





Proposed Apartment Development
Nos. 23-28 Prussia Street, Dublin

Heritage Impact Assessment

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1.0 Background History of the Properties

The proposed development site consists of a roughly rectangular piece of ground, having formerly been five separate domestic properties. The site stands on the east side of Prussia Street, a short distance north of its junction with Manor Street and Aughrim Street. Manor Street was an early route out of Dublin, heading north towards Cabra. During the Eighteenth Century, the street was gradually built up with single-family houses of varying widths, heights and quality.



Plate No. 1. Segment of John Rocque's Map of Dublin, printed in 1756. The proposed development site is outlined in red, and shows that no structures had been built on the site prior to the date of this map. At that date, Prussia Street was known as Cabra Lane.

John Rocque's *Map of Dublin*, shows the area as surveyed in 1756. This map was considered to be quite accurate in its time, and effectively shows the extent of Dublin's development up to that date. At Cabra Lane, Rocque depicted an empty rectangular site in the approximate location of the subject development site. The awkward diagonal boundary lines adjacent to the southern boundary are clearly recorded, and those old property boundaries are still in evidence in the remaining properties. To establish where the northern boundary falls in the Rocque map, it is important to look closely at the house that survives at No. 29 Prussia Street.



Plate No. 2. Old photo showing the west front elevation of Nos. 27- 29 Prussia Street, prior to the demolition of Nos. 27 and 28. It is clear from the similarities in their design and shared roofline, that Nos. 28 and 29 were built as a pair, and shared a party wall and common fireplaces. During the late 20th Century, Nos. 27 and 28 were demolished, leaving only fragmentary remains of the large chimney breast and front wall at No. 28.

An examination of that house and the fragmentary remains of the house at No. 28 strongly suggests that those houses were built as a pair, sharing a massive chimney stack with corner fireplaces, and having similar front elevations. The door surround on the front elevation at No. 29 is a rare survivor of an early Eighteenth-Century carved stone surround, without an arched fanlight. Only a precious few similar door surrounds have survived in Dublin, all dating from around 1730-1750. Some details of the front wall of the demolished house at No. 28 can be seen in the masonry nib that survives on the party wall. The window jambs were perpendicular to the wall, a feature that was common up to the middle of the Eighteenth Century. The width and pattern of fenestration of the four-bay front elevation of No. 29 strongly suggests a construction date prior to the middle of the Eighteenth Century, potentially as early as the first quarter of that century. Those houses do not appear on the 1756 Rocque's Map of Dublin, but they were most likely built very soon after that map was published.



Plate No. 3. Detail from the mid-Nineteenth Century Ordnance Survey map, showing the development area as it existed in 1864. Houses occupy all of the Prussia Street plots, with long rear gardens extending to the boundary with the large open space to the east.

As shown on the 1864 edition of the Ordnance Survey, a continuous row of houses then existed along Prussia Street. While only the house at No. 23 Prussia Street is still standing, some fragmentary evidence remains to describe the age and design of some of the demolished houses. The surviving elements of those houses will be described in more detail in the following chapter.

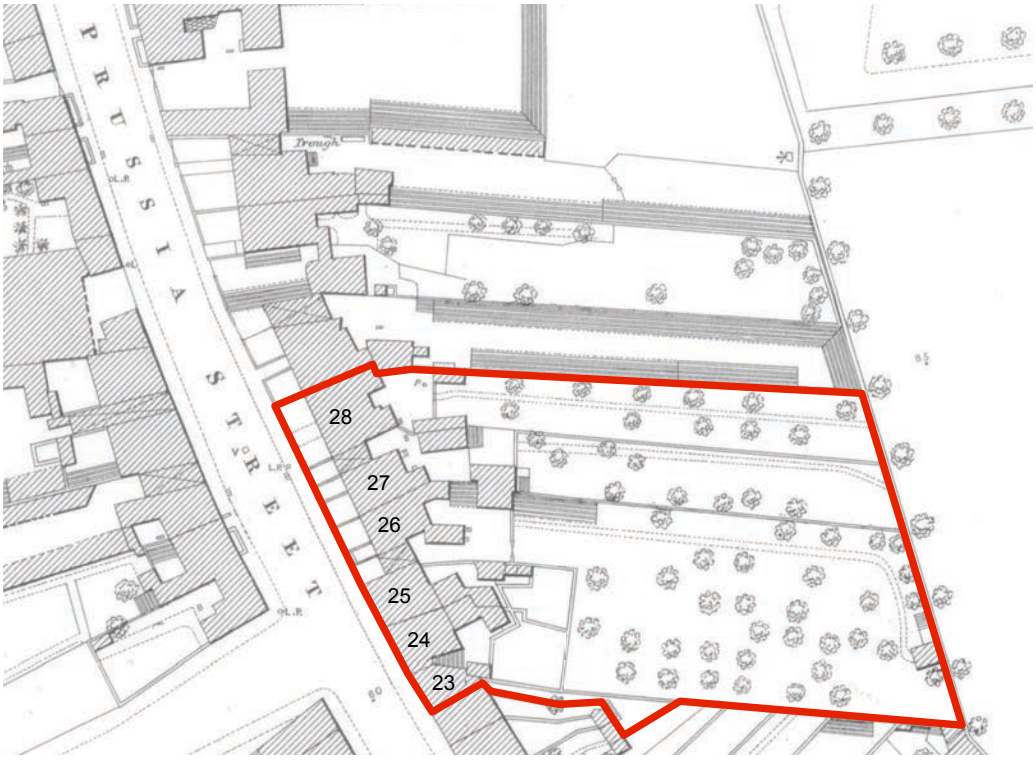

Plate. 4 Detail from the late Nineteenth Century Ordnance Survey map, showing the development site at that time. All of the building sites were still occupied at that date with houses of varying sizes and ages. Also of note is that St. Joseph's Road has been cut through from Prussia Street to Aughrim Street to the west.

By the end of the Nineteenth Century, the large rear gardens behind many of the Prussia Street houses had begun to be used for commercial activities. As shown in the late Nineteenth Century Ordnance Survey map above, there were large sheds and stores in the rear gardens to the north of the proposed development site. Surprisingly, such structures were not in evidence behind Nos. 24-28 Prussia Street by this date. It is important to note the Dublin Cattle Market was located a short distance to the north-west of the development site, at the junction of Prussia Street and North Circular Road. This outdoor market was first established around 1863 and remained in operation until 1973. The sheer scale of this market, and its impact on the surrounding areas, must have contributed to the decline in the quality of life for the residents of Prussia and Aughrim Streets.



Plate No 5. Detail from the 1907 edition of the Ordnance Survey map, showing the proposed development site at the beginning of the Twentieth Century Many of the deep rear gardens have begun to be developed with industrial buildings or terraces of artisan type houses. Further north, many of the gardens contained cattle pens and other similar structures. By the middle decades of the Twentieth Century, the lands behind the old houses within the development site were all being used as motor sales or repair shops, or other light industrial uses. By the end of the century few of the old houses were still standing.

During the Twentieth Century, more of the large rear gardens around Prussia Street were developed to house motor repair shops, motor dealers and general light industrial uses. Eventually, except for No. 23, all of the houses within the proposed development site were demolished to provide additional space for commercial activities. Nos 24 and 25 Prussia Street were still standing as late as 2005, at which time they were recorded in a report attached to a planning application (Ref.No. 3327/05). While the basic structural shells remained intact at that time, both houses were in very poor condition and had been stripped out internally. In the cases of Nos. 24, 25 and 28, only the ground floor front walls are currently standing, to act as a front boundary wall to the commercial sites behind. No. 23 Prussia Street is still standing, but was heavily altered during the later decades of the Twentieth Century, and has a commercial shop front in its ground floor.

After 1999, many individual properties along Prussia Street and its adjacent streets were included on the Record of Protected Structures. No. 29 Prussia Street, immediately adjacent to the proposed site is currently included on the RPS for

Dublin. In the current Development Plan the immediate surroundings to the south of the site, including No. 23 and the sites of the former houses at Nos. 24 and 25, are currently zoned as Z2 (to protect and/or improve amenities of residential conservation areas). A small stretch of Prussia Street has also been designated as an Architectural Conservation Area, including a small piece of the north-west corner of the development site. In addition, a Zone of Archaeological Interest has been included in the Development Plan, to encompass most of Prussia Street and the front portions of the properties along the street.

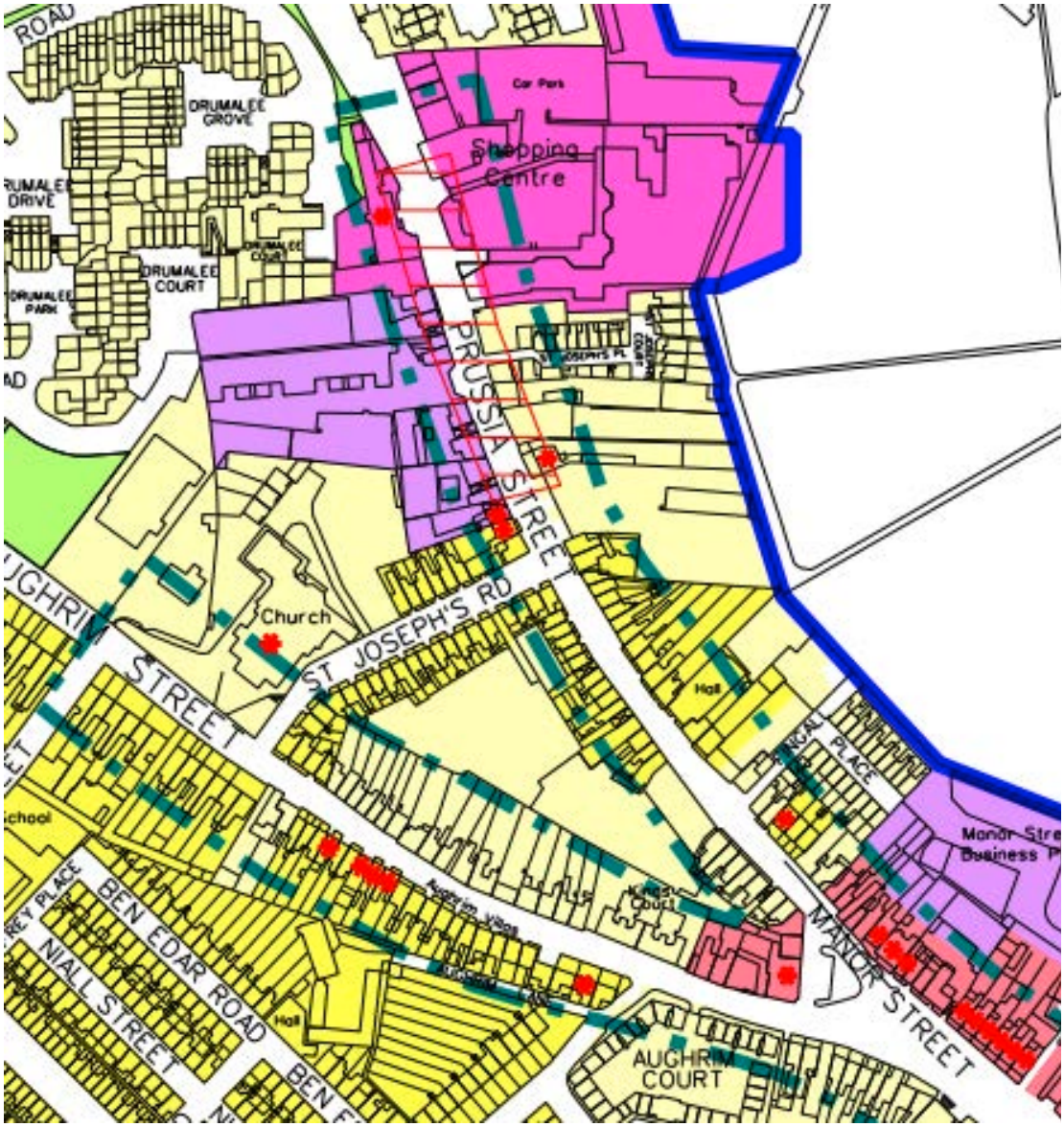

Plate No. 6. Detail from the current City Development Plan, showing the location of Protected Structures, the yellow Z2 Neighbourhood Architectural Conservation Area and the heavy green dashed lines denoting a Zone of Archaeological Interest. The site of proposed development is at the centre of the map.

2.0 Current Description of the Development Site and Its Urban Context



Plate No. 7. West facing front elevation of No. 29 Prussia Street and the fragmentary remains of No. 28 Prussia Street to the right. No. 29 is a Protected Structure and stands just outside of the red line boundary to the proposed development.

2.01 Description of the Houses that Formerly Stood within the Development Site

In its current condition, the site of the proposed development consists of a large parcel of land, mostly covered with concrete paving and including a few poor quality commercial and light industrial buildings from the second half of the Twentieth Century. None of those structures or features has any architectural or historical significance. On the western edge of the site are the remains of three of the Eighteenth and Twentieth-Century houses that appeared on the historic OS maps. Some additional fragments of No. 28 Prussia Street can be seen preserved in the exposed party wall to No. 29.

No. 29 Prussia Street, adjacent to the northern boundary of the proposed development site, is a three storey four-bay mid-Eighteenth Century house, which was most likely built as a pair with the demolished No. 28 Prussia Street. Those houses do not appear on the 1756 Rocque's Map of Dublin, but they were most likely built very soon after that map was published. As shown on the attached photos, No. 29 is a three-storey, four bay semi-detatched house, recessed slightly from the road behind an iron railing. Although currently rendered, the walls consist of red-brick masonry and it is most likely that the front elevation consisted of red face brick. The original sash windows have been replaced with top hung uPVC framed windows, but the spacing and sizes of the openings is probably unchanged. The most significant feature on the west-facing front elevation is the fine carved stone door surround, with a small semicircular fanlight. The door surround, shown in the attached photo, includes simple recessed panels to the jambs, and console brackets with fish-scale relief carving supporting a decorated stone lintel.

Compared to contemporary 1750s houses closer in to Dublin's Georgian Core, this house appears relatively old-fashioned and less refined. It does however represent the kind of houses that Dublin's Eighteenth-Century merchant class built for themselves, very few of which have survived so intact. It is not known exactly when No. 28 Prussia Street was demolished, but it happened prior to the 1990s. The ground floor of the original front wall was left standing, to serve as a site boundary wall. A portion of the first and second floor front wall was also left as a nib against the corner of No. 29. These fragmentary remains of No. 28 are of interest because they show some details of the basic masonry construction, including the thickness of the front wall, the use of handmade red brick, perpendicular window jambs and the size and location of the front door opening. It is likely that a richly decorated stone door surround originally existed on the front of No. 28, and some evidence for that surround could survive under the existing render finish.

The chimney stack on the south side of No. 29 originally served the fireplaces in both No. 28 and 29. Of particular interest is the pair of angled corner fireplaces on the ground and first floors of the now missing house. It is likely that similar fireplaces exist in No. 29, adding to that house's architectural significance.



Plate No. 8. Detail view showing the front entrance door to No. 29 Prussia Street. The fine carved stone door surround, with panelled jambs and patterned scrolled brackets is an important feature of the house. The panelled timber door is a later feature. The door to No. 28 Prussia Street was probably similar in style and detail.



Plate No. 9. Detail view showing the south party wall on the south side of No. 29 Prussia Street. The massive chimney stack with corner fireplaces served No. 28 Prussia Street, since demolished.



Plate No. 10. Detail view showing the ground floor front wall to the former house at No. 28 Prussia Street. Note the central door with fanlight, and the evidence for two flanking windows. It is possible that some portions of a carved door surround have survived under the render finish to the front of this wall.



Plate No. 11. Detail view showing the nib left on the corner of the structure at No. 29 Prussia Street, surviving from the demolished house at No. 28. This nib shows several interesting features, including perpendicular window jambs, which would suggest a construction date from the middle of the 18th Century or earlier. The external brick reveals to the window openings show that the window joinery was hidden behind the reveal suggests a construction date from the middle of the 18th Century and later. The front wall is also quite thick compared to ordinary Dublin terraced houses, suggesting that the house was built to a relatively high standard and cost.



Plate No.12. General view showing the surviving ground floor front walls to Nos. 24 and 25 Prussia Street. The reddish-orange bricks are typical of Victorian period houses in Dublin, suggesting that the houses were rebuilt some time after 1860.



Plate No. 13. Detail view showing the blocked front door openings to the demolished houses formerly standing at Nos. 24 and 25 Prussia Street.

2.02 Urban Context Around the Proposed Development Site



Plate No. 14. General view looking east down St. Joseph's Road, towards the proposed development site. The front walls of the demolished houses at Nos. 24 and 25 Prussia Street can be seen, with some of the new DIT buildings beyond.

2.03 Description of No. 23 Prussia Street

The only remaining house on the development site is at No. 23 Prussia Street. Shown in Plates Nos. 14 and 17, this house dates from around 1850-1860, and was built as a small terrace with Nos. 21 and 22. Those houses have retained more of the original character on their front elevations, having a segmental arched fanlight over the front doors, exposed face bricks and sash windows. At No. 23, a commercial shop front was inserted into the front elevation during the second half of the Twentieth Century, and the external masonry has been covered with painted render. The sash windows have all been replaced along with the front entrance door. Virtually nothing remains from the original interior features and finishes.



Plate No. 15. General view looking south-east showing the two storey houses that line Prussia Street adjacent to the development site. The remaining front wall of No. 24 Prussia Street is visible at the left. No. 23 Prussia Street is the white building left of centre.



Plate No. 16. General view looking south-east, showing the current appearance of the Prussia Street frontage to the development site.



Plate No. 17. General view looking west across Prussia Street, showing the varied mix of building types and conditions that exist in close proximity to the proposed development site. These buildings are within an Architectural Conservation Area, as shown on the Dublin Development Plan zoning map.

2.04 Current Conditions Within the Development Site

Over the course of the Twentieth Century, many of the large rear gardens behind the single family house along Prussia Street were gradually converted to commercial and light industrial use. The deep gardens behind Nos. 24-28 Prussia Street were gradually combined and redeveloped with several single and two storey commercial structures. The open spaces were paved to provide hard standing, and the site was used for many decades for a combination of repair shops, motor car sales and repair, and other general types of light industrial uses.

As shown on the following photos, none of the existing Twentieth Century structures have any historic or architectural significance.



Plate No. 18. General view looking south-west from within the proposed development site, showing the rear elevations of the houses to the south of the site. No. 23 Prussia Street is visible at right of centre, having a flat roof and unpainted cement render to the side and rear walls. A small portion of the rear wall to No. 24 Prussia Street can be seen at the right, turning the corner from its remaining side wall. Nothing remains of any of the original side boundary walls from the Nineteenth Century, except a short piece of brick wall running at an angle behind No. 23 Prussia Street.



Plate No.19. General view looking north-west from within the proposed development site. Note the poor quality Twentieth Century commercial structures at the right, and the existing structures across Prussia Street left of centre above.



Plate No.20. General view showing some of the existing poor quality commercial structures that current stand within the proposed development site.

2.05 Shared Stone Boundary Wall on East Side of Development Site

As seen on the attached maps and the Architect's site plans, the proposed development site is bounded on the east by the new Grangegorman campus for DIT. The overall area that will become the Grangegorman campus was the site of several large Victorian institutions, including a fever hospital, work-house and prison. These institutions were gradually closed through the course of the Twentieth Century, leaving a massive empty site close in to the heart of Dublin. During the early Twenty-first Century, a new campus for the Dublin Institute of Technology will be built on these lands, allowing the university to consolidate many of its remote facilities into a single site.

During the Nineteenth Century, a rubble-stone wall formed the boundary between the Grangegorman area and the surrounding private properties. A section of that wall continues to form the boundary between the subject development site and the new DIT campus. The wall consists of coursed rubble limestone masonry, capped with a course of jagged limestone blocks. During the Twentieth Century, many stretches of the wall were raised in height using in-situ concrete, cast on top of the rough capping course.

At the subject development site, it is proposed to remove the concrete from the top of the wall, strip off the inappropriate sand and cement render and paint finishes, and repair the wall where damaged. In addition, it is proposed to make new openings through the wall, to provide for a new pedestrian access route from Prussia Street into the campus. It is also the intention of the developer to re-use the stone from the openings in the landscape scheme of the proposed development. The following photos show the current appearance of the stone boundary wall, from within the subject development site, and from the Grangegorman campus site. Details for the proposed works can be seen in the attached Architect's drawings and details.



Plate No. 21. General view looking east towards the shared stone boundary wall on the eastern edge of the development site. This is the location of the proposed pedestrian lane, to connect Prussia Street to the new Dublin Institute of Technology campus. Note the in situ concrete forming the upper half of the wall. It is proposed to remove the concrete upper section of the wall, down to the original capping level.



Plate No. 22. General view looking east, showing the stone and concrete boundary wall from within the proposed development site. The paint and render will be carefully removed from the face of the wall.



Plate No. 23. General view looking north from within the DIT campus, showing the east side of the shared boundary wall with the development. Note the good quality limestone masonry. The original irregular limestone capping course has survived beneath the Twentieth-Century concrete upper wall sections.



Plate No. 24. Detail view of the east side of the stone boundary wall, shared with the DIT campus. Note the coursed rubble limestone masonry, with rough vertical capping stones.

3.0 Proposed Development and Heritage Impact Assessment

3.01 Overall Development of New Apartments

The proposed development will consist 102 no. apartments and 1 no. café/restaurant unit in 3 no. blocks (ranging from 3-8 stories in height). A partial basement level will contain plant/water tanks. A new pedestrian footpath will be developed along the southern boundary to the development site, linking Prussia Street directly to the Grange Gorman Campus, through a new opening created through the existing C19th rubble stone boundary wall. All existing structures within and around the perimeter of the site are to be removed, with the exception of the shared rear boundary wall and the former party wall to No. 29 Prussia Street.

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The scale and massing of the proposed new development has the potential to impact on the surrounding area. There have been other multi-storey developments in the general area in recent years, and there is another development to the north of No. 29 Prussia Street for which planning has been applied for a large development of student accommodation. To soften the impact of the proposed development on the historic setting along Prussia Street, the project's architects have paid particular attention to the following points.

- The building height to the west-facing front block will consist of four and five storey sections along the Prussia Street elevation, to be sympathetic to the two and three storey historic structures in the immediate area. This block will step up along its rear elevation to five storey's. The middle block will rise to six storeys, and the rear eastern block will rise to eight stories. Please see the Architect's detailed proposed drawings, showing these structures.

- Along the junction with No. 29 Prussia Street, the proposed development will be carefully detailed to prevent any physical impact to the Protected Structure at No. 29 Prussia Street. The massive chimney stack attached to the exposed party wall will be left in place, with the proposed new structure carefully pulled back where necessary.

- To provide visual continuity with the historic grain of the surrounding buildings, the Prussia Street elevation has been broken up into smaller two-bay and three-bay units, with a strong vertical line giving the

development similar massing to individual terraced structures.

3.02 Removal of Fragmentary Remains of Demolished Structures

To allow for the construction of the proposed development, it is proposed to remove the fragmentary remains of the previously demolished structures at Nos. 24, 25 and 28 Prussia Street. Those remains were discussed in the previous chapter, and consist of the following features:

- At Nos. 24 and 25 Prussia Street, the ground floor front walls remain in place, with concrete block masonry blocking up the doors and windows. A portion of the north side wall has also survived at No. 25. It is propose to totally remove these partial remains of the previously demolished late Nineteenth Century houses.

- At No. 28 Prussia Street, the ground floor front wall remains in place, along with a nib of masonry at the first and second floors, projecting approximately 700mm from the corner of No. 29. The shared chimney-stack in the former party wall between Nos. 28 and 29 also remains in place. It is proposed to remove the ground floor front wall and carefully cut back the projecting masonry from the face of the party wall at the front wall and chimney locations. A detailed method statement will be prepared for cutting back the remains of the front wall of No. 28, after a detailed structural survey at the start of the project. It is expected that a combination of imbedded wall ties and expert masonry repairs using lime mortars and soft porous bricks will be required to effect the appropriate repairs.

- The proposed new development will be set back from the face of the former party wall that now forms the south side wall to No. 29 Prussia Street to avoid any damage to the Protected Structure at No.29. The large triangular chimney stack that projects from the party wall with No. 29 will remain in place, and the proposed new structure will step back where necessary to avoid any contact or structural impact. This residual space will be covered by a simple roof, and well ventilated to prevent a build-up of dampness or vegetation.

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Although the development site is in an old area of historic Dublin, in close proximity to several protected structures and historic boundary walls, there are no complete historic buildings remaining on the site. There are partial upstanding remains from three old houses, and an altered rear boundary wall on the rear of the site. The removal of the remains of the old houses will not have a negative impact on the historic character of the area. The ruined front walls are only a single storey in height and detract from the

area. The loss of historic building fabric can be mitigated through a detailed survey of the surviving building fabric, including a measured survey and detailed photo survey, prior to and during the demolition stage.

3.03 Demolition of No. 23 Prussia Street

- This small house is proposed for demolition in the proposed development. Although it is part of a terrace of mid-Nineteenth Century houses, No. 23 has been heavily altered to extent where only its external masonry walls have remained in place. Its original pitched and slated roof has been replaced by a flat roof. A commercial shop front has been inserted to the front elevation, and the ground floor mostly cleared away. Most of its external brick masonry has been covered with sand and cement render and all of the sash windows have been replaced with uPVC framed windows.

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Although No. 23 Prussia Street is protected by being in a Z2 Neighbourhood Conservation zoning area, its heavily altered condition greatly reduces its significance and its contribution to the streetscape. The demolition of this structure to allow for the creation of a new pedestrian route between Prussia Street and the new DIT Grangegorman campus will have a positive impact, on balance, on the incremental development of this part of Dublin's urban core.

3.04 Proposed Works to the Shared Rubble-Stone East Boundary Wall

- The later in-situ concrete added to the top of the wall will be carefully removed from the original capping course. This work will be carried out following a detailed method statement prepared by an experienced conservation architect. The concrete will be cut away in sections to avoid damaging the original masonry and stone capping course. The removal of the in-situ concrete on top of the wall will be saw-cut approximately 200mm above original capping stones, to prevent damage to those stones during that work. Further cutting by angle grinders and hand chisels will be employed to remove the remaining concrete materials, to cause the least impact to the original capping stones. All loose masonry will be re-laid in natural hydraulic lime and sand mortar.

- The internal and external faces of the shared stone wall will be carefully cleaned to remove later renders and paint finishes. The face of the wall will be cleaned of all paint using the least aggressive cleaning medium. It is not intended to extensively repoint all of the wall's mortar joints,

because they appear to be in generally sound condition. Wherever the mortar joints are loose, heavily eroded or in need of replacement, they will be repointed using a stiff mix of hydraulic lime and coarse aggregate, beaten back to a flush profile.

- It is also intended to make a new opening in the wall to accommodate a new pedestrian route between Prussia Street and DIT. The details of this intervention into the shared wall are well illustrated in the Architect's drawings and details.

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The removal of the Twentieth-Century concrete extensions to the old stone walls will have a positive impact on the historic boundary wall. The walls were raised significantly at some time in the Twentieth Century, probably to provide additional security between the properties. Removal of the later concrete will return the walls to their original height and allow the original toothed capping course to be clearly seen.

Although the proposal to make a new pedestrian route through the stone boundary wall will certainly change the appearance of the wall, it should be recognised that there will be a massive change in use on both sides of the wall. There are no longer several massive Victorian institutions on the east side of the wall, for which the wall provided a sense of security and enclosure. Most of the proposed development will see a change from commercial and light industrial use to a development of apartments. Obviously, the wall is no longer required to provide a high level of privacy and security. The proposals for a new pedestrian path across the southern edge of the development site will see a new pedestrian link between Prussia Street and the DIT campus. The details of the proposed modifications to the boundary wall have been carefully designed, to read as contemporary intervention, while avoiding pastiche details.

4.0 Conservation Strategies for Shared and Adjacent Properties

4.01 Protection Measures in Relation to No. 29 Prussia Street

It is proposed to carefully remove the remaining ground floor front wall to Nos. 28 Prussia Street, and to tidy up the remaining masonry nib that extends from the corner with No. 29 Prussia Street. This will be carried out by skilled masons to prevent any damage to the protected structure at No. 29. The excavation and construction of the proposed front block of apartments in the new development will also require careful structural design and construction method statements, to prevent any damage to the adjacent Protected Structure at No. 29.

A gap will be left between the existing former party wall with No. 29, including the projecting chimney stack. The new structure of the proposed development will be set back a sufficient distance from the 18th century wall and chimney, to allow for ventilation and occasional access for maintenance and repair. The gap will be covered by a roof, and well ventilated to prevent dampness or rainwater falling into the space.

4.02 Protection Measures in Relation to the Shared Rear Boundary Wall

Prior to the commencement of the works on site, the final details of all repairs and modifications to the boundary wall shared between DIT and the subject property will be agreed between both parties, and with Dublin City Council. During the site clearance and construction of the proposed new development, best practice will be followed to prevent damage to the shared boundary wall. A detailed method statement and materials specification will be agreed among all parties, prepared by a competent and experienced conservation specialist.

4.03 Recording of Surviving Features from Nos. 23, 24, 25 and 28 Prussia Street.

Prior to and during their final demolition and removal, all surviving building fabric at these properties will be carefully recorded in a photographic and measured survey. The foundations to the already demolished houses will be recorded in photographs and measured survey when they are exposed during the site clearance.

Summary of Conclusions

- The proposed multi-storey development will occupy a large site assembled from five previously demolished 18th and 19th century houses.

- The former houses dated from the second half of the 18th century, through the first quarter of the 19th century, and represented a typical Dublin domestic architecture in which ordinary Dubliners lived and worked.

- The old houses had been built on long narrow plots, whose backlands were redeveloped during the early 20th century for light industrial use.

- Three of the old houses disappeared during the second half of the 20th Century, and the various sites were assembled under a single owner. Two houses were demolished during the early 21st Century due to their unsafe condition. Only a single 19th Century house survives on the site, having been heavily modified during the late 20th Century.

- The growth of the Irish economy during the early 21st century has created a strong demand for housing in the Smithfield/Stoneybatter neighbourhood and has created an opportunity to redevelop the subject property to a higher density than previously would have been considered feasible or desirable.