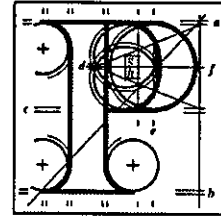


Our Case Number: ABP-314724-22



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Breda Scully
56 Saint Ignatius Road
Dublin 7

Date: 06 January 2023

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.

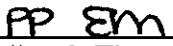
The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

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

Tel	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glaao Áitiúil	LoCall	1800 275 175
Facs	Fax	(01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin	Website	www.pleanala.ie
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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
Baile Átha Cliath 1	Dublin 1
D01 V902	D01 V902

56 St. Ignatius Road
Dublin 7

24th November 2022

Re. Proposed Metrolink – Mater Station (Berkeley Rd. Area)

Dear Sir/Madam

I enclose my submission with regard to above. As a lifelong resident of the above area, I have serious concerns about the effect of the project on the lives of all who live and work here. I elaborate on these concerns in the following pages.

Yours faithfully

Breda Scully *Breda Scully*
Tel. (01) 8302388
0862292428

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	<u>059482-22</u>
ABP-	_____
24 NOV 2022	
Fee: €	<u>50</u> Type: <u>cash</u>
Time: <u>15.43</u>	By: <u>hand</u>

BERKELEY ROAD AND DISTRICT - **A PLACE TO CALL HOME OR JUST SOMEWHERE TO PASS** **THROUGH?**

I write with reference to the proposed MetroLink Mater station to be built on the site of the small park at junction of Berkeley Road/Eccles Street (known as the Mater Park), and the Metrolink line which, it is planned, will run directly under St. Joseph's Parish Church and presbytery,

As a lifelong resident of this area I believe the plan, if carried out, will be very much to the detriment of the locality and will make life even more difficult for those who reside here. A look at a map of the district will show that it is dominated by three very large complexes – the Mater Hospital, Mountjoy Prison and Croke Park. These enormous buildings dominate the skyline. They draw heavy traffic and footfall to the area. The blare of sirens from ambulances and police cars forms an ongoing cacophony. In such a setting, the quest for peace and quietness assumes great importance.

Walking townward along Berkeley Road, approaching the Eccles Street junction, a wonderful vista unfolds before one's eyes. Straight ahead is the park with its fine trees, reflecting the changing seasons. To the left, is the noble façade of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, and the Georgian houses of Eccles Street, crowned in the distance by the towering spire of the exquisite St. George's Church, designed by Irish architect, Francis Johnston. Beyond the trees, rises the blue-grey granite of St. Joseph's Church.

St. Joseph's Church, Berkeley Road, is, indeed, a beacon of light and hope in the parish and beyond. Its priests have ministered tirelessly to generations of parishioners. They have visited and consoled the sick in the Mater Hospital throughout the years, while patients and loved ones continue to come across from the hospital to spend time in the peace and quiet of the church. Many have commented that the Church, although close to the city centre, has a rustic and peaceful air.

The MetroLink plans would, if carried through, negatively affect the very important role St. Joseph's plays in the daily life of the area. Access by car or on foot would be severely limited. The celebration of baptisms, marriages and funerals would be almost impossible. Filipino and Syro-Malabar communities also hold ceremonies in our church. Many travel from outside Dublin. Those with cars require parking. The church is both a spiritual and a social centre for many people. Wheelchair users attend the church, as do others with limited mobility. Access is vital. The MetroLink plans appear to have been drawn up without any consideration at all for the fact that St. Joseph's is very dear to many people, both within and beyond the parish.

Noise, too, is a major issue. Will the peaceful atmosphere of St. Joseph's be shattered by the sound of machinery? Will the noise of tunnelling drown out the ceremonies?

It is crucial, too, that the structure of the church be protected. The building dates from 1880 (the belfry was added 10 years later). Inside, the church is bright, filled with light streaming in through stained glass windows (some by Harry Clarke). What guarantee is there that if tunnelling goes ahead, the church won't be affected or made unsafe? This is a big concern to all who care about St. Joseph's.

Adjacent to the church is the lovely Mater Park. While we don't have access to it, we can enjoy its beauty, without fear, from the footpaths that surround it, unlike the Royal Canal Bank or The Basin which many residents avoid because of the drug dealing, drinking and other anti-social behaviour that take place. Birds can build their nests safely in the trees of the park, away from human interference. They can be heard singing on a spring morning, or seen hopping across the grass. The park is home also to other wildlife, such as foxes and squirrels. We cannot allow this precious ecosystem to be destroyed. If that happens, part of ourselves will die too.

Until about two years ago, the Mater Park was maintained by Dublin City Council. The flowerbeds were planted seasonally and were a joy to behold. The park was landscaped for the visit of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. I remember learning, from my mother, the names of the flowers growing behind the railings, as we passed on our way to school. Sadly, Dublin City Council, for whatever reason (the prospect of MetroLink?) no longer maintain the park. However, each February, the faithful daffodils still herald the coming of spring, and the magnolia trees follow in glorious array. The foliage and the grass are a tonic to the heart, especially as most residents in the parish don't have gardens, and are lucky to have even a small backyard. The park is literally a breath of fresh air. If Covid taught us anything, it is that fresh air and open spaces are essential for health of mind and body.

The original Mater Hospital building looks onto the Park, and an elderly Sister of Mercy, who nursed for many years in the hospital, told me that when the hospital was built, the Mercy Sisters stipulated that the open area should not be built upon, but should be left to provide fresh air and light for the patients and the local inhabitants.

Why should the gift of these brave and thoughtful women from long ago be sacrificed on the altar of so-called progress? For patients and for local residents, fresh air and light are as essential as ever, but do not appear to be taken into account on the Metrolink plans.

Situated in the Mater Park, near Berkeley Road/Eccles Street intersection is the Four Masters Cross (1876) by James Cahill, commissioned by Sir William Wilde (father of Oscar). This monument was erected in 1876 in honour of four Franciscan Friars who preserved the Ancient Annals of Ireland from destruction. It would be an act of cultural vandalism to remove this cross, erected in 1876, and which is of such historic and aesthetic significance.

Also, in the park is the Healing Hands sculpture, by Tony O'Reilly, erected in 2000. It consists of a hollow bronze hand-patterned sphere, containing an eternal flame, and supported on a pedestal. It symbolizes the love of Christ which continues in the care given by hospital staff to the sick. Again, it is a privilege to have this work of art on display in full view of everyone passing by the park.

Austin Clarke mentions the Mater Park in his memoir "Twice Around the Black Church". With its natural beauty, an oasis in a grey cityscape, and its artistic and literary connections, how can anyone even contemplate "removing" the Mater Park?

Also, what of the businesses along Berkeley Road, e.g. two chemists' shops, photography studio, cafes, flower shop, dry cleaners etc.? How will they manage if Berkeley Road is closed to traffic and buses rerouted for any length of time? The danger is that they will close, and we will have even more derelict buildings. The village-like character of the road will be gone for ever. What will come in its place? Noise, dirt and pollution, of which we have more than enough already.

Also, any closure of Berkeley Road would severely affect Public Health Nurses and others (e.g. Drivers who deliver "Meals on Wheels") as they carry out their very important work in the parish. They are a lifeline to many ill and elderly people, allowing them to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. Access to Berkeley Road, and the roads leading from it, is essential for these vital services.

We accept that this area has a very large transient population e.g. many people travel from all over the country to the Mater Hospital. We do not wish to see these people discommoded. However, many of those coming to the hospital from the country (my own relatives included) would rather travel by car rather than risk the vagaries of public transport, particularly when a person is ill and frail. Secure parking, at a reasonable rate, should be provided by the hospital for patients and for staff.

Throughout the summer and, indeed at other times too, crowds pass through North Circular Road and Berkeley Road on their way to Croke Park for matches and concerts. We accept the inconvenience of crowded roads and footpaths, the noise, the litter. At least when the crowds have gone, the place returns to normal. However, by situating the Metrolink link station at Mater Park and having the line run under St. Joseph's Church, these oases of peace would be lost or changed for ever.

Is it possible that the Luas Finglas extension could be extended further to Dublin Airport? Surely it would be less invasive and less expensive than what is proposed in the Metrolink plans. The plans for Luas Finglas read as follows:-

"Luas Finglas will be constructed mostly in grass track, an attractive innovation in Ireland, while a cycle and pedestrian path will be constructed along much of the line, providing family-friendly, sustainable, convenient access between northside communities and the city centre". (National Transport Authority).

Surely, this sounds a better option than what is "coming down the track" to Berkeley Road and other areas along the MetroLink route? It would be a better option too for passengers, a safer, more comfortable journey with air and natural daylight. In the unfortunate event of an accident, or a terrorist incident, emergency services could access the scene more easily if the vehicle was travelling above ground. Just because other cities have metro systems, do we have to blindly follow suit? Please think again about extending the Luas.

Finally, the Berkeley Road area is a place where people live and do business. We do not want to see it turned for years into a construction site, to emerge finally as a mere staging post on the MetroLink line. No metro is worth the air pollution, noise and chaos indicated by these plans. If there is money available, let it be spent on housing and health, instead of sending our young people off to the airport in underground trains to live abroad.

Put simply, for this area, MetroLink spells longterm pain, with no gain at all.

We wish to keep our church, our beautiful park, our shops and our services. This is an old and historic area, with great literary and artistic heritage. We are proud of it. We do not want to lose it. It is home.

Submitted by: *Breda Scully*
Breda Scully
56 St. Ignatius Road
Dublin 7

24th November 2022