

Observation on the Appeal of the decision to Grant Permission and Retention under Dublin City Council Planning Application 2628/17 Phibsborough Shopping Centre and 345 -349 North Circular Road.

I make this observation as a follow-on to my submission to Dublin City Council in relation to planning application reference 2628/17.

As a City Councillor 2004-2014 I worked to achieve an upgrading of Phibsborough through a statutory Local Area Plan.

I welcome the proposal to re-develop the Phibsborough Shopping Centre however the decision by Dublin City Council to grant permission and retention is disappointing and left un-amended will be a missed opportunity for Dublin city and the local area.

The re-development of Phibsborough Shopping Centre offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to regenerate a run-down and neglected village into a vibrant urban community. I urge An Bord Pleanala to use its powers to achieve the maximum positive regeneration of Phibsborough for all.

It should be noted that when deciding on this application Dublin City Council had a potential conflict of interest in relation to the planning application for the shopping centre because of its interest in the redevelopment of the adjoining site at Dalymount Park.

The largest site for development in Phibsborough is the Dalymount Stadium to the rear of the development. It is disappointing and unsatisfactory that the two developments are not progressed simultaneously.

I note the conditions of Dublin City Council's planning decision and generally support conditions; 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24.

I ask An Bord Pleanala to review the decision by Dublin City Council to address the absence of the following key elements:

- Community gain
- Affordable permanent mixed-use housing
- Adequate refurbishment or replacement of the tower block

Condition 2 of Dublin City Councils decision stipulates that the developer will pay €922,129.72 as a development contribution to the local authority. I ask the Board to make it a condition of any permission that the local authority be required to "ring fence" these development contribution funds exclusively for use in Phibsborough to address the absence of "community gain" in this application, to mitigate the negative impact of the traffic congestion and to upgrade the streetscape and environment.

Condition 4 of the planning permission granted by Dublin City Council stipulates that this development "shall be used only as student accommodation or accommodation related to a Higher Education Institute...". There is no definition of what type of organisation constitutes a "Higher Education Institute" and I would ask the Board to address this issue.

There are already more than 8,000 purpose built dedicated student accommodation beds in operation and/or development in Dublin Central. Additionally, a sizable portion of existing residential properties in Phibsborough are in use as rental accommodation. The decision to designate this site exclusively for student housing purposes removes the potential for the site to be

deliver desperately needed affordable permanent homes and will contribute to an overconcentration of short-term housing in the area.

The re-development of this site is a once in a lifetime opportunity to create new permanent homes in the heart of Phibsborough. There is huge demand for housing in Dublin Central and particularly in Phibsborough from people of all ages. Young workers at The Mater, Mountjoy, Gardai, Nurses, Doctors, Teachers are all desperately seeking affordable housing in the area. Elderly people living in three and four-bedroom homes wanting to down size but stay in the area have very little choice. The housing crises is so bad that the Local Authority has considered using facilities at Mountjoy Prison as homeless housing.

I therefor request An Bord Pleanala to replace condition 4 with a new condition that requires the development to provide a minimum 30% long term affordable accommodation to rent or buy.

Condition 6 of Dublin City Councils decision deals with the proposed mesh. I ask the Board to reject the "interim" proposal to cover the building in mesh and to make a condition of any permission a permanent long term architectural treatment of the highest quality and standard. Anything interim is just not good enough for a development of this scale, significance and prominence. A redevelopment of a site of this strategic importance in the city merits a permanent structural solution.

Rather than cladding the tower with an ugly cage-like structure instead it should be treated as a conservation project.

Restoring the architectural integrity of the tower, as if it was a protected structure and carrying out restoration works could result in the least ugly outcome for this monstrosity which has blighted the village of Phibsborough for over six decades.

I ask An Bord Pleanala to reject the proposal for an interim mesh cladding of the tower because it will be visually obtrusive and significantly detract from the adjacent Z2 residential conservation area zoning. Instead I ask An Bord Pleanala to condition any permission to require the retrofitting of new windows and the upgrading of the tower to to meet the highest current environmental building standards.

The option of concealing the antennae with landscaping, to give the effect of a roof garden when viewed at street level, should also be explored.

In summary, this an a once in a lifetime opportunity to regenerate a key urban centre in our capital city. An Bord Pleanala should use all its powers to ensure that the redevelopment is undertaken to achieve the maximum positive result for the city and its inhabitants.

Thank you for considering my observations.

Sincerely,

Mary Fitzpatrick

