Planning Department,

Dublin City Council

Civic Offices

Wood Quay

Dublin 8

24th August 2020

**Re: Development proposal at 38-42 Hill Street and 36A Great George's Street, Dublin 1**

**Ref: 3061/20**

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Irish Georgian Society wishes to object to this planning application.

The proposed development site at No. 38 Hill Street backs onto and lies within the curtilage of no. 38 North Great George’s Street, a protected structure. North Great George’s Street was developed from the 1769 onwards by the Mount Eccles Estate with some of its finest houses constructed by the noted stuccodore Michael Stapleton and by Charles Thorpe, stuccodore, master builder and Lord Mayor of Dublin from 1800-01. In recent decades many houses on the street have been restored and have set a standard for the revitalisation of Georgian buildings in Dublin and have also generated a great deal of civic pride among residents.

No. 38 North Great George’s Street is particularly accomplished and was built in 1785 by Charles Thorpe who lived in the building and went on to become Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1800. It was later occupied by Professor John Pentland Mahaffy, founder of the Georgian Society (1908 to 1913) and tutor of Oscar Wilde, and it is for him that the house is today named. Between the 1920s and 1960s the building deteriorated into tenement use but after its purchase by Desiree Shortt in 1975, it gradually underwent a long series of repairs and restorations which the Irish Georgian Society lent support to through its conservation grants programme.

In considering No. 38, Christine Casey (2005, p. 210) notes:

No. 38 has the grandest staircase and railings on the street complete with newel posts and modern lamp standards. The doorcase has a big concave archivolt decorated with paterae, swags and confronted sphinxes. This house also has very fine *piano nobile* ceilings, that in the saloon are embellished by painted ovals and roundels set into its borders.

*Buildings of Ireland, Dublin* (Yale)

In its appraisal of No. 38, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage states:

The interior retains extensive neo-Classical detailing, including fine ceilings. With its striking Adamasque doorcase, and original fenestration, the house adds considerably to the variety and charm and architectural heritage merit of this fine, well-preserved street.

*www.buildingsofireland.ie*

This planning application proposes to demolish an existing two storey structure with a floor area of c.186sqm that lies in the rear garden of No. 38, and to replace it with a six-storey structure that would provide an additional c.885sqm of floor space. This represents close to a six-fold increase in the size of the current structure.

The Irish Georgian Society is strongly of the view that the scale and height of this proposed development would have a very significant detrimental impact on the character and setting of No. 38. It would also further undermine the integrity of the adjoining houses along the eastern side of North Great George’s Street which already face the prospect of having a high-density six storey structure built in their back gardens.

In considering this planning application, the Irish Georgian Society notes that while the original mews building for No. 38 has been replaced, its replacement on Hill Street remain subservient, in terms of building height, to the principal house on North Great George’s Street. This subservience, in terms of bulk, height and massing, is a key characteristic of the Georgian conservation area. By contrast the proposed building is taller than the terrace along North Great George’s Street, would dominate the character of the area, negatively impact on the significance of the protected structures, and would be inappropriate in the context of the surviving Georgian heritage in close proximity.

In this regard, the Society considers the proposed development to be contrary to the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-22. Policy CHC2 makes clear that it is the policy of Dublin City Council to ensure that the special interest of protected structures is protected, stating that “Development will conserve and enhance protected structures and their curtilage and will… not cause harm to the curtilage of the structure; therefore, the design, form, scale, height, proportions, siting and materials of new development should relate to and complement the special character of the protected structure”. Section 11.1.5.3 of the Development Plan importantly states that “the traditional proportionate relationship in scale between buildings, returns, gardens and mews structures should be retained”.

The excessive height will produce a negative impact on residential amenity for the occupants of No. 38 North Great George’s Street by way of loss of outlook, loss of daylight, loss of privacy and overlooking, and the proposal would set a further undesirable precedent for Hill Street. Granting permission for a development of the scale proposed in such close proximity to the rear elevation of a Protected Structure would also set a serious and unwelcome precedent for such development in the Georgian core of the city.

The Irish Georgian Society is of the view that the character of the North Great George’s Street area stands to be significantly affected by the form, scale, height and massing of the proposed development. If built, it would present an incongruous and anomalous addition to the street-scene. It would dwarf the established built form in the vicinity and detract from the character of the area, and as such would contravene planning policy. The Irish Georgian Society, therefore urges that planning permission be refused.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Donough Cahill

IGS Executive Director