



Archaeology, Conservation & Heritage,  
Planning & Property Development Department,  
Block 3, Floor 3, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8.

Seandálaíocht, Caomhantas & Oidhreacht  
Roinn Pleanála & Forbairt Maoine  
Oifigí na Cathrach, An Ché Adhmaid, Baile Átha Cliath 8.

### Conservation Officer's Report

**To:** Natalie De Roiste

**Date:** 10/08/2022

**Ref. No:** SHD0014/22

**Location:** At the Junction of Santry Avenue & Swords Road, Santry, Dublin occupying the site of the existing Chadwick Builders Merchants

**Proposal:** **PROTECTED STRUCTURE:**

The development consists of the following:

(1) Demolition of the existing building on site i.e. the existing Chadwicks Builders Merchants (c. 4,196.8m<sup>2</sup>). Construction of 350 no. 1, 2, & 3 bed apartments, retail / commercial and community uses in 4 no. buildings that are subdivided into Blocks A-G as follows:

(2) Block A is a 7 to 14 storey block consisting of 59 no. apartments comprised of 26 no. 1 bed & 33 no. 2 bed dwellings, with 2 no. commercial/retail units located on the ground floor (c. 132.4m<sup>2</sup> & 173m<sup>2</sup> respectively). Adjoining same is Block B, which is a 7 storey block consisting of 38 no. apartments comprised of 6 no. 1 bed, 20 no. 2 bed, & 12 no. 3 bed dwellings, with 2 no. commercial/retail units located on the ground floor (c. 162.3m<sup>2</sup> & 130.4m<sup>2</sup> respectively). Refuse storage areas are also provided for at ground floor level. Block C is a 7 storey block consisting of 55 no. apartments comprised of 13 no. 1 bed & 42 no. 2 bed dwellings. Refuse storage areas are provided for at ground floor level. Adjoining same is Block D which is a 7 to 10 storey block consisting of 51 no. apartments comprised of 25 no. 1 bed, 19 no. 2 bed, & 7 no. 3 bed dwellings, with 1 no. commercial unit / café located on the ground floor (c. 163.3m<sup>2</sup>). A refuse storage area is also provided for at ground floor level. Block E is a 7 to 10 storey block consisting of 58 no. apartments comprised of 10 no. 1 bed & 48 no. 2 bed dwellings, with 1 no. community use unit located on the ground floor (c. 188.1m<sup>2</sup>). A refuse storage area, substation, & switchroom are also provided for at ground floor level. Adjoining same is Block F which is a 7 storey block consisting of 55 no. apartments comprised of 13 no. 1 bed & 42 no. 2 bed dwellings. A refuse storage area & bicycle storage area are also provided for at ground floor level. Block G is a 7 storey block consisting of 34 no. apartments comprised of 20 no. 1 bed & 14 no. 2 bed dwellings. A refuse storage area & bicycle storage area are also provided for at ground floor level.

(3) Construction of a 1 storey residential amenity unit (c. 187.9m<sup>2</sup>) located between Blocks A & D.

(4) Construction of basement level car parking (c.5,470.8m<sup>2</sup>) accommodating 173 no. car parking spaces & 719 no. bicycle parking spaces. Internal access to the basement level is provided from the cores of Blocks A, B, C, D, E, & F. External vehicular access to the basement level is from the south, between Blocks B & C. 36 no. car parking spaces & 58 no. bicycle parking spaces are also provided for within the site at surface level.

(5) Public open space of c. 1,915m<sup>2</sup> is provided for between Blocks C, D, E, & F. Communal open space of c. 3,122m<sup>2</sup> provided for between (i) Blocks E, F, & G, (ii) Blocks A, B, C, & D, and (iii) in the form of roof gardens located on Blocks A, C, & F and the proposed residential amenity use unit. The development includes for hard and soft landscaping & boundary treatments. Private open spaces are provided as terraces at ground floor level of each block and balconies at all upper levels.

(6) Vehicular access to the development will be via 2 no. existing / permitted access points: (i) on Santry Avenue in the north-west of the site (ii) off Swords Road in the south-east of the site, as permitted under the adjoining Santry Place development (Ref. 2713/17).

(7) The development includes for all associated site development works above and below ground, bin & bicycle storage, plant (M&E), sub-stations, public lighting, servicing, signage, surface water attenuation facilities etc.

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### Policy Context

The subject building is in an area zoned Z3, the objective of which is *'To provide for and improve neighbourhood facilities'*.

### Appraisal

The present Heiton Buckley Builders Merchants on the corner of the Swords Road and Santry Avenue (Red brick industrial complex with tower and rounded corner bay) was built c.1950 to designs by T.J. Cullen, as the former factory, offices and showrooms of J.H Saville & Co, the home of International Harvesters Ltd. (the site was historically referred to as *'Harvester's Corner'*).

The architectural style of the former office and showroom block draws heavily on the 'De Stijl' school of architecture in Holland - in particular the work of Dutch Modernist Architect, Willem Dudok, whose work generally comprised of 1-2 storey red or brown brick flat roofed structures, with overhanging concrete eaves, punctuated by brick towers and often incorporating a curving bay. The works of 'De Stijl' school of architects had a profound effect on the architecture of the fledgling Irish Free State, keen to proclaim its modernity on the world stage. The Heiton Buckley building shares similar characteristics with Dudok's works with a pleasing, modernist frontage incorporating tower, curved corner bay and punch windows at each level (which would originally have been steel windows).



Fig.1: Vondelschool Hilversum, Netherlands (1928-29) by Willem Dudok.



*Fig.2: Heiton Buckley Builders Merchants ( former factory, offices and showrooms of J.H Saville & CO) Santry Road, as featured in An Tostal brochure written by Michael Scott in 1953.*

The building is well-considered, consciously presenting its office and showroom block to the east, fronting onto the Swords Road. The attached multi-bay factory structure to the rear/west displays an overall utilitarian deployment of detail, compared to the office and showroom. The former office and showroom block is considered by the Conservation Section to be an exemplar of modernist light industrial/commercial architecture, representative of the industrialisation of the city fringes during the mid-20th century. It is further considered to make a strong contribution to the social and historical fabric of the area. The CO considers the former showroom and office block to be of architectural interest comparable with other 20th century modernist factories (Mercedes Benz, Naas Road, Dublin 12).

#### **Assessment and Conclusion**

I have reviewed the plans and particulars associated with this application comprising an EIAR including drawings, an Architectural Design Statement and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA).

The Senior Executive Conservation Officer (Acting) provided a report dated 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022 as part of an overall submission made by Dublin City Council in relation to the development of the subject site and attended a pre-app meeting with An Bord Pleanála on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022 (ABP Ref: ABP-312127-21).

#### **AHIA**

Although the applicant's EIAR includes an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) prepared by an accredited conservation architect, the building has not been assessed in accordance with the criteria by which to assess the conservation significance of an historic structure as set out in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 (AHPG) and the Planning and Development Act 2000. It is noted that the AHIA does not address the heritage significance of this building.

The AHIA does not include an impact statement as detailed under Section B5.16 of Appendix B of the AHPG which states: *'The author(s) of assessments compiled to accompany a planning application should be fully appraised of the development proposal. The assessment should contain an evaluation of the quality and importance of the structure. In addition, it should contain a comprehensive assessment of the implications of the development for the character of the structure and the area in*

which it is located. This should highlight how the elements of this character (those which contribute to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social and/or technical interest) would be materially altered by the development'. Notwithstanding the above commentary, the AHIA contains sufficient information (history/description/condition/photographic record) to ascertain the significance of the building for the purposes of this assessment.

The building is a recognisable local landmark sited along a primary arterial route, designed by a known architectural practice (T.J. Cullen) which contributes greatly to the character of the fringes of the city. The office and showroom block display architectural ambition, making its mark on the street scene through the elegant composition of the curved corner bay. Further notable design elements include the tower, the overhanging eaves and the free-standing concrete entrance canopy having a unusual shallow butterfly roof.

The Conservation Section notes that *'the basic form and fabric of the building remain unchanged'* retaining surviving internal fittings and features such as 'well-formed' surviving terrazzo flooring staircases and steel windows. The multi-bay factory structure to the rear/west of the site displays an overall sparing deployment of detail and is architecturally utilitarian, compared to the office and showroom. The CO notes that the building featured in a section on architecture in a *'An Tostal'* brochure written by Michael Scott in 1953 – the AHIA acknowledges that Scott *'obviously deemed the International Harvester building to be worthy of inclusion'*. The CO notes that Michael Scott is considered to be the most vocal proponent of Irish architectural modernism at the time, suggesting that the building was well received in architectural circles.

Notwithstanding that the building is not on the Record of Protected Structures nor included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) survey of the area, the Conservation Section of Dublin City Council acknowledge an increased appreciation for 20th century architecture and have more recently sought to survey and assess sites and structures of this era, following greater research into the architectural heritage of this period in Dublin (including *More than Concrete Blocks: Vol. II, 1940-72*, Four Courts Press, 2018). The Conservation Section considers the subject office and showroom block, designed by a known architect, to be an exemplar of modernist 20th century light industrial architecture and is an increasingly rare survival of some significant quality on the fringes of the city. The CO considers the office and showroom block to be of 'Regional' significance displaying architectural, social and historical interest, comparable with other landmark 20<sup>th</sup> Century modernist factory structures (Mercedes Benz, Naas Road, Dublin 12).

#### Retention of Portion of Building

The Conservation Section recommended retention and reuse of the office and showroom block (with rounded bay and tower – but excluding the former multi-bay factory to the rear/west) during the pre-planning consultations with An Bord Pleanála on the proposed development. The applicant's submission does not address whatsoever any option for, or consideration of, the retention of the building as requested at consultation stage. No examination of the possible retention of the office and showroom block has been provided, nor any justification as to why this portion of the building could not be incorporated within the proposed scheme. The Conservation Section notes that the AHIA states that *'the condition of the building is considered fair/good'* adding that there are *'no signs of structural failure or distress'*. The sole reason for demolition provided is *'to allow for optimum site usage the proposal includes the total demolition of the existing buildings on site'*.

The Conservation Section would be supportive of a sympathetic proposal, which retains and incorporates the modernist office and showroom block, which is considered to be of architectural merit and an established and recognisable local landmark on this arterial route into the city, leaving

the majority and remainder of the site available for redevelopment. Whilst it is recognised that this building is not a protected structure the proposed demolition and irreversible loss of this exemplar modernist light industrial/commercial 20<sup>th</sup> century structure is highly regrettable from an architectural conservation and heritage perspective and as such the development proposal cannot be supported by the Conservation Section.

#### Recommendation

I recommend a refusal of the proposal.

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#### **Conclusion**

I have reviewed the above planning application file and recommend **REFUSAL** for the reason(s) set out below:

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#### **Recommendation**

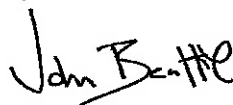
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I recommend that the proposed development be **Refused** for the reason(s) set out below:

#### Reasons for Refusal

- The applicant has not demonstrated any consideration of the architectural conservation issues raised during the consultation process regarding the merits of retaining the showroom/office blocks (only) of this 20<sup>th</sup> century building. Whilst it is acknowledged that the building is not a protected structure, the proposed demolition and irreversible loss of this exemplar modernist light industrial/commercial 20<sup>th</sup> century structure, would represent a serious loss to the architectural heritage and amenities of the area, which would not be acceptable to the Conservation Section.

Signed

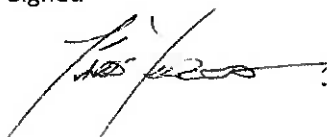


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**John Beattie**

Assistant Architectural Conservation Officer  
Archaeology, Conservation & Heritage

Signed



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**Paraic Fallon**

Senior Planner

Conservation Section  
Planning and Property Development

cc

- X Planning Officer (Email)
  - X Conservation Section (File / Hardcopy)
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