

Iarnród Éireann

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Tom Vaughan,  
Planning and Development Department,  
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Dublin 8,

04<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**Draft Georges Quay Area Plan-Submission/Observation**

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed a submission from Iarnrod Eireann (IE) / CIE regarding the Draft Georges Quay Plan that issued for comment in December 2008.

IE / CIE have participated in consultations with Dublin City Council (DCC) and Murray O'Laoire, the Consultants engaged by DCC, during the preparation of the draft plan. As a strategic Stakeholder within the area, testified in the provisions specifically relating to Tara Street Station, we welcome any proposals to provide a coherent strategy for the future development of the area.

Having reviewed the Draft Georges Quay Plan in the context of the Tara Street Station development as is proposed by IE / CIE we would submit that the proposal by IE / CIE supports the aspirations in the draft plan in the following respects:

- the desirelines gravitating from the city to the Station;
- increasing and improving the public realm at street level by widening the footpaths at the Station entrance;
- the use high quality materials and design, including glazing at street level to bring the city closer to the concourse and to allow the activities of the concourse to be visible from the surrounding streets; and
- improving pedestrian access from Georges Quay to the North and from a greatly enhanced entrance from Tara Street. This will shift the pedestrian flows from the Quays towards the streets behind and to the proposed desired pedestrian route through the Poolbeg St./Hawkins street/Townsend Street Site area.

IE / CIE has made a substantial commitment over the last 10 years in producing design proposals for the redevelopment of Tara Street Station to provide the Landmark building required for this most important city centre transport hub. IE / CIE worked closely with

the planning department of DCC and its panel of external advisors on the selection of the optimum proposal for the Station, culminating in the grant of planning permission by An Bord Pleanála in 2002. (please refer to Appendix A outlining the IE / CIE Tara Street Station scheme development in discussion with DCC planning department).

This design is currently being reviewed in light of current guidelines in relation to sustainability with a view to submitting a planning application to An Bord Pleanála in March 2009 under the Strategic Infrastructure Act. This Landmark design was developed with the assistance of a team of Architects who have international experience of high rise landmark buildings in America, Europe & Asia.

In the period of design development leading up to the current proposal the operational requirements of the concourse in terms of passenger flow, safety capacity and the circulation from concourse to platforms was examined in great detail. We are satisfied that the design as contained in the IE / CIE redevelopment proposal represents the optimum design and allows for an enhanced capacity of 14,500 passengers an hour.

These considerations are not reflected in the indicative layouts proposed for the Station site within the Draft Georges Quay plan.

## **Public Realm**

The draft Georges Quay Plan acknowledges the poor quality and dearth of existing public spaces within the Study area. IE / CIE are to make a positive contribution within the proposed Station design by increasing the width of the public footpath to Tara Street and providing widened and improved entrances from Tara Street and Georges Quay to a generous triple height Concourse. Train arrivals and departures will also be visible from the concourse and the streets beyond. The concourse is located on the axis of the proposed pedestrian desire line through the Poolbeg St./Hawkins street/Townsend Street Site, linking the Station to College Green.

The proposed aim in section 4.3.1 of the draft Georges Quay Plan of providing pedestrian movement from the North to the South through the Concourse as well as enhancing permeability on the Eastern Elevation and around the corner to Poolbeg Street is not attainable given that this is a very tight city centre site which will need to perform the following functions:

- Cater for up to 14,500 passengers an hour;
- Provide sufficient and accessible vertical circulation to the platforms above using stairs, escalators and lifts;
- Meet the normal requirement for revenue control within a Railway Station;
- provide access and servicing to the proposed Offices overhead; and
- Respect the close proximity of the adjacent protected structure of Kennedy's Pub (In DCC's proposal for Tara Street as contained in the draft plan, one of the proposed towers is actually built over the rear of Kennedy's premises - refer to Figure 4.17 of the draft Georges Quay Plan)

These real requirements and restrictions don't seem to have been considered adequately in the plan. The Draft plan must consider the day to day realities of running one of the busiest stations in the country.

The draft Georges Quay Plan also proposes a possible desire route for pedestrians running along the existing Railway Viaduct with key open spaces along this route. The proposal as illustrated in figure 4.14 of the draft Georges Quay Plan shows a proposed open space under the viaduct where the current and proposed Station concourse are located; this effectively eliminates most of the ground floor available for a Station concourse and renders direct station access to the southbound platforms impossible. The only alternative would be a convoluted solution which would force passengers to gain access to a level to cross over the railway and drop down to the Southbound Platform. This is not consistent with the principles of accessible building and station design.

The pedestrian route along the viaduct also ignores the fact that the property in this area is in multiple ownership and has the viaduct and platform supports as obstructions.

The Figure 4.20 of the draft Georges Quay Plan, as shown, has eliminated the whole of the southbound platform of the Station; the existing Station platforms exist outside the width of the Viaduct itself.

## **Sustainability**

When Irish Rail undertook a review of the Station Redevelopment in 2008 a primary goal was to review the design in line with recent guidelines on the provision of Sustainable development. IE / CIE set our consultants the task of achieving the highest possible Energy rating for the Building & introduce best practice in the design proposal. The Current IE / CIE design for Tara Street Station utilising energy efficient proposals has achieved a predicted Rating of B on the BER scale. Furthermore, the position of the proposed air rights development over a major Transport hub is in line with guidelines for sustainable development. Car Parking has also been restricted with the emphasis being placed on public Transport and provision for Bicycle parking.

## **Building Design**

The proposal for Tara Street Station in the draft Georges Quay Plan envisages a dual tower design of 14 and 22 Storeys over a Station Concourse. The requirement for two distinct service cores in such a dual tower proposal would severely restrict and compromise the concourse layout at ground floor level. This is especially apparent given the very restricted nature of the site, as described above. The outline dual tower proposal within the draft DCC plan would also provide more inefficient floorplates at the higher levels.

IE / CIE demonstrated to DCC during the discussion stage, the negative impact on the operational viability of the concourse as contained within the DCC proposals.

### **Public Transport requirements**

In terms of the proposals for the Station within the draft plan. I would add the following.

- The plan calls for access through the Concourse from North to South with permeability in the Eastern Elevation as well. Yet it is unclear how the authors of the draft plan saw that the Concourse could function within this requirement as well as having to accommodate at least two service cores at Ground level, from the offices above, where previously there was one.
- As noted above, figure 4.14 illustrates a proposed open space under the present viaduct within the site of the proposed Concourse (In the draft plan and IE / CIE proposal). It is not clear whether the authors considered that vertical access via stairs lifts and escalators would be required to gain access to the platforms above and that revenue protection in the form of Ticket validators would be required in the Station Concourse as well. It is not clear how a Station with the proposed capacity of 14,500 an hour could operate with the remaining space.
- The Figure 4.20 as shown in the draft Georges Quay Plan has eliminated the whole of the Tara Street Station Southbound platform; the existing Station platforms exist outside the width of the Viaduct itself.
- In Section 4.3.1 Tara Street Station, the report suggests that *“It is considered that the concourse or existing railway arches offer a good opportunity for small commercial offices or retail uses within the lower arches, facing either inwards towards the lower levels of the concourse or towards a public open space to the east of the site.”*  
This fails to recognise that the space under the arches are critical for efficient circulation within the concourse, to and from the Platforms, as well as aiding accessibility by providing the most direct route possible.

### **Visual & Shadow impacts**

The Station proposal in the draft Georges Quay Plan envisages dual towers over Tara Street Station of 75-80 metres (14 & 22 storeys respectively). This is similar in height to the previously proposed Borg Developments (24 & 14 storeys) proposal at Georges Quay which was refused planning permission in September 1999 by An Bord Pleanála who in their decision stated

*“Having regard to the height and bulk of the proposed development, it is considered that the development would detrimentally affect the historic precincts of the Custom House, Trinity College, and the Liffey Quays and would, therefore, seriously injure the amenities of property in the vicinity.”*

In the current Station proposal by IE / CIE every effort was taken to minimise the impact of the Development within these historic precincts.

It is quite clear from the additional views taken for the IE / CIE proposal that the impact of a 80 metre high building would be considerably greater than a building 60.8 metres high.

(Please refer to Appendix B views 19A, 19B, 20B, 21A attached which illustrates the lesser impact of the IE / CIE 60.8 metre proposed development when viewed from key areas of Trinity College including the steps of the Moyne Institute & front square, in similar areas to those in Part 5 VIA Study in the draft Georges Quay plan for the proposed 80 metre dual towers for Tara Street station.)

The views within Part 5 VIA Study: City View Photomontages do not include a view from Henrietta Street. (refer to Appendix C for the current Tara Street proposal by IE/CIE at 60.8 metres)

Within Appendix A of the draft Georges Quay Plan, the shadow impact of the development proposals in the proposed draft Georges Quay plan, including the suggested built form of Tara Street, are shown. In IE / CIE's proposals for Tara Street the shadow impact of the 60.8metre building proposed was examined to try to minimise the casting of shadows on the Custom house.

A building of 80 metres height would certainly have a more detrimental impact on the Custom house but this is not evident in the Shadow examples shown. Minimising the effect of overshadowing onto adjacent sites is a stated aim of section 4.2.2 A Height Strategy for Georges Quay.

As a major Stakeholder in the Georges Quay area, we would welcome the opportunity for future consultation with Dublin City Council and their advisors in respect of the further development proposals for the area.

Yours sincerely

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**Liam Boyce**

Architects Department

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