

## **SOUTH EAST AREA COMMITTEE MEETING MAY 2024**

**PLAN NO: PLANNING REF. NO. 3317/24**

**LOCATION: PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT OF THE NEWCOMEN BANK BUILDING AT 16 CASTLE STREET DUBLIN 2, AND PART CHANGE OF USE TO PROVIDE MULTI-PURPOSE SPACES, VISITOR & STAFF FACILITIES, AND OFFICES FOR DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL AND FUTURE TENANTS.**

The proposed Part 8 development (presented to the South East Area Committee in June 2023) was put on public display from 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 until the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Plans and particulars of the scheme were available for inspection and on display in the Civic Offices, Wood Quay.

The closing date for submissions or observations was Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

It is the intention of CRES to present this Part 8 to the July City Council Meeting. The approval of a Part 8 is a reserved function of the City Council.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

One prescribed body submission has been received within the prescribed period. The condition was raised by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and is summarised as follows –

- The proposed development falls within the area for an adopted Section 49 Supplementary Contribution Scheme – Luas Cross City (St. Stephen's Green to Broombridge Line) under S.49 Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. If the above application is successful and is not exempt, please include a condition to apply the Section 49 Luas Line Levy.

Response: As the proposal is for works to a building included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS no. 2050), the development is exempted from any requirement of the Section 49 Luas Line Levy.

No third party submission has been received within the prescribed period.

### **Internal DCC Departmental Observations**

Drainage Planning, Policy and Development Control Section (DPPDC) has no objection to this development.

The Transportation Division has no objection to the proposal subject to conditions

The Conservation Division has no objection subject to conditions

The Archaeology Division has no objection subject to conditions

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **Zoning & Policy – Dublin City Development Plan 2022 - 2028**

The site is zoned Z5 'City Centre', with the objective '*To consolidate and facilitate the development of the central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and protect its civic design character and dignity [...] The strategy is to provide a dynamic mix of uses which interact with each other, help create a sense of community, and which sustain the vitality of the inner city both by day and night.*'

Protected Structures

Record of Protected Structures (Volume 4 of the 2022-2028 Dublin City Development Plan):

RPS Ref. No: 2050

Policy CHC1: To seek the preservation of the built heritage of the city that makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes and the sustainable development of the city.

Policy CHC2: It is the policy of Dublin City Council to ensure that the special interest of protected structures is protected. Development will conserve and enhance Protected Structures and their curtilage and will:

- a) Protect or, where appropriate, restore form, features and fabric which contribute to the special interest
- b) Incorporate high standards of craftsmanship and relate sensitively to the scale, proportions, design, period and architectural detail of the original building, using traditional materials in most circumstances
- c) Be highly sensitive to the historic fabric and special interest of the interior, including its plan form, hierarchy of spaces, structure and architectural detail, fixtures and fittings and materials
- d) Not cause harm to the curtilage of the structure; therefore, the design, form, scale, height, proportions, siting and materials of new development should relate to and complement the special character of the protected structure
- e) Protect architectural items of interest from damage or theft while buildings are empty or during course of works
- f) Have regard to ecological considerations for example, protection of species such as bats.”

The site is located within a ‘Zone of Archaeological Interest’ for the purpose of the National Monument Service.

The site is also included in an ACA, an Architectural Conservation Area as defined in the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-28 and sits within a Conservation Area.

## **PLANNING ASSESSMENT RESPONSE**

The Planning Authority welcomes the proposed works, which are conservation-led and respect the historic fabric and significance of the protected structure and deems it acceptable in principle.

The proposed use of the former Newcomen Bank as civic rooms for cultural, commercial, ceremonial and social uses by the Council and the public is considered a permissible use under the Z5 zoning.

## **Conclusion**

The Planning Department supports the proposed development and considers that the scheme put forward is acceptable.

## **Appropriate Assessment (AA)**

Under Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Regulation 30 of SI NO.94/1997 ‘European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations (1997) any plan or project which has the potential to significantly impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. This requirement is also detailed under Section 177 (U) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

A screening report for Appropriate Assessment has been submitted. The report is based on a desktop review and a site walkover undertaken in June 2023. The report identifies that there is no hydrological, physical or ecological links between the subject site and any European/Natura 2000 sites and therefore concludes that the potential effects from the project on surrounding European Sites are negligible and not likely to occur.

The Planning Department, as the competent authority, has considered the screening report, has undertaken the Appropriate Assessment screening of the development and has determined that progression to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process (i.e. preparation of a Natura Impact Statement) is not considered necessary. It is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect, individually, or in combination with other plans or projects, on a European site.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

Having regard to the nature, size and location of the proposed development and the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, it is concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment and as such an EIAR is not required.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-28. The proposal is considered acceptable.

### **Recommendation**

Accordingly, it is recommended that a decision be made by Elected Members of the Council to proceed with the proposed development.

### **CONSULTATION**

The project team undertook an extensive programme of consultation throughout the design development process to ensure a collaborative approach to the design. To this end a number of consultation events were arranged which included the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, An Taisce, Dublin Civic Trust, the Heritage Council, adjoining landowners and City Council Departments.

The general response to the scheme was overwhelmingly positive and the principal interventions proposed were welcomed. Separately a number of presentations and update reports have been given at Area Committee outlining the developing proposals. These will continue during the detailed design stage.

DCC have engaged proactively throughout the design and planning process for the Newcomen Bank refurbishment scheme. All workshops were well attended and the views and needs of those in attendance have been incorporated where possible and appropriate.

### **CONCLUSION**

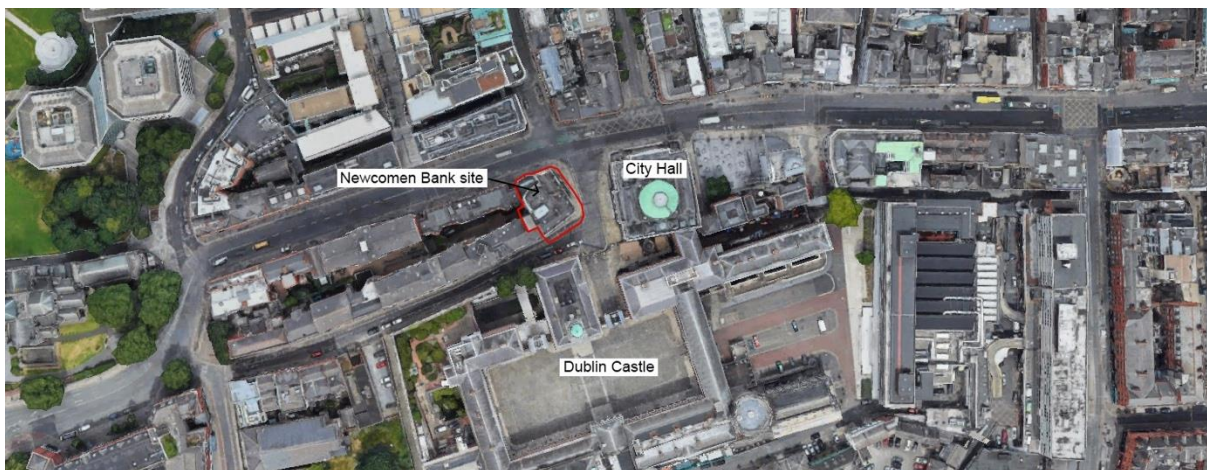
This proposal meets the objectives laid out in the DCC Development Plan 2022-28 as well as the other relevant corporate policy documents. Having considered all the observations, this proposal addresses any concerns raised. It is our intention to bring this Part 8 to the July meeting of City Council for approval.

### Concept

The proposed development is being led by the Culture, Recreation & Economic Services Department. Following the completion of extensive surveys and inspections, consultation and the examination of best practice exemplar projects, the proposal is for the refurbishment of Newcomen Bank and its part change of use to provide multi-purpose spaces, visitor & staff facilities, and offices for Dublin City Council and future tenants. It also includes for general upgrades to meet fire safety and accessibility requirements, including for a new accessible entrance on Castle Street.

The building, once refurbished, will produce a world class public cultural amenity to the city centre. Providing flexible and adaptable indoor spaces, it will cater for a wide demographic of people, offering the opportunity for all to experience one of the finest Georgian townhouses in Dublin. Visitors will have access to the magnificent Georgian rooms of the upper floors, and their many historic features still remaining to this day: medium to small spaces will be bookable for both cultural and council use, including lectures, meetings or modest events such as recitals or exhibitions. The ground floor will have the capacity to welcome over 170 people for larger gatherings, such as conferences or wedding receptions. The basement multi-use rooms will be ideal to host workshops or performance practice spaces, while the top floor will turn into a comfortable office space for mid-term rentals, to festival groups for example.

Directly adjacent to Dublin Castle and City Hall, this refurbishment project will actively participate to the regeneration and development of the city centre, while bringing back to life one of its most magnificent historic architectural gems.

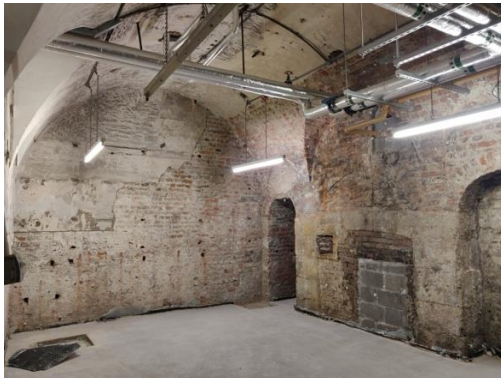


Site Location



Existing Building Condition – External Views





Existing Building Condition – Internal Views





CGI for the proposed new ramped and stepped access to the Castle Street entrance



Section through the Newcomen Bank building with Castle Street on the left and Lord Edward Street on the right.