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Consignation , Representations of Grangegorman : Past ,Present and Future

Adrian Langtry
Dublin Institute of Technology

Aisling Reddin
Dublin Institute of Technology

Jason Kearney
Dublin Institute of Technology

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Adrian Langtry, Aisling Reddin, Jason Kearney, Noel Phelan, Orlaith Baldwin, and Vincent Gregan

CONSIGNATION

Representations of Grangegorm: Past, Present and Future

Broadcast Gallery, 2013

Acknowledgements

Curated by Adrian Langtry, Aisling Reddin, Jason Kearney, Noel Phelan, Orlaith Baldwin and Vincent Gregan.

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Also thanks to the anonymous provider of the video shot without permission in one of the oldest and most physically distressed of the original buildings is to be screened on the opening night.

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Introduction

In September 2014 the first wave of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) students from Portland Row, Mountjoy Square, Temple Bar and Rathmines will be moved to Grangegorman. This raises issues in terms of remembering the past of the site and incorporating the history into the future function of the site which is largely public, and so the public should be aware of these past functions in the experience of the new.

At present many current students are preparing for the move to the site at Grangegorman, while others will miss the opportunity to study at the new college campus as their programmes come to an end. Regardless of this, opinions of students are essential and provoke informative and evaluative discussions which have not been an issue in the past in relation to the site of Grangegorman. Local residents are also crucial to the fundamentals of public discussions and opinions of the site in direct relation to every phase of the past, present and future.

We will be the last fine art and photography students to complete our study at Portland Row and Temple Bar. The students who are coming through directly after us will be the first to move to the DIT Grangegorman campus.

We wanted to curate an exhibition from the perspective of the student population affected by these changes, but who will never study on the new site. It is our aim to make a contribution to ideas and proposals about how to think about the history of the site, its people, its artifacts in the present, as we all imagine its future.

Delving into the past of Grangegorman with St Brendan's Hospital operating since 1815 previously under the name of Richmond Lunatic Asylum, a connection is created between the patients and staff who provided the rich history and records of the past for preservation. This is utilised by the Grangegorman Development Development Agency (GDA) who are taking this into account in developing a sustainable Dublin Institute of Technology Grangegorman campus not only for future students, staff and local residents but in remembrance of those who were present in the former era of the site.

- Adrian Langtry

DIT Student Surveys.

A number of students were surveyed from three DIT campuses, Portland Row (Fine Art), Temple Bar (Photography) and Mountjoy Square (Social Sciences, Design, Criminology). These will be the first campuses to move in September 2013.

What do you think about the upcoming DIT campus at Grangegorman?

“I think it will be a good thing over the coming years as it gets settled but during the transition it could be a bit awkward. On the whole it is a step in the right direction as it will bring more of a university feel to DIT and perhaps lead to better opportunities to sample other creative areas.”

“Moving will provide a better opportunity for integration across disciplines.”

“I feel it will be a positive move for the college as a whole and will provide a more coherent student atmosphere, however, in terms of the Temple Bar photography building, it may not offer the same advantages. At present, it is very hard for students from various courses to interact and accessing various library facilities demands an excess of time travelling.”

“I feel it will be beneficial and an improvement on what is currently available.”

Would you prefer to stay in your current building?

Yes: 42% No: 58%

Can you give your reasons for your answer?

“It is great to have a building solely for photography and where you could get to know everyone in the years above and below you. It was also good for getting to know the staff too.”

“It will benefit because Portland Row is really isolated and then it won't be. There will be more opportunities for students and students will be exposed to a wider range of disciplines.”

“I would personally prefer to have access to all college facilities in one place without travelling across the city numerous times.”

“When we do cross-disciplinary modules they are never successful. I imagine at Grangegorman there will be more of these modules which are badly constructed.”

Do you think your course will benefit from the move?

Yes: 41% No: 59%

Can you explain your choice?

“I feel that Photography course is really enjoyable because of the small campus. Everybody knows each other and we all have a common interest, rather than being in a large campus with many other people. We are able to easily converse with our peers and I do not feel this aspect of the course will carry over once the move happens.”

“More student interaction with like-minded people.”

“It will be good to have all DIT facilities and services in one place rather than scattered across the city.”

“Mixing with other art students will enrich the course.”

“In terms of the photography BA, the move may not be such a positive one. Temple Bar is a cultural hub and is a prime location for any art-based course. Having a working relationship with both the NPA and GOP is extremely beneficial and I feel that the course may lack some appeal when this relationship is broken by the move to Grangegorman.”

Are you aware of the history of the site on which the DIT campus is being constructed? If so, what do you know about it?

Yes: 44% No: 56%

The majority of students were aware that Grangegorman was a mental health institution but that was mostly the extent of their knowledge on the subject.

Does it concern you that historical buildings have been and will be demolished in order to begin construction of the large campus?

Yes: 50% No: 16% Mixed 34%

“Not particularly. Things have to move on and progress, if the buildings are not listed, then they are not that significant.”

“It does concern me, it always does when you are destroying a part of history so I hope they documented it with photos and videos and have to for people to look at.”

“An amount of conservation is of course important but I think that there has to be room for evolving to meet the needs of the institution.”

“Sometimes if buildings no longer have a function or are uninhabitable, they essentially serve no purpose. I’m not that familiar with the project and the development, so I’m not sure the type of buildings that will be demolished or what percentage of the buildings will be repurposed. I think DIT has a history of reusing old buildings, Bolton Street in particular comes to mind and it’s really not a nice place. It’s very dark and has too many expansive corridors, that gives the place a very empty feeling. It feels less like a college and more like a hospital. If DIT are to spend all this money on building a new Campus it should be modernised and conducive with improving 3rd level education. As far as I’m concerned using 120 year old buildings isn’t a very good idea.”

Do you think it’s important to preserve the historical identity of the site?

Yes: 73% No: 27%

“It’s important to recognise it and allow it to be seen, but this doesn’t have to mean keeping all buildings exactly as they are.”

“It’s important that the site pays homage to the past but not to the extent of obstructing the development of the project and the education of the future youth. There is no point honouring the past to disadvantage the future.”

“Yes. The past should be properly recorded and preserved.”

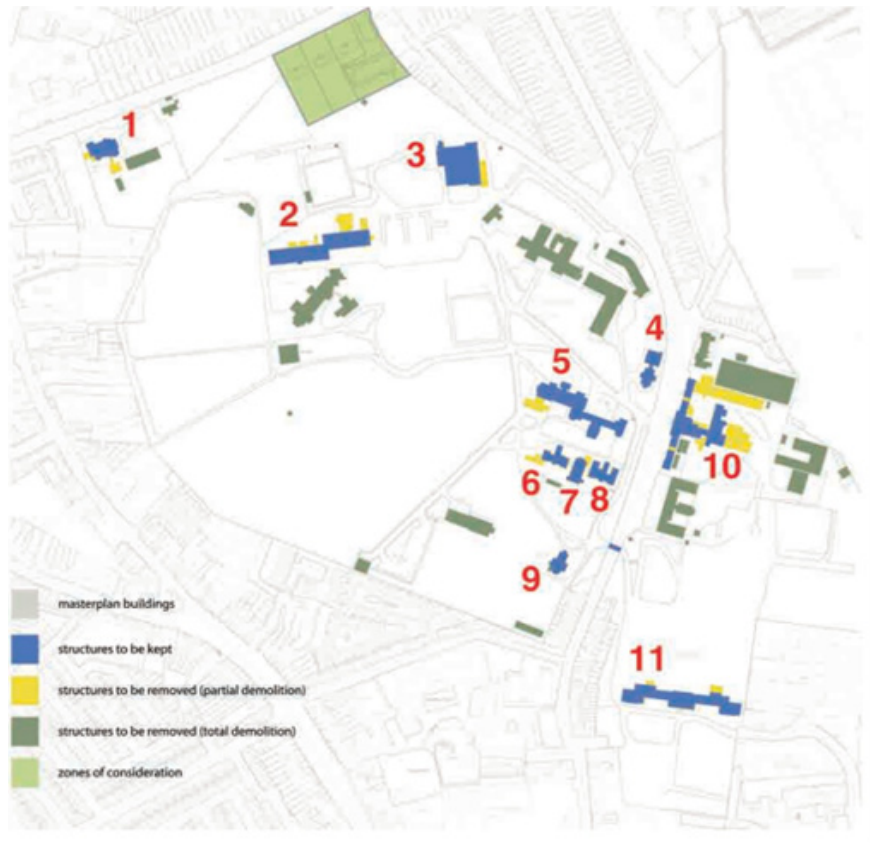
What effect do you think the sudden withdrawal of students from the city

centre will have?

The most noted effect foreseen by students was the impact on local businesses in the city centre that students frequent and provide a substantial amount of custom to, such as delis and convenience shops.

“The impact on local businesses that largely rely on student customers will be notable”

“I think it won’t be a notable distraction for big businesses but places such as cafés and restaurants catering towards students will suffer. There should be an exponentially better growth on the other end though. With a huge influx of new people to the area, house and flat prices will increase and more small businesses could start up in the area. It will effectively be turning a residential district into a commercial one while just economically destabilising an already commercial area.”



Retention of Existing Structures, GDA Masterplan.

1. Connolly Norman House (St. Dymphna's)

This two-story house was built in the late 1890s as the home of the Director of the hospital. Like all listed buildings to remain on the site it is listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) of the Dublin City Council. The building can be converted to function as a small administrative space for the mental health program of the HSE.

2. Male Ward (top house)

This three-story structure was built in 1870 as the male wards of the Richmond Lunatic Asylum. It can be incorporated as a portion of the DIT Library.

3. Laundry Building

Single-story structure built in 1895. It can be converted into a Day Facility for the residents on the HSE site and members of the surrounding community.

4. Mortuary

Single-story building built in 1900. It can be converted into administrative offices for the GDA and may function as a Visitor Orientation Centre.

5. Female House

Built in 1870 to house female population of the hospital. It can house portions of the Student Services for DIT and help form a hub of student services and activities.

6. Male Infirmary

The Male Infirmary was built in 1850. The possible use is a multi-faith place of worship, and/or other associated student services.

7. Roman Catholic Church

The existing Roman Catholic Church will remain as a Catholic Church.

8. Female infirmary

Built in 1850 can be converted into a DIT bookstore and café.

9. Church of Ireland chapel

This building was constructed in 1860. This single volume space can be used as a gallery or exhibition space.

10. Richmond penitentiary (clock tower building)

Built in 1814 and is one of the oldest buildings on the site. The building is scheduled to be used as academic space for the Built Environment Department of DIT.

11. Richmond lunatic asylum (lower house)

Three-story structure built in 1810. It will be restored and converted, possibly into a portion of the Science and Industry Centre for DIT.

In addition, the historic tunnel which connects to the two parts of the site under Grangegorman Road Lower, will be retained.

On Site and Memory

This will sound like a strange question; but what makes somewhere a place? What is it that defines and designates an area as something other than what it is? Defining it as something important, or even just different? Landscapes, as seemingly permanent as they appear, can only become landmarks through something quite ephemeral, something immaterial. That is, through memory. Memory shapes a site. Sites (these places of significance) become differentiated from everywhere else through memory. These places build on collective memory until they become ingrained in the history of the people who surround it; who flow in and out of it. Grangegorm is such a place.

- Luke Fogarty

The Editing Process

Archives are usually recognised as correctly functioning representations of the past. However, every archive is at fault, similar to the narrative of history, the archive is a viewpoint, a collection and has occurred through a process of selection and omission. The archive, being merely a perspective, yet commonly absorbed as a total representation should be viewed as a 'fragmentary narrative ... without any pretension to a grand universal identity-function' (Pucci, 1996:133). It is with this theoretical realisation that we chose to photograph certain objects selected from The Grangegorm Community Archive, which was recently located in the former nurses residence of St Brendan's on Grangegorm Lower, Dublin 7. It also featured as a 'pop up museum' in this years Phizzfest in Dublin 7, which took place on 4-6 May 2013.

Featuring various items from the 1900s, this archive has been assembled and is currently under the care of Dick Bennett, former Head Nurse at St Brendan's who also was interviewed for this exhibition. It contained roughly 200 to 300 items in a small 8m by 4m room such as a nurses uniform, electroconvulsive therapy machines (ETC machines), personal items from past staff and patients, religious paraphernalia and a host of other historic objects.

Constrained by technical boundaries that resulted in a size limit of photographable objects, we selected 58 of these that resonated strongly with a visual presence. Our lighting set up was clinical and consistent, essential in creating a sense of objectivity commonly understood through the medium of photography when viewing a collection of items. From this selection we devised three broad categories: personal items, religious items and medical items. Every aspect of editing a collection of photographs is in a sense similar to creating an archive; you are choosing your method of representation, your version of history, which results in a guided perspective for the viewer.

We debated many different edits and eventually arrived at the conclusion that the two medical images hung on the gallery wall and directly related to physically changing the human brain, would best represent the history of the psychiatric facility at St Brendan's. 'The choice is mine: To subject its spectacle to the civilised code of perfect illusions, or to confront it in the wakening of intractable reality (Barthes, 2000:119).

- Jason Kearney

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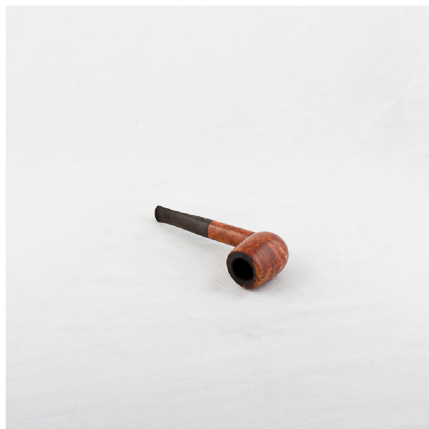
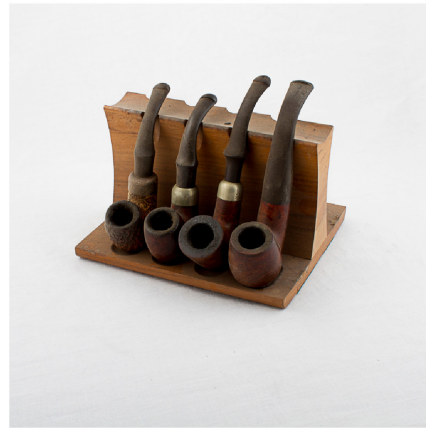














Interview with Ivor Browne, former Resident Medical Superintendent in Grangegorman.

Can you quickly summarise your connection to Grangegorman and its facilities?

The job that I had there was Chief Psychiatrist, which was actually derived from the RMS, Resident Medical Superintendent but the post was modified to take on more of a planning function to develop services for the whole Eastern area. While I had legal responsibility for running the hospital most of my time there was spent in planning and developing services in the community.

Briefly, what exactly does the role of Superintendent entail? Did you work with patients or was your area of focus the actual administration of the facility?

I was responsible for the administration of the institution but as soon as possible I delegated most of those functions to other Psychiatrists so that I could concentrate on developing community services, indeed at that time in developing the 10 districts of the Dublin and peripheral areas. Nevertheless I was determined to maintain my clinical work focusing on Psychotherapy and I managed to continue this all through my career in spite of the heavy administrative duties. One year after taking on the post of Chief Psychiatrist I became Professor of Psychiatry in UCD and while here again I was able to delegate a number of these functions to other professors who were appointed to the Mater and Vincent's hospitals respectively, nevertheless the teaching duties took up a considerable amount of my time so in other words I had three jobs. As if this wasn't enough some years later I created the Irish foundation for Human Development and got quite heavily involved in community development in Ballyfermot, Derry and the inner city in Dublin 1.

The site of Grangegorman is making a thematically similar transition from health service to the educational; how do you feel about that? Is this a positive thing?

In my opinion this is a very positive development and I've always seen mental health work as mainly educational for both the individual and the community. In fact, about 40 years ago I tried to negotiate with DIT to develop a University on the site as I felt that this would greatly facilitate the ending out

and final closure of the Institution which was my aim all along, but at that time but they weren't ready to make the necessary transition and turned down the offer. This is just one illustration of the fact that many of the things I attempted to do were simply too early for people to take up but thankfully they are beginning to take shape now.

Are you aware if photography or art have a role in the facility at all?

I believe they have a role in mental health as a whole and in various ways we employed artwork as well as music in therapy over the years. Thankfully the institution of Grangegorman is now closed so if there is to be a development of the arts it will have to be in terms of the new University.

If so, was it for administrative or therapeutic purposes?

Art therapy is now an established discipline in the mental health services although it could be developed much more than is the case at present. It is an untapped therapeutic approach since very often it is the denial of a persons creative potential and expression that results in their becoming frustrated and mentally disturbed. One significant development arose when we are able to take over the old Protestant Church where we instituted a new approach to therapy involving music, controlled breathing, dance, body movement, mandalas and other such artwork which opened up a major avenue of expression that results in their becoming frustrated and mentally disturbed. One significant development arose when we are able to take over the old Protestant Church where we instituted a new approach to therapy involving music, controlled breathing, dance, body movement, mandalas and other such artwork which opened up a major avenue of expression and trauma resolution for the human beings we were treating. This resulted in the emptying out of the equivalent of two of the most disturbed units of the institution. For anyone who is interested this work was portrayed in the "Would You Believe?" programme by RTE about my work.

Do you yourself feel art (of any kind) can play an important part in health?

There are two main aspects to therapy, one of which is the resolution of problems and traumas from the past, while the other equally important dimension is about helping the person to find a goal or purpose for the future – in short to identify a direction, which they would love to pursue. Art therapy and creative expression is vital for both of these purposes.

Out of curiosity what is your interest in photography and art of any kind?

In my work with unresolved grief and other traumas I have found the use of old photos from a persons past will make a significant contribution to helping them open up the experience of the area of their life they have frozen and failed to fully experience. My own connection with the arts has been mainly along the dimension of music and sound with traditional Irish and jazz being closest to my heart. The wonderful thing about jazz and Irish music is the direct expression of the self, freshly though the music. Each and every time the music is a creation, not a regurgitation of a formal composition. This was true of classical music back at the time of Johan Sebastian Bach but has become more formalized over time.

What were the patients' living arrangements like in its final years? And if possible, can you compare this with living conditions early in the facility's past?

In my opinion the living conditions within Grangegorman and for that matter all other mental hospitals were deplorable in the past and this remained so for those who were left right up till the final closure of the facility after 200 years. I never saw the solution in terms of improving the facilities within the institution but rather of transferring these services out into the community and creating a new range of small facilities on a decentralized basis. This is where the future lies and such services based on respect and human relationships are being gradually developed in various parts of the world.

Did certain objects take on significance during your time working there? Was there a certain area that was important even?

My main concern was to knock down and empty out most of the old buildings, which were thoroughly unsuitable for human habitation. In addition to the therapeutic work in the old protestant church, which holds positive memories for me, the main gate for me had a significant symbolism because it was the main entrance that had been removed from the estate of Santry Court and this was done by my predecessor at the time when he was planning to create a third large mental hospital which thank God never materialized. This is why to go through this gate, day by day, had such personal significance for me. When Miles McGappaline was writing his series in the Irish Times he quite frequently signed some of these articles "Lord of Santry Court". This I believe was because he had become aware of the plan to create a new mental

Institution and given that he had frequent admissions into Grangegorman because of alcohol consumption, he figured that he would be the first star patient in the new facility.

Were patients generally allowed their own personal objects? (books, notepads, etc.)

Only to a limited extent and even their personal clothes were often not returned to them when they came back from the central laundry. This had a debilitating effect on their whole sense of personal identity. Nevertheless some of the nurses showed real sensitivity in facilitating some patients to retain their personal objects. To give just one example, there was one old lady down in the old part of the institution whose husband had died many years before but who had never accepted that he was gone and every day the nurses used to give her a second dinner which she placed on the locker for her husband. Although she hardly ate anything herself, this showed a real humanity in the midst of the generally brutal conditions.

If so, are you aware what happened to these objects when the patient left? Where they discarded, or added to an archive or personal file of some sort?

There have been serious efforts to build an archive of such objects but sadly much of this was lost, including many of the original case records which would have provided a fascinating glimpse into history.

Is it the responsibility of a hospital like St. Brendan's to keep track of these sorts of artefacts? Are they important in an administrative sense?

It should be the responsibility of an institution like Grangegorman and it is a tragedy that a much more complete archive wasn't built up. That is 200 years of history embedded in Grangegorman which was the first Public Mental Hospital in the country. This failure emphasizes the tragedy of what happened in institutions such as Grangegorman where a person was not only deprived of their personal possessions but much more significantly lost their personal identity in becoming a depersonalized unit in the anonymous facility.

Interview with Brendan Kelly

Can you quickly summarise your connection to Grangegorman and its facilities?

I work as a senior lecturer in psychiatry at UCD and consultant psychiatrist at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, which is a psychiatry service neighbouring that at St Brendan's. As a result, I have clinical and collegial interactions with St Brendan's, as part of the unified Dublin North City mental health services. In addition, I have done some historical research in psychiatry (including a PhD), some of which looked at St Brendan's in the past (see attached).

Do you have any thoughts on the change? (Positive, negative etc.)

The change is part of a continued, welcome move toward community-based care for the mentally ill, in line with A Vision for Change (2006), the government's mental health policy. The policy focuses on "building and fostering positive mental health across the entire community and for providing accessible, community-based, specialist services for people with mental illness". This is part of that process of positive change.

Are you aware if photography or art have a role in the facility at all?

Art has formed part of the occupational therapy programme at St Brendan's, and there are several art projects relating to the transition to the new Phoenix Care Centre.

Are/were you familiar with the patients' living arrangements in its final years? And if possible, can you compare this with living conditions early in the facility's past?

Conditions in the 1800s and early 1900s, when there were over 2000 patients in St Brendan's, were often difficult: see attached paper for some insights into conditions in 1907. Conditions improved very consistently from the 1960s onwards; there is an account of some of this in Ivor Browne's "Music and Madness": The development of the Phoenix Care Centre is the logical culmination of this progress.

Were patients generally allowed their own personal objects? (books, notepads, etc.)

Again, this varied over time, with real progress happening from the 1960s onwards. Prior to that, and especially in the 1800s and early 1900s, the situation was often difficult. However, it is worth noting that, even in the mid-1800s, there was a vast schooling programme at the hospital, with reading, writing and art forming central components. This education and activity programme was the envy of other hospitals throughout Europe, and was visited by doctors from myriad European countries. It was led by Dr Joseph Lalor (resident medical superintendent from 1857 to 1886) who wrote that “I consider that education and training are most valuable agents in the treatment... and that it expresses in name and substance what has long been known in reference to lunatics in general as to their moral treatment ... starting with the proposition that education and training form the basis of the moral treatment of all” (1878). The Irish Times (5 August 1886) wrote of Lalor’s “undoubted genius” and “humane projects which he both conceived and put into execution”. There was much that was progressive at St Brendan’s, although when patient numbers became very large, managing the institution was a clear challenge.

Interview with Ronan Doyle, Head of Communications, Grangegorm Development Authority.

What are your thoughts regarding the history of the site at Grangegorm and the regeneration of the site for DIT?

The Grangegorm site has always been in institutional use, including an asylum, penitentiary and psychiatric hospital. Even though it is 73 acres it has been a walled off void in the north inner city. Not only will the redevelopment bring a new third level college here, it will open it up to the surrounding neighbourhood and create both a destination and a link to the city from the north western suburbs.

As DIT has many colleges in the City Centre, how do you think the new campus will affect the college and the local community in Grangegorm?

This new campus will essentially allow DIT to deliver better services to its students. Currently it is located across 38 locations. This means that it has to duplicate many of its services to do with libraries, IT, admin etc. Also students in some of the courses have to travel from site to site for different classes and this is awkward. Once located on one site all of the services will be delivered centrally and therefore in a better way. Complimentary courses can be located close together meaning students do not spend much of their time travelling. They can identify more with one location. Moving a large new population into an area is going to have an effect on the area. It is essential that in this case the effect is positive. It will obviously have different meanings to different people in the community but on the whole I think people are positive about it.

What are the GDAs long term plans regarding artifacts and other archival material that was found on the Grangegorm site? Will there be access to the public to view these artifacts at some point in the future?

It is intended that a space is made available onsite for the artifacts and that this space is open for viewing. This details of this have yet to be finalized.

With regards to the lifestyle images that were circulated by the GDA for the new Grangegorm campus, was there a specific visual rhetoric or idea that the GDA wanted to convey with these images?

The CGIs and water colours of the new quarter have been done by Moore

Ruble Yudell, the company who created the Masterplan. I think they generally try to convey an open urban space which is inviting and bright. James Mary O' Connor has often talked about the bucolic nature of the site and I think they try to emphasise this. They also focus on the complimentary nature of the new with the old buildings.

Taking into account the history of the site at Grangegorman, do you think it will be hard to change the preconceived images that the public will have of the site?

Its interesting that while a lot of Dublin people know "the Gorman" as an old psychiatric institution, there doesn't seem to be a very negative view of it as a place. When I talk to people I hear a lot of different stories about people playing sport here, people playing here as kids and people coming here to go dancing with the nurses. Also what is happening as part of the re-development is so striking that I think people are very keen to see it come about.

Interview with James Mary O'Connor - lead architect for the DIT campus.

What are your thoughts regarding the history of the site at Grangegorman and the regeneration of the site for DIT?

We believe that both the academic idea and the experience of place and history need to be addressed on the site. You could say that it is the difference between the "head and the heart." Our goal for the Grangegorman Project is not only to create a vibrant, world-class campus for Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Health Service Executive (HSE) and the local community, but also to respond to the site's rich historical context and strengthen connections to the existing urban fabric. The "Celtic Tiger" boom did not greatly change this area of the north side of Dublin. Here we have an opportunity to reconnect parts of the city to a generous landscape. There has been a series of community workshops throughout the design process. We have taken many ideas from these meetings to better inform the project design, to better serve the surrounding communities,--like the DCC community library, the HSE primary care facilities, access to community facilities and shared use of sports fields.

As DIT has many colleges in the City Centre, how do you think the new campus will affect the college and the local community in Grangegorman?

I think the looser framework of the "open hand" during the conceptual design phase was an important template in our approach. We valued creating a number of centres which we thought could engage the other buildings. We wanted to leave breathing space around the buildings to create spaces for social engagements - a sort of learning landscape. The Irish climate calls for narrower buildings to ensure interior daylight. The landscape fingers between the buildings lead to the palm of the site - the playing fields. The open hand is a symbol of the goals of education and the invitation to the greater community to use the site and its facilities. The Grangegorman Masterplan opens up the site to the surrounding community and natural context. For example, from the main library complex windows, you can see the Dublin city skyline, including the mountains beyond. The consolidation of the entire school on one campus in the city is an extraordinary opportunity for DIT because it would promote the close interdisciplinary exchange of ideas from the various faculties, and allow for the sharing of grouped resources such as libraries, sports facilities, student services and student housing. This crossover of ideas and fields of

knowledge is very exciting. Grangegorman's student body will be diverse. The experience afforded by the masterplan will be open and will result in a collective education. DIT's future will bring together many strands of learning on one campus which will enrich the learning for every student.

Do you think that allowing public access to the site will allow for a greater awareness regarding the history of Grangegorman? Both, among students and the local community, especially as this may not have been the case before now.

Yes, definitely. In addition to creating a vibrant new quarter, it is very important in the Masterplan to maintain links to the past history of the site by protecting much of the mature landscaping and open space as well as eleven existing buildings on the site (the earliest dating back to 1810 and all listed on Dublin's Record of Protected Structures) that will be given roles in the new campus. The historic perimeter wall will also be protected and re-modeled to give it a new purposeful life. We are proposing several prominent elements to reconnect to the history and memory of the site, including a "Cultural Garden," arts installations, and signage. The plan creates important places adjacent to and around historic structures. The Top House retains its prominent presence as a focus of the Library at Upper Terrace. The "Cultural Garden," an axial space aligned with the Clock Tower, flanks the "Student Hub"—a central village of protected buildings that are all adapted to social activities. The installation of contemporary public art works near or adjacent to the protected historical structures (Clock Tower, Lower House, Top house, Laundry Building, Mortuary, Student Hub, etc. . .) can also provide an effective contrast and insightful interpretation of old and new elements. There is also an opportunity to highlight and celebrate some of the listed buildings in their unfinished states, especially the Lower House.

Taking into account the history of the site at Grangegorman, do you think it will be hard to change the preconceived images that the public will have of the site?

Our goal in the Masterplan is not to erase the past history of the site, but to incorporate it as part of the design of the new campus to give it a richer meaning. While the older generation may know about this history, the younger generation may actually have no knowledge about it. The history and culture of the Grangegorman site provides a layer of memory that makes it interesting. A similar example is the Berlin Wall and the history and memory associated

with it. Resonant examples also exist in Italy, where all the multiple layers of history are maintained, preserved and applied to build upon and inform each other. Furthermore, the permeable spaces and access provided in the new Masterplan will bring on creative opportunities in work, learning and living for DIT, HSE and the local community. There will be amazing opportunities for well-designed new buildings at many scales, while also recognising the rich past history of the site. I hope the future firms entrusted with the implementation work on the Masterplan will spend time and help build a beautiful and lasting campus for the city of Dublin.

As a former DIT graduate, how, if at all did your attending DIT influence your conception of the campus/assessing the needs of the college?

Coming from Phibsboro myself, I always thought the Grangegorman site was a missing link in the urban fabric of the northside of the city. Growing up there, I have the advantage of a very thorough knowledge of all the streets, alleys and adjacencies travelling from home to DIT— Bolton Street, cutting through The Kings' Inns and Henrietta St. DIT – Bolton street where I studied Architecture lacked a campus and I did not understand this until I went to UCLA. You were on a campus that you went to and you heard music playing, or heard about an interesting history lecture or jazz, and it was about the whole experience and not the narrow band of what you were doing. I think that one of the benefits for DIT at Grangegorman is being able to provide all these things together in a campus setting and experience in the future. At Grangegorman, we have been lucky to work with a very good client, the GDA, led by Gerry Murphy and Michael Hand, who really believe in the project. Also, everyone from DIT has participated and embraced the challenge of transforming the site into a world class campus. It is about education and place-making rather than commercial development. John Mitchell from our Dublin partners DMOD has ensured open dialogue and communication between all parties. This has made for a very productive experience for all.

What do you think should be done with the archival material gathered from Grangegorman?

It is very important in the Masterplan to maintain links to the past history of the site. What is most interesting about the site is the cultural and historical memory of the place, and how this can inform and provide a richer meaning to the design of the new campus.

In this regard, some of the archival materials can be kept and exhibited in a suitable museum or gallery space on the site. In particular, the existing tunnel under Lower Grangegorman could provide a suitable and evocative location for this purpose—as a “gallery passage” hosting permanent and/or temporary exhibitions on various topics including the history of the Grangegorman site, DIT or HSE.

With the planned public spaces around the site do you think the new DIT campus will be transformed into an integrated site not just for students but the community as a whole?

Yes. One of the project’s goals was the reintegration of the site back into the city fabric, creating links into the surrounding community. These physical links would allow the community access to a public library and primary school designed for the site as well as the shared use of the sports facilities, retail shops, restaurants, and arts facilities of DIT. I love that sequence at Trinity College when you walk through the gate, even though it is narrow, and there is a path which opens up to a series of quadrangles. Everyone, not only students, come and pass through these spaces sometimes as a shortcut through the city and other times to experience the place itself. In a similar way, the Masterplan at Grangegorman maximizes open space for the site and allows for the notion that the institute can have many uses. It serves students and locals alike. Like a city, it offers variety and diversity. Local kids growing up will have opportunities to see and maybe engage and be influenced by students—science, applied science, business, engineers... when they walk along the main pedestrian path, St. Brendan’s Way. The campus experience will unfold the whole range of educational opportunity at their feet. The visibility of apprentices working at learning their craft will open up new possibilities for the community both local and citywide.

Image Attributes

Page 7 - Retention of existing structures, GDA Masterplan (4:70).

Pages 12-16, 19-23 - Vincent Gregan and Jason Kearney

Page 17 - Adrian Langtry

