

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment



Regarding proposed works within the walled garden, farmyard and to the boundary walls and entrances at Mount Congreve, Kilmeaden, Co Waterford



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Introduction

This Report was prepared by Waterford City & County Council to assess the impact of proposed works within the walled garden, farmyard and to the boundary walls and entrances at Mount Congreve on the historic character of the House and to form part of the documentation for the public consultation process to be carried out under Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations. This report should be read in conjunction with Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Bluett & O'Donoghue Architects which covers the impact of proposed works on the Main House.

Mount Congreve is included in the Record of Protected Structures for County Waterford, RPS Ref. No.35, and is also included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) where it is described as being of artistic, architectural, historical and social interest and is rated as being of national importance. The NIAH includes descriptions of the main entrance gates, the east gate lodge, the walled garden, the glasshouse, the head gardener's house, an estate worker's house and the stables. Mount Congreve is also included in the NIAH Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Ref WA-75-S-534102.

The proposed development at Mount Congreve consists of

Renovation and up-grade of Mount Congreve House to provide for access by the public, host events, visitor accommodation and offices. Works will include installation of a lift, universal access, toilets, kitchen, fire safety improvements and installation of a bio-energy heating system. (see The Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Bluett & O'Donoghue Architects)

Within the attendant grounds proposed works within the farmyard, walled gardens and works to the boundary walls and entrances include

Development of the farm yard to incorporate a café; offices, meeting facilities, craft yard; children's play area and a retail unit

Other works will include the development of a car park, waste water treatment facility, creation of a wetland garden, upgrade of existing greenhouse, enhancements to the grounds and paths and development of a children's playground.

Improvements to sight lines on the L4411 by setting back the estate wall at the entrance just west of the main entrance into the House and Gardens. The second entrance will be used for traffic entering the gardens and the existing main entrance will be used for traffic exiting the House and Gardens.

The following structures which may be impacted on by the proposed development are

- Main Gate
- Proposed new entrance gate also known as Doyle's Gate
- Walled Gardens
- Glass House

Farmyard

- Proposed Craft area
- New Café
- Covered seating area
- Playground area
- Plant shop
- Car Park
- Wastewater treatment area

The Historical background of Mount Congreve is included in the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Bluett & O'Donoghue Architects

Statement of significance

Mount Congreve is rated as being of National Importance by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The walled gardens and farmyard were established at the same time as the Main House. The layout of the walled gardens has remains almost unaltered. The trapezoidal shaped farmyard consists of group of ancillary structures dating from mid 18th century onwards. The buildings are collectively of significance attesting to the disparate activities undertaken in the maintenance of a large-scale estate. The mature walled garden is of architectural and social interest as evidence of the various activities necessary in the maintenance of a large-scale estate. The construction of the walls serves to assimilate the composition into the landscape. The expansion of the gardens by Ambrose Congreve in the 1960s referencing an Asiatic and particularly Chinese themes, is also evident in various architectural motifs around the House. This chapter of enhancement works was yet another phase in the evolution of Mount Congreve.

The House and Gardens at Mount Congreve are a physical expression of the history of the Congreve family over the centuries. The estate and the ornamental gardens are completely intertwined and the prospect of presenting this story to the public in a sympathetic manner can be of great benefit to the social, historical and architectural heritage of Waterford.



Ambrose Congreve 1907- 2011

Main Gate- NIAH 22901720



This was originally the approach to the farm but was altered in the 1960s as part of the overall enhancement works carried out at Mount Congreve by Ambrose Congreve. The gateway comprises of a pair of limestone ashlar piers with moulded capping, decorative wrought iron double gates, decorative wrought iron flanking pedestrian gates, limestone ashlar outer piers having moulded capping, and sections of limestone ashlar flanking boundary walls to perimeter of site.

A well-composed gateway incorporating fine stone work to the piers and boundary walls, together with decorative wrought iron work, which enhances the design quality of the composition. The gateway, together with the attendant gate lodge, forms an important element of the Mount Congreve estate, and contributes to the visual appeal of the locality.

This structure is considered of Regional importance within the architectural and artistic categories of special interest

Proposed works - dismantle boundary wall to the west, set back to facilitate sightlines , rebuilt to match existing walls , in height design and materials

Impact - It is considered that this will have a minor negative impact on the architectural heritage as the form will be retained

Mitigation – prior to works commencing recording of structure and conservation method statement to be prepared by suitably qualified conservation personnel .



West Gate – Doyles Gate

Main gates c. 1960s comprises of a pair of rendered piers with moulded capping, urns and decorative wrought iron double gates, which incorporates geometric motif similar to back stairs in Main house. The flanking walls are cement rendered walls. The footprint of the gateway has evolved since the First Edition 6 inch Map surveyed in 1841 when this was the Main gateway . This width of this entrance has been reduced and a second avenue was developed, where the Main entrance is now. The lodge to the rear has been relocated since the 25 inch Map survey of 1905

Proposed works – dismantle existing walls and piers and set back to facilitate sightlines. The walls and piers are to be rebuilt to replicating the existing walls in height, design and materials

Impact - The gates are historic but the walls are part of the improvement works in 1960s. Minor impact on the historic fabric

Mitigation prior to works commencing recording of structure and conservation method statement to be prepared by suitability qualified conservation personnel.

			
<p>Location of proposed entrance</p>		<p>Gateway and adjacent boundary walls to be set back</p>	
			
<p>Gateway</p>		<p>Detail of the gate which incorporates geometric motif similar to back stairs in Main house</p>	

Boundary Walls

Sections of random rubblestone boundary walls with cement pointing. Sections of the walls are part of the improvement works in 1960s.

Proposed works – dismantle existing walls and set back to facilitate sightlines. The walls are to be rebuilt to replicating the existing walls in height and materials

Impact –Minor impact on the historic fabric

Mitigation - prior to works commencing recording of structure and conservation method statement to be prepared by suitability qualified conservation personnel.

	
Boundary stone wall to be set back	Boundary stone wall to be set back (non historic wall)
	

Walled gardens - NIAH 22901714



The Walled garden, was developed c.1770, on a wedge-shaped plan. The walls are constructed of random rubble stone walls with lime mortar, and round-headed pedestrian opening having rendered surround. There are also sections of brick wall and evidence of rebuilding/addition of extra height to the walls . The walled garden and its layout was further enhanced by the improvement works carried out by Ambrose Congreve in the 1960s

This structure is considered of Regional importance within the architectural and social categories of special interest

Proposed works – enhancement of pathways

Mitigation It is proposed to upgrade existing paths using gravel. There are no new paths or kerbing proposed.

Impact – No visual or physical impact on the architectural heritage



Glass House



NIAH 22901723

This is a detached three-bay single- and two-storey glass house, c.1850, comprising single-bay double-height central block (palm house) with single-bay single-storey flanking lateral wings (propagation houses). Hipped glazed roof to central block and pitched glazed roofs to wings in timber frames with timber ridges, louvered timber panelled vent to apex to central block having copper-clad elongated-pyramidal roof over, and cast-iron rainwater goods on timber eaves. Unpainted rendered, ruled and lined walls. Square-headed window openings to central block with 36/36 timber sash windows. Square-headed door opening with glazed timber panelled double doors. Square-headed window openings to wing with stone sills, and fixed-pane timber windows. Interior with limewashed lime rendered walls, planting beds, and cast-iron water pipes.

This is an elegant substantial glass house forming the centrepiece of the walled garden at Mount Congreve. The construction of the glass house, which allowed for the adjusting of an artificial climate through a system of hot water pipes and vents to the roof, is of technical engineering interest. Very well maintained, the glass house retains its original form and fabric but is in need of some repair. The glass house is of additional significance as an indicator of the various activities undertaken in the maintenance of a large-scale estate. This structure is considered of Regional importance within the architectural and technical categories of special interest

Proposed works – repair of the glass and frames, remove some of the concrete 1960s beds to locate a mobile coffee dock to the rear of the glasshouse at entrance from the Greenway.

Impact - coffee dock is mobile so there will be no physical or visual impact on the architectural heritage. The repair of the glasshouse is a positive impact .

Mitigation- Prior to works commencing recording of structure and conservation method statement to be prepared by suitability qualified conservation personnel. Works to be carried out by suitability qualified person as per best practice as per Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht guidelines.



Main entrance to glasshouse from south



Section of glasshouse to east



Bedding areas constructed in the 1960s



Bedding areas constructed in the 1960s – to be removed to facilitate access from the Greenway into the gardens – location of coffee dock



Interior of glasshouse temporary propping of roof – area to be repaired



Entrance to glasshouse back and front doors



Propagation areas



Propagation areas



Propagation areas



Door to the greenway

Farmyard

The trapezoidal shaped farmyard consists of group of ancillary structures dating from mid 18th century onwards . The earliest building is the single and two storey stable buildings and by the 25 inch map survey of 1905 most of the structures on site at present are in situ. The buildings are collectively of significance attesting to the disparate activities undertaken in the maintenance of a large-scale estate.

General photographs of the farmyard area



Farmyard from the main vehicular



To north



To north



entrance to west yard area



Old dairy yard area



West yard area to south



Plant sales yard area



Proposed craft area



NIAH 22901726

Detached nine-bay single- and two-storey stable building, c.1850, on a symmetrical plan retaining original aspect comprising nine-bay two-storey block with single-bay two-storey projecting entrance bay to centre having square-headed carriageway, and four-bay single-storey lean-to flanking infill ranges. Hipped slate roof on a T-shaped plan (lean-to to flanking infill ranges) with clay ridge tiles, rendered chimney stack, rendered coping, and cast-iron rainwater goods on rendered eaves. Unpainted rendered walls. Square-headed window openings with no sills, and timber fittings. Square-headed door openings with timber boarded sliding doors. Square-headed carriageway with timber boarded double doors. Set back from road in grounds shared with Mount Congreve

A well-composed substantial stable building of solid form and massing, which retains its original form, and most of its original fabric. The stable block forms the centerpiece of a group of ancillary structures in the Mount Congreve estate, which are collectively of significance attesting to the disparate activities undertaken in the maintenance of a large-scale estate.

This structure is considered of Regional importance within the architectural category of special interest

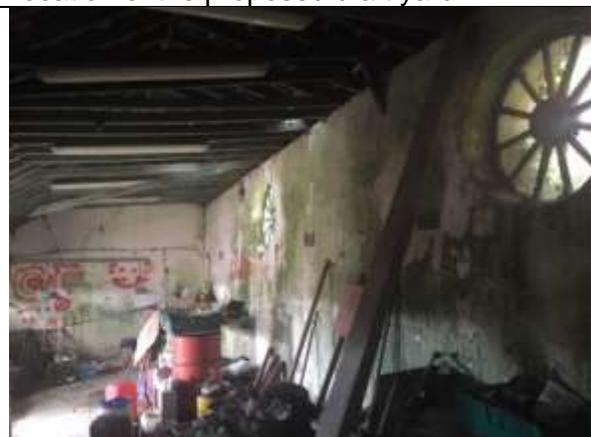
Proposed works Upgrading to provide space for craft workers- existing water and electricity supply in situ. On the east side of the building offices/meeting rooms are proposed. This will not necessitate physical interventions.

Impact - Positive impact , restoration of windows, doors

Mitigation measures Prior to works commencing, recording of structure and conservation method statement to be prepared by suitability qualified conservation personnel. Works to windows, doors, roof etc to be carried out by suitability qualified person as per best practice as per Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht guidelines.



Location of the proposed craft yard



Interior of the building with circular windows

New cafe



At present this is a open shed of mid 20th century date with attractive truss. The roof is pitched with natural slate .

Proposed works - It is proposed to locate a café in this area . There will works to level the ground surface but the window opes shall remain. A new door ope is proposed to the walled garden. This wall has been altered previously.

Impact - Positive impact on the architectural heritage

Mitigation measures Prior to works commencing, details of the proposed windows doors and opes shall be submitted. Works shall be carried out by suitability qualified person as per best practice as per Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht guidelines.



Proposed café from east



Proposed café , covered seating area and offices



Covered seating area and proposed café



Proposed café and toilets



Entrance to proposed café



Location of doorway to the walled garden

Covered seating area



A single storey rubblestone outbuilding with cement rendered walls and pitched roof with natural slate. This is an open shed area which may date back to 19th century. Very attractive roof support.

Proposed works –no works proposed

Impact - no impact on the architectural heritage

Mitigation measures – None



From the south



Adjacent yard /front entrance open

Play area



Concrete surfaced yard bounded by ranges which will support the skills/craft area

Proposed works – Children’s playground

Impact – no impact

Mitigation measures - None

Upgrading plant shop

Low single storey outbuilding rubblestone construction; cement rendered walls, pitch roof with natural slate roof dating from late 19th century.

Proposed works upgrade to facilitate the plant sales section of the development, insertion of bifold timber doors.

Impact - minimal impact

Mitigation measures - Details of proposed timber doors to be submitted prior to construction works commencing



Plant sales shop area

Area to the front of plant sales shop

New retail unit



View of site location to the east



View of area to the north and farm yard outbuildings

Proposed works

It is proposed to locate a single storey detached retail building in the area that is at present a car park.

Impact - Identifiably contemporary and part of the evolving character of the yard. There will be a visual impact on the approach to the yard. The height scale and massing will ensure that the new build will blend with the receiving environment

Mitigation measures - None

Car Park



Area of proposed car park

Proposed works - Provision of 200 car parking spaces /coach parking

Impact - moderate visual impact

Mitigation measures- Surface dressing such as grasscrete/gravel with boundary screening treatment of semi mature trees

Waste water treatment



View from approach road into farmyard

Proposed works - provision of waste water treatment

Impact - no visual or physical impact

Mitigation measures – appropriate landscaping

Impact assessment

The proposed works within the farmyard include a café; offices, meeting facilities, craft yard within the existing farmyard buildings and the provision of children's play area and a retail unit. The proposed new retail building element of development and will have a minor visual impact on the setting of the farmyard but can be considered part of the continuing evolution of Mount Congreve. The proposed works will ensure the conservation of the historic farmyard with a sustainable reuse of the buildings. As such it is considered that the interventions will represent a positive impact on the architectural heritage of Mount Congreve.

Other works proposed include the development of a car park, waste water treatment facility, creation of a wetland garden, repair of the historic greenhouse, upgrade of apartments to provide high quality tourist accommodation, enhancements to the grounds and paths. All proposed conservation works to the greenhouse and apartments will be carried out to best practice. The surface treatment of the car park and the paths, the boundary treatment of the proposed new car park, the screening of the waste water facility will respect the setting with the use of appropriate materials and planting. As such it is considered that the interventions will represent a positive impact on the architectural heritage of Mount Congreve.

The improvements to sight lines on the L4411 by setting back the estate walls and entrance gates are necessary interventions. The proposed entrance gateway and some of the adjacent walls were constructed in the 20th century. These walls and piers are to be dismantled to facilitate sightlines. These walls and piers are to be rebuilt to replicating the existing walls in height, design and materials. It is considered that this will have a minor negative impact on the architectural heritage.

The proposed works materially will affect the character of the protected structure. However the proposed works have been designed so that they will be sympathetic to the historic buildings on site and the special and unique character and setting of Mount Congreve House and Demesne. Options have been carefully considered and have due regard to the DoEHLG Department Guidelines on Architectural Heritage Protection.

Conclusion

Since Mount Congreve house ceased to be a private residence in 2012, the sustainability of the historic House and Demesne has had an uncertain future. The proposed development seeks to ensure its sustainability by enhancing the house and grounds as a visitor attraction, which will provide revenue to maintain this impressive historic House and Gardens. The proposed works will include some necessary interventions to the historic fabric. All works will be carried out to best conservation practice as per Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht guidelines and advice. The sensitive management of the built and natural heritage at Mount Congreve requires appropriate development of the house and its curtilage within the demesne landscape. With this Part 8 application it is considered the process of change with regard to the House, farmyard the walls, entrances, is managed with respect to the historical and architectural significance of Mount Congreve.

All the proposed works to enhance the House and Gardens of Mount Congreve will ensure its sustainable use for the present and future generations.

