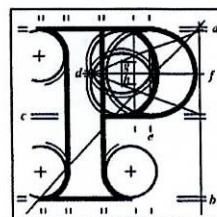


**Our Case Number:** ABP-314501-22

**Your Reference:** Monaghan County Council



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

Catriona Morgan  
RPS Consulting Engineers  
Elmwood House  
74 Boucher Road  
Belfast  
Antrim  
BT12 6RZ  
Northern Ireland

**Date:** 13 February 2023

**Re:** South Dublin Street and Backlands Regeneration Project. The proposed development covers an area of approximately 2.72 hectares and comprises urban regeneration and public realm proposals. Properties at 7- 13 Dublin Street, lands to the rear of 1-9 The Diamond and 1-26 Dublin Street, the Courthouse car park, Lower Courthouse car park, Castle Road, and N54 Macartan (Broad) Road, townlands of Roosky and Tirkeenan, Co. Monaghan

Dear Madam,

I refer to the above mentioned proposed development which is before the Board for approval. Please be advised that the Board, in accordance with section 175(5)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, hereby requires you to furnish the following further information in relation to the effects on the environment of the proposed development:

#### **1. Built Heritage**

The proposed development involves the demolition of a number of buildings comprising established street frontage and an outbuilding within the curtilage of an adjoining protected structure, and the creation of a new vehicular street together with significant surface car parking.

All submissions received by An Bord Pleanála on the case have been previously forwarded to you. You are invited to make a response to the submissions made, in particular that from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Development Applications Unit, dated 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022 which includes the following excerpts:

*"Having regard to government's suite of new policy and funding initiatives for town centres, there are some concerns regarding the number of buildings proposed for removal within the town centre of Monaghan. This may require a close look by the planning authority."*

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*Further information could be provided to describe the re-making/repairing of the street-fronted buildings referencing the qualities and characteristics of traditionally constructed buildings of Irish towns. Alternative approaches informed by urban exemplars would enhance the proposal e.g. pedestrian interconnection drawing on the historic precedent of pedestrian archways routes in the town.*

*..... the breaking and opening out of the historic streetscape to a surface car park would not have a wholly positive impact on the cultural significance of the place, the urban form and the coherence of the town plan.*

*.... This approach to town regeneration departs somewhat from policy and guidance and could take from the heritage of the historic town centre."*

The concerns raised by the Department are shared by An Taisce and the Heritage Council. The Heritage Council, in its submission dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022, state:

*"The historically determined urban pattern of burgage plots and lanes has served the functional life of Monaghan well for centuries and is an important historical characteristic that provides quality of life, sustainability and a sense of place-heritage 'time-depth'.*

*It is recommended that the development proposal be significantly altered to conform to this pattern, and not to break it by the opening-up of a large hole in the street elevation...*

*... This proposal will thus affect the historic setting, and therefore the character of the Dublin Street ACA..."*

Notwithstanding that the proposed scheme is plan-led and for which URDF funding has been secured, the Department raise concerns about the principle of the development in the context of the recently published Town Centre First Policy and Housing for All plan. Similarly, the national policy on Architecture, Places for People, emphasise the need to protect and enhance our existing building stock, supporting a transition to climate neutrality:

*"Local and national architecture and design strategies will prioritise the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings with particular focus on urban centres: avoiding or minimising the demolition of existing structures, prioritising vacant buildings and brownfield sites and safeguarding cultural assets as a community resource."*

The Climate Action Plan 2023 contains a number of relevant steps for compact growth, including a shift towards active mobility in the delivery of developments and reusing existing buildings and unused lands.

Chapter 10 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025, titled 'Settlement Plan for Monaghan Town 2019-2025', includes a section on 'Monaghan Land Use and Transportation Study' (March 2018) which sets out the new road proposals for Monaghan Town. These links are identified on the CDP Map, MDP1. The proposed scheme is not listed/included as a 'new road proposal'.

While the Monaghan Land Use and Transportation Study states the Dublin Street Regeneration Plan was assessed in the Monaghan Traffic model, a comprehensive justification for the new two-way vehicular road is lacking both in the Study and the Regeneration Plan itself, particularly when vehicular access is available to the south off Broad Road/N54.

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The aforementioned recent national policies, the concerns that the proposal is a "modern car-focused proposal", the proposed demolition of part of the streetscape opposite a group of structures within the Dublin Street ACA, the cultural significance of one of the buildings to be demolished and the lack of justification for the vehicular connection to Dublin Street, when taken in totality, suggest that an alternative proposal for enhanced pedestrian access *only* may be warranted.

The applicant is therefore invited to reconsider the proposed scheme and following consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, submit a response to the concerns raised, including revised drawings as may be necessary.

In submitting a response, the following should also be addressed:

- A detailed design statement, including details of design palette;
- Addressing the lack of active elevations for all sides of the new connection / Gavan Duffy Place, should it remain in some form;
- Complete elevations of blocks (to be amended/retained) along the new connection / Gavan Duffy Place,
- As a new square is also proposed to the east of Nos. 12 and 13 Dublin Street. Elevations, which includes the rear return of Peaky Blinders public house, addressing /enlivening this square are considered necessary,
- A reduction in the proposed block size or a mid-pedestrian link of the block between Church Walk and The Mall, Section 3.3.2 'Block sizes' of DMURS refers.

## **2. Protected Structure**

It is the Department's opinion that the outbuilding to the rear of no. 24. Dublin Street is within the curtilage of a protected structure (ref. 41303130, Sherry's pub). Having regard to policies in the County Development Plan 2019-2025 to protect and conserve structures included in the Record of Protected Structures (BHP1-3 and BHP5-8) the applicant is required to submit alternative proposals which show the retention and re-use of the outhouse.

## **3. Visual Impact Assessment**

A number of the submissions, including those from third party observers, raise concerns about the landscape and visual impact assessment, specifically the methodology used and the findings/impact of the proposed development. In addition, concerns are raised that the LVIA fails to consider the direct view off Dublin Street into the Back Lands /car park area.

Having regard to the concerns raised and the guidance in the Landscape Institute's 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19' the applicant is requested to prepare and submit verifiable and accurate photomontages of the proposed development from all views, and an additional view from the Back Lands facing north towards the rear of Dublin Street south.

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#### **4. Flood Risk & Drainage**

Following a review of Chapter 5 – Flood Risk and Drainage of the EIAR, the Flood Risk Management Plan for Neagh Bann (2018) and associated OPW data, it appears that the significant flood event of 2011 was a result of a blocked culvert, which is prone to blockage, and is proximate to the site. Furthermore, while funding was approved in 2019 to construct a new culvert across the N54 and the R162 in Monaghan Town and additional flood alleviation measures for the Castle Road area it appears that such works have not been undertaken, having regard to section 5.4.2.1 of the EIAR. Please expand and clarify this issue.

In the interests of clarity, please provide a comparison between the existing volume of attenuation and rate of discharge to the Shambles River and that proposed. Please also indicate how you have had regard to climate change in the flood risk assessment and infrastructure requirements. You are further requested to submit a cross section through the site and indicating the proposed attenuation area.

#### **5. Water Quality**

- (a) Table 6.8 is a repeat of Table 6.9: summary of Ortho-Phosphate. Please submit the correct Table 6.8 Summary of Total Oxidised Nitrogen, and include a statement as to whether or not the levels are indicative of high or good quality or otherwise.
- (b) The Drainage Layout Map, drawing no. DR1001 does not indicate the proposed water or sewerage network. Please submit a site layout plan detailing these proposed networks.
- (c) Submit a site layout plan indicating existing service networks in the site, to include water and sewerage.

#### **6. EIAR**

Having regard to the concerns raised above, the applicant shall amend and update the EIAR, by way of an addendum, as necessary.

#### **7. Appropriate Assessment Screening Report & NIS**

Having regard to the concerns raised above, which may cause amendments to the scheme such that a revision to the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and NIS are considered necessary. This shall be done by way of an addendum.

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8. Other

- (a) Submit Appendix B - Traffic Flow Diagrams – Appendix 9a, Volume II of the EIAR or clarify if this is Appendix 9c Existing Traffic Flows (PCUs).
- (b) Please confirm that the Audit Feedback Form is accurate, for example, RSA problem 4.14 is indicated as recommendation accepted, however, this is not the case.
- (c) Submit a site layout plan, with additional detail indicating those areas where steps are proposed.
- (d) Please submit a response to additional matters raised in the submissions and not addressed under issues 1-7 above.

Please also note that following its examination of any information lodged in response to this request for further information, the Board will then decide whether to invoke its powers under section 175(5)(b)(i) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, to require you to publish newspaper notice of the furnishing of any further information and to allow for inspection or purchase of same and the making of further written submissions in relation to same to the Board.

Your response to this letter should be received **not later than 5.30 p.m. on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

In this regard, please submit 2 hard copies and one electronic copy of the above information.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board. Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Caulfield  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737287

JA13

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