MetroLink

Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Carroll's Building Stairs and Lift

F01

2024/03/27

MetroLink

Project No:	32108601
Document Title:	Carroll's Building Stairs and Lift
Document No.:	
Revision:	F01
Date:	27/3/2024
Client Name:	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Client No:	
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File Name:	Carroll's Building Stairs and Lift

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Document history and status

Revision	Date	Description	Author	Checker	Reviewer	Approver
F01	27/3/2024	Carroll's Building Stairs and Lift	RG	JK	JK	

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this note is to set out the reasons for the proposed provision of stair and lift access to the Luas at Charlemont and its relationship to the Carroll's Building, a protected structure.

2.0 Strategic Reasons for Charlemont Station

Charlemont is an optimal location for a MetroLink station to allow for the future extension of metro services *"…southwards towards UCD, or along the existing Luas Green Line, or towards southwest Dublin*" as set out in the NTAs GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042. Even in the absence of this requirement to make provision for a future tie-in to, and the conversion of the Green Line to MetroLink standard, Charlemont remains an optimal location for a MetroLink station.

Charlemont has sufficient catchment and demand to justify a station in this location, with major mixed-use developments, multinational main offices, hotels, pubs and restaurants and residential use all within a five to ten-minute walk from the station. Charlemont also provides an optimal interchange point with the Luas Green Line, providing connection to passengers to a segment of the line that can be upgraded in capacity far closer to the capacity of MetroLink than any section of the Green Line north from Charlemont station, including the section to St. Stephen's Green, with tight bends reducing speed, and junctions with major east-west traffic corridors south of the park.

This is set out in more detail in the 'TII Response to Submissions of the Elected Representatives at Charlemont Station', document presented to the Oral Hearing on 4th March 2024.

3.0 Connectivity to Luas

The station will provide northbound Luas passengers with the option of transferring at Charlemont to MetroLink services providing onward connection to Tara and Glasnevin Stations with connection to Irish Rail services, Dublin Airport Station, and Swords., whereas southbound MetroLink passengers can opt to transfer to the Luas line at Charlemont for services to Ranelagh, Sandyford and Cherrywood.

The interchange between Luas and MetroLink will be a single level change and is a distance of approximately 60m based on the addition of the Luas platform stairs to the east of the Luas line.

Locating a terminus at Charlemont provides a direct interchange to the Luas Green Line at a point where there is the possibility for increased capacity (following upgrade interventions as described in the TII report "Luas Green Line Peak hour capacity requirements south of Charlemont" published in March 2019), rather than at St. Stephen's Green where no practical interventions to further increase line capacity is feasible.

The interchange between Metrolink and the Green Line Luas is a key objective of the Metrolink and for the integrated transport network for Dublin.

4.0 Design and Location of Stairs and Lift

The design provides the essential interchange with the Charlemont Luas stop. Access will be via the existing pedestrian footway in front of the Carroll's Building which has capacity to accommodate the additional pedestrian use and then via new stairs and lift installed in front of the western end of the Carroll's building and adjacent to the Luas viaduct, as shown in Figure 1, which comprises View VVM 23.2 in the photomontages that accompany the Railway Order application.

The identified location is the optimal location for interchange between Metrolink and Luas, for the following reasons:

- The optimum arrangement of routes and vertical circulation (lifts, stairs) is an important provision of a legible layout for the interchange between the Metrolink and the Green Line Luas;
- In line with good design guidance, equal prominence and visibility has been given to accessible means of Vertical Circulation. To achieve this the lifts are located so that they are equally visible to the stairs, both when approached from the top and bottom;
- If the lifts are not easily visible and not co-located with the stairs, those with luggage might use stairs when it may be less safe to do so, which could be a cause of accidents. Given the connection to the Airport, we anticipated that people using luggage would be a common feature at Metrolink stations;
- In addition, separating the lift and stairs would undermine the first principle of Universal Design, i.e. equitable use, providing the same means of use for all users avoiding segregating or stigmatizing any user. TII does not want to split PRMs/ people with cases via a separate wayfinding; and
- It has the shortest and least constrained walk from the station exit on Grand Parade and the Luas line.

Suggestions to relocate the lift to the north side of Grand Parade have been made to reduce impact on the Carroll's Building. This would have the following issues:

- it would require in-canal works in the Grand Canal to create the lift foundations;
- It would separate the lift from the stair access; and
- Relocation of the stairs as well as the lift would require additional and permanent in-canal works as well adding significantly to the pedestrian numbers on this section of the footway.

Figure 1 View of Carroll's Building with Metrolink in place (EIAR, VVM 23.3)

5.0 Carroll's Building

Section 26.5.4.16.1 of the EIAR (Architectural Heritage) describes the area at Charlemont Station and identifies the Carroll's Building as a protected structure.

The greater part of the site for the proposed station is number 2 Grand Parade, which is the site of a protected structure known as the Carroll's Building, and which is an office building erected in the 1960s.

The building is described as a '*Seven-storey plus penthouse level, purpose-built office building*' and is noted as being on the Record of Protected Structures for Dublin City Council (Ref. RPS 3280) and is referenced in the EIAR as Constraint Number BH-579.

The EIAR assesses the impacts of the Proposed Project on the environment and the following mitigation and residual impacts on the protected structure are identified.

It is anticipated that there will be no direct or indirect impacts on architectural heritage at Operational Phase other than the impact on the character and setting of the Carroll's Building.

Mitigation
The lift and staircase are to be kept as small as possible and impinge on the frontage of the protected structure to the least possible extent and the design is to be such as to compliment that of the protected structure and is to be reversible, not being tied into the building. The impact will decrease to significant following mitigation.

The works area to the front of protected structure will be reinstated on completion of works and no further mitigation is necessary.

Residual Impacts
The provision of a lift, stairs and a widened pavement will be mitigated by design to reduce the impact on the protected structure. Following mitigation the impact will be significant.

6.0 Appropriateness of Design Response

The Carroll's Building is noted for being one of the few mid-twentieth century buildings to be included in the record of protected structures. It was designed by Patrick Robinson of Robinson, Keeffe and Devane in the early 1960s, and was notable at the time for its modernity, clean lines, large areas of glazing to front and rear, allowing light penetration deep into the building and for its clearly expressed stairway enclosed by glass.

As noted above, the impact on the protected structure will be significant following mitigation.

The proposed design and positioning of the stairs and lift structure has been developed to provide the least possible impact on the protected structure and on the views on to the front façade of the building. Particular design intent includes:

- All structures independent of the Carroll's building;
- The lift structure is aligned close to the existing Luas viaduct with only minimal projection across the extreme western end of the building;
- The finish of the lift structure will be made compatible with the Carroll's building finish so that it is visually consistent with the building;

- It is further noted that the lift location directly adjacent to the Luas viaduct ensures that it does not block views of the building façade from either side of the Grand Canal (as seen by the photomontage above), with views already constrained from further west obscured by the Luas viaduct and appears more associated with the Luas structure than the Carroll's building;

- It is acknowledged that the stairs are aligned in front of the building. To minimise the extent of impact the stairs are turned back on themselves to minimise extent along the front of the building and to stay clear of the existing building entrance;

- The stairs are proposed to have a lightweight appearance with open rails on the stairs themselves. It is intended to finish the stairway in a colour similar to that of the Portland stone cladding bands between the windows of the protected structure and this will further reduce the visibility of the stairway when seen against the Carroll's Building. As can be seen in the photomontage this retains clear visibility through to the building façade behind;

- Impacts on the façade views from the staircase will be most impacted by the direct view across the canal as shown on the photomontage. Views are not possible from points further west due to the Luas viaduct obstruction. Views from points further east, on the south side of the canal are restricted until past Dartmouth Terrace. Views from the north side of the canal will be most impacted by the stairs;

- A further mitigating factor is that the stairs only encroach on the lower two levels of the building façade, with virtually no impact on the well-defined structure of the upper floors forming the office space. The lower two levels of the building are comprised of a more mixed or variable finish (brick wall at east, obscure central portion) which is better able to accommodate the lower stairs with more limited impact.

The is potential for overlooking of the office windows at the top of the stairs, although they may already be overlooked from the Luas platform. This could be mitigated through the addition of an obscure glazed panel at the top landing by the lift. It is considered that this would have a minimal impact on views of the building.

7.0 Conclusion

Charlemont Station is a core element of the Metrolink project. It supports a local catchment of its own while also providing an optimal interchange point with the Luas Green Line for northwards connection towards Broombridge and southwards to Ranelagh, Sandyford and Cherrywood.

Connection to the Luas Green Line is an essential component of the proposed Charlemont station works.

The optimal connection to the Luas Green Line is by way of stairs and adjacent lift on the same side of the road as the northern station entrance on Grand Parade.

While the proposed works have been identified as a significant impact on the Carroll's Building protected structure, the impacts have been minimised by way of the location west of the main facade, and the proposed design and finishes of the proposed lift and stairs. The design response minimises the thickness of the component parts of the staircase, opting for a transparent balustrade and minimal thickness of the stair flight and the required supports. The proposed solution comprises an appropriate design response to this sensitive site in the context of the need for this project and its central role in delivering on strategic transport and planning objectives.