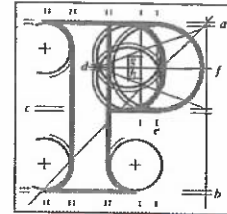


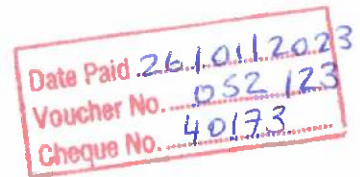
Our Case Number: ABP-314724-22

Your Reference: The Abbey Theatre Amharclann na Mainistreach



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Hughes Planning & Development Consultants
85 Merrion Square
Dublin 2
D02 FX60



Date: 26 JAN 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, there is no fee for an affected landowner, listed on the schedule, to make an observation on this case, therefore, a cheque refund of €50 is enclosed.

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,

pp Niamh Thornton
Niamh Thornton

Executive Officer

Direct Line: 01-8737247

Teil
Glao Áitiúil
Facs
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

Tel
LoCall
Fax
Website
Email

(01) 858 8100
1800 275 175
(01) 872 2684
www.pleanala.ie
bord@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902



HUGHES
PLANNING
& DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

AN BORD PLEANÁLA

LDG-

ABP-

11 JAN 2023

Fee: €

Type:

Time:

By:

Planning Observation

ABP Ref. No. NA29N.314724

**Railway (Metrolink - Estuary to Charlemont via
Dublin Airport) Order**

January 2023

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF:

The Abbey Theatre Amharclann na Mainistreach
26 Lower Abbey Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 K0F1

85 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, D02 FX60
+353 (0)1 539 0710
info@hpd.c.ie
www.hpd.c.ie

1.0 Introduction

Hughes Planning and Development Consultants, 85 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, have prepared this planning observation on behalf of our clients, the Abbey Theatre Amharchlann na Mainstreach, 26 Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1, D01 K0F1, in respect of a submitted Railway Order Application submitted by Transport Infrastructure Ireland for the Railway (Metrolink - Estuary to Charlemont via Dublin Airport) Order. The details of the application are as follows:

ABP. Ref.	NA29N.314724
Applicant	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Case Type	Railway Order Application
Description	Railway (Metrolink - Estuary to Charlemont via Dublin Airport) Order

From the outset, it is submitted to An Bord Pleanála that our clients are, in general, supportive of the proposal and the contributions which may be made by the Metrolink, however, in this instance, our client wishes to express some reservations on the proposal due to a lack of detail submitted with the planning application in relation to the operation of the Abbey Theatre during the construction stage of development, if approved. The Applicant has had no engagement with the Abbey Theatre, thus overlooking the specific operational requirements of the theatre and failing to safeguard the operations.

This submission has been accompanied by the prescribed fee of €50 and we would ask An Bord Pleanála to forward all correspondence relating to this submission to this office.

2.0 Site Description

The area of our clients' interest extends to approximately 3,161sq.m and is defined by its boundaries to the north by Abbey Street Lower, to the south by Eden Quay, to the east by Gardiner Street Lower and to the west by Marlborough Street. The site contains the Abbey Theatre which is which is considered a key component of the cultural heritage of both Dublin City and Ireland. The Abbey Theatre is Ireland's National Theatre. The Abbey Theatre opened on 27th December 1904, founded by WB Yeats. In 1927, the Peacock Theatre opened as an experimental annex to the Abbey Theatre and a home to other amateur companies. The Peacock Theatre also served as the home for the Abbey School of Acting and for the Abbey School of Ballet. The Abbey Theatre has a long and fascinating history and has evolved into one of Ireland's most renowned theatres. The site history is reflected in the theatre's mission statement which reads as follows:

'Inspired by the revolutionary ideals of our founders and our rich canon of Irish dramatic writing, our mission is to imaginatively engage with all of Irish society through the production of ambitious, courageous and new theatre in all its forms. We commit to lead in the telling of the whole Irish story, in English and in Irish, and we affirm that the Abbey is a theatre for the entire island of Ireland and for all its people. In every endeavour, we promote inclusiveness, diversity and equality.'

Whilst the existing Abbey Theatre is the key feature on the site, the wider area which is of interest due to a redevelopment scheme also contains properties along Eden Quay which include several protected structures. The area surrounding the subject site features a mix of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional buildings in a variety of architectural styles and varying in heights. These buildings are occupied by residential and commercial land uses.



Figure 1.0 Aerial image showing the immediate locational context of our clients' area of interest, including the Abbey Theatre. (approximate outline).



Figure 2.0 Bird's eye image showing the wider locational context of the Abbey Theatre and surrounds.



Figure 3.0 Street view image of the Abbey Theatre.

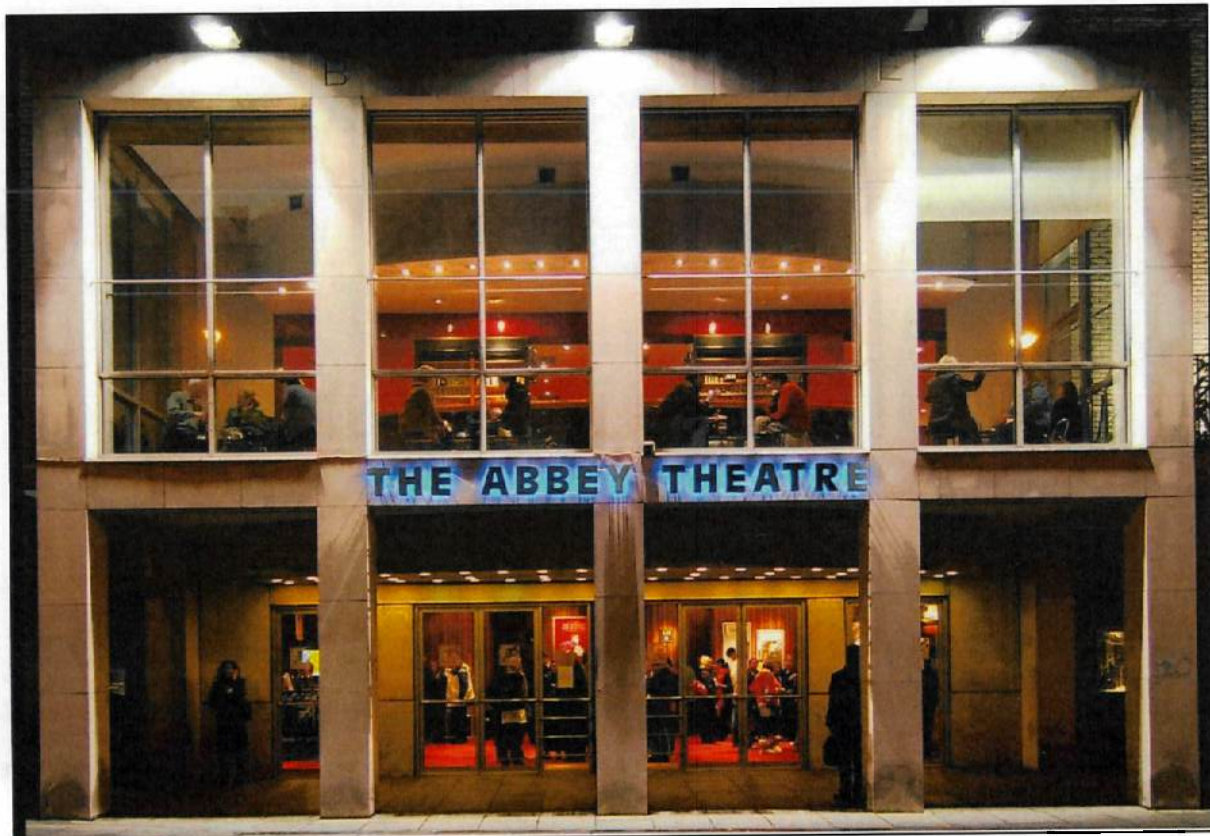


Figure 4.0 Photograph of the Abbey Theatre.

The Abbey Theatre is Ireland's National Theatre. The Abbey Theatre opened on 27th December 1904, founded by WB Yeats. In 1927, the Peacock Theatre opened as an experimental annex to the Abbey Theatre and a home to other amateur companies. The Peacock Theatre also served as the home for the Abbey School of Acting and for the Abbey School of Ballet. The Abbey Theatre has a long and fascinating history and has evolved into one of Ireland's most renowned theatres. The site history is reflected in the theatre's mission statement which reads as follows:

'Inspired by the revolutionary ideals of our founders and our rich canon of Irish dramatic writing, our mission is to imaginatively engage with all of Irish society through the production of ambitious, courageous and new theatre in all its forms. We commit to lead in the telling of the whole Irish story, in English and in Irish, and we affirm that the Abbey is a theatre for the entire island of Ireland and for all its people. In every endeavour, we promote inclusiveness, diversity and equality.'



3.0 Site Planning History

A review of Dublin City Council planning register has found several planning applications on the Site including the Abbey Theatre and the adjoining sites. The following are noted:

3.1 The Abbey Theatre, no. 26 Abbey Street Lower, Dublin 1

Reg. Ref. WEB1572/20 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 24th November 2020 for a development comprising *the erection of new external illuminated signage on the front (western) elevation of the building facade.*

Reg. Ref. 2294/16 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 16th May 2016 for a development comprising *the erection of a single story workshop with an area of 47m² in the existing yard to the rear of the Abbey Theatre.*

3.2 Scots Church and VHI House, Abbey Street Lower, Dublin 1

Reg. Ref. 3926/18 Planning permission and retention permission granted by Dublin City Council on 17th December 2018 for a development comprising *modifications to permission refs. 1546/08 (extended under ref. 1546/08/x1), ref. 2627/16 and ref. 4419/16 to include: removal of the existing temporary free standing totem signage; Retention of the groundworks associated with the existing temporary totem signage (foundations, wiring etc.); Erection of a new free-standing totem sign (c.4m high) denoting the entrance to the new VHI Healthcare Office Headquarters (signage totalling c.8sq.m); Associated site development works and alterations to permitted landscaping.*

Reg. Ref. 4419/16 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 5th April 2017 for a development comprising *modifications to the planned expansion of VHI Healthcare Office Headquarters permitted under Reg. Ref 1546/08 and Reg. Ref. 2627/16. Modifications include: Redesign of permitted rear (south) glazed link. Removal of existing entrance, ramp and signage at VHI House and provision of a new planter. Reconfiguration of internal first floor balconies within permitted office building.*

Reg. Ref. 2627/16 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 6th September 2016 for a development comprising *'modifications to permitted development Reg. Ref. 1546/08 including omission of previously granted first floor pod and staircase within the church building. - Provision of new link to permitted lift lobby and new connection through Church wall. - Revised extension and glazed link building design including revised link building roof to south of the church. - Revised church floor level and entrance design including glazed automatic sliding door screen. - Revised lobby and reception area design. - Provision of new ope and sliding door screen from entrance lobby to church. - Removal of existing organ pipes, pulpit and chancel rail. - Replacement of contemporary church and church hall windows. - Removal of existing wall and blocked up chimney breast from former vestry room. - New security grille and gate at permitted south elevation. - New fire escape doors. - Feature facade lighting. - Relocation of permitted attenuation tank. - New external rainwater pipe design.*

The proposed changes results in a net reduction in permitted floor area by c.190.7 sq.m to c. 2600.5 sq.m in total.

Reg. Ref. 1546/08 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 2nd October 2008 for a development comprising *modifications and extension to the existing structures and for change of use from ecclesiastical to office use as part of the planned expansion of the VHI Healthcare Office Headquarters at Abbey Street Lower.*

3.3 No. 21 Eden Quay, Dublin 1

Reg. Ref. 4052/19 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 7th January 2020 for a development comprising *the change of use of the first floor of the premises from commercial to residential & the provision of 1 no. one bedroom apartment on the existing 1st floor level of this protected structure.*

Reg. Ref. 3862/18 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 26th April 2019 for a development comprising *the change of use from retail shop unit to take away coffee shop at ground floor unit, 21 Eden Quay, Dublin 1 - A Protected Structure.*

3.4 Mercantile Building, 26-27 Eden Quay, Dublin 1

Reg. Ref. 3416/19 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 19th February 2020 for a development comprising *the conservation, modification and extension of the Mercantile Building to accommodate a new VHI Healthcare screening clinic providing consultation rooms, reception and office space. To the rear of the Mercantile Building a new 5 storey office extension over basement is proposed facing onto Abbey Street Old to provide an extension to VHI Healthcare Office Headquarters with connectivity between the existing and new offices provided at ground floor level across Abbey Street Old (with associated public realm improvements) and also via a new pedestrian glazed link bridge at second floor level. The connection to the existing offices will necessitate modifications to permitted development Reg. Ref. 1546/08 (as extended under Ref. 1546/08/x1 (including provision of new accesses. Permission is also sought for lighting and signage to the Mercantile building, the extension, the public realm and the existing building.*

Reg. Ref. 2118/15 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 1st May 2015 for a development comprising *the change of use from office use to hostel; Rear extensions to basement, ground, first, second and third floors and the provision of an additional fourth floor on the rear extension; The total number of storeys proposed for the rear building is 5 over basement. The front building is to remain as 4 storeys over infilled basement; The total floor space of the proposed development is 1,174 sqm; Total additional floor space is 638 sqm and total retained floorspace is 536 sqm; Redesign and extension of the existing offices, reception rooms, bathrooms and circulation areas to now provide the following: Dining area, WC, laundry and services room at basement level; 2 no. bedrooms (each with ensuite bathroom), games / TV area, glazed roof atrium, cafe area, social area, reception area, staff offices, entrance lobby, disabled WC, store room and locker area at ground floor level; 4 no. bedrooms (each with ensuite bathroom) on each of the first, second, third and fourth floors of the rear extension; Additional storage room on the first floor rear extension; rear terraced area on the fourth floor rear extension accessible from the bedrooms; 2 no. dormitory bedrooms (each with ensuite bathroom), separate bathroom and storage room on the first floor of the original front building; 4 no. bedrooms (3 with ensuite bathroom on the second floor of the original front building; 5 no. bedrooms (4 with ensuite bathroom) and separate bathroom on the third floor of the original front building (29 no. bedrooms in total); Construction of a new rear facade elevation with render and brick finish and modern window design; Metal roof design for rear extension; Additional stairs, stairwells, landings, lift, lift lobbies, fire escapes and circulation areas; Internal*

alterations to existing internal design elements to include removal of reception counter, partitions, stairways, a window railing, joinery, old pipework and electrics; Blocking up of internal doors and windows; Retention, restoration and/or reinstatement of original lobbies, partitions, fireplaces, hearths and mantelpieces, stairs, doors, windows and casings, rooflights, tiling and flooring, rendering, architraves, plasterworks, cornicing, joinery, and balustrades; Relocation of roof stairs; Blocking up of internal windows and doors; Widening and/or upgrading of internal doors and windows for access and fire safety rating; Construction of additional partitions and screening, stairs and fire escapes, lockers, doors and windows, rendering, balustrades and a new staff counter; Retention of existing front facade with minor repairs including additional pointing and repainting of windows and doors; And all ancillary development boundary works.

3.5 No. 28 Eden Quay, Dublin 1

Reg. Ref. 3360/20 Planning permission refused by Dublin City Council on 4th November 2020 for a development comprising the *change of use from existing paved area to outdoor seating area for use by customers of 'The Wiley Fox', to comply with social distancing guidelines as defined by the Department of Health and the HPSC. This will include the erection of 4 no. removable canvas screens, supported by metal posts, and the placement of tables and chairs.*

3.6 Liberty Hall, Eden Quay, Dublin 1

Reg. Ref. 3714/15 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 11th January 2016 to *affix a temporary banner to the Eden Quay frontage of its premises at Liberty Hall, Eden Quay, Dublin 1. The banner will be 20 metres in height and 10 metres in width and will be fixed to existing metal loops on the facade. It will be displayed for a period of two weeks from Friday 27 November 2015 to Friday 11 December 2015.*

Reg. Ref. 2995/14 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 8th October 2014 to *affix a temporary banner to the Eden Quay frontage of its premises. The banner will be 20 metres in height and 10 metres in width and will be fixed to existing metal loops on the facade. It will be displayed for a period of three weeks from 26 September to 10 October 2014.*

Reg. Ref. 2029/14 Planning permission granted by Dublin City Council on 1st April 2014 to *affix a temporary banner to the Eden Quay frontage of its premises. The banner will be 20 metres in height and 10 metres in width and will be fixed to existing metal loops on the facade. The banner will be displayed for a period of not more than four weeks from the date of receipt of the planning permission.*

4.0 Planning Policy

The following section will provide a brief overview of the key planning policy relating to our clients' property, particularly the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the National Planning Framework, the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 and the draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 which is coming into effect in December 2022.

4.1 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040- National Planning Framework seeks a more balanced and concentrated growth, particularly within the five major cities in Ireland. A key element of national growth is the more efficient use of underutilized sites within existing built-up areas. The following national policy objectives are considered to be relevant in the context of the proposed redevelopment:

NPO 4 *Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.*

NPO 5 *Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.*

NPO 6 *Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.*

4.2 Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan 2018-2027

The National Development Plan 2018—2027 sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the National Planning Framework set out therein. The National Development Plan demonstrates the Government's commitment to meeting Ireland's infrastructure and investment needs over the next ten years, through a total investment estimated at €116 billion over the period. This includes investment in enhanced amenity and heritage. National Strategic Outcome 7 of the National Development Plan 2018-2027 related to Enhanced Amenity and Heritage. In relation to this outcome, the development plan notes that investment in culture, heritage and sports can play a very important role in improving amenities and the attractiveness and liveability of different areas, whether in cities, other urban areas, small towns and rural areas. This investment can complement and reinforce the impact of investment in sustainable public transport networks and in other amenities. Plans for investment in culture and heritage recognise that high quality infrastructure is critical for a vibrant heritage and culture sector and that investment in our cultural heritage underpins social cohesion and supports strong, sustainable economic growth. In terms of regional objectives, specific priorities are to enhance arts and culture centres throughout the country, develop the sustainable tourism potential of our culture and heritage infrastructure and improve Ireland's outdoor recreation infrastructure and natural heritage. In recognition of the vital role of culture, heritage and sport in our national life, total funding allocated to strategic investment priorities in this area is in excess of €1 billion.

Notably, the Abbey Theatre redevelopment was included within this plan.

4.3 National Development Plan 2021-2030

The National Development Plan 2021-2030 is an updated plan for Ireland following a review of the 2017 plan by the Government. The NDP plays an essential role in shaping responses to the challenges of the present, and also prepare us for the challenges of the future. It will ensure the implementation of the NPF through investment levels which will be well above the EU average. The major public investment approved by Government and detailed in the new NDP will play a significant role in addressing the opportunities and challenges faced by Ireland over the coming years from issues such as Covid-19, Brexit, housing, health, climate action and a population projected to grow by one million people between 2016 and 2040.

The National Development Plan commits to a once in-a-generation investment in the renovation and redevelopment of our National Cultural Institutions. This investment is aligned with the NPF objective of ensuring that Ireland has a creative, innovative and culturally attuned society, whose people, businesses and communities are equipped to further our national economic output and creative endeavour.

The redevelopment of the National Concert Hall is included within the National Development Plan which aims to provide upgraded and modernised facilities and visitor experience. The redevelopment of the Abbey Theatre is one listed project set for completion over the next 5 years. The Abbey Theatre is an ambitious project that will deliver a landmark building to house the National Theatre. As such, any development occurring adjoining the Abbey Theatre should ensure that the existing operations are not disturbed. This has not been satisfactorily demonstrated by the submitted documentation.

4.4 Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (2019)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Regional Assembly (RSES) provides a long-term, strategic development framework for the future physical, economic and social development of the Southern Region. The purpose of the RSES will be to support the programme for change set out

in Project Ireland 2040. The RSES promotes long-term transformational and rejuvenation-focused city growth for Metropolitan areas and surrounds including Dublin.

The RSES notes that culture, language and heritage are an integral part of Irish life. Their importance in society remains undiminished, from their deep intrinsic value, to their wider social import and benefit, and their economic potential in terms of creative industries and cultural tourism. The RSES states the following in relation to arts and culture:

'The role of arts, culture, and language in providing for enhanced wellbeing and social cohesiveness is recognised with participation in cultural activity directly linked to individual and societal wellbeing and quality of life. There is significant provision of arts and cultural facilities with nearly all national cultural institutions and several regionally significant facilities located in the Region. Additionally, arts and culture have a key role to play in highlighting the distinctiveness of place in our cities, towns and rural areas and they play a significant role in defining Ireland's international profile, as a place of culture, learning and creativity, thus assisting to attract tourism and investment. Cultural tourism forms a central plank of the Irish tourism industry and a very significant generator of foreign exchange earnings'

The following policy of the RSES relates directly to the above:

RPO 9.24 *Promote and facilitate the role of arts and culture in recognition of its importance to people's identity and the potential for economic development through a unique cultural tourism offering throughout the Region.*

Cultural and the arts are important elements to the Irish society and Irish economy, generating revenue from local, national and international tourists. The Abbey Theatre is notably the national theatre of Ireland. Thus, the protection of its operations should be facilitated. This is not evidenced within the submitted railway order documentation.

4.5 Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

The Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 lays down six themes that constitute inter-related and essential elements for a sustainable approach future development in the city. The six themes are; Economic, Social, Cultural, Urban Form, Movement and Environmental. The current Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 recognises the value of the arts and culture and the role they have in achieving more sustainable and resilient cities. 'Culture/Built Heritage' is noted as one of the key principle to deliver a better quality of life for all. The principle is described as follows:

Cultural/Built Heritage *Making provision for cultural facilities throughout the city and increasing awareness of our cultural heritage and promoting safe and active streets through the design of buildings and the public realm.*

Section 11.2 of the current development plan refers to 'Culture' in further detail and states that:

'the enhancement and promotion of Dublin as a 'City of Character and Culture', promoting an active artistic and cultural community at city-wide and neighbourhood levels is central to making a vibrant city that is an attractive destination for tourists, the residents of the city and the creative industries. Reinforcing existing cultural quarters, nurturing new cultural initiatives that support emerging cultural quarters and enabling access to cultural development at a local level are essential to developing a city's cultural wealth.'

More specifically, Figure 18 of the development plan lists the 'Abbey Theatre' as a main tourist attraction, as indicated on the following extract. Notably, it is within close proximity to several others. The development plan also refers to the Abbey Theatre as a 'National cultural institutions' which include the National Archives, National Concert Hall, the Abbey Theatre, National Museum of Ireland, National Library of Ireland, National Gallery of Ireland, Chester Beatty Library, Irish Museum of Modern Art and the Crawford Gallery.

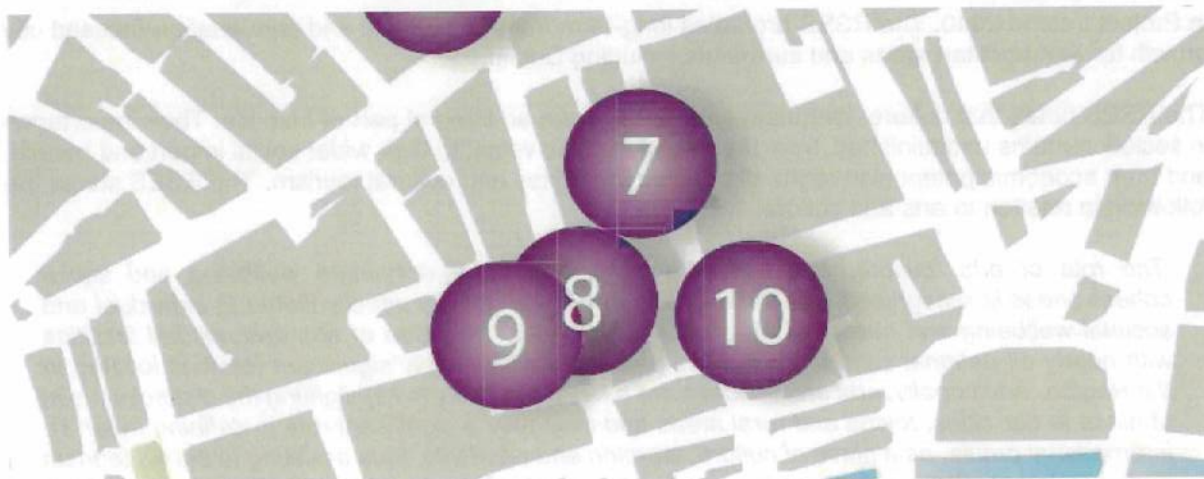


Figure 5.0 Extract of Figure 18 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 which identifies the Abbey Theatre as a main tourist attraction.

Making provision for cultural facilities and increasing awareness and protection of the City's cultural and built heritage through high quality design underpins the City Development Plan. Dublin City Council has a stated policy in developing the city's cultural resources. This priority also provides for a concerted effort to upgrade the public domain in the city to facilitate festivals, events and movement between the city's cultural attractions

4.5.1 Zoning Objective

Under the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, our clients' lands are zoned 'Z5' (refer to the following figure below the objective of which is *'to consolidate and facilitate the development of the central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and protect its civic design character and dignity.'*

The vision for this zoning area is to strengthen and consolidate the robust city-centre mixed-use zoning, with active promotion of the inner city as an attractive place for urban living, working and visiting; the delivery of housing regeneration projects, the emergence of spatial clusters of economic specialisms, public realm improvements and the strengthening of the retail core.

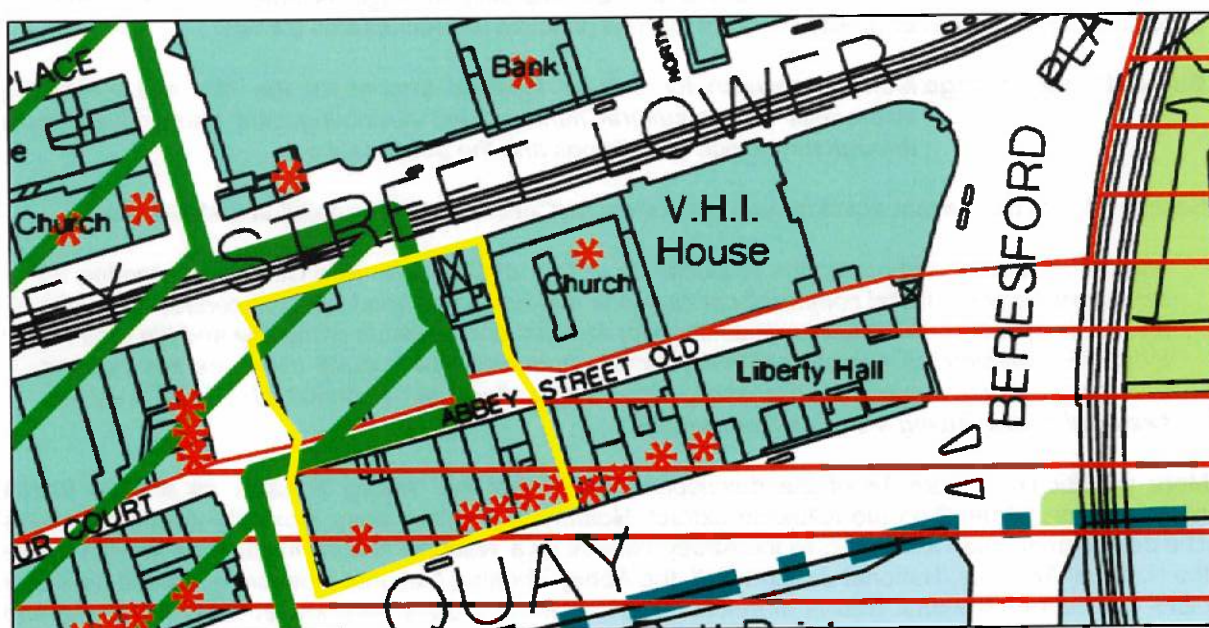


Figure 6.0 Extract from Zoning Map Set E of the Dublin City Council Development Plan 2016-2022 illustrating the subject site (yellow outline) as contained within lands subject to zoning objective Z5.

The zoning matrix within the plan contains the following permissible and open for consideration uses on Z5 zoned lands:

Permissible Uses:

'Amusement/leisure complex; bed and breakfast; betting office; buildings for the health, safety and welfare of the public; car park; car trading; childcare facility; civic offices; community facility; conference centre; cultural creative, artistic, recreational building and uses; delicatessen; education; embassy office; enterprise centre; funeral home; guest house; home-based economic activity; hostel; hotel; industry (light); internet café; live-work units; media-associated uses; medical and related consultants; motor sales showroom; nightclub; office; off-licence; open space; part off-licence; place of public worship; public house; public service installation; residential; restaurant; science and technology- based industry; shop (district); shop (neighbourhood); shop (major comparison); take-away; training centre; veterinary surgery; warehousing (retail/non-food)/retail park.'

Open for Consideration Uses on Z5 lands;

'Advertisement and advertising structures; civic and amenity/recycling centre; financial institution; household fuel depot; outdoor poster advertising; petrol station; transport depot'.

4.6 Dublin County Development Plan 2022– 2028

The relevant development plan against which any planning application at our clients' premises would be assessed against is the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028. This plan is set to come into effect in December 2022, replacing the current Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028.

4.6.1 Zoning

We note, as per the provisions of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, our clients' lands remain under the Z5 zoning objective, the purpose of which is to *'To consolidate and facilitate the development of the central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and protect its civic design character and dignity'.*

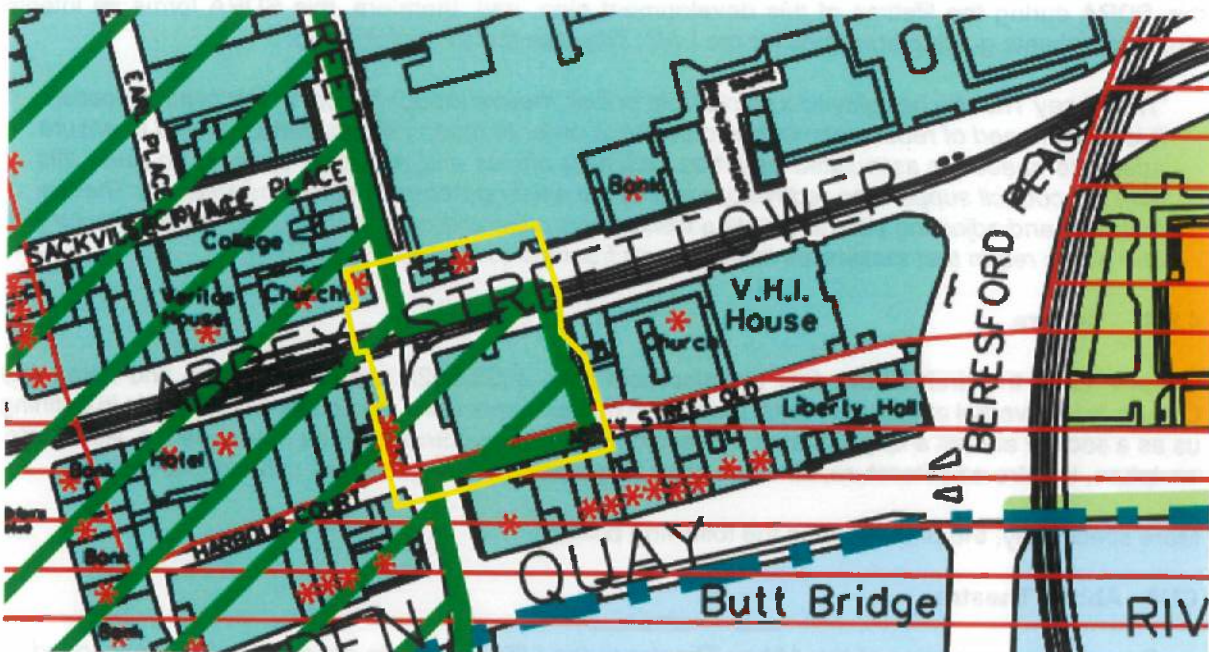


Figure 7.0 Extract from Zoning Mapset E of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, showing our clients' site (red star) subject to the Z5.

4.6.2 Permitted and Open for Consideration Land Uses

The development plan contains a list of permissible uses and open for consideration uses on Z5 zoned lands. The following is noted:

Permissible Uses:

Amusement/leisure complex, beauty/ grooming services, bed and breakfast, buildings for the health, safety and welfare of the public, café/tearoom, childcare facility, civic offices, community facility, conference centre, craft centre/ craft shop, cultural, creative, artistic, recreational building and uses, cultural/recreational building and uses, delicatessen, education, embassy office, enterprise centre, financial institution, funeral home, guesthouse, home-based economic activity, hostel (tourist), hotel, industry (light), internet café/call centre, livework units, media-associated uses, medical and related consultants, mobility hub, nightclub, office, off-licence, off-licence (part), open space, place of public worship, primary health care centre, public house, public service installation, recycling facility, residential, restaurant, science and technology-based industry, shop (district), shop (local), shop (neighbourhood), shop (major comparison), sports facility, student accommodation, take-away, training centre, veterinary surgery, warehousing (retail/non-food)/retail park.

Open for Consideration Uses on Z5 lands;

'Advertisement and advertising structures, betting office, Build to Rent residential, car park, car trading, civic and amenity/recycling centre, household fuel depot, laundromat, motor sales showroom, outdoor poster advertising, petrol station, postal hotel/motel, transport depot..

4.6.3 SDR 10 – North East Inner City

The Abbey Theatre and surrounds are located within SDR 10 – North East Inner City. The NEIC SDR has an area of 161ha and is located in the city centre just north of the River Liffey, extending from the historic Moore Street area, on its western side, to Docklands, on the east. It includes areas to the east of Dorset Street and extends to some areas north of the Royal Canal. Given the significance of this area and its regeneration potential, Dublin City Council is committed to preparing a Local Area Plan for this SDR during the lifetime of this development plan, and, therefore, this SDR forms an interim strategy and sets guiding principles for the LAP. The plan states the following:

'The Abbey Theatre has played a pivotal role in Irish theatre through history at this central location. It is now in need of redevelopment/ expansion in order to meet modern standards and to ensure adequate space for associated activities including offices and rehearsal spaces. To meet this aim, the council support the redevelopment of the existing Abbey Theatre and Peacock Theatre buildings and adjoining sites to create a vibrant new cultural quarter with high quality architecture and public realm that maximises linkages and frontage to the River Liffey.'

4.6.4 Culture

Chapter 12 of the draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 relates to Culture and notes that Culture is a universal and fundamental part of the human experience, and plays a central role in defining us as a society and as a City. Cultural expression takes many forms such as music, dance, visual arts, sculpture, theatre and literature; all when used for purpose of interpretive or cultural expression.

More specifically, the plan includes the following policy:

CU6 - Abbey Theatre

Support the expansion of the Abbey Theatre to the Liffey to create an upgraded and expanded venue that contributes positively to the culture of the city and provides the Abbey with a distinctive, visible new context that contributes positively to the Liffey Quays

5.0 Concerns on Submitted Application

As stated, our clients are generally supportive of necessary improved public transport infrastructure within Dublin City and County, as well as the improvement of national connectivity. However, the submitted railway order application causes some concerns, primarily relating to the lack of communication by the Applicant with the Abbey Theatre and possible adverse impacts arising from the proposal on the operations of the theatre.

The Abbey Theatre is located along the red Luas line. This light railway system has extremely high frequency during peak hours as well as having regular frequency trams at non-peak times of the day. This proximity currently results in disturbance to the Abbey Theatre. Our clients seek reassurance that Metrolink will not result in any additional disturbance of performances or rehearsal space. The purpose of the rehearsal is to prepare the performance and to also achieve a sense of the performance space, allowing for familiarity with the surrounds. This could be adversely impacted by any adjoining vibrations, noise and/or disturbance which may result from the operation of Metrolink or the tunnelling works related to same.

The Applicant has not directly consulted with the Abbey Theatre group, nor have they submitted adequate information, models or details to demonstrate that rehearsals or performances will not be impacted upon. Such relevant information includes possible additional contaminants from electromagnetic interference to instruments, amplifiers, sound loops, broadcast units etc. Again, a significant concern arises in relation to the construction period of the railway if approved, especially during the tunnelling period which may be highly disruptive and may require changes to performance or rehearsal programmes operating at the Abbey Theatre. There is a lack of information demonstrating how the construction stage, including tunnelling, may affect the structure of the Abbey Theatre and surrounding buildings.

As noted, the Abbey Theatre has been earmarked for large-scale redevelopment within national plans prepared by the Government. This has not been referenced by the Applicant. Information on the possible impacts of Metrolink operations of the Abbey Theatre and the impending comprehensive redevelopment should be sought and considered prior to any grant of permission. Such information should be provided by the Applicant and its team with all relevant stakeholders, including our clients.

6.0 Conclusion

We submit that the proposed railway order application has been made without consideration of the possible adverse impacts on the functioning or operation of the Abbey Theatre and surrounding properties. The Abbey Theatre is designated as Ireland's National Theatre and thus should be protected from undue impacts arising from developments, including at construction and operational stages. The Abbey Theatre currently adjoins a high frequency Luas line. Rail traffic along the line will increase in the event of the Metrolink being approved and constructed, resulting in impacts to performance and rehearsal spaces of the Abbey Theatre and the Peacock Theatre. The level of impact has not been measured or detailed by the Applicant. Whilst our clients are generally supportive of the improvement of national public transport infrastructure, it is submitted that the scheme should not be approved without consideration of any impacts it will have on the Abbey Theatre and/or appropriate conditions to mitigate same.

We look forward to the decision of the Board on this application.



Kevin Hughes MIPI MRTPI
Director for HPDC Ltd.