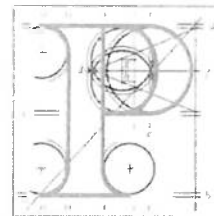


Our Case Number: ABP-318758-23

Your Reference: SID-OBS-001494



An
Bord
Pleanála

Vivienne Byrne Chairperson
Droichead Arts Centre
Barlow House
West St
Drogheda
Co. Louth

Date: 15th February 2024

Re: Proposed public realm improvement works known as the 'Westgate 2040 Project'
in Drogheda, County Louth

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Board has approved it or approved it with conditions.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned officer of the Board at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Aisling Reilly
Executive Officer

Direct Line: 01-8737131

JA02

| | | |
|--------------------|---------|--|
| Teil | Tel | (01) 858 8100 |
| Glaos Áitiúil | LoCall | 1800 275 175 |
| Facs | Fax | (01) 872 2684 |
| Láithreán Gréasáin | Website | www.pleanala.ie |
| Ríomhphost | Email | bord@pleanala.ie |

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 64 Sráid Maoilbhríde | 64 Marlborough Street |
| Baile Átha Cliath 1 | Dublin 1 |
| D01 V902 | D01 V902 |

Droichead Arts Centre
Barlow House
West St
Drogheda, Co. Louth.

9 Feb 2024

An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, DO1 V902

Bord Pleanála Case reference: JA15.318758

Re: Observation on the Urban Regeneration Project within the Westgate Vision Area of Drogheda, Co Louth.

From: Droichead Arts Centre – Barlow House – Westgate Ward

Grounds for Observations to ABP:

- (i) **the implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development in the area concerned.**

Droichead Arts Centre is a multi-disciplinary arts centre in Drogheda, County Louth. Based over two buildings, Stockwell St., leased from the council, where we have our theatre, gallery, café bar, and box office, and Barlow House, a Georgian Building, which we purchased in 1999, which houses admin offices, artist's studios, as well as workshop/rehearsal space.

Most Droichead Arts Centre Board members and the executive took part in the Turley Consultation process of 2022 and very much like and welcome the ambition and scale of the Westgate Vision Area plan. It will help re-invigorate Drogheda, providing a pleasing entrance from the Westgate side of town, opening up the river to recreation, leisure, nature, business opportunity and also the incorporation of the Old Abbey, both protecting and enhancing the area. As part of the consultation, and as a major land owner in the Westgate Ward – i.e. Barlow House, we made the consultants aware of a proposed development at the back of Barlow House, that of a new flagship Arts Centre.

It was always our intention when purchasing Barlow to ensure we optimise this beautifully preserved Georgian building and the space around it for the betterment and development of Drogheda and the Arts. This new arts centre would combine the existing activities of both buildings into one purpose built new centre.

In 2021 we commissioned architect Adrian King, from McKeivitt King to complete a feasibility study for a new arts centre at the back of Barlow. We have corresponded with Louth County Council, and

droichead arts centre

met with representatives only recently again where detailed plans of the Westgate Ward project was shared with our board and executive, and our architects presented our draft plans for a new arts centre at the back of the Barlow House.

Both parties agreed that both the Westgate Ward and the Droichead projects would complement each other greatly.

We acknowledge we are still at the infancy stage of bringing our Droichead plans to fruition. Whilst we have continued operating to serve our community and the Arts from our other venue in Stockwell St., we would like to re-iterate that we are very keen to progress this project and understand that this could be a lengthy process between funding, planning, delivery, etc. but we are very excited about the prospect of delivering this flagship project to the town and surrounding area.

In devising these plans, there is a requirement for vehicular access to the side/back to move sets, equipment, supplies into the proposed new Droichead gallery and theatre space. Our roll door access onto George's Square, as marked in the Westgate Ward plans is factored into our feasibility study/initial plans we shared with Louth County Council. We recognise that this access has not been used for many years as it wasn't necessary to our site in its current under-utilised state. The back of Barlow is currently used for car parking and some temporary studio buildings which are in a state of dilapidation and would all be taken down to clear the site to make way for the new centre.

We note and have discussed how the Westgate Ward plans which are currently with ABP close off Barlow's access to George's Square. We also note that the plan for the new theatre would need side/rear access as this wider part of the Barlow site will be the orientation used for the theatre space.

In meeting with Louth County Council it was noted that this situation would be reviewed and we will discuss the possibility of providing access to the back of Barlow via the O'Reilly's Car Park which is accessed from Fair Street as a compensatory measure should the George's Square development proceed, thus blocking Droichead's access via our rolling gate. We understand a lot more thought and discussion is required between both parties to ensure we will find a solution which is amenable to all.

We look forward to discussing this matter further with Louth County Council in the future and arriving at a solution that works for Droichead, Louth County Council and the Westgate Ward.

Kind regards



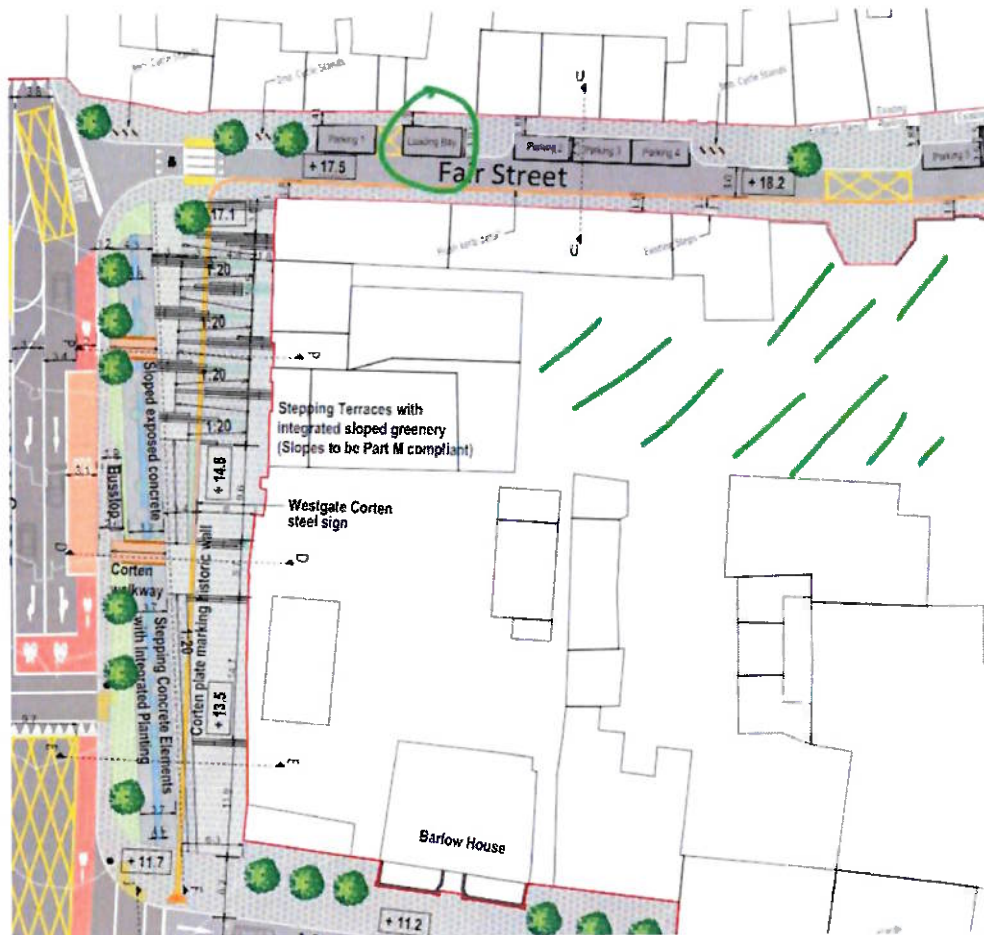
Vivienne Byrne, Chairperson

droichead arts centre



Legend on drawing 1:- Westgate Ward area outlined in red. Outbuilding on Barlow grounds with path leading to roll gate linking Barlow to George's Square. The Gate that is proposed for bringing stage sets, musical instruments, large art installations into the planned new theatre and gallery space.

droichead arts centre



Legend on drawing 2:- the green lined area is LCC-owned space, formerly known as O'Reilly's car park, which is accessed from Fair Street. There is direct access from this car park to the back of the Barlow site in the bottom left hand corner of hatched area. This area could be considered for compensatory alternative access by LCC for Droichead to Barlow in the event of a loss of George's Square roll gate access