

**GOWAN HOUSE
CARRIGLEA BUSINESS PARK
NAAS ROAD, DUBLIN 12**

**ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE
IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7th September 2023

**Historic Building Consultants
Old Bawn
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1278/01

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Background

This report has been prepared for Malclose Limited as part of the documentation to be submitted with a planning application for a proposed large scale residential development at Gowan House, Naas Road. The report addresses the potential for an impact of the proposed development on Naisetra, which is a protected structure, and which is located on the opposite side of Naas Road, on the Old Naas Road, and Drimnagh Castle, which is located about 300 metres to the south-east of the application site and is a protected structure and an archaeological monument.

The site was inspected for the purposes of preparing this report on 4th and 10th May 2023 on which occasions the photographs incorporated in the report were taken and the site examined to prepare the descriptions contained therein.

Historical research was carried out on the background history of the property and the results are set down below.

While this report contains comment on aspects of the condition of the buildings it is not a condition report or a structural report and must not be read as such.

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Historical background

While the planning application relates to Gowan House on the southern side of Naas Road, Gowan House is not of architectural heritage significance and is not addressed in this historical background. However, on the northern side of Naas Road, almost opposite Gowan House, is Naisetra, which is a protected structure and approximately 300 metres to the south-east is the medieval Drimnagh Castle.

Drimnagh Castle has its origins in the thirteenth century and includes alterations and additions through to the seventeenth century. It was associated with the Barnewall family until the latter period. Drimnagh is significant for being surrounded by a water-filled moat, within which is the castle, its courtyard and gardens. The castle was occupied for many years by the Christian Brothers in association with the adjacent schools. From the late 1980s extensive refurbishment was carried out on the castle and its associated grounds.

Naisetra was built in about 1914 for a Mr A G Campbell and was named after an artesian well on the property, Naisetra being “artesian” spelt backwards.

In about 1920 Naisetra was acquired by Wilfred F Lamb who, with his brother, was establishing a fruit-growing business locally. The Lambs came from County Armagh, where their father had a business making fruit preserves and in 1922, they established the firm of Lamb Brothers (Dublin) Limited. This became a very successful business, particularly for their products marketed under the name Fruitfield. The Lambs downsized from Naisetra in 1968 to a bungalow on Crannagh Road, Rathfarnham, Crannagh Road having been built on lands that were part of one of the fruit farms belonging to Lamb Brothers.

In 1941 Dublin Corporation undertook an employment scheme that involved bypassing the bend in the Naas Road where it ran through Bluebell. To achieve this, they acquired land by compulsory purchase order, including part of the grounds of Naisetra and part of the lands on which Lamb Brothers had a fruit farm.

Naisetra was sold at auction in October 1968, when it was purchased by a company director, William Madigan. Fifteen years later, William Madigan's daughter, Madeleine, married the former Hollywood film actor, Gardner McKay in Dublin. Gardner McKay had retired from acting at the peak of his career in the late 1960s and had reinvented himself as a writer. Madeleine Madigan was a painter.

William Madigan died in 1990 and the house was sold at auction in 1994. The new owners applied for planning permission to demolish the house and build a fast-food restaurant on the site. Planning permission was refused, with substantial numbers of local objections to the proposed demolition. A local campaign to have the house listed for protection resulted in the house being proposed for listing in the Draft Dublin City Development Plan in 1998.

The house was subsequently used as offices, for which planning permission was granted in 2001. The offices were occupied by GMC Utilities, a company founded by Gerry McCloskey in the 1970s and the house continues in use as offices.

Conservation context

Record of Protected Structures

Gowan House is not protected. Naisetra became a listed building in the Draft Dublin City Development Plan in 1998 and with the coming into force of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1999, the house became a protected structure.

Lansdowne House, which lies adjacent to Naisetra, to the west, is not a protected structure.

Drimnagh Castle is a protected structure and was first listed in the Dublin City Development Plan 1971. The castle is also included in the Sites and Monuments Record.

Conservation areas

Neither Gowan House nor Naisetra are within an architectural conservation area or any other type of conservation area. Drimnagh Castle is within an area hatched in red on map G of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, denoting a conservation area that is not an architectural conservation area. The extent of this area is confined to the moated castle and a short distance beyond.

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has not included either Gowan House or Naisetra in its survey of the Bluebell area. Lansdowne House, which is next door to Naisetra to the north, is included in the NIAH, where it has been assigned a regional rating for its special architectural interest. Lansdowne House is not visible from Gowan House due to dense tree cover.

There are four entries in the NIAH for Drimnagh Castle, referring to the castle, the adjacent wing, the bridge over the moat and the walled garden.

Survey



Plate 1: Gowan House, seen from Naas Road to the north-east

Gowan House lies on the southern side of Naas Road, approximately 100 metres from the junction with Old Naas Road. It is a purpose-built commercial building with its ground-floor level faced with red brick laid in stretcher bond, above which is dark-coloured profiled steel cladding set vertically and curving at the top to form the roof covering. To the west of centre there is a projecting section of the building with similar facing materials, though with a slightly lower height. The building is set back from Naas Road behind a grass strip and bounded on the road frontage by a painted steel railing set on a brick plinth wall.



Plate 2: Gowan House



Plate 3: Naisetra, seen from the north

Naisetra is a two-storey Edwardian house faced with red brick laid in Flemish bond on its front façade and southern end, while at the northern end the brick is laid in stretcher bond. The roof is slated, and tall red-brick chimneys rise from below the ridge. The window heads are slightly segmental, and the windows have been replaced with uPVC casements. The front of the house faces Old Naas Road, where it is accessed via a vehicular gateway, while the boundary of the property continues onto the Naas Road frontage.

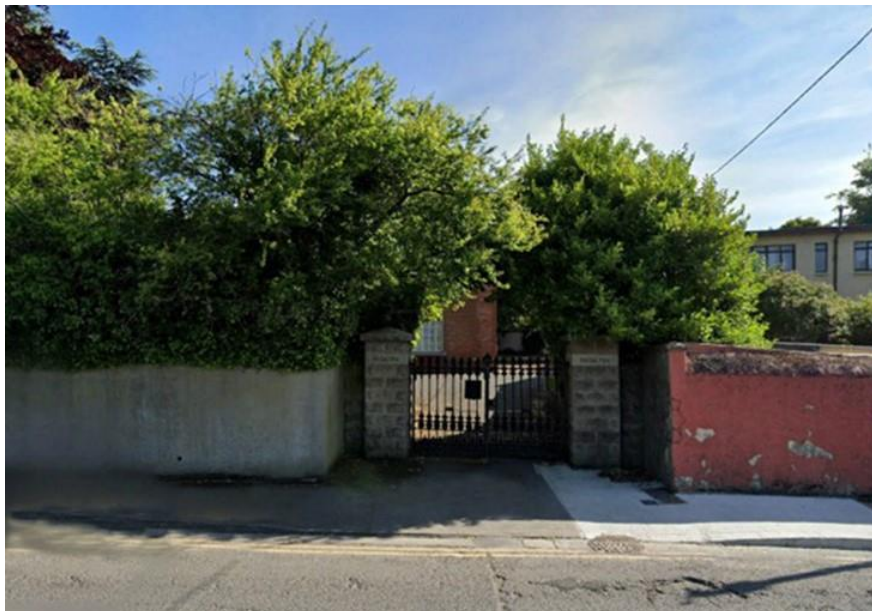


Plate 4: Front entrance to Naisetra

The photograph above shows a straight-on view toward the house through the entrance gateway. Only a small part of the house may be seen, and a greater area of the house frontage can be seen only on close approach to the gateway, as seen in Plate 5 overleaf. A full view of the house is only seen from within the grounds, close to the front of the house.



Plate 5: View of Naisetra through the entrance gateway

These photographs illustrate how only small areas of the protected structure may be seen from outside the site and these are only seen from limited locations around the site.



Plate 6: View of Naisetra from the south-east, across Naas Road



Plate 7: View of Naisetra from the junction of Naas Road with Old Naas Road

Naisetra stands on a site of about 2,100 square metres, the site narrowing toward the junction of Old Naas Road with Naas Road, the two frontages being at an acute angle of approximately forty degrees. Each frontage is bounded by a wall, that on the Naas Road frontage being of mass concrete and rising to a height of about three metres. There is a disused pedestrian opening onto Naas Road.



Plate 8: View toward Naisetra from the frontage of Gowan House

The grounds of Naisetra have a heavy tree cover, with a variety of tree types. In the vicinity of the south-western corner of the property there is a group of evergreen oaks, to the east of which is a large Monterey cypress, these trees being evergreen. The photograph above shows the view from the front of Gowan House toward Naisetra, the house being concealed behind the evergreen oaks.



Plate 9: Drimnagh Castle, seen from the south

Drimnagh Castle stands within a moated site that is about 75 metres by 65 metres, with the castle located in the south-eastern sector. The main building is on the eastern side and consists of a hall with a tower attached on the southern side, while there are other ranges of buildings projecting to the west on the northern and southern side of the main building, thereby enclosing a courtyard on three sides. To the west of the castle and courtyard is a formal garden, while an additional open area lies to the north of the castle and garden. The moat is surrounded by trees. To the west of the moated site are playing fields associated with the school.



Plate 10: View to north-west from courtyard of Drimnagh Castle

The photographs above show views of the castle, looking toward the present application site.

Proposed development

It is proposed to demolish Gowan House and to erect a large-scale residential development on the site in two blocks. Block 1, to the east, is to be part two-storey and part fifteen-storey over a lower ground floor and basement. Block 2, to the west, is to be part nine-storey and part eleven-storey over basement. The development will provide accommodation for 941 students, with ancillary facilities.

Gowan House is not of architectural heritage significance and its demolition is not at issue from a conservation perspective.

Naisetra

As noted above, Naisetra, on the opposite side of Naas Road, is a protected structure, and the proposal for a substantial development in the vicinity needs to be assessed to ascertain whether or not the proposal would have any adverse impact on the architectural heritage of Naisetra or on its setting.

As has been seen in the survey above, the grounds of Naisetra have an extensive tree cover and at the south-western corner, which is the part of the grounds closest to the application site, these trees include a group of evergreen oaks and a Monterey cypress. The oaks are in excess of ten metres high, while the cypress is taller. The nearest point of the proposed buildings is at a distance of approximately seventy metres from the house at Naistra, while the trees are in an area of the grounds that extends less than twenty metres from the house in the direction of the proposed buildings. Simple geometry indicates that the proposed buildings will not be visible from house, or, at the very worst, the topmost part of the parapet would be visible to anyone who looks out from the top of an open first-floor window. As such, the buildings will not be readily visible from the house.

By the same token, the grounds of the house are well screened, and the proposed buildings will have no appreciable effect on the setting of the protected structure. Verified view V4 shows that the view southward from Old Naas Road and Bluebell Avenue will include both Naisetra and the proposed building, however, the proposed building will be off to one side in the view, away from Naisetra. The view from a little further to the east would theoretically include Naisetra to the front and the proposed development directly to the rear, though in practice the dense planting in the grounds of Naisetra would ensure that the protected structure would not appear in the view. Plate 4 above illustrates the degree of at the front of the house from the angle at which the proposed development would be directly to the rear of the house.

Section 12 (Stephen Diamond Landscape Architects Drawing No: 22-579-SDA-PD-DR-XX-210) has been provided to illustrate the buffer planting on the Gowan site relative to existing vegetation within the Naisetra garden around the protected structure along Naas Road during winter. The existing evergreen planting provides a considerable level of screening between the proposed new development on the Gowan site and the Naisetra site. Further screening will be provided by the proposed buffer planting consisting of large native evergreen trees and a scrub and ground cover layer of vegetation along Naas Road on site to mitigate any potential negative visual impact caused by the new development.

Drimnagh Castle

Drimnagh Castle is located about 300 metres as the crow flies from the application site to the south-east. As may be seen in verified view V12, the top of the tower of the proposed building on the application site would be visible on the approach to Drimnagh Castle, though in the distance and not to the extent that it would be intrusive. Verified view V11, as seen from the castle courtyard, shows that even in winter when there are no leaves on the trees surrounding the moat, the proposed building is barely visible and will have no impact on the character or setting of Drimnagh Castle.

The orientation of the buildings at Drimnagh Castle is such that the views are not toward the application site. The castle buildings are orientated slightly off the cardinal points, while the application site is to the north-west. The view from the front of the main building at the castle is westward, while from the front of the castle the view is to the east. The open side of the courtyard is to the west, such that the predominant view is in that direction, over the ornamental garden, and not toward the application site.

Conclusion

As has been shown above, the distance between the protected structure at Naisetra and the proposed buildings, together with the dense belt of evergreen trees and shrubs between the house and the proposed development, ensure that the character and setting of the protected structure will not be affected by the proposed development. Similarly, the orientation of the buildings at Drimnagh Castle, the distance of the castle from the application site and the belt of trees surrounding the castle moat ensure that there is no appreciable impact on the character and setting of Drimnagh Castle arising from the proposed development.