 Present view of Quay Street looking west. Note the visibility of the gable elevation which presently visually detracts from the ACA.



Plate 25 Design of proposed new development on Quay Street, prepared by D3D.

6.2.2.3 Anticipated impact on High Street

The proposed residential building on High Street (Block B) has been designed to respect the established scale of the buildings on this residential street. The entirety of the new development is designed as a single entity; a high-quality urban intervention so that there is common architectural language and coherency to the entire scheme and consequently the design of this building is similar to Block A on Quay Street, but the building form is modelled differently to respond to the specific context of High Street.

The building sits quietly on the street to avoid competing with the prominent building at the top of the street, the Carnegie Library. The recessed balconies add depth and definition to the façade, and visually break down the scale of the building. Respectful distances have been maintained adjacent the boundaries to avoid encroachment of the adjacent single-storey structures.

The simple material palette has been selected to harmonise with the brick of the residences and the library on High Street. The lower floors are faced in brick with a similar colour tone, but the material is used in an appropriately contemporary manner. The bricks are laid in a stretcher bond with a natural stone plinth to create sharp, clean simple lines. Similar to Block A, on Quay Street, the recessed upper floors are clad in zinc and a glazed system to reduce their visual impact when viewed from a distance.

It is considered that the existing boundary walls are not of sufficient architectural interest to warrant their retention. The proposed elevation on High Street constitutes a well-considered scheme that positively contributes to the ACA.

It is proposed to extend the tree planting in the footpath in front of the High Street Block to enhance the existing residential character of the street.



Plate 26 *Verified View of Proposed development on High Street, prepared by D3D.*

In addition to the inherent heritage considerations outlined within this report, the physical site restraints imposed by the sloping nature of this tight, urban site infill site present challenges to its redevelopment. It is considered that the submitted scheme successfully responds to the given challenges and succeeds in delivering an accomplished sustainable and purposeful reuse whilst retaining its distinctive character.

6.2.2.4 Summary of anticipated impact on the ACA as adhering with Table 12.11 – ‘Direction for Proposed Development within Architectural Conservation Areas’ of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

Policy contained in Table 12.11 of the County Development Plan to ensure that changes and development within ACAs are carried out in a manner sympathetic to its distinctive character	Adherence of the proposed development with Policy Objective DMS158 of the County Development Plan which states that “All planning applications for works in an Architectural Conservation Area shall have regard to the information outlined in Table 12.11.”
Retention and Reuse	Adherence
Existing buildings and structures should be retained and reused rather than replaced. Applications for demolition of buildings that contribute to the character of an ACA will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The onus will be upon the applicant to justify the demolition of the building. The Council will start from the premise that the structure should be retained.	Please refer to Section 6.1.1. above, describing potential impacts associated with demolition of buildings within the subject development site. As cited therein, following a detailed review of these buildings, it was found that none contribute to the special character of the ACA. Their loss and proposed replacement as a consequence is not found to be contrary to County Policy.
Retain original building materials, finishes and features including windows, doors, roof coverings, boundary treatments (such as stone walls, hedges and railing) and other features of interest that contribute to the special character and enliven the streetscape.	As above, the presentation of the elevational elements of the subject building range is not found to contribute to the character of the ACA.
Retain any surviving kerbing/paving and items of street furniture that contributes to the character of the ACA.	No such items exist within the boundaries of the subject development site.
Restoration of original materials or features that have been lost or replaced will be supported and encouraged. Documentary evidence or surviving examples should be used to direct the design of these.	No such items exist within the subject development site.

Policy contained in Table 12.11 of the County Development Plan to ensure that changes and development within ACAs are carried out in a manner sympathetic to its distinctive character	Adherence of the proposed development with Policy Objective DMS158 of the County Development Plan which states that “All planning applications for works in an Architectural Conservation Area shall have regard to the information outlined in Table 12.11.”
Alterations and New Build	Adherence
Development proposals for new build need to follow a sensitive design approach that respects the established character of the ACA in terms of the scale, massing, bulk, plot sizes, proportions and materials of the adjoining buildings to the development site. Direction can be taken from traditional forms and dimensions that are then expressed in a contemporary manner or with contemporary elements rather than an exact copy of a historic building style. Where a totally contemporary design approach is taken the detailing, materials and overall design must be carefully handled and of a high quality to ensure the proposal does not compromise the integrity and character of the area.	The proposed new build scheme has been designed to respect the established character of the ACA, please refer to Sections 6.2.1.1. and 6.2.1.2. above describing efforts to modulate the scheme's elevations to respond to original historic plot grains to a greater extent than the existing structures, which in the amalgamation of plots disregarded such sensitivities.
Demolition of structures that positively contribute to the streetscape character will not normally be permitted.	The remains of a historic gable of a house now forming a boundary wall on Quay Street will be retained as a screening element of the development. No other historic wall fragments exist in the subject development site boundaries.
Retaining the legibility of the historic urban grain of a streetscape or townscape is important and so where a development seeks to amalgamate a number of different building plots the design treatment should consider articulating the original plot divisions in the volume of the new building. Where it is proposed to connect existing	The existing development on the site eroded previous plot delineations in the amalgamation of historic plots. To improve on the elevational character of the proposed development, attempts have been made to illustrate the verticality of original plots in the treatment of its elevation.

Policy contained in Table 12.11 of the County Development Plan to ensure that changes and development within ACAs are carried out in a manner sympathetic to its distinctive character	Adherence of the proposed development with Policy Objective DMS158 of the County Development Plan which states that “All planning applications for works in an Architectural Conservation Area shall have regard to the information outlined in Table 12.11.”
buildings internally frontages should maintain an active function and alterations to the historic fabric should be kept to a minimum.	
Extensions to buildings in ACAs that are visible from public places should be of a scale and proportion that respects that of the original building. In general extensions should be subservient in size with materials, finishes and roof profiles that complement the principal structure.	Not applicable to the subject development.
Alterations or modifications of existing facades, openings, finishes, roofscapes, etc. should not detrimentally impact on the character of the ACA or cause damage to the building. - Removal of the original weathering coat of a building or its render or plaster finish to expose the underlying stone is unacceptable. - Where a building has a unpainted render or plaster finish this should not be painted over. - Insertion of dormers or roof lights should be on hidden pitches and in general should not be placed on the front roof slope. - Enlargement of window or door openings can change the prevailing proportions of the building or streetscape and so original dimensions should normally be retained.	Not applicable to the subject development.
Signage in an ACA should be minimal, discrete and sensitively designed so as not to negatively impact on the special character	The detail of signage and lighting will be subject to a future planning application.

Policy contained in Table 12.11 of the County Development Plan to ensure that changes and development within ACAs are carried out in a manner sympathetic to its distinctive character	Adherence of the proposed development with Policy Objective DMS158 of the County Development Plan which states that “All planning applications for works in an Architectural Conservation Area shall have regard to the information outlined in Table 12.11.”
of the area. All other external commercial elements or fittings such as canopies, lighting and menu boards should be kept to an absolute minimum	
Public Realm Works	Adherence
Elements of existing street furniture such as original kerbing, paving, setts, post-boxes, railings, bollards etc. should be identified and retained.	No such items exist within the boundaries of the subject development site.
Any new street furniture (such as bins, lighting, signage-poles etc.) shall be of a high quality and consistent design with consideration given to their siting and location. Street furniture should be kept to a minimum and any redundant modern street furniture removed.	No such items exist within the boundaries of the subject development site.
In instances where the Council does not have direct control over street furniture, it will engage with the relevant agency/agencies, where possible, to encourage them to comply with the Architectural Conservation Area policies.	Not applicable to the subject development.
Works to improve the public realm such as new surfaces, dished pavements, traffic control measures including signage and ramps shall respect and enhance the essential character of the ACA	Not applicable to the subject development.

Table 2: Applicability of the proposed development with Table 12.11 of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

6.3 VISUAL IMPACT ON ADJACENT PROTECTED STRUCTURES

There are a number of protected structures in the vicinity of the subject site and the impact of the proposed development on these significant structures is described below.

6.3.1 No.11 Bridge Street (RPS Ref. No. 0040)

No.11 Bridge Street, is an imposing 4-story over basement house, which backs onto the applicant site. Notably the building was in use as an RIC Barracks in the early 20th century and features in accounts of a violent reprisal attack carried out by the Black and Tans in 1920, known as 'The Sack of Balbriggan'.

The structure has been modified at ground level to accommodate a shopfront but, for the most part, its external form appears to be largely in-tact, though in need of repair. The building is presently in use as a launderette at ground floor level. There are a series of contemporary utilitarian extensions attached to the rear of the structure.

Anticipated impact on No.11 Bridge Street

The proposed development will have no physical impact on No.11 Bridge Street. There is a modern, utilitarian extension adjoined to the rear of the original house (all comprised of modern fabric) and a metal stairs which provide access from this structure to the rear of the plot into the applicant site. This condition will be retained as is and will be unaffected by the proposed development. The structural engineering report will provide a methodology for the protection of existing boundaries during the construction phase.

The new development, which is taller than the existing supermarket will obscure the view of the railway viaduct from the rear windows of the main house. This view, though pleasant, is serendipitous and is a designed or protected view. It is submitted that any sustainable redevelopment of this infill urban site will result in the loss of this aspect from the rear rooms. The protected structure is positioned on the western boundary and therefore, the new development will not diminish the daylight quality in these rooms.

The immediate environment, at the rear of No.11 Bridge Street, is cluttered with a series of ad-hoc extensions, unsympathetic to the main house. It is submitted that the removal of the present supermarket and the creation of a high-quality landscaped courtyard will have a positive impact on the setting of the protected structure.

The primary view of the structure, from Bridge Street will not be impacted by the development, due to the strategic positioning of the taller elements within the site, to minimise the impact on the Bridge Street properties.



Plate 27 Front elevation of 11 Bridge Street, with modified shopfront.



Plate 28 Rear elevation of 11 Bridge Street, adjoining the subject site, with utilitarian extensions appended to the rear.

6.3.2 Kincora (RPS Ref. No. 0048)

This structure dates from c1850 and was built in a Gothic Revival style. The structure was used as a Police Barracks during the late 19th century, and is now in residential use. The building is constructed with random rubble, brick lined openings and stone quoins. The pitched roofs are clad in slate and have exposed rafter tails at the eaves. The house is constructed on elevated land, level with High Street and overlooking Quay Street. There are a number of mature trees within the garden, which is enclosed by an attractive coursed rubble masonry wall, topped with upright topstones.

Anticipated impact on Kincora

The proposed development will have no physical impact on Kincora. Owing to the elevated position of the protected structure, the new development will be visible from the building. It is submitted that the present 1980's structure is poorly designed and visually unattractive and that the proposed development will constitute an improvement.



Plate 29 Entrance to Kincora, 39 High Street, mid 19th century Victorian Gothic Revival style building, east of the subject site.

6.3.3 Carnegie Library (RPS Ref. No. 0046)

The Carnegie Library was designed by George L. O'Connor and constructed c1906, using Portmarnock redbrick with limestone detailing. The building is prominently positioned on the corner site of Georges Square and was designed in the Scottish Baronial style featuring a distinctive turreted clock tower. The building was extensively restored c2006, with further restoration works undertaken to the clock-tower in 2017.

Anticipated impact on the Carnegie Library

The library will not be impacted by the proposed development. The new building on High Street is designed to sit quietly on the street and within the established building heights and harmonise with the existing finishes.



Plate 30 Verified view of the proposed development showing the existing context of the Carnegie Library the top of High Street. Block B has been designed to sit quietly into the existing streetscape to avoid detracting from the dominance of this characterful building. The proposed development is highlighted with a red arrow. Prepared by D3D.

6.4 ANTICIPATED BROADER IMPACTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

This assessment has identified several significant protected structures within the vicinity of the proposed development. The undulating topography of Balbriggan Town naturally influences the visual impacts of the proposed scheme.

The height and scale of the proposed development is considered appropriate for this urban site. Presently the site is underutilised, and its redevelopment will naturally alter the existing views. The long-range views, depicted in the verified CGIs submitted with this application, show that the height of the proposed development will have a minor impact on the existing skyline but that it is not intrusive.

The use of high-quality materials which integrate well with the existing built environment is a mitigating factor. The materiality of the upper floors changes from the solidity of brick on the lower levels, which relate to the streetscapes, to a lighter, more reflective quality through the use of pressed metal cladding and glazing system. This has the visual effect of softening the impact of the upper floors when viewed from a distance at it merges with the rear of the existing buildings in the town centre.

Consideration has been given to the views from the coast and railway aqueduct, a protected structure, to the north-east of the site. The view of the gable of the building on Quay Street, which is the predominant element as viewed from this aspect, is favourable relative to the existing situation. All elevations, including the gables, have been well-considered and the vertical emphasis and rhythm of the façades relate to the traditional buildings in an appropriately contemporary manner. The use of two different materials on the northern gable of Block B on the High Street building, brick on the front element and render to the rear, has the effect of visually reducing the scale and depth of the building to favourably relate to the 19th century brick residences adjacent.

It is recognised that the proposed redevelopment, which is a distinct, contemporary building and larger in scale relative to the existing buildings on the site, will alter the present setting, but this is not adverse in terms of the character of the ACA. The proposal delivers improved street frontages to the benefit of the urban realm and constitutes a positive redevelopment of a disused building with a derelict appearance. In broad terms, the proposal balances the sensitivities of the ACA and can be successfully absorbed into the distant views of the town.



Plate 31 *Verified view of the proposal from the Railway Aqueduct*

7.0 RESPONSE TO ABP-308916-20

Item 13 is relevant to architectural heritage and a response is submitted below;

Item 13

Response to issues raised by the Parks and Green Infrastructure Division (dated 15.01.21), Transportation Planning Section (dated 19.01.21), Water Services Division (dated 20.01.21) and Conservation Officer Section (dated 11.01.21) of FCC, as per the reports submitted in Appendix 3 of the Planning Authority Report, received on 27th January 2021.

Item 8.3 'Integration and Urban Design' of the Planning Authority's opinion describes issues raised by the Conservation Officer and includes a number of specific recommendations which are scheduled below;

Recommendation 3:

Reduce the scale / height of the block fronting Quay Street to a maximum of four-storey shoulder height (with a deeper setback for a recommended two floors above this). Omit the top floors of both blocks to provide for a maximum 4 storey height on High Street and 6 storey on Quay Street.

Response 3:

Quay Street:

In response to the Conservation Officer's comments, the height of Block A, on Quay Street has been reduced to six-storeys creating an effective shoulder height of 4 storeys onto Quay street, with two recessed floors above.

The massing of the building is broken down through the use of a number of architectural design treatments. The narrow, historic plots evident within the ACA are articulated through the alternating use of different materials, which emulate the pattern of a traditional street front. The built form is further broken down through the introduction of a series of vertical setbacks, to reinforce the verticality and add visual interest across the façade. Furthermore, the central setback effectively reduces the visual impact on Quay Street by increasing the width of the street on the upper levels to minimise the visual mass and scale of the development on the street, whilst maintaining a strongly defined building line at entrance level.

The pallet of materials of brick and painted render is harmonious with the traditional materials characteristic of the built fabric within the ACA. The contrast emulates a traditional streetscape and has the effect of visually reducing the massing of the buildings into a series of smaller elements. The upper floors have generous setbacks and upper volumes are stepped back and forth to create visual rhythm and interest. The balconies are recessed to avoid visually cluttering the streetscape and to bring depth to the façade.

High Street:

On High Street it is considered that the architectural form is compatible with the form and scale of recent development trends and visually relate in scale and form to the adjacent Harbour View apartment block. Block B is three storeys, with two recessed floors above. The higher parts of the proposal are set back significantly from the street and the stepping down of the form towards the northern gable presents a logical response to resolving the transition in scale to the 19th century single-storey dwellings, providing a physical and visual separation between the two entities.

The street elevation on High Street is articulated to emulate traditional plot widths to harmonise with the established grain of the streetscape. The change in material from brick to render emphasises the variation and this elevational treatment is also employed on the gable to visually reduce the impact of the overall depth of the building form.

Wider range views:

The anticipated impact of the proposed development on the wider range views are described in Section 6.4 within the main body of this report.

Recommendation 4:

Provide a brick finish which is light to dark brown rather than red/orange range.

Response 4:

In accordance with the recommendation above, it is proposed that the selected brick finish on Quay Street will be buff coloured in light to dark tones. To improve the legibility of the traditional plot widths the contrast of the proposed materials has been further increased through the introduction of painted render elements, emulating the grain and materiality of a more traditional streetscape in congruence with the ACA.

A richer tone of brick is proposed for Block B on High Street, to complement the character of the existing streetscape. It is proposed that the specific brick and pointing style be agreed with the local authority by way of physical samples on site.

Recommendation 5:

Consideration should be given to inclusion of additional retail units and / or additional entrances from the development onto Quay Street to address concerns in relation to the integration of the development into the wider regeneration of this part of Balbriggan.

Response 5:

The proposed scheme has been revised to include two retail units and two amenity spaces at entrance level on Quay Street. It is considered that the proposal supports the aspirations

outlined in the 'Our Balbriggan Rejuvenation Plan. This mix of uses will bring interest to what is presently a blank, inactive street frontage, blending a diversity of uses which will be active at different times throughout the day and night.' The retail spaces have been strategically positioned in the most prominent positions on Quay Street to maximise their visual and impact in animating and revitalising this underutilised street. Provision of direct access into these retail spaces will generate increased daytime activity and encourage pedestrian movement from the main street towards the harbour area, to strengthen the connection and encourage positive activity.

The shopfronts and plinth will be clad in a light-coloured stone, a high-quality, durable material and appropriate for the urban environment. The substation is finished in masonry, to relate to the existing rubble boundary wall adjacent to the new development and minimise the visual impact on the streetscape.

Recommendation 6:

Provide a location within the proposal for a piece of public art.

Response 6:

There is no public space in which to position a piece of art within the proposed development. It is proposed to contribute to upgrade the public realm by introducing using high-quality materials, such as granite paving in support of the local authority's objectives to upgrade Quay Street. Please refer to the detailed drawings and documentation provided by MDO Architects and Cunnane Stratton Reynolds for details.

8.0 SUMMATION

It is considered that the proposed scheme is a well-considered, design-lead architectural response to a restricted urban infill-site which has the potential to encourage further investment in the town centre with a consequential regeneration of the historic core. The proposed residential scheme will bring vibrancy to the ACA, not just in terms of population but also in terms of maintaining the viability of commercial activity of shops and restaurants within the ACA. The modulation in height, considered use of high-quality materials and elevational treatment ensures that the proposed development will blend successfully into the receiving context and re-invigorate this presently underutilised site.

Protection of the settings of heritage structures and the ACA environs need not necessarily prevent change, and it is considered that the submitted redevelopment will improve the quality of the streetscapes. The submitted design is contemporary in character but also contextual and sensitive to the heritage context.