

OYSTER POINT
 TEMPLE ROAD
 BLACKROCK, CO. DUBLIN. A94 Y661

T + 3531 4003200 F + 3531 2108168
 E MAIL@MOB.IE WWW.MOB.IE



23rd May 2022

Re: Notice of the proposed addition of your property Vanessa's Bower to the list of Protected Structures for Kildare County Council under Section 12(3) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended

MOB

The Bower Celbridge.

Your ref: PPS4

Background:

The Saint John of God Trust (Ireland) purchased Celbridge Abbey and its grounds in 1952 and have used those lands to provide much needed services for people with intellectual and physical disabilities establishing a meaningful relationship with the local community. The Saint John of God Trust (Ireland) have a deep attachment to Celbridge and all of the lands and structures in its ownership, in particular we have considerable pride in all of the buildings of historical note. It is our intention to continue this special relationship long into the future which will include taking full responsibility for all the structures on our land.

Further to the letter from Kildare County Council dated 14th March 2022 outlining the consideration of, "Vanessa's Bower" as an addition on the Record of Protected Structures the Saint John of God Trust (Ireland) wish to make the following submission for consideration in this process:

The photograph below shows the condition of 'The Bower' today, what the photograph doesn't really convey is how dangerous the location actually is. The roof has recently fallen off the structure, either it collapsed or was vandalised and the original stones are lying in the bed of the river, see photograph below, *Photograph 1*.

You might be forgiven for thinking that walking down to the bower in this photograph is harmless and poses no risk to public life. However, it is located in a particularly dangerous location on the edge of rock face above the River Liffey.



Photograph 1



Photograph 2 below, tells a different story, It is clear that the entire base of the Bower has fallen away, into the river below potentially due to erosion. Should a member of the public approach this bower at night or indeed under any circumstances there is a very real risk involved of slipping and falling into the river below. The SJOG Trust (Ireland) need to address this risk with signage and potentially fencing off the location.

Equally this photograph demonstrates the clear dangers involved of actually restoring the bower and the risk to any workers involved in said restoration.

Photograph 2



In this photograph, *photograph 3*, we can clearly see the stones from the Bower lying in the River Liffey below.

Photograph 3



This photograph, *photograph 4*, is taken from another angle putting the steep cliff edge in context with the bower.

Photograph 4



The River Liffey is a fast flowing dangerous river at this point just beneath the weir and anyone who falls into the river here would be swept downstream, see *photograph 5* below:-

Photograph 5



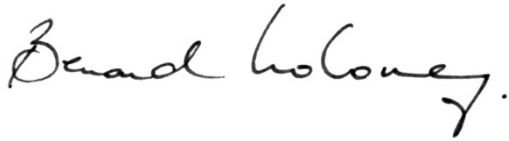
In summary:-

- The SJOG Trust (Ireland) are committed to restoring the Bower and have already engaged Moloney O'Beirne architects last year to undertake surveys of the Bower, prepare a schedule of works to restore the Bower and advise on the health and safety requirements to undertake such work given the risks associated with the site. We, Moloney O'Beirne Architects have engaged with an appropriately qualified stone mason regarding the works and have received costs. However, the concern of the SJOG Trust (Ireland) is that should the Bower now become listed on the Record of Protected Structures, the cost of restoration will be much more expensive. Furthermore, these proposed repair works will be delayed as a planning application will be required.
- St John of God Trust (Ireland) is a charitable body and therefore the cost of restoration is a significant factor for completing the works. Furthermore, the future ongoing maintenance of the Bower as a protected structure will bring financial strain upon the St. John of God Trust (Ireland).
- It will be difficult to retrieve the original stones from the river due to health & safety concerns. Also the costs of attempting to retrieve the stones from the River Liffey would be prohibitive.
- The location of the Bower brings with it a significant amount of health & safety risks due to its close proximity to the River Liffey and the steep descent into it which makes it a risk for people to visit it.
- Furthermore, due to the vandalism of the Bower and the health & safety risk arising from the public using the Bower to access the river for swimming St. John of God Trust (Ireland) are considering closing off the entire area from the public. This will also prevent future vandalism of the Bower once the repairs have been carried out.

The Bower is located on dangerous rock face, with an extremely steep fall into the River Liffey. Erosion over the years has increased those risks. The concern of the SJOG Trust (Ireland) is that assigning protected status to this structure will also potentially attract more people to the site, causing risk to public safety will be inevitable.

The St. John of God Trust (Ireland) fully appreciate the importance of our built heritage and the need to protect it, they are the owners of numerous protected structures both in Kildare and around the country in general. They are committed to repairing Vanessa's Bower, however, they are not in favour of the site being included on the List of Protected Structures based on the reasons set out above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard Moloney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small flourish at the end.

Bernard Moloney M R I A I

Director

Moloney O'Beirne Architects

