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Bord Pleanála Backs Grangegorman Plan

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News

Bord Pleanála backs Grangegorman plan

FRANK McDONALD

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AN BORD Pleanála's decision to approve planning permission for an integrated campus for colleges of the Dublin Institute of Technology at Grangegorman was welcomed yesterday by Michael Hand, chief executive of the Grangegorman Development Agency who insisted the Dublin project was now "shovel-ready".

He said the board's decision meant that the project would have a "transformative effect on the city of Dublin", contributing significantly to job creation in construction and urban regeneration.

Mr Hand said an enabling programme of works could start on site "almost immediately", including "significant refurbishment" of protected structures to bring them into educational use.

Work is under way on construction of new mental health facilities on the North Circular Road end of the site, and this is due to be finished by the end of this year. The next scheduled project is an environmental health sciences institute.

The president of DIT, Prof Brian Norton, congratulated the Grangegorman Development Agency on getting approval for its planning scheme, which was drawn up by California architects Moore Ruble Yudell in association with Dublin-based DMOD.

"The quality of this project has been recognised by a number of major international awards already, including an honour award conferred by the American Institute of Architects just this week. Approval of the planning scheme ensures that the plan can be realised."

Last November exchequer funding for the DIT project was cut even as Minister for Public Expenditure Brendan Howlin reaffirmed that it remained a "priority project" for the Government.

As a result, as Prof Norton said, DIT would have to look at other options.

"Exchequer funding is one important element but other essential funding for the project arises from leveraging savings on the rent roll for existing properties, sale of DIT-owned properties, PPP bundles and privately funded elements through philanthropy."

The original plan to develop a centralised campus at Grangegorman was conceived during the boom, when it was expected that buildings owned by DIT at Bolton Street, Kevin Street, Bishop Street and other locations could be sold for substantial sums.

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