

**Reference #149: John Conway & Orlaith McCarthy, 15 Dartmouth Square West.**

My name is John Conway. I am representing my wife and myself as residents of # 15 Dartmouth Square West. We are reference # 149 in TII's Responses to Submissions. I have already participated in Module 1 on 5 March last, addressing issues of grave concern in relation to noise disturbance and ground settlement and vibration during the construction phase which could lead to severe structural damage to our home.

I have no wish to revisit these topics today, except to put it into the record that TII have undertaken to include our home and all the homes from 1 – 17 on Dartmouth Square West in Phase 3 Assessment of damage. I think it is very important that this Phase 3 Assessment is carried out before the board's decision is made. I would urge you therefore, inspector, to seek a copy of this Assessment before you submit your report.

TII's plans require the construction of a diaphragm wall about 30 metres long and 30 metres deep which will run in a north westerly direction. It will be closer to # 15 Dartmouth Square West than to any other house on the terrace. At its starting point at the north end, it will be less than 12 metres from the back door of our home. This proximity – which I only discovered subsequent to my Module 1 submission – is of major concern to my wife and myself. If this piece of work must happen, I urge ABP to make it a condition that the diaphragm wall construction method is used, as I am told that this construction method reduces the risk of ground settlement and subsidence.

I will move on now to traffic issues, including drop-off / pick-up, parking and emergency access.

**Parking**

Dartmouth Square is a Parking Permit and Park & Display area, designated by Dublin City Council as a 'Very High Demand Zone' with an hourly charge of Eur 4 from Monday to Friday between 8 am and 6.30 pm. Residents of the Square have no other option and must rely on-street parking facilities as we are prohibited by the Dublin City Development Plan from converting our front gardens into off-street parking. According to the 2022 Census, only 12% of resident families do not own a car, while 82% of resident families own either a single car or 2 cars.

It is easy to imagine therefore how difficult it can sometimes be to get a parking space close to our home. The situation has certainly deteriorated over time and it is clearly set to get worse during both the construction phase and the operational phase of the MetroLink terminus. We have already experienced parking pressure from construction workers on the Hines / Carrolls Building site.

TII's plans involve digging up the roadway on Dartmouth Square West in order to redirect utilities. When this is happening on-street parking will not be available to 'westie' residents and we will have to try our luck on finding a parking space on the north side of the Square or elsewhere. This will be more than an inconvenience for mothers with small children & shopping bags and for elderly couples.

**Emergency Access**

Of more significance to such elderly couples (including my wife and myself) will be the issue of emergency access to our homes for ambulances or fire brigade. When this matter was touched

on in Module 1 the TII response was that they would respect the '40 metre rule' – meaning that emergency services would be able to get within that distance of our homes. That doesn't make us feel any safer!

### **Traffic Flows**

Traffic Insights, the traffic planning consultants, made a presentation to the Oral Hearing yesterday on behalf of the Charlemont & Dartmouth Community Group. These experts highlighted the implications for traffic flows in and around the vicinity of Dartmouth Square which will be the direct consequence of the lack of parking or drop off / pick-up spaces or waiting facilities for taxis at either the north or the south entrance to the Charlemont terminus.

TII has taken the view that the non-provision of car parking or drop-off / pick-up facilities should act as demand management measure. But this assertion is unsupported by any evidence. It is highly likely that such demand will create pressure elsewhere within the environs of the Charlemont terminus and the Dartmouth Square area, giving rise to severe traffic and parking impacts, which have not been considered or assessed within the EIAR.

### **Misplaced Terminus**

The Charlemont & Dartmouth Community Group has long argued that Charlemont is simply the wrong place for the centre city terminus. This argument is supported by the concerns expressed above about traffic congestion. But in fact, Charlemont has become the terminus by default as it was not originally designed as or intended to be the city centre terminus!

The original MetroLink plan formulated under the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 35 (TSGDA 16) included the upgrading of the LUAS Green Line to Metro standard. However, the Preferred Route Development in March 2019 decided to defer this upgrade and 'pending the future extension of the MetroLink southwards, the (Charlemont) station will now provide a temporary southern terminal'. This deferral has subsequently become a permanent abandonment, but Charlemont which was originally intended to be a temporary terminus only, has become the de facto southern terminus.

### **LUAS Interchange**

TII continues to make a virtue out of the lack of parking and drop-off / pick up and taxi facilities in the vicinity of the Charlemont terminus. They insist that a significant proportion of the passengers will walk or cycle to the Charlemont terminus. I don't doubt that more people are walking & cycling than before and perhaps this trend will continue – but I don't think it will be the preferred mode of transport for families heading to Dublin airport with luggage, small kids & buggies!

TII also insist that since the Metro forms part of an integrated public transport system, passengers will arrive at a Metro station by other public transport means. In the case of the Charlemont terminus, this means by LUAS Green Line or by bus. However, the LUAS interchange with the Metro at Charlemont is far from ideal! The Metro station will not be directly connected to the LUAS stop.

Again, if you are a family travelling to Dublin airport, or if you are elderly or if you are a person of restricted mobility or visual impairment, you have quite a challenge ahead of you to get from the LUAS platform to the Metro platform. First you have to negotiate steps down to the Grande Parade footpath. There is only one small lift to this level. Then you have to walk about 75 metres along the Grand Parade footpath, past the refurbished Carrolls Building, to reach the northern

entrance to the Metro. You will then have to negotiate 3 different escalators to reach the Metro platform. That's quite a trek even for an able-bodied person!

The first escalator (you'll have a choice of a set of 3 parallel escalators) will bring you down 12 metres from street level to the Concourse level. You will then walk 16 metres across the concourse to another set of escalators to go down to the Mezzanine level, a drop of 8 metres. You will then walk 15 metres across the Mezzanine level to another set of 2 escalators, to take you down to the east or west platform, a drop of 9 metres. So, the total drop from street level to the platform is 29 metres. Add another 7 metres from the LUAS platform to street level. In crossword puzzle parlance, that's 36 down and 106 metres across!

The journey is bad enough going down – but even worse coming up from the Metro platform to the LUAS platform! It is user unfriendly and confusing. For strangers / visitors using the system for the first time, it will be a nightmare.

### **Bus Connects**

The interchange between the Metro terminus at Charlemont and the bus system is far from satisfactory. The closest bus stop is on Ranelagh Road. This is 200 metres from the southern Metro entrance and 300 metres from the northern entrance. This stop is on a number of bus routes, but it is not part of the 'spine' system. They are low frequency routes, meaning buses come every hour or half hour.

The nearest bus stop on the E Spine is on Lesson St Upper which is 450 metres away from the northern entrance. The nearest bus stop on the A Spine is at Rathmines Road Lower which is 550 metres away from the northern entrance. There would be additional walk times from both these bus stops to reach the southern Metro entrance.

None of these bus stop options offers passengers an easy connection with the Metro at Charlemont. None of these options is attractive to an elderly person or a person of restricted mobility. It's quite a hike whichever option you choose. It's not attractive to people travelling with luggage to Dublin airport either. And the rattle of wheelie bags along the pavement at all hours of day & night will not be attractive to the residents of the Charlemont & Dartmouth Community!

### **Closing Comments**

During Module 1 and Module 2 this Oral Hearing has heard many arguments about the unsuitability of Charlemont as the city centre terminus for the Metrolink. It is quite simply the wrong place for it. It was not originally designed to be or intended to be the city centre terminus. This has happened by default. This idea should have been abandoned at the same time as the upgrading of the LUAS Green Line to Metro was abandoned.

If the Charlemont terminus goes ahead as proposed, it will create traffic and parking chaos in the environs of Grand Parade, Dartmouth Square and Dartmouth Rd and a much wider area.

As a terminus, Charlemont offers very poor connectivity with the bus system and with the LUAS Green Line. It offers very poor facilities for taxis and for passenger car drop-off and pick-up. It pins too much hope on passengers arriving to the terminus on foot or by bicycle!

It should not proceed!