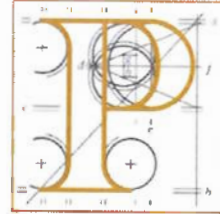


Our Case Number: ABP-318758-23

Your Reference: SID-OBS-001493



An
Bord
Pleanála

Kieran Campbell
6 St Ultan's
Laytown
Drogheda
Co. Louth

Date: 15 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,

PP Eadwina McHole

Aisling Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737131

JA02

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KIERAN CAMPBELL

M A

ARCHÆOLOGIST

6 St Ultan's, Laytown, Drogheda, Co. Louth.



9 February 2024

To: An Bord Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902

**RE: Public Realm Regeneration Works in the Westgate Vision Area, Drogheda,
Co. Louth. Ref JA15.318758**

A Chara,

In relation to the above planning application, I would like to submit the following observations, Nos 1-5 as follows:

1. Medieval Town Wall and riverside tower
2. The Old Abbey
3. Boyne Navigation barge wreck
4. Demolition of wall
5. Preservation of street furniture

1. Medieval Town Wall

Firstly, I welcome the proposed developments contained in this 'Westgate 2040' application and the aims of the wider plans for the 'Westgate Vision Area' of Drogheda. In particular, the proposed repair and conservation of the neglected stretch of medieval town wall from West Gate to the river is long overdue. Consideration should be given to representing at ground level the circular tower which stood at the turn in the town wall at the riverside. The tower is clearly shown on the 1698 *View of Drogheda from St John's Hill* by Francis Place (Fig. 1 below). Excavation would be required to determine the exact location if this is not already known.

2. The Old Abbey

Similarly, the conservation of the surviving portions of the Old Abbey, including the west window and gable of the north aisle currently in a fragile state, is to be welcomed. In relation to the Old Abbey, it needs to be pointed out that this medieval religious house is incorrectly identified throughout the planning application documents (aside from Table 16.1 in EIAR vol. 2) as the Abbey of St. Mary d'Urso, whereas the ruins are in fact of the Augustinian Friary founded by c. 1300 and were identified as such in the *Irish Historic Town Atlas No. 29: Drogheda* published by the Royal Irish Academy in 2019 (McHugh 2019). It is true that the ruins were previously thought to be of St. Mary d'Urso and admittedly the religious affiliation will not make any material difference to the proposed works, but the error should be corrected in any future documentation associated with this project.

The above mentioned *Irish Historic Town Atlas No. 29: Drogheda*, the premier source for information on the archaeology, history and topography of Drogheda, published in 2019, is missing from the references in Chapters 16 and 17 of the EIAR Vol. 2, dated 2023. The Atlas contains a wealth of information on the cultural history and development of the town, illustrated in a comprehensive series of maps and views. These include views of Drogheda by Francis Place (1698) and Ricciardelli (1753) which show the Westgate Vision area, **original** copies of maps by Newcomen (1657) and Ravell (1749) and the Taylor and Skinner's map of the town of Drogheda (1778).

3. Boyne Navigation barge wreck

In 2021, at the public consultation stage conducted by Turley planning consultants, I made a submission concerning the wreck of the iron barge lying semi-submerged in the riverbank below the Ronan Halpin sculpture and about 20m east of the Bridge of Peace (Fig. 3). I proposed that the barge, a relic of the Boyne Navigation (1748-1932), should be retrieved, conserved and set up on the riverbank as a static display being a tangible link to Drogheda's industrial past and the importance of the River Boyne in its history, and that at least a feasibility study should be undertaken to determine if and how this could be achieved.

My proposal was included in the 'Representative Comments' in the *Westgate Consultation Survey Report* (p. 20) where it is described as 'somewhat esoteric'. I can find no mention of the barge in the planning application documents and would be concerned for its future in the development along the riverfront. It does feature in the 'Design Statement' (p. 35), but only as an incidental inclusion in a photo-montage of the finished development.

I have since learned that the barge is listed in the Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database maintained by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage where it is designated as Wreck No. W18567 (Fig. 2). The barge should therefore be protected under Section 3 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987, the primary piece of legislation for the protection of wrecks over 100 years old. The Act provides that a person shall not dive on, damage, or generally interfere with, any wreck which is more than one hundred years except in accordance with a licence issued by the Minister for Housing, Local

Government and Heritage under Section 3 (5) of the Act. It follows that the barge wreck, if not recovered, should be protected from any damage during the proposed works.

The detailed history of the Boyne Navigation is covered in several publications, principally V. and R. Delaney's *Canals of the South of Ireland* (1966) and C. Ellison's *The Waters of the Boyne and Blackwater* (1983). In summary, the Boyne Navigation commenced work in 1748, reaching Slane by the 1760s and Navan by 1800. In 1913 the Boyne Navigation Co. went into liquidation and the canal was taken over by Navan millers, John Spicer and Co. Ltd. who operated six boats. The canal was derelict by 1923 and finally abandoned in 1932. The barge wreck at Westgate, Drogheda, is most likely one of the barges operated by the Boyne Navigation Co. or by John Spicer & Co.. There is reference in 1884 to a 'fine iron boat in perfect order', which Ellison surmises is a boat called *The Wasp*. Spicers operated a large iron barge called 'Boyne' both for carriage of goods from Drogheda to Navan and for excursions (Figs. 4, 5). With further research it should be possible to determine the age of the barge and maybe even its identity. The likelihood that it was made by the T. Grendon or the Drogheda Ironworks Co. would add to its relevance to the town.

There is considerable renewed interest in the Boyne Navigation as an amenity. The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland are currently engaged in restoration and maintenance work at several locations along the route (Navan, Slane and Oldbridge). Given that 'heritage preservation ranked as one of the key features of Westgate' (*Westgate Consultation Survey Report* p. 26), I firmly believe that the barge is worthy of conservation and would be of considerable interest as an exhibit.

4. Demolition of wall at Old Abbey Lane

One of the proposals in the development is the 'Demolition of a section of boundary wall located between Old Abbey Lane and Father Connolly Way' (p. 13 in Planning Statement – Description of Development no. 3). I question the need to remove such a long stretch of this stone wall composed of rubble limestone, a feature of Drogheda which is disappearing. The wall would have been the eastern boundary wall of Alderman Barlow's Garden as shown on Ravell's map of 1749. Would a gateway through the wall not be more appropriate than creating a wide-open space? (Note: There is an Ordnance Survey bench mark on one of the stones low down on the east side of this wall).

5. Preservation of street furniture

The Public Realm improvement works will involve much resurfacing, replacement of footpaths, undergrounding of services etc. On Scholes Lane, within the 'Westgate Vision Area' and within the area of the proposed development, there are several cast-iron drain grates made by and inscribed 'Drogheda Ironworks' (Figs. 6, 7). The Drogheda Ironworks was in operation on the South Quay c. 1914 to 1974. It is my experience that these grates are replaced during resurfacing works but I see no reason why they cannot be retained, if not *in situ* then reused in some other appropriate location. The same goes for any other similar pieces within the development area.

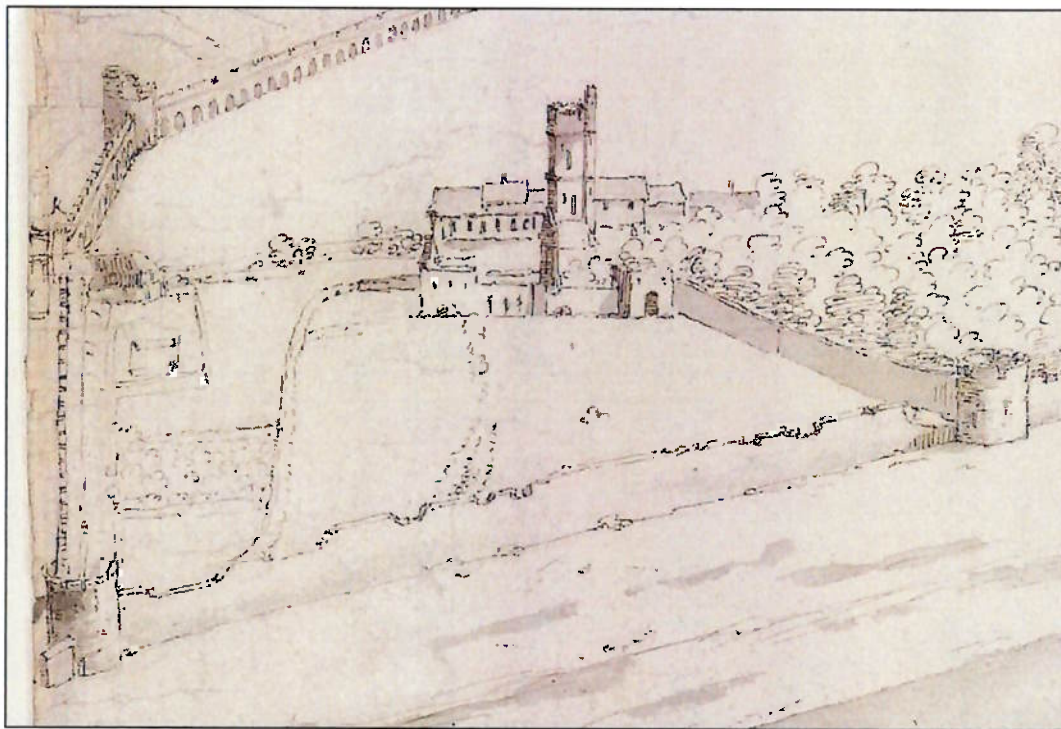


Figure 1: Old Abbey and medieval town wall and towers as shown in 'A View of Drogheda' by Francis Place 1698.

Wreck Details:

Field	Value
Wreck Name	Unknown
Wreck No.	W18567
Classification	Unknown
Place of Loss	River Boyne Drogheda 20m east of the Bridge of Peace
Date of Loss	Unknown
DD_Lat	53.714900
DD_Long	-6.357330
Source of Co-ordinate	National Monuments Service
Description	The remains of a large metal wreck are visible at low tide lying on the riverbed near the quay wall.
Record Source	National Monuments Service
Date of Loss Year Only	

Figure 2: Boyne barge wreck listed on National Monuments Service Historic Environment Viewer.



Figure 3: Boyne Navigation barge at Westgate, Drogheda (photo: David Huber).



Figure 4: Barge 'Boyne' moored off a ship at South Quay, Drogheda, in early 1900s.

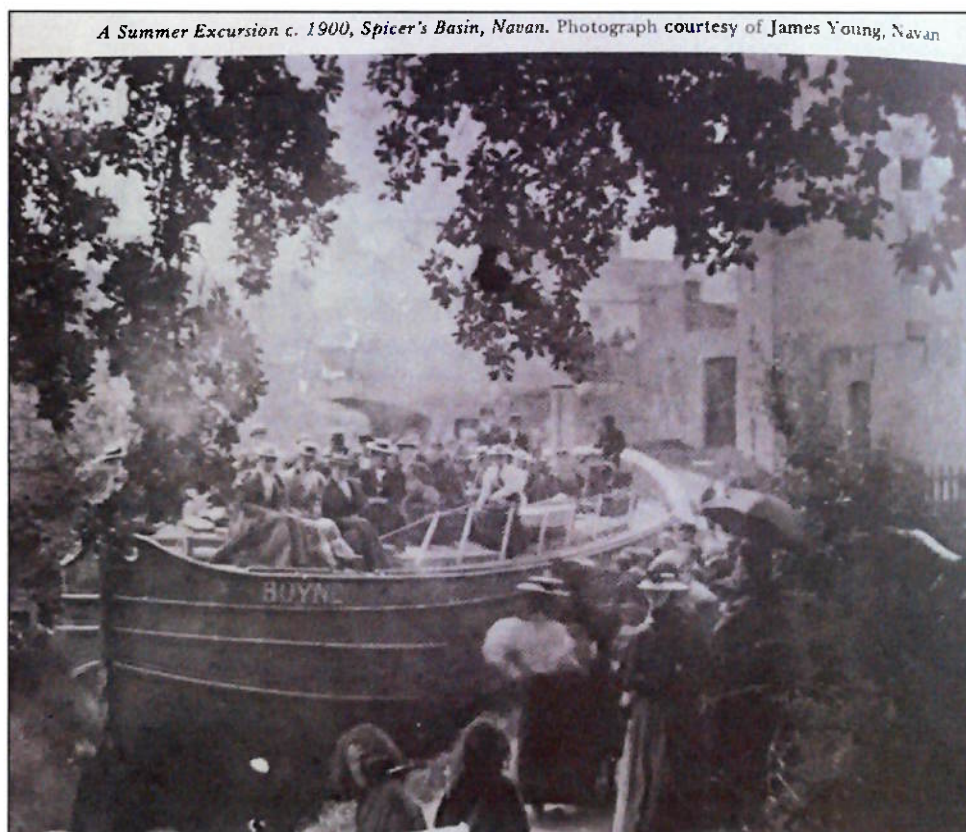


Figure 5: Barge 'Boyne' on a Spicer's excursion at Navan, c. 1900.



Figure 6: 'DROGHEDA IRONWORKS' grate at Scholes Lane.



Figure 7: DROGHEDA IRONWORKS' grate at Scholes Lane.