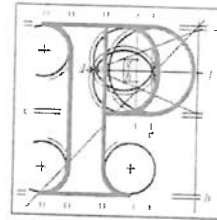


Our Case Number: ABP-318093-23



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

Myriam Madigan  
4 The Cottages  
Marfield Road  
Clonmel  
Co. Tipperary  
E91 X763

**Date:** 20 December 2023

**Re:** Proposed road development at The Quay, Quay Street, Suir Island and Raheen Road  
The Quay, Quay Street, Suir Island and Raheen Road, Clonmel County Tipperary

Dear Sir / Madam,


An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission (including your fee of €50) in relation to the above-mentioned proposed road development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed road development shall not be carried out unless the Board has approved it or approved it with modifications.

If you have any queries in the mean time, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board at [laps@pleanala.ie](mailto:laps@pleanala.ie)

Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

  
Breda Ingle  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01 873 7291

HA02

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4 The Cottages  
Marlfield Road  
Clonmel  
E91 X763

18<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear Madam/Sir

Ref: Project #HA 92.318093  
[Suir Island Infrastructure Links Project | Tipperary County Council Consultations \(tipperarycoco.ie\)](#)

Generally, I think a project like this is a very good idea; it offers an easy walkable access to Suir Island and the new gardens sound lovely. Also, the current location itself (a dull car-park with a dirty toilet) desperately needs improving. However, I am very concerned about the environmental impact which I know will be huge.

Secondly, I am also very concerned regarding the impact on both the town and the townspeople. I am worried about the charm and character of our town being destroyed by dull, generic design. I acknowledge that an enormous amount of work has gone into the project on the engineering side. Of course, engineering is extremely important, but it is not the only thing that is important and it must be put in its correct place and not allowed to overrule everything else. Beauty, soul, aesthetics, charm, character and style are of equal importance. This point may be argued against and even brushed aside by many, however, like most people, I believe the overall feel of a space has a massive impact on the subconscious of people (who are not just receptors); this cannot be understated or overlooked. Beauty affects our health, well-being, creativity and social behaviour. The people of Clonmel have enduring ugliness and dereliction for a long time and they definitely deserve something incredibly beautiful. I was delighted to listen to Senator Michael McDowall speaking recently in the Seanad. He was speaking in particular about dereliction in Dublin, but he also spoke about beauty and against uglification. Sadly, uglification has galloped throughout the country at high speed for a long time and I don't want to see any more of it in Clonmel. I attach a link to an article on his website relating to the above dereliction and most importantly, he notes "architectural excrement" and I agree wholeheartedly with this phrase. [Dublin's dereliction problem needs a totally different approach - Michael McDowall](#). I don't want any architectural excrement in Clonmel.

The project is huge and I can only touch on a few points, please see below:

1. **Environmental impact** – with reference to the construction phase and the removal of waste material etc, I would like to know more about this. Currently it is not known/stated and it is assumed to be within a 30km radius. (Chapter 9, page 14). This means a large number of vehicles trucking back and forth to Suir Island to this dumping space. The impact of this is huge, especially if the dumping area is over 30km away. When exactly will the location(s) be clarified? Will the details be well publicised? Will options be available? Do you have any potential locations in mind? What can be done with the materials? Can they be re-used/re-purposed in any way? What efforts have been made to re-purpose those materials?
2. **Reduction of concrete and more greenery** – environmentally, the manufacture of this material is disastrous. Also concrete attracts heat and we will feel the consequences of far higher temperatures within the next few summers. Heat issues can be significantly reduced by planting additional greenery, especially trees and I cannot emphasise enough the importance of this point. I attach a very good short programme from the BBC/YouTube which speaks to this point. [\(934\) How to combat extreme heat in urban areas | Future Earth | BBC News - YouTube](#) In particular, on the north side (near the hotel) I think it is important to include more greenery and while I am well aware that you want some open/gathering

space, I encourage and even plead for more trees in the grassy sections beside the ramp. Having more trees would also help disguise the ramp.

3. **Concrete Visual Impact** - the visual impact of concrete is rarely good; generally, it looks boring, bland and generic. However, creativity with patterns and materials can make a huge difference. I am disappointed with the large concrete benches – yes, they look neat and tidy on plan, quick and easy to construct, but that’s all. In reality, they are not good to sit on and pardon me for saying this, but really, they are horribly cold in winter, both visually and sensually. I strongly, recommend some redesign here, or at the very least, some slatted wood components on the surface. (Yes, the wood will have to be replaced more frequently, but it is far more comfortable for the user/human to sit on.) However, the truth is that my preferred option would be some metal framed benches with wood seating – this could be a highlight of the project; artists could be asked for designs per the layout of the planned seating. We need to use every possible excuse to be sustainability – but you are doing the opposite and this is massively important. Secondly, when using metal, it could be bolted to the ground which allows more flexibility, making the seats moveable, which might be useful from time to time to the people of the town. I say this because I am a user of the area.
4. **Local Materials** - I strongly recommend the use of old materials such as local stone. I cringe when I see some of the images, particular the main image showing all the steps (Fig 2.2) and also Fig 2.3. I hope that all such images are merely the result of bland software. These images are soulless and could be any one of dozens of nameless towns in the mid-west (America). I note you have some very nice old/local stonework on the side of the steps – this is great and I would highly, highly recommend more of this and possible for the curve area around the benches. Also, I suggest some cobbled stones, possibly a swirling path/design reflecting our history – some frescos, there are many creative things which would uplift the space enormously. Let’s make it more attractive and be more artistic – involve artists!
5. **Public Furniture/Seating** – this is a detail, but a vitally important aspect of any project. It can add or detract from the overall impact of a space. I note that you have some seating (in the area above), but I request some more, generally throughout the project. We have an aging population (40% over 45, Chapter 4, Page 11), so seating is vitally important. Most importantly, it must be attractive, not dull/generic. An example of dull/generic furniture can be seen on the Blueway (near Convent Bridge) where some seating was placed late 2022. Yes, it is functional, but that’s the only good thing to say. It’s dull and the people of Clonmel deserve better. Some level of style, design, charm and soul should be in evidence in a project such as this. Clonmel is a classic town with beautiful architecture, so extra care must be taken to complement our historic buildings and not crash against them.
6. **Lighting** – function is obviously very important, but it is equally important to have attractive lighting, not just functional lighting. Most of the recently installed lighting at the Kickham Barricks public space is dreadful and I hope this error will not be repeated for the Suir Island area. In particular, I ask for “warm” lighting, ie yellowish tones and not glaring cold, bright white.
7. **Bridge** – I applaud the idea of a curving bridge, this is really nice, but I overheard someone describing it as a runway at an airport – I thought that was spot on, so I note it here. Again, I hope this is simply a software issue, but I mention it, as I am concerned that something bland and generic will be built. Please take extreme care to work with our classic features.
8. **Electrics and Plumbing** – please, please, please put in a full infrastructure for future electrics and plumbing. Even if you cannot afford all the features at this time, at least put in the facilities. Future funding can come from some very unusual sources, not even dreamt of at this time. It would be sheer negligence (almost criminal) not to do the job properly and fail to fit the space out with electrics and plumbing.
9. **Drinking water fountains** - drinking water must be available throughout Clonmel and I will be pursuing this subject separately, as I have identified a number of locations. However, in terms of this project, it must be planned and I recommend having at least four drinking water fountains. Having clean drinking water helps reduce plastic bottles. We already have a major problem with litter/dumping, so it is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce plastic.

10. **Public Toilets** – you may already have toilets planned and possibly I missed them, as I cannot see them on the plan. I phoned Tipperary County Council and was advised that some toilets have been planned in the new garden area, but I know that some will be needed in the space near the hotel and they must be planned in. I strongly recommend that you add them in immediately. This is vitally important for the townspeople, but also very important for tourism. The Council regularly speaks about tourism and how good it could be. I can assure you tourism will fail miserably if you do not include toilets; they are essential. Possibly under the steps area (near the hotel) might be a great location; there is a mobile toilet in that car-park space at the moment, so I recommend at least two in this new plan. I visited the public toilets in Cahir specifically for this submission and I note there are five located very conveniently, in town. I believe you have some planned for the new gardens, but having some toilets near the hotel are essential.
11. **Fountain Feature or Splash Pad** – you have shown a new open public space near the steps (with concrete benches), this would be an ideal location for a feature fountain or a fountain splash pad. I enclose a link to a splash pad in Battery Park, New York. [\(934\) Beautiful Battery Fountain Splash Pad | New York City - YouTube](#) As our climate warms up, it would be ideal to have something like this which would be enormously attractive, especially in summer.
12. **Name Objection “North Plaza”** – currently known as The Quays Car-Park, I strongly, strongly, strongly object to the word “plaza” – this is a word frequently used in American shopping malls in a multitude of semi-derelict towns. For me, it has a cheap and tacky/tatty connotation. I know the word is disliked by many local people when referring to the new Kickham Barricks space. I refuse to use the word “Plaza” in that context. It feels like a “copy-cat” exercise, I’ve noted the word “Quarter” being used in Dublin – it’s just laughable! If viewed in the Spanish sense of the word, the new space is nothing like a plaza, so it’s a massive misnomer and should not be foisted upon us. I don’t know who came up with this word, but it’s not appropriate. For Suir Island, I think we can do a lot better! Thinking in a historic context, Clonmel is well known for the element of honey which you note on several occasions in your presentation - and therefore beehives. Such elements could be represented with sculptures and the space could be called “The Hive” or “Suir Island Hive” or something along these lines. Even the shape of the semi-round seating area near the steps (The Quays Car-Park) reflects the shape of a beehive.
13. **Public Sculpture/Artistic Element** – this project could be so beautiful that people actually travel from far and wide just to see it. In the past, statues of famous people have been placed in public places; thankfully, we have moved on from that and can be more imaginative. I attach a link to Architectural Digest which shows some stunning sculptures from around the world - [38 of the Most Fascinating Public Sculptures | Architectural Digest | Architectural Digest](#) To deflect the cost, a completion for artists throughout Ireland could be set up with sponsorship, well in advance of the project. Effectively, the cost could be quite low to the project and you would simply supply a space with electrical connection. I think at least one of the sculptures should be a beehive (to link in with #12 above which would also connect beautifully with the history of the area). I also refer to Cahir and Waterford City; wonderful wood sculptures are on display and bring real joy to people and added interest to those spaces. I recognise that this suggestion is well outside the parameters of this project, however the groundwork should be put in place to allow for future artistic expression.
14. **Labyrinth** – again I refer to Battery Park, New York; there is a beautiful labyrinth which people walk round on a daily basis. If you have some space, I think it could be an enormously welcome addition. [Experience a Labyrinth in NYC | The Battery](#)

I know this project is part of a bigger plan with a hotel being rebuilt and remodelled (Clonmel Arms). I have seen some images and I am appalled – boxy generic design, utterly soulless and completely devoid of charm or character (apart from the original protected section on Sarsfield Street). I am certainly not against modern architecture, but it needs to be good, not boring. Again, I say that the people of Clonmel deserve better. I see both plans as having enormous potential and benefit to the townspeople; this could be a fabulous space, but the

"details" will make or break such projects and I would dearly love and genuinely like to see it all work well, thus I respectfully request and urge revisions and more careful attention to the creative things we can do. I was born in Clonmel and returned in recent years, having spent most of my adult life abroad. I have seen lots of gorgeous architecture and lots of horrible structures. I have a very strong interest in bringing beauty back to Clonmel. It was once known as a beautiful and prosperous town, but in recent decades it has become a disaster.

I strongly believe in the concept of co-creating; thus, the opinions of the people of the town should be brought into this project. I have heard that you have not had many responses, but many of them have been complaints about losing a few car parking spaces. I do not support that view. Without the current Quays Car-Park, we still have more than enough parking – especially when you take into account that we are supposed to be reducing our car use. I am a strong supporter of walkable space and your plan certainly accomplishes that.

I am very happy to help further and if at a future time, you form a committee to work out details, I would love to be part of that group.

Yours sincerely

Myriam Madigan

