

# The University of Dublin

## Trinity College

### **Draft minutes of the Site and Facilities Committee Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008 in the Board Room, House 1.**

*Present* Dr. J.K. McGinley in the Chair, Bursar (Prof. M. O'Mahony), Dr. David Abrahamson\*, Acting Treasurer (Mr. Ian Mathews), President of the Students' Union (Mr. Cathal Reilly), Chief Operating Officer (Mr. Chris Lyons), Vice-Provost & Chief Academic Officer (Prof. Patrick Prendergast)\*\* , Director of Buildings (Mr. Paul Mangan).

*Apologies* Prof. Roger Stalley, Mr. Michael Slevin, Deputy Director of Buildings (Mr. Pat McDonnell).

*In Attendance* Ms. S. Mac Mahon (Executive Officer, Director of Buildings Office).  
Mr. G. Whyte, Dean of Students.  
Ms. Patricia Gray\*\*\*, Administrative Officer, Director of Buildings Office.

*\*Present for minutes SF/08-09/01 – SF/08-09/ 06 and SF/08-09/ 09, SF/08-09/11, SF/08-09/12*

*\*\*Present for minutes SF/08-09/01- SF/08-09/ 08*

*\*\*\*Present for minutes SF/08-09/10*

The Chair welcomed the Vice-Provost CAO, the Chief Operating Officer and the new President of the Students Union to their first meeting of the Site and Facilities Committee.

#### **1. Minutes**

**SF/08-09/01** –The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

#### **2. Matters Arising**

Matters arising from the minutes were discussed and have been recorded below, (see Minutes **SF/08-09/02** to **SF/08-09/04**).

##### **SF/08-09/ 02 – Accessibility Audit**

The Director of Buildings advised the Committee that College-wide Accessibility Audit is in progress.

##### **SF/08-09/ 03 – Hazardous Materials Facility**

The Director of Buildings informed the Committee that the preparatory work required in order to bring the Hazardous Materials Facility into use is underway and it is hoped that use of the facility will commence on a phased basis from the start of the new academic year.

### **SF/08-09/ 04 – Long Room Hub Project**

The Director of Buildings reported that the planning application for the Long Room Hub Project was submitted in early August and it is hoped that a decision will be forthcoming in mid October. He said that, should the planners request additional information the 2 month period for decision would re-start on the date of the submission of additional information. He advised that, should any appeals be lodged against the decision, the appeal process could take 6 – 8 months. In the meantime the architects have arranged meetings with An Taisce and the Georgian Society in order to brief them about the project. The architects have advised that, if planning permission is obtained by mid October, they would hope to commence building in March 2009 and complete by September 2009. However, the Director advised that the College would have to consider if this programme was appropriate having regard to the College calendar and the need to minimise disruption to College activities.

### **3. Section A**

#### **SF/08-09/ 05 – Science Gallery Proposal**

A proposal from the Director of the Science Gallery dated 13 June 2008 to refurbish the Railway Arches at the north eastern corner of College was considered by the Committee. The proposal entailed developing Arches 1, 2, 3 and 4, with Arch 5 being cleared to provide a connection through from the Science Gallery to a proposed landscaped area. The Committee noted that there was a potential donation of €1m towards the cost of the proposed scheme.

The Committee noted that the Arches had been allocated to the Buildings Office, Grounds and Gardens and as a Picture Store in January 2007 (minute SF/06-07/ 39 refers). It was also noted that the area is designated as access for delivery vehicles in order to reduce large vehicle traffic on campus. The Director of Buildings said that, although the proposal is desirable in the long term, the need for storage space is urgent in the short term arising from the decision to dispose of Cumberland St Stores.

The Committee noted the potential merit of the proposal and invited the Director of Buildings to consider what other options might be available for storage space. In addition the Committee asked that the proposal be considered by the current Steering Group of the Science Gallery.

The Director of Buildings informed the Committee that the recently appointed College Conservator has indicated that it would be preferable to design and build a dedicated, purpose-built Picture Store that will account for humidity requirements and other important art storage issues and that the previous proposal to use a railway arch may no longer be relevant.

#### **SF/08-09/ 06 – SFC Self Assessment Evaluation Report**

In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Site and Facilities Committee agreed on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 to undertake an evaluation of its performance. This evaluation was carried out by way of a questionnaire which was circulated to all Committee members at the SFC meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The Director of Buildings expressed his gratitude to the Acting Secretary, Ms Anne Fitzgerald for undertaking to compile a report following receipt of 7 questionnaires from a possible 11. He advised that he did not submit a response.

A number of issues were discussed and the Director of Buildings highlighted certain areas as follows where it appeared members had indicated concern as evidenced by satisfaction ratings of 3 or less (out of 5):

- 1) the lack of oversight of sub-committees; 2) a general lack of knowledge College-wide of the remit of the Committee; 3) a desire for ongoing education of the Committee; 4) insufficient consideration of infrastructural needs.

With regard to the breadth of knowledge and experience of the members of the Committee the Director of Buildings suggested that this requirement should, ideally, be met through the appointment of the Board representatives.

The Director advised the Committee that the Site Development Plan is updated every 5 years and he acknowledged that there may be insufficient reference back to the Plan by the Committee in the intervening periods. He advised that the plan is currently under review and that he intends to bring proposal for the 2008 DCP to the Committee during Michaelmas term. The Committee agreed to his suggestion that a yearly meeting, separate from the normal schedule of SFC meetings, should be set up to discuss the Site Development Plan, and related matters. This will allow also for general briefing of new members.

The Committee agreed to a suggestion from the Chair that these matters might be reviewed again at the November meeting when the Acting Secretary might be invited to attend to elaborate on her findings.

The Chief Operating Officer expressed concern that the remit of the Committee is not properly focussed. He said he will submit a memorandum to the November meeting of SFC outlining his proposals for altering the structures relating to the business of this Committee and his proposals for relating the College's estates strategy to its strategic plan.

The Chief Academic Officer confirmed that there is a determination to continue with the current restructuring process and the members noted that Principal Committee Structures are currently under review by a dedicated working group.

#### **SF/08-09/07 – Biosciences Development**

A memorandum from the Director of Buildings dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008 setting out the current position was circulated to the Committee. The Committee noted that the successful tenderer was chosen as the most economically advantageous because the tender was the lowest and the offer on the commercial element presented was vastly superior to the other tenderers. He reminded the Committee that planning permission for the scheme (reduced somewhat in scale from the original scheme) was received in March 2008. A revised contract sum for the construction of the academic facilities had been negotiated by the College's Quantity Surveyors with the contractor to reflect changes that had occurred since the original tender. The Committee noted that under Vacation Procedures the Provost approved a proposal to commence the project.

The Committee noted that Messrs. Walls will design, fund and construct the retail and commercial space in the development. Ownership of the property will at all times remain with TCD. Walls will take out a loan to fund the construction which TCD will underwrite and Walls will give a counter indemnity to TCD. Repayments of the loan will be met out of rental income for a period of 14.5 years\* after which all the rental income will go to TCD.

The Director of Buildings advised the Committee that Messrs Knight Frank, the College's Commercial Property Consultants, have confirmed that the rental projections are reasonable. And the Committee noted that the College is being advised by Matheson Ormsby Prentice Solicitors in relation to the legal aspects of this transaction and by Price Waterhouse Cooper in relation to the financial and taxation issues.

\*There is provision for adjustment of this term if interest rates change.

The Director of Buildings advised that following the omission by An Bord Pleanala of 80 parking places, some 3000 sq.m of space is available at basement level -3. He has invited the Librarian to advise by the end of September, if the Library wishes to use the space for library storage. The additional cost is estimated to be €5.5m. In the event that the Library decides against taking the

space, he recommended that it be retained to provide much needed warehouse/storage space on College owned property at an economic cost.

The Acting Treasurer re-affirmed the Director of Buildings' statement that the European Investment Bank (EIB) has agreed in principle to lend the required amount of €75m and this is due to be formally approved by the Board of the EIB at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008. He said that it is envisaged that the project will be funded through PRTL15 and philanthropy (one philanthropic donation has already been received). He confirmed that revenue sources to meet the long term costs of the proposed loan, if required, had been identified.

He said that the HEA has yet to respond formally to his request for confirmation as to the effect on the potential funding under PRTL1 5 but that he believes that any risk would apply to works undertaken in advance of approval of the project by the HEA. In that case, the actual exposure is limited and does not arise at present– as the HEA funding is likely to be less than the full cost of the academic facilities.

The Committee approved the action taken to date noting the intention to bring forward documentation for the October Site and Facilities and Board meetings for the approval of the award of the full contract.

#### **4. Section B**

##### **SF/08-09/ 08 – College Electricity Costs 2009**

A memorandum dated 3 September 2008 from the Engineering Services Manager, Mr Kieron McGovern, was circulated to the Committee for information. The Committee approved his recommendation that the College extend its contract to purchase electricity from Airtricity for 2009, noting that the increase negotiated on behalf of the College is significantly less than that approved generally for customers of the ESB, and the general increase in fuel costs. The Committee commended the fact that the College will continue to source the majority of its electricity from an environmentally friendly source, noting that the Board has given consideration to the carbon footprint of the College.

##### **SF/08-09/09 – Cobble Reduction Programme**

A memorandum from the Deputy Director of Buildings dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008 was circulated to the Committee. It was noted that Dublin City Council has issued a notification of Decision to Grant Permission dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August, for the access paths in Front Square, subject to 8 conditions, the most significant of which is the removal of the diagonal lines in Front Square from the scheme. The Director of Buildings informed the Committee that it is the advice of the architects, and his recommendation, that the College accepts this permission along with the conditions.

Dr Abrahamson advised that the idea of universal access should allow the incorporation of access to routes where those with and without disabilities would tread equally and this permission does not conform to this principle. The Director of Buildings acknowledged this point and advised that the appropriate course of action would be to secure the permission proposed under the current decision to grant and to apply separately for the diagonal routes at a later date, which decision could be appealed, if necessary. The Committee approved this approach.

##### **SF/08-09/ 10 – Insurance Renewal 2008 – 2009**

The Director of Buildings introduced the Administrative Officer, Ms Patricia Gray, who was present to answer any questions that may arise and referred to his memorandum dated 8 September, 2008, that had been circulated. The Committee noted the insurance premium for the coming year is €995,000 which is an increase of 3.7% from September 2007, at which time there was an overall reduction in premium costs of 40%. The Committee noted that the some of the saving in 2007 was

used to increase the risk reduction budget and the recommendation from the Director of Buildings that this approach be continued in 2008.

This issue of un-insured risks was highlighted and in particular the fact that the College insurance does not cover malpractice in private hospitals. It was noted that research is being undertaken as to how the gap between un-insured and insured can be bridged, perhaps with additional insurance cover.

In relation to the purchasing of cyber liability along with more extensive cover for legal expenses in employment related claims, it was agreed that the Director of Buildings will meet with the Director of ISS Services, Staff Secretary, the College Secretary and the Chief Operating Officer as appropriate to review College requirements.

Ms Gray, in answer to a query, stated that an increase in the deductible amount in claims does not significantly change the premium costs to the College.

The Insurance Renewal Proposal was approved by the Committee.

**5. Section C**

**SF/08-09/ 11 – College Green Building Management Group**

The Committee noted the minutes of the College Green Building Management Group meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

**SF/08-09/ 12 – Grounds & Gardens Advisory Committee**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Grounds & Gardens Advisory Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The committee considered that the advice regarding temporary banners was excessively restrictive. The Director of Buildings undertook to meet with the Senior Dean and the President of the Students Union to discuss the policy for the hanging of temporary banners on the campus.

**6. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

**SF/07-08/13 – Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Site and Facilities Committee is scheduled for 11am on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

Signed .....

Dated .....