



ROEBUCK
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Planning Department,
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council,
County Hall, Marine Road,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin

3rd September 2016

Re. Planning Reference D16A/0212
Location: The Grove, Goatstown Road, Dublin 14

To Whom It May Concern,

We wish to make an observation on the further information submitted on 23rd August 2016. There are two points we would like to address, 1. Pedestrian Access to the Site at Friarsland Avenue, and 2. Child Safety.

1. Pedestrian Access to the Site at Friarsland Avenue

2.11 Item No. 11: Pedestrian Access to the Site at Friarsland Avenue

Item No.11 states:

"Applicant's proposal in relation to the pedestrian access to Friarsland is not acceptable to the Planning authority and revised drawings and details are required indicating access from Friarsland Avenue to be free of gates in order to provide unrestricted permeability for pedestrians/cyclists."

2.11.1 Applicant's Response

As granted permission under Reg. Ref. D11A/0595, this pedestrian access at Friarsland Avenue will be operated by a cardholder access or other security measure (available only to the proposed residents) between about 5pm and 8am. The access will be open during daylight hours for pedestrian access through the school at all other times. This facilitates safe and efficient movement by school children from Friarsland Avenue to the schools. The permitted arrangement was discussed at the post-RFI meeting with the Local Authority and it was agreed that as this arrangement is as per the permitted scheme it is proposed to be retained as part of the RFI response.

1.1 Clarity Needed

Although permission was granted under Reg. Ref. D11A/0595, we wish to highlight that this permission dates from 2011, and is for an as yet unfinished scheme that is now substantially altered from the original application dating from this date. As such we find ourselves in the situation whereby we are making an observation on the amendment of an amendment, and therefore feel that the original permission is no longer valid, or indeed appropriate, in this instance.

Notwithstanding, we also find the above response, and the original text from Reg. Ref. D11A/0595, very unclear and not well thought out, and we are seeking clarity. For example some of the items that are in need of clarity are:

- *The open space network links directly between Friarsland Avenue and the school and will be utilised as a safe pedestrian access for school children. The gate at Friarsland Avenue will be cardholder access only between about 5pm and 8am. - Reg. Ref. D11A/0595*

We have seen no detailed groundfloor plans of the “open space network” that will link between Friarsland Avenue and the school, in particular between Friarsland Avenue and The Grove. For example how will the footpaths between Friarsland Avenue and The Grove link?

- *(available only to the proposed residents) - Reg. Ref. D16A/0212*
This is not stated in Reg. Ref. D11A/0595. If it is not stated in the earlier granted permission, who then can apply to have access to this locked system?
- *between about 5pm and 8am Reg - Ref. D16A/0212*
What does “about” mean in this context? This is a very vague term.
- *The access will be open during daylight hours - Reg. Ref. D16A/0212*
Daylight hours change from winter to summer. 8am and 5pm in winter are not daylight hours.
- *for pedestrian access through the school at all other times - Reg. Ref. D16A/0212*
This does not make sense. Access is through the school for pedestrians? The schools are the destination, not the access route. This should be construed as further evidence that this response is not well thought out.

1.2 Gated Access Is Not Suitable In This Location

A cardholder, or similar, access system for this pedestrian entrance, to which only residents would have access, would have a detrimental impact on:

1. The members of our residents' association
2. The residents of The Grove
3. The residents of the future development which is currently being planned for the rest of the site, to the west of The Grove (see Fig 2 below).

The reasons for this are as follows:

1.2.1 School Building Hours Are Not Limited to 8am to 5pm

Many of our members accompany their children through this shortcut to the on-site Our Lady's Grove Pre and After School facility that takes the children in early morning, brings them to school, and collects them from school until their parents return in the evening. To limit the opening time of the shortcut to 8am to 5pm is not practical for working parents who live close by.

Also, many after-school activities take place in the schools, well into the evening, for both children and adults. The number of after-school activities is likely to increase in coming years. The current three-year education strategy being developed by Minister for Education Richard Bruton, plans to make school buildings available out of hours for after-school care, homework clubs and other community activities. Setting a time limit on access -

to an important pedestrian route to two schools, and a pre and after-school is completely out of step with this plan, and would inconvenience many residents who live within our association's boundary. The alternative route, if the shortcut access is closed, is significantly longer, and involves travelling via the traffic-heavy Goatstown Road.

Our Lady's Grove School is a polling station for all elections. Up to now, the shortcut access has been open on election days. From 7am to 10.30pm. Closing this pedestrian access during this time would greatly inconvenience local voters.

We ourselves, as a newly formed residents' association, wish in the future to use the school buildings for community events, as there is no other community indoor space within, or close to, our boundaries. To curtail pedestrian access for our members to the school buildings would be a big inconvenience for all concerned.

1.2.2 Cycle and Pedestrian Permeability

The pedestrian access shortcut from The Grove to Friarsland Avenue will be a very important route for pedestrians and cyclists living in The Grove and also in the new as yet undeveloped adjacent site (see Fig.2 below). Once all development is complete in a few year's time, there will be in the region of 150 units in the greater Our Lady's Grove site. This pedestrian shortcut will be the most direct route to the Luas, to the local shops, pharmacy and restaurant on Farmhill Road, to Dundrum village with its services such as the local library and Garda station, and also to the Dundrum Town Centre. To insist on a cardholder access system for even part of the day, will inconvenience a great many future residents. As already mentioned, the alternative route, if the shortcut access is closed, is significantly longer, and involves travelling via the traffic-heavy Goatstown Road. Younger residents and students on bikes will be especially inconvenienced, and potentially put in danger, as this route involves them crossing a very busy road twice in the space of approximately 200m. The alternative is to cycle on the footpath, inconveniencing pedestrians.

We should be making our local environments more cycle and pedestrian friendly, not less so. We note that the County Development Plan supports this provision. In the section 2.2.7.1 Policy ST5: Walking and Cycling (link above, page 26) it states: "*new development will be required to maximise permeability and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists*". Setting a time limit on a pedestrian shortcut is definitely not maximising permeability and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

2. Child Safety

We raised a point regarding child safety on our original observation, 27th April 2016. We would like to re-emphasise this point. We feel it is important to point out that the future increase in traffic on the road through the greater Our Lady's Grove site, once development is finished, will have an impact on school child safety.

We feel it imperative that, at the very least, a barrier(s) should be erected at the crossing where the path coming from the shortcut through The Grove meets the road. Currently there is a zebra crossing here with no barriers on either side. When the new path coming

through The Grove (in front of the old convent building) is opened it will give children on scooters and bikes plenty of space to build up velocity and come at speed out onto the road. There is a downward incline on this path adding to the danger here (see Fig. 1 below). The risk of an accident will be especially acute during morning drop off times, with residents leaving for work at the same time as parents, children and staff arriving for pre-school and school.

*Reg. Ref. D11A/0595, section 3.8: Integration of the southern woodland space with the remainder of the scheme is achieved through a generous open space connection that links directly to the 'convent open space' and runs adjacent to a 'homezone' street, which further reinforces the connection. These Homezone streets are multi—use plazas (rather than traditional roads) that will contribute to the quality and integration of the open space network even though they are not part of the open space quantum. The open space network links directly between Friarsland Avenue and the school and will be utilised as a **safe pedestrian access for school children**. The gate at Friarsland Avenue will be cardholder access only between about 5pm and 8am. The space within the 'Homezone Streets' is broken down and softened using strategic tree planting and a variety of surface materials. The degree of enclosure and complexity is also a cue to drivers to reduce speed. Nonetheless, **a 5kph 'Homezone' sign will be placed** at the ramped entrance to this precinct.*

In the original planning permission document Reg. Ref. D11A/0595, section 3.8, we note there is reference made to “*safe pedestrian access for school children*”, and even a mention that a 5kph sign will be erected. Averting the possibility of children scooting or cycling at speed out onto a road is definitely something that would be covered by the term “*safe pedestrian access for school children*”. A barrier at the junction where the path meets the road, at the end of this downward incline, is an absolute necessity.

In Summary

We are disappointed that neither point from our original observation appears to have been sufficiently addressed by the County Council or the developer. We feel that as the only body to have made an observation, it is our responsibility to our members, the future residents of the greater Our Lady's Grove site, and the staff and pupils of the schools on the site, to ensure that the two modest aspirations of sensible pedestrian and cyclist permeability and convenience, and child safety, are properly considered and a decision made for the greater good of the local community.

We believe we will have no option but to appeal to An Bord Pleanála if we feel an inadequate or inappropriate decision is made.

Yours sincerely,

Úna O'Shea
Planning Point of Contact
Roebuck Residents' Association

Stan McHugh
Chairman
Roebuck Residents' Association



Fig.1 - Shortcut route through The Grove. Note the downward incline on the path where it meets the road.

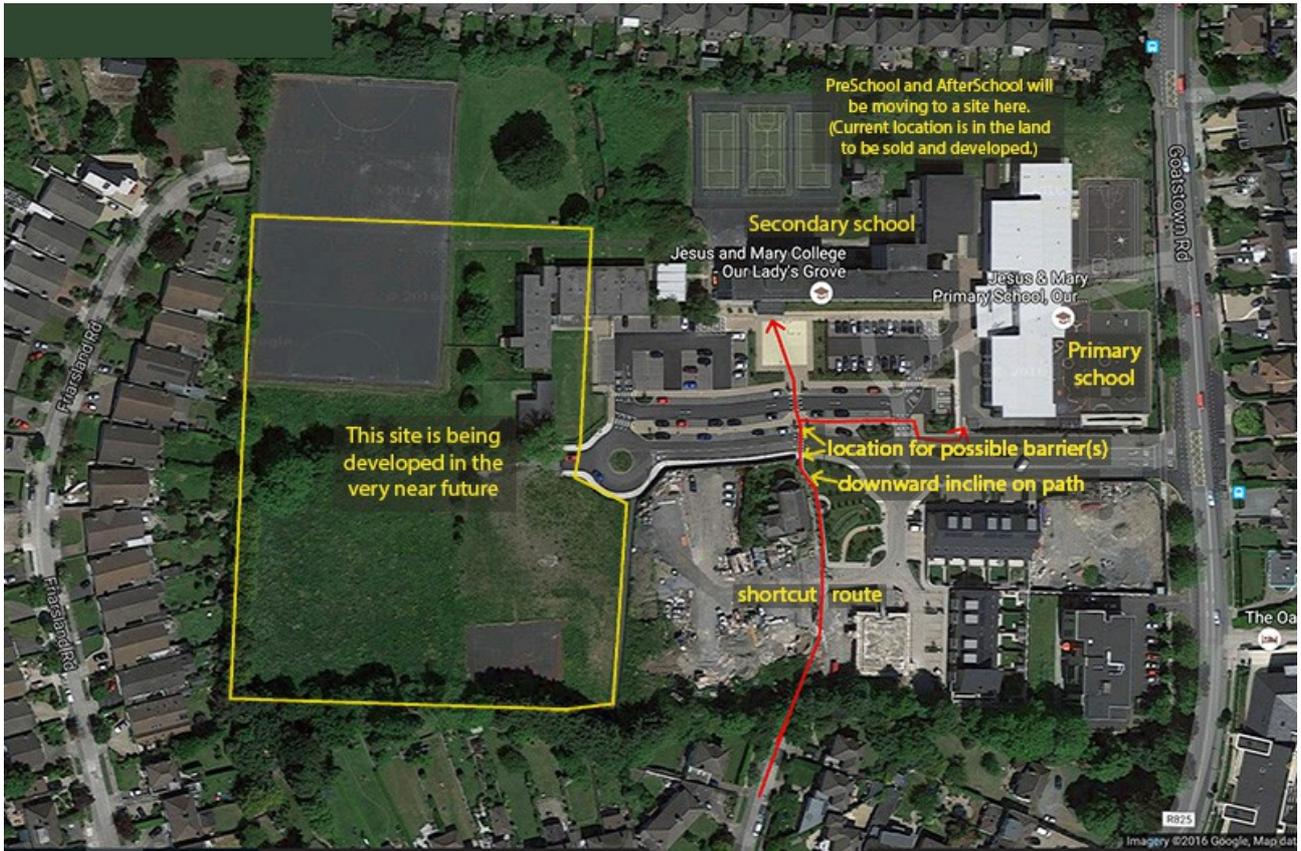


Fig. 2 – Aerial photo showing the site that will be developed in the near future. This will lead to a substantial increase in the amount of traffic on this road. We have been informed by the property consultants handling the preparations for the sale of this site that a planning application is to go in shortly. Also shown is the short cut route through The Grove, the location of the schools, preschool and after-school, the downward inclining path, and the locations for possible safety barriers.