



Proposed Developments at the Former
"Morton's the Firhouse Inn"
Firhouse Road,
Dublin 24

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Heritage Impact Assessment

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Introduction:

The following Heritage Impact Assessment report was written to accompany the planning application for proposed developments at the former 'Morton's The Firhouse Inn', located at Firhouse Road, Dublin 24. The **Development Description** for the proposed development is as follows:

Bluemont Developments (Firhouse) Limited intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) for a Strategic Housing Development with a total site area of c.0.46 ha, on lands located at No. 2 Firhouse Road and the former 'Morton's The Firhouse Inn', Firhouse Road, Dublin 24.

The development will consist of the demolition of all existing structures on site (c. 1,326 sq m), including:

- **Two storey building formally used as public house, ancillary off-licence and associated structures (c. 972 sq m);**
- **Two storey building comprising an existing barber shop and betting office (c. 260 sq m);**
- **Single storey cottage building and associated structures (c. 94 sq m); and**
- **Eastern boundary wall and gated entrance from Mount Carmel Park.**

The development with a total gross floor area of c. 10,750 sq m, will also consist of 100 no. residential units arranged in 2 blocks (Blocks 01 and 02) ranging between 3 and 5 storeys in height, over lower ground floor and basement levels, comprising:

- **96 no. apartments (consisting of 2 no. studio units; 45 no. one bedroom units; 10 no. two bedroom (3 person) units; 34 no. two bedroom (4 person) units; and 5 no. three bedroom units), together with private (balconies and private terraces) and communal amenity open space provision at podium and roof levels; and**
- **4 no. duplex apartments (consisting of 2 no. one bedroom units and 2 no. two bedroom units (4 person) located within Block B01, together with private balconies and terraces.**

The development will also consist of non-residential uses (c. 355 sq m), including:

- **1 no. café (c. 58 sq m) and 1 no. office (c. 30 sq m) located at ground floor level of Block B01;**
- **1 no. medical unit (c. 59 sq m) and 1 no. betting office (c. 66 sq m) located at ground floor level of Block B02;**

- 1 no barber shop (c. 28 sq m) located at ground floor level between Blocks 01 and 02; and
- 1 no. crèche (c. 114 sq m) located at lower ground floor level of Block B01 and associated outdoor play area to the rear.

Vehicular access to the site will be from the existing access off Firhouse Road. The proposal includes minor alterations to the existing access, including the provision of new and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure.

The development will also consist of the provision of public open space and related play areas; hard and soft landscaping including internal roads, cycle and pedestrian routes, pathways and boundary treatments, street furniture, basement car parking (80 no. spaces in total, including accessible spaces); motorcycle parking; electric vehicle charging points; bicycle parking (long and short stay spaces including stands); ESB substations, piped infrastructural services and connections to existing public services, (including relocation of existing surface water sewer and water main from within the application site onto the public roads area along Firhouse Road and Mount Carmel Park); ducting; plant; waste management provision; SuDS measures; stormwater management and attenuation; sustainability measures; signage; changes in levels; public lighting; and all ancillary site development and excavation works above and below ground.

Existing Structures on the Site

None of the structures on the site are included on the Record of Protected Structures. Tom McGimsey, RIAI Grade 1 Accredited Conservation Architect, was asked to visit the site of the proposed development and comment on the existing structures on the site. In particular, the development's professional advisors sought clarification on the heritage value of the single storey structure adjacent to the existing pub structure, referred to in the Archaeological Impact Assessment report as a 19th Century Smithy. The site was visited and photographed on the morning of Wednesday, the first of September, 2021. The single storey structure was opened up for full access, and all rooms were examined.



Plate No. 1. Detail from the Ordnance Survey of Ireland showing the proposed development site around the start of the 20th century. The word Smithy appears above the row of structures at the south-east corner of the triangular development site. It is unclear exactly which structure was the Smithy at the time this map was drawn.

The Firhouse Inn is a much altered pub, probably dating from the first quarter of the 20th century. Many of its features have been removed or covered up with modern renders. This structure was substantially extended to the west after its sale around 1945. The pub is not architecturally or historically significant.

The single storey cottage is a simple artisan style house, dating from the second quarter of the 20th century. It is a simple vernacular structure, last in use as a cafe. It has no particular architectural or historic significance.

The group of commercial structures at the south-west corner of the site appear to date from the late 20th or early 21st century, and have no architectural significance.

Description of the Former Cottage

A thoroughly researched and well-written Archaeological Impact Assessment report was prepared for the proposed development of the site by Archaeology & Heritage Consultancy Limited. In this document, it was suggested that the small single storey structure adjacent to the pub was the same structure that was labelled as a Smithy in the 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey Maps. The report suggested that this structure warranted further documentation prior to its removal under the proposed development.

The subject cottage stands approximately at the centre of the proposed development site, adjacent to the west end of the Firhouse Inn structure. The principal cottage structure consists of a two-roomed single storey cottage, built of brick and rubble stone masonry, and covered with a dashed render. The double-pitched roof has a single central chimney stack, and is covered with Welsh slates. Behind the cottage is a small extension with a doubled pitched roof, forming a valley with the cottage roof. A second extension stands against the west gable end of the cottage, in a small garden enclosed by a rubble stone boundary wall.

The main cottage has a central door and two windows facing south. The doors provides access into a small lobby, with a pair of small domestic rooms flanking a central chimney mass. The walls are of painted plaster, and the ceiling is lined with painted V-groove timber cladding. The narrow chimney breast in each room has a small fireplace. A small former bedroom and bathroom occupy the rear extension, and the room to the west contains a commercial kitchen.

The architectural design and materials are consistent with a small artisanal domestic cottage, dating from the early decades of the 20th century. It is very unlikely that this structure was originally built as, or used as, a smithy. The typical rural smithy, or forge, in Ireland was a simple and robust structure used to shape wrought iron and other metals for use as horse shoes, cart wheel rims, and countless other everyday implements. They typically have wide doors to the front, to allow of fresh air circulation through the hot interior, and to allow for the entry of horses, cart, materials and fuel into the work area. While they were commonly of similar scale to the Firhouse Cottage, they would not have been built with the same domestic features or plan as can be seen in the cottage.

A comparison of historic photographs and at the series of Ordnance Survey maps of the area shows that the pub structure on the corner of the site was originally only half as large as it currently stands. It is most likely that the Smithy was actually the structure that stood between the pub and the remaining cottage.



Plate No. 2. Historic photo showing Nolan's Bar, later known as the Firhouse Inn. At that time, the bar was only half as long along its primary elevation as it currently exists. A small single storey structure is barely visible to the left of the bar. Presumably this was the Smithy, or Forge, later to be demolished when the two-storey structure was extended to the west.

Another pertinent document is the attached advertisement from 1945, announcing the imminent sale of the Firhouse pub, along with the adjacent forge and cottage. The fact that there was a cottage, as well as a forge, supports the theory that the surviving single storey structure was not the Smithy noted on the OS maps.

TUESDAY, 12th JUNE, 1945, AT 3 P.M. (Sharp),
 (Per instructions of the Owner).
NOLAN'S, "FIRHOUSE," TALLAGHT, CO. DUBLIN.

Part held for ever free of rent and part held for a lease of 99 years from 29th September, 1857, subject to the yearly rent of £10 and a P.L.V. of £21. The Premises are situated on the junction of two roads, and consist of a well-fitted bar, 2 lounges with separate entrance, bottling stores and other out-offices, and Dwelling with commanding appearance, Cottage and Forge. They are situated on approx. 2 rods of ground. These grounds are tastefully laid out as gardens with seats, shrubberies, and walks, and have been tastefully kept for a number of years. There are other out-offices with hen runs and fowl-houses. The Cottage on the property is let at £1 per annum, and there is also a Forge and House let at £4 per annum. These lettings reduce the total outgoings. The Dwelling, with separate hall door entrance, contains large sittingroom, 4 bedrooms, kitchen, scullery; water laid on; electric light. The Dwelling is newly decorated, and is in first-class order. For further details and Conditions of Sale apply to the Solicitors or Auctioneer.

Solicitors: JAMES W. LANE & CO., 11 St. Stephen's Green, N.

Plate No. 3. Newspaper clipping advertising the upcoming sale of Nolan's "Firhouse", Tallaght, Co. Dublin. (From 12 June, 1945).

Summary

As noted in the Archaeological Assessment report, the single storey cottage is not on the Record of Protected Structures. It is also very doubtful that it was the Smithy that was noted in the group of structures on the 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps. In my opinion, there is nothing significant about the cottage that would make it significant enough to warrant protection from demolition. Similarly, the former Firhouse Inn pub is not worthy of statutory protection. It has been heavily altered and extended over the decades, and it has minimal architectural or historical significance.

Annotated Photo Survey of the Existing Structures



Plate No. 4. South facing front elevation of the Firhouse Inn. The original structure is the green painted portion to the right. The forge was located in the location of the yellow painted portion of the inn.



Plate No. 5. Primary south elevation of the cottage and its yard.



Plate No. 6. General view showing the non-historical commercial structure at the south-west corner of the development site.



Plate No. 7. General view showing the rubble stone boundary wall at the west side of the development site.



Plate No. 8. General view looking south showing the rear extension to the cottage.



Plate No. 9. General view looking east towards the west end of the cottage.



Plate No. 10. Internal view looking towards the entry from the east room in the cottage. The entry is paved with red and black terra cotta tiles, commonly used during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Plate No. 11. General internal view showing the chimney breast in the east room in the cottage. Note the timber-sheeted ceiling, with the collar ties raised above the wall heads.



Plate No. 12. General internal view showing the fireplace in the west room in the cottage.



Plate No. 13. General internal view showing the commercial kitchen in the west side extension to the cottage.



Plate No. 14. General internal view showing the rear wall in the rear extension to the cottage.