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## **Decision of An Bord Pleanála in Relation to Proposed Civic Plaza at College Green**

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On 18 May 2017 Dublin City Council made an application for approval to An Board Pleanála, under Section 175 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for the development of a new Civic Plaza, ancillary traffic management measures and minor works at College Green, Dublin, in accordance with the plans and particulars, including an environment impact assessment report.

This proposal was in accordance with the City Councils long held objective to develop a world class Civic Plaza in College Green, a location steeped in historical and architectural importance for the city and the nation.

The development of the proposed Civic Plaza at College Green, is facilitated greatly, by the urgent need to reconfigure College Green to take account of the increased numbers of pedestrians and cyclists in this area and the new requirement to cater for 55-metre long Luas Cross City trams. In addition, the proposal would have contributed significantly in addressing the issues of competing transport demands for road space at this location, by simplifying complex traffic signalling arrangements, removing conflicting movements and streamlining all bus and taxi movements along the north south axis.

An Oral Hearing was conducted over 15 days in March/April 2018 and following consideration of the Inspectors report, An Board Pleanála, on Wednesday 17 October 2018, issued its refusal to grant consent to the application as follows:

### **'Reasons and Considerations:**

**It is considered that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable and that it would produce a quality public realm that would significantly enhance the amenity and attractiveness of this city centre location, would significantly improve the visual amenities of the area and would improve appreciation of the architectural and cultural heritage of this important site. However, it is considered that:-**

- (i) Notwithstanding the use of the regional traffic model, the Board cannot be satisfied that the traffic analysis carried out, and the associated information provided, particularly at local level, was sufficient to accurately quantify traffic impacts of the proposed development and the magnitude of those impacts,**
- (ii) The consequent uncertainty but likely significantly negative impacts for bus transport, in light of the scale of re-routing of buses proposed, the**

**critical importance of bus transport to the city, and its future role in facilitating model shift from public car usage, in line with national policy,**

- (iii) The identified and unresolved capacity issues on the Quays in their capacity to accommodate the scale of bus re-routing proposed, and**
- (iv) The failure to demonstrate that the existing footpaths on both sides of the Quays have the capacity to accommodate the increased numbers of pedestrians that would be re-directed onto the Quays as a result of bus re-routing,**

**The proposed development would give rise to significant adverse impacts on pedestrians and on bus transport within the city centre and would, therefore, be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development of the area.'**

The Inspectors report and the decision of the Board are currently under consideration with regard to the future of the proposal, options that might be available and next steps. The principal options available to the City Council are as follows:

1. To seek a Judicial Review in relation to the decision of An Bord Pleanála. An application in this regard must be lodged within 8 weeks of the decision to refuse.
2. To lodge a new application to An Bord Pleanála for the Plaza and traffic management measures having regard to the An Bord Pleanála decision.
3. To abandon the Plaza proposal at this time and proceed to make the necessary alterations to traffic management arrangements in this area to address the competing transport demands that must be addressed using the Councils own powers as a roads authority.

**Dick Brady**  
**Assistant Chief Executive**

**31<sup>st</sup> October 2018**