



Lauren Griffin

From: Lauren Griffin
Sent: Monday 11 November 2024 16:39
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Ref. No: ABP - 320938 - 24- Woodquay Park Enhancement - Galway City Council

A Chara,

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

Kind regards,

Lauren

From: Diarmuid [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday 11 November 2024 14:26
To: LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>
Subject: Ref. No: ABP - 320938 - 24- Woodquay Park Enhancement - Galway City Council

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1, Walshe's Terrace
Woodquay,
Galway,
11/11/2024

Dear sir or madam,

I wish to object to the proposed development for the following reasons

1) Reduction in amenity and loss of privacy at my dwelling house. The proposed new entrance at B (see layout plan below) opposite the front entrance to my house reduces the residential amenity of my dwelling as it overlooks the front of my house and represents a significant reduction in privacy. I am accustomed to people passing my house and that's fine but under this proposal they will be looking straight at my front door, sitting room and driveway. Essentially all activity, coming and going can be observed from close range in a manner it couldn't be heretofore. There is absolutely no need for this new entrance to the Park while there is an alternative major new proposed entrance located a few meters around the corner looking onto the waterside and the river Corrib. The consultants response to this issue is in the Consultants Report as follows

"Table 3-1: Elements raised during the second consultation which were not able to be actioned, and the reason why

Retention of the access path at the Plots

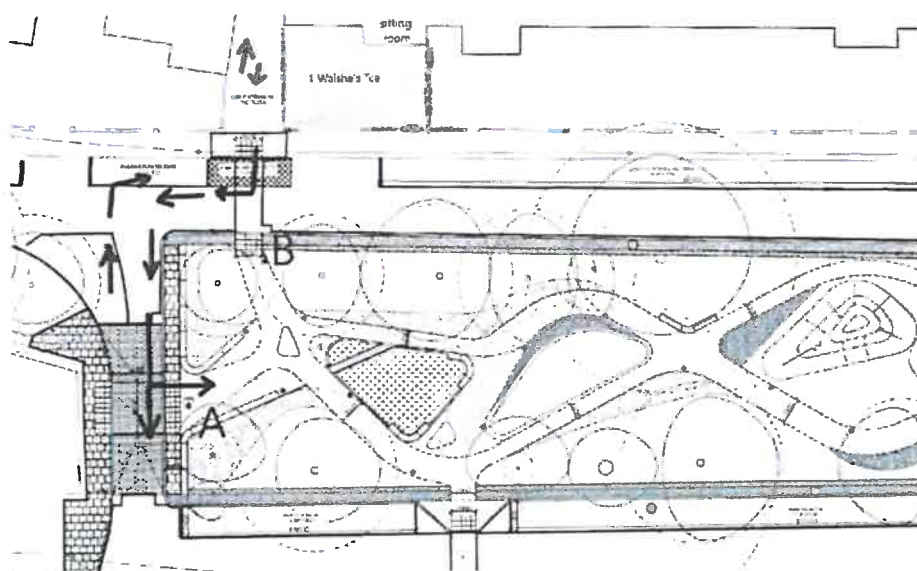
This access represents a key linkage to the future Clifden Railway Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and the Connemara Greenway. The access path enables the best provision of a segregated and safe

active travel path to the future bridge. This is in line with the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 (Chapter 4.4, 4.8 Obj. 19, and 5.7.1), Cycle Design Manual (Section 2.2), National Cycle Network (Section 6.3 and Corridor 12), and DMURS.

*The concerns regarding residential amenity are noted, however, precedent of providing similar crossings elsewhere in Galway and Ireland has not been shown to increase loitering at the crossing point. Further, the provision of the crossing has been assessed as part of the Road Safety Audit. In addition, modifications were previously made to the design of the crossing at the request of residents to address pedestrian and vehicular safety concerns.**

The elimination of the proposed entrance opposite my private residence (See B below) does NOT CHANGE or contradict any of the provisions cited for creating the proposed entrance at B. The "key linkage" is still maintained using the proposed new entrance yards away facing the water. I strongly believe that if it was a private body that made the planning application to a Local Authority they would be conditioned to relocate the entrance so as to protect me from injurious affection and to protect my residential amenity.

Therefore I am requesting that the proposed opening be omitted.



LAYOUT PLAN

Blue arrows indicate Existing 2 way cycle and pedestrian movements to and from The Plots which is located at the rear of my dwelling and through the laneway at the side of my house. All that is required is that Park entry be at Point A and the "key linkage" planning criteria will still be maintained.

2) Safety: the proposed access effectively creates a crossroads. I have worked 40 years as an Engineer in various Local Authorities mainly in the area of roads infrastructure. The preferred configuration of minor and major route junctions, where two routes cross is what is known as a "staggered junction". As one approaches from the Plots, **one should not be able to shoot straight across the major route which carries 2 way vehicular traffic**. Instead, there should be a barrier (Chevron sign), blocking the straight through route which obliges one to slow down and take stock. Then when safe, turn right and then left. The existing situation satisfies this requirement. No amount of signage or other mitigation measures are as effective

I have no doubt that the consultant's audit may have passed the proposed configuration subject to certain works being carried out, However, the preferred and safer configuration is the one I have outlined above.

I should point out that I have observed behaviour at this junction for over 25 years and am very familiar with how it is used. The proposed solution is not the most sustainable solution and the likelihood is that some unfortunate person will impact with a vehicle while attempting to go straight across the road.



3) Disturbance and antisocial behaviour:

Again, referencing Table 3-1, *"The concerns regarding residential amenity are noted, however, precedent of providing similar crossings elsewhere in Galway and Ireland has not been shown to increase loitering at the crossing point."*

Let me say there are no similar crossings in Galway. We are unique in having an old established community in a residential area beside the Corrib. two rows of terraced houses facing each other separated by a small Park with many access points to the area. On occasion very large numbers of people congregate both in the passageway beside my house, the riverside and the Park. There are at least 7 pubs in the immediate vicinity, not to mention several major supermarkets that sell alcohol on the Headford Road a short distance away. People travel through the laneway (access to and from the Plots) disposing of packaging, cans, bottles etc en route.

It is necessary to call the Gardai from time to time at all hours of the morning to disperse these crowds be they in the laneway beside my house or in the Park. Of course these people are going to use the proposed entrance at B to access the Park. This brings the noise and nuisance closer to my house and my neighbours. There are no toilet facilities anywhere near. It's simply not good planning if protection of residential amenity is not the priority,

At least if people are accessing the Park from the proposed entrance on the Waterside it's better than accessing just in front of my house as noise and antisocial behaviour is diverted away. Again all this points to a lack of familiarity with the idiosyncrasies of this particular area and consideration of residents when selecting that access at point B. It might have seemed a logical choice looking at a map but in order to protect my Residential Amenity it is necessary to use the waterside entrance. Did the Designers Consult with the Gardai or do an audit on anti social behaviour and how best to counter it at a practical level?

There are so many festivals on our doorstep and while most people respect that this is a Residential Area, many do not.

And on the point of loitering, the Consultants Report, Table 3-1 says "*precedent of providing similar crossings elsewhere in Galway and Ireland has not been shown to increase loitering at the crossing point*". That statement does not hold true in the case of the Park. One of the well known issues here is that there is in fact loitering at the existing 2 entrances to the Park so that statement in the report is **not valid in our case.**

I think if the designers had been more familiar with antisocial behaviour in this area and how it impacts on the Residents they might have considered more targeted measures to combat it and had a different design.



Above an example of antisocial behaviour in the laneway leading from the Park to the Plots. You can see in the image the traces of countless cases where it falls on the property owner to remove it even though the nuisance arises from the public laneway.

3) Loss of the existing railings: This residential area houses an older community. Most of the houses were built over 100 years ago. Walshe's Terrace and Corrib Terrace have a certain character and I object to the removal of the railings as they suit the character of the area and give definition to the Park boundaries.

The railings provide an element of security because the gates can be locked if disturbances are getting out of hand. If Gardai are involved the offenders are corralled and it allows for easier containment.

The consultant uses the word "Fencing" but they are in fact railings. Hardly sustainable having acquired this valuable asset to simply remove them.

The local National Schools send young children to the Park and the first thing they do is close the two gates for the children's protection from the roads around the Park.

Please see examples of railings around Pearse Park, Pearse St, Dublin . There are lockable gates on both sides.

[55 Pearse Square - Google Maps](#) and [47 Pearse Square - Google Maps](#)

Pearse Park is overlooked by terraced houses the same as Woodquay Park and no one is trying to get rid of the railings. Like our own, those railings are part and parcel of the character of that area in Dublin.

● **The agreed Woodquay Park plan was to retain the railings and have 2 openings, one at each end of the Park.** There is no issue with locking gates as the City Council does this already at a nearby location. Until a few years ago a resident locked the Park at night.

4) Non compliance with the agreed agenda for the Park. The Woodquay Park Project was to be closely aligned to the Mary Reynolds concept agreed with the City Council and while that agreement was expressly stated in the brief given to the Consultants it appears to have been ignored. The railings were part of the Mary Reynolds Design for an inclusive space but also to provide a retreat for quiet contemplation or teaching or indeed an element of performance.

Table 3-1 in the Consultants Report states

"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.."

Well there certainly was no determination to prioritise residential amenity or to preserve the integrity and character of the area. The residents would have withdrawn the application through our public representatives if they thought the railings were going to be lost and that the essential nature of the Park was being changed. They never got the chance.

If the space is open as suggested it will effectively be another Eyre Square which was never the intention of the residents association.

They don't want another plaza.

I strongly believe that the Residents have not been dealt with in an open manner. The WRA was supposed to be kept informed and after that second meeting with the consultants on 24th June 2024 where a lot of issues remained to be sorted the plan for the Park was advertised in the papers without anyone coming back to the Residents Association.

The reason the City Council had those couple of meetings with us at all was because we were supposed to be partners in the Project.

In summary I do not believe that the development as proposed and the loss of residential amenity is in keeping with the proper planning and development of the area.

The Park as designed has its merits but its not right for our area for the reasons detailed above

Regards,

Diarmuid Croghan BE, Dip Highway and Geotechnical Engineering, Dip Environmental Engineering