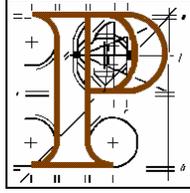


An Bord Pleanála



ROADS ACTS 1993 to 2007

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTS 2000 to 2011

Kilkenny County Council

APPLICATION by Kilkenny County Council of County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny for approval under section 51(2) of the Roads Act, 1993, as amended, in accordance with documentation, including an environmental impact statement, lodged with An Bord Pleanála on the 6th day of June, 2008, as modified by the additional information and revised environmental impact statement received by An Bord Pleanála on the 31st day of January, 2011.

PROPOSED ROAD DEVELOPMENT: Construction of a bridge crossing over the River Nore, a new central access street and a new distributor roadway in the western environs of the city. The Bridge together with the new street and distributor roadway will form a new central access in the city linking residential areas to the west of the city to the core central business district and providing increased connectivity to urban areas to the east of the River Nore, Kilkenny City, County Kilkenny, as modified by the additional information and revised environmental impact statement which provide for an altered scheme consisting of an urban street approximately 700 metres in length, which will link Saint Canice's Place in Kilkenny City to the Castlecomer Road on the east of the city. The proposed urban street will incorporate a bridge crossing the River Nore. The street will accommodate two lanes 3.5 metres wide for traffic in either direction and two parallel cycle lanes 1.5 metres wide at road level. Footways will be provided on both sides of the street. In general, these footways will be two metres wide and will be raised behind the roadside kerbs. On the River Nore Bridge, the footways will be widened to three metres. The bridge will also support a further widened observation platform above the river bank on the southeast side of the crossing.

DECISION

APPROVE the above proposed road development in accordance with the said documentation based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions set out below.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Having regard to:

- (a) the provisions of the Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan, 2008-2014 and of the Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan, 2005,
- (b) the revised environmental impact statement (January 2011) submitted in support of the Central Access Scheme for the City of Kilkenny, as modified, including the mitigation measures set out therein,
- (c) the assessment by the Board of the likely effects on the environment of the proposed road development,
- (d) the information contained in the Natura Impact Statement and the appropriate assessment by the Board of the implications of the development for the River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation, in view of the conservation objectives for that Natura 2000 site,
- (e) the existing and predicted traffic flows in Kilkenny City and environs,
- (f) the deficiencies in the existing road network, including the existing two bridges in the city, and, in particular, the inadequacies of Green's Bridge,
- (g) the need to enhance cross river linkages in Kilkenny, whilst not attracting additional through traffic within the city,
- (h) the submissions made in connection with the application, including at the oral hearing (December 2008) and submissions made subsequently in relation to the amended scheme (January 2011), and
- (i) the reports of the Inspector appointed by the Board to report on the case,

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed Central Access Scheme for the City of Kilkenny, as modified, would:

- (i) accord with the provisions of the development plan and the local area plan for the area,
- (ii) meet a need to supplement the existing cross river routes in the city and significantly improve interconnectivity within the city,
- (iii) improve the safety and convenience of road users,
- (iv) be acceptable in terms of its impact on the environment,
- (v) be acceptable in terms of its impact on the heritage of Kilkenny, both archaeological and architectural,
- (vi) would not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, and

- (vii) would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

CONDITIONS

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the modified plans and particulars for the Central Access Scheme for the City of Kilkenny, including the revised design for the bridge, submitted to An Bord Pleanála on the 31st day of January, 2011, and the mitigation measures (encompassing the environmental commitments) set out in the revised environmental impact statement (January 2011) also submitted on the same date, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and protection of the environment.

2. Phases 2 and 3 of the road development, as originally proposed (May 2008), shall not be carried out on foot of this order.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and protection of the environment.

3. Details of all the materials and finishes to the road and bridge shall be finally determined after consultation with the Architectural Review Panel, selected by the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and referred to in the environmental impact statement (January 2011). Finishes shall be of high quality and sympathetic to the historic environment of the area and consideration shall be given to constructing the cycle tracks level with the public footpath rather than level with the road carriageway.

Reason: To protect and enhance the historic streetscape of this part of Kilkenny City.

4. A suitably qualified Project Archaeologist shall be appointed and archaeological monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with all licence and permit requirements of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Reason: To protect cultural heritage.

The Board was not satisfied that the scheme as originally proposed in the environmental impact statement of May 2008, including particularly the construction at this time of Phases 2 and 3, would be in the interest of the longer term proper planning of Kilkenny, including protecting of its unique mediaeval character. The Board considered that the Central Access Scheme proper (Phase 1) would not be appropriate as a major artery for longer distance traffic, because additional such traffic traversing the historic centre of Kilkenny City would have an unduly negative effect on the city centre environment and would lead to increased north-south severance. Accordingly, the Board agreed with the Inspector that Phases 2 and 3 of the scheme, as originally proposed, - the link to the Western Environs and the Loughmacask Road - would be premature pending progress on that part of the Kilkenny outer ring road between the Castlecomer Road and the Freshford Road (including a new river Nore crossing) which would alleviate traffic pressure on the city centre, especially from heavy goods vehicles.

The Board also considered the design of the bridge, as originally proposed (May 2008), was not appropriate in terms of its visual impact at this sensitive location. The revised design (January 2011) is acceptable.

**Member of An Bord Pleanála
duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Board.**

Dated this day of 2011.