

**PROPOSALS FOR A
PROTECTION PLAN
AT

Auburn House,
Malahide, Co. Dublin.

for Kinwest Ltd.,**



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The following report was prepared as part of the submission for planning permission to the Protected Structure at Auburn House, Malahide, Co. Dublin. It was a visual survey and architectural assessment of the buildings, and was prepared for that purpose only.

1.2 The building is a Protected Structure, as defined by the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000. It is listed under the currently applicable Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023 as follows:

RPS No.	Structure name	Street Address	Description
0448	Auburn House	Dublin Road (R107) Auburn, Malahide, Co. Dublin	Late 18th or early 19th century house, outbuildings and walled garden.

1.3 This report was prepared by Sheehan & Barry Architects, who are a Grade One accredited conservation practice under the RIAI system of conservation accreditation.

1.4 The purpose of the report is to examine the house and immediate outbuildings and detail and to report on a strategy the architectural features and general architectural qualities of the building in the context of its' status as a Protected Structure within the definition of the Planning Act 2000 and to assess the impact of the proposed planning application.

2.0 DESCRIPTION & HISTORIC BACKGROUND

2.1 The structure is situated off the Malahide Road opposite the grounds of Malahide Castle Demesne on the road leading into Malahide Village in north County Dublin. The complex consists of a 5 bay three storey (including an attic storey) over basement dwelling with later single storey ballroom wing with a fine rear stableyard. Also located within this small estate is a separate walled garden with ancillary structures previously converted to residential use but retaining the original walls and garden structures pertaining to the walled garden. The estate retains the same entrance position as is indicated on the 1907 and 1829-42 survey which is formed of a rendered convex flank walls leading to lower pedestrian gate piers with wrought iron pedestrian gates flanking raised main entrance piers. All are topped with plain stepped granite cappings. The wrought iron gates appear to be of relatively recent installation or substantially restored. The entire ensemble forms a 'gentleman's estate' of notable quality and interest.

I refer to Turtle Bunbury's excellent history of the estate. He notes that the Crawford family had become land owners in the Auburn area, having originated in Fermanagh where they were prosperous merchants. The house was constructed c. 1779. One of the Crawfords had married into the Vernon family of Clontarf Castle and the house was likely constructed to mark this marriage.

In 1845 the house moved into the ownership of William Donnelly. Donnelly had been appointed to the position of Register General of Marriages. Donnelly made a number of improvements to the estate and Bunbury notes that it was likely the corner towers were added to the walled garden at this time. Indeed their castellated romanticism owes more to the 19th century love of the gothic and than medieval than to the late 18th century adherence to the classical ideal. Donnelly passed the house to his son in 1879 who was also called William and who was secretary to the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland John Gore,

later the 1st Baron Annally. Into the 20th century and the house had passed into the ownership of the Murphy family. It was at this time that the commission to add the present ballroom to the side of the house was made. The architect was Richard Orpen, brother of the famous society portraitist, Sir William Orpen. Orpen was a successful architect with a large number of commissions specialising more in the addition and alteration of existing buildings than in large new works. The new wing was designed as a Billiard Room. This explains its essentially internalised plan with a large rooflight to give even light for this popular pursuit of the prosperous Edwardian era home owner.

Later in the 20th century The Murphy family sold the house to Sir Geoffrey Thompson who had been a distinguished soldier in the Second World War followed by a senior position with Arthur Guinness & Co. After his passing the house was purchased by Dr. Daniel McCarthy, a distinguished engineer. In 1996 Auburn was bought by Ulick & Mary McEvaddy who carried out a thorough conservation programme under the auspices of John Deaton of Deaton Lysaght Architects. This has left the house in an excellent state of preservation, retaining its original character and features.

The stable yard was also maintained with recent roof works ensuring that the fabric has remained in a good general condition. No particular works were carried out to the interior which are generally dilapidated and do not contain significant examples of intact equestrian joinery or fittings. Rather, there are some fragments of typical t+g sheeted timber detailing and doors and some finishes such as flag stones which should be accessed and where possible re-used in any refurbishment. The exterior facing into the yard retains the beautifully made and proportioned metal windows and original stable yard doors with masonry of coursed and squared limestone with fine brick dressings to all opening. It is not known where the stone was quarried. The stone oxidises to a particular rose hue which may be characteristic of a particular higher iron mineral content.

¹ Turtle Bunbury - Writer & Historian - 'Auburn House, Malahide, Co. Dublin.'

2.3 Current Situation

The building is not presently occupied but was until recently used as a dwelling. The courtyard buildings are not used except for storage purposes.

It may be appropriate to consider letting the building to approved tenants who can provide on-site monitoring for maintenance and security. Although approved tenants may be in place the premises should still be subject to regular independent inspection for condition and maintenance.

If approved tenants are installed then the provisions under 2.4 will need to be modified as appropriate. A detailed tenantry agreement should be drawn up and must include access rights for the owner / manager to maintain condition reviews.

2.4 Protection Plan Proposals

2.4.1 Security

A full security review should be undertaken by a reputable security specialist with a view to examining the following:

Alarm Systems: Full review of the present system and subject to that a full upgrade of the alarm systems should be undertaken to ensure compliance with current industry standards and functionality. The systems should be 24 hour monitored and should include a comprehensive system of camera recording and monitoring and intruder detection. Systems should be allied with fire, smoke and carbon monoxide detection. Systems should be compliant with Irish industry standards as set out in I.S. EN 50131/1;2006. Remote monitoring should be allied to in person and on site checking of the structure to assess if any risks have become apparent or if any attempt has been made to enter or damage the structure. Any identified damage should be immediately repaired using appropriate materials and methods.

Internal security within the building should be assessed and any alarm system will likely need to allow for internal security cameras and / or movement detection. The security assessment should consider whether internal doors should be closed to reduced fire spread risk. However, in most situations doors should not be locked as this may only lead to further damage in the event of unauthorised persons entering, even if only on a temporary basis before alarms trigger a response.

All external window and door locking systems should be checked and upgraded where required. Regular in person inspections should be instigated as a matter of course.

The gardens around the structure must be maintained so as to avoid the impression of lack of care and maintenance. Climbing planting should be controlled so that they do not invade rainwater goods etc.

2.4.2 Heating

The present heating system should be inspected by a suitably qualified mechanical consultant or engineer and a report prepared on its immediate viability. This report should include a full risk assessment to determine if the system requires immediate repairs or upgrades in terms of control mechanisms, temperature management or localised areas of risk which could give rise to local damage. Subject to that report a heating strategy should be put in place to ensure that the house is heating to a design maintenance temperature. This may be on the basis of periodic heating to maintain a minimum maintenance temperature.

The heating system should be inspected on a regular (minimum once per annum) basis and the fuel source monitored to ensure that it is maintained.

2.4.3 Electrical

A full survey should be undertaken to determine the condition of the electrical services and to assess any potential risks to the structure from poorly performing equipment or out of date installation. Where and if risks are identified these should be addressed without delay.

If the structure is to be left unoccupied then it may be appropriate to consider timed lighting within the structure.

It may be appropriate, where certain services will not be used for some time, to disconnect these services to reduce risk and both mechanical and electrical reports should address these areas.

2.4.4 Roof, rainwater goods and drainage.

A full survey of the roof should be undertaken to ensure that any immediate or medium terms roof maintenance issues are identified and a programme for maintenance and repairs instigated. In particular all valleys, gutters and downpipes should be examined to ensure that they are in good condition and cleaned out on a regular basis. All gutter and downpipe fixings should be examined and where required repaired or replaced using likely or suitable fixings and to an approved methodology to avoid damage to the building fabric. Roof repairs must be undertaken in a timely manner and to the required conservation standard using appropriate conservation materials and methods.

All drains should be inspected to ascertain if any blockages are present. All drains should be left clear and free from obstruction and existing risks should be identified such as any existing areas prone to flooding. Where these are identified action should be taken to address or mitigate these risks.

2.4.5 Fire

A full fire risk assessment should be undertaken to ascertain how the building can be protected and where possible compartmentalised. This will be allied to reports checking the condition of services which may pose the most immediate risk of non-deliberate fire incidents. A comprehensive system of smoke detection and fire alarms should be connected with the alarm system and this should be fully monitored on a 24 hour basis.

2.4.6 Protection of vulnerable features.

Any identified vulnerable features should be carefully photographed and recorded.

An assessment should be carried out of any high-risk items which could be the target for removal. These typically include chimneypieces and it may be appropriate that key pieces should as this have protection in the form of non-impactful boxing in using plywood or similar to approved techniques. These should include padding, ventilation and fixing to non-critical fabric with security screws.

2.4.7 Ventilation and Humidity

A strategy for ventilation should be considered. Existing ventilation may rely on occupation and this may be compromised by security and fire risk needs. A full survey of the property should be undertaken to assess existing ventilation and existing levels of humidity. These may be maintained to an acceptable level by retaining a heating system managed using timed controls. In some cases it may be appropriate that introduce managed passive ventilation at windows although this should not compromise security or increase the risk of insect or vermin attack.

Monitoring of humidity within the building should be established and regularly checked

2.4.8 Records and Inspections,

A full and comprehensive condition survey will be required prior to any sustained period of un-occupation.

A schedule of items for regular inspection should be drawn to allow consistent inspection and to allow comparison with previous inspections. All elements of the schedule should be inspected regardless of apparent condition or status.

A person or body with regular and consistent knowledge of the structure should be appointed so that they can act as active guardians or custodians of the structure rather than periodic or sporadic agency monitoring where engagement and knowledge will be compromised. That person or body should maintain a logbook of visits and inspections etc.

Inspections should check for vermin and where found appropriate control measures put in place.

Prior to any securing of an unoccupied building a full photographic record of its condition should be made so that comparison can be made with any identified maintenance issues of deterioration.

This record should identify in particular any significant or vulnerable features both within and without the building. This should be compiled into a formal inventory. Any loose features such as furniture items should be removed off site for safe keeping and storage.

At the close of any period of un-occupation a handover maintenance file should be prepared for the next occupants by way of record of the condition and management of the structure during the period of un-occupation.

2.4.9 Reporting

Where the structure is subject to a condition of planning or protection order etc, the owner should consider sharing periodic reporting with the local authority by way of reassurance and compliance.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 A full and comprehensive survey should be undertaken that will include building condition and all services and should encompass fire risk and security issues. This will then inform a maintenance strategy which should be maintained throughout any period where the building is not occupied.

Where and if the building is to be temporarily let to selected tenants, this should be under strict conditions and should include regular inspection by third parties.

Any building issues should be dealt with without any delay and according to appropriate methods and materials and the resolution of any building maintenance issues should not involve loss of any inherent character or historic fabric.

Conditions of planning should be adhered to.

