

## **Introduction**

Good afternoon, my name is Jo Homewood, I have lived in the Inchicore Railway Estate since 1996, and since 2004 I have been the chair of the Inchicore Railway Estate Residents' Association.

I would like to thank An Bord Pleanála for offering our community the time and opportunity to provide further substance to our written submission, which still holds true in most of the aspects it covers, despite the oral submissions provided by the applicant.

### **The Inchicore Railway Estate Residents' Association**

The Inchicore Railway Estate Residents' Association represents people who live in the Inchicore Railway Estate, also known as the CIE Estate, or the Works Estate. Our area comprises 212 houses and a population of around seven hundred residents. Originally set up in the early 1970s as the CIE Residents' Association; the name was formally changed at the AGM in April 2010.

We are a very active community and the Residents Association have a substantial record in positive, committed citizenship and as champions of the local environment and local heritage.

We have worked closely with Dublin City Council on number of local projects, including a collaborative sculptural and heritage project on the Estate. The new playground in Grattan Crescent Park is a huge success and was realised as a result of efforts by ourselves, and other local residents in Woodfield in collaboration with the city council. We run local festivals, children's events, sports days and many other activities on an annual basis.

The residents' association, under its previous name the CIE Residents' Association, made a substantial submission to Dublin City Development Plan 2005 – 2011 which outlined the significance of the area in heritage terms and called for the Estate to be made an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). This was followed up in 2007/8 and reiterated in our submission to the current development plan (2011 – 2017).

In the current Dublin City Development Plan it is stated that it is an objective of Dublin City Council: "to undertake an assessment to inform the potential ACA designation for several areas including... CIE Estate Inchicore" (Ref FCO34).

I would now like to move to introduce Inchicore on Track, which is a sub-committee of the residents' association set up to respond to, and campaign in relation to, the DART Underground proposal for Inchicore.

I will now pass you over to John Beck who is the chair of Inchicore On Track and as such will be leading the IOT presentation and introducing each chapter of our presentation and the people presenting on our behalf.

My thanks for your attention.

## **Inchicore on Track**

Good afternoon, my name is John Beck, and I am a resident of the Inchicore Railway Estate since 2002, and a resident in Ireland since 2000, having moved here from Amsterdam, The Netherlands in that year.

The Dutch are known to be quite direct, so if I demonstrate any of that behavior in the coming presentation, I apologise in advance. Having said that, the situation and stress that has been thrust upon us since our community first heard of the plans to extend the Dart Underground to Inchicore has had a profound impact on our lives, and as such, I find it continuously challenging not to speak my mind in the manner that I am used to.

Allow me to set the scene for the initial stages of this proposed Project.

We were presented with **this leaflet** back in April 2009, and as part of that very same leaflet, we were told that a Railway Order was to be lodged just 5 months later, in September of that same year.

As we will be elaborating on in our presentation today, the immediate impacts of this proposal were unimaginably stressful. **Here** was the first ever mention to place a future station within the Railway Works directly adjacent to our Estate, opening the possibility for development of a 74 acre site to all kinds of undefined developments and to place a construction site the size of Croke Park in the heart of our community, to accommodate the Tunnel Boring Machine Launch Pit.

I am of course relieved to say that the placement of the TBM launch Pit has since been suggested to be removed from within our community, and has not been included as part of this railway order application. It took CIE the guts of a solid year to reverse their one track mind of stating the TBM could ONLY be positioned where it was proposed, as again and again we were told that there

were simply no other viable alternatives. We will elaborate later on the details of this particular process, because it is important to outline what we had to go through to get any form of adjustment to the initial devastating plans from CIE.

Let me be very clear here: removing a construction site of that kind of magnitude does not remove any of the other remaining impacts that this proposed project will still have on our community- which are considerable - and it is ultimately our community that will be left living with the consequences of what is currently a deeply flawed project for the rest of our lives – unless serious remedial action is taken.

There is a more than a little irony attached to CIE's decision to rapidly reroute the DART Underground into what is a tranquil and close knit community with a unique architectural heritage and culture bound up with the origins of the Irish Railway.

I am often asked what I am against, I prefer to make it clear what we are for: A properly planned station, and in its current state, it is not properly planned. As it is currently proposed, it is not welcome and it is not supported. We will be pointing out in our submission how little time was afforded to this end of the project and how compressed the timescales have been specifically in relation to the Inchicore part of the project.

Anecdotally, I would like to point out that the underground project in Amsterdam, going from the north to the south of Amsterdam, right under the heart of the city, was started in 2002 and was to last 7 years. The current earliest predictions of the completion date are now 2017, and current cost overruns are at 2 billion and counting.

My only point being that this project was commenced in haste and the price is still being paid for this approach.

## **Dart Underground and the Oral Hearing**

We recognise the potential of the DART Underground project to help provide important transport solutions to Dublin as an evolving city. We also recognise this proposal is supported by key national, regional and local strategies and plans.

We welcome the project and its broad terms and aims.

However, it is a very large and complex proposal with serious and important consequences for the future of the city of Dublin and its citizens. We believe that it should be delivered to the highest possible standards in design and quality; that it should be exemplary in terms of proper planning and sustainable development and that it should seek to maximize the benefits and cause the minimum of harm to the city and its citizens. Our objective is to make a constructive contribution towards achieving this.

Our intention here is to reflect back to the applicant and inform the Board on those aspects that concern and impact us. We are living on the ground and unapologetically bring forward the issues as they present to us. While we welcome the project in broad strokes there is much in the detail that we find deficient. We also find that the proposal contains some errors and flaws and we wish to bring these deficiencies to the attention of the Board. We will ask that the Board directs CIE to take appropriate corrective measures.

It's unsurprising that a proposal of this breadth and complexity is not perfect. Indeed, a goal of this process is to scrutinise and test the quality of a 'Draft' Railway Order. And, given the extraordinary powers that a Railway Order confers on a successful applicant, it is proper to hold it up to the most stringent and detailed scrutiny.

We feel this is an absolute imperative given the scale and duration of impacts that this project will have on the Inchicore Railway Works and Estate and the adjoining areas.

## **DART Underground brings major impacts and great change**

We are here because this project heralds momentous change for the Railway Estate, the adjoining Works, and the wider Inchicore area and beyond.

During the Construction phase:

- The proposed works include tunneling underground west from Memorial Park under properties along Inchicore Road, Woodfield, Murrays Cottages, the Inchicore Railway Estate and Works. The tunnels will be driven in a rising gradient bringing them closer to properties here than in any other area of the city.
- A Major Scale construction site is proposed within the Inchicore Railway Works abutting the Railway Estate; it will include construction of an ESB Substation and a TBM reception pit in close proximity to the Estate; demolition of historic buildings within the Works; excavation of an open cut from the reception pit to the existing mainline; construction of a DART Underground terminus train station and turnback facility.
- A moderate scale Construction Site is proposed in the Sports Ground within the Railway Estate for the construction of an Intervention and Ventilation Shaft
- Construction Works on the historic curtilage wall (a protected structure) of the Estate between Inchicore Terrace North and Sarsfield Road.
- These sites and associated works will give rise to increased levels of traffic within and next to the estate and this will include construction traffic and construction workers traffic and parking.

In planning terms, a dramatic change of use is proposed by the development of a station as a transport hub in the centre of private land, currently industrially zoned, Z6. This will turn the enclosed industrial works into an open public space and create new public rights of way into and out of adjoining residential estates. It will also lead directly to the future development of the entire 74 acres of the Inchicore Railway Works and also, potentially, areas of the Railway Estate; a further construction phase that could continue for decades. The impacts will be medium, long term and permanent. The implications are profound.

## **Hasty Proposal**

In April 2009, it was publicly announced for the first time that CIE proposed extending the Dart Underground to Inchicore and was intending to apply for a Railway Order in September 2009. Local communities were given barely five months to understand, consult, participate and respond to DART Underground proposals.

It can be clearly understood from the EIS and other records within the public domain that the Heuston to Inchicore section was brought forward in haste; that the level of assessments and consultations that were part of Phases 1 & 2 of the project were bypassed or compressed into a number of weeks in relation to the proposed extension of the scheme to Inchicore.

This haste has had consequences for the quality of the proposal put forward in April 2009 and its subsequent iteration in design, optioneering and planning terms.

It also had a major impact on how this proposal was received in Inchicore and, in particular, within the Railway Estate, which bore a substantial brunt of the then newly conceived and presented proposals. It was clear from the outset that there had not been time to give due consideration to the impacts on the local area or local communities. We believe the initial failure to assess these impacts remains embedded within the current EIS.

## **Insufficient Detail – Quality Compromised**

We are concerned with various types of omissions within the EIS across many disciplines and on a variety of levels. Sometimes these omissions are recognised and simply deferred to a later time and another agency or mechanism thereby removing them from scrutiny and remit of the current process.

Across a range of disciplines, detail is consistently lacking and is deferred and would become the responsibility of the Contractor to generate. Much of this is due to the deployment of the Reference Design model as a mechanism by which detail is withheld or deferred. How this is done seriously undermines the quality of the application as presented resulting in a proposal, that as it stands, is sub-standard and simply cannot be properly assessed.

Specifics and details are consistently not being presented, not only in relation to the finished, built environment but also the proposed temporary construction sites including site and haul route layouts. It is impossible to assess the impacts of these, given the current level of information and therefore it is impossible to respond comprehensively and with due diligence. We will ask in several instances that this detail is furnished for the consideration of the Public and the Board before this inquiry ends.

## **Displacement of Responsibility**

CIE consistently puts the onus onto the Contractor and other agencies in respect of various aspects of the project.

The onus is shifted to the Contractor by CIE particularly in the case of plans which bear directly on how the scheme will impact the environment including communities; these include: Noise and vibration plans; Dust Minimisation Plans; Traffic Management Plans; Site Management Plans; Environmental Management Plans; Construction codes of practice; the Property Protection Scheme, Monitoring provision, Community Liaison scheme etc.

CIE has at this hearing also claimed on more than one occasion that Community Gain is outside the scope of the DART Underground project yet there is clear provision within the Railway Order Act that contradicts this bald assertion.

CIE has referred to, and made available, an agreement reached with DCC in respect of the current proposal. Yet it is entirely uncertain what the specific status of this agreement is. It seems to give DCC a compliance role in relation to the elements deferred and removed from the current process. On the other hand, it justifies those deferrals. Meanwhile, the power of DCC in enforcement is not explicit.

We are concerned that vital aspects of the proposal and its impacts are thus removed from the current process, thereby impairing the possibility of input, comment, observation or objection from the members of the public and diluting the powers and scope of An Bord Pleanála. This may allow for CIE, the contractor and, to some extent, DCC to make key decisions from which the public are excluded.

## **Time - is now on our side**

Given that the Government has effectively put this scheme on hold, there is a real window of opportunity to address the deficiencies and omissions of the project and deliver a DART Underground and integrated transport system for Dublin of the highest standards – one in which we can all share our part as responsible citizens and stakeholders.

It is a project that should in time come to symbolize the transition to a more enlightened era of planning, public service and participative democracy.

Before concluding on this introduction I would like to reiterate the fact that our formal written submission made in August of last year stands as an important document of reference. It is a substantial and well researched and presented document that was made possible through the collective spirit and commitment of the entire community.

IOT has been repeatedly mandated by residents throughout the DART Underground process – this can be testified through continually high attendances at public meetings and the unbroken and consistent approach to supporting the various strands of the campaign, its funding and technical support needs and where requested, formal petitioning, including our most recent addressing An Bord Pleanala.

Throughout this period the Residents Association and IOT have been sustained by the support of the overwhelming majority of householders and tenants on the Railway Estate, which in turn we hope is reflected appropriately in the resolute and dutiful manner in which we present our case here today.

Finally, it is important to state unambiguously that the residents of the Railway Estate, its representative Association and campaign group Inchicore On Track formally objects to this Railway Order Application in its current format. We

further ask that An Bord Pleanála reject the application and instruct CIE / Irish Rail to undertake a more considered, consultative, properly researched and viable proposal in which we might all take some pride and comfort.

I will now proceed to indicate the 9 headings and order in which we will present our communities views and evidence in greater detail, as follows:

### **Contents and format of our Oral Submission**

1. **Who We Are** – A profile of the area, its community and specific relationship to CIE / Irish Rail
2. **Consultation & Participation** – this section examines national and international definitions and standards attaching to public participation and consultation in planning processes, while also detailing the extent to which the community sought and failed to secure a properly engaged relationship to the DART Underground process
3. **Planning, Station and Environs and Proposed Future Development** – a critical review of the main features and characteristics of those sections of the Railway Order Application that purport to represent proper planning specific to the location of a Station in Inchicore and proposed future Development within the area
4. **Design, Architecture & Heritage** – a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the inadequate quality of measures specific to Design, Architecture and Heritage. Presented firstly, with reference to first principles and good practice and secondly with regard to what is specifically proposed by the applicant and how this could have a major detrimental effect on both our national and local railway heritage.
5. **Construction and Operational Impacts & Issues** – this section will address the great variety of recognised and anticipated construction and operational impacts upon our community with a clear focus on arising issues and ameliorating measures

6. **OTB Engineering** – a presentation on behalf of the Railway Estate residents that inquires into the appropriateness of the current alignment, and the proposed locations of the intervention shaft and DART Underground station in Inchicore.
7. **Community Gain and Corporate Social Responsibility** – this section is centered on highlighting the absence of an appropriate spirit of corporate social responsibility within CIE / Irish Rail. It also makes a strongly argued case for a set of well considered and modest community gain measures that would benefit the whole of Inchicore and adjoining communities
8. **Conditions, Modifications and Improvements to the Railway Order** – in this penultimate section we will represent a summary of the conditions, modifications and improvements we are requesting that An Bord Pleanála consider including in advance of issuing any Railway Order
9. **Conclusion to Oral Submission** – in this closing section we will draw together the main features of our oral presentation and open out the way for the applicant to respond or inquire further into the substance of our position