



Submission
on
Draft Dublin City
Development Plan
2011 - 2017

11th March 2010
by the
Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

1 Introduction

This document is a submission from the Dublin Branch of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland to Dublin City Council on the Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017 as published on the website www.dublincitydevelopmentplan.ie

2 About IWAI

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (founded in 1954) is the largest body representing inland waterways boaters and enthusiasts in Ireland. The association has ~4500 members organised in 20 branches across the island of Ireland. The majority of our members are boat owners and users and support the responsible use of all kinds of boats on our waterways. We organise over 200 events on and around Irish waterways each year. We operate a website (www.iwai.ie) devoted to information about our inland waterways. Our quarterly magazine “*Inland Waterways News*” is circulated free of charge to all members and to a wide range of other interested bodies.

In the Dublin area, we organise rallies, cleanups, etc. on the Royal Canal, Grand Canal and River Liffey (see photos at right) and advocate the use of these waterways as living waterways/navigations for leisure and commercial use – more information is available at <http://dublin.iwai.ie>.

3 Conventions

In this document, text that has been extracted from the Draft Master Plan is shown in *italics*.



4 **Overall Comment**

This plan places considerable emphasis on making Dublin a more attractive city to live and work in. Dublin is blessed with waterways, both natural and man-made. Three waterways are navigable, namely the Royal Canal, the Grand Canal and the Liffey (to Islandbridge).

There is no reference in the plan to bringing “life” to the waterways, to “animating” the waterways. Even the recent “Draft Dublin Canals Plan” makes scant reference to bringing life to the waterways itself, treating the canals as if they were simply a garden water-feature rather than as a resource to deliver social inclusion and social cohesion through water-based leisure and sporting activities.

This is particularly true in relation to the Royal Canal Linear park, where ideas in relation to floating gardens have long been mooted.

Our experience echoes that experienced in cities across Europe, specifically that waterways with boats attract onlookers and tourists. Our regular “voyages” on the Grand Canal and Liffey are almost universally met with smiles, clicking cameras, wistful memories of bygone times and the odd witty comment.

We would like to see that the Dublin Development Plan contain specific objectives to encourage boating and other water-based activities on our waterways. Within Dublin, we have two under-utilised canals. We have two large canal docks (Spencer Dock and Grand Canal Dock), where mooring is actively discouraged at present.

More than 50 berths have stood idle at the Grand Canal Dock Visitors Centre for more than 5 years – the Dublin Branch of IWAI cannot get permission to use them other than for two weeks a year in May. Individuals cannot get permission to access them at all.

Grand Canal Dock and Spencer Dock are almost unique in Europe in terms of extent and offer the possibility to brand Dublin with a distinctive waterways image. How much more attractive would the new Grand Canal Square and refurbished Hannover Quay be if there was a small water-borne community in residence nearby with boats that move regularly?

The simple fact is that boats attract walkers, voyeurs, tourists to the waterways.

The following photographs show what's possible when life, through boating, is brought to the waterways



Leiden, Netherlands.



Paris



Amsterdam



Copenhagen



Arsenal, Paris

Our own voluntary efforts in Dublin are popular but sadly transient as mooring within the city is actively discouraged. The following photos are just a sample from recent rallies organised by the IWAI in Dublin.



From 2011 onwards, it should be possible to enter the city from the Shannon via one canal and return via the other. At present, anyone contemplating such a trip would be actively discouraged from stopping off for a week or two in Dublin. This has to change.

In addition to supporting transient mooring, we would hope that Dublin City Council would, in line with the DDDA, support the provision of “Liveaboard” boats within Dublin City boundaries at suitable locations and with suitable provision for water, sanitation, waste etc. In this context, a “liveaboard” is a boat on which people live either part time or full time. Again, this is common in most of Europe’s urban areas and brings life and “character” to the waterways. As stated earlier, both Grand Canal Dock and Spencer Dock are large bodies of water that would be enhanced by the presence of liveaboards.

4.1 Social Cohesion, Disadvantaged area support

Both the Grand and Royal canals flow through some “disadvantaged” areas in Dublin. It could be argued that watersports or water-based activities should be encouraged in the communities. However, such activities require some basic facilities including secure storage for items such as kayaks, canoes etc. We would hope that the development plan support the provision of such supporting infrastructure to facilitate community-led water-centric activities.

See our specific suggestions below in relation to SDRA 13.

5 Specific Observations and Comments

5.1 Section 6.4.4 Rivers, Canals, and the Coastline

GC18 To continue to cooperate with Waterways Ireland and other agencies to develop the amenity and biodiversity of canals as set out in the 'Dublin Canals Study' (2009) and supporting 'Waterways Ireland: Interim Environmental and Heritage Policy' document

While we agree with the objective above, we would also like to see specific objectives per our section 4 above, specifically that:

1. Dublin City Council has an objective to encourage boating and similar water-based activities on Dublin's waterways.
2. Dublin City Council supports the facilitation of "liveboards" at suitable locations in the city.

5.2 Objective SIO12: To develop new cycle links ...

SIO12 To develop new cycle links including:

- Sandymount to Clontarf using Dodder Bridge and Macken Street Bridge.
- Sutton to Sandycove, including a new off road cycle and pedestrian route through Docklands and on to Clontarf
- Docklands Route
- Grand and Royal Canal Premium Routes
- Heytesbury Premium Route

Dublin IWAI supports the above objective provided that the implementation of the proposed Grand and Royal Canal Premium Routes do not impact on the navigability of the canals.

5.3 Objective SIO17: To provide additional cycle and pedestrian bridges ...

SIO17 To provide additional cycle and pedestrian bridges across the city's canals and rivers to form part of strategic cycling and walking routes

Dublin IWAI supports this objective provided that the implementation does not impact on the navigability of the canals.

5.4 SIO34 To initiate and / or implement the following road improvement schemes and bridges within the six year period of the plan ...

In relation to the planned Dodder Bridge ...

Navigation access between the River Liffey and the Grand Canal Basin must be retained – hence the new Dodder Bridge must be capable of opening to permit sail craft. Access to the basin is already limited by tidal conditions (due to silt deposited by the River Dodder). There should be no restrictions on bridge opening times and it should open on-demand.

5.5 16.2.8 Development Proposals Adjoining Rivers and Canals

Where a proposed development adjoins a river or canal bank, the area adjacent to the waterway should be retained as a linear park or walkway, with linkages into the wider open space network.

The width of the linear park will take into account the existing layout and amenity potential with due allowance for riparian corridors and flood risk. In all case, any existing blockages to permeability, such as boundaries or redundant buildings, should be resolved where possible.

Dublin IWAI welcomes this.

5.6 SDRA 6 Spencer Dock North, Docklands

This Spencer Dock North Strategic Redevelopment Area forms part of the wider redevelopment area of the Dublin Docklands Development Area (DDDA) which includes the three major areas of Spencer Dock North, Poolbeg, Grand Canal Harbour as set out in the DDDA Masterplan 2008. Section 25 Schemes have been prepared for Poolbeg and Grand Canal Dock.

- 1. To develop a new urban neighbourhood based on sustainable densities and with a strong sense of place, a 'bridge' between the established communities of East Wall and North Wall/Sheriff Street.*
- 2. To facilitate the provision of a socially cohesive community through the provision in an integrated manner of a wide range of housing types and tenures.*
- 3. To create a high quality physical environment through the development of a coherent spatial structure based on a hierarchy of linked streets and spaces.*
- 4. To open up the Royal Canal as a central component of this spatial structure, as a linear park - a 'green lung', a vital connector to the River and a generator of a network of linked public spaces.*
- 5. To improve accessibility from this new neighbourhood and the adjoining neighbourhoods to the city centre and the I.F.S.C. through the development of an integrated public transportation system.*
- 6. To create a permeable quarter by removing existing physical barriers between these lands and the adjoining neighbourhoods of East Wall and North Wall/Sheriff Street and developing of a network of pedestrian and cycle linkages.*
- 7. To explore alternative and innovative ways of creating a new public dynamic and energy within the linear park and forging a physical synergy between the park and future developments on the adjoining lands to the east.*

This section (SDRA 6, page 185) should also include the Grand Canal Dock area.

5.6.1 Sheriff St. Bridge

Since the installation of the flood defences at Spencer Sea Lock, the non-operation of Sheriff St. lifting bridge currently makes navigation of the Royal Canal difficult if not impossible for vessels. The clearance beneath Sheriff St. bridge is approximately 88” (2.2 meters). A minimum of 3m clearance is required.

We would like to see the replacement of Sheriff St. bridge added to the list of proposed works on bridges.

5.6.2 Measures to animate the waterways

The IWAI is fully supportive of measures to “animate” the waterways. However the policies to deliver the support infrastructure required to achieve this are missing from the current plan.

In order to achieve these goals, the IWAI would like to see provision made for:

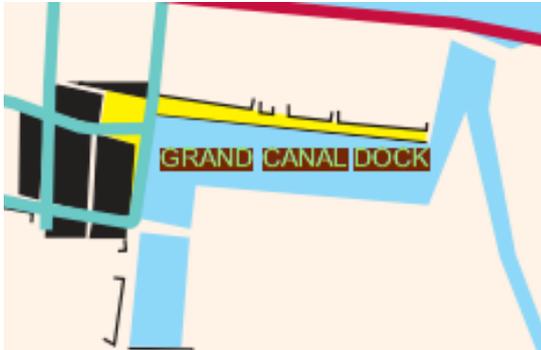
- Provision for mooring;
- Secure storage of boats (including engines) when not in use;
- Parking for cars and trailers (where a boat is launched and recovered in a single day or for example over a weekend);
- Provision to do minor maintenance on boats;
- Changing rooms, toilets (for active water sports participants).
- Dedicated area for liveaboards.



In particular, Grand Canal Dock has two dry docks that currently lie idle. The area around these dry docks is ideally situated to be a hub for marine-related businesses including “light” maintenance of vessels.

5.6.3 Open Space

The situation of Grand Canal Dock is anomalous. Consider the following excerpt from Figure 5 (page 24) below.



In the diagram above, only Hanover Quay and the new Grand Canal Square are shown as “key spaces”.

In Figure 11 (Green Routes page 69) shown below, Charlotte Quay to the south of Grand Canal Dock is represented as a green route (a route, currently blocked by a gate).



IWAI would support an objective to have all quays adjoining Grand Canal Dock as public spaces.

Note however that provision would have to be made for users of the water at Grand Canal Dock for parking, boat storage etc. as outlined above.

5.7 SDRA 13 Dolphin's House

- 1. The development of a vibrant mixed use urban quarter will be promoted to consolidate the southern end of Dolphins Barn and provide an important destination point at the south end of the Cork Street corridor.*
- 2. The development of high quality streetscapes onto Dolphins Barn to form a natural southward extension of the existing mixed use commercial zone in the village centre to promote the reinvigoration of Dolphin's Barn village centre.*
- 3. The development of a strategy to ensure an integrated approach for the regeneration of Dolphin House and adjoining commercial sites fronting the South Circular Road and Dolphins Barn will be promoted. An integration of landuse and design principles will promote coordination in the event of future redevelopment on these adjoining sites.*
- 4. The heritage, tourism and recreational opportunities of the Grand Canal will be promoted as a key feature for the site and for Dolphins Barn.*
- 5. Permeability will be promoted through the site to encourage active streets and connections to the adjoining neighbourhood, in particular pedestrian and cyclist routes. East to west connections from Dolphins Barn towards Herberton Road and north to south connections from the South Circular Road to the Grand Canal will be encouraged. The feasibility of a new pedestrian crossing point over the Grand Canal to connect with Dolphin Road will be explored.*
- 6. The development of synergies with other regeneration areas in close proximity will be promoted for co-ordination in the provision of new facilities. New parks, recreation and community facilities will be promoted as features accessible to the wider neighbourhood for inclusion and integration of the site with the adjoining area.*

The IWAI is delighted to note the presence of point 5 above.

The complex at Dolphin House abuts a long level section of the Grand Canal. It is ideal for water-based activities. The IWAI would support provision of infrastructure to support community-led water-based activities, particularly:

- Secure storage for boats (including engines) when not in use;
- Changing rooms, toilets (for active water sports participants).

5.8 SDRA 14 Croke Villas

- 1. The site at Croke Villas benefits from a close association with a national landmark (Croke Park). Opportunities for a development that mixes high quality residential development with commercial, tourism and recreational uses associated with the stadium and its functions will be encouraged. See also SCO5 in relation to Croke Park, Ballybough/North Strand*
- 2. The development of a high quality mixed use quarter comprising of quality new homes supported by a complimentary range of mixed commercial, community and recreational facilities will be promoted.*
- 3. An excellent standard of architecture, urban design and public realm will be encouraged to maximise the benefit of the site frontages.*
- 4. The heritage, tourism and recreational opportunities of the Royal Canal will be promoted as a key feature for the site and for the local area.*
- 5. An integrated approach for the regeneration of the site and adjoining lands, will be promoted having regard to the potential future development along adjoining backland or infill sites. The character and amenities of established residential streets adjoining the regeneration area will be respected as part of a design proposal.*
- 6. The opportunity for pedestrian and cyclist connections along a green corridor by the Royal Canal and strong synergies between this regeneration area and the Docklands will be encouraged.*
- 7. Strong permeability through the site will be encouraged along high quality active streetscapes to connect with the wider area. In particular, legibility via walking and cycling routes towards existing and future proposed rail and metro services at Drumcondra Station, towards Connolly Station, linkages to the recreational routes along the Royal Canal Corridor and routes connecting with the Main Civic Spine (Parnell Square and O Connell Street) will be encouraged.*

The IWAI is delighted to note the presence of point 4 above.

The IWAI would support provision of infrastructure to support community-led water-based activities, particularly:

- Secure storage for boats (including engines) when not in use;
- Changing rooms, toilets (for active water sports participants).

5.9 APPENDIX 25 OUTDOOR ADVERTISING STRATEGY

Zone 4: Zone of existing and potential high amenity related to the waterways and the coast inappropriate for advertising. This zone includes the River Liffey Corridor, the canal corridors and along the campshires in the Docklands. In this zone all outdoor advertisement is prohibited.

We would argue that waterways-based commercial entities such as the RIASC barge (moored Mespil Rd.) and Cill Airne (moored Liffey) be permitted to advertise their presence in the vicinity of their vessels.

5.10 Liffey Bridges

We would ask Dublin City Council to note that, due to its design, the James Joyce bridge constructed in 2003 has reduced the time window for which the Liffey is navigable up to its traditional end of Navigation at the former Guinness Wharves at Victoria Quay.

No new bridges should so-restrict navigation of the River Liffey.

6 Contact Details

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