

To the Chairperson and Members  
of the South East Area Committee



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

**Meeting : 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (Special Meeting) Update on the Part 8 notification regarding the Mansion House which was made to the South East Area Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023.**

**Report on Proposed Part 8 for the Mansion House, Dawson Street, Dublin 2.**

**Planning Reference : 3175/24**

The Chief Executive's Department, wishes to provide an update to the South East Area Committee regarding the Part 8 planning application concerning the proposed Part 8 for the Mansion House.

**Project Context and Consultations**

The Mansion House Accessibility Project commenced in June 2016 when the Protocol Committee requested a report on the Universal Access Provisions to the Mansion House. Currently neither The Mansion House, The Oak Room nor The Round Room have satisfactory universally accessible or inclusive entrances. These access issues have been the subject of consideration by Dublin City Council and other universal access advocacy groups for quite some time.

There have been a series of consultation meetings; on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 a meeting of the Mansion House Disability Access Focus Group was held with representatives from the Disability Groups who formed a project specific working group. A presentation was given by Access Consultant, Eoin O'Herlihy. The Disability Groups advised of their preference for a ramp to be included. From December 2016 to January 2019: Further meetings were held by DCC with the Disability Groups discussing options prepared by City Architects.

A Public Consultation Webinar was held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 – invitees included former Lord Mayors, Councillors, OPW, Irish Georgian Society, Conference & Events Venue at the Mansion House, Irish Wheelchair Association, Royal Irish Academy, Central Remedial Clinic, Dublin Town, Irish Architectural Archive, National Council for the Blind in Ireland, representative of the PPN, Conservation Officer from the Department of Housing Local Government & Heritage.

Following the external stakeholder consultation, major concerns with the long external garden ramp access were identified by the stakeholders.

An alternative proposal was investigated by the Design Team, which follows a different approach and which would involve the installation of two internal lifts instead of the long external garden ramp.

The feedback on this alternative Option B was very positive and the proposal was welcomed by both the internal steering group members as well as the external stakeholders. Work began in earnest to develop this design and bring the project to Part 8.

At all stages of the project we have been very fortunate to have had Conservation input not only from the Conservation Officer but also the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Dublin City Council have tasked a highly experienced multi-disciplinary design team, led by Grade 1 Conservation Architects Blackwood Associates, with the design of the new universal access. There has been extensive liaison with the Mansion House management, the internal steering group (incl. Building Control Officer, Conservation Officer, Property Management Section representative, Grade 1 Conservation Architect, the Chief Executive's Department and internal and external stakeholders, all of which consider the current option the best, most comprehensive long-term solution for the Mansion House complex.

**The development consists of the following:**

New external approach route to the Oak Room & Round Room shared Entrance Vestibule, to include the removal of existing modern steps and existing raised approach route from Dawson Street to the Entrance Vestibule of the Oak Room & Round Room, located between the Mansion House and the Lord Mayor's Garden. The existing raised approach route will be replaced by a new gently downwards sloping approach route, to a new level one storey below the existing. Removal of existing railings and light well wall to northern side of the Mansion House.

Adjustment of modern railings between the approach route and the Lord Mayor's Garden. Provision of new external stairs leading from terrace of Supper Room down to the Lord Mayor's Garden, landing at the southeast corner of the existing garden. Provision of a new Juliet Balcony to existing external double doors to the Lady Mayoress's Parlour at the North elevation at Ground Floor level of the Mansion House. Localised adjustment to modern paving at northeast corner of forecourt to Mansion House.

Alterations to existing Oak Room & Round Room Entrance Vestibule to include new public entrance one storey below existing. This work includes the adaption of the existing Entrance Vestibule space from single storey to new double height (in part) Entrance Foyer encompassing a section of the existing basement beneath, new lower storey addition to its main front elevation. The new lower part of the elevation will contain the proposed new main entrance to the Foyer accessed from the proposed new approach route. Proposed new roof at existing location, proposed new single roof light to replace existing three roof lights.

Provision of new internal passenger lift and staircase between new lower ground floor level and existing upper ground floor level. Alteration to the interior expression to include new wall panelling, ceilings and floors. Relocation of existing double doors between Oak Room of Mansion House and New Entrance Foyer along same wall. Adjustment of door set between the Supper Room and New Entrance Foyer.

**Provision of a new passenger lift within the Mansion House.** The works will include a new lift shaft and lift car to serve lower ground, upper ground and first floors of the Mansion House. Lowering of existing window at lower ground floor, to provide new accessible entrance door at lower ground floor level along the northern wall of the Mansion House. This new entrance door will be accessed directly off new sloped approach route. Alteration to room layouts at lower ground floor to provide circulation route to lift. Alteration to internal wall at upper ground floor to provide door opening into lift. Provision of new door opening in first floor external wall to rear of Mansion House to accommodate access lift. Provision of a second new door opening along same wall at first floor to allow egress at this location.

Addition of new mechanical ventilation plant and screen to flat roof at rear of Supper Room

and all other associated site works.

**Images of the proposed Scheme :**



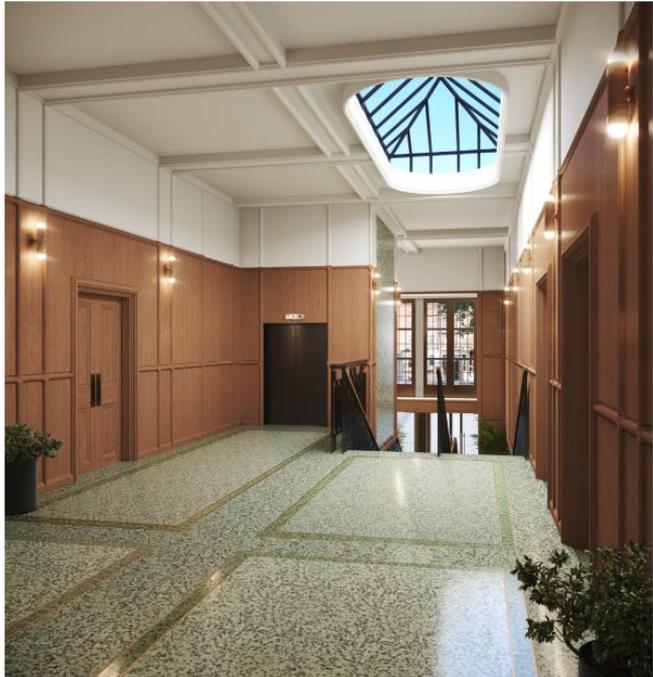
Proposed Exterior from Dawson Street



Proposed Exterior from Dawson Street



Proposed Lower Ground Floor Interior looking towards the Round room



Proposed Upper Ground Floor Interior, looking towards Dawson Street

## **Observations**

### *Prescribed Bodies*

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII): Report received. No objection subject to condition relating to guidelines for work close to Luas lines and Section 49 Contribution Scheme.

### *Third Parties:*

Three observations were received within the prescribed period. The main points raised in these observations can be summarised as follows:

- The Mansion house is a rare early survivor and is recognised by the NIAH as being of National interest.
- Universal access to buildings is essential and is a challenging task to retrofit.
- It is noted that the ramped entrance to the Round room/ Oak Room entrance to the side of the Mansion House will leave all visitors arriving at a new lower-level entrance to these rooms and requiring either a full flight staircase or a single passenger/wheelchair accessible lift to get them up to their destination.
- The Georgian Society questions whether this arrangement can be deemed significantly better than what a larger upgraded and properly-serviced platform lift in the existing location could be?
- Opening up use of the basement of the main house could be a benefit of the scheme but not identified in this proposal.
- At first floor level the lift seems to be disconnected from the apartment.
- Concerns that the lift would impact on lighting to the main staircase.
- The proposal seems overly complicated.
- Letter of support for the proposal.
- Can a changing places toilet facility be provided in line with the new amendment to part M of the building regulations.

The content of the submissions received were noted and has been considered by the Planning and Development Department in their assessment of the proposal. The Planning and Development Department are supportive of the development and have not highlighted any particular concerns regarding the proposal.

An approval of a Part 8 application is a reserved function of the City Council, it is now the intention to bring the proposal to the May City Council meeting for formal approval.

**Ruth Dowling**

**Senior Executive Officer**

**Chief Executive's Department**

**16<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**