



An
Bord
Pleanála

Observation on a Strategic Infrastructure Development Application

Observer's details

1. Observer's details (person making the observation)

If you are making the observation, write your full name and address.

If you are an agent completing the observation for someone else, write the observer's details:

(a) Observer's name

Denis M-Baker

(b) Observer's postal address

Sprucefield, Carrick, Edenderry, Co. Offaly.

Agent's details

2. Agent's details (if applicable)

If you are an agent and are acting for someone else **on this observation**, please **also** write your details below.

If you are not using an agent, please write "Not applicable" below.

(a) Agent's name

Click or tap here to enter text.

(b) Agent's postal address

Click or tap here to enter text.

Postal address for letters

3. During the process to decide the application, we will post information and items to you or to your agent. For this **current application**, who should we write to? (Please tick ✓ one box only)

You (the observer) at the postal address in Part 1

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The agent at the postal address in Part 2

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Details about the proposed development

4. Please provide details about the **current application** you wish to make an observation.

- (a) **An Bord Pleanála case number for the current application (if available)**
(for example: 300000)

Click or tap here to enter text.

- (b) **Name or description of proposed development**

Dart + West Electrified Railway Order 2022

- (c) **Location of proposed development**

(for example: 1 Main Street, Baile Fearainn, Co Abhaile)

Newcomen Rail Bridge (lifting bridge), Spencer Dock, Dublin.

Observation details

5. Grounds

Please describe the grounds of your observation (planning reasons and arguments). You can type or write them in the space below. There is **no word** limit as the box expands to fit what you write.

You can also insert photographs or images in this box. (See part 6 – Supporting materials for more information).

THE FUTURE OF THE ROYAL CANAL

A SUBMISSION TO AN BORD PLEANÁLA REGARDING THE DART+WEST ELECTRIFIED RAILWAY ORDER 2022

on behalf of

IWAI Royal Canal Branch

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND
Cumann Uiscebhealaigh Intíre na hÉireann

NEWCOMEN RAIL (LIFTING) BRIDGE

This bridge is strangling the potential of the Royal Canal. This small section of track sits at water level, diagonally across the canal just below Lock No. 1, at the west end of Spencer Dock. It completely blocks entry or exit from the Royal Canal unless lifted. It was originally intended to be automated so that it could be easily lifted when needed, but twelve years on from the reopening of the canal Iarnród Éireann have failed to do so. It is debateable whether the current simple structure could ever have been made to operate remotely with the efficiency required normally by such lifting structures.

1ST SUBMISSION TO DART+WEST PUBLIC CONSULTATION

I attach here (following) our first submission to the Dart+West Public Consultation, it gives a detailed description of the existing bridge structure and suggests suitable replacement options which would allow both rail line and canal to function fully.

We have outlined how either a lifting bridge, swing bridge or a drop lock could be implemented to ensure that the Royal Canal is finally able to open fully. Currently, this bridge obstructs passage through the canal at Spencer Dock and is only lifted by appointment on a handful of occasions in the year rendering the canal closed to through traffic for 259 days in each year. The canal has suffered dreadfully because of this restriction, people simply avoid bringing boats here and the question must

5. Grounds

be asked was all the investment in dredging, rebuilding of lock gates, bridge replacement just a waste of money while this anomaly is allowed to persist.

The enormous success of the greenways, and particularly the Royal Canal Greenway, has attracted much attention from tourism bodies and Fáilte Ireland. They have identified the potential and are now looking at the canal navigation and evaluating it's potential. The prospect of a tourism link between the Shannon and Dublin via both the Royal and Grand canals has been noted but this one obstacle controlled by Iarnród Éireann is stifling all growth.

Iarnród Éireann has appeared to ignore our solution suggestions made in the 1st submission, their current plans show an updated design to the bridge base and lowering the track level further by up to 385mm (we have yet to see drawings showing how this is possible as the current bridge sits with it's base in the water or at water level depending on the level in Spencer Dock).

CONCLUSION: RE NEWCOMEN RAIL (LIFTING) BRIDGE

We would urge An Bord Pleanála to require Iarnród Éireann to replace the obstructing Newcomen Rail Bridge with an acceptable solution which finally opens the Royal Canal.

PROPOSED ELEVATED WALKWAYS AND CYCLEWAYS

IWA I Royal Canal are totally opposed to the proposed elevated walk/cycleways. These monstrous edifices will completely overshadow the canal and it's environs which is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). The canal, it's bridges and structure have listed status and will be visually impaired by the construction of these facilities adjacent to it. They represent a very poor design solution and it's difficult to imagine any location where they might be considered acceptable. They appear to be a cheap solution where pedestrian bridges and improved lifts would suffice. These constructions will quickly become magnets for graffiti so beginning a gradual downgrade of the areas in which they are located.

PALLISADE FENCING ABOVE RAIL BRIDGES

We note and object to the intention to put palisade fencing atop of railway bridges adjacent to the canal and it's listed canal bridges. Again this is an inappropriate use of this fencing and inconsistent with a sensitive approach to building adjacent to heritage structures. An individual would not be allowed to build with such disregard for heritage structure and a sensitive environment, Iarnród Éireann should be obliged to reach the same standards. The goal should be to design fencing which will enhance the heritage, not to install something that downgrades it.

5. Grounds



Newcomen Rail Bridge with train passing over.



Newcomen Rail Bridge, outlined in yellow.

[I have tried to attach a pdf of our 1st Submission here, I don't know if the system will display all of the three pages of that doc. If not, that doc is available from the Branch, please contact the chairperson.]

5. Grounds

5. Grounds

approximately two hours only; most lifts take place mid week. The lifting requires a crew from Iarnród Éireann to be



5. Grounds

5. Grounds

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Supporting materials

6. If you wish, you can include supporting materials with your observation.

Supporting materials include:

- photographs,
- plans,
- surveys,
- drawings,
- digital videos or DVDs,
- technical guidance, or
- other supporting materials.

You can insert photographs and similar items in your observation details: grounds (part 5 of this form).

If your supporting materials are physical objects, you must send them together with your observation by post or deliver it in person to our office. You cannot use the online uploader facility.

Fee

7. You **must** make sure that the correct fee is included with your observation.

Observers (except prescribed bodies)

- strategic infrastructure observation is €50.
- there is no fee for an oral hearing request

Oral hearing request

8. If you wish to [request the Board to hold an oral hearing](#), please tick the “Yes, I wish to request an oral hearing” box below.

You can find information on how to make this request on [our website](#) or by contacting us.

If you do not wish to request an oral hearing, please tick the “No, I do not wish to request an oral hearing” box.

Yes, I wish to request an oral hearing

☐ **Yes**

No, I do not wish to request an oral hearing

☐

Final steps before you send us your observations

9. If you are sending us your observation using **the online uploader facility**, remember to save this document as a Microsoft word or PDF and title it with:

- the case number and your name, or
- the name and location of the development and your name.

This also applies to prescribed bodies sending an observation by email.

If you are sending your observation to us by post or delivering in person, remember to print off all the pages of this document and send it to us.

For Office Use Only

FEM – Received		SIDS – Processed	
Initials		Initials	
Date		Date	

Notes