

An Bord Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.
D01 V902

28th October 2022

**Re: DART+ WEST ELECTRIFIED RAILWAY ORDER 2022
CASTLETHORN AND CHARTERED LAND GROUP SUBMISSION WITH RESPECT
TO THE IMPACT OF THE ASHTOWN ROAD IMPROVEMENT WORKS ON OUR
LANDS AT ASHTON HOUSE.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write with respect to the Railway Order Application for DART+ West. The Ashton House lands at Ashtown, Dublin 15 are owned by Lintwell Ltd., an associated company of the Castlethorn and Chartered Land Group. The subject matter of this submission is the seriously negative impact of the Ashtown Road Improvement Scheme, which forms part of the DART+ West Railway Order application works, on our subject lands at Ashton House.

We wish to confirm our support for DART+ West but we object to the Railway Order application in its current form because of the unduly negative impact it would have on our Ashton House lands. This objection is accompanied by the statutory fee of €50 as required in order to make this submission.

This submission is supported by technical reports and drawings as prepared by O'Mahony Pike Architects, Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers and David Slattery Conservation Architects.

1. CONSIDERATION OF ASHTOWN ROAD IMPROVEMENT WORKS AS PART OF THE DART+ WEST RAILWAY ORDER APPLICATION

Ashton House and its surrounding demesne is situated to the west of Rathborne Village with significant frontage onto Ashtown Road. It is a Protected Structure so designated having regard to the architectural and historical significance of the main Ashton House as well as its gate lodge, gate piers and gates, which are all directly referenced on the Record

of Protected Structures. Ashton House will be directly impacted by the proposed Ashtown Road Improvement Scheme that forms part of the DART+ West proposal. We have had numerous constructive meetings with representatives of the DART+ West project design team and we have made formal submissions at each stage of the public consultation process.

We sought more detailed information, including proposed sections and CGIs of the vertically realigned and widened Ashtown Road at its interface with the Ashton House lands and particularly at the existing gate-lodge and any proposed new entrance works at that location. We did not however receive any such details in advance of the public consultation that took place on the Revised Preferred Option for Ashtown from 9th March until 6th April 2022.

That March 2022 public consultation was the first time we had been afforded the opportunity to see reasonably detailed drawings including sections, which confirm the extent of level change proposed at the gate-lodge and entrance gates and the extent of retaining structure consequently required to try to maintain an entrance at this location. We have grave reservations about the impact of the Ashtown Road Improvement Scheme, as currently proposed, on Ashton House, particularly in terms of the resulting access arrangements to Ashton House and the impact of the proposed road scheme on the character and setting of the gate-lodge and its associated entrance piers and gates, which all form part of the Protected Structure of Ashton House.

The proposed underbridge involves very significant level changes to the existing roadway as well as road widening adjacent to our gate-lodge and entrance and more significant land-take further north, which are apparent by reference to the available plan drawings, sections and photomontages, as put on public display as part of this Railway Order application. The impact on the eastern boundary of Ashton House is indicated on the plan drawing *'Roadworks Design – LC01: Ashtown General Arrangement Sheet 3 of 4'* and the second image on the section drawing *'Roadworks Design – LC01: Ashtown Ashtown Road Alignment – Typical Cross Sections Sheet 3 of 3'*. The drawing titled *'Roadworks Design – LC01: Ashtown Road Alignment Plan and Profile Sheet 3 of 3'* is the most telling of these drawings confirming the newly proposed road levels relative to existing road levels by detailed chainage points along its length.

It is apparent by examination of the above referenced drawings and sections that the proposed road level adjacent to the existing entrance gates to Ashton House would be circa 2.7m below the existing road level rising to meet existing road level at a point some 25m further north. It is also apparent by reference to the aforementioned drawings that the proposed vehicular and pedestrian access to Ashton House will need to ramp up from this lower level at its interface with Ashtown Road over a distance of some 40m back into the Ashton House site before it rises sufficiently to meet existing ground level. This ramped access, as indicated in Section H-H, would take the form of a narrow corridor enclosed with high retaining walls and fences on both sides. A 1m wide pedestrian 'hard-strip' is indicated on either side of a 4.8m wide roadway within this channelled corridor. It would be a constrained, contrived and hostile environment, tunnel-like in character and devoid of any landscape opportunities and it makes no provision for safe pedestrian access or egress to our lands.

We wish to draw the attention of the Board to *'Works Layout Plan No. WP.009'* and its accompanying label 9.12 as explained under Schedule 1 and stated as – *"Termination of the footpath along the west of the alignment fronting Ashton House. Modification of the*

existing curtilage to a 0.5m rubbing strip and provision of an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing at Ashton House gate lodge.” It seems apparent by reference to this drawing and accompanying description of works that it is intended to divert pedestrians by way of a new internal pathway to the north of the gate-lodge leading to a new opening in the wall that would deposit pedestrians onto the 0.5m wide rubbing strip at the western edge of the road carriageway. If this is the intention then we would submit it is a very ill-thought-out proposal, which would be entirely unsafe and unsuitable for anyone bar the most able-bodied and courageous! It is worth noting also that there is no reference to this pedestrian entrance or potential crossing point on the aforementioned plan drawing *‘Roadworks Design – LC01: Ashtown General Arrangement Sheet 3 of 4’*. We would suggest that the extent of permanent versus temporary land-take is not readily apparent by reference to the ‘Property Plans’ or ‘Works Layout Plans’ submitted as part of the Railway Order application.

We would submit that the drawings submitted are limited in detail and that the photomontages are lacking in credibility, and it is telling in our view that there is no photomontage centred on this proposed new entrance arrangement at the gate-lodge. We would draw the attention of the Board to *‘View 14 Ashton House Gate As Existing’* as contained with the submitted Photomontages – Part 2 View Locations 14-20. It is a cropped view, and we would question why it wasn’t generated from a point just a few metres further south to give a clearer and fuller representation of this entrance as proposed. We would point out that the height of that gate pier, in the foreground of the photo, to underside of cap looks is circa 2.7m high i.e. the same dimension by which the new surface level of the realigned Ashtown Road will drop at this point below existing road level. We would contend that the subsequent photomontage, *‘View 14 Ashton House Gate As Proposed’*, is not reflective of the proposed condition as described and this image significantly under-represents the extent of wall and retaining wall that would be necessitated in the foreground of this image, to the south of the gate-lodge.

We would refer the Board to the accompanying A3 booklet *‘Ashtown Road Upgrade & Entrance to Ashton House’* as prepared by O’Mahony Pike Architects, which includes what we would contend are accurate Sketch-Up representations of the proposed entrance arrangement on page 7 of the booklet, utilising the plans, sections and profile sheets available as part of this Railway Order application. This was specifically commissioned by us to get a better understanding of the impact of this road proposal on our lands and to give consideration to potential alternative design solutions. We also refer the Board to the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment of this proposed entrance arrangement, plus our suggested alternative arrangement as outlined later in this submission, by David Slattery Architectural Conservation Architects which is also included as part of this submission.

The character and relationship of this historic entrance to Ashton House would change dramatically. We acknowledge that the required land-take for the widened and realigned Ashtown Road is unavoidable. So too is the dramatic lowering of road levels to achieve grade separation from the canal and railway line. This impact on Ashton House is most acute at the gate-lodge and the existing entrance here to the Ashton House lands where the new road level will be c. 2.7m below existing road level.

The proposed Railway Order design response, to try to maintain this existing vehicular access point, is well intentioned but does not work. It would be a heavily engineered and incongruous proposal that would visually sever the gate-lodge from its piers and gates, all of which form part of the identified Protected Structure at Ashton House and it would create a very negative and conflicted sense of place at the entrance to this historic demesne. The Architectural Heritage Chapter of the EIAR, forming part of the Railway Order application,

notes the potential 'Profound' impact of the proposed Railway Order works on Ashton House (Table 21-13) and considers the residual operational impact to be 'Very significant negative', which is the most pronounced negative impact on any built heritage site identified within the DART+ West Study Area, as listed under Table 21-18. This we submit is avoidable and every effort should be made to avoid this level of impact on the Protected Structure of Ashton House, its gate-lodge, gates and piers.

In addition to the unduly negative impact on the historic setting and character of the Protected Structure the proposed new entrance arrangement would also result in very compromised and inadequate vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements to Ashton House and its lands. We believe these lands have future development potential given their location immediately adjacent to Ashtown Train Station and Rathborne Village as recognised in the Fingal County Council commissioned Dunsink Feasibility Study including its accompanying Transport Appraisal and Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) as prepared for the overall Dunsink Long Term Strategic Reserve under the Draft Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029. The current vehicular entrance proposal would create a physically constrained, incongruous, and very negative first impression for people arriving at Ashton House whatever use these private and underutilised lands may ultimately be put to.

Finally, we and our consultant team would have reservations about the safety and operational efficiency of positioning the vehicular entrance to Ashton House at a low point on the road, just as one starts climbing northbound and so close to the underpass exit. It intuitively feels unsafe, and we would have traffic safety concerns both for vehicles trying to exit onto the Ashtown Road here and for left and right turning movements into our lands by way of this narrow, ramped access, as proposed.

For all the reasons set out above we are opposed to the DART+ West project as it is currently proposed and specifically as it interfaces with Ashton House and we believe there is a better alternative, which could accommodate a comparable, and crucially at-grade, vehicular entrance to Ashton House at a point c. 100m to the north.

2. PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE ENTRANCE ARRANGEMENTS TO ASHTON HOUSE

2.1 New At-Grade Vehicular Entrance

The scope of the proposed road improvement works appears to extend as far as the existing roundabout at the northern end of Rathborne Village, although we note that the redline 'Development Boundary' as indicated on '*Works Layout Plan No. WP.009*' extends further north to the junction of Ashtown Road with River Road.

Castlethorn developed Rathborne Village and as part of this development Ashtown Road was effectively realigned to run through the centre of Rathborne Village and over the canal and railway line at the existing at-grade rail crossing. That section of Ashtown Road adjacent to the gate-lodge to Ashton House was downgraded in function to essentially serve as a local access to the Rathborne Village basement car park, access to Ashton House and as a service route for the commercial units within the village. The original alignment of Ashtown Road was 'dog-legged' to meet this new roundabout junction at the northern entrance to this new village 'main street' having regard to its local low level function of this downgraded road.

Castlethorn

The impact of the proposed road scheme now is a reversal of the present arrangement whereby that section of roadway adjacent to the Ashton House gate-lodge becomes the through-route once more, significantly upgraded in capacity as primary route and bus corridor, and that stretch of roadway through Rathborne Village becomes truncated to serve only some limited on-street village car parking and a setdown for Ashtown Train Station.

It is submitted that the existing roundabout junction should be re-examined, as supported by our consultant engineers, Waterman Moylan, to give greater legibility to the new Ashtown Road corridor alignment and to ensure adequate capacity at this junction between Ashtown Road and Rathborne Avenue to accommodate the anticipated volumes of traffic including Dublin Bus services within the surrounding and evolving road network. We would respectfully request that the scope of works to Ashtown Road as part of DART+ West be extended to fully include this roundabout, that this junction be repositioned and redesigned and a new purpose-planned vehicular and pedestrian entrance directly west off this reconfigured junction be accommodated to serve Ashton House (see Figure 1 below).

Such an access would be provided at-grade, aligned with Rathborne Avenue and would facilitate a much better relationship between the Ashton House lands and Rathborne Village, as is the case with existing conditions on-site.

This new vehicular entrance would facilitate a positive relationship also with our recently permitted scheme directly to the north of Rathborne Village (ABP-309318-21). Permission was granted here for 169 no. dwellings in a mix of duplexes and apartments plus a creche, in two blocks 4-5 and 8-10 storeys in height and with a public plaza at its southwest corner. Vehicular access to this permitted development is from Rathborne Avenue at the eastern side of this site.

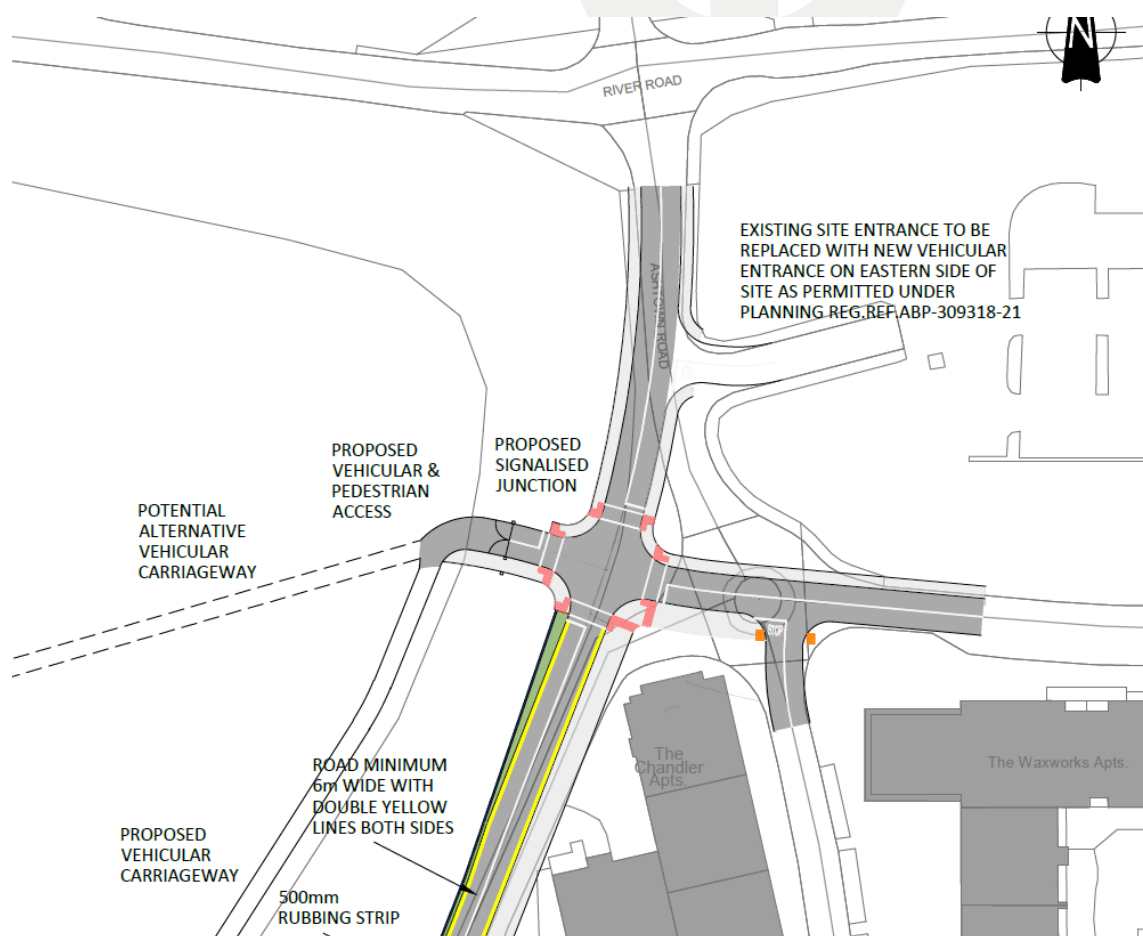


Fig 1: Extract from Waterman Moylan Sketch Design of Proposed Alternative Junction and Access to Ashton House

We include a preliminary drawing from Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers which shows this amended junction as a simple priority '4-arm' junction. This junction could be signalised as necessary and it re-establishes the original alignment of Ashtown Road as the priority route off which Rathborne Avenue and Rathborne Village are accessed to the east, and Ashton House to the west, respectively.

It is more pedestrian and cyclist friendly than a roundabout and consequently a more DMURS compliant junction arrangement. Consideration can be given to signalisation, at the outset if necessary, or when the Ashton House lands are developed as appropriate and subject to planning. A local road access and footpath served by a priority junction onto the realigned Ashtown Road is a comparable like-for-like vehicular access arrangement to our lands.

2.2 Pedestrian and Cyclist Entrance at Gate Lodge

As part of this alternative, we propose that steps be provided within a slightly setback entrance at the Ashton House gate-lodge to facilitate pedestrian access at this original entrance point. These generous steps in a 'scissor' configuration would provide landscaping opportunities and would mitigate the scale of retaining structure required at this location. It would crucially keep the original gates and piers in use and at their existing vertical alignment to maintain that visual and functional relationship with the gate-lodge. A ramped Part M and cyclist access is proposed behind the retaining wall ramping gradually

document included as part of the Catch-Up visual representations of the four suggested alternative entrance board to the attached Heritage Interpretation Architects, which comprehensive conservation perspective.

We were informed, subsequent to our April 2022 submission, at a meeting with representatives of Roughan O'Donovan, Iarnrod Eireann and Coras Iompair Eireann in attendance, by the DART+ West project design team that they could see merit in our alternative proposals but that the EIAR and supporting statements were being finalised and they were under pressure to lodge the Railway Order application. It was recommended to us at that meeting that we make our case to An Bord Pleanála with respect to the Railway Order application and invite the Board to seek Further Information from the Applicant to formally give consideration to this alternative access arrangement to Ashton House.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The currently proposed access arrangements to Ashton House are inappropriate and unacceptable to us as landowner.

We strongly contend that our alternative access proposal for Ashton House is a much more coherent, cost-effective and rational engineering solution that respects the character, maintains equivalent access and 'future-proofs' the Ashton House lands. It would also re-establish the original alignment of Ashtown Road as the priority route off which Rathborne Avenue and Rathborne Village are accessed to the east, and Ashton House to the west, respectively. It is more pedestrian and cyclist friendly than a roundabout and consequently we submit a more DMURS compliant junction arrangement. It would also better facilitate increased north/south vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian movements when lands off Dunsinea Lane are ultimately developed as part of the Dunsink strategic landbank.

The redline Development Boundary of the Railway Order application as indicated on '*Works Layout Plan No. WP.009*' extends along the entire eastern boundary of the Ashton House lands, as far north as the junction of Ashtown Road with River Road. The amendments proposed in this submission would involve local road alterations fully within public road carriageways as well as an amended interface with our lands. It is entirely within the gift of CIE working with us and engaging with the local Roads Authorities to facilitate this proposed amendment.

We hereby respectfully request An Bord Pleanála to seek Further Information under Section 41 of the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001, as amended, from the Applicant to give consideration to potential alternative access arrangements to Ashton House from Ashtown Road that better respect the character and setting of Ashton House, its Gate Lodge, Gate Piers and Gates, which are all Protected Structures, and which provides adequate and safe vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist access to these currently under-utilised lands.

The DART+ West project design team has been very helpful and professional in all our dealings with them, and we believe they are positively disposed in principle to our alternative suggested entrance arrangements for Ashton House. We are disappointed that they proceeded to make the Railway Order application with the currently proposed access arrangements, to which we are steadfastly opposed. We trust that this submission will precipitate a Further Information request to afford Coras Iompair Eireann the opportunity to reconsider this issue and include our alternative access arrangements as part of the ultimate Railway Order. We wish to maintain a positive working relationship with the Applicant in our role as a stakeholder in the area who are facilitating them by accommodating a construction compound on the Ashton House lands, as well as on lands we own at Kellystown further west.

We trust that due consideration will be given to the points made in this submission, as supplemented by the accompanying enclosures as listed below. We would very much welcome the opportunity to attend the oral hearing on this project if indeed one is held, and we would be happy naturally to respond to any Further Information request if required from us.

Yours sincerely,

*This letter does not bear a signature
as it was transmitted electronically*

James Leonard
Chartered Town Planner and Project Manager
Castlethorn and Chartered Land Group
For and on behalf of Lintwell Ltd.

Encl./

1. 'Ashtown Road Upgrade & Entrance to Ashton House' - A3 booklet prepared by OMP Architects.
2. 'Sketch Realignment of Ashtown Road showing New Entrance to Ashton House' – A3 drawing prepared by Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers.
3. 'Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment of the Proposed Alternative Entrance Route to Ashton House, Ashtown, Co. Dublin' – A4 report prepared by David Slattery Conservation Architects.



ASHTOWN ROAD UPGRADE & ENTRANCE TO ASHTON HOUSE

OCTOBER 2022

FOR CASTLETHORN CONSTRUCTION

 mahony pike

INTRODUCTION

Ashton House, located in Ashtown, Dublin, is in the ownership of Castlethorn Construction. Access to Ashton House is from Ashtown Road.

Iarnrod Eireann are proposing to upgrade the Ashtown Road as part of the electrification of the Dublin - Maynooth service, and the access to Ashton House is impacted by these proposals.

Castlethorn are supportive of the upgrade of Ashtown Road in principle, but are concerned with the impact of the proposed design on the access arrangements to Ashton House. We have proposed an alternative access arrangement to Ashton House, which is a minor design amendment to the Iarnrod Eireann proposals, which could be implemented without requiring any significant changes to the Ashtown Road Upgrade, i.e the alignment and gradient of the Ashtown Road Upgrade would not change, and any design changes would be local and limited to the relationship between Ashton House and the Ashtown Road.



Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1837-43, showing Ashton House & Gate Lodge, with two access routes between the main house and Ashtown Road.



Ordnance Survey Map of Ashton House and Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)

EXISTING CONDITION

The existing access to Ashton House is off Ashtown Road.

Existing stone piers and gates, located at the corner of Ashtown Road, define the entrance. Ashton gatelodge is located just inside the gates, and both the gatelodge and the stone piers with gates are Protected Structures.

The existing road level adjacent to the stone piers is c. 40.36 OD, and the base of the piers and the finished floor level of the gatelodge are all at a similar level, allowing the elements to be read together.



Photograph of Ashton House entrance from within Ashton House Lands (Existing Condition)



Photograph of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)



Existing Setting of Ashton House,

PROPOSED CONDITION BY IARNROD EIREANN

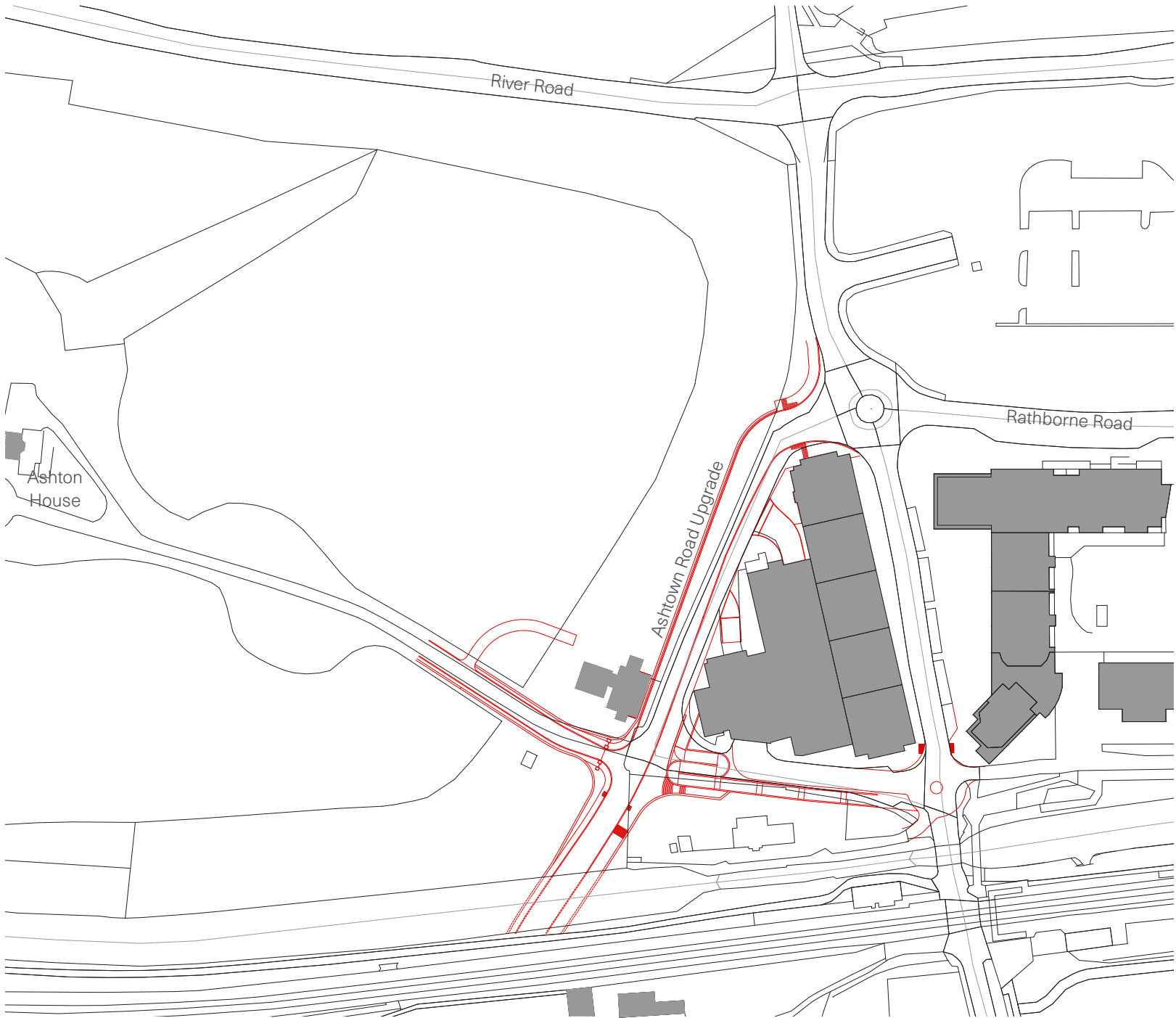
The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade by Iarnród Éireann changes the alignment and levels of Ashtown Road. The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade passes under the existing railway & canal, and then rises back up to meet existing road gradients at Ashtown Road roundabout.

The level of the proposed road, at the point where it passes the entrance to Ashton House, with its stone piers & gates and gatelodge (Protected Structures), is c. 37.62m OD, which is c. 2.74 metres below the existing road level at that position.

The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade also widens and realigns the existing road. The new alignment overlaps with the existing position of the stone piers & gates (Protected Structures), and therefore necessitates their removal, and reconstruction elsewhere, in a position to be agreed. The details of the proposed arrangement are described in more detail on the following page.

While Castlethorn are supportive of the upgrade of Ashtown Road in principle, we are concerned that the local access arrangements to Ashton House will result in an significant deterioration in the quality and nature of the access to Ashton House, in particular in relation to the following:

- Road Safety: The existing access area is c. 30 metres from the underpass under the canal and railway, and in the proposed Iarnród Éireann design, the Ashtown Road Upgrade is still rising steeply at the point that it passes the entrance to Ashton House, resulting in traffic from Ashton House exiting onto a steeply sloped, fast moving carriageway;
- Protected Structures: The entrance to Ashton House is defined by stone piers and gates, and a gatelodge, all of which are Protected Structures. The setting of the Protected Structures and the relationship between the piers & gates and the Gatelodge is severely impacted by the proposals.



OS Map of existing Ashtown Road (shown in grey), with Iarnród Éireann proposal overlaid (shown in red).

PROPOSED CONDITION BY IARNROD EIREANN

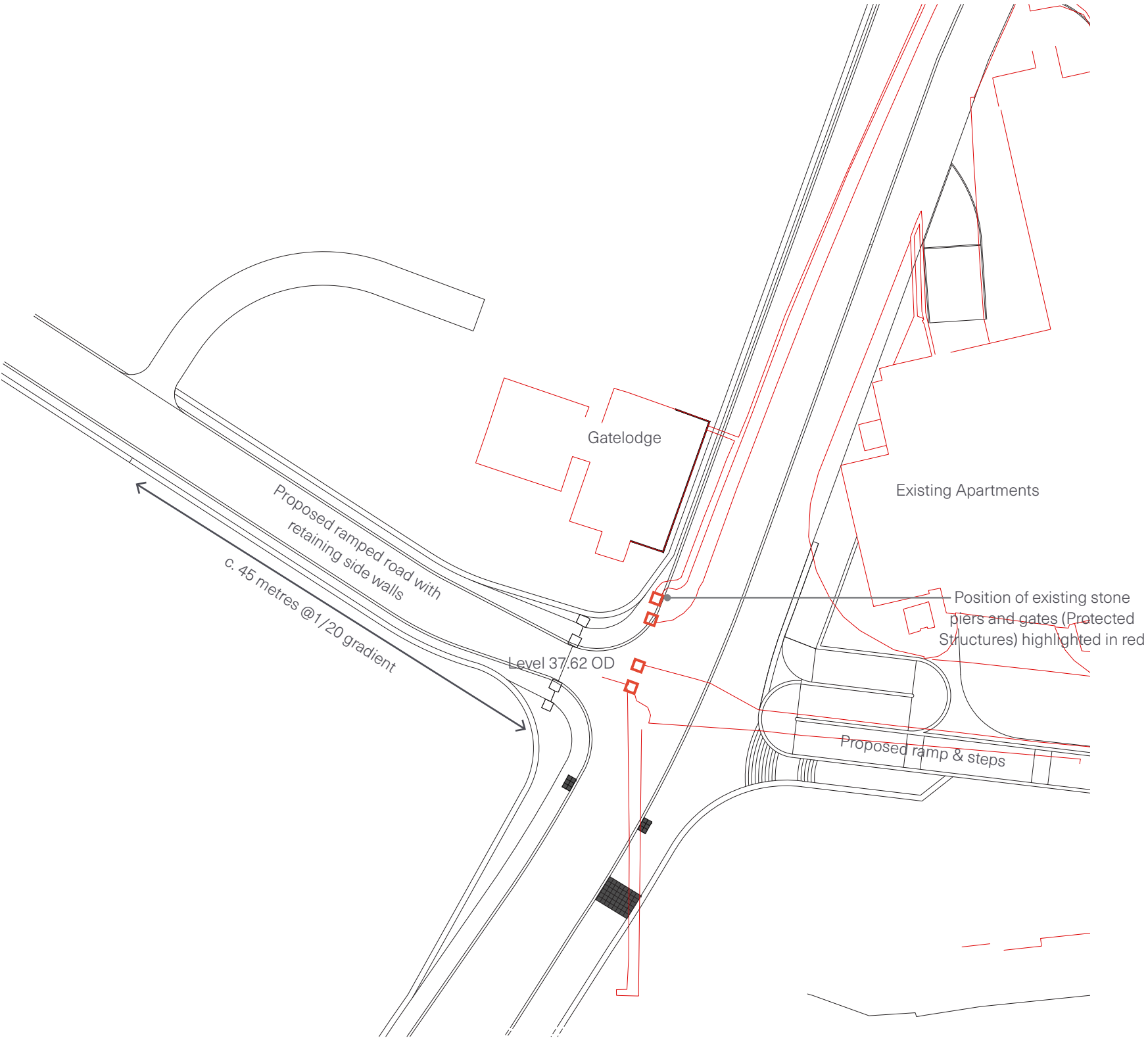
The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade passes under the existing railway & canal, and then rises back up to meet existing road gradients at Ashtown Road roundabout. The level of the proposed road, at the point where it passes the existing stone piers & gates (Protected Structures), is c. 37.62m OD, which is c. 2.74 metres below the existing road level at that position.

The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade also widens and realigns the existing road. The new alignment overlaps with the existing position of the stone piers & gates (Protected Structures), and therefore necessitates their removal, and reconstruction elsewhere, in a position to be agreed.

Iarnrod Eireann have proposed that the existing position of the stone piers & gates (Protected Structures) be removed and reconstructed in a position slightly south-west of their existing location, and that they would be placed at the level of the proposed Ashtown Road upgrade, i.e. c. 2.74 metres below their existing level.

Iarnrod Eireann have proposed that the newly positioned piers would continue to serve as the point for vehicular and pedestrian access to Ashton House, and propose that a ramped road, which would be c. 40-45 metres in length, located inside the grounds of Ashton House, would navigate the proposed level change of c. 2.7 metres between the Ashtown Road upgrade and existing ground levels. Retaining walls will be required on the sides of the ramped road to deal with the level difference between the road and the adjacent ground levels.

We are concerned that the proposed entrance condition will create an unsafe, unpleasant, “tunnel” or “underpass” effect for entrants into Ashton House, and will sever the relationship between the existing stone piers & gates and the gatelodge, all of which are Protected Structures.



Drawing showing Iarnrod Eireann proposal (shown in grey), overlaid on existing conditions (shown in red).

PROPOSED CONDITION BY IARNROD EIREANN



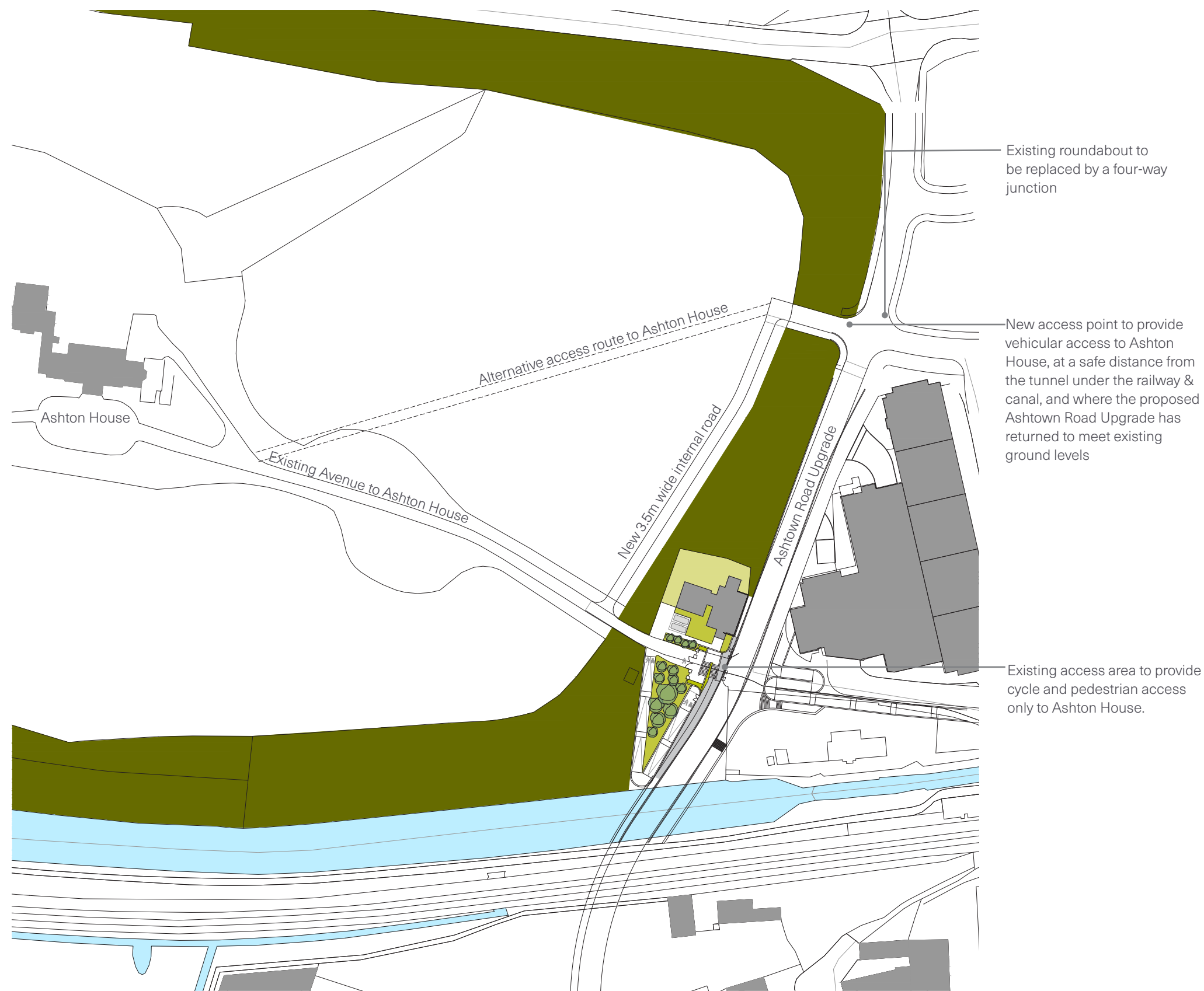
Proposed Ashtown Road Upgrade & Ashton House entrance by Iarnrod Eireann, with change in ground level of c.2.7metres at the existing entrance to Ashton House. As can be seen in the 3d model, the stone piers and gates are dwarfed by the scale of the retaining walls required by the Ashtown Road Upgrade, and the relationship between the stone piers & gates and the Gatelodge is severed.

PROPOSED CONDITION BY CASTLETHORN

Castlethorn are supportive of the upgrade of Ashtown Road in principle, but are concerned with the impact of the level change on the access arrangements to Ashton House, and have proposed an alternative access arrangement. This alternative access arrangement does not impact on the realignment or proposed levels of the Ashtown Road upgrade, which would not be impacted by this alternative access arrangement.

Castlethorn are proposing that vehicular access to Ashton House be moved from its existing position to a point further north long its boundary with the Ashtown Road, opposite the existing Rathborne Road. At this point, the Ashtown Road Upgrade has reached existing ground levels, and the existing junction could be reconfigured to provide a safe vehicular access at this point.

Castlethorn are proposing that the existing access to Ashton House would become an access point for pedestrians and cyclists only. This arrangement is described in more detail on the following pages.



PROPOSED CONDITION BY CASTLETHORN

The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade necessitates the removal, and reconstruction elsewhere, of the existing stone piers & gates (Protected Structures). The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade also necessitates a level change of c. 2.7 metres at the existing entrance point.

Castlethorn have considered the impact of both the repositioned piers & gates, and the 2.7m level change, and are proposing that the existing entrance is redesigned to become a pedestrian and cycle access only, with steps and ramps to navigate the level difference, and that vehicular access to Ashton House is moved further northwards, adjacent to the existing roundabout, where the levels of the proposed Ashtown Road upgrade and the existing levels align.

Castlethorn are proposing that the piers be repositioned so that they remain at the same ground level as the gatelodge (Protected Structure), and are aligned with the western wall of the gatelodge, effectively defining a threshold area outside the gatelodge on the Ashton House side of the boundary. This arrangement maintains an appropriate relationship between the gatelodge and the gates & piers, all of which are Protected Structures.

The proposed position of the piers in the Castlethorn scheme creates a bellmouth on the Ashtown Road side of the boundary. The bellmouth area can be used to provide steps which navigate the the proposed level change of c. 2.7 metres between the Ashtown Road upgrade and existing ground levels, and some soft landscaping.

A pedestrian and cycle access ramp, discreetly located behind the boundary wall of provides access for all between the new Ashtown Road upgrade and the Ashton House lands.



PROPOSED CONDITION BY CASTLETHORN



Alternative entrance design to Ashton House by Castlethorn, with the stone entrance piers retained at their existing ground level, and new steps and ramp to negotiate the 2.7m level change. This proposal does not require any changes to the alignment or levels of the Iarnród Éireann design for the Ashtown Road Upgrade.

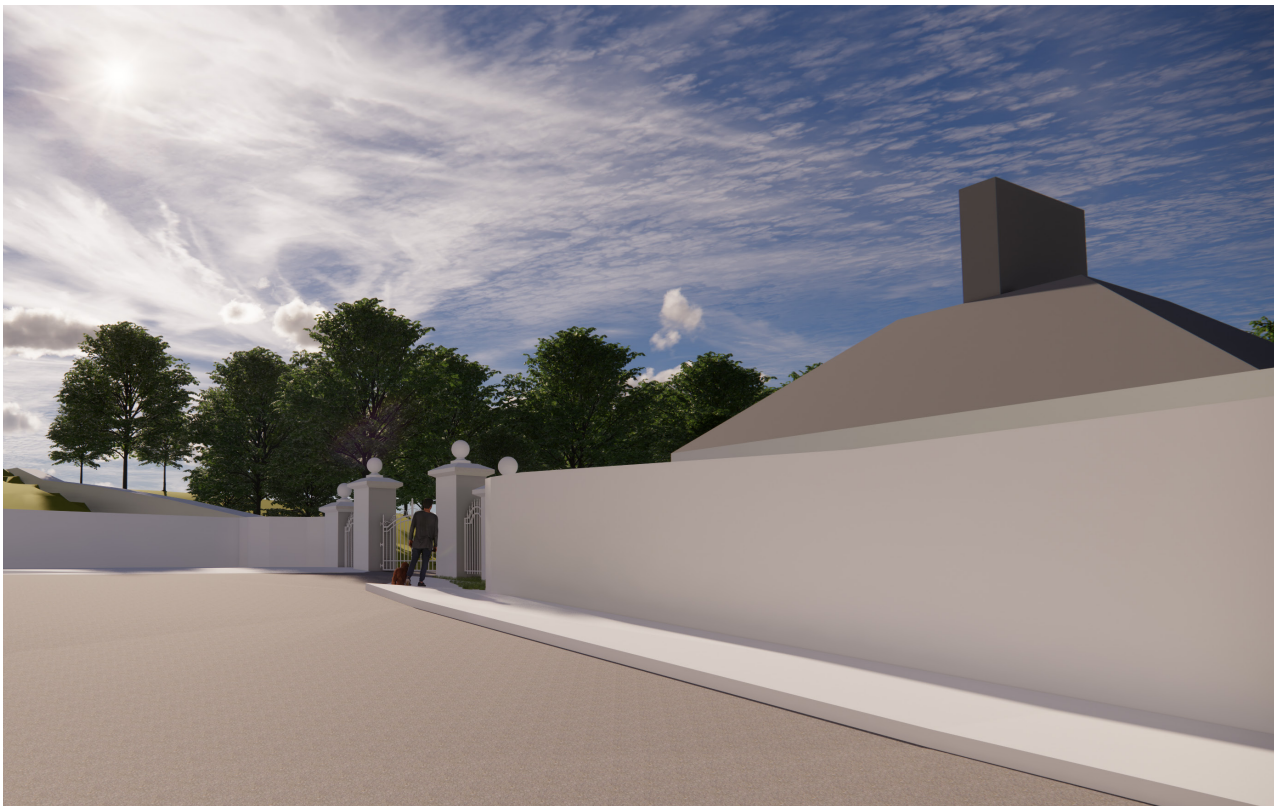
VIEW FROM ASHTOWN ROAD, LOOKING SOUTH

EXISTING CONDITION (PHOTO)



Photograph of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)
The existing road has a narrow carraigeway and footpaths. The existing boundary wall to Ashton House will be removed as part of the Ashtown Road upgrade, and it is expected that some trees will also be removed.

EXISTING CONDITION (MODEL)



3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)

VIEW FROM ASHTOWN ROAD, LOOKING SOUTH

IARNROD EIREANN PROPOSAL



3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Iarnrod Eireann Proposal)

CASTLETHORN PROPOSAL



3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Castlethorn Proposal)

In both of the above views, the proximity of the entrance to Ashton House from the underpass that is part of the Ashtown Road Upgrade is clear. The significant level change necessitates high boundary walls along the western edge of the Ashtown Road Upgrade, where the walls will effectively be retaining structures of c. 4.0 - 5.0 metres in height. The tall walls will overshadow the entrance area to Ashton House, which, when combined with the noise and traffic movements from the tunnel, will create a very traffic-dominated environment.

VIEW FROM ASHTOWN ROAD, LOOKING AT ENTRANCE

EXISTING CONDITION (PHOTO)



Photograph of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)

EXISTING CONDITION (MODEL)



3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)

The stone piers, gates and Ashton Gatelodge , all Protected Structures, are intended to be read together, as an assembly of elements that define the approach to Ashton House. The piers, gates and the gatelodge all are sitting at very similar ground levels.

We accept that the position and level of the Ashtown Road Upgrade will inevitably change the environment in the vicinity of the existing entrance to Ashton House, with the wider carriageway, increased traffic volumes and 2.7m level change all having a significant impact.

VIEW FROM ASHTOWN ROAD, LOOKING AT ENTRANCE

IARNROD EIREANN PROPOSAL



3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Iarnrod Eireann Proposal)
The stone piers & gates (Protected Structures) are removed from their existing position and rebuilt as shown, at a level c. 2.7metres below their existing position. A new boundary wall, which forms the western edge of the Ashtown Road Upgrade, with estimated heights of between 4.0 - 5.0 metres, acts as a retaining wall to the Ashton House Lands.
Vehicular and pedestrian access to Ashton House is via the repositioned gates, and the new, steeply sloped access road that would be required within the Ashton House Lands is visible through the gates. Retaining structures will be required on both sides of the new access road to Ashton House, which will create a “tunnel” effect, and overshadowing on the access road.

CASTLETHORN PROPOSAL



3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (CastlethornProposal)
The stone piers & gates (Protected Structures) are removed from their existing position and rebuilt as shown - their position aligns with the western wall of the gate lodge, and their ground level is the same at their existing ground level.
The new position of the stone piers and gates creates a “bell mouth” area, where steps and planting are located, which facilitates pedestrian movement between Ashton House and the Ashtown Road Upgrade.
A new boundary wall, which forms the western edge of the Ashtown Road Upgrade, with estimated heights of between 4.0 - 5.0 metres, acts as a retaining wall to the Ashton House Lands - the position of the proposed steps and planting screens the height of the boundary walls, mitigating the visual impact of their height.

We accept that the position and level of the Ashtown Road Upgrade will inevitably change the environment in the vicinity of the existing entrance to Ashton House, with the wider carriageway, increased traffic volumes and 2.7m level change all having a significant impact. However, in the Iarnrod Eireann proposal on the left, the stone piers are dwarfed by the new retaining walls, and the ramped access to Ashton House will be dark and tunnel-like. In the Castlethorn proposal on the right, the stone piers maintain a relationship with the gate lodge, and the proposed steps and planting mitigate the visual impact of the inevitable level changes that arise from the Ashtown Road Upgrade.

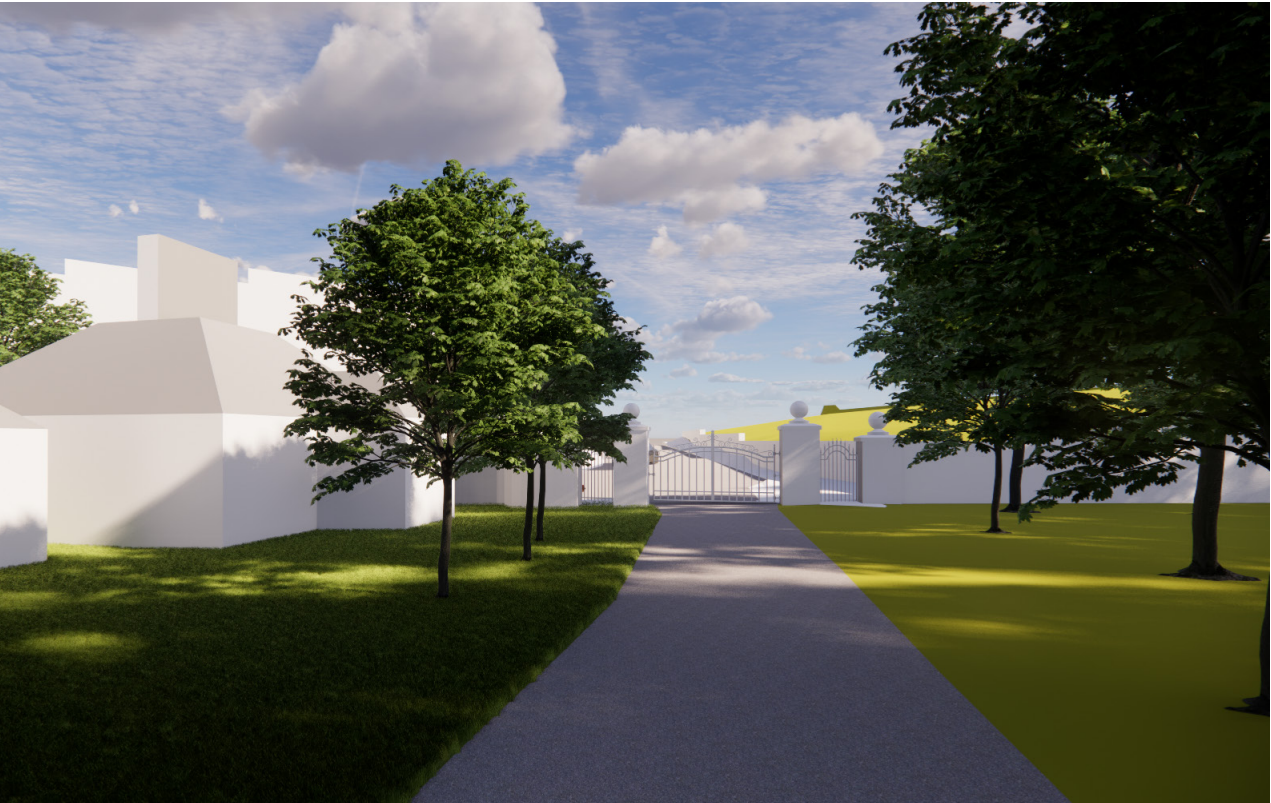
VIEW FROM ASHTON HOUSE LANDS

EXISTING CONDITION (PHOTO)



Photograph of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)

EXISTING CONDITION (MODEL)



3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)

The stone piers, gates and Ashton Gatelodge , all Protected Structures, are intended to be read together, as an assembly of elements that define the approach to Ashton House. The piers, gates and the gatelodge all are sitting at very similar ground levels.

VIEW FROM ASHTON HOUSE LANDS

IARNROD EIREANN PROPOSAL



3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Iarnrod Eireann Proposal)
As the level of the Ashtown Road Upgrade, where it meets the existing entrance area, is c. 2.7 metres below existing levels, the Iarnrod Eireann proposal includes a new access road within the grounds of Ashton House, which is a ramped road of c. 45 metres in length, at a gradient of c. 1:20. The proposed new access road will require retaining walls to both sides. The visual impact of the new access road is shown in the above image - the new access road effectively divorces the gatehouse from the entrance sequence, as it is positioned at a different level, and will be visually separated by the access road and its surrounding retaining walls and fence.

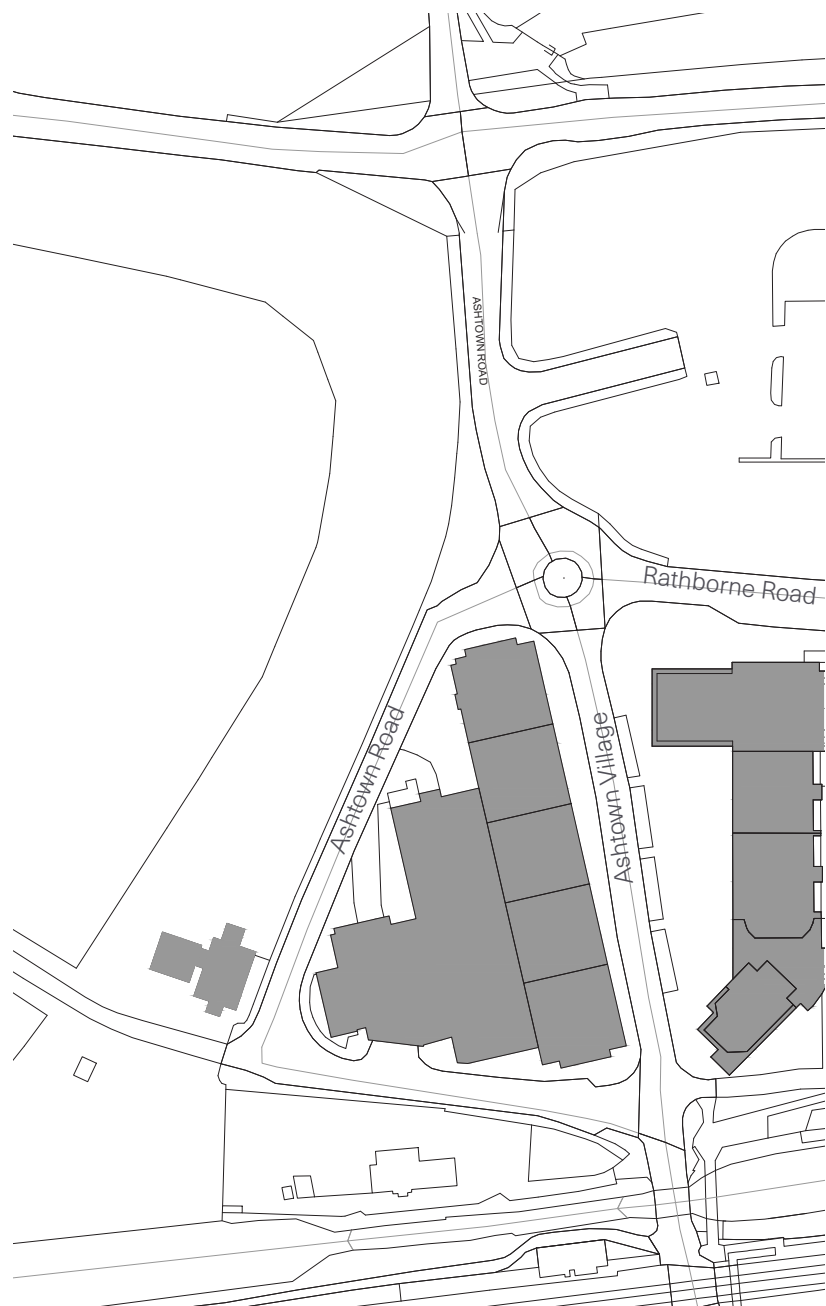
CASTLETHORN PROPOSAL



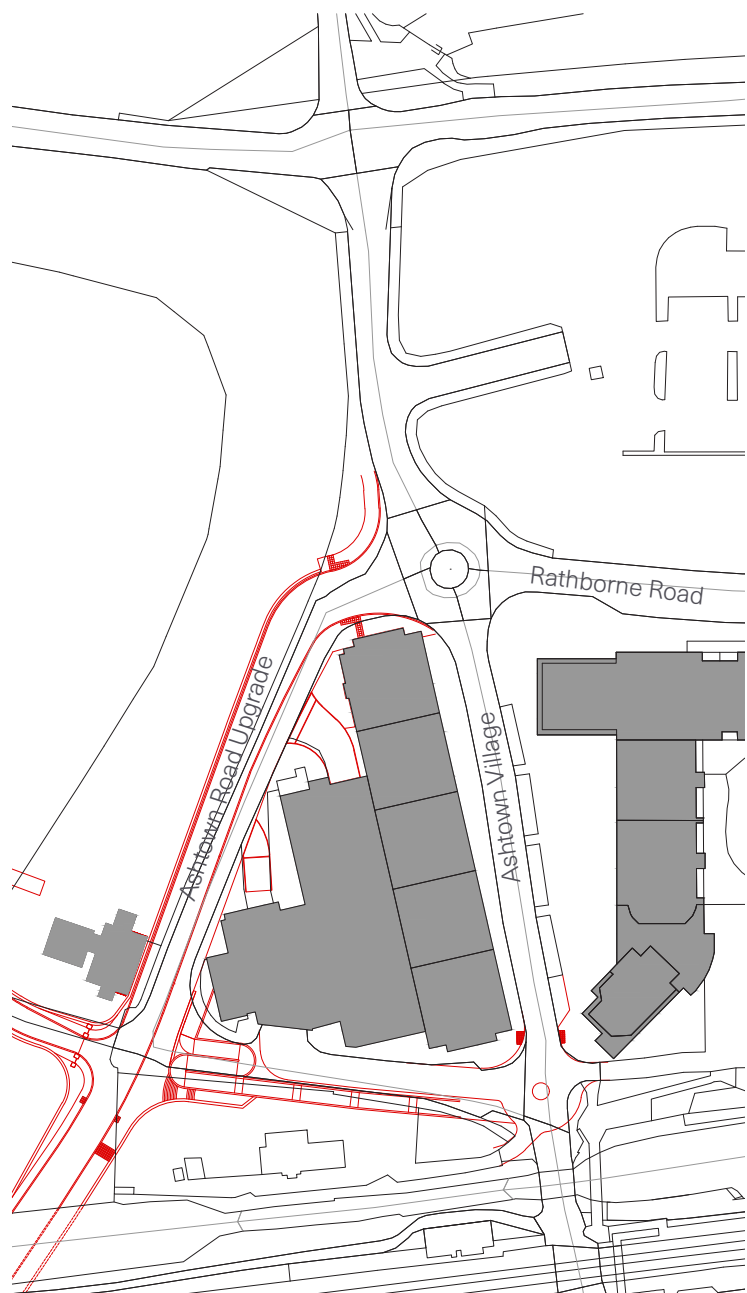
3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Castlethorn Proposal)
In the Castlethorn proposal, the stone piers and gates are repositioned at the same level as their existing level, which maintains a harmonious relationship between the gatehouse and the piers, all of which are Protected Structures, and are intended to be seen together.
The proposed steps, located outside the repositioned gates, are not visible in this view, and the proposed ramp, located on the right hand side of the image, is very discreet, as it is combined with a generous area of planting.

We accept that the level change of c. 2.7 metres in the vicinity of the entrance to Ashton House is inevitable. However, we maintain that this level change, and the proximity of the entrance area to the Ashtown Road Underpass render the existing access point unsuitable as a vehicular access point, and that the existing entrance should become pedestrian and cycle only, with vehicular access to Ashton House to be provided elsewhere.

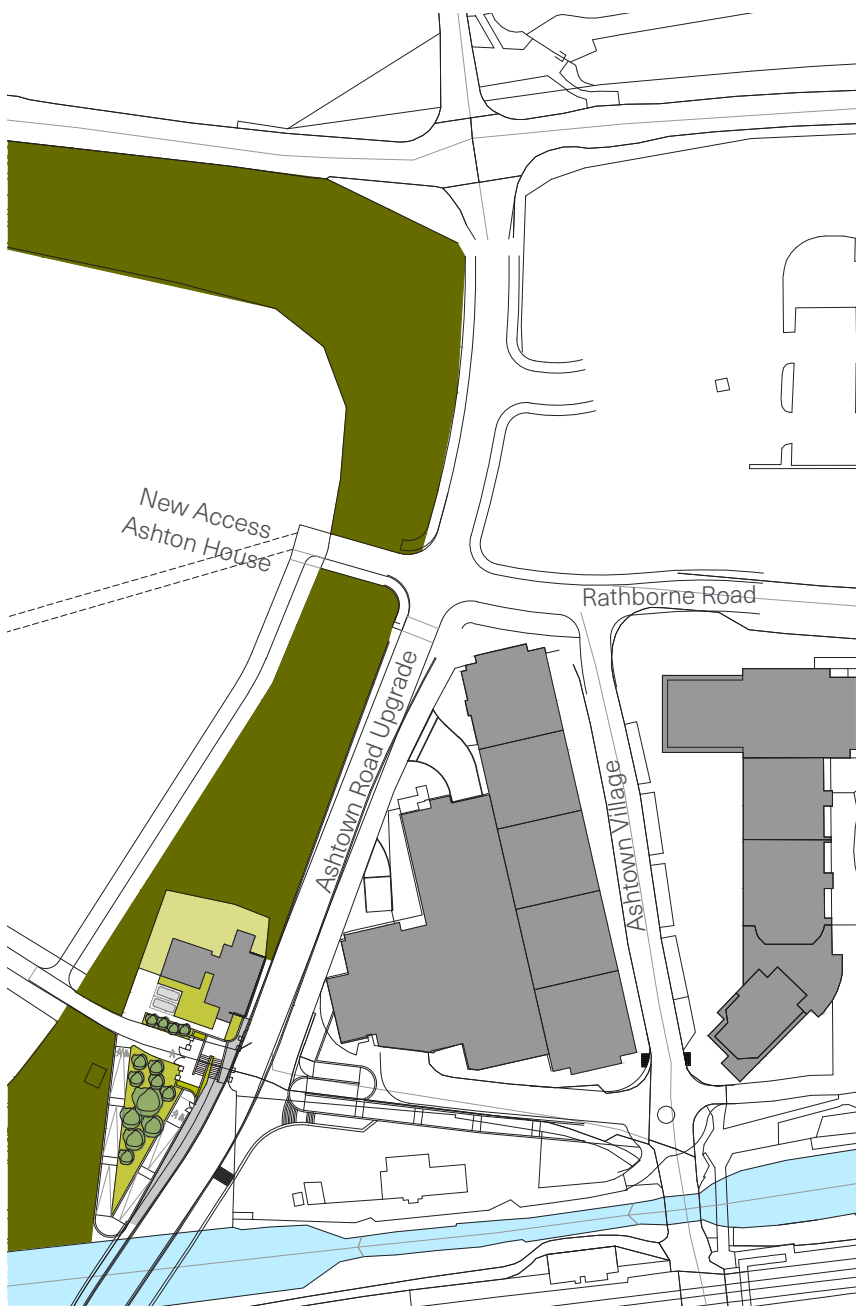
PROPOSED NEW VEHICULAR ENTRANCE



OS Map of Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)



OS Map of existing Ashtown Road (shown in grey), with Iarnród Éireann proposal overlaid (shown in red).



Castlethorn Proposal, with proposed new 4-way junction in lieu of existing Ashtown Road roundabout.

At the moment, the junction between the Ashtown Road, Rathborne Avenue and Rathborne Village is a roundabout. The Ashtown Road Upgrade proposes to maintain this roundabout, as shown in the middle image above. However, the road hierarchy between Ashtown Road, Rathborne Avenue and Rathborne Village will be changed by the Ashtown Road Upgrade, with the Ashtown Road Upgrade becoming a more important route, and Ashtown Village becoming a vehicular cul-de-sac.

The Castlethorn scheme proposes that the existing roundabout be replaced by a 4-way junction, between the Ashtown Road Upgrade, Rathborne Avenue and the proposed new vehicular access to Ashton House. The proposed new vehicular access to Ashton House is located where the Ashtown Road Upgrade is at existing levels, thereby avoiding any requirement for ramped access and retaining structures within the Ashton House lands. The proposed access point is c. 130 metres from the underpass that is part of the Ashtown Road Upgrade, and is therefore a much safer point for vehicular access than the existing entrance area.

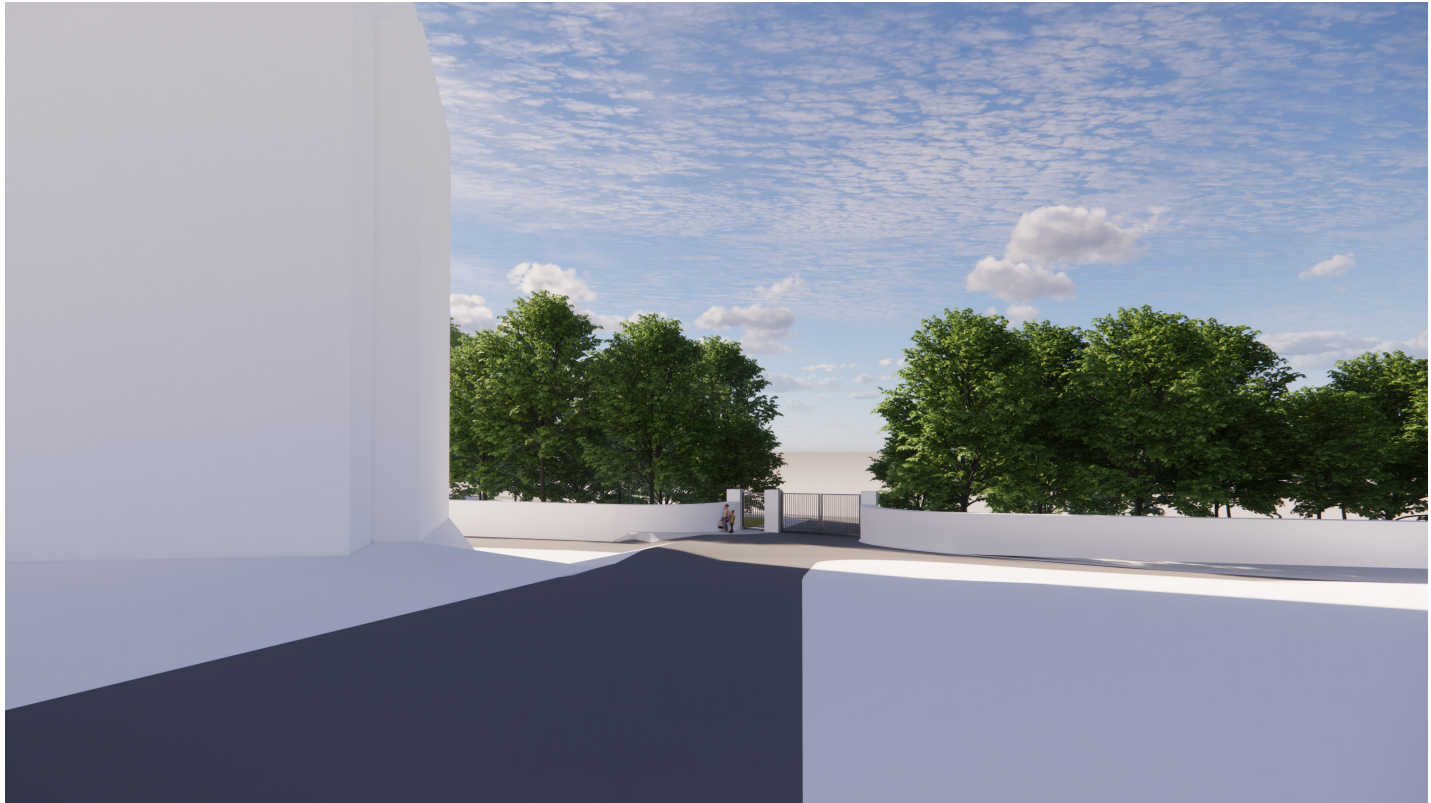
PROPOSED NEW VEHICULAR ENTRANCE

EXISTING CONDITION (PHOTO)



Photograph of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (Existing Condition)

CASTLETHORN PROPOSAL



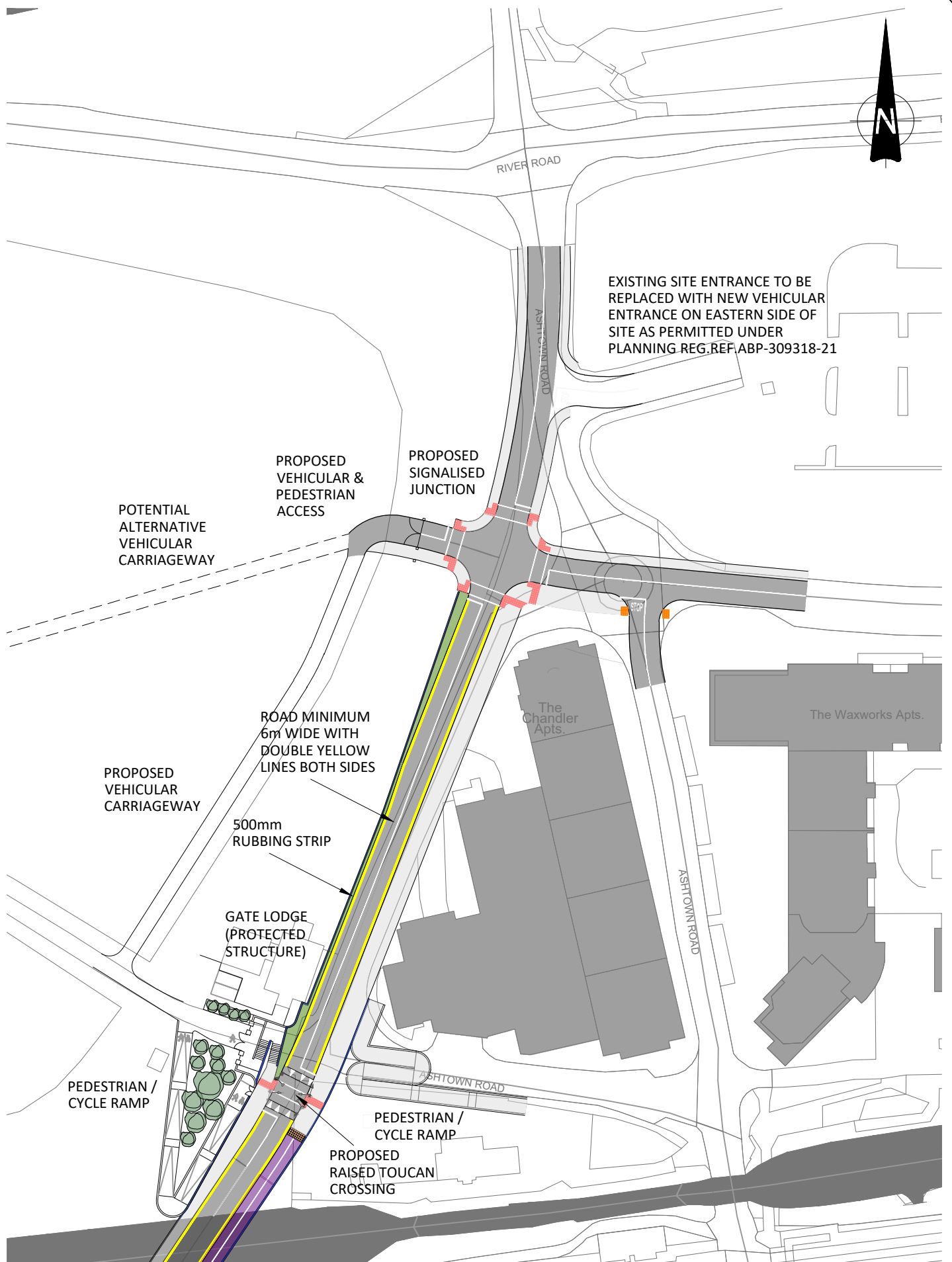
3d view of Ashton House entrance from Ashtown Road (CastlethornProposal)
The proposed new vehicular entrance to Ashton House is 5.0 metres wide, with a 2.0 metre wide pedestrian access adjacent. The proposed entrance is similar in scale to the existing entrance, i.e. it is a like-for-like provision.

CONCLUSIONS

Castlethorn are supportive of the upgrade of Ashtown Road in principle, but are concerned with the impact of the proposed design on the access arrangements to Ashton House.

We have proposed an alternative access arrangement to Ashton House, which is a minor design amendment to the Iarnród Éireann proposals, which could be implemented without requiring any significant changes to the Ashtown Road Upgrade, i.e the alignment and gradient of the Ashtown Road Upgrade would not change, and any design changes would be local and limited to the relationship between Ashton House and the Ashtown Road.

We would appreciate if the Iarnród Éireann proposals could be modified to take on board our preferred access arrangements for Ashton House.



SKETCH REALIGNMENT OF ASHTOWN ROAD SHOWING NEW ENTRANCE TO ASHTOWN HOUSE

SCALE 1:1000 @A4



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Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment of the Proposed Alternative Entrance Route to Ashton House, Ashtown, Co. Dublin

This assessment has been prepared on instruction from Castlethorn Construction. It provides an outline historical background of Ashton House, and its setting and significance. The assessment considers two potential proposals for alterations and improvements to Ashtown Road, and in particular the impact of these alterations on the historic fabric and character of Ashton House and its setting. Option A is the proposal by Iarnród Éireann as part of their Dart+ West Ashtown Road Improvement Scheme, and Option B is the alternative proposal put forward by OMP Architects and Castlethorn Construction.

Ashton House, Ashtown, is included on the Fingal County Record of Protected Structures, RPS Reg. Ref. 690. This listing includes the house, outbuildings, gates and gate lodge. The house appears to be of Georgian origin, although substantially altered and remodelled in the late 19th century. Structures within the site, including the Walled Garden to the south appear to pre-date the construction of the house.

This assessment considers the external appearance of Ashton House, its setting, and structures within the curtilage which may be impacted by the proposed alterations, and does not consider the interiors of Ashton House.

1. Outline History of the Site



Figure 1: Detail extract showing the Ashtown area, from the 1760 Rocque Survey of County Dublin.

David Slattery – Conservation Architects Ltd.

James Slattery B.Arch., Dipl. ABRCons M.R.I.A.I. – Principal / Director

Ashtown is noted as Ashe Town on the 1760 Rocque map of county Dublin. This map shows several structures in the area of the subject site, including in the approximate location of the existing Walled Garden and Stables/Sheds, and near the existing Walled Garden to the West (formerly part of the Ashbrook estate). Two entrances to the site from the adjoining roads are illustrated in this map – one from the North and one from the East. This survey pre-dates the construction of the Grand Canal, to the south of the site, in the late 18th century.



Figure 2: Detail extract showing the Ashtown area, from the 1816 Taylor map of Dublin.

The later, less detailed, Taylor's Map of County Dublin, 1816, appears to show a structure in the approximate location of the existing Ashton House. The Walled Garden and other structure adjoining the Walled Garden are also noted in this map. This map illustrates one entrance to the site only, from the North. Ashbrook House is labelled as Ashtown House in this map, and is visible to the west of the subject site, along with its clearly identified Walled Garden.



Figure 3: Detail extract showing the Ashtown area, from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1837-43.

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1837-43, provides the earliest detailed view of the subject house and its site. The south-western portion of the site appears to have a Walled Garden, with adjoining service yard and associated structures. A Gate Lodge is noted in the south-eastern corner, adjacent to the 10th Lock along the Grand Canal. Several paths and circulation routes within the estate are also illustrated, including the primary entrance avenue leading to the house from the Gate Lodge. In the adjoining site to the west, the Walled Garden and Gate Lodge are noted in this map.

Ashtown House (as it was named at this time) is noted as one of the principal seats in the Castleknock area in Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, 1837. The resident at this time is recorded as J. Dunne, Esq.

Griffith's Valuation of 1848 notes that Josias Dunne, Esq., is still the resident of Ashtown House. This valuation notes that the house was previously valued at 66l and raised the value to 80l.

In 1891 the existing house was enlarged and remodelled, to designs by William Hague. The resident of the house at this time was Andrew Moore. It appears that the Moore family had been at Ashton House since at least 1868. The extent of the alterations carried out at this time can be seen in the 1907-11 Ordnance Survey Map, and included the addition of a Billiard Room and alterations to the Gate Lodge.

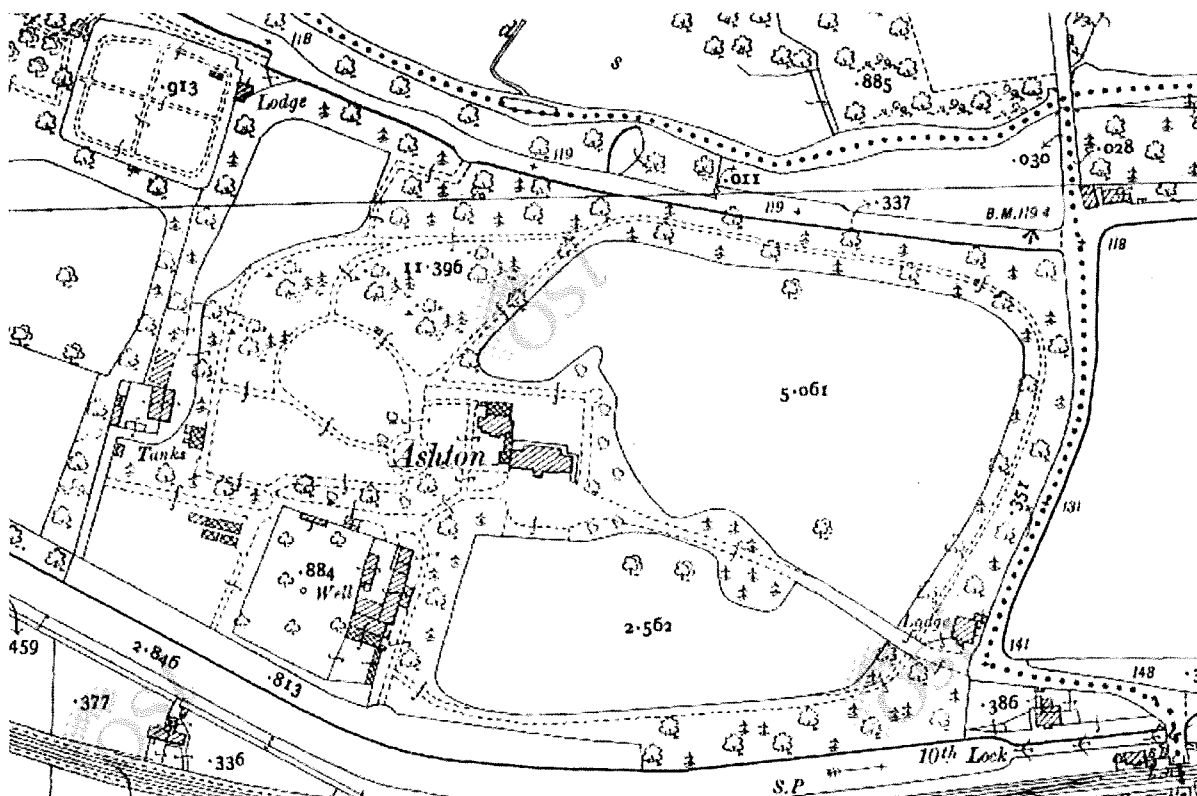


Figure 4: Detail extract of the 1907-11 Ordnance Survey Map.

The 1907-11 Ordnance Survey map provides a detailed view of the layout of the estate at this time. The entrance approach remains along the primary avenue leading to the house from the south-eastern corner. The north-western portion of the site appears to have been planted as a woodland area, with numerous pathways. There has been some further development of the service yard and Kitchen Garden area in the south-western portion of the estate. The south-eastern portion of the site appears to be open parkland, with a belt of trees along the perimeter.



Figure 5: 1946 Photograph of the front facade of Ashton House, showing the Italianate style remodelling carried out in the late 19th century.



Figure 6: 1949 Aerial View of the subject site. BFA XAW027072.

The 1949 aerial view of the subject site shows the rural setting of the Ashtown area at this time. The view also reveals the relatively insular character of the Ashton House estate, with views to the outside limited by the perimeter belt of trees. The Walled Garden and associated service structures are visible in the foreground of this photograph.



Figure 7: 1952 Aerial Photograph of the subject site. BFA XAW044966.

The 1952 aerial photograph shows a different viewpoint, including a view of the front façade of the house. This angle shows that there was a gap in the perimeter tree belt to the south, which may have been to allow views from the house to the Royal Canal. A series of greenhouses are visible to the west of the Walled Garden.

These mid-20th century aerial photographs also reveal the extent to which the estate was subdivided into different areas through the planting of trees. This is particularly notable in the delineation between the front lawn area, and the open parkland to the north-eastern portion of the site, the latter of which appears to be visually removed from the house by the line of trees along the entrance avenue.

Modern alterations and additions within the site, including in particular the construction of modern structures in the south-western portion of the site, and the development and growth of the surrounding context of the Ashton Estate have significantly altered the character of the subject site.

2. Assessment of the Significance of Ashton House

Ashton House is included on the Fingal County Record of Protected Structures, Reg. Ref. 690. The structure is of clear architectural and historic significance. This significance is largely based on the historic fabric of the building and its external appearance. The interiors of Ashton House will not be impacted by either proposed entrance route, and therefore.

Other structures within the site, including the Stables and Walled Garden are also of historic significance as they illustrate the workings of the historic estate.

The setting of Ashton House has been altered from its original form. These alterations include the clearing of the woodland area to the north-western corner, the loss of the trees lining the entrance avenue, and the construction of modern structures in the south-western portion of the site.

The estate is largely closed off to the public realm, with a thick belt of trees along the perimeter. The significance of the setting is therefore connected with Ashton House itself, and it is not considered to contribute to the character of the surrounding area.

Key views and vistas within the estate are limited, as the estate was historically heavily planted with trees which subdivide the estate into different areas. This can be seen in the overlay on the early 20th century Ordnance Survey map, below.

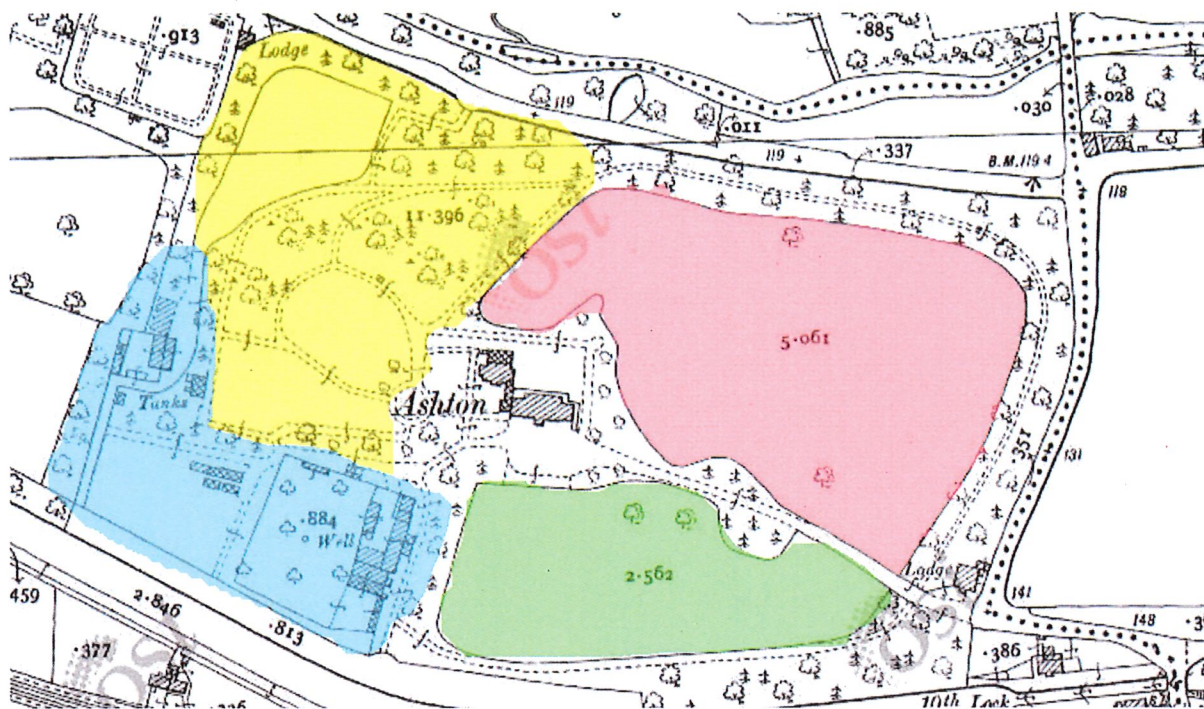


Figure 8: Sketch overlay on the 1907-11 Ordnance Survey Map, showing the different areas within the estate, where yellow indicates recreation/amenity, blue indicates service, pink indicates parkland, and green indicates parkland with primary views from the house and the entrance avenue.

The most significant portions of the estate are considered to be along the southern perimeter with the Royal Canal. This includes the former service area (in blue), which has historic structures such as the Walled Garden and Stables which are of significance. The parkland to the front setting of the house, highlighted in green, is also considered to be significant. This area would have been visible in views of the house from along the entrance approach, and also formed the foreground for views from the house towards the Canal. The northern parkland area, highlighted in pink, was of lesser prominence within the estate, and does not contribute to views of the house. This area of parkland was divided from the southern portion by a line of trees, visible in the aerial photographs above. The former Woodland area, highlighted in yellow, is of little or no significance today, due to the extensive loss of trees and paths/rides which created the character of this portion of the estate.



Figure 9: 3D image showing the existing entrance to Ashton House, with the Gate Lodge, Gate Piers and Gates (all Protected Structures) clearly labelled.

The entrance to Ashton House makes a positive contribution to the architectural heritage character of Ashtown Road, with 19th century gate lodge, and stone gate piers and gates within rendered stone boundary walls. The ensemble of entrance gates, piers and gate lodge are visible from views along the approach from Ashtown Road, and are the only portion of the historic estate visible from the public realm. This ensemble, and its contribution to the character of the streetscape of Ashtown Road, is of architectural significance. This has been recognised in Fingal County Council's decision to include these elements on the listing of Ashton House on their Record of Protected Structures: *"Early 19th century house, outbuildings, gate lodge & gates. The house is in Victorian Italianate style."*

3. Assessment of the Architectural Heritage Impact of the Proposed Options

The following section will consider and assess the architectural heritage impact of each of the two proposed options on the historic fabric and character of Ashton House and its setting.

Option A has been proposed by Iarnród Éireann as part of their Ashtown Road Improvement Scheme, which forms part of DART+ West and involves grade separation of the road from the railway line and canal by way of tunnel and a widening of the Ashtown Road corridor. This will impact the historic fabric and character of the eastern boundary of the Ashton House lands. Chapter 21 of the submitted EIAR (in relation to Architectural Heritage) acknowledges the impact on the Ashton House Protected Structure (and Gate Lodge) arising from this as *"Profound"* (See Table 21-13 – Ref. BH149/DL3). It would be reasonable to consider alternatives therefore which can avoid or significantly mitigate this.

Option B has been proposed by O'Mahony Pike and Castlethorn Construction as an alternative proposal in response to Iarnród Éireann's proposal. This option will involve the creation of a

new vehicular entrance in a location further to the north along Ashtown Road, and the re-use of the existing entrance point for pedestrian and cycle access only.

For further detail on both proposals, please refer to the 'Ashtown Road Upgrade and Entrance to Ashton House' document prepared by O'Mahony Pike Architects, included as part of this submission.

Option A – Proposed by Iarnród Éireann

A summary of Iarnród Éireann's proposed upgrade of Ashtown Road is provided in OMP's summary document:

"The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade by Iarnrod Eireann changes the alignment and levels of Ashtown Road. The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade passes under the existing railway & canal, and then rises back up to meet existing road gradients at Ashtown Road roundabout. The level of the proposed road, at the point where it passes the entrance to Ashton House, with its stone piers & gates and gate lodge (Protected Structures), is c. 37.62m OD, which is c. 2.74 metres below the existing road level at that position. The proposed Ashtown Road upgrade also widens and realigns the existing road. The new alignment overlaps with the existing position of the stone piers & gates (Protected Structures), and therefore necessitates their removal, and reconstruction elsewhere, in a position to be agreed..."

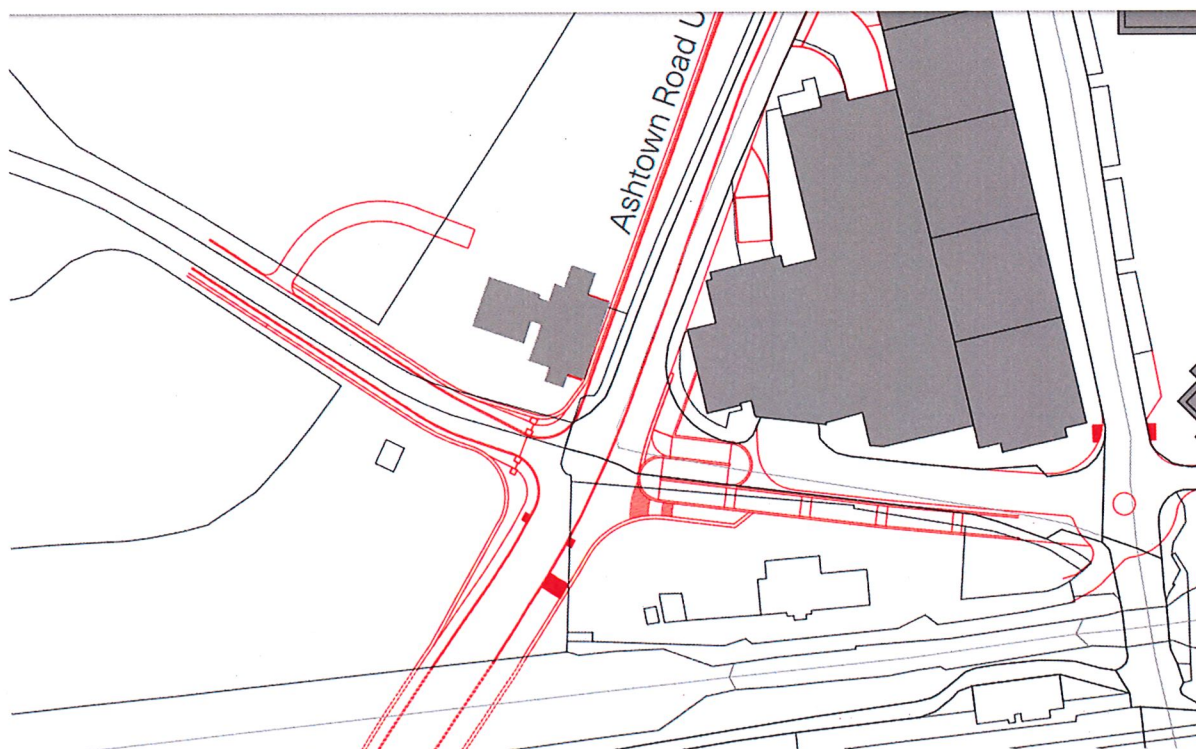


Figure 10: Plan of the Iarnród Éireann proposed alterations to Ashton Road shown in red, overlaid on the existing Ordnance Survey map. Drawing prepared by OMP Architects.

"Iarnrod Eireann have proposed that the existing position of the stone piers & gates (Protected Structures) be removed and reconstructed in a position slightly south-west of their existing location, and that they would be placed at the level of the proposed Ashtown Road upgrade, i.e. c. 2.74 metres below their existing level. Iarnrod Eireann have proposed that the newly positioned piers would continue to serve as the point for vehicular and pedestrian access to Ashton House, and propose that a ramped road, which would be c. 40-45 metres in length,

located inside the grounds of Ashton House, would navigate the proposed level change of c. 2.7 metres between the Ashtown Road upgrade and existing ground levels. Retaining walls will be required on the sides of the ramped road to deal with the level difference between the road and the adjacent ground levels."

The most significant feature of this proposal is the widening, realignment and level changes of Ashtown Road. This will necessitate the relocation of the existing gate piers and gates to a level far lower than the gate lodge itself, along with the demolition of the existing rendered boundary wall to Ashton House. The works will have the effect of creating a curved tunnel below the gate lodge and will remove the gate lodge from view and dwarf the gate piers which will be at a much lower level, disconnecting the gate lodge and entrance setpiece. These upgrade works to Ashtown Road will have a significant impact on the character of Ashtown Road, and on the contribution of the boundary features of Ashton House to the streetscape.

Option A includes a change of level along the entrance avenue, and the construction of retaining walls on either side of the avenue. The existing historic gates and gate piers (Protected Structures) will be relocated slightly to the west, at the proposed new ground level. The high retaining walls required for these works will have a significant impact on the character of the historic estate and the setting of Ashton House, altering the landscaping within the estate, and impacting significant vistas along the entrance avenue and within the setting of the Protected Structure.

The proposed new retaining walls will also impact the architectural character of the Ashton House estate as viewed from the public realm, with the retaining walls to either side of the entrance avenue limiting views of the parkland and creating a tunnel-like appearance. The high retaining walls will sever the existing visual connection between the Gate Lodge and Gate Piers/Gates, eroding the significance of this ensemble of entrance structures.

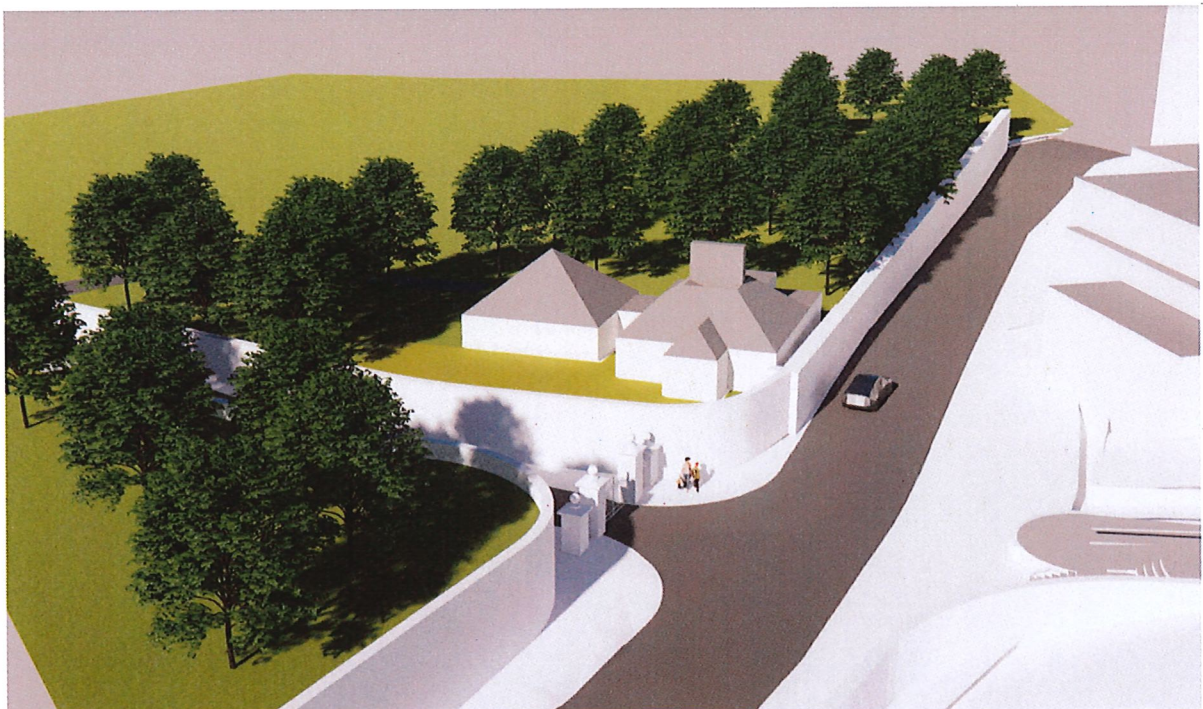


Figure 11: 3D model showing Option A, proposed by Iarnród Éireann. Prepared by OMP Architects.

The proposed works within Ashton House lands are considered to be an irreversible and inappropriate intervention to the setting of this Protected Structure, which will have a

significant deleterious impact on the character of the setting and on views and vistas within the estate. The works will undermine the significance of the gates/gate piers and Gate Lodge through their separation by a tall retaining wall, and will completely alter the character of the Ashton House estate and its contribution to the streetscape.

Option B – Proposed by O'Mahony Pike Architects and Castlethorn Construction

OMP and Castlethorn's proposed alternative accepts Iarnród Éireann's proposed realignment and level changes of Ashtown Road, and includes these alterations in their proposal. Option B differs from Option A primarily with regard to the consideration given to the entrance point to Ashton House, and the relationship between the gates, piers and gate lodge.

In Option B, OMP and Castlethorn propose the creation of a new vehicular access to the Ashton House site further to the north along Ashtown Road. The existing access point and entrance avenue will be used for pedestrian and cycle access only, with the level change between the road and the entrance avenue resolved through steps and ramps. This will remove the need for the tall retaining walls either side of the entrance avenue, a key feature in Option A.

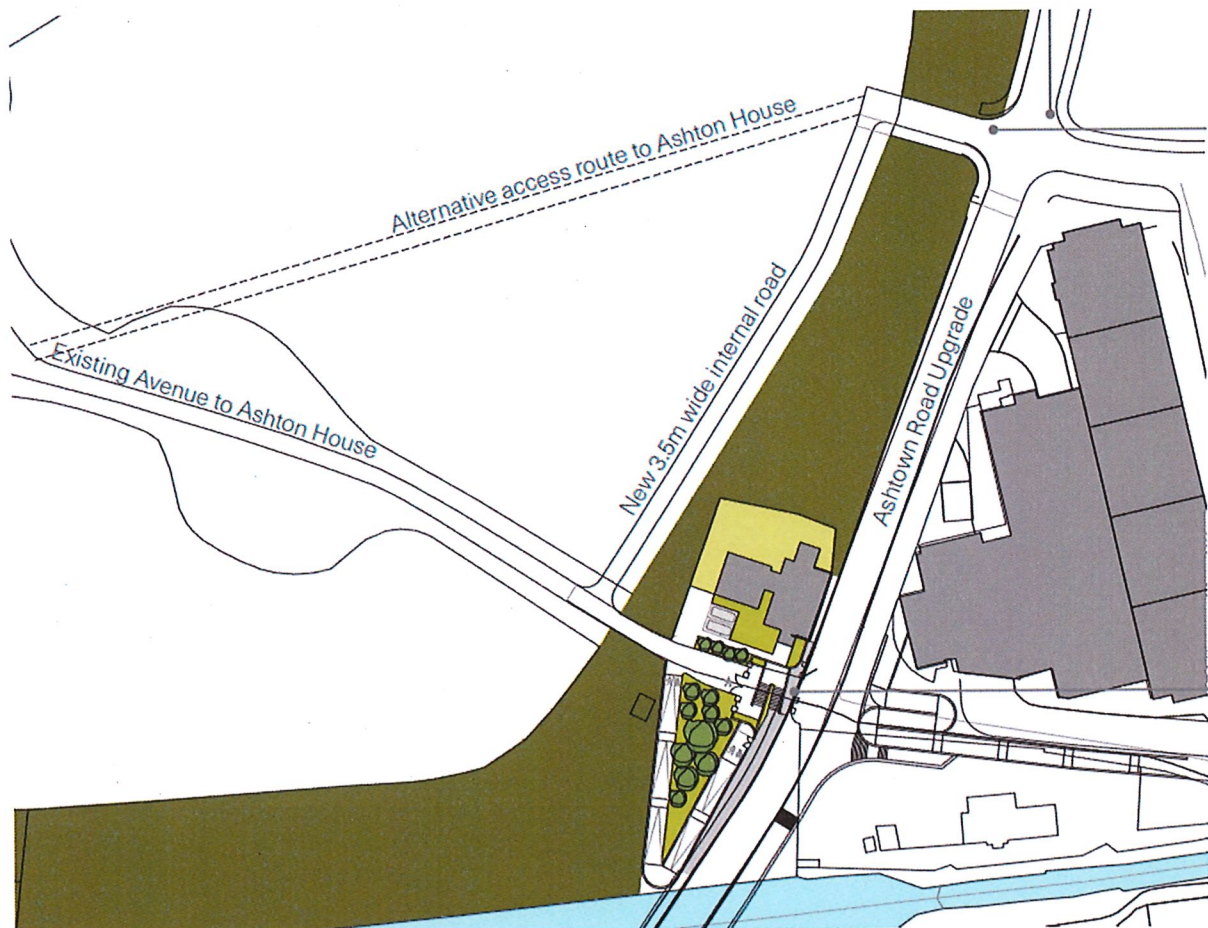


Figure 12: Plan of the OMP proposed alterations to Ashton Road, with the existing conditions overlaid in red. Drawing prepared by OMP Architects.

The entrance gates and piers will be relocated to the west, at the top of the proposed new ramp/steps. This will ensure that the relationship between the gates/gate piers and the entrance avenue remains largely intact and will preserve views from the gateway along the

entrance avenue towards the house. Similarly, the relationship between the gates/gate piers and the gate lodge itself will be retained in this option.

The proposed new vehicular entrance and avenue will cut through the parkland to the north of the existing entrance avenue. There are no outbuildings or ancillary structures in this area, ensuring minimal impact on the historic fabric of the estate. This location for the new avenue also ensures that the primary views and areas of greater significance within the parkland will not be impacted. The route of the proposed new entrance route is therefore considered to be an acceptable and appropriate alternative.

The continued use of the existing entrance avenue and gates/piers by pedestrians and cyclists within this proposed scheme is considered to be a positive, as it ensures that the surviving historic 19th century avenue will not become redundant or fall out of use.

The construction of new pedestrian steps at the existing entrance will alter the character of the estate from the streetscape, and will result in a loss of historic architectural character of the streetscape. However, through the construction of these steps and the neighbouring ramp (not visible from the streetscape) the existing landscaping and levels within the estate lands will be protected and retained. This will ensure that the setting of the Protected Structure, and views within the estate, are protected and preserved.

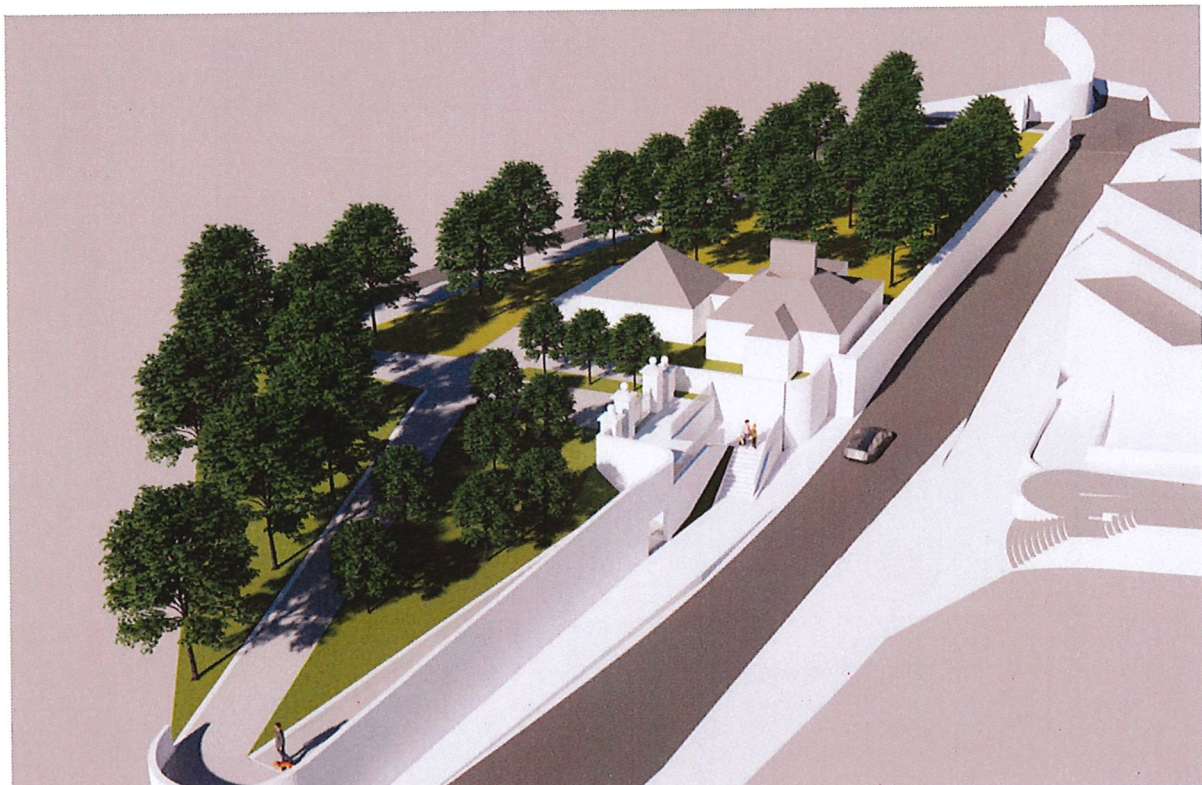


Figure 13: 3D model showing Option B, proposed by OMP and Castlethorn. Prepared by OMP Architects

Option B will nevertheless irreversibly alter the relationship between the historic estate and the streetscape of Ashtown Road, severing views from the public realm into the estate lands. However, in the context of a necessary infrastructural intervention, the proposal can be seen as far less impactful than the existing proposal.

A detailed conservation specification and method statement for salvage, relocation, repair of all of the stone and iron elements should be agreed with the Planning Authority and

conditioned to ensure that the fabric and character of the entrance and gate lodge are enhanced by the works.

4. Conclusion

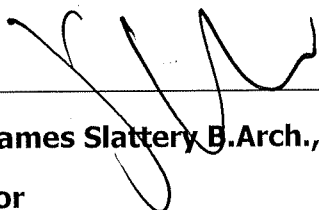
The proposed upgrading works to Ashtown Road under both schemes will have a significant impact on the setting of Ashton House, and in particular on its boundary with the streetscape. Both Option A and Option B involve realignment, widening and level changes of Ashtown Road, necessitating the relocation of the existing gate piers and gates and the demolition of the existing boundary walls. Both options will have impacts on the setting of Ashton House, a Protected Structure, and its relationship with Ashtown Road. In both cases, the relationship between the historic structures and the streetscape of Ashtown Road will be impacted negatively.

However, it is considered that Option B is the more appropriate intervention of the two. This is based on the impact of each proposal on the setting of the Protected Structures, and the landscape within the lands of Ashton House. Option B largely preserves the relationship between the Gate Lodge, Gate Piers and Gates and Entrance Avenue, while also protecting the relationship between the Gateway and the House. Option B also protects the landscaping and existing levels within the estate, ensuring minimal impact on the character of the setting, and on views within the estate.

The impact of Option B on the contribution of the Ashton estate to the character of the streetscape of Ashtown Road is considered to be an acceptable intervention, as these alterations are necessary in order to preserve the existing conditions within the estate. It is clear that the existing historic architectural character of Ashtown Road will be lost in either scheme, due to the extent and scale of upgrade works proposed by Iarnród Éireann. Option B is preferred over Option A from an architectural heritage impact perspective, as Option B limits the most significant impacts to the boundary and streetscape, rather than within the lands of the historic estate. Option B allows the estate, and in particular the ensemble of Entrance Avenue, Gates, Gate Piers and Gate Lodge, to largely retain their existing form and inter-relationships, albeit elevated from the street level.

The integrity of the historic landscape and setting of the Protected Structure and the relationships between the House, Gate Lodge, Entrance Avenue, Gates and Gate Piers, will be retained with minimal alterations under Option B, and this option should be pursued ahead of Option A.

Yours sincerely with kind regards,



James Slattery B.Arch., Dipl. ABRCons M.R.I.A.I.

for

David Slattery Conservation Architects Ltd.