

Minutes of Special Meeting of the Moore St Advisory Group
Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht,
24 April 2019 @ 10.00a.m., 23 Kildare St, Dublin 2

In attendance were:

Prof Tom Collins (Chairman)

Lord Mayor Cllr Nial Ring, Colm Brophy TD, James Connolly Heron, John Conway, John Daly, Sean Haughey TD, Cllr John Lyons, Muriel McAuley, Cllr Mícheál MacDonncha, Christina McLoughlin, Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Brian O'Neill, TD, Maureen O'Sullivan TD, Garry McDonagh – Secretariat

Apologies: Ernie Beggs, Joan Burton TD, John Connolly, Patrick Cooney, Cllr Ciaran Cuffe, Sen Máire Devine, Margaret Hanway, Tom Holbrook, Cllr Sean Paul Mahon, Cara O'Neill, Aengus O'Snodaigh TD and John Stephenson,

1. New members

The Chair welcomed two new members to the Group, Colm Brophy TD, who would represent Minister Paschal Donohoe at meetings, and Senator Máire Devine replacing Mary Lou McDonald TD.

2. Presentation by Hammerson

Simon Betty from Hammerson introduced his team. He stated that they were now in their 3rd year of working on this project and this proposal was how they planned to take the scheme forward. This plan is 10 to 15% smaller than the original, is made up of a mixed use development with no stand-alone car parking catered for in the scheme. It will support the regeneration of Dublin 1 and will bring the economic benefit of up to 10,000 jobs during the construction phase. They will insist that jobs be given to locals, will run community outreach programmes and will support up to 89 apprenticeships, 40 new and 49 existing ones. The timeline, will be to submit a plan in the first half of 2020. There will then be a pre-construction period followed by a phased introduction of the scheme over a period of time. He asked that the group would take a look at these plans and come back with comments. The work-up of the fine detail design will take nine months from now.

Friedrich Ludewig then provided a more detailed presentation of the plan. He informed the group that they planned to provide for two public spaces, a small one on the corner of Henry Place and Moore Lane and a second larger one at the back of numbers 20/21. With regard to the market, he felt that the stalls should face the street rather than the walls, they should have awnings and be provided with power. They would envisage a pedestrian link between Henry St and Moore Lane and aim to keep the relationship between the lane and the White Building. They would also favour an East West connection from O'Connell Street through to Moore Street. This would entail the removal on No 19 and half of No 18, which were ruins in 1916.

The larger public space could be used as the entrance to the national monument rather than having it on Moore Street itself. They have worked with a company called Space Syntax regarding pedestrian movement. Their research suggests that an East/West lane would increase footfall by 6.4 million per annum. They also intend to retain the cobbles, perhaps taking them up and relaying them. They propose a memorial trail through the site, capturing the movements of the volunteers through the area in Easter 1916. They had chosen Connemara marble cobbles as preferred material denoting the trail. Finally, he drew attention to the proposed Metrolink for the north end of O'Connell Street stating that TII are still testing options regarding the placement of the station, the metro will need the east-west link too.

In response to questions from members he suggested that 30% to 40% could be covered if it is to compete fully with indoor shopping centres. Approximately 2000 sq. metres would be available for residential units. The reason they do not wish to use the O'Rahilly Parade as the East/West link is that it backs onto Jury's Inn service yard, there is a huge vent which is very loud and their research shows that there would be much less footfall. Mr Betty added that O Rahilly Parade is too far north in the scheme and is a single sided street at the end of a lane and wouldn't work as the link. When asked about the public squares he told the group that both would be in their ownership but would be completely open to the public. There would be no gates, upkeep and security would be their responsibility.

3. Discussion within the group

The Chair thanked Hammerson, asked if they would provide us with copies of the presentation and the meeting proceeded after they had left.

It was agreed that the TD's working group would take cognisance of all comments on the plan with a view to bringing a final recommendation back to a plenary meeting of the MSAG on May 31st for approval.

Members welcomed the current engagement of Hammerson with the MSAG and the new proposals were generally seen as a very substantial improvement on the earlier Chartered Land plans.

The following specific comments were made:

- The Lord Mayor, drawing attention to his direct family connection with 1916 events in Moore Street asked that it be put on record that he supports the plan and specifically the East–West Street.
- Deputy Haughey stated that he felt that the plan should be agreed in principle as it is the only viable proposal for the area and, given that, he was also prepared to concede the breakthrough.
- Cllr MacDonncha queried the additional roofing proposed in the new plan as compared to the previous version.

- Deputy O’Cuiv remarked that in the context of Irish weather he considered the roofing a good idea. He stated he would like to see an archway considered at Nos. 18 and 19 as an alternative to a complete breakthrough.
- Similarly Ms McAuley stated that she could live with an arched breakthrough at Nos. 18 and 19. She also queried the proposal to demolish and remove a building on the corner of Henry Place and Moore Lane to create the smaller of two pocket squares
- Deputy Brophy stated that he found the plan both interesting and positive and that, while there might be a couple of pinch areas, they were not insurmountable. He understood the need for a breakthrough but that an archway might be a good compromise.
- Deputy O’Sullivan welcomed Hammerson’s willingness to engage with MSAG. She supported the awnings proposed for O’Connell St and suggested that MSAG should get back to Hammerson with any specific proposals it might have.
- Mr O’Neill stated that he would bring the plan to the members of his Association and revert with comments. He also referred to the UNESCO guidelines on historical urban renewal and preservation which he believed were positively reflected in the work of the MSAG.
- Cllr Lyons said he felt that the balance between the commercial and historical/commemorative focus of the plan overly favoured the commercial element.
- Ms Mcloughlin and Mr Connolly Heron drew attention to the significance of the battlefield site and the associated potential for battlefield tourism. Both felt that the plan could optimize this theme.
- It was generally agreed that the State had a significant footprint in the area and could have a greater involvement in populating the space from a heritage point of view.
- The absence of the traders was noted and the need for their continued representation on the group was emphasised.

4. Decisions

Members would have two weeks from the meeting date to submit written comments on the Hammerson Plan. These, together with the other comments noted in 3 above, would be considered by the TDs’ sub-group in their response to Hammerson on the Plan. The outcome of this process would be presented to the MSAG as a whole on May 31st for approval.

The National Monument sub-group will engage with:

- state agencies regarding other state buildings in the area;
- state agencies involved in tourism, e.g. Fáilte Ireland and Rubicon and/or John Concannon in relation to the battlefield tourism potential..

It is envisaged that the national monument and traders sub-groups will also make final presentations at the meeting on May 31st.

5. AOB

Cllr MacDonncha stated that he will be meeting Richard Shakespeare of DCC today regarding trader issues.

6. Next meeting

31 May 2019