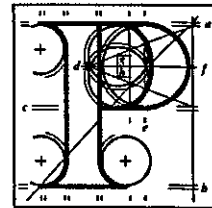


Our Case Number: ABP-314724-22



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Anne Behan and John Kearns
79 Seatown Villas
Swords
Co. Dublin

Date: 29 November 2022

Re: Railway (Metrolink - Estuary to Charlemont via Dublin Airport) Order [2022]
Metrolink. Estuary through Swords, Dublin Airport, Ballymun, Glasnevin and City Centre to
Charlemont, Co. Dublin

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission (including your fee of €50) in relation to the above-mentioned proposed Railway Order and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions/observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the relevant County Council(s) and at the offices of An Bord Pleanála when they have been processed by the Board.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: www.pleanala.ie.

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

Yours faithfully,



Niamh Thornton
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737247

RA05 (No Receipt to Issue)

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First of all, Thank you for the direct updates and proposals for the Metrolink as it impacts on Seatown Villas provided to the local residents of Seatown Villas in October 2021.

In principle, we fully support the Metrolink project. We believe that a modern public transport system is vital for the future development of Swords and the surrounding areas.

As we live in No79 which faces directly onto the green space that will see the most change in this project, I think we are in a good position to voice an opinion on what is proposed.

1: The plan for new openings/access into Seatown Villas from the Linear park proposal.

We fully support and agree with the other Seatown Villas residents who had a chance to speak on the call back in October 2021 and outlined their objections to opening up an access point between the R132 and Seatown Villas via the proposed linear park (refer to image 1 & 2). There is no good reason to do this. All it will do is drive additional traffic both vehicular and pedestrian (walking/cycling) into a very quiet residential area. If the idea is to save time for people looking to access Metro trains at Seatown or Estuary Park & Ride by providing multiple access points to the linear park connecting path, then surely this is redundant by the fact that the planned service schedule of the Metro (trams running every 10/15/20 minutes) negates the need to have faster access routes from Balheary or North Street areas as if someone misses a tram, another one will be along in a very short time. It would not add any significant time delay for people to have to use the current access points via Seatown Road to the Seatown roundabout or via North Street via the R125 to the Estuary roundabout. In fact, as these are the main current pedestrian or cycle options for people today, then it doesn't create an impression that they would be inconvenienced taking the same routes in the future once Metrolink is open.



(Image 1)

Seatown Villas – Street Level View

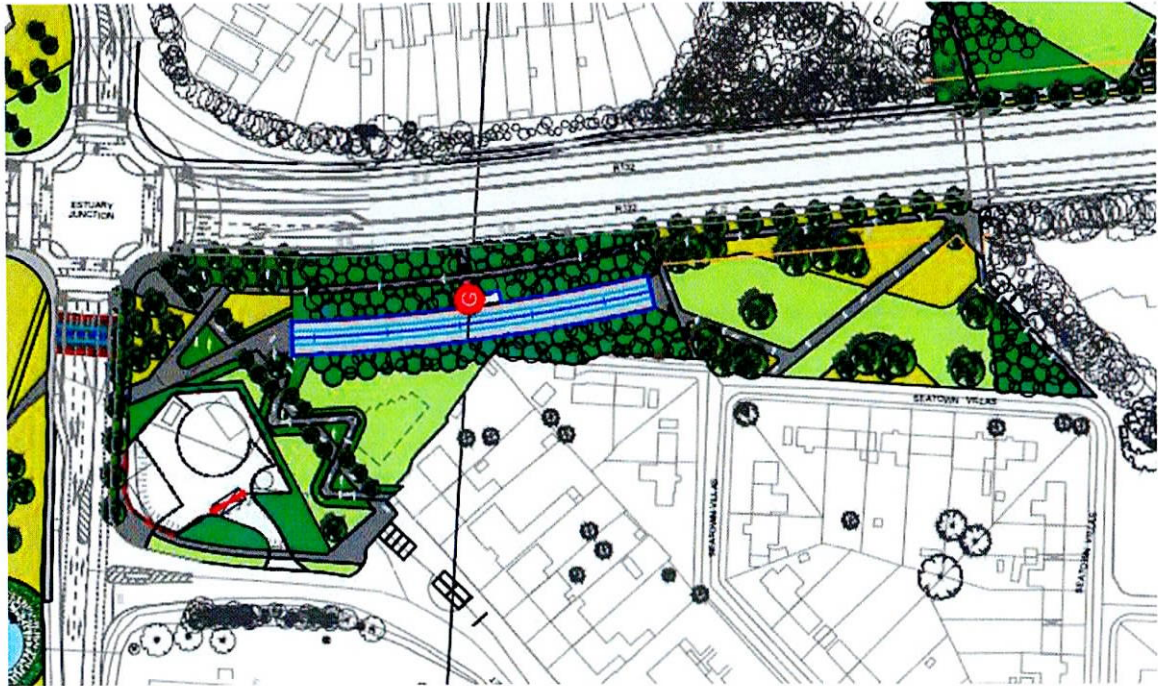


(Image 2)

It is very easy to build an idyllic picture of what life would be like from the stylised artists impressions of a future Seatown Villas with this linear park showing families and commuters mingling peacefully on common and shared recreational areas when the actual day to day reality is often very different. We suggest that you consult with Fingal CoCouncil on the issues that they have had with the small children's playground in the Castle park on the other side of North street from Seatown Villas. What on paper was also a great idea of providing a safe area for small children to play safely has turned into a congregating place for teenagers. With the majority of the residents of Seatown Villas either falling into an older demographic as it is the oldest residential estate in Swords or families with smaller children, it would be unfair to turn their peaceful living situation into an area when they would not feel safe with the amount of through traffic from mainly other areas in the town. The examples of linear parks already in Fingal provided at the time gave the Ward River Valley park as one example. This is not a comparable example as people are using the access points beside and through housing estates to access the various amenities within the park boundaries. What is being proposed for Seatown Villas is the opposite - people using the estate as an access point to move to somewhere else.

We are quite sure that none of the current residents would have any issue with having to walk that bit further to access either Seatown or Estuary Park & Ride stations themselves. Given that situation, I don't believe that providing easier access to other residents of Swords to the detriment of residents in Seatown Villas is a fair trade.

From the updated detail provided on the Railway Order (refer to image 3, this intention makes even less sense as this proposed linear park only extends from the proposed Estuary Junction to the proposed pedestrian crossing over the metro line (without any detail about how this new crossing bridges the R132)



(Image 3)

Now this new linear park sits between a dual carriageway, an exposed section of the metro line and a new planned pumping station. The new zig zag path from the proposed Estuary junction to North street offers the same access as exists currently (and in the proposed new layout) along the pedestrian path by the side of North street. At the other end, it only serves as a shortcut between Estuary Court and North street via Seatown Villas. Something that is not required as there is direct access from Estuary court via the pedestrian bridge over the Seatown roundabout on the R132 and will continue in the new proposed R132 Connectivity project where the proposed Seatown Road junction concept has both pedestrian and cycling crossings provided at all sides of the junction for easy crossing to either side of Seatown road or south along the R132 which would be the intended direction of travel for the majority of crossings at this junction to access the new proposed Seatown Metrolink station (refer to image 4).

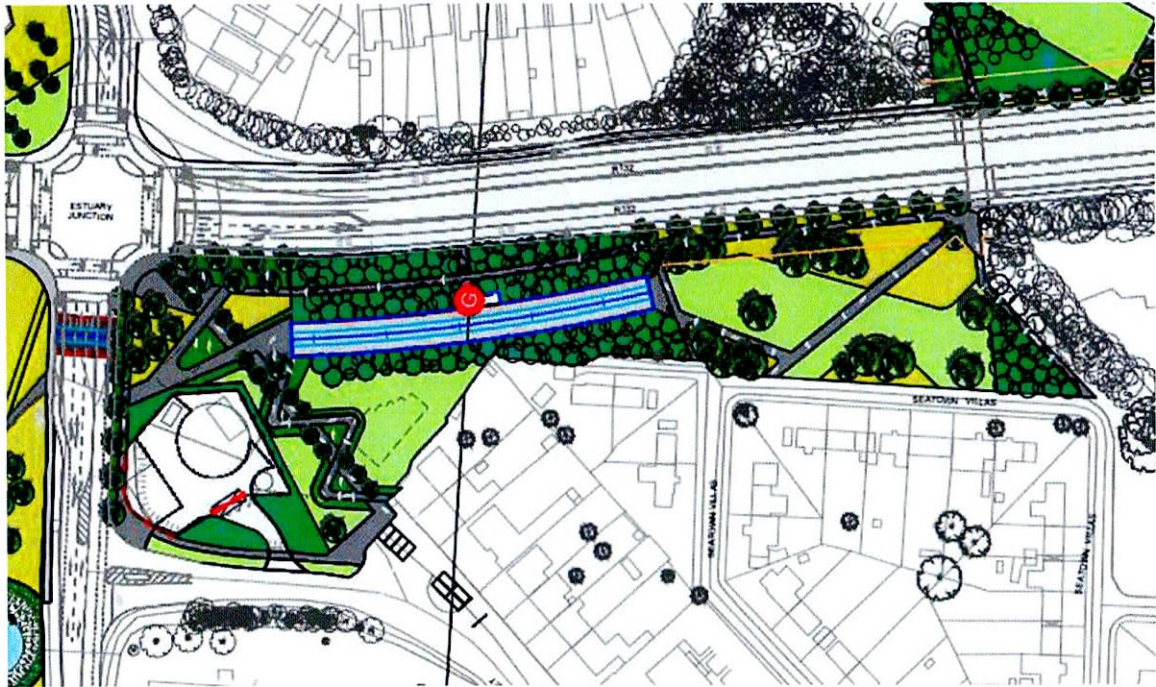


Figure 4.5: Proposed Seatown Road Junction Concept

(Image 4)

2: Alignment of the rail line and the construction method

We would also like to raise a question on the planned construction method described for the portion of the line that will be coming through Seatown Villas in the proposal. There is a section of the line once it is inside the current Seatown Villas boundary described as retained cut design (refer to image 5). Why is this being included in a residential area



(Image 5)

Why can't this portion of the line continue as Cut and Cover design, the same as the portion of the line that enters and exits the current Seatown Villas boundary? At least, then there is a possibility to return the green space to closer to what it is currently after the construction works are complete. Given the focus currently on minimising the impact on the environment, returning the green space and trees back to what they were after the track works are completed by continuing the cut and cover design on to the Balheary Park section of the track where there is ample space for the retained cut design and is not a residential area.

We would like more information on this regarding studies, regulations and requirements that would dictate for a retained cut section in an otherwise short section of tunnelled track. Given the relatively short distance between the planned Seatown and Estuary Park & Ride stations, it does not seem that regulations would dictate that additional points for open light or safe exit / emergency service access in the event of an accident or service failure of one of the trams in a covered section are required in such a short section of the line. Especially when there will be much longer sections of tunnelled track as the line enters the Airport boundary and the proposed route from there towards Dublin City Centre.

We would be concerned at the additional impacts that this design would introduce, in particular:

- noise impact of trams passing along this section,
- access and parking requirements for emergency vehicles if this the retained cut is planned to be used for emergency access
- safe exit and dispersal of passengers if this retained cut is planned to be used as an emergency exit

- Encouraging "spectators" to watch trams passing through the retained cut section.

The residents of Seatown Villas will have to sacrifice a lot during the construction phase of the Metrolink project given the scale of the project. Given that the construction could last for anything up to 6 years, we will suffer more than most with the noise, construction traffic and total loss of our green space. By returning the space and boundary conditions to the way they are now before any work starts should be the very least we are entitled to. A small community such as what exists today in Seatown Villas should not be made to suffer in order to facilitate the rest of Swords. There is no good reason why the current space and boundary conditions could not be returned when the works are complete. The green space and mature trees in Seatown Villas should be treasured. It is not progress to destroy them. These cut and cover & cut and open methods of construction are just cheaper alternatives to full tunnel construction which is what we have been promised since the first "Metro North" project back in 2001. Cheaper is not always better. And cheaper here is letting the residents of Seatown Villas badly. We urge you to reconsider the current proposals for this section of the track and listen to the residents who will be here long after all the people working on the project have returned to their own homes without any negative impact of a train line cutting through their front gardens.

Regards,
Anne Behan & John Kearns
79 Seatown Villas, Swords.
21/11/2022