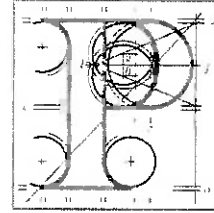


Our Case Number: ABP-316272-23



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Mary O'Mahony
9 Rathfarnham Wood
Rathfarnham
Dublin 14
D14 Y0H2

Date: 11 October 2023

Re: Bus Connects Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme
Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed road development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

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

The Board has also received an application for confirmation of a compulsory purchase order which relates to this proposed road development. The Board has absolute discretion to hold an oral hearing in respect of any application before it, in accordance with section 218 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Accordingly, the Board will inform you in due course on this matter. The Board shall also make a decision on both applications at the same time.

If you have any queries in relation to this matter please 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,

Eimear Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737184

HA02A

Teil	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glaó 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

Mary O'Mahony
9 Rathfarnham Wood
Rathfarnham
Dublin 14
D14 Y0H2

An Bord Pleanála (Strategic Infrastructure Division)
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

13th August 2023

AN BORD PLEANÁLA

ABP ~~LDG~~ 316377-23
LOB ~~ABP~~ 065894-23

14 AUG 2023

Fee: € Type:

Time: 2.32 pm By: hand.

**BusConnects Templeogue / Rathfarnham to City Centre CBC
Objection to proposed Compulsory Purchase Order - 8 Rathfarnham Wood,
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14 - Plot List: 1017(1).1d, 1017(2) 2d
Submission on (1) Planning Application in respect of and (2) Proposed CPO of
Woodland area of Rathfarnham Castle Park – Plot List: 1001(1).1f; 1001(2).2f**

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to object to the proposed CPO affecting my property, which has been submitted to you for confirmation. My house and my neighbours' are unusual in that they back onto the Grange Road and a section of high value amenity area – private back garden – is proposed to be taken.

While I acknowledge that the need for improvements to the public transport system in Ireland is an absolutely necessity and that private property may be impacted as a result, I must stress that I believe that land grab should only happen as an absolute last resort, be justified by reference to the proposed benefit to the road improvement and be to the minimum extent possible.

In my case, the area of land sought to be acquired permanently is 1.6m and the area of land sought temporarily is 3m which is totally disproportionate. On top of this, the level of disruption and environmental impact involved in knocking a 3 metre high, exceptionally high quality, granite faced wall are completely unnecessary and again disproportionate.

In addition to this, a tree in my garden is proposed to be cut down as part of the works. This is one of a group of three trees described in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment as:

"Represents group of early mature/mature Beech trees and Whitebeam trees displaying over all good condition. These trees are contained within private property along the eastern side of Grange Road."

From an environmental perspective there is absolutely no reason why this tree should be cut down.

I must add that the arboriculturist, who looks after my tree and has been doing so for many years and ensures that the tree does not cause any inconvenience overhanging the road and footpath, informs me that the tree is around 100 years old and that the loss of the tree from my garden would most likely have a detrimental effect on the two in my neighbours garden in No 8.

The tree in my garden was trimmed back late last year at a cost of €1000.00.

It would be totally disproportionate and environmentally unreasonable to lose beautiful, mature trees for such a minor area.

The land grab area suggested from my garden is a very minor area and easily avoided. The obvious solution would be to deviate slightly – and it is only very slightly – from the standards widths of the proposed footpaths and cycle lanes. Tiny reductions or changes are all that is required to keep the mature tree(s) and avoid the environmental disruption for a minor land acquisition. The loss of such beautiful, mature and carbon-absorbing trees along a fairly busy road seems totally disproportionate and environmentally unreasonable. It should be avoided if at all possible.

Dimension deviations from standard are already recommended and in place in other locations for various reasons including mitigating or removing impacts on existing trees and properties.

Again I stress that I believe that land acquisition should be a very last resort and avoided if at all possible. It is easily the case here and deviation from standard seems to be an appropriate and obvious approach to save these mature and healthy trees.

Aside from this, I also wish to object to the planning application in respect of and the proposed compulsory acquisition of a large strip of Rathfarnham Castle Park (RCP) which is vitally important amenity for the area. I have set out a summary of the main points below, but also wish to object on the basis of all of the grounds set out in the Rathfarnham Wood Residents Association (RWRA) submission which has been submitted in the recent days.

1. Summary of Reasons for Objection to CPO and Planning Proposals affecting Rathfarnham Castle Park and my property (for further details please see RWRA submission):

- (a) **Hydrology** –The Environmental Impact Assessment Report, Natura Impact Statement and other Scheme documents and maps are seriously deficient in that they do not at all consider an important watercourse, known as the Glin River or Whitechurch Stream. This watercourse flows under the Grange Road and into Rathfarnham Castle Park, where it feeds and drains the duck pond. It is a fragile resource and is easily blocked, causing serious issues. It is an open watercourse which will be built over at two places, and yet has not even been surveyed.

It supplies water to the pond in the Park and is vital for its ecosystems and an important wildlife habitat. However, it is not properly either identified or assessed in the Scheme documentation. It is also hydrologically connected to two Natura 2000 sites - the Wicklow Mountains SAC and the South Dublin Bay SAC and this issue has also not been appreciated. The Water Framework Directive must be complied with.

- (b) **Land Use and the Built Environment** – the proposal is that a unique unspoilt natural area will be taken. Rathfarnham Castle Park and my garden are situated at the very start of the CBC. There is realistically no long term prospect of bus lanes continuing outwards from the nearby Nutgrove Avenue / Grange Road / Rathfarnham Wood junction (see explanation in RWRA submission).

Therefore, taking a substantial amount of woodland from this 450m stretch, primarily to put in an outbound bus lane, at a huge cost in terms of biodiversity and the environment does not make sense. The Woodland area is situated primarily at the boundary of the

Park with the Grange Road which is exactly the area where the land is proposed to be taken. (There is already an inbound bus lane in this area.)

This unspoilt woodland area is a quiet haven which is very unusual in such an urban setting and is particularly needed by people with sensory issues, autism etc. Once gone, it cannot be replaced. Habitat fragmentation should not take place, under the Green Infrastructure principles. This is particularly relevant given the cumulative effect of both these proposals and the proposal to remove the entire ornamental pond area at the other side of the Park (for car parking). It is a small park and should be protected, not chiselled away at.

The Residents Association suggests that a sufficient bus priority for outbound buses could instead be achieved by utilising a bus priority light at the end of the dual carriageway beside Rathfarnham Village (at the junction with Butterfield Avenue). That would remove the requirement to sacrifice the Woodland area. There is already an inbound bus corridor running alongside the Park.

This solution would also result in avoiding the loss of trees in my and my neighbours' gardens.

- (c) **Climate** – removal of carbon-absorbing, noise-absorbing and pollution-absorbing mature trees, bushes and undergrowth unnecessarily. There are very many mature trees situated in the Woodland area which would be lost if these plans proceed. The Beech trees in my garden which are both c. 100 years old would be lost under these plans. Incidentally the landscape maps are misleading in disregarding so many trees and bushes and not clearly identifying trees to be lost, which hinders the right to effective informed public participation.
- (d) **Flora and Fauna** –Rathfarnham Castle Park has an extensive number of species, including protected species such as bats, tufted ducks, mallards, a grey heron, a cormorant, black headed gulls, a badger, mining bees and frogs. Although the Woodland area only takes up a small part of the overall RCP, it is absolutely vital in terms of its biodiversity. The bat roosts in the Park must be retained in particular. The Habitats Directive must be complied with.
- (e) **Landscape and Visual** – the removal of greenery and established trees would be very detrimental to the area. The Woodland Playground in RCP was recently revamped and is extremely popular with local children. It is a peaceful, unspoilt, natural setting which is very unusual in such an urban area. The trees provide shelter and shade, so the area is highly valued in all seasons. The presence of the trees, vegetation and undergrowth give a real sense of being in the countryside. It is extremely important to neurodiverse or autistic people or those with sensory needs. No community audit took place regarding the impact of the loss of this area.
- (f) **Noise, Vibration and Air** – the construction works themselves would cause a huge amount of disruption to the animals living in the park (frogs, ducks, bats, bees, squirrels, foxes, water fowl etc) as well as the users of the Park. The Woodland Playground is extremely popular with local children, schools etc. The proposal is that the road would in future be much nearer to the Playground and as so many mature trees would have been taken, the air in the Playground would be far more polluted and less suitable for children.

The suggested impact on my garden and tree(s) would be totally removed by the suggestion by The Residents' Association to terminate the bus corridor at the Rathfarnham Village Bypass and introduce a signal controlled priority light for outbound buses at the junction with Butterfield Avenue. The Park and in particular the Woodland area must be protected for future generations.

Yours faithfully


Mary O'Mahony