

# MANAHAN PLANNERS

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Development Plan Submissions  
Strategic and Economic Development  
City Hall  
Anglesea Street  
Cork, T12 T997

13/09/21  
[By email]

## **Re: Griffith College Cork Submission to Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028**

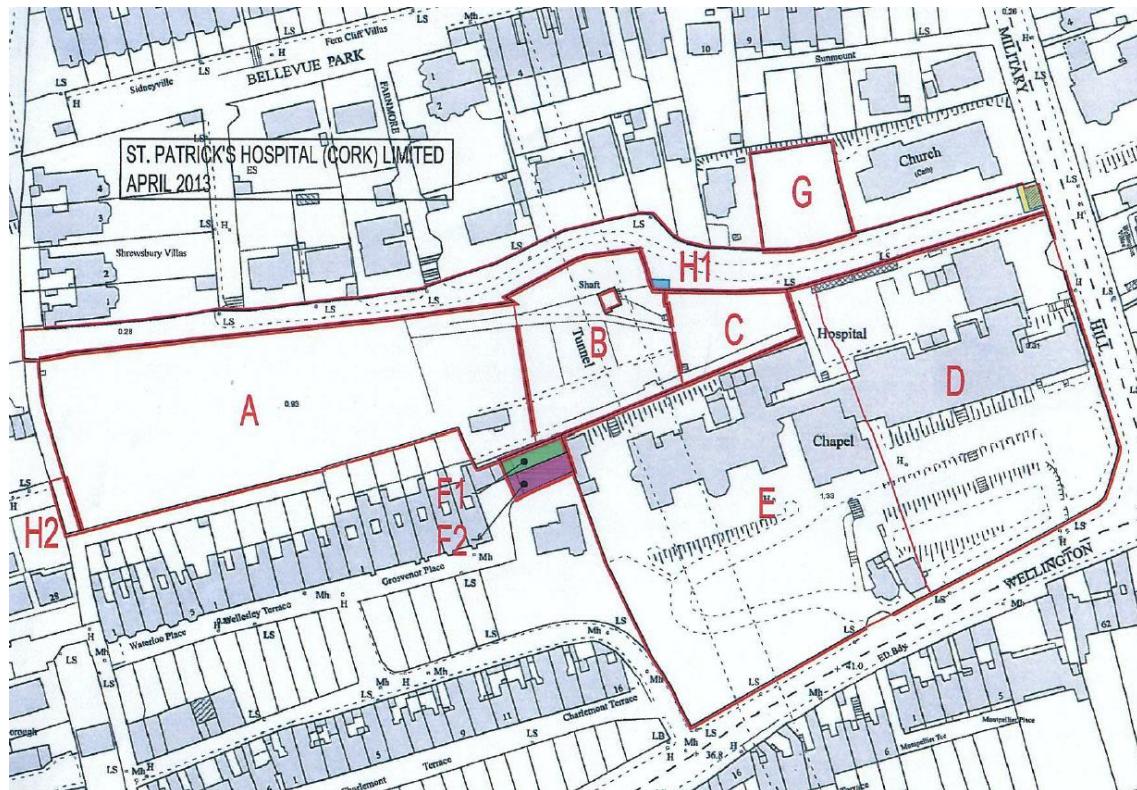
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Dear Sir/Madam,

We refer to the public notice seeking submissions to the review of the outgoing Development Plan for Cork City.

We have been retained by Patluke Limited, trading as Griffith College Cork, Wellington Road, Cork, to make a submission to the draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.

The extent of their site is set out below outlined in red.



*Image 1 shows the extent of their site, as transferred from St. Patricks Hospital, outlined in red.*

## Introduction

The college have taken over the former Marymount hospital buildings and surrounding grounds and have successfully established a Third Level college at that location.

We note in the draft plan recently published that the land within C, D and E in the image above are proposed to be zoned for ZO 13 for educational use, as we requested in the pre draft submission. The College is grateful for this recognition of its existence in this location.



However the lands contained within A and B above, which are part of the college grounds and are intended for future expansion of the College have not been zoned for education use.

Rather they have been zoned as **Zoning Objective 18 Landscape Preservation Zone**:  
*“To preserve and enhance the special landscape and visual character of Landscape Preservation Zones.”* and even of more concern, have been zoned with the designation to prevent the development on these lands.

Policies related to Landscape Preservation Zoning Objective include the following:

### **ZO 18.1**

These areas have been identified due to their sensitive landscape character and are protected due to their special amenity value, which derives from their distinct topography, tree cover, setting to historic structures or other landscape character.

### **ZO 18.2**

Many of these sites have limited or no development potential due to their landscape character. **There is a presumption against development within this zone**, with development only open for consideration where it achieves the specific objectives set out in Chapter 6 Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space and Biodiversity.

These lands are currently maintained and used as open space by the college for casual recreation by students (see photographs included with the submission.) The college considers these lands to be part of their expansion in the future and would hope to build (subject to planning permission) residential and other accommodation for students in this location. The current designation prohibits this, so we request that it be removed from the new plan. We request that the entire of their lands contained within the red line in the image above would be zoned for educational use. In reaching this decision the following information may be of assistance to the Planning Authority.

## **Site Context**

Griffith College is Ireland's largest independent third level institution. Griffith College Cork runs a variety of both full-time and part-time, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In 2014 the college moved to its permanent 5 acre campus occupying the former Marymount Hospice on Wellington Road, overlooking the city.

There have been a number of permissions granted for change of use to Educational use within the overall site. Moreover, buildings within the campus are Protected Structures and considerable investment has been expended to ensure they are refurbished and upgraded for educational use.

## **History of Griffith College Cork**

Griffith College was established in 1974 and our Cork campus was developed in 1998. Initially our programmes were run from Drinan Street, then St. Patrick's Hill and more recently in the former CBS school building on Sullivan's Quay until we acquired the Marymount Hospice campus on Wellington Road in 2013.

Griffith College Cork runs over 197 programmes on both full-time and part-time basis. These are delivered at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Law, Business, Journalism, Finance, Computing Science and Pharmaceutical Management as well as professional programmes in Law and Accountancy.

The College has recently validated a Healthcare Apprenticeship programme and a pre-degree foundation programme for its international students. In addition to this the College expects to continue to develop new programmes to meet the needs of its ever increasing number of Irish, EU and international students over the coming years.

## **Description of existing site**

The college is based on a large 5 acre campus on Wellington Road, within the Wellington Road/St. Luke's Conservation Area, and close to the centre of Cork city. Griffith College Cork is strongly committed to the creation of a positive learning environment. This relaxed and productive atmosphere is achieved by developing a strong pastoral care ethos, evidenced by the open-door policy of lecturers, the operation of all lectures on a first-name basis, the provision of both written and oral feedback on formal and informal assignments, and the close, friendly working relationship between students and staff, all of which are based on a spirit of trust and collaboration.

The premises is included on the record of protected structures, RPS No. PS787. The buildings are also included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage's (NIAH) survey for Cork City.

The site is located in a mature inner city residential neighbourhood in Cork (Zone 3), with the north (rear) of the site zoned for landscape preservation (zone CC4). The site has an area of approximately 2.2 Ha (5.3 acres) – area 'A' on the OS map. The land has road frontage onto and vehicular access from Wellington Road and Military Hill – as well as owning a private road along the north perimeter with vehicular access to the large grassed area (area 'A' on the OS map). See H1 on the map on page one.

The buildings on site are situated on a raised site to the rear side of Wellington Road, having landscaped gardens to the south (front), and large ground located to the north (rear) of the buildings.

The buildings, boundary walls and gateway material is old red sandstone. The sandstone is snecked with white limestone dressing. This style of construction is distinctly Victorian and was first used in the nineteenth century.



***Image 2 shows the site and its four main buildings and the year the building were constructed.***

The site contains four historic building: A gate lodge, the former St. Patrick's Hospital, the former St. Vincent's Orphanage/ St. Patrick's Convent, and a chapel. The buildings, boundary walls and gateway material is old red sandstone. This style of construction is distinctly Victorian.

### **Refurbishment of Convent**

In 2020 the College sensitively restored the former convent building under the expert eye of Gareth O'Callaghan Conservation Architect.

The €2million project over the past 18 months has transformed the nuns living quarters into 20 lecture rooms, while retaining all the original architecture detail of the 1800 building.

The refurbishment accommodated and anticipated population of approximately 650 learners occupying the building at one time. Alterations to the building were required to comply with current Building Regulations. Additionally repair and maintenance work were undertaken to the historic fabric of the building. The repair work included repairs to the masonry old red sandstone walls with limestone dressing, the roofs and chimney stacks, stained windows, internal joinery and fireplaces. Treatment of dry rot, and replace existing windows, doors and rainwater goods. As well as converting the attic to an open office landscape for staff.

In addition to the restoration of the Convent building, adjoining this, built in 1909 by the Honan family, the Chapel, has been witness to the many guises that this magnificent building. The chapel is now deconsecrated and is an invaluable space in which academic events, concerts and of course graduations are held.



***Image 3 shows the street view showing the view of the site, the gateway, Gate Lodge, Hospital, Chapel and Convent from Wellington Road.***



***Image 4 shows the Gate Lodge's front elevation and main entrance. The gate lodge is a detached single storey building with an attic built in c.1880.***



***Image 5 shows the Hospital's front elevation. The hospital/ hospice is an attached three storey over a basement building with an attic built in 1870.***



***Image 6 shows the Chapel's front elevation. The chapel is an attached building with a double height building, a gallery, and is arranged on a cruciform plan and was built in 1908. Continuous upgrading and redecoration was undertaken to the premises between 1950 to date.***



***Image 7 shows the Convent's front elevation. The Convent, an attached three storey building and was built in 1876 as the St. Vincent's Orphanage.***

The mature gardens to the front that is landscaped and professionally maintained. The 2 acre grassed grounds located to the rear are used for students for recreation purposes as well vegetable growing plots, to the rear of the campus. Originally the 2 acre grassed grounds was used by the religious order as a garden to grow food and provided all the food needs of the convent and hospital. Over the past 15 years the grass was not cut and in 2017 the College reseeded grass for the benefits of its students.

A temporary change of use was granted to St. Angela's College, a voluntary secondary school, in 2011. In 2014, Griffith College received a grant of planning permission for change of use of the Ground Floor of the former Convent to third level education use. Griffith College subsequently undertook reversible minor alterations to the ground floor of the Convent. The work was completed in December 2014 under Conservation Architect Aidan Powell, of APA. In 2015, Griffith College received a grant of planning permission for change of use of the former St. Patrick's Hospital to education use. While in 2019 a planning application was granted for change of use of former St. Vincent's Orphanage/St. Patricks Convent for educational use and modifications to existing structure to include two new internal stairs and a new ambulant staircase to the rear. The work was completed in February 2021 under Conservation Architect Gareth O'Callaghan, of JCA.

The College are very proud of the completed restoration work and strive to maintain and upkeep the historic buildings and grounds to a high standard in accordance with Heritage guidelines, and lead by a Conservation Architect. The college have also develop a maintenance plan for the premises.

## **Student Numbers on campus – plan to expand in a measured fashion over the next few years**

The College has provided the following commentary on their existing and future plans in the following statement.

*“Currently in the 2021/22 academic year Griffith College have 1,200 learners with 500 undertaking day programmes (200 national and 300 international / EU) and 700 undertaking evening and weekend programme.*

*It is projected that in 2024/25 we have will 1,600 learners with 800 undertaking day programmes (300 national and 500 international / EU) and 800 undertaking evening and weekend programme.*

*It is expected that in 2027/28 we have will 2,000 learners with 1,100 undertaking day programmes (400 national and 700 international / EU) and 900 undertaking evening and weekend programme.*

*It is expected that in 2030/31 we have will 2,300 learners with 1,400 undertaking day programmes (500 national and 900 international / EU) and 900 undertaking evening and weekend programme”.*

### **Strategy for college and site in the future**

*“The College has ample capacity to meeting the demands for the 2024/25 academic year but after that additional teaching space will be required.*

*Also in order to continue to develop our international market we will require purpose built student accommodation, for 50% of our international students, to be built preferably on campus so as to develop a living student village on part of the large grassed area to the rear of the campus.*

*In addition to this we will require additional teaching space, on-campus sports (indoor and outdoor) and restaurant facilities also on part of the large grassed area to the rear of the campus.*

*It would be envisaged that the majority of the grassed area to the rear of the campus would be maintained and new buildings sensitively built within modest heights and fully landscaped”.*

It is clear that the lands to the rear (A and B) are essential to the development of the college in the future. The designation as proposed will have an adverse impact of that development.

The lands in question are not of any particular landscape amenity value that would merit their retention solely as open space.

In support of this contention, we include a series of photographs overleaf that indicate the nature of the lands,

**Photos of rear grounds:**



Image 2 shows field west to east



Image 2 shows field south to north



Image 3 shows west to east



Image 4 shows west to east



Image 4 shows west to east



Image 5 shows North to South



Image 6 shows East to West



Image 7 shows East to West



Image 8 shows North to South



Image 9 shows Boundary wall East to West



Image 10 shows Upper View East to West

Image 11 Entrance to Field from lane



Image 12 shows Rear view of College



Image 13 shows View east to West



Image 14 shows View of Field



Image 15 shows Nuns walk



Image 16 shows Nuns walk adjacent to field



Image 17 shows Field view



Image 18 East view of student area



Image 19 Field view

## **Conclusion**

This submission proposes that the entire of the lands in the ownership of Griffith College at Merrymount, Wellington Road, Cork have the Zoning Objective ZO13 to provide for education use.

In particular, that portion of the site that is proposed to be zoned as ZO18 should be zoned for educational use.

The field to the rear is not of sufficient visual or landscape value to merit its inclusion within an area worthy of “landscape preservation”. Instead, it is crucial that the land is available (and zoned) for the expansion of the college. As set out above the College makes a significant contribution toward the achievement of the Planning Authority’s objective for education in Cork and this should be supported.

We trust that the views of our client outlined above be taken into consideration in the preparation of the Draft City Development Plan. We are available to discuss issues arising from this report anytime.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tony Manahan".

**Tony Manahan**

**Manahan Planners**