

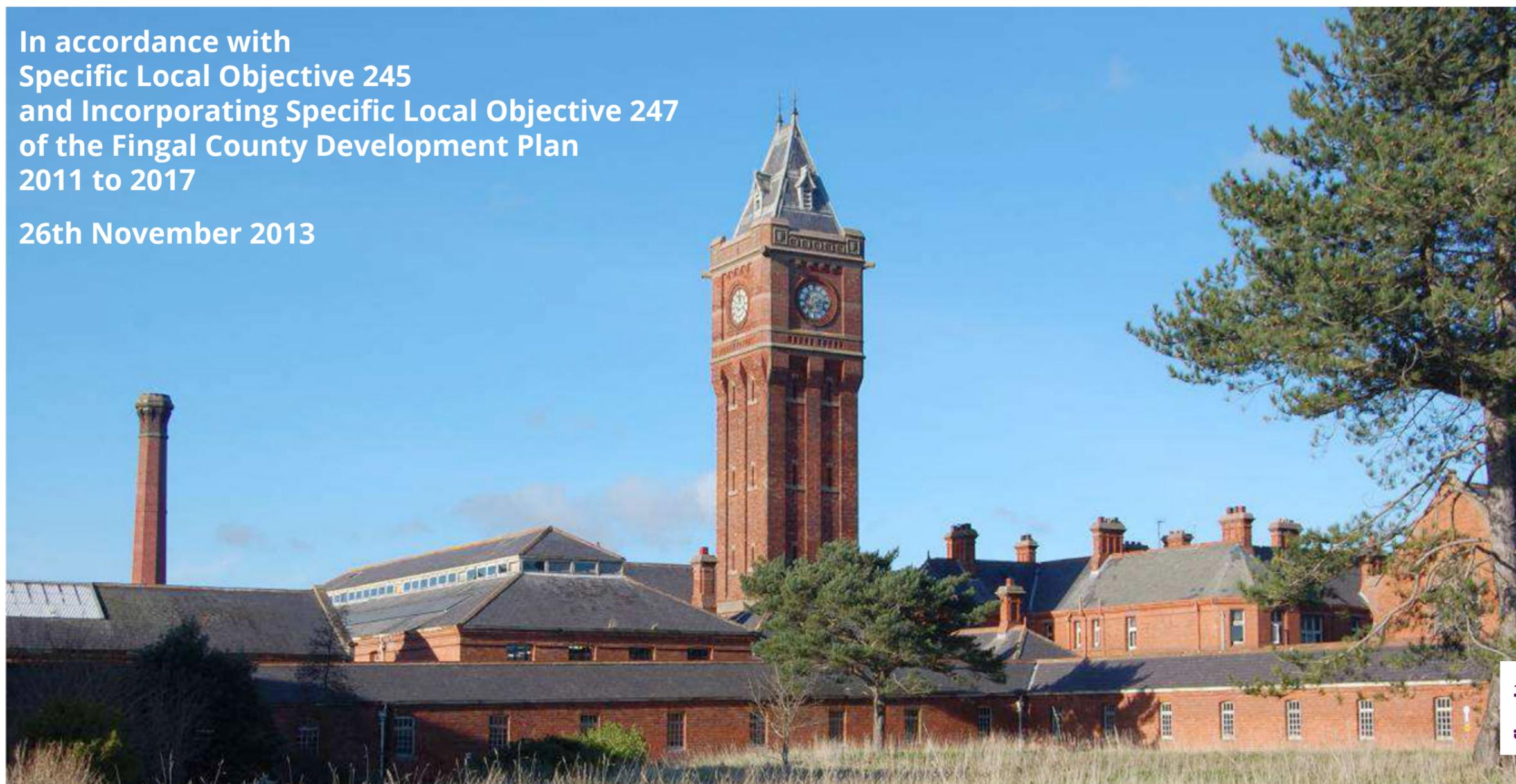


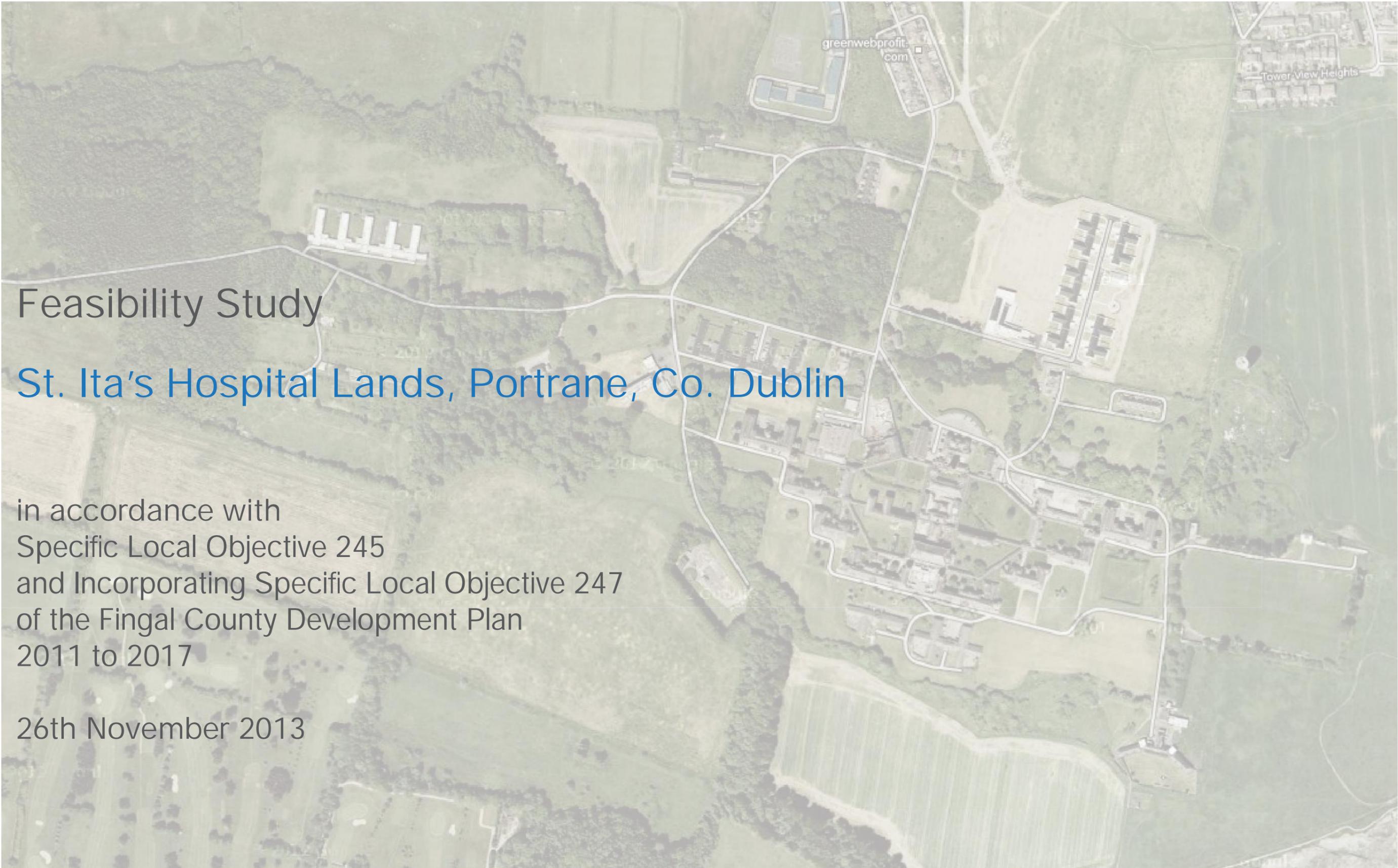
Feasibility Study

St. Ita's Hospital Lands, Portrane, Co. Dublin

In accordance with
Specific Local Objective 245
and Incorporating Specific Local Objective 247
of the Fingal County Development Plan
2011 to 2017

26th November 2013





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2011 to 2017

26th November 2013



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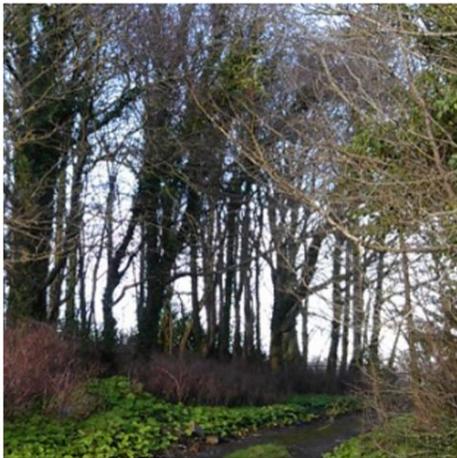
Punch Consulting Engineers

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01: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



Introduction

1.1 Basis for the Feasibility Study

This joint Fingal County Council/ Health Service Executive Feasibility Study relates to the HSE's Psychiatric Hospital facility and lands at St. Ita's in Portrane, County Dublin.

The Study has been produced by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and approved by Fingal County Council (FCC) in accordance with Local Objective 245 of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017 (CDP) which states the following:

Local Objective 245

Undertake a feasibility study of St Ita's, in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex. The study will explore the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities taking cognizance of the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site. The study will also prioritise the re-use of the existing buildings, including protected structures on site and also maintain and provide for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

This Study also incorporates Local Objective 247 of the CDP which states the following:

Local Objective 247

Encourage a Woodland Management Strategy for Portrane Demesne.

1.2 Background - Brief History of the HSE's lands at St. Ita's

The HSE's lands at St. Ita's Hospital Demesne, Portrane comprise approximately 111 Hectares. Refer to Map 1. These lands are located on the coastline of the Donabate peninsula with the Rogerstown Estuary to the north and the Malahide Estuary to the south.

Portrane is located on the north eastern area of the Donabate peninsula approximately 3km east of Donabate Town on the R126 which is serviced by a rail link and is 13km from Dublin City centre.

St. Ita's has been a mental health hospital since its inception in the late 19th century. The impressive collection of Victorian red brick buildings dominate the peninsula and are visible across the Malahide Estuary over 4km away. The existing institutional complex is extensive and accommodates a large number of protected structures and attractive buildings in a woodland and coastal landscape. Many building elements within the complex are landmark structures, visible over long distances from the coastline particularly to the south. There are exceptional coastal views from this slightly elevated site and the design of any development should retain these vistas where possible.

The complex expanded in recent decades with the construction of various buildings and outhouses built in a period from the 1950's to the 1990's. These structures are distributed throughout the lands without coherence and many are currently in a state of disrepair or dereliction. The most recent construction activity has culminated in the opening of the Knockamann daycare and residential facility in 2010.

Today the hospital is used by the HSE as a mental health complex providing acute and continued care beds. A number of the buildings are currently unoccupied and/or derelict. Of the 64 buildings surveyed for this Study, 34 are in use (or partial use) at the moment. Of the occupied buildings, 23 could be vacated if required. For further details please refer to schedule of buildings in Appendix G and as referenced in Section 4 as well as section 3.4 below.

A number of sport facilities also use the hospital lands, including a bowling green handball alley and St. Ita's AFC soccer pitch which is located to the east of the

demesne, while St Patrick's GAA pitches are to the west of the main entrance drive outside the site.

1.3 Background - Genesis of the NFMHS Proposal

The Central Mental Hospital (CMH) has been based in Dundrum, south County Dublin since 1850. It provides the base for the National Forensic Mental Health Service in Ireland and is the only centre in the state that provides psychiatric treatment in conditions of maximum and medium security. The CMH provides acute, medium and longer term psychiatric care for mentally disordered offenders and others like them who are suffering from a mental illness. Most of the hospital's admissions (some 90%) come from the Prison Service, whether they are on remand, pending trial or serving a sentence. The CMH operates as a therapeutic rather than a penal institution, and is run with a hospital ethos.

There has been little or no structural change to the Dundrum facility since it was built. While there has been significant renovation and refurbishment of various parts of the facility, many elements of the building are reflective of the Victorian era and out of date for modern requirements. The Dundrum facility is no longer an appropriate place for treating and caring for persons with mental illness. In 2003 the Minister for Health & Children established a Project Team with stakeholder involvement to progress the re-development of the CMH including the consideration of the reuse of the Dundrum site as well as alternative sites in the country.

1.4 Background - Site Selection Process for the NFMHS

Following the appointment of a Project Team to progress the re-development of the CMH, the team considered several options for the location of the new CMH, from remaining on the current site in Dundrum to re-location to a site outside Dublin. The Project Team completed its work in March 2004 and recommended that the CMH be relocated to a new purpose built facility in the greater Dublin area, as this was judged to be the most appropriate option for delivery of patient care.

The purchase of a site at Thornton Hall Co. Dublin for the location of a prison complex to replace the Mountjoy prison complex was approved in principle by Government in November 2004. Subsequently, the Government agreed in principle, and subject to further study, that the hospital should be transferred from Dundrum to the Thornton Hall site, although this was opposed by stakeholders.

In May 2006 the Government confirmed their decision to locate the new CMH on a site at Thornton Hall, Co. Dublin, and that the cost of developing the hospital would be met from the proceeds of the sale of the existing site in Dundrum. The new hospital would be built on its own campus, adjacent to the planned Mountjoy Prison Replacement Complex. It would be a separate health facility owned and managed by the Health Service Executive.

A second project team was established in January 2007 with stakeholder involvement to progress the CMH development. A draft project brief was prepared and a cost benefit analysis was completed. Subsequently, the HSE decided that a Forensic Mental Health Unit for Children and Adolescents and a Forensic Mental Health Unit for persons with an Intellectual Disability should be co-located with the CMH. However the Thornton Hall site was not large enough to accommodate these additional units. The Thornton Hall site presented other difficulties too, in particular, anticipated planning delays and implications of the delay in the prison development.

In June 2009 Minister for Health & Children proposed that the location of the new hospital should be changed from Thornton Hall. The Government raised no objection to this proposal. John Moloney, Minister of State for Equality, Disability and Mental Health, subsequently confirmed that the new hospital would not be built at Thornton Hall.

Following a request from the Department of Health and Children to move forward with

the development of a new CMH, a third Project Team was convened by the HSE in late 2009 with broad membership of government agencies, service user groups and carer organisations. The Project Team carried out an option appraisal of four HSE owned sites which were:

- St Ita's, Portrane
- Newcastle, Co. Wicklow
- St Fintan's, Portlaoise
- St Bridget's Ardee

St Ita's, Portrane was identified as the most appropriate site in the option appraisal study.

The HSE engaged O'Mahony Pike Architects in April 2010 to carry out a detailed option appraisal of the St Ita's site to identify an appropriate location within the site for the development of a new CMH (refer to Appendix A). The HSE Project Team and O'Mahony Pike Architects (OMP) consulted with Fingal County Council on several occasions during the option appraisal process. It should be noted that the existing buildings at St Ita's were assessed as regards their suitability to provide accommodation for the NFMHS facility; however they were deemed to not be fit for purpose. This issue is considered in more detail at Section 4.1 below.

A preferred site was identified in the OMP Options Appraisal document. A subsequent Site Strategy Report was then produced by OMP for the preferred site (refer to Appendix B).

Following the option appraisal the Project Team drafted an Outline Business Case and engaged DKM Economic Consultants to produce a Cost Benefit Analysis which was published in June 2011. Dr James Reilly T.D., Minister for Health, announced in November 2011 that the redevelopment of the CMH was included in the HSE Capital Plan for 2012-2016. Refer to Appendix K comprising a press release from the Department of Health on Health Capital Investment.

Minister Lynch formally announced that the CMH was being relocated to St Ita's, Portrane in July 2012 following appointment of the Design Team. Refer to Appendix L comprising a press release from Ms Kathleen Lynch T.D., Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People.

1.5 Feasibility Study Requirement

Following the initial site suitability meetings between FCC, the HSE and the HSE's consultants OMP in 2010, Local Objective Number 245 (as listed above) was included by FCC in the Fingal County Development Plan 2011 to 2017 as part of the 2010 review of the plan.

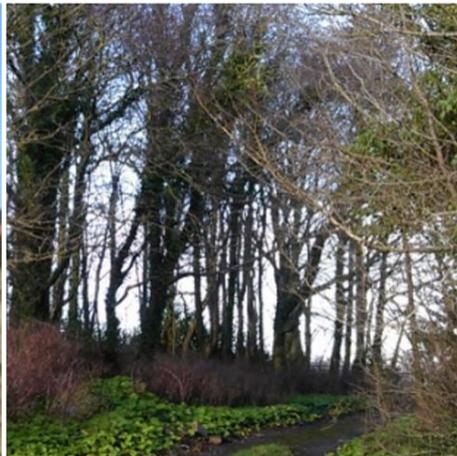
Following on from discussions between FCC and the HSE in 2012, the HSE agreed to produce the Feasibility Study on behalf of FCC which would, among other things, assess and incorporate where appropriate the findings of the OMP options appraisal report. The Feasibility Study was commenced in January 2013 by a team of multi-discipline consultants appointed by the HSE and was completed in November 2013.

1.6 Layout of Feasibility Study

This Feasibility Study contains the following sections:

- Section 1 comprises this introduction;
- Section 2 comprises the planning policy context for the document;
- Section 3 comprises details of the various surveys carried out for this study. The surveys in full are enclosed as appendices to the study;
- Section 4 comprises details of options for possible sustainable re-use of existing buildings, an 'Implementation Strategy' for maintenance of the buildings, as well as details of a Woodland Management Strategy for the St. Ita's lands;
- Section 5 comprises a site selection process to confirm the appropriate site for the proposed new psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities at St. Ita's. This includes a review of a previous site analysis carried out on behalf of the HSE in 2010. However, the present analysis includes assessment on environmental issues including ecology, architectural heritage, archaeology, and visual impact.
- Section 6 comprises the conclusion and final recommendation of the study. This includes recommendations on a proposed variation of the Fingal County Development Plan to support the optimal future sustainable use of this complex and to consider the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital), having regard to the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site as well as recommendations on pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes through the site (ensuring public accessibility).

02: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT



Planning Policy Context

The relevant statutory planning policy document for St. Ita's is the Fingal County Development Plan 2011 to 2017 (the CDP). This was adopted by FCC on the 23rd March 2011 and it came into effect on the 20th April 2011.

The CDP's Strategic Overview (Chapter 1) states the following with regard to St. Ita's Hospital and to Portrane, which is classed as a small town:

PORTRANE

Portrane is a unique settlement located on the north eastern area of the Donabate Peninsula and thus enjoys many natural amenities. It is composed of three distinct areas: Portrane Village, The Burrow and St. Ita's Hospital. Due to the importance of the built and natural heritage, any development of this area will have to demonstrate its sustainability and ensure the protection of the Natura 2000 sites including Rogerstown Estuary located nearby. There are also two ACAs in Portrane, St Ita's complex and Grey's Square. The policies for Portrane will be in line with those identified for small towns in the Regional Planning Guidelines.

ST. ITA'S HOSPITAL

The existing institutional complex is very extensive and accommodates a large number of protected structures and attractive buildings in an extensive demesne type landscape. Building elements within the complex are landmark structures, which are visible over long distances from the coastline particularly to the south. There are exceptional coastal views from this slightly elevated site. It is an exceptional site which, in the event of it no longer being required by the Health Service Executive, could be reused to provide for future housing (conversion of existing structures), amenity and other ancillary needs within the County. There is a need to examine options regarding the optimal re-use and refurbishment of the complex of buildings within the demesne setting, to ensure the future sustainable use of this important and unique resource.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Protect and retain the distinctive village character of Portrane and protect and enhance existing natural amenities and built heritage. Strengthen the urban form of the village and improve local service facilities. Ensure the Burrow is protected from inappropriate development.

The relevant planning policy details and designations applying to the St. Ita's site are as follows:

Zoning:

The majority of the HSE landholding at St. Ita's is zoned 'HA' High Amenity, with the objective to 'Protect and enhance high amenity areas'. Refer to Map 2 (County Development Plan Sheet 7). There are other zoning objectives at the northeast of the HSE lands but these are not relevant to this study.

The Objective in the CDP for the HA zoning is to "Protect and enhance high amenity areas."

The Vision in the CDP for the HA zoning is to "Protect these highly sensitive and scenic locations from inappropriate development and reinforce their character, distinctiveness and sense of place. In recognition of the amenity potential of these areas opportunities to increase public access will be explored."

As it stands, the long established hospital use at St. Ita's is a 'Non-Conforming Use' as it not permitted in the present land use zoning. However, the CDP recognises that there are uses throughout the County which do not conform to the zoning objective of the area. The CDP states that reasonable intensification of extensions to and improvement of premises accommodating these uses will generally be permitted within

the existing curtilage of the development and subject to normal planning criteria.

Local Objectives:

The following two Local Objectives apply to St. Ita's:

245 Undertake a feasibility study of St Ita's, in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex. The study will explore the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities taking cognizance of the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site. The study will also prioritise the re-use of the existing buildings, including protected structures on site and also maintain and provide for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

247 Encourage a Woodland Management Programme for Portrane Demesne.

Specific Objectives:

The specific objective to protect & preserve trees, woodland and hedgerows applies to St. Ita's. Icons identifying this objective on CDP Sheet number 7 are located across the St. Ita's hospital site, particularly where large stands of trees are located (as apparent from an aerial photo of the NFMHS site – refer to Map 1).

Protected Structures

The CDP's Record of Protected Structures lists the following protected structures within the grounds of St. Ita's Hospital:

RPS No.	Name	Address	Townland	Description
536	St. Ita's Hospital Complex		Portraine Demesne	Extensive 19th century mental hospital complex (of around
537	Round Tower (Memorial)	St. Ita's Hospital Complex	Portraine	19th century memorial in grounds of St. Ita's Hospital
538	Church & St. Kenny's Well	in grounds of St. Ita's Hospital	Portraine Demesne	Site of Church & Holy Well

The following two items are located outside HSE lands:

RPS No.	Name	Address	Townland	Description
539	Priest's Chamber	in grounds of St. Ita's Hospital	Quay (Portraine)	Feature in grounds of St. Ita's by high tide
540	Chink Well	in grounds of St. Ita's Hospital	Quay (Portraine)	A well in a cave on the seashore which is covered

Refer to Map 2 for the location of these protected structures as noted on County Development Plan Sheet 7.

Objective AH14 of the CDP seeks to encourage the sympathetic and appropriate reuse, rehabilitation and retention of Protected Structures seeking that the Protected Structure is conserved to a high standard, and the special interest, character and setting of the building preserved. In certain cases the relaxation of site zoning restrictions may be considered in order to secure the preservation and conservation of the Protected Structure where the use proposed is compatible with the existing structure and this will only be permitted where the development is consistent with conservation policies and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Designed Landscapes – Historic Gardens, Demesnes & Estates

As St. Ita's Hospital is located within the grounds of Portrane Demesne the following CDP provisions are of relevance:

Objective AH22 of the CDP requires that proposals for development within historic designed landscapes should include an appraisal of the designed landscape (including an ecological assessment) prior to the initial design of any development, in order for this evaluation to inform the design which must be sensitive to and respect the built heritage elements and green space values of the site.

Objective AH23 of the CDP seeks to ensure that proposals for large scale developments and infrastructure projects consider the impacts on the architectural heritage and seek to avoid them. The extent, route, services and signage for such projects should be sited at a distance from Protected Structures, outside the boundaries of historic designed landscapes, and not interrupt specifically designed vistas. Where this is not possible, the visual impact must be minimised through appropriate mitigation measures such as high quality design and/or use of screen planting.

Recorded Monuments

The CDP map relevant to St. Ita's (Sheet 7, refer to Map 2) identifies a number of recorded monuments at the edges of the St. Ita's Hospital grounds.

Architectural Conservation Area

The entire St. Ita's Hospital site is located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). An ACA is defined by Planning Legislation as a place, area, group of structures or townscape that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures

The Council will seek to ensure that any new development or alteration of a building within or adjoining an ACA positively enhances the character of the area and is appropriate in terms of the proposed design, including: scale, mass, height, proportions, density, layout, materials, plot ratio, and building lines.

This has been considered at section 3.5 below.

Historic Landscape Characterisation Area

This informs future management and development of the landscape. The historic hospital use on site has been identified in FCC's Historic Landscape Characterisation Report of Portrane Peninsula (2007).

Landscape Character Type

St Ita's is designated as a 'Coastal' Landscape Character Type. Refer to Map 3, County Development Plan Sheet 14. This Coastal Landscape designation is noted by the CDP to have 'exceptional landscape value with high landscape sensitivity'. The CDP adds that "these areas have a low capacity to absorb new development".

The CDP states that it is a challenge to locate new development in these areas without it becoming unduly obtrusive. Views of the high lying areas are available from long distances and panoramic views are available from the uplands to the surrounding areas. The CDP notes that the coastal fringe is very sensitive to development due to the exposed nature of many of the coastal and estuarine areas making them particularly vulnerable to intrusive development. Finding sites for new development along the coast will be difficult as new development is likely to be conspicuous. The setting and character of coastal areas are particularly sensitive and could easily be damaged by inappropriate development.

Principles for Development within the Coastal Landscape are specified in the CDP

as follows:

- Skylines, horizon and ridgelines should be protected from development
- Sites with natural boundaries should be chosen, rather than elevated or open parts of fields. The form of new developments should be kept simple and they should be sited within existing shelter planting or within the contours of the land to minimise visual impact
- Clustering with existing farmhouse and/or farm buildings is generally preferable to standalone locations
- Field and roadside hedgerows should be retained. Proposals necessitating the removal of extensive field and roadside hedgerows should not be permitted
- The retention and active management of trees and woodland blocks should be promoted
- The use of trees and woodlands to contain new development should be encouraged. Strong planting schemes using native species, to integrate development into these sensitive landscapes, will be required. New planting needs to be carefully located and selected
- The management of the river margins should be promoted and development along the riverside which will intrude on the character of the river valleys should be restricted
- Outside urban areas, the major river corridors should be protected and improved by leaving a minimum 30 metre wide margin, on each side of these rivers, undeveloped and encouraging planting where appropriate, to enhance the landscape and habitat value of these corridors (see Objective BD24, Section on Ecological Corridors and Stepping Stones)
- Estuary margins and any hedgerows along the margins must not be disturbed
- The special character of the coast should be protected by preventing inappropriate development on the seaward side of coastal roads
- The character of the coastal visual compartments should be retained by preventing intrusive developments on headlands, promontories and coastal lands within the compartments. The coastal skyline should be protected from intrusive development

Environmental Designations: Nature Development Area

The CDP's Nature Development Area (NDA) designation covers a large section of the St. Ita's Hospital lands, particularly the woodland areas. Refer to Map 4, County Development Plan Sheet 15.

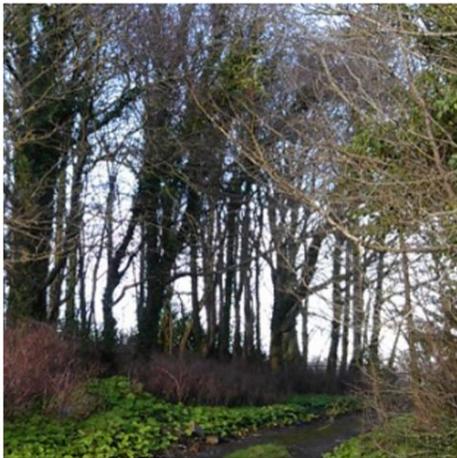
The CDP states that NDA's are locations where nature conservation can be combined with existing activities such as farming, forestry, quarrying and recreation (e.g. golf courses). The areas and land-uses have been selected because of their existing or potential value for wildlife. The nature development areas are reservoirs of biodiversity in the wider countryside and together with the corridors and stepping stones allow species to move through the landscape.

From a planning perspective, the Council aims to ensure that the biodiversity value of these areas is maintained and enhanced. Applications for planning permission must demonstrate how the proposed development will maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of the site.

Environmental Designations: Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Conservation Area (SPA)

The site is adjacent to SAC's and SPA's. Screening for both Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for any proposal to vary the CDP.

03: SURVEYS



A number of site surveys of the entire 111 ha St. Ita's complex, within the ownership of the HSE, have been carried out as part of this Feasibility Study. These surveys are enclosed either as a map/figure within the Study report or else as an Appendix to this Study. These surveys have all informed the Feasibility assessment carried out as part of this Study.

Site surveys are as follows:

3.1 Site ownership

A site ownership map outlining the extent of the HSE's property is included at Map 6.

3.2 Topographical survey and ground conditions

A Topographical survey and ground conditions map is included at Map 7.

3.3 Utilities (including wayleaves etc.)

A utilities map including details of wayleaves is included at Map 8.

3.4 Architectural Survey

An Architectural Survey of buildings within St. Ita's Complex, in the ownership of the HSE has been carried out by Carrig Conservation Consultants. This survey includes photographic records of each building as well as details to a standard utilised by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. This is included at Appendix G. The assessment and recommendations based on this Survey as well as the Archaeological Survey with regard to the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities are included in Section 5 of this Report and have taken cognizance of the cultural sensitivities of the site.

3.5 Archaeological Heritage

A desktop survey of Archaeological Heritage by Carrig Conservation Consultants is included at Appendix H.

It is proposed to carry out a programme of test trenching on the site identified for the proposed new hospital unit as part of an EIS for the NFMHS project.

The appointed archaeological team has advised that, with reference to the use of Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to identify any potential archaeological features on the site, test trenches would be far more meaningful. GPR over a site this size is very expensive and would have to be followed up to confirm findings with archaeological test trenches.

The archaeological team agrees that there is real merit in carrying out slit trench surveys as the site is in a relatively high area of prehistoric settlement. A reasonable grid of trenching would be bound to pick up any dense archaeological material, and given the high level of design and interaction of the buildings on the site.

3.6 Visual/Landscape Appraisal

A Visual / Landscape Appraisal of the site by Mitchell & Associates is enclosed at Appendix I. The assessment and recommendations of this Survey with regard to the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities are included in Section 5 of this Report and have taken cognizance of the visual sensitivities of the site.

3.7 Bat Survey

A baseline Bat Survey was carried out by Dr. Tina Aughney (Bat Eco Services) in the Summer of 2012, the most appropriate bat surveying period, and a report based on this survey was produced in April 2013. This is enclosed at Appendix D.

3.8 Tree Survey

A tree survey, carried out by John Morgan (Independent Tree Surveys), is enclosed at Appendix E.

3.9 Woodland Management Strategy

An outline Woodland Management Strategy has been prepared by Mitchell & Associates, with reference to Local Objective 247 of the County Development Plan, and is enclosed at Appendix F. A brief outline of the Strategy has been set out in Section 4.6 below.

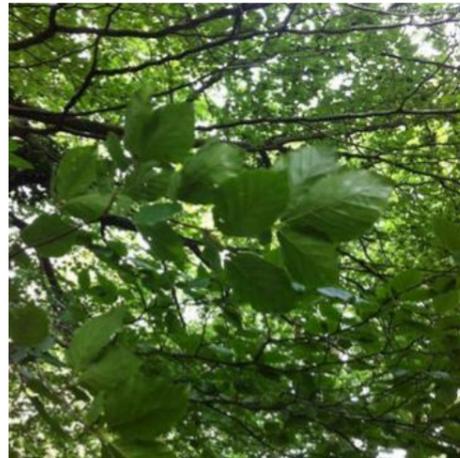
3.10 Ecology Survey

An Ecology Survey, with reference to a Bat Survey, Tree Survey and Woodlands Management Strategy has been carried out and is enclosed at Appendix C. The assessment and recommendations of this Survey with regard to the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities are included in Section 5 of this Report and have taken cognizance of the ecological sensitivities of the site.

3.11 Survey of Mobility and Accessibility to existing St. Ita's Facilities

A survey of pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes (existing and proposed) commissioned by Punch Consulting Engineers is included at Appendix J. The assessment and recommendations based on this Survey are included in Section 5 of this Report, with specific reference to the stated objective of maintaining an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

04: FUTURE OPTIONS FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS AND WOODLANDS



Future Options for Existing Building and Woodlands

One of the priorities of this Feasibility Study is the re-use of the existing buildings, including protected structures on site. In this regard the HSE has considered options for possible sustainable re-use of the buildings including the non-clinical use of the red-brick buildings (protected structures). This Feasibility Study has therefore considered proposals by the HSE for:

1. Possible use of the existing buildings for clinical use (NFMHS);
2. Consolidation of existing HSE services at St. Ita's; and
3. Alternative use for remaining existing redbrick buildings at St. Ita's.

4.1 Consideration of possible Clinical Use for Existing Buildings

The existing buildings of the St Ita's complex (as identified in the Carrig Architectural Survey, Appendix G) have been assessed and considered for the relocated NFMHS facility. The specialised model of care provided by the NFMHS and the custodial nature of this facility has created a prescriptive and specialised design model which St Ita's cannot satisfy. Robustness is a major requirement, also 'climbability' of structures, which must be contained within a secure perimeter sufficient distance away to prevent scaling of walls or buildings themselves. Anti-ligature fixtures and fittings is also a feature of the design, resulting in careful detailing and selection of suitable materials. To house the new NFMHS facility in St Ita's would be completely at odds with both the Mental Health Design Guidelines and the onerous security, safety and functional requirements of the Design Brief for the project, consequently the HSE has taken the considered view that these buildings are entirely unfit for purpose. A separate future use strategy has therefore been drafted and will be implemented, as outlined below.

In particular, the Clinical Director, of the National Forensic Mental Health Service at the Central Mental Hospital, Professor HG Kennedy, has advised as follows:

The St Ita's complex of buildings have been condemned in several reports by the Mental Health Commission, Inspectorate of Mental Health services over many years as unfit for purpose. The reasons for this are as follows:

- *Outmoded designs such that ligature points are intrinsic to the fabric of the building. Modern mental health hospital buildings are designed to prevent suicide. Research by the UK National Confidential Enquiry into Homicides and Suicides by psychiatric patients (University of Manchester) has shown that eliminating ligature points has had a substantial effect on hospital suicides in the UK, so much so that national suicide rates fell appreciably as a result.*
- *Modern hospital practice is to respect dignity and privacy in so far as this is possible (European Convention on Human Rights Article 8). Old fashioned "Nightingale" wards and shared bedrooms are incompatible with this modern human rights standard.*
- *Admission to hospital for treatment of mental illness or mental disorder now focuses on intensive care, followed by intensive rehabilitation.*
 - » *Intensive care requires highly specialised environments combining design with safe sight lines, specially designed de-escalation areas as well as safe access to fresh air, outdoor spaces and dignified access to bathroom facilities. None of these could be provided in the existing buildings.*
 - » *Intensive rehabilitation requires access to a range of rooms for individual psychotherapies, group psychotherapies and group psycho education. It also requires access to specialised occupational therapy facilities, primary care facilities and exercise facilities.*

These considerations apply to all modern mental health facilities and are amongst the clinical reasons why the existing buildings at St. Ita's are no longer fit for purpose.

Modern Forensic Mental Health Services are delivered in technically highly specified buildings in order to comply with Human Rights obligations and in order to deliver evidence based treatments in a safe environment. Additional elements required include:

- *Minimum standards for space per patient in individual bedrooms as well as in therapeutic and living spaces.*
- *Minimum standards for physical safety of the environment including controlled access and egress, specialist observation and monitoring technology and safe sight lines.*
- *Use of robust materials to ensure the safety of all those using the environment.*
- *Specialist therapeutic environments within wards for the de-escalation and therapeutic management of acute excited states.*

All of these must be provided in accordance with standards set by the European Court of Human Rights. The Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture, which visits and inspects the Central Mental Hospital every four years, has been highly critical of the existing CMH buildings in Dundrum, which are very similar to the existing St. Ita's buildings. At the same time the CPT has praised the therapeutic programmes provided within the existing CMH and emphasised the need for more appropriate buildings to enhance those programmes.

The Mental Health Commission (an independent statutory body established under the Mental Health Act, 2001) is currently working closely with the HSE and is supporting the approach to move existing mental health services out of the redbrick buildings and accommodate them in more appropriate accommodation at St. Vincent's in Fairview and Beaumont Hospital.

The Mental Health Commission advises that the existing St. Ita's buildings are not fit for purpose and encourage and support the move of existing mental health services off site.

With regard to the above, while the existing buildings are not suitable for the location of a new secure mental hospital – the NFMH facility, Fingal County Council will promote the re use of the buildings for appropriate uses where such activities will secure viable sustainable uses in these buildings into the future and which will provide for the proper conservation and sustainable development of St. Ita's. This is further discussed in sections 4.2 and 4.3 below

4.2 Proposal for Consolidation of Existing HSE services at St. Ita's

HSE Dublin North East has now developed a plan to consolidate all existing remaining services on the campus into an agreed Active Zone within the red brick buildings. This strategy has been agreed with the Hospital Manager and local HSE Estates office in Swords and involves the relocation of all services which are currently being provided in various parts of the existing Red Brick buildings into a reduced number of locally grouped buildings. Buildings in active use are identified in Map 9.2 of this Study.

The complex of buildings, while not being 'fit for purpose' in current clinical thinking and demands, has the ability to provide offices or treatment rooms. There is scope for identifying other sections of the HSE which could transfer to the site. This is already in motion with regard to Building No. 17 (refer to Map 9.2). Where new uses are found for buildings under the mantle of the HSE, care should be taken that this does not result in the building then becoming less appealing to other potential occupiers i.e. all HSE occupancy should be kept together and not distributed randomly throughout the complex. In this respect it is suggested that the focus of future HSE use of the building be confined to the western side of the complex thereby freeing up the eastern side for any other use. At present Building No.48 is undergoing renovation for reuse and the remaining clients in Building No.24 will be transferred to there. The remaining occupancy within the main

complex then will be administration, some staff accommodation, offices, canteen, laundry and the provision of utilities. Other client accommodation is provided in Buildings 38, 39, 44, 55 and 56. Staff accommodation is currently provided in Buildings 43 and 45.

This strategy will allow for the more efficient provision of the (remaining non-clinical) services with reduced travel distances between all of the various services. It will also allow the HSE to implement improved Environmental Management Control systems on the site. This will include the implementation of a major Energy reduction programme which is consistent with the HSE's obligation as a public body to comply with the Government's target to reduce public sector energy usage by 33% by 2020, as outlined in the SI 542 – European Communities (Energy End –Use Efficiency and Energy Services) Regulations 2009. This will also facilitate the implementation of comprehensive Water Quality and Waste Management systems for the site which will involve specific management and control systems for the active and inactive zones.

This strategy to relocate services to the western side of the building complex will also free up blocks of adjacent space which will be available to allow other uses and services to be accommodated on the site as appropriate and will facilitate planning for the future sustainable use of all buildings on the site. This active use strategy will require the immediate refurbishment of a number of existing buildings within the complex. All buildings not identified for use as per Map 9.2 of this study will be mothballed in a manner which will be in accordance with an agreed protocol as developed with the conservation consultants, Carrig and as set out in Appendix G. This approach will incorporate appropriate planned maintenance regimes for the occupied and the unoccupied (mothballed) spaces.

This will allow the relocation of appropriate services which are currently accommodated in leased and rented accommodation in various locations within North Dublin onto the St Ita's campus thus allowing the re-use of previously empty buildings. This is consistent with the HSE's policy to maximise the utilisation of its assets and to minimise expenditure on rental costs and will also provide opportunities for future planned occupation of adjacent buildings.

It should be noted that the HSE's active use proposal should consolidate services onto the westerly side of the complex which is aligned to the location of the new NFMHS facility. This will leave the buildings on the easterly side of the site free for a wide range of potential uses in the area of the site which has the best views etc of the coastline & thus the more attractive to non health related or external agencies which may be grouped together. It is intended that the remainder of these buildings on the easterly side of the site will be made available to other state agencies and public bodies under the programme which is being progressed by the Office of Public Works (refer to Section 4.3 for further details on the OPW programme).

4.3 Alternative Use for Remaining Existing Redbrick Buildings at St. Ita's

The diverse scale and nature of the buildings on the site, due to the drive of the original developers to have a self-sufficient complex of buildings resulting in a site that once resembled a small town, means that it could accommodate a wide diversity of uses. The current economic climate will make identifying a new use even more challenging.

The complex of buildings, while not being 'fit for purpose' in current clinical thinking, has the ability to provide offices/treatment rooms. There is scope for identifying other sections of the HSE which could transfer to the site as set out in Section 4.2 above. Where new uses are found for buildings under the mantle of the HSE, care should be taken that this does not result in the building then becoming less appealing to other potential occupiers i.e. all HSE occupancy should be kept together and not distributed randomly throughout the complex.

The varied nature of the complex lends itself to a variety of new uses including residential, cultural, commercial and educational. The layout of the buildings could prove very attractive to a third level institution for housing a satellite campus. This is an area that

Future Options for Existing Building and Woodlands

could be explored in relation to at least a section of the complex.

The HSE is currently reviewing appropriate alternative use for the existing redbrick buildings to accommodate their support and administration services. This has meant that the programme to renovate and restore the buildings has commenced. The roll-out is strategic with some buildings complete and others programmed for immediate refurbishment. The approach and programme is logical and phased so as to facilitate future flexibility in use.

Unused buildings in these initial phases will be “mothballed” and maintained in line with Carrig’s recommendations (see Appendix G).

National Asset Management Database

The HSE are also entering into national memorandum of understanding with the Office of Public Works (OPW), where available building stock can be identified to other public bodies and made available to them for their own use.

The background to this OPW programme is that the Government established a Steering Group, chaired by Claire McGrath OPW, charged with the preparation of a Property Management Delivery Plan. It involves participation from all the Government Departments, Local Authority representation and the HSE. It does not include the Semi-States or the Utilities.

The Government’s Reform Plan sets out commitments relating to Property Asset Management to drive public service-wide efficiency and ensure that optimal value for money is achieved in the management of the State’s property portfolio.

The rationalisation of State bodies, the use of online services and the reduction in public service numbers over the past few years have resulted in a focus on changing business practices combined with reduced property requirements. These developments require a multi-faceted adjustment to the management of the State’s property portfolio to consolidate operational locations consistent with service delivery and review public service accommodation policies particularly in relation to space norms, open plan accommodation and maximising energy efficiency. The Plan aims to improve the planning and management of the public service property portfolio in Ireland by improving co-ordination of strategies and activities, processes for strategic planning, projects and property management. It involves participation from all the Departments, Local Authority representation and the HSE.

The intent is to develop a national approach to the management of the State’s property portfolio and ensure a close working relationship between the various property asset holders in terms of transferring or sharing accommodation assets and information. It would involve first refusal on property for the other participants (Departments, Local Authorities, HSE etc.) prior to going to the market with a disposal for instance. It would also include notification to the others of space vacant in a block, a wing or a floor of a property that is not fully utilised and that could be made available to the others. A large part of the Steering Group’s focus is on office estate but Garda stations, schools and healthcare properties come into the mix. There are consistency and money-saving components to the exercise as well through the development of space allocation standards and energy efficiencies.

It is intended to have a map-based searchable database that each agency’s properties would be listed on with, initially, a basic dataset of 7 to 8 items which would be expanded over time. The key objective is to make the State’s management of its property estate more efficient and streamlined.

As various unused buildings within St. Ita’s become available, they will be entered into

this database with notification of all parties to the Steering Group, including Government Departments and Local Authorities, that these vacant properties are available for use.

4.4 The use and reuse of existing buildings

The best method for conserving historic buildings is to keep the buildings in active use. Identifying suitable new uses for the existing hospital complex will be vital in ensuring the long-term conservation of this complex of buildings

It is an objective of the HSE to:

- Consolidate all existing remaining services on the campus into an agreed active area within the red brick buildings [The active use area is indicated on map 9.2]
- Identify other sections of the HSE which could transfer to the site at St. Ita’s
- Consolidate all HSE uses within one area within the western side of the complex
- Enter into a national memorandum of understanding with the Office of Public Works (OPW), where available building stock at St. Ita’s can be identified to other public bodies (for example Government Departments, Local Authorities etc.) and made available to them for their own use prior to the disposal of the buildings on the open market

4.5 Maintenance of the buildings at St Ita’s

There has been an absence of general maintenance of the buildings at St. Ita’s over many years. Maintaining the existing buildings at St. Ita’s is essential in order to ensure their conservation in future years. The buildings need regular maintenance. Regular maintenance and correct and timely repair will extend the life of all buildings whilst making new uses easier to facilitate.

Maintenance is the most important factor in safeguarding buildings whether they are mothballed or in constant use. Any building that has been mothballed should be regularly inspected, with internal inspection every quarter and external inspection every six months. Should any defects manifest, externally or internally, then immediate action should be taken to identify the cause and repair the fault.

It is an objective of the HSE to:

- Carry out the immediate refurbishment of a number of existing buildings within the active use area identified on Map 9.2 of this study
- Ensure that all buildings outside of the active use area will be mothballed in accordance with an agreed protocol as developed with the conservation consultants, Carrig and as set out in Appendix G and as referenced in Map 9.2. This approach will incorporate appropriate planned maintenance regimes for the occupied and the unoccupied (mothballed) spaces
- Put in place/ commit the necessary resources to implement a phased programme of maintenance works for both necessary maintenance works and medium/long term works to ensure the conservation of the existing buildings at St. Ita’s in the future

‘Implementation Strategy’ for maintenance of the buildings

Maintenance of a building is essential in ensuring its conservation. Whether historic or not, all buildings need regular maintenance. Regular maintenance and correct repair will extend the life of any building whilst making a new use easier to facilitate. There are very real economic benefits too. Checking the health of the building on a regular and systematic basis and attending to minor defects as they arise will save money in the long run. By doing this you can avoid the need for major repair works, which are not only damaging to the architectural or heritage value of the building, but can also be expensive and disruptive.

It should be borne in mind that the Planning and Development Act 2000 places a responsibility on owners and occupiers of protected structures to prevent their property from becoming endangered. Good maintenance and repair practices will keep the building from falling into decay and are part of the day-to-day responsibility of all owners and occupiers of protected structures.

Regular inspections will detect problems. If these are dealt with at an early stage, it will minimise the need for major and expensive repair work. It is useful to have a maintenance plan for the building. A maintenance plan can be used to plan short, medium, and long-term maintenance and repair programmes and to budget accordingly.

To make the job of regular inspection safer and easier, consideration should be given to providing a permanent means of access to the areas that will need regular inspection. Some of the roofs and rainwater goods are difficult to access. Externally, duckboards fitted on lead roofs and gutters will avoid damage by foot traffic. Permanent ladders to access roofs will need to meet relevant health and safety standards and should be installed so as not to damage the part of the building they are fixed to. If any of these works are likely to be conspicuous, they may require planning permission. The provision of a different surface around the perimeter of buildings would help in allowing a safe secure working platform around the buildings while also ensuring that plant growth was kept away from the buildings and therefore easier to control.

Maintenance Works Generally Fall Into One Of Three Categories:

1. Routine or day-to-day maintenance tasks that arise as defects occur such as repairing slipped slates after a storm, replacing broken window panes and clearing blockages from rainwater goods and drainage channels.
2. Cyclical maintenance includes annual or sixmonthly works such as clearing gutters, clearing vegetation and debris from roofs, repairing damaged paintwork and cutting back climbing and overhanging plants.
3. Occasional maintenance includes repainting external joinery and ironwork and carrying out minor repair works or works identified in a longterm programme of works.

The maintenance and repair of rainwater goods, roofs and windows are of paramount importance to the conservation of the complex as these are most likely to result in the deterioration of the buildings’ fabric. In addition biological growth needs to be removed. The addressing of these issues and ensuring that the buildings are watertight will also help maintain them in a suitable condition while a new use is found for them. In the implementation of a strategy for maintenance of the buildings, these items are of particular importance as they will allow for the mothballing of the buildings until a future use is found. A methodology for addressing these issues is contained at the end of this report.

In addition to these maintenance issues, long term works to the buildings should include addressing issues with regard to the repair of brickwork and the replacement of fabric such as windows where these have been unsuitably replaced in the past. New replacements should respect the historic character of the complex.

A strategy for necessary maintenance works is included in Appendix G

4.6 Future Proposal for the Walled Garden

It is envisaged that the currently dilapidated walled garden to the south of the wooded area in St. Ita’s will be utilised as part of the services at St. Ita’s. They will be gradually renovated to be used as part of the therapeutic elements of the NFMHS, for example in the step down phase where patients may be supervised prior to discharge. In the

interim the overgrown nature of the walled garden will be considered and measures put in place to control invasive weeds.

4.7 Woodland Management Strategy

Local Objective 247 of the Fingal Development Plan is to 'encourage a Woodland Management Programme for Portrane Demense'. In this regard Mitchell and associates were appointed by the HSE to prepare a preliminary Woodland management strategy for inclusion in the feasibility study. This preliminary Woodland management strategy [see Appendix F] aims to set out some of the main aspects to be considered and included within a comprehensive woodland management programme for all of the lands at St. Ita's- a programme which will be intended as a practical and flexible tool for woodland management into the future .

The trees and woodlands are an essential and integral part of the character of St. Ita's demesne and its landscape character. Given that there has been little active management of the woodland areas in recent years within the demesne, it is imperative that a phased woodland management programme for the entire demesne be implemented. A phased woodland management programme is required for all of the lands at St. ITA to ensure the retention of trees and woodland into the future.

It is an objective of the HSE to:

1. To prepare a tree and woodland management programme for all the demesne lands
2. To put in place the necessary resources to implement a phased tree and woodland management programme for all the demesne lands in the HSE's ownership

In particular, the aim of the Woodland Management Strategy is to protect and enhance the amenity value of the existing woodland and increase the biodiversity of native flora and fauna. In this regard, the Strategy will provide detailed objectives and prescriptions, including monitoring and review proposals, to be carried out to achieve this, taking into account the preferred site for the NFMHS at St. Ita's as set out in this Feasibility Study in Section 5 below.

It is an objective of the HSE to maintain public access through the demesne lands, subject to the Woodland Management Strategy's aims and phased implementation in respect of bio-diversity, tree protection etc. As part of the ongoing development of the Woodland Management Strategy, way-finding and signage will be given due consideration and the prioritisation of specific works will be set out.

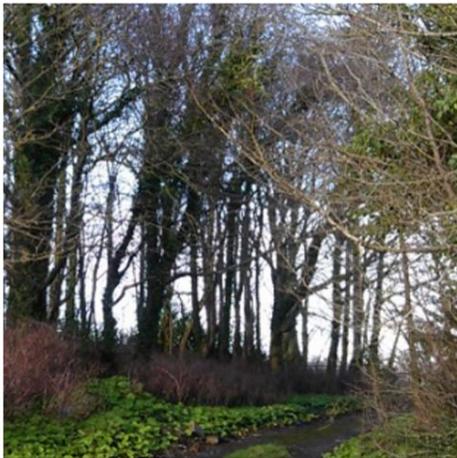
4.8 Maintaining Public Access through the site

Public access through the demesne lands shall be maintained.

It is an objective of the HSE to:

1. Maintain public access through the site. Should it be necessary to relocate an existing right of way through the site, this shall be undertaken prior to the development of the NFMHS.

05: SITE SELECTION FOR THE NFMHS FACILITY



5.1 Identification of 5 Sites & Village area etc

As mentioned at Section 1.4 above, O'Mahony Pike Architects (OMP) was appointed by the HSE in May 2010 to prepare a site suitability assessment of the St. Ita's lands in consultation with Fingal County Council for the relocation of the Central Mental Hospital, otherwise known as the National Forensic Medical Health Service (NFMHS) project. These initial studies, in consultation with FCC, recommended a preferred site for the proposed NFMHS within the St. Ita's complex (please refer to the OMP site suitability document enclosed in Appendix A). OMP then prepared a detailed site strategy for the preferred site (please refer to the OMP site strategy document enclosed in Appendix B).

Having regard to the stated development requirements for the NFMHS, the OMP site suitability document broke the St. Ita's site into 5 distinct sub-sites of approximately 20 acres/ 8 hectares for analysis (please refer to Map 11). This analysis excluded the lands to the north of the demesne within the HSE landholding due to their unavailability for development as they encompass residential zoned lands adjacent to Portrane Village to the north, as well as new accommodation facilities built by the HSE, football pitches and a children's institutional building. In the interest of clarity, the present assessment in this Feasibility Study on the areas of Ecology, Visual and Landscape and Cultural Heritage (Architecture and Archaeology) has also used the same sub-sites for analysis, based on similar reasoning to the OMP document, namely each is an area large enough to meet the development site requirements of the proposed NFMHS and they can be distinguished from each other both visually and ecologically.

The OMP site suitability document stated the following with regard to the 5 sites and the lands to the south of Portrane Village:

Site A

Site A is located to the west of the demesne nestled within a woodland setting. The redline boundary identifies an area of 20 acres.

There is an existing and derelict building on the site dating back to the 1960s, which has not been outlined with any architectural merit in the draft Statement of Character for the ACA.

The site is predominantly flat to the south and falls gradually towards the north. The site is surrounded to the south, west and north by a swath of trees, which would provide shelter, privacy and a visual amenity.

A building form of 2-3 stories could be achieved at this location due to the enclosing elements, which allow for a greater efficient in building layout, construction and servicing.

Locating the CMH at this location would also maintain the entire eastern demesne in its current function and allow for the future expansion of the use across the lands.

The site is currently approached from the main entrance to St. Ita's Hospital from the east however two secondary alternative access points maybe available for secure access, fire tender access or to form a 1way system for the facility

Site B

Site B is located to the west of the St Ita's building complex. The redline boundary identifies an area of 20 acres which contains the existing nurses residences (in a dilapidated condition and of no architectural merit), House 100 (a two storey house again of no architectural merit) and the walled garden of Portrane House to the west.

The walled garden is the most historic structure on the site and may form part

of an amenity area for patients and staff alike. The open nature of the site to the south and its proximity to the historic hospital buildings complex would constrain the scale and form of a facility.

The site is easily accessible from the main entrance to the north and again a secondary secure access maybe accommodated from the west with agreement with FCC.

The site is predominantly a flat site but falls away to the south adjacent to the walled garden area. The site is enclosed to the west by the woodland, which provides shelter and privacy to the site. The lands are orientated to the south allowing for good solar gain and an aspect over the Donabate Golf Club.

Site C

Site C is located to the south of the demesne. The lands are approximately 3-4m below the plateau of the hospital complex and share a boundary with the coastline.

There are no structures on the site and it's often used for agricultural purposes. The waste water treatment plant is located to the north western corner of the site along its entrance avenue.

The lands are flat and subject to some water logging. Drainage maybe an issue for this site due to its low-lying nature.

The site is bound to the west and south by a triple line of trees which provide the site with shelter from the south westerly winds but the eastern boundary is open to the coastline with only a 2m high wall for protection. The northern boundary is formed by a sharp incline towards the hospital site.

This site would provide a secluded and private environment for the CMH. Access is limited with an existing narrow and winding access from the Hospital complex, which is not ideal for servicing.

Main constraints across this site would be the retention to the vista to and from the hospital complex across the site towards the coastline as identified in the ACA. The heights and scale of the facility could be constrained to the benefit of the existing protected structures and their vistas.

Site D

Site D is located to the east of the demesne and are in part in use as a football ground for St. Ita's football club. The boundary identified is 20 acres and the round tower and water tower landmarks are contained within this boundary.

An alternative boundary is also identified in the attached drawings; however this area is further restrained by numerous vistas to and from the coastline to the landmark buildings.

The site is bound to the west by a double line of trees and the hospital buildings. The sites close proximity to the historic structures together with its current community and amenity use would constrain development on these lands.

The site would afford excellent views across the coast, which would be a therapeutic gain for patients. Access to the site would be incorporated into the existing road network. A secondary access for security would not be possible from this location.

Services could also connect back to existing services network.

Site E

Site E is the existing hospital buildings. These buildings have been identified as a probable site location due to their under use and prime location.

The buildings are under utilized currently, with only ground floors under use in most buildings. The structures appear to be in very good condition and with a refurbishment plan, the building could be returned to full use.

Access and vistas currently experienced by the complex could be enjoyed by patients and staff alike into the future.

Security and the delivery of defined facilities within the brief may not be able to be accommodated within the complex. The building could alternatively be used for administrative, educational or rehabilitation uses in the future.

Their extraordinary location and amenity next to the coastline should be exploited into the future.

Village Expansion

These lands encompass the lands to the north of the demesne. These lands encompass residential zoned lands, new accommodation facilities built by the HSE, football pitches and a children's institutional building.

The location of the CMH in this area is deemed inappropriate and unsuitable due to the existing uses and proposed uses of the Fingal Development Plan.

Vistas to and from this site from the Portrane and Rush would also need to be retained and considered in any future development.

5.2 Characteristics of the proposed NFMHS Facility

The HSE currently proposes that the National Forensic Mental Health Service development will ultimately comprise:

- 120 bed National Forensic Hospital (NFH)
- A 10 bed Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit (CAMH-F)
- A 10 bed Forensic Mental Health Intellectual Disability Unit (MHID-F)
- A 30 bed Intensive Care Rehabilitation Unit (ICRU) within one campus.

The NFMH facility will be surrounded by a secure perimeter of a 5.2 metre high fence or equivalent boundary structure with a 5 metre clear zone on either side, with an additional 2.4m high fence on the outer line of the external 5 metre clear zone.

The CAMH-F unit will be located independently, outside of the campus perimeter and enclosed by a 5.2m high wall with a 2.4m high fence located 5m outside the line of this wall to provide a clear zone on either side.

The ICRU will also be located independently from the other facilities and will also have a 5.2m high perimeter, which may take the form of either a fence or wall, also with a 5m clear zone on either side demarcated by a 2.4m high fence on the external side.

A 2.4m high mesh fence with hedgerow planting is currently proposed around the entire NFMHS Campus to define the outer boundary. The current outline design proposes and incorporates a secure boundary for the main campus and for the independent CAMH-F and ICRU units. This will be formed either by a 5.2m high precast concrete wall or 5.2m high high-quality dense mesh fencing.

The secure perimeter will not be broken by gates or openings, entry to the secure areas will be through the reception building, which will form part of the secure perimeter. There will also be surveillance equipment monitoring both internal and external sides with these mounted on the perimeter at set intervals. The line of the perimeter will tend to be straight wherever possible to avoid blind spots and unnecessary additional surveillance equipment.

A 5 metre wide clear zone which will have no built structure within will run either side of the secure perimeter, on the external side this will be demarcated on the outer edge with the 2.4m fence referred to above.

The design for the scheme is at an early stage – the superstructure for the buildings is likely to consist of in-situ reinforced concrete columns, beams and floor slabs with the provision of a proprietary light and insulated render system for the building walls with double-glazed powder coated steel curtain walling.

The buildings are likely to be of a one-storey construction which will also tend to reduce the potential for visual intrusion from surrounding viewpoints. Sloping roofs, with a pitch of between 5 and 30 degrees, are likely to be a feature of the design. Eave heights will not be so low as to facilitate access to the roofs from the ground, 900mm rolled eaves overhangs with anti-anchor guttering will be used to further prevent access. Roof heights in excess of xx metres would not be expected.

At this early stage in the development of design proposals for the required facility, it has been assumed for the purposes of this study that the foregoing represents a potential feasible design approach for the scheme.

The same approach has been assumed for all five sites when considering potential visual impacts.

5.3 Reassessment of the 5 sites by the Feasibility Study

With specific reference to Local Objective 245 of the CDP, to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex and to explore the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities, this Feasibility Study has reassessed the OMP site suitability document's original five sites (Refer to Map 11 and also to Appendix A) with additional input and assessment of various environmental considerations which were not included in the original OMP document, including visual impacts and landscape assessment, ecological assessment, architectural conservation assessment and archaeology assessment.

This additional layer of assessment was required to ensure a robust validation of the recommendations in the OMP document including the choice of the preferred site having regard to specific environmental considerations. In other words, this Feasibility Study was sought by FCC to ensure that the proposed NFMHS development is feasible at St. Ita's, in planning policy terms, having regard to the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site.

5.3.1 Visual/Landscape Appraisal of St. Ita's

The following Visual/Landscape Appraisal of the St. Ita's site, with regard to the 5 sites originally identified in the OMP site suitability document, is an extract from a report by Mitchell + Associates, which is enclosed in full in Appendix I.

The method of determining the visual impact of any development in a landscape is of critical importance in order that an objective view on the "carrying capacity" in visual terms can be determined, and the ability of the receiving environment to absorb or accommodate a certain level of impact without serious damage to the landscape and visual environment.

In this appraisal we have used as a basis for evaluation, that which is normally used in the preparation of the visual/landscape impacts for an Environmental Impact Statement.

The following documents were consulted in the preparation of this document.

- *Topographical Survey*
- *Aerial Photography*
- *Fingal County Development Plan*
- *Tree Survey and Condition Report*

There were five sites selected within the study area for consideration for the proposed development. These are based on the five sites identified at St. Ita's by O'Mahoney Pike Architects in their detailed option appraisal of the Portrane lands commissioned by HSE in 2010.

[With reference to the 'Characteristics of the proposed NFMHS Facility' as set out at Section 5.2 above,] no consideration of the potential for architectural and landscape design to markedly mitigate and/or enhance potential visual impact has been taken into account in this report since such considerations require the benefit of fully detailed design thinking. This aspect of good design cannot be evaluated as yet since the scheme design is currently at a very early stage. Such evaluation would generally form a key part in any Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment carried out as part of an EIS, normally accompanying the planning submission for schemes of this nature and scale.

An outline visual analysis of the receiving environment for each of the five sites is outlined below – please refer also to the Appendices: Map 1 Topography map and Map 2 Visual analysis map.

SITE A:

Site A is located to the north-west of the demesne consisting of an area of approximately 20 acres contained within a woodland setting.

The site slopes gently from a height of approximately 18 metres O.D. along the south-eastern edge of the site to a low point of approximately 4 metres O.D. along the northern boundary. The slope regime is generally within the 1 in 10 and 1 in 20 range with some slightly steeper slopes located along the northern edge of the site.

The site is enclosed to the north, west and south by dense woodland with the existing open space being primarily derelict grassland. A line of derelict buildings, a former hospital accommodation ward, is located close to the southern boundary.

There is a mix of contiguous land uses surrounding site - to the north of the site the land is primarily agricultural land, to the west it is a mixture of woodland and agricultural land. Immediately to the south and east the site is bounded by HSE lands, while further south there is more agricultural land with Donabate Golf Club beyond.

Views into the site from the north, west and south are obstructed by the existing woodland, while any views from the east are from within the HSE lands.

There are signs of fly-tipping on the site with rubbish (old furniture, broken televisions etc.) discarded particularly within the woodland areas.

Site A offers little in terms of visual amenity value with much of the land taken up with derelict grassland, derelict buildings and woodland which is at best, managed at a very low level.

SITE B:

Site B is located immediately to the south of Site A at the western edge of the HSE lands and is also located in a woodland setting, with the central and north-western parts of the site taken up with relatively mature woodland planting.

The land falls gently from a height of approximately 19 metres O.D. at the north-eastern corner towards the south-western corner of the site to a low point of approximately 6 metres O.D. The slope regime is generally quite flat with slopes between 1 in 25 and 1 in 50 with some steeper slopes in the 1 in 10 range located in the south central and south-western portions of the site.

Much of this site is in woodland with the site being more open in nature to the south where the walled garden is located. To the east is a five-storey nurse's residence building of low visual quality with a maintained grass lawn area to the front. To the west of the nurse's residence is a detached house surrounded by woodland.

To the south of the site the land is primarily agricultural land with Donabate Golf Course located further beyond south of this. To the west is a mixture of woodland and agricultural land, while to the north and east the site is bounded by the HSE lands.

Views into the site from the north and west are obstructed by the existing woodland. Views from the south are generally partially obstructed by the hedgerow planting on the agricultural lands. From the east, views in are from the HSE lands themselves.

As on Site A there are signs of fly-tipping on the site with rubbish (old furniture, broken televisions etc.) discarded primarily in the woodland.

In visual terms the primary visual amenity value is generated by the historic walled garden located to the west, with the existing woodland planting located in the centre of the site also offering a level of visual and recreational amenity value.

SITE C:

Site C is located to the south of the HSE lands at a lower elevation than the remainder of the HSE lands. The highest point on this site is at the top of the escarpment located along the northern edge of this site from where the ground slopes steeply down the escarpment to a height of approximately 11 metres O.D. From the bottom of the escarpment the land is generally flat with a low point of approximately 6 metres O.D. located along the southern boundary.

Any steep slopes on the site are confined to those located along the escarpment along the northern edge which forms an effective separation from the existing built environment of the hospital to the north. The site is a much more open landscape than Site A and Site B with most of the land in agricultural use, with a strip of woodland planting located along the western and southern boundaries. To the south and west of the site the contiguous land use is primarily agricultural with some low density housing located further to the south. There is a sewage treatment plant located immediately to the west of the site. To the east the site boundary is a 2 metre high stone wall located along the coastline edge. To the north is a mix of historic hospital buildings located on the centre of the HSE lands.

Views into the site are confined to those from the east and south-east with direct views into this site from Donabate Strand. Further west, the views into the site are obstructed by the existing woodland planting, while views from the

north are from the HSE lands themselves. There are also excellent views out towards the coast from this site.

In visual terms Site C is more open in character and more vulnerable to views in, particularly from the south-east. Any development on this portion of the site would also tend to obstruct views towards the historic protected structures located in the centre of the HSE lands.

SITE D:

Site D is an 'L' shaped wedge of land located to the east of the lands, stretching to the coastline and located on the highest elevated portion of the lands.

The northern portion of the site slopes from a high point of approximately 24 metres O.D. towards the west to a low point of approximately 21 metres O.D. along a stone wall at the edge of a recreational sports pitch. From this point the ground levels off across the sports pitch to a low point of approximately 18 metres O.D. along the southern boundary. There are small areas of steep slopes in the 1 in 10 and steeper range located on the northern portion of the site, but the majority of the site has a much gentler slope regime with slopes being in the region of 1 in 25 and less.

The southern portion of the site is taken up with recreational sports pitches containing a pavilion and a handball alley, while the northern portion consists primarily of derelict grassland with the landmark water tower and round tower being the primary visual focus in this area.

The contiguous land use to the south and north of the site is agricultural land. The eastern boundary is located along the coastline edge, while to the west are the HSE lands.

Views into this site are primarily from the north and south, with views in from the open space located on the southern edge of the Tower View Heights and Seaview Park Residential areas to the north and from Donabate Strand to the south. There are also high quality views out towards the coast from this site.

In visual and landscape terms Site D offers more in visual and landscape amenity value given the presence of the recreational pitches and round tower. It is also located at the highest point on the lands and thus more vulnerable to views in.

SITE E:

Site E is located on the centre of the HSE lands and is totally different in landscape character from the other selected sites, being in an area largely taken up by the existing hospital buildings.

The ground levels on this portion of the site are fairly consistent with a high point along the northern portion of the site of approximately 18 metres O.D. falling to a low point of approximately 16 metres O.D. along the southern edge of the site.

The site is dominated by the existing historic hospital buildings, many of which are derelict or in a poor condition, often with only the ground floor levels being used in buildings.

This site is surrounded on all sides by the HSE lands and its location offers a high level of views and views to and from the site. There is a high level of visual amenity value on this site given the quality of the important historical buildings located on the site and the views to and from the site.

Summary of Visual Analysis:

Sites A is assessed as being the least vulnerable of the five sites in terms of visual impact and impact on the existing landscape character. The existing woodland protects the site from views in from the north, west and south. Views into the site from the east are from the HSE lands themselves. The site also has a low visual amenity value given the presence of the derelict buildings, derelict grassland and evidence of fly-tipping.

Site B was assessed as the second least vulnerable site in terms of visual impact and impact on the existing landscape character. As for Site A, views in from the north, west and south were obstructed by the existing woodland, with views in from the east being from the HSE lands themselves. The presence of the historic walled garden renders Site B more vulnerable to impacts from the proposed development than at Site A.

Site C, while having a relatively low level of visual amenity value, is more open in nature to Sites A and B and is vulnerable to views in from the east and south-east. It is therefore assessed as being the third most suitable of the five sites in terms of its ability to absorb the proposed development into the landscape.

Given the presence of the recreational pitch, the historic round tower and views out towards the coast, Site D has a higher level of visual amenity value than Sites A, B and C. It is also open to views in from the east and north-east. It is therefore assessed as being the fourth most suitable in terms of visual impact and the site's potential to visually absorb the proposed development.

The elevated levels of Site E, along with the presence of the historic buildings and existing vistas to and from this site give it a high level of visual amenity value. It is, therefore, the most vulnerable of the five selected sites to visual impact from the proposed development.

In conclusion, therefore, in terms of the potential visual impact presented by the proposed development, Site A is assessed as being the most likely of the five sites to be able to acceptably absorb the development into the existing landscape. The likely proposed roof heights within this site would appear to be adequately screened by the existing woodland which largely surrounds this site. In addition the mitigating impacts of good architectural and landscape design would be expected to ensure minimal adverse visual impacts on surrounding areas.

The existing woodlands to the north, west and south in being relatively dense and mature, clearly offer significant visual screening of Site A and the proposed development within it, as outlined previously. Retention, protection and good future management of these woodlands are therefore central to maintaining this aspect of visual screening.

It is also perhaps useful to remember that there is a deal of accumulating evidence which suggests that the relatively natural green vegetated prospect that the woodlands present when viewed from within the site is significantly more conducive to improved recovery rates among patients within such facilities than is the case for say built-up or urban environments.

5.3.2 Architectural Heritage/Archaeological Appraisal of St. Ita's

The following Architectural and Archaeological Assessment of the St. Ita's site, with regard to the 5 sites originally identified in the OMP site suitability document, is an extract from two reports by Carrig Conservation Consultants, which are enclosed in full in Appendix G and H.

Site A contains a 1960s hospital building and a small single-storey industrial-type structure (date unknown). The two structures contribute little to the architectural character of the St Ita's Hospital and Portrane Demesne Architectural Conservation Area. The site is also located at a distance from the core of the historic hospital complex and this site has minimal issues from a conservation perspective.

Site B contains the walled garden, the site of the original Portrane House and the 1960s Female Nurses Home. The walled garden with its associated structures and enclosing walls are the most significant architectural components from a conservation viewpoint in this area. This, if incorporated into a proposed development, should be retained as an intact unit. The other structures within the site are of later date and contribute little to the architectural character of the St Ita's Hospital and Portrane Demesne Architectural Conservation Area. Portrane House was demolished in the mid twentieth century and replaced by a more modest house. The site of the original house is of interest from an archaeological viewpoint given the potential for foundations and a basement relating to the historic house.

Site C does not contain any structures. However views across this site from the historic hospital complex are an important part of the relationship between the complex and the sea. The location of any new development here would have a serious negative impact on the vista between St Ita's and the sea, a vista which is an integral part of the character of the site. There would also be the reverse effect with the interruption of views of the hospital from the sea

Site D contains the tower/ folly built in 1844 by Sophia Evans and the 1967 water tower. The tower/ folly is a particularly important structure and is included in the county's Record of Protected Structures in its own right (RPS Ref. 537). It is one of the few remaining structures associated with the historic Portrane Demesne and as such any development around it would have a negative impact on its character. The water tower is also an important landmark structure within the locality. This site contains the handball alley constructed within the hospital grounds. Though of little architectural significance, this structure has important cultural connotations as it represents a structure-type once prevalent throughout the countryside.

Site E contains the architectural set-piece of St Ita's Hospital, built between 1896 and 1903. The complex is included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS Ref. 536) and is an impressive collection of red brick buildings, which is unique in Ireland and remains highly significant for architectural, historical, artistic, technical and social heritage reasons. Safeguarding the integrity and significance of the complex is of paramount importance. Any proposals within Site E would have to be achieved without loss of key components of the ensemble and also ensure that the complex's significance is maintained.

From a Built Heritage perspective, Sites A and B appear to be the most suitable sites for future development within the ACA, with future development likely resulting in the demolition of structures in these areas. The listing within the Record of Protected Structures in Fingal County Council's Development Plan (RPS Ref 536) is not entirely clear on the extent of protection to be afforded each building within the complex, therefore leaving some uncertainty as to whether the more modern buildings are considered to be within the curtilage of the historic hospital complex and therefore protected.

St Ita's Hospital and Portrane Demesne Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character (Draft)

A draft Statement of Character has been prepared for Fingal County Council on the St Ita's Hospital and Portrane Demesne Architectural Conservation Area. This document evaluates the special interest of the ACA through documenting the history of the site, establishing the boundaries of the area, carrying out a brief architectural survey with particular attention given to buildings of significance and identifying and appraising the character of the area. This in turn fed into identifying policies and objectives for the area.

The Statement of Character appraised both the landscape demesne of Portrane House and the St Ita's Hospital complex looking at the components of both and how they contributed to the significance of the area. The objectives set out in the document are aimed at protecting the special character of the area through control and positive management of any changes made to the built environment. Any works which affect the character of the ACA will generally require planning permission and these works are set out in the document. Guidance is provided in the document with regard to work on various features such as exteriors, roofs, windows and doors and what works might affect the character of the ACA.

Proposals to demolish structures of architectural merit within the ACA, whether protected structures or not, will always require planning permission. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining structures that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Demolition will normally only be permitted where (i) the structure makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the ACA, or (ii) in exceptional circumstances where it can be strongly demonstrated that it is essential to the long term sustainable development, reuse or change of use of the historic building complex.

Any extension or alteration should respect the physical character of the ACA and should contribute to the visual enhancement of the building which is extended and to its context. Direction is given in the draft ACA document with regard to extensions and alterations to existing buildings. Any new build proposals should have a high design standard and should be sited in positions which are screened from view or on sites that have already been built on once it can be established that the location is not damaging to the integrity of the ACA

Identification of suitable new uses for those parts of the large-scale historic asylum complex that are now vacant will be important to ensure their long-term conservation. It is therefore a priority to promote appropriate new uses within the existing Protected Structures of St. Ita's hospital complex and demesne where such activities will secure viable sustainable re-use of the complex into the future and which will provide for the proper conservation and sustainable development of St. Ita's. To safeguard the integrity and significance of the complex it is important that adaptation seeks to retain key components of the ensemble.

The designed landscape features, parkland and woodland are to be retained as far as possible with any new development within the ACA carefully sited to minimise impact. New interventions should aim to reinstate historic parkland where possible.

The restoration of character where original materials have been removed and replaced with modern or inappropriate materials will not require planning permission but will have to be agreed with the Conservation Officer prior to works commencing on site. Any general maintenance works such as to the roofs, rainwater goods or windows will not require planning permission as long as original materials are retained.

Conclusion of Cultural Assessment

The draft ACA Statement of Character has sought to clarify exactly which structures within the former demesne are Protected Structures and also identify any others that are deemed to contribute positively to the character of the ACA. These consist of any surviving elements of the original Portrane House (such as the lodge, the round tower and walled garden), the 19th century hospital buildings, the isolation hospital, the redbrick houses, St. Anne's & St. Joseph's terraces, the terraced houses on the main avenue, the handball alley, the water tower and the outbuildings. The remaining structures within the site, which are primarily late 20th century or early 21st century buildings, are not assigned any special significance or designation and so would be subject to normal planning considerations and restrictions. Therefore, from a built heritage perspective, of the five sites identified by OMP Sites A and B contain locations that appear to be the most suitable within the complex to accommodate future development subject to the design being appropriate and sensitive to the protected elements in the vicinity

5.3.3 Ecological Assessment of St. Ita's

The following Ecological Assessment of the St. Ita's site, with regard to the 5 sites originally identified in the OMP site suitability document, is an extract from a report by Faith Wilson Ecologist, which is enclosed in full in Appendix C.

Table 5.1. Principal habitats present in each of the proposed sites for the NFMHS and evaluation of their importance for nature conservation and biodiversity – see Appendix I for site rating methodology.

Site Code	Site Description/Habits	Rating
A	This site is dominated by a field of improved agricultural grassland and is bounded by mixed broadleaved woodland to the west, south and north, and a treeline on an earthen bank with a drainage ditch to the east. Earthen banks and drains are also a feature of the woodlands along the northern part of the site and drain to an area of wet grassland to the north. A small copse of woodland adjoining an old paddock is located within this site. The southern part of the site contains a number of specimen trees of high quality with potential for roosting bats.	C – woodlands D - other habitats
B	This site contains the old walled garden with its orchard and a large block of mixed broadleaved woodland which forms the central link between the woodland to the west and the remainder of the site to the east. A large block of woodland between the walled garden and the former site of Portrane House is also present and contained some good mature specimens of oak, ash and beech as well as other species. The fruit trees in the orchard may be of heritage value. Areas of mown grassland and specimen trees surround the nurse's residence. Japanese knotweed is an issue along the deep drainage ditch/water feature at this site.	C
C	This low lying site is sheltered from the west and south by a triple treeline on an earthen bank and is dominated by a tilled field which appears poorly drained. Scrub has developed on the embankment in front of the main hospital buildings and this area will be further investigated for mammal activity. This site adjoins the coastal habitats included within the boundary of the Portrane Shore pNHA.	D – wooded shelter belts only.
D	This is an open exposed area of amenity grassland used by St. Ita's football club. The playing grounds are surrounded by a tall stone wall with a scattered treeline of pines. A number of built structures including a hand ball alley, a water tower and a round tower are located within the area.	E
E	This site includes the main hospital buildings and adjoining grounds of amenity grassland, ornamental shrubs, parking areas and planted trees at St. Ita's. The main interest in this area is for roosting bats in the buildings.	E

Table 5.1

Site Selection for the NFMHS Facility

Table 5.2. Likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts rated as high (H), medium (M) or low (L) of the project on habitats and species of conservation value within each of the proposed sites

Impact	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D	Site E
Ecological Rating	C/D	C	D	E	E
Reduction of habitat area	M – potential loss to areas of woodland habitats	M – risk to woodland habitats	L	L	L
Disturbance to key species	M – potential loss of bat roosts in trees and buildings	M – potential loss of bat roosts in trees	L	L	M – potential loss of bat roosts in buildings which have not been surveyed
Habitat or species fragmentation	M – potential loss of connectivity through the site	M – potential loss of connectivity through the site	L	L	L
Reduction in species density	M - potential loss of foraging area for local badger population and for bats	M - potential loss of foraging area for local badger population and for bats	L	L	M - potential impacts on bats
Changes in key indicators of conservation value	M - potential loss of woodlands and habitat for a variety of species	M - potential loss of woodlands and habitat for a variety of species	L	L	L
Preference from the perspective of ecology	3	3	1	1	2

Identification of Preferred Site from an Ecological Perspective

The identification of the preferred location of the site for the new NFMHS at St. Ita's has been assessed using the following factors:

- reduction of habitat area
- disturbance to key species
- habitat or species fragmentation
- reduction in species density
- changes in key indicators of conservation value

These are summarised below in Table 4.1 and an overall preference rating is given for each of the sites from the perspective of ecology (note that some site options are rated equally).

Conclusion of Ecological Assessment

Although it is recognised that there are ecological issues with all the proposed sites, Site A is emerging as the preferred option due to findings of the visual assessment, architectural heritage assessment and clinical assessment of the sites.

The potential impacts on biodiversity at this site and the 'Nature Development Area' can be mitigated for with careful and considerate design and planning which ensures that impacts on trees and woodlands in this area are avoided and connectivity between this site and the remainder of the demesne is preserved and enhanced.

A considered and well implemented woodland management plan for the entire demesne which not only addresses the heath, stability and stand quality of the woodlands but also the biodiversity value in terms of ground flora, control and eradication of invasive species would significantly ameliorate any impacts of the proposed NFMHS.

It is recommended that this is approached using close to nature woodland

management techniques whereby the exotic trees and conifer woodlands are over time slowly replaced with native species using natural regeneration and other techniques to ensure that woodland continues to provide cover and habitat for a variety of key faunal species. This coupled with the possibility of the creation of a new area of native woodland established on lands owned by Fingal County Council to the west of the site could restore connectivity of the Portrane woodlands with those closer to Donabate village. Funding for such woodland establishment is currently available from the Forest Service and could be availed of.

5.4 Recommended site for the NFMHS

With reference to Local Objective 245 of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017, the objective required, among other things, that the Feasibility Study "will explore the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities taking cognizance of the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site".

The required characteristics of the proposed low-rise, secure NFMHS facility have been set out by the HSE (refer to Section 5.2 above).

Expert Clinical input from the HSE has confirmed that the existing buildings at St. Ita's, in particular the protected structures, are not fit for purpose for use as a NFMHS facility (refer to Section 4.1 above), albeit some of these buildings may have a future role to house ancillary services related to the NFMHS, as set out above.

The Visual Appraisal for this Feasibility Study has concluded that "Site A is assessed as being the most likely of the five sites to be able to acceptably absorb the development into the existing landscape. The likely proposed roof heights within this site would appear to be adequately screened by the existing woodland which largely surrounds this site. In addition the mitigating impacts of good architectural and landscape design would be expected to ensure minimal adverse visual impacts on surrounding areas."

Site B was identified in the Visual Appraisal as "the second least vulnerable site in terms of visual impact and impact on the existing landscape character. As for Site A,

views in from the north, west and south were obstructed by the existing woodland, with views in from the east being from the HSE lands themselves. The presence of the historic walled garden renders Site B more vulnerable to impacts from the proposed development than at Site A."

The Visual Appraisal noted that the "existing woodlands to the north, west and south in being relatively dense and mature, clearly offer significant visual screening of Site A and the proposed development within it, as outlined previously. Retention, protection and good future management of these woodlands are therefore central to maintaining this aspect of visual screening."

Architectural/Built Heritage Assessment for this Feasibility Study has concluded that "From a Built Heritage perspective, Sites A and B appear to be the most suitable sites for future development within the ACA, with future development likely resulting in the demolition of modern structures in these areas." This Assessment also notes that FCC's 'St Ita's Hospital and Portrane Demesne Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character (Draft)' states that "All new build proposals should have a high design standard, avoid impacting on any views which are essential to the integrity of the complex and should be sited in positions where they can be screened from view or on sites which are already built on, once it can be established that the location is not damaging to the integrity of the ACA. The document also proposes that the new Central Medical Hospital be located within where it can be concealed within woodland and its visual impact contained."

The Ecological Assessment for this Feasibility Study has concluded that "Although it is recognised that there are ecological issues with all the proposed sites, Site A is emerging as the preferred option due to findings of the visual assessment, architectural heritage assessment and clinical assessment of the sites. The potential impacts on biodiversity at this site can be mitigated for with careful and considerate design and planning which ensures that impacts on trees and woodlands in this area are avoided and connectivity between this site and the remainder of the demesne is preserved and enhanced."

The Ecological Assessment for this Feasibility Study has concluded that "Although it is recognised that there are ecological issues with all the proposed sites, Site A is emerging as the preferred option due to findings of the visual assessment, architectural heritage assessment and clinical assessment of the sites. The potential impacts on biodiversity at this site and the 'Nature Development Area' can be mitigated for with careful and considerate design and planning which ensures that impacts on trees and woodlands in this area are avoided and connectivity between this site and the remainder of the demesne is preserved and enhanced."

Having regard to the above, it is apparent that Site A, or Site A with an element of Site B (excluding the walled garden), which contains obsolete hospital buildings in an area screened by heavy woodland, is the most suitable site for the development of the NFMHS facility at St. Ita's. In other words, the proposed development of the NFMHS at St. Ita's is feasible having regard to the "the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site". This is broadly in line with the findings of the OMP Options Appraisal Report from 2010 which was produced following consultation with FCC, notwithstanding that this 2010 report did not have the benefit of the additional survey work and multi-disciplinary analysis and assessment as carried out for this Feasibility Study.

5.5 Maintaining Public Accessibility through the site

Public access through the demesne lands shall be maintained.

It is an objective of the HSE to:

1. Maintain public access through the site. Should it be necessary to relocate an existing right of way through the site, this shall be undertaken prior to the development of the NFMHS.

With reference to Local Objective 245 of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017, the objective also required, among other things, that the Feasibility Study should “maintain and provide for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site”. In this regard, an assessment and proposal to ensure this objective is met has been carried out as part of this Feasibility Study by Punch Consulting Engineers and is enclosed in Appendix J. This report also includes a pedestrian survey of persons traversing the St. Ita’s campus for recreational purposes.

The Punch report has been carried out with reference to the assumed location of the proposed NFMHS on Site A and partially on Site B, being the emerging preferred site in this Feasibility Study, with reference to Sections 5.3 and 5.4 above. In this regard, the Punch Report states the following:

Regarding the existing pedestrian route that passes along the ridge through the centre of the site which constitutes a pedestrian right of way across the site from west to east, its is a requirement of the HSE that this route is relocated from its current position for reasons of security for the NFMHS project.

Therefore, an alternative route would be feasible where it will follow the existing route from the western entrance to the site up to the point where it splits between the route along the ridge through the site and the route to the treatment plant.

The new route would then follow the route to the treatment plant, skirting the woodland area on its southern boundary, pass by the northern fringe of the WWTP [Fingal County Council Waste Water Treatment Plant], and either connect with the pedestrian route south east to the coast, or turn into the Portrane Demesne via a track to the north.

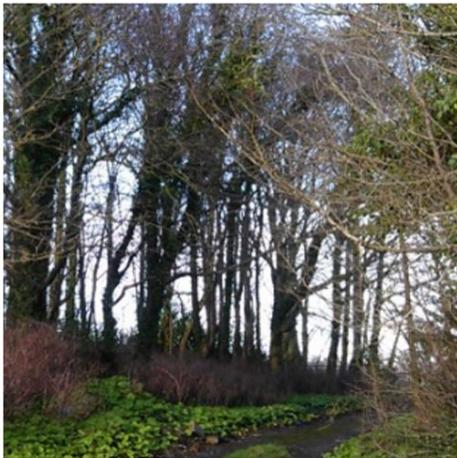
The new route could have pedestrian way finding signage along its route to encourage its use by pedestrians. The track should be to an acceptable standard to encourage its use.

The extinguishment of the existing pedestrian right of way and the creation of a new diverted route would maintain the connectivity for pedestrians traversing the site. Pedestrians can access the route via the three existing access points – Portrane Avenue, the old Demesne entrance to the west of the site, and the pedestrian track to Portrane Beach in the east – thereby maintaining the amenity value to the local community.

The new route should be in place before the existing route is extinguished. These works would form part of the NFMHS project and would be funded and built under this project.

The new pedestrian route is located partially on lands owned by Fingal County Council or HSE. The footpath can be delivered through cooperation between Fingal County Council and the HSE.

06: CONCLUSION



Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

A feasibility study of St Ita's hospital complex and demesne at Portrane has been completed jointly by Fingal County Council and the HSE to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex and to consider the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities having regard to the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site.

The feasibility study has been undertaken in accordance with Local Objective 245 of the CDP which states:

'Undertake a feasibility study of St Ita's, in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex. The study will explore the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities taking cognisance of the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site. The study will also prioritise the re-use of the existing buildings, including protected structures on site and also maintain and provide for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site'

The following are objectives of the HSE:

a) The use and reuse of existing buildings

The best method for conserving historic buildings is to keep the buildings in active use. Identifying suitable new uses for the existing hospital complex will be vital in ensuring the long-term conservation of this complex of buildings

It is an objective of the HSE to:

- Consolidate all existing remaining services on the campus into an agreed active use area within the red brick buildings as indicated on map 9.2
- Identify other sections of the HSE which could transfer to the site at St. Ita's
- Consolidate all HSE uses within one area within the western side of the complex
- Enter into a national memorandum of understanding with the Office of Public Works (OPW), where available building stock at St. Ita's can be identified to other public bodies (for example Government Departments, Local Authorities etc.) and made available to them for their own use prior to the disposal of the buildings on the open market

b) Maintenance of the buildings at St. Ita's

There has been an absence of general maintenance of the buildings at St. Ita's over many years. Maintaining the existing buildings at St. Ita's is essential in order to ensure their conservation in future years. The buildings need regular maintenance. Regular maintenance and correct and timely repair will extend the life of all buildings whilst making new uses easier to facilitate.

Maintenance is the most important factor in safeguarding buildings whether in mothball or constant use. All buildings in mothball should have a regular routine of inspection every quarter internally and every six months externally. Should any defects manifest on the interior then immediate action should be taken to identify the cause and repair the fault.

It is an objective of the HSE to:

- Carry out the immediate refurbishment of a number of existing buildings within the

active use area as per Map 9.2.

- Ensure that all buildings outside of the active use area in Map 9.2 will be mothballed in accordance with an agreed protocol as developed with the conservation consultants, Carrig and as set out in Appendix G. This approach will incorporate appropriate planned maintenance regimes for the occupied and the unoccupied (mothballed) spaces.

- Put in place/ commit the necessary resources to implement a phased programme of maintenance works for both necessary maintenance works and medium/long term works to ensure the conservation of the existing buildings at St. Ita's in the future.

c) Woodland Management Strategy

The trees and woodlands are an essential and integral part of the character of St. Ita's demesne and its landscape character. Given that there has been little active management of the woodland areas in recent years within the demesne, it is imperative that a phased woodland management programme for the entire demesne be implemented. A phased woodland management programme is required for all of the lands at St. Ita to ensure the retention of trees and woodland into the future.

It is an objective of the HSE to:

1. To prepare a tree and woodland management programme for all the demesne lands
2. To put in place the necessary resources to implement a phased tree and woodland management programme for all the demesne lands

d) Maintaining public access through the site

Public access through the demesne lands shall be maintained.

It is an objective of the HSE to:

1. It is an objective of the HSE to maintain public access through the site. Should it be necessary to relocate an existing right of way through the site, this shall be undertaken prior to the development of the NFMHS.

e) New National Forensic Mental Health Service Facilities

It is an objective of the HSE to:

1. To provide for the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital) within the St. Ita's Hospital complex and demesne.

It is the objective of Fingal County Council to actively support the implementation of the objectives laid down in this feasibility study including specifically those relating to:

- The development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital) within the St. Ita's Hospital complex and demesne.
- The reuse of the Protected Structures for appropriate uses together with the ongoing future maintenance and management of these structures ;
- The ongoing maintenance and management of the Demense landscape including the trees and woodland which are an intrinsic part of this unique landscape.

- The maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

The following Variation to the Fingal development Plan 2011-2017 is proposed in order to support the protection, conservation and use of St. Ita's into the future.

6.2 reason for the draft variation

The Reason for the draft variation, as required by Section 13 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, is to facilitate the long term planning and sustainable development of the St Ita's Hospital complex and demesne, owned by the Health Service Executive (HSE), into the future by supporting the implementation of the objectives laid down in the completed Feasibility Study of St Ita's and with particular regard to the conservation of the historic buildings within the designated Architectural Conservation Area at St Ita's.

Background to the reason for the Draft Variation

Local Objective 245 in the Fingal County Development Plan 2011 to 2017 is to:

'Undertake a feasibility study of St Ita's, in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex. The study will explore the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities taking cognisance of the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site. The study will also prioritise the re-use of the existing buildings, including protected structures on site and also maintain and provide for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site'

This feasibility study of St Ita's, has been completed jointly by Fingal County Council and the HSE to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex and to consider the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities having regard to the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site.

The study also prioritises:

- The re-use of existing hospital buildings on the site, many of which are Protected Structures together with their maintenance and management into the future;
- The ongoing maintenance and management of the Demense landscape including the trees and woodland which are an intrinsic part of this unique landscape; and
- The maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

The Feasibility Study identifies the St Ita's Hospital complex and demesne as a suitable location for the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital);

It is the objective of Fingal County Council to actively support the implementation of the objectives laid down in this feasibility study including specifically those relating to:

- *The development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital) within St. Ita's;*
- *The reuse of the Protected Structures for appropriate uses together with the ongoing future maintenance and management of these structures;*
- *The ongoing maintenance and management of the Demense landscape including the trees and woodland which are an intrinsic part of this unique landscape;*
- *The maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.*

6.3 Proposed changes to County Development Plan

The following text sets out the proposed changes to the Fingal CDP 2011-2017 with reference to the assessments carried out above. The proposed variation contains seven proposed changes to the CDP. For clarity, the existing wording in the CDP is presented in red text with the proposed variation wording text in black.

Proposed Change 1 - Page 47 of the Written Statement:

ST. ITA'S HOSPITAL

The existing institutional complex is very extensive and accommodates a large number of protected structures and attractive buildings in an extensive demesne type landscape. Building elements within the complex are landmark structures, which are visible over long distances from the coastline particularly to the south. There are exceptional coastal views from this slightly elevated site. It is an exceptional site which, in the event of it no longer being required by the Health Service Executive, could be reused to provide for future housing (conversion of existing structures), amenity and other ancillary needs within the County. There is a need to examine options regarding the optimal re-use and refurbishment of the complex of buildings within the demesne setting, to ensure the future sustainable use of this important and unique resource.

ST. ITA'S HOSPITAL

The existing institutional complex is very extensive and accommodates a large number of protected structures and attractive buildings in an extensive demesne type landscape. Building elements within the complex are landmark structures, which are visible over long distances from the coastline particularly to the south. There are exceptional coastal views from this slightly elevated site.

The need to examine options regarding the optimal re-use and refurbishment of the complex of Protected Structures within the demesne setting was identified by the Council, to ensure the future sustainable use of this important and unique resource.

A feasibility study of St Ita's, has been completed jointly by Fingal County Council and the HSE to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex and to consider the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities having regard to the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site.

The Feasibility Study identifies the St Ita's Hospital complex and demesne as a suitable location for the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital). It also prioritizes the re-use of the existing hospital buildings [many of which are Protected Structures] together with their maintenance and management into the future; the ongoing maintenance and management of existing trees and woodland and the maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

It is the objective of Fingal County Council to actively support the implementation of the objectives laid down in this feasibility study including specifically those relating to:

- The development of a new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital) within St. Ita's.
- The reuse of the Protected Structures for appropriate uses together with the ongoing future maintenance and management of these structures ;
- The ongoing maintenance and management of the Demense landscape including the trees and woodland which are an intrinsic part of this unique landscape.
- The maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility

through the site.

Proposed Change 2 – Local Objective (LO) 245:

Undertake a feasibility study of St Ita's, in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex. The study will explore the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities taking cognisance of the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site. The study will also prioritise the re-use of the existing buildings, including protected structures on site and also maintain and provide for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

Revised LO 245:

A feasibility study of St Ita's, has been completed jointly by Fingal County Council and the HSE to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex and to consider the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities having regard to the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site.

It is the objective of Fingal County Council to actively support the implementation of the objectives laid down in this feasibility study including specifically those relating to:

- The development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital) within the St. Ita's Hospital complex and demesne.
- The reuse of the Protected Structures for appropriate uses together with the ongoing future maintenance and management of these structures ;
- The ongoing maintenance and management of the Demense landscape including the trees and woodland which are an intrinsic part of this unique landscape.
- The maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

Proposed Change 3 - New Additional LO 245 [A] (insert on CDP Map no. 7)

'To provide specifically for, and support the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital), within the St Ita's Hospital complex and demesne. The joint Fingal County Council and HSE Feasibility Study for St. Ita's campus has identified St. Ita's Portrane as a suitable location for the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities and in principle the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the zoning objective for the area.'

Proposed Change 4 - Record of Protected Structures: insert new objective AH 14 A [page 214 CDP] as follows:

'Promote the use or reuse of all the Protected Structures at St. Ita's Hospital complex and demesne in Portrane as a priority for Fingal County Council. Notwithstanding the use class 'HA' Zoning matrix, appropriate uses within the Protected Structures and within the ancillary land areas within the complex including uses which also relate to and are consistent with the historic use of the overall historic complex (established prior to the foundation of the Irish State) will be actively promoted and allowed to proceed subject to appropriate consent where such activities will secure viable sustainable re use of the complex into the future and which will provide for the proper conservation and sustainable development of St. Ita's .

Proposed Change 5 - Designed Landscapes – Historic Gardens, Demenses

& Estates: insert new objective AH 24 [A] [page 218 CDP] as follows:

A feasibility study of St Ita's, has been completed jointly by Fingal County Council and the HSE to determine the optimal future sustainable use of this complex and to consider the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital), having regard to the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site. It is an objective of Fingal County Council to secure the implementation of the objectives laid down in this feasibility study that relate to: the re-use of the existing Protected Structures and historic building stock for appropriate uses together with the ongoing maintenance and management of these structures; the ongoing maintenance and management of existing trees and woodland and the maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

Proposed Change 6 - Page 272 CDP

HEALTH CENTRES/SERVICES

A number of public, voluntary and private agencies are responsible for the provision of healthcare facilities within the County, with the Health Services Executive (HSE) being the primary agency responsible for delivering health and personal social services. While the residents of the County have access to the various hospitals located in the surrounding counties, there are currently three public hospitals within the Fingal area namely, Connolly Hospital in Blanchardstown, and the more specialised facilities of St. Mary's Hospital in Baldoyle and St. Ita's in Portrane.

The Primary Care Strategy published by the Department of Health and Children in 2001, promotes the development of a team-based approach to service provision, which will help to provide a fully integrated primary care service. Consequently, practices wishing to develop their premises are encouraged to provide a 'one stop' primary health and community care service, integrated under one roof. There are obvious benefits in locating such medical/health care facilities in a location close by or adjacent to other community facilities, shops and public transport, such as town, district or neighbourhood centres.

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This Development Plan provides for the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities, (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital) within the St. Ita's Hospital complex and demesne in Portrane, taking cognisance of the cultural, visual and ecological sensitivities of the site. The appropriate conservation and viable future re-use of the Protected Structures within the boundary of St. Ita's for appropriate uses is also a priority of Fingal County Council together with the maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

The Primary Care Strategy published by the Department of Health and Children in 2001, promotes the development of a team-based approach to service provision, which will help to provide a fully integrated primary care service. Consequently, practices wishing to develop their premises are encouraged to provide a 'one stop'

primary health and community care service, integrated under one roof. There are obvious benefits in locating such medical/health care facilities in a location close by or adjacent to other community facilities, shops and public transport, such as town, district or neighbourhood centres.

Proposed Change 7 - Proposed Change to 'HA' Zoning Objective (pages 340-341): Additional narrative at bottom of Use Classes table -

Nothing in this County Development Plan Zoning Matrix (use classes related to HA Zoning objectives) shall disallow proposals for:

(i) The building of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital) within the St. Ita's hospital complex and demesne in Portrane on 'HA' zoned lands. The Feasibility Study identifies the St Ita's Hospital complex and demesne as a suitable location for the development of new modern psychiatric health care and ancillary facilities (which can include the provision of a National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital);

(ii) Future renewal, improvement, redevelopment of the established historic building stock within St. Ita's Hospital complex and demesne at Portrane;

(iii) Appropriate uses including uses which also relate to and are consistent with the historic use of the complex within the demesne established prior to the foundation of the Irish State;

Please refer to LO 245[A] on CDP map no. 7 and Objective AH 14A CDP Written Statement.

