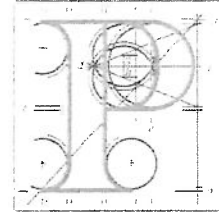


Our Case Number: ABP-320164-24



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Anthony Davey and Isobel Murray
Knockevin
Claremont Road
Howth
Dublin 13
D13 FC63

Date: 30 October 2024

Re: DART + Coastal North Railway Order 2024 - Northern Line between Dublin City Centre and Drogheda including the Howth Branch
Dublin City Centre and Drogheda, located in counties Dublin, Meath and Louth

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent letter in relation to the above mentioned case. The contents of your letter have been noted. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: www.pleanala.ie.

If you have any queries in relation to the 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,



Aisling Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737131

RA03

Teil (01) 858 8100
Glaó Áitiúil 1800 275 175
Facs (01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin www.pleanala.ie
Ríomhphost bord@pleanala.ie

Tel (01) 858 8100
LoCall 1800 275 175
Fax (01) 872 2684
Website www.pleanala.ie
Email bord@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde 64 Marlborough Street
Baile Átha Cliath 1 Dublin 1
D01 V902 D01 V902

Knockevin
Claremont Road
Howth
Co.Dublin
D13 FC63

Planning Application for DART & Coastal North

Ref:NA29N.320164

Objection from: Anthony Davey and Isobel Murray

A Chara,

We live on the eastern part of Claremont Road, the public road and in a cul-de-sac. This public road serves eight private family homes and the Howth Lodge apartments, which are home to over 100 citizens.

All residents of this cul-de-sac must cross the Claremont Level Crossing in order to access their homes. The associated level crossing and public road is the only vehicular access to this cul-de-sac. We have been resident here since 1990 and have seen a significant increase in the closure of the level-crossing barrier XQ 004 at Claremont Crossing. Since the establishment of the Dart, the frequency and duration of closures at the Claremont level-crossing has increased to the considerable inconvenience of the residents of this part of Claremont Road.

When the level-crossing is closed, all residents of the cul-de-sac are either confined behind the barrier without access to the public road, i.e. Howth Road, or prevented from returning to their homes on the other side of the level-crossing, delayed at the gates or on the main road, south of the level-crossing. The escalation in the number of closures and the increased duration of such closures has been gradual, and has already climbed to barely tolerable levels of inconvenience and exclusion from direct access to our homes. We note here that Irish Rail

and the proponents of the Coastal North Project have so far been unaware that this eastern part of Claremont Road is a Public Road.

My wife, myself and our neighbours have been increasingly concerned about the current number of closures and their duration with constant interruption of access to and from our homes and for the increasing difficulty created for public and other services, in particular emergency services, such as Ambulance and Fire Services in gaining access to the cul- de-sac.

Whilst my neighbours and we have always accepted and endured a degree of limitation to our right of access to our homes in order to facilitate the passage of the rail service to Dublin and beyond, I submit that the level of interruption must be "reasonable" in order to be legally tenable by the applicants and it must be "reasonable" within the law and the parameters of proper Planning and Development.

Of note, Irish Rail must appreciate that:-

1. any increase in the number and duration of interruptions thereby preventing access to our homes, by level crossing closures, must be "reasonable"; and
2. the projected rate of level-crossing closures, if the order sought is granted, will result in barrier closures 12 times per hour, over a 7-hour period each day, which will result in our homes being inaccessible for at least 30/32 minutes per each hour (representing an obstruction of ingress and egress to our homes at least three and a half hours in every 7-hours).

In considering the proper Planning and Development of the area covered by Irish Rail's application, the Planning Authority is obliged to consider not only the totality of the area affected by the proposal, but must have regard to the specific adverse consequences of granting permission in particular areas such as the Howth peninsula, and more specifically, the vicinity of the Claremont level-crossing (XQ004) as outlined in this and other observations and objections.

We submit that such a level of interruption to the right of access to our homes would be "unreasonable" and a breach of our right to enjoy "reasonable" access to our homes.

Furthermore, we submit that such an increase in the number and duration of barrier closures of the level-crossing could not, on any objective assessment, be regarded as "reasonable" either from a Planning or from a Legal point of view.

The reduced access to our homes for Emergency and other services will create a significant Health and Safety risk by reducing effective response by such services to the residents of the Claremont Road cul-de-sac in emergency situations as a result of the proposed increase of barrier closures.

We are also concerned that Irish Rail's proposal has not taken account of or addressed the danger which already exists during the current closures of the level-crossing. We note the space between the level-crossing and the Howth Road (south of the level crossing) can only accommodate 2/3 vehicles at a time. Consequently, there is a frequent occurrence whereby 2/3 vehicles are waiting at the barriers on the South of the crossing (XQ004), seeking to enter Claremont Road from Howth Road, alongside further vehicles joining the queue resulting in those additional vehicles having to wait on the main road creating a tailback and blocking traffic backing on the main road towards Sutton and Howth; there being only room for one lane of traffic in either direction on the main road.

This situation occurs on a dangerous road bend and lasts until the dart barriers are lifted and the first two or three vehicles have crossed the tracks. Please note there is only room for one lane of traffic in either direction on the main road, blocking traffic in both directions. The new cycle lanes erected by Fingal County Council further complicate the issue and the backing up of traffic would render this corner on Howth Road a black spot for cyclists, especially so during periods of darkness and bad weather when sight lines are foreshortened.

All of the above has been brought to the attention of the applicants in previous correspondence and at one meeting *inter partes* meeting. This situation will be greatly exacerbated by increased frequency of barrier closures and especially at peak road traffic times and also by the projected 24% increase in the population of Howth.

To date, there have been daily occurrences of especially long barrier closures at Claremont Level Crossing XQ004. I am aware of the ability of the Senior On-Duty Signaller, the Electric Control Operator and the Central Traffic Control Manager at Irish Rail to make a manual override of the automated barrier down control. We question the apparent use of the manual override of the "approaching train movement Track Control Circuit" causing barrier closures of 5 and 6 minutes for a single train passing at Claremont Level Crossing XQ004. When looking up the track at Howth Station, one can see the train standing with lights on ready to move but five minutes or more will elapse before that train passes the crossing at higher than usual speeds. If this is a tactic to enable the DART train to regain time or to 'fit in' later as it joins the main Dublin-Belfast line, it is a major concern and inconvenience to those waiting at the barrier for that time. As part of the planning process, we ask that this is thoroughly investigated not just from a safety perspective, but also from a point of due consideration to vehicles and pedestrians crossing the DART tracks.

We submit until this situation is researched and reported on by the Applicants, with relevant surveys addressing the above objections at appropriate closure and road traffic times, the Application is incomplete and premature and the Planning Authority should not consider the application, or alternatively, this application should be refused.

As residents of Howth, we also object to the proposal to terminate the direct link from Howth to Connolly Station in Dublin City and its replacement by a shuttle service to Howth Junction Station. The proposal includes necessitating a change of train on the inward journey and on the return journey, in addition to the need to negotiate a steep overhead foot bridge at Howth Junction. This will pose serious difficulties for older and younger passengers, even if they are accompanied, and in some cases, this journey will be impossible and render the service inaccessible.

Historically, Howth Junction platforms have a record of poor safeguards to transiting and joining passengers due to vandalism, anti-social behaviour and personal attacks. Of late, it is widely known that a young woman was assaulted and the pushed down beneath a DART train adjacent to the tracks. Only those physically well capable of defending themselves would be at ease utilising Howth Junction. As a user of the DART, I have never seen a member of An Garda Síochána or security official at this station. My personal opinion is that this is not a safe

or secure place to wait for a DART connecting train. It appears that Irish Rail do not stand out as champions of personal safety and security in this regard.

Overall, the proposal offers no benefit to residents of Howth to counterbalance the removal of the direct DART service to Connolly station and the traffic hold-ups and disruptions which will be caused at Sutton Cross, Strand Road Sutton, Strand Road Baldoyle and Deerpark/Claremont corner on the Howth Road and at the level-crossings situate at Claremont level-crossing, Strand Road Sutton/Baldoyle and Lauders Lane Sutton.

For the reasons set out above, we submit that the Application should be rejected, the Applicants having failed to anticipate the extreme consequences for the residents and citizens who have raised the above issues in the Consultative Process.

Alternatively, if it is decided to grant the Application, notwithstanding the objections raised, such granting should be subject to:-

- Clear, viable and enforceable preconditions and operational conditions to protect our right, and the right of residents, to **reasonable access to our homes**;
- The continuation of a direct DART service to Connolly station; and
- Ensuring no additional traffic danger or congestion is created on and/or around the already pressed Howth peninsula.

Please now find our cheque in the sum of €50 as required to submit my planning objection to

Planning Application for DART & Coastal North Ref:NA29N.320164. We would be most grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this letter and cheque.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Davey and Isobel Murray