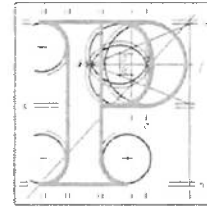


Our Case Number: ABP-318573-23

Planning Authority Reference Number:



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Irish Georgian Society
c/o Donough Cahill
City Assembly House
58 South William Street

Date: 19 February 2024

Re: A proposed Road Development comprising of the N2 Slane By-Pass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme
Within the Townlands of Slane, County Meath

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 accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

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.

Teil
Glaó Áitiúil
Facs
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

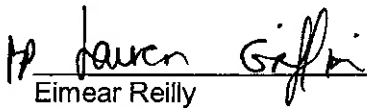
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Yours faithfully,



Eimear Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737184

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Irish
Georgian
Society

An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

15th February 2024

**RE: Proposed Road Development comprising of the N2 Slane By-Pass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme
Ref. 318573**

To whom it may concern,

Having previously commented on the EIA Scoping Consultation for the N2 Slane Bypass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme, the Irish Georgian Society wishes to comment on this application to An Bord Pleanála and specifically to express concerns about the design proposals for The Square in Slane and road crossing points within the Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area.

Overview

The proposed provision of a bypass for Slane is welcomed in principle by the Irish Georgian Society given the expected and much needed reduction in volumes of HGV traffic that will result along the N2 through the village of Slane and across the historic Boyne Bridge. Such traffic levels have long had a detrimental impact on the public realm of Slane village and its composure and security. HGV vehicles have also inevitably generated a maximum of noise and atmospheric pollution in using the road between the bridge and river, while that route has tragically become renowned as an accident blackspot.

In considering the current presentation of Slane, it is noted that the traffic management system has generated significant visual clutter that has compromised the character and appreciation of its streetscape. This devaluing of the public realm and the ambience of the location has not been to the benefit of the architecture of the village, a situation that is most evident in The Square.

Observations on the proposals

The Irish Georgian Society has very significant concerns about the proposals for Public Realm Improvements in Slane, most notably those for The Square and the planned road crossing points lying within the Slane Village Architectural

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The Irish Georgian Foundation, operating as the Irish Georgian Society, is a charitable organisation which encourages the appreciation and conservation of Ireland's architecture and decorative arts

Irish Georgian Foundation Committee of Management: Mary Apied, John Barber (UK), Victoria Browne, Zoë Coleman, Tom Cooney (US), William Earley, Jacqueline Hall, Dr Conor Lucey, Sara Moorhead SC, Peter Murray, Charlie Sweeney, Michael Wall (Chair). IGS President: Sir David Davies

Charity Reference No. CHY 6372 CRA: 20011505 Company Registration No: 32176

Conservation Area (ACA). The Square is of notable significance and sensitivity for its grouping of four houses that were built c. 1760, with each flanked by screen walls and outbuildings. The proposed crossing point on the N2 lies next to a number of protected structures, four of which were constructed c. 1760 while the fifth was built c. 1840. The first of the two planned crossing points to the west of The Square on the N51 is situated next to the Conyngham Arms Hotel, built c. 1770, while the second is next to Saint Patrick's Church which was built in the 1790s. Both buildings are also protected structures.

The *Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2008)* notes that the “objective of Architectural Conservation Area designation is to protect the special character of an area through rigorous control and positive management of any changes made to the built environment” (10.0 Implications for Planning and Development). In considering the significance of The Square, the *Appraisal* states the following:

It is a fine example of a formally planned diamond and still forms the focal point of the village as it did in the eighteenth century. The octagon was carefully designed as a unit with four three-storey over basement residences, diagonally positioned and connected by screen walls to outbuildings forming pavilions to the streets, which radiate from the square...

The set-piece of the external space, streetscape and roofline created by the formal octagon has defined Slane throughout the centuries and is the architectural icon of the village to this day. As the village's only planned open space, its role has been highly significant and its uniqueness is expressed in the status of the surrounding buildings, which were planned as residential rather than public. The proportion of the four houses in relation to the scale of the old market place lends a level of sophistication to the village, which otherwise conforms to archetypical provincial planning. (7.1.1 Architectural Character)

In considering works to the Public Realm and, notably, changes to traffic management and parking within the ACA, the *Appraisal* states:

[Changes] should take into account its ACA designation and seek to preserve and enhance the character of the area in the design and provision of parking meter machines, signage, ramps, renewed surface treatment and pavement layout. (10.2.2 Works to the public realm)

Given the recognised importance and sensitivity of this eighteenth-century urban set-piece and of the protected structures on the streets radiating from it, the Irish Georgian Society is of the view that every effort should have been made to comply with this provision of the *Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area Character Appraisal*. Regrettably, it is apparent that little or no allowance for the historic built environment was made in the design approach which instead seems to have been driven entirely by engineering requirements.

The Irish Georgian Society wishes to draw attention to the following design details of particular concern that are outlined in Vol. 3 (General Arrangement) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR):



- The proposed use of 'Asphalt with red chipping' and 'Red Tactile Paving (Controlled Crossing)' would dominate views within The Square and would significantly compromise the character and setting of protected structures within the ACA.
- No detailed information is provided on the materials to be used for the proposed 'large unit paving' or 'medium unit paving' and so it is not possible to determine the visual impact of these proposed works.
- The purpose of the 'raised platforms' in the centre of The Square and at the proposed crossing points is unclear as is their visual impact.
- No details or design rationale are provided for the proposed 'soft landscaping area'.

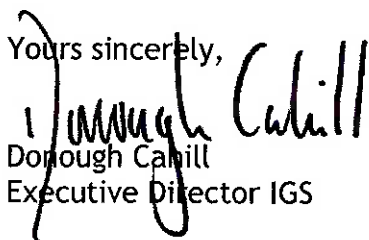
The proposals for Kerbs & Pavements in Vol. 3 of the EIA provide similar reason for concern as details for the new signage and surface treatment of the proposed 'Shared Pedestrian and Cyclist Facility' are unclear.

It would seem that photomontages of the Slane Village ACA have not been included in Vol. 4 of the *EIA Report* though a limited number of these views have been included in a gallery on the website. These confirm concerns about the detrimental visual impact of the planned works with wide expanses of red surface finishes dominating the urban space.

In its submission to the EIA Scoping Consultation, the Irish Georgian Society had indicated that it looked "forward to the knock-on effects of the rejuvenation of the architectural and urban heritage that would inevitably follow the vast improvements of the ambience and environment the bypass would endow". Sadly, the design proposals do not encourage confidence that such a scenario would follow for The Square and the Slane Village ACA as the public realm improvements outlined in the application might inhibit rather than facilitate regeneration.

For the proposed bypass of Slane to succeed in attracting investment into the village's built heritage and promoting sensitive improvements, the Irish Georgian Society recommends that an RIAI accredited Grade 1 Conservation Architect be engaged to assist with devising a suitably sympathetic design for The Square.

Yours sincerely,


Donough Cahill
Executive Director IGS

