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3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

**Re. Planning Reference D20A/0268**

**Location: Old IGB Lands, Goatstown Road, Dublin 14**

To Whom It May Concern,

Please find below the Roebuck Residents' Association's observation in relation to the RFI ref. D20A/0268.

We wish to state that we are very supportive of the two Educate Together schools that will be located on this site, and we wish to see them in situ as soon as is practical. We also wish to state that the Association is in favour of the plan for the permanent school campus, as was outlined in the Proposed Masterplan (see Fig 2 below). This Masterplan design appears to be a sensitive and appropriate approach to development on this site, and will make for an excellent school experience for the local children who will be lucky enough to attend.

We would like to say however, that we are disappointed with the quality of the response provided by the Department of Education (DOE) to this RFI. Many items that are of concern to our members are very unclear. It would have to be assumed that the Department does not have much familiarity with this site and its position within the locality. As most of our members are long term residents here with many years experience of living beside it, we are very aware of the practical issues regarding this site. As such please find below our observations regarding the points raised in this RFI.

Regards,

Susan Kennedy

Secretary  
Roebuck Residents' Association

## Permeability

We are very disappointed to note that it appears there will be no permeability on the southern side of the site. Currently the only pedestrian/cyclist access points are on the northern side - Mount Carmel Road and Farmhill Road. In order to truly promote non-vehicular traffic to and from the school, the site needs to be made as permeable as possible. This means pedestrian/cyclist access from all other sides - south eastern, southern, south western and western. School children and teachers will be arriving at this site from all directions. It does not make sense to only have pedestrian/cyclist access points on the northern side.

Having multiple access points would also have the advantage of spreading out, and reducing, the individual impact (parking problems, potential anti-social activity etc.) on houses close to the access points. It is not fair that the burden of these potential issues be borne by residents on the northern side of the site only.

We strongly request that this issue of permeability be looked at further by the Council, as there are options available to increase permeability here.

## Trees

We are extremely concerned to note that it appears that trees are to be removed along the northern boundary (Farmhill Drive) to make way for a path. At present, there are leylandii and ash trees along this boundary. The ash trees along the northern boundary are fully grown mature trees in very good condition. They are much appreciated by nearby residents, and should not be removed. There is also concern that the construction of a path close to these trees will cause damage to the root system.

As well as their obvious benefit as regards a visual amenity, they are also important to the biodiversity in the area. Many different birds, squirrels and bats are frequently seen in, or in the vicinity of, these trees. Also, considering the spread of Ash Dieback disease nationwide, it is even more important than ever to preserve healthy examples of this genus.



*Fig 1 – Ash trees along the northern boundary*

The leylandii trees along the boundary with Mount Carmel Road are causing a nuisance to adjoining property owners and should be properly maintained, or possibly removed.

## Condition of Proposed Open Space on Western Side of Site

While we welcome the idea of additional, and much needed open space in the area, albeit of a temporary nature until the permanent school is constructed, we have concerns about the current condition of the open space on the western side of the site.

At present, this space is very overgrown, and unusable. As well as thick brambles and other vegetation, the ground surface itself is very uneven and contains many areas with holes/hollows. It would be a hazardous area for children or anyone attempting to walk across it, and will be an insurance liability for the DOE. The space will need considerable work to make it safe and useable.

We do not see any reference on the Site Plan, or in the accompanying text documents, that states the DOE has a plan to make this space safe and useable. Under the conditions of the Zoning, we understand they do have such a responsibility. We note this is specifically mentioned in condition (g) of Table 8.3.10 in the CDP: *“Said space shall be provided and laid out in a manner designed to optimise public patronage of the residual open space.”*

### **Possible solution:**

We understand the need for the school to move to their temporary buildings as soon as possible. So with that in mind, we suggest that until the open space is made useable, there should be no openings from Mount Carmel Road and Farmhill Road, and this open space should not be accessible by the general public.

## Path Along Northern Boundary

We have serious concerns about this path:

### **1. Why is it so close to the adjoining properties?**

The path shown in the new Site Plan runs along the back and side of one house on Mount Carmel Road, the back of 5 houses on Farmhill Drive, the side of 2 houses on Farmhill Road, and along the back of 18 houses in Belfield Downs. This is a potential security and privacy risk, and would involve the removal of mature trees, or cause potential damage to their root system. A path in this location is an unwelcome proposal for the majority of adjoining property owners.

### **Possible solution:**

In the original “Proposed MasterPlan”, the path does not run along the boundaries like this, instead it is set much further back. The path should be moved to the location that is shown in the “Proposed Masterplan” below.



Fig 2 – The Proposed Masterplan

## 2. Fenced Off Path/ Dead End

Due to the hazardous condition of the open space (see “Condition of Proposed Open Space on Western Side of Site” above), the path would need to be fenced off with substantial fencing, or hoarding, in order to prevent access to the open space. This would create an uninviting long channelled path through this site, fenced or walled off on both sides. We note there is a gate proposed for the end of this path at the fence boundary around the prefabs area (gate is visible on Road Access Layout plan). Will this gate be locked on a regular basis? If so, the long channelled path will end at a gated dead end. There would be a personal safety risk if entering this path outside of daylight hours.

### **Possible solution:**

We understand the need for the school to move to their temporary buildings as soon as possible. So with that in mind, we suggest that until the open space is made useable, there should be no openings from Mount Carmel Road and Farmhill Road and no path running through this area.

## **Pedestrian Entrances - Mount Carmel Road and Farmhill Road**

We note there are no details included regarding the pedestrian/cyclist entrances on Mount Carmel Road and Farmhill Road.

Clarification is needed on the following:

### **1. Gates**

Will there be gates on these openings? If there will be a gate at the end of the path at the prefab area (as is shown on the Road Layout Plan), there will be no permeability advantage in having openings here. If there will be a gate at the prefab end of the path, then there

should be gates on these openings also. They should be locked and unlocked when the gate at the prefab area is locked and unlocked.

**2. Position**

Where will the openings be positioned within the wall? Centred in the middle of the road, or off centre, opening onto one of the existing footpaths?

**3. Appearance**

What will the openings look like? Width, finish, pillars etc.

**4. Made Good**

- Will the end of the cul de sacs will be “made good” when the works on the openings are complete.
- Will the public footpaths be extended at the end of these cul de sacs in order to lead in through the entrance way?
- Will these footpaths have kerbs to stop cars parking right up against the wall and impeding access?
- Will there be appropriately dished areas to accommodate cyclists coming through?
- Presumably the openings will be 3m in width (the width of the path proposed). Will a bollard be put in place to stop vehicular traffic entering.

## Site Size of Temporary School

We’d like to comment on the issue regarding the DOE's technical guidance relating to school size (Additional Information Request Item 01 (ii)). We note that the site area should be in the region of 1.57ha, but is in fact 0.83ha. We also note that in reponse the DOE says this size requirement does not apply to temporary buildings. We would be interested to know where this is stated.

Notwithstanding that, we would like to point out that although the DOE views this as a temporary school, in practice it will be the only secondary school experience for many local students who attend, as it is very unlikely that a permanent school will be constructed in the near future. Therefore it is very important that extra usable grassed external space should be made available for them.

**Possible improvement:**

With that in mind, one simple improvement to the existing proposal would be to extend the “GRASS” area specified in the Site Plan, in the north east section, close to the vehicular entrance. If this grass area was extended out to the northern boundary, this would effectively double the grassed area.

Alternatively, moving the fence back and adding extra grassed space to the west of the portacabins would also be an easy method to add extra green usable space for the temporary school. This space would be incredibly useful during good weather for both outdoor lessons and activities, and would be much appreciated by the students and staff.

Both of these options would be very simple ways to create space that would otherwise be “wasted” until the permanent school is built in the future.

## **Vehicular and Cycle Accessibility Via Goatstown Road**

### **Cycle Lanes**

We note the Engineer of the report “Stage 1 Quality Audit (incorporating an access, cycling, walking and road safety audit)” makes a recommendation that a dedicated cycle link between the existing cycle lane on Goatstown Road and the proposed cycle stands should be provided. However this is not what is portrayed on the Road Access Layout plan. This is unfortunate, considering the importance of prioritising non-vehicular modes of travel to this school. This decision should be revisited.

### **Bus Turning**

We would also like to note that considering the very large catchment area this school has, there is a high likelihood that buses may be necessary to transport some students. We would like to point out that the turning area is not sufficiently wide for a bus to turn around. We realise this is a temporary school, however we do not want to see the same mistake made as was made in the road planning of nearby Our Lady’s Grove, where the diameter of the roundabouts are not wide enough for a bus to turn in one go.

### **Pedestrian Toucan Crossing**

We note the email correspondence between the architect and the Council engineer regarding the placement of the toucan crossing on Goatstown Road. It seems strange to us that there doesn’t appear to be criteria that need to be followed in situations like this. Instead the engineer tells the architect that he has no preference as to where it should go!

We are not road engineers so cannot give a professional opinion. However we would like to state that the recently placed toucan crossing further north, close to Our Lady’s Grove was put on the wrong side of the access road into the school campus. It should have been placed on the northern side of the entrance, not the southern side, to accommodate children coming from that direction. (As children coming from the other direction already use the crossing at Trimbleston/Larchfield Rd junction.)

Our point is, can some thought please be put into the location of this toucan crossing? For example, should it be located uphill of the school entrance (on the southern side)? As it could then potentially form a breakpoint for cyclists travelling at speed downhill before they reach the vehicular entrance.