



ROEBUCK
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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

21st June 2020

Re. Planning Reference D20A/0268
Location: Old IGB Lands, Goatstown Road, Dublin 14

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of The Roebuck Residents' Association we wish to make the following 10 observations relating to the above planning application. We are an active residents' association comprising of approximately 380 households in Goatstown. The association's area is bordered to the south by the IGB site, with a number of our members backing onto the site, and others living beside two of the proposed pedestrian access-ways. We were very happy to hear that the Department of Education purchased this site, which has been vacant for many years, and that two schools are to be located here. Many of our members' children will attend these schools, and we envisage a large community involvement in the establishment and growth of the schools over the coming years.

1 – Opportunity to promote walking and cycling

We encourage and support all initiatives to promote sustainable travel practices at the school. We would like to see these initiatives implemented for all phases of development on the site, including this first temporary phase. We wish to see motor vehicle traffic reduced to an absolute minimum from the very start.

When the two schools are in situ on the site, the total number of students will be approximately 1,200. Added to this will be teachers and other staff. This makes a very sizeable number of people that will be arriving at, and leaving from, the site every day.

It is important to note that there is no Quality Bus Corridor on Goatstown Road. The permanent cycle lane infrastructure further down on Clonskeagh Road, opposite the

entrance to UCD, coupled with the new style kerbed cycle lanes that will be shortly added to Goatstown Road, means a QBC will never be added to this route. Also, under the Bus Connects plan, the number 11 bus (the only bus that travels on Goatstown Road), will have its frequency further reduced (approximately one bus every 30 minutes). In other words, it is not possible for public transport to serve this site in any effective way. Hence the importance of prioritising cycle and pedestrian travel as early as possible.

Walking and cycling as the dominant modes of travel to and from the schools will benefit the local community by:

- reducing traffic
- reducing overspill parking
- reducing local pollution (air and noise)
- increasing safety for the pupils and local residents
- providing health benefits for pupils and staff

“We will dramatically increase the number of children walking and cycling to primary and secondary school by mandating the Department of Transport to work with schools across Ireland, local authorities, the Green-Schools programme and local initiatives, including Cycle Bus and School Streets.”

Newly Published "Programme for Government", Section: Transport

2 – Traffic

The speeds currently reached on the stretch of Goatstown Road in front of the school are excessive, with motor traffic frequently in excess of the official 50kmph. Cycle traffic speed is also an issue; the downhill stretch from The Goat junction means cyclists reach high speeds along here also, especially during the morning rush hour period. There are regular incidents of near-misses, and occasional collisions, between cyclists and school children at Our Lady's Grove entrance further north on Goatstown Road. Traffic calming approaches should be taken by the Council in relation to this stretch of Goatstown Road.

We are also concerned about the likely negative effect on the local area by school-based car traffic. Travelling to this school by car should be actively discouraged by the Council. In this regard, consideration should be given to a number of measures, including the possibility of the Council introducing, on a trial basis, a number of drop-off points on the periphery of the area, or implement a "School Streets" type of initiative. We would be happy to discuss

this with the council and the school authorities.

3 – Construction Management

It is imperative that a detailed and well thought out Construction Management Plan be drawn up before any construction begins.

Points that should be included are:

- No construction activity during unsocial hours (not before 9am at weekends, not before 8am weekdays, finish by 5pm)
- No construction traffic to take place at school drop-off and pick-up times.
- A dedicated pointsman to be on-site to ensure safety of children during the construction phases. This will be particularly important at the proposed construction vehicle entrance on Goatstown Road.
- Adequate parking space for construction workers and contractors, and for the temporary parking of delivery lorries, cement trucks etc. when making deliveries. These parking/vehicle waiting areas need to be provided for on-site, in designated areas predefined in the management plan.
- Regular site visits from Health and Safety officials should take place to ensure all possible safety standards are being met. We are keen to not have another situation similar to when a large construction vehicle toppled over, along with metres of hoarding, a few metres from a primary school yard. And where very large construction vehicles use the same road space as children on bikes. (Ref. Our Lady's Grove)
- Proper pedestrian walkways and separated cycle lanes to be clearly marked out during the construction period. Both on school grounds, and also on the stretch of Goatstown Road in front of the site.
- Residential areas surrounding the site should not be used as points of access to the site for motor traffic, either during the construction phases or post construction.
- Regular meetings should take place during the construction phases between the developer, school authorities, and representatives from the local community, in order to reduce potential areas of concern.

4 – Permanent Schools' Design Proposal, i.e. the Masterplan

Regarding the "masterplan" contained in the "Site layout plan" document (drawing titled: Site Development Strategy), it is hard to comment fully without elevation plans and other details. However our initial impression is that we would be in favour of the design approach that has been taken here.

We are keen that multiple storey areas be kept as far back as possible from the perimeter to reduce privacy and loss of light concerns for residents backing onto the site.

We are also very encouraged to see multiple outside sports and recreation areas including playing field, tennis/basketball courts, yard space, courtyard space, and other smaller landscaped green areas. It is important for both physical and mental health to have adequate outside space in a school environment. Other public schools in the area do not have the same advantages of open and adequate sporting and recreational amenities that the nearby private schools enjoy. So it is encouraging to see that pupils attending this public school will not be similarly disadvantaged.

We would like to comment on the zoning of this site. We see that this design has been created following the current F zoning, using the 40:60 ratio of built area to open space. We are aware that the zoning of this site may change when the new County Development Plan takes effect in 2022, and that this ratio may change. We suggest that a 50:50 ratio is the minimum ratio suitable for schools today, in order to facilitate the appropriate development of our young people with regards to sport and recreation.

5 – Biodiversity

This site has been an undeveloped site for many years. It was first farmland, then sports grounds, then left vacant. It has never been built on. As such it is a relatively unique suburban site containing pockets of rich biodiverse areas. As well as a large insect population, many wild animals and birds have been seen or heard in, or on the periphery of, the site - badgers, hedgehogs, bats, foxes, squirrels (grey), frogs, and most recently, a possible Barn Owl. This richness of biodiversity should be taken into account during planning and construction, and be protected as much as possible.

We ask that pesticides not be used during the clearing of this site prior to construction. Pesticides are now not routinely used by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council in public areas, and we believe this is a precedent that should also be extended to the clearance and maintenance of this state-owned site.

We also request that as much area as possible is left "wild" - areas that are not crucial to the footprint of the schools and recreational areas. This would allow established areas of bramble, ivy, dandelions, and other crucial bird and insect supporting plants etc. to remain as is, in order to continue supporting local insect and bird life.

It would be preferential if non-usable outside space within the curtilage of the school

buildings area, e.g., alongside walls, peripheral areas etc., be left wild. Any new areas of planting should use native and other insect and bird friendly plants, and be planned with an emphasis on keeping the external environment as bird and insect friendly as possible.

We would also welcome consideration of the establishment of bat and bird (house martin, swift, garden birds etc.) boxes on the school buildings as well as on trees.

Taking these steps would, in some small way, help address the Government's declaration of a biodiversity emergency (May 2019). There have also been many studies made that attest to the fact that a connection to nature is a critical component in children's development. Attending school in such a nature-friendly environment would undoubtedly have an immeasurably positive effect on children's well-being, both physically and mentally.

"We will promote biodiversity initiatives across primary, post-primary and third-level sectors, and ensure that schools, colleges, and universities across the country play an active role in providing areas to promote biodiversity."

Newly Published "Programme for Government", Section: Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

6 – Trees

We are happy to see the retention of the trees around the perimeter. There are some fine examples of mature native trees such as Ash, and also some impressive Poplars. These should be preserved. There are also a number of Leylandii trees on the perimeter that have been let grow to very high heights. There should be appropriate maintenance of these Leylandii trees, and in certain cases they should be removed. Suitable native trees should be planted in their place. This should be done in consultation with adjoining homeowners.

7 – Community Access

We request that the sporting and leisure facilities planned for the school site be made available for use by the local community, in particular the Goatstown Community Games group. This volunteer group would be very appreciative of access to these facilities.

We would also like to request access to meeting rooms in the school. Currently we have no community room or similar in order to hold small, or large, meetings.

8 – Bike Parking

We are encouraged to see bike parking on the plan. We request that the number be increased, and that all bike parking be covered from the weather. Every effort should be made to encourage students, and girls in particular*, to cycle to school. Ensuring that all bike parking is covered, is one approach that could help.

**1 in 250 teenage girls cycle to school – An Taisce*

9 – Lighting

Any provision of lighting is to be sensitive to the residents on the boundary of the site.

10 – Increase Number of Pedestrian/Cyclist Access Points into the Site

We believe there should be a greater number of pedestrian/cyclist access points to the site than the 3 marked on the "masterplan" drawing Site Development Strategy.

Increasing the number of access points would dilute possible issues that may occur at each individual access point. The greater the number of access points, the lower the number of people coming through each one.

The increased permeability would also be better for the surrounding areas as it would further reduce travel distances to the schools, and hence reduce the amount of car traffic generated.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Kennedy
Secretary
Roebuck Residents' Association