

Lauren Griffin

From: Lauren Griffin
Sent: Monday 11 November 2024 11:59
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Woodquay Park Enhancement. Ref. no: ABP - 320938 - 24

A Chara,

The Board acknowledges receipt of your email, official correspondence will issue in due course.

Kind regards,

Lauren

From: Angela Gallagher - [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday 9 November 2024 14:53
To: LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>
Subject: Woodquay Park Enhancement. Ref. no: ABP - 320938 - 24

Caution: This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

Inchiquin,
Greenfield,
Headford,
Co. Galway
H91V9TT

November 9th, 2024

Re: **Woodquay Park Enhancement**

Ref. no: **ABP-320938-24**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I request that An Bord Pleanála refuse planning permission for the proposed enhancement development for Woodquay Park. This is in existence since the early 1900s and is one of very few parks in one of the older residential areas of Galway. I object to the development on the following grounds:

1. Railings:

It is proposed to remove the railings to create '**an open, inclusive and inviting amenity**'. Parks are recreational by nature and therefore should provide spaces for relaxation and calm. These are the rare places that people gravitate towards, to take time out from their busy schedules. Railings and hedgerows provide a boundary – shelter if you like – from the busy rush of everyday life. The railings/hedgerows provide a sound barrier from the noise of the surrounding traffic and city life. Remove this and that peace and calm is gone completely. An

enclosed park provides safety where children are at play, and being enclosed by railings (with potential to lock at night) will reduce the possibility of anti-social behaviour.

2. Inclusive and Inviting:

It has been stated that: **'A fundamental principle of the design for the park was to create an open, inclusive and inviting amenity space which was fully accessible and integrated with its surroundings, including the River Corrib to the north and Woodquay Square to the south. It was determined that the inclusion of fencing and gates would be incompatible with this design objective'.** Most parks are enclosed by railings. It is worth noting that in cities like Dublin, parks such as Stephen's Green, Merrion Square, Mountjoy Square to name just a few, are all defined by railings because the historic and architectural significance of preserving these green spaces in urban environments is paramount. These green spaces are valued and the railings are retained to protect them at all costs. A space does not have to be free of an enclosing element to be inviting. On the contrary, the most magnificent 'inviting' gardens and parks in the world, whether they be public or private, are defined by an enclosing element with an entrance. Monuments, eg. castles, stately homes etc. have enclosing elements with entrances that both invite and control access. Our homes – the bedrock of our society – are defined by garden walls or fences – with entrances. Are these not inviting? Do these gates and railings say: Don't enter or do they spark curiosity and a warm welcome? The statement in bold above is illogical. It is the enclosing element that defines and, more importantly, protects the space for all to enjoy safely, now and in the future.

3. Hedgerows:

It is proposed to remove 155m of hedgerow. Approx. 3,000km of hedgerows are being destroyed annually in Ireland. It is incumbent on all to protect every metre of hedgerow. This destruction results in the decimation of wild habitats being threatened constantly at an alarming rate. Vast sums are then ploughed back into restoring these habitats. Consequently, removing one metre of hedgerow is one metre too much. While the park offers a great amenity for local and visitor alike, it is our duty – because of the threat to the planet - to give equal priority to the flora and fauna. And small though the park may be, the existing trees and hedges offer much needed habitat to our local bird population. It is proposed to replace this existing native hedge with a new 'native hedge' that will be lower at just one metre in height. This will not provide safe nesting sites for birds as it is too low to the ground, making nesting birds vulnerable to predators. In addition, limiting the hedge height hugely reduces the wildlife habitat and biodiversity within the park. I have no objection to the removal of invasive species, e.g. Montbretia.

4. The role of a park:

The proposed plan seeks to introduce new pedestrian crossings to **'enhance access into and links through the park to other city destinations'**. This park is so small that any entrance / exit will allow easy access to links to other city destinations. What, after all, is the role of a park? A park is a designated space of respite and relaxation. It is not a routeway. A path borders the park on three sides: Waterside, Headford rd., and Corrib tce. These provide more than adequate 'easy links to other city destinations'. The Green, Sandymount in Dublin has three open gates (one other for maintenance purposes which is usually locked). I believe this park is much larger than Woodquay, is located in the heart of an extremely busy commercial area (eg. Pubs, restaurants and many retail outlets) and yet it only has three points of entry. It too is also enclosed by railings.

5. Conclusion

Woodquay Park is a park in the manner of the Georgian square parks of Dublin such as Pearse square, Merrion square etc, these are all characterised by being fully enclosed with railings, hedges, mature trees and mainly grass surfaces, with closure in the evenings and nights, protecting and enhancing the residential amenity of the

areas. While Woodquay Park is of a much smaller scale, it could be developed further in the manner of those successful urban spaces that have stood the test of time and contributed so much to the value of living in the city. This development takes all those crucial elements and removes or reduces them, removing railings and hedges, opening the front and end of the park completely, removing most of the grass, removing some trees. The extensive paving creates an avenue or public plaza with quick access to the waterfront, thus becoming more of a thoroughfare or street and less of a park. The machinery, the building works and structures required to achieve such extensive paving will undoubtedly adversely impact the root system of the mature trees, further reducing natural habitat, shelter and the feeling of nature or wilderness in an urban setting. The development will seriously injure the residential amenity, peace and quiet, and natural setting that is there now. While supposedly addressing concerns about anti-social behaviour, the removal and reduction of the most critical elements of the park will – on the contrary - open the way to a whole new set of anti-social occurrences.

For a park that is over one hundred years old it is in remarkably good condition. Its mature trees are a credit to the area and not easily replaced in an era of ash die-back and other threats. Preservation of traditional and environmental elements should be a requisite for any enhancement of the park, ensuring a safe and peaceful amenity for all to enjoy in the future.


Thank you for giving this your consideration.

Yours,

Angela C. Gallagher

Ps. I'm also sending this email as an attachment, enclosed here.



 Please consider the environment - do you *really* need to print this email?

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Greenfield,
Headford,
Co. Galway
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the enclosing element that defines and, more importantly, protects the space for all to enjoy safely, now and in the future.

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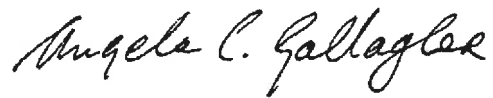
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Thank you for giving this your consideration.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Angela C. Gallagher". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Angela C. Gallagher