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The Secretary,
An Bord Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1

8th June 2022

Re: Case No. 313306 – Strategic Housing Development at Old Connell, Newbridge

Dear Sir/Madam,

The National Transport Authority (the “NTA”) have reviewed the above planning application and, based on the *Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035* (the “Transport Strategy”), which is a consideration material to the proper planning and development of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), and taking into consideration *the Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-42* (the “new Transport Strategy”), make the following observations and recommendations.

1.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development is predominantly a residential scheme comprising of 569 residential units including a mix of 244 apartments and 325 houses which includes a network of public open spaces and other uses. The other uses being a proposed childcare facility (crèche facilitating 10 staff and 154 children), a clinic (330 gross floor area) and neighbourhood centre/commercial building (1,441 gfa convenience units and 33b gfa café and restaurant).

2.0 Public Transport

At present, public transport connectivity directly to the site is limited. There are a number of bus stops located at approximately a 10-15minute walk away from the proposed development on the R445. Newbridge Train Station is approximately 28minute walking time, 10minute cycling, or 7minute driving time away. This station offers regular services to Cork, Galway, Waterford, Dublin Heuston Station and Westport.

The current *Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023* has the objective to ‘*reduce car dependency and increase the use of sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport.*’ The *Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029* (section 15.7.3 Public Transport) also states that ‘*All new development should be designed to maximise permeability and connectivity to public transport networks in accordance with the provisions of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and*

Streets. As such, the proposed development includes the provision of two new bus stops (one serving each direction) on the Newbridge Southern Outer Orbital Relief Road (NSORR). At present, the NTA has no plans to provide bus services on this road.

The Master Site Layout Plan includes bus stop designs whereby the cycle lane runs to the front of the bus stop, causing potential conflicts with cyclists and bus users. Best practice design is to run the cycle lane to the rear of the bus stop, thereby reducing the potential for conflict. The bus stops should also be in-line with the road.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the applicant is required to design the bus stops in accordance the *National Cycle Manual* guidance and best practice design in which the cycle lane travels behind the bus stop in order to minimise potential conflict and that the bus stops are kept in-line with the road.

3.0 Road Layout & Filtered Permeability

The proposed development will deliver approximately 350m of the NSORR from Great Connell Roundabout to the furthest access point within the development site along the new road. A bridge crossing over the River Liffey to the west of the development site is not within this proposal.

The 3 primary accesses to the residential units and commercial units is via the NSORR, however there are 4 additional proposed future vehicular access points to the site, two at the north of the site connecting to Wellesley Manor, and two at the south-west corner of the site, facilitating potential connections to and from the neighbouring zoned residential lands to the south. In total, there could potentially be 7 vehicular access points to this development, causing an inappropriate volume of vehicular traffic for a residential development through the potential creation of 'rat-runs' to the neighbouring lands. The provision of additional vehicular capacity on the road network is not in line with Kildare County Council sustainable transport policies and objectives or those of the Transport Strategy which seek to encourage sustainable mode choices and confer advantage to pedestrians and cyclists.

The MMP indicates a pedestrian Route 'C' through Wellesley Manor which includes several sections of 'desire path' and this is identified as the shortest and safest path to the schools, town centre and train station. This route is the most efficient route to reach the schools in particular and safe and legible pedestrian and cycle routes should be provided in order to reduce the requirement to otherwise use the Great Connell Road which is a longer and potentially less-safe route for school children.

Recommendation: It is recommended that no new vehicular access points are permitted to the existing neighbouring housing estates (Wellesley Manor) to the north of the proposed development, rather that filtered permeability to facilitate pedestrians and cyclists is provided, in the interests of promoting sustainable travel patterns and reducing the reliance on the private car.

Recommendation: It is recommended that if there is a requirement for a vehicular access point to the potential future development lands to the south, that one is sufficient, and that this should be the easterly one which is the main north-south access route, and that provision should be made for filtered permeability to facilitate pedestrians and cyclists at the other location, in the interests of promoting sustainable travel patterns and reducing the reliance on the private car.

It is noted that the north-south access route in the southern portion of the development has three no. access points to the east and 2 no. access points to the west. It is suggested that the number of access points could be rationalised in order to facilitate and confer advantage to active travel modes.

It is noted that scheme could benefit from the introduction of filtered permeability measures at several locations in order to provide a safer, more traffic calmed and pedestrian-friendly layout.

Recommendations:

- North-west quadrant has a long sweeping road along the linear park with two access points – this could be filtered at one or two points to provide a safer environment along the linear park;
- South-west quadrant, the southern-most block is surrounded by roads – this could benefit from a filter again providing safer access to the park area;
- South-east quadrant, the first access point on the north-south access route could be filtered to provide access to pedestrians and cyclists only;
- South-east quadrant, the access point to the main north-south access route could be filtered to provide access to pedestrians and cyclists only;

4.0 Junctions

The proposed signalised junction with the Great Connell Road will be an important junction for pedestrian, cyclist and potential public transport users. The proposed cycle track on the NSORR will connect across the junction to the adjacent employment uses and forms part of the GDA Cycle Network Plan as a proposed secondary cycle route for Newbridge. The NTA welcomes the upgrade of the junction to a signalised junction, however, given the importance of the route, it is recommended that the junction should be a protected style junction in accordance with the *Preliminary Design Guidance Booklet for BusConnects Core Bus Corridors* and the upcoming revised *National Cycle Manual*.

Recommendation: In the interests of providing a safe and efficient junction at this location on a secondary route in the GDA Cycle Network, it is recommended that a protected style junction is provided in accordance with the *Preliminary Design Guidance Booklet for BusConnects Core Bus Corridors* and the upcoming revised *National Cycle Manual*.

It is noted that the proposed layout includes a Toucan crossing on the NSORR, located between the access point to the northern residential area and the access to the southern residential area. It is noted that the southern access route includes a cycle track, as does the NSORR. Cyclists approaching from the southern access route appear to be required to travel west to the Toucan crossing to proceed east to reach the neighbourhood centre. The location of the Toucan crossing does not appear to coincide with the desire line of future residents approaching from the south who wish to reach the future bus stops and the neighbourhood centre. It also appears that no provision is made at the vehicular junction for cyclists to cross the road to access the cycle track travelling in an easterly direction (other than using the Toucan crossing).

Recommendation: It is recommended that the location of crossing points and the associated provision for cyclists to access the cycle track on the northern side of the NSORR travelling east is given consideration in the context of the desire lines to reach the bus stops and the neighbourhood centre.

Conclusion

I trust that the views of the NTA will be taken into account in the assessment of the above planning application.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Mac Aree". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Mac Aree
Head of Strategic Planning