

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

THE AREA & CONTEXT

Today being of local, regional and national significance, Ebrington Barracks, located on a prominent elevated site overlooking the historic walled city was initially designed in the early 17th century as part of the Elizabethan Plantation of Ulster and subsequently developed as a substantial military base played an important role in the city's history.



Image 01: Francis Neville's 1689 map of Londonderry showing 'Strong's Orchard'

Around mid-1800 the main barracks complex was commenced and was laid out in within a rectangular wall arrangement the "Star Fort" a defensive structure ,was located immediately east of the river and facing the city to the west. The walls framed a central parade ground with buildings on three sides and to the west was open to the views of the river Foyle.

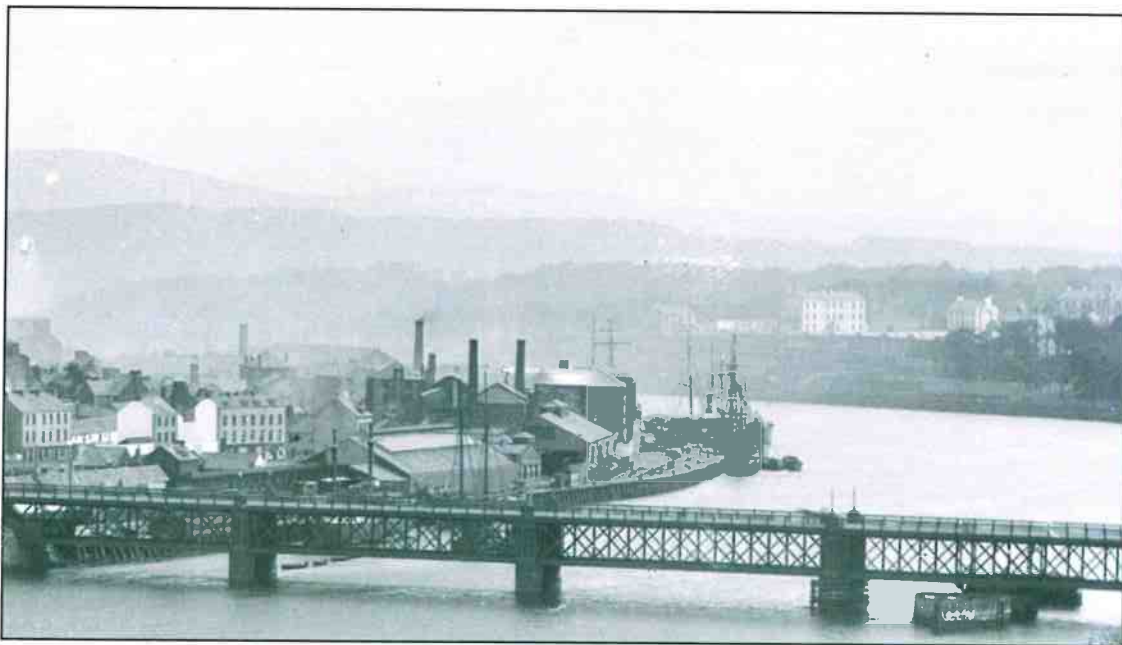


Image 02: Ebrington Barracks in the distance beyond the River Foyle appearing to show Buildings 45 & 46 under construction. C. 1880

PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT EBRINGTON DERRY-LONDONDERRY



Image 03: Late 19th Century view of Ebrington from the North West

As a military building, the plan arrangement was of a standardized linear plan form arranged in a three sided arrangement with buildings up to 3 storey. The Barracks character was that of a group of buildings reflecting basic operational military requirements, basic architectural façade treatments incorporating repetitive window/ door arrangements and simple materials such as slate, brick, render, all representing an image of modest simplicity yet capturing the strength and “fit-for purpose” of its intended use.



With little embellishments other than the landmark clock tower the Barracks complex had a strong presence and this is evidenced in photos recorded in late 19th century and circa early 20th Century showing clearly the strong standardized massing and simple arrangement of individual buildings.

Image 04: The parade ground being used during WW1, 1914

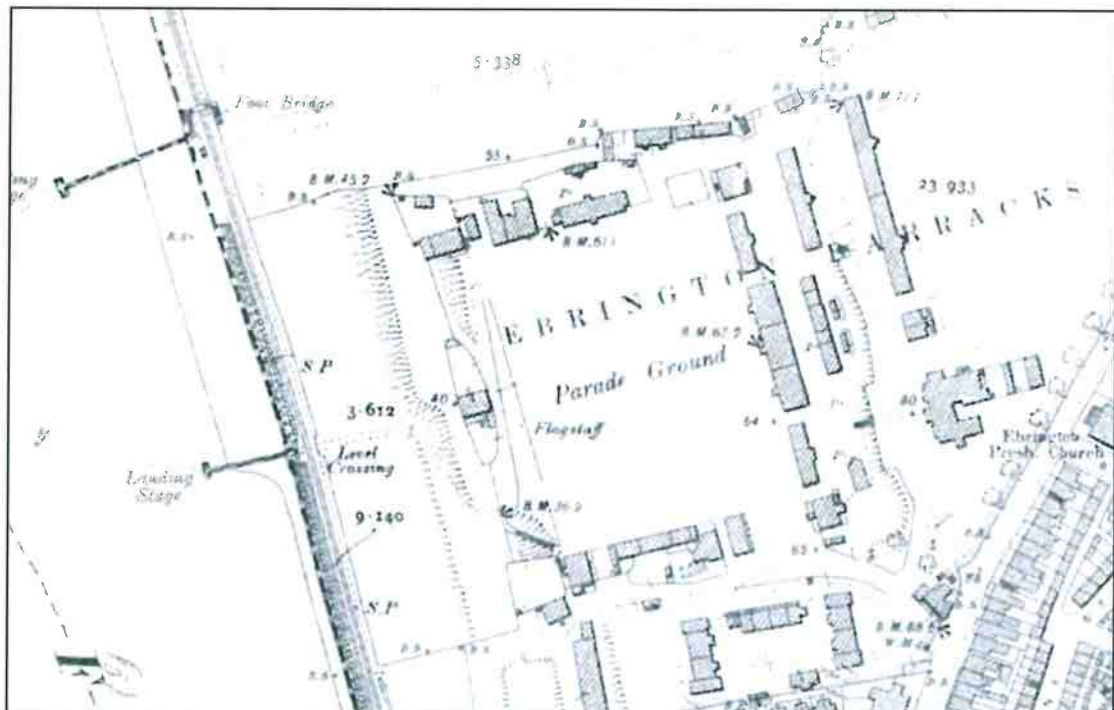


Image 05: Ordnance Survey map of Ebrington Barracks, 1904

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It is recognised that there are several Barrack buildings located outside the Star Fort and although of significance reflect the city's history of several other Barrack buildings predating Ebrington such as Bank Place in the early 18th century, the bottom of Shipquay Street c.1738 and then Foyle Street in the early 19th century.

As with most building arrangements designed for necessary practical uses, Ebrington developed in the late 1800's/early 1900's to the east and north outside the Star Fort original layout creating extensive building work for uses such as learning rooms, manager quarters etc.

However this work involved the removal of part of the original Star Fort walls on its south and east lending further significance to the remaining portions to the north and west.

In or around 2003 after recognition of the Historical Significance of the Ebrington site Environmental Heritage Service gave the historic walls of the Star Fort the status of Scheduled Ancient Monument and also a total of 14 buildings were listed Grade B2 in 2006.

Given the importance of the Ebrington Site and Derry/Londonderry first UK city of Culture status the historical value of the location of proposed project site, albeit outside the Star Fort primary building arrangement is considered very significant.

As exists today many of the buildings on the project site have already been demolished.

With outline planning permission having been granted for a numerous range of uses as part of the city's regeneration of the site (including residential) and a hotel, brewery and offices already granted Planning Permission, the designer recognises fully that Ebrington is emblematic of the potential social and economic success of the new Northern Ireland and of a city looking to the future.

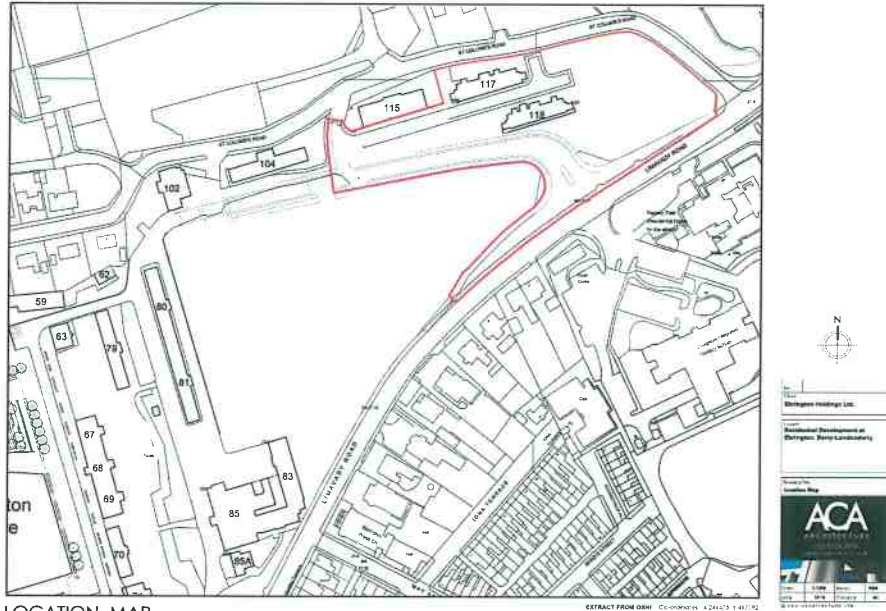


Image 06: View of Ebrington from the 'Peace Bridge' 2015

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THE SITE

The site lies some 300 metres to the north east of the main “Star Fort” buildings and incorporates two existing buildings listed as 117 (Grade B2 listed) and 118 (recorded as of historic value).



LOCATION MAP

Image 07: Location map showing area of site within red line

The site falls naturally approx. 2.5m from south-south east to north-north west and is approx. 1.8m below the Limavady Road on the south-south east frontage. The land falls approx. 2.5m from its north-north east end to the south-south west end.

The existing linear and rectangular 3 storey buildings with material finishes of slate, red brick walling and white uPVC windows arranged in a disciplined vertical placing presents a character of strict institutional modesty.

Buildings referenced 117 and 118 are both placed at the existing lower ground levels.

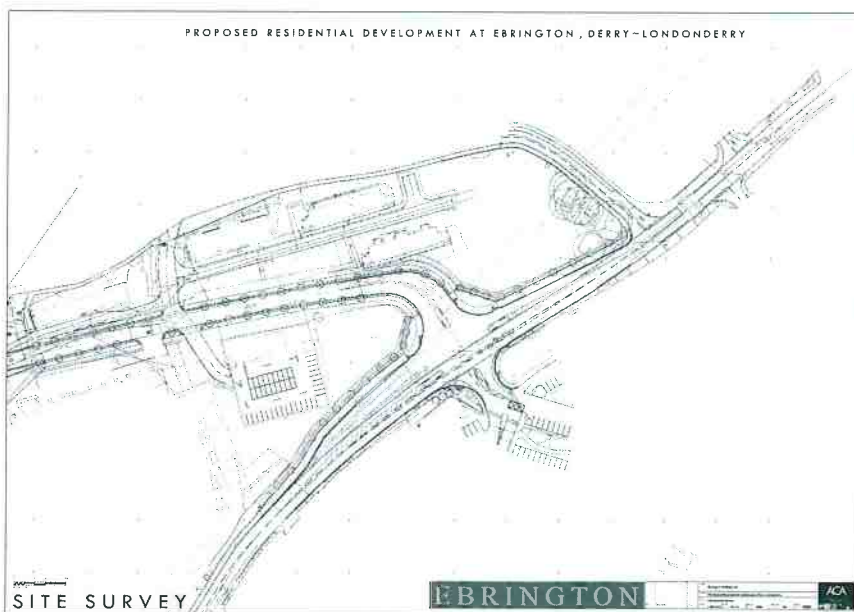


Image 08: Existing site survey including newly constructed entrance layout

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Fronting part of the project site is the busy trafficked Limavady Road which consists of a mixture of building forms, materials and uses. The majority of properties on this road, fronting or in close proximity of the site are mainly high 2 storey and 3 storey properties of which have external finishes such as slate roofs, render painted and unpainted. There exists a single storey school fronting the site and a 4 storey brick finished apartments at Melvin Court some 150 metres away on the Limavady Road.

It is fair to say that the 2 & 3 storey buildings are considered typical of the character of a good part of the city's business street frontages, but there exists on the Limavady Road numerous variances in building forms, scales, massing and types.

It is also worth noting that a number of red brick linear buildings existed on the project site fronting Limavady Road which can be seen on historical maps between 1919-1963. These were substantial in scale and located close to the public footpath/carriageway.

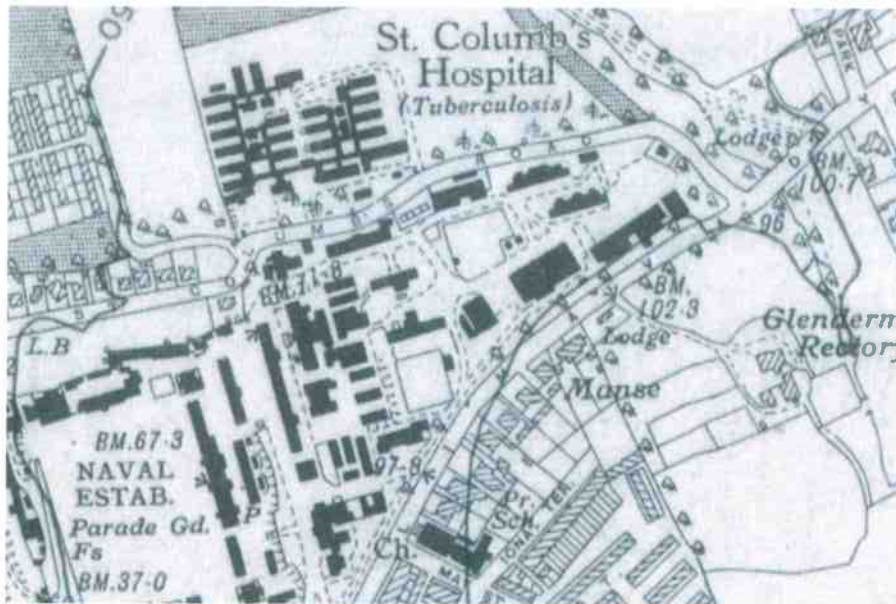


Image 09: Historical site map dating between 1919-1963

At this stage the following is considered relevant;

- a) The project site albeit in the close neighbourhood to the "Star Fort" is on the periphery of the Ancient Monument some 300 metres away
- b) The project site contains 2 buildings of historical importance and references must be incorporated into any future design on the site, giving suitable and sensitive consideration to both being buildings that are of historical value.
- c) The project site partly fronts a major thorough-fare of mixed building types and uses and therefore any development although having a sympathy with the architecture of its on-site neighbours should not be directly influenced by same but rather sympathetic to same in its design.
- d) The site being considerably lower than the Limavady Road also slopes away from the Limavady Road at the lower existing ground level, presenting an opportunity to further benefit the proposal by the addition of a 4th floor level which would be mostly visibly concealed to onlookers from the Limavady Road.
- e) The proposal must understand the significance of the Ebrington Barracks site as a whole and its effect both on Ebrington Barracks Site and Limavady Road Urban frontage.
- f) The Proposal must recognize the significance of existing buildings in the Ebrington Barracks Site/Limavady Road in aspects of mass, forms, textures etc.
- g) The proposal must represent a "future" yet incorporate the "past".

THE DESIGN

The Proposed Design recognises;

- 1) The importance of its location, by the scale and form of the buildings proposed, mainly rectangular in form with a disciplined yet modest character of building designs which possess an inherent strength all attributes drawn from influences of the Star Fort buildings and Limavady Road premises.
- 2) The Limavady Road Façade with its relaxed yet strong attributes pointing to the future which is considered appropriate for a site of such prominence and in a city context yet draws its influences from that which previously existed on the site at this location/nearby building masses and responds to a building placed at a busy highway of considerable significance to the city.
- 3) The past designs of the site/area are incorporated in the Limavady Road elevational massing with the relaxed simplicity of massing, disciplined window/door arrangements, vertical emphasis and central projection reminiscent of the Star Forts “landmark clock tower”, and from that which previously existed.
- 4) That the natural ground level and slopes offer an opportunity to heighten the importance of Block A by the addition of an extra floor level which is in the main mostly concealed from the onlooker but allows improved building integration into the site as the existing ground levels naturally fall away from the Limavady Road. This also allows reduction of building regulation requirements for steep slopes or steps.
- 5) The importance of designing new building’s that borrow aspects from the Star Fort building but it is also important to avoid dilution of the designs, hence the proposed modern interpretation of design which incorporates a simple timeless approach which has an “inviting warmth” and in the spirit of a city looking forward rather than to the past however respecting the past.
- 6) The importance of building materials, textures and colour ,that reinvents those used on existing buildings yet possessing and reflecting a “warmth and freshness” necessary to creating a newness yet paying respect to existing older buildings by the use of brick, zinc (reflecting a modern version of slate) etc.

This is achieved by the light coloured brick, grey framed windows and zinc roof being a more modern interpretation of natural slate.
- 7) As with any building mass the corner or “hinge” has an importance whether it be a “stopend” or between two masses as in this design. It is important that the connection is dealt with in an appropriate manner both in design, form and materials. In this case the design incorporates a feature curved corner building that is predominantly glazed.
- 8) The importance of recognising in a sensitive way the existence of block reference 118 by stepping down the building mass on the south west elevation. This elevational mass continues to incorporate a design simplicity with materials and colours that repeat the features of the South East Limavady Road Elevation yet at the “bookend” block C reduces the mass to a scale, mass and colour that respects its existing neighbour 118 – clearly confirming this is the past and this is the future.
- 9) The architecture of Block D is simply a continuation of the style of Limavady Road Block A however now the existing ground levels creates the need to reduce the building mass to 3 storey.
Again this building mass reduces from 3 to 2 storey in order to respect the scale,
Mass and colour of neighbour Building 117.
The use of a light coloured brick is considered appropriate to completely differentiate old in dark brick and the new in light brick which eliminates uncertainty of old and new.
- 10) The importance of existing building 118 and therefore proposes minor elevational treatment only which preserves the character of that which is existing given its in-site location.

- 11) That the design for the Grade 2 Listed building referenced 117 must allow the existing building to remain the dominant building due to its listing and importance, thus reacting to preserve as much of the building as possible. However unlike building referenced 118 it is considered in this instance ,that given its road frontage location this building needs some improvement in order to future-proof with an air of dignity.

Therefore it is proposed to slightly remodel the projections on the north facing roadside elevation using recycled red brick with the provision of small extensions, following a similar scale to that which exists allowing the proposal and use to be “**fit-for-purpose**” ensuring its future.

The use of Vertical Black Larch cladding extensions compliments the deep red brick of the master building in a modern and sensitive way, while ensuring minimal demolition to the existing rear elevation wall. The south elevation remains unaffected.

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SUMMARY

The proposal site albeit outside the 'Star Fort' recognizes the importance of the historical value of the ancient monument including the buildings listed and noted of value within the project site representing a historical record of the site and its immediate surrounds.

The existing ancient monument forms were simple standardized arrangements and very much designed to be "fit-for-purpose-intended" both visually and internally yet with a modest strength of purpose.

Limavady frontage and previous long linear large building property on the site plus neighbouring surrounds must be a reference point for reflecting the architecture that exists/existed within the project site and its immediate surroundings being the "city street".



Image 11: Proposed elevation to Limavady Road

The proposed design understands and reacts to that which exists within the project site and immediate surrounds by incorporating a simplicity of form reminiscent of the "Star Fort" buildings with its linear/regular massing and repetitive fenestrations all being reflected albeit in a more contemporary manner. Respect is paid to those buildings existing in the site by adapted mass reductions, colour etc.

However being of a modest architecture the design uses materials that are both warm and complimentary yet respectful of its place within this important site and overall site context.

The new building designs although being of a modern intention incorporate a modernity of warmth, invitation and freshness that is worthy of a city looking to the future.

The existing buildings are considered of a similar high importance and in this proposal have been given the respect deserved whilst achieving a comprehensive solution that is so important in ensuring the future preservation of these buildings.

In summary the designs have embraced the historical values of the site and buildings yet seeks to create new buildings for the future and breathe a freshness into 117 & 118 whilst looking forward with a contemporary interpretation of that which the city deserves.