



Bardas Átha Cliath
Dublin Corporation

Cork Street / The Coombe

Relief Route

ENVIROMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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CORK STREET / THE COOMBE RELIEF ROUTE

3.0

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

3.1

Introduction

A description of the proposed road scheme and associated works, other options considered and future traffic forecasts are described in this chapter

3.2

Options Considered in 1994 Study

1994
An Environmental Impact Study for the route was undertaken by Dublin Corporation in 1994, and a report, "Cork Street/The Coombe Relief Route: Environmental Impact Study" prepared.

A number of options were considered in general terms,

- a) Do nothing
- b) Do minimum (single carriageway improvement)
- c) A series of dual carriageway alternatives

Following initial study, two options were considered for full evaluation. These were:

- a) A single carriageway all purpose road comprising a 9 metre carriageway and 2.5 metre footways
- b) A dual two lane all purpose road comprising 6.7 metre carriageways with a 1.83 metre central median, 1.8 metre footways, and 1.5 metre cycle tracks.

The single carriageway option was eventually discounted because it failed to provide sufficient benefits for public transport. The Environmental Impact Study therefore recommended the dual carriageway option with an alignment to the south of no.10 Ardee Street. Following concerns expressed by local residents about the adverse environmental implications for the properties in Chamber Street and Chamber Court, the scheme was subsequently amended to run to the north of no. 10 Ardee Street.

This scheme was adopted by Dublin City Council on 9th May 1994.

Current Options.

As a result of opposition to the dual carriageway option expressed during the consultation process for the Liberties / Coombe Integrated Area Plan, and the need to take full account of the DTI strategy and the Draft Dublin City Development Plan, the scheme was re-examined in February 1998. The further options considered were all single carriageway options, and all made allowance for dedicated bus and cycle lanes.

Option 1 provided a four lane single carriageway option with cycle lanes and nearside lanes dedicated to buses. Off carriageway parking bays were provided to the southern side of Cork Street in areas of surplus land.

Option 2 was similar to option 1 except that off carriageway parking provision was to the northern side of Cork Street adjacent to shops and business premises.

Option 3 provided a two lane single carriageway with cycle lanes, and dedicated bus lanes on the approaches to junctions only.

The opportunity was also taken during the review to amend the tie in at the eastern end of the scheme to a signal controlled T-junction with the Coombe. This served two main objectives:

- (i) To reduce traffic speeds on the approach to Francis St. and Dean Street.
- (ii) To reduce the effect on the physical fabric of St. Brigid's school, allowing the 19th century front façade to remain, maintaining both the existing streetscape and street pattern of The Coombe.

Option 3 was discounted because it failed to provide sufficient priority for buses during peak periods. This was a result of commuter queues extending beyond the proposed lengths of bus-only lanes.

It was also determined that parking provision was more advantageous on the northern side of Cork Street adjacent to the shops and other commercial premises. Option 2 was therefore the preferred scheme, and is described in Section 3.6.

The following Section describes in detail the public consultation and participation processes referred to briefly in this Section.

Public Consultation and Participation

3.4

Introduction

3.4.1

Dublin Corporation is fully committed to the involvement of the public in determining the optimum scheme. It is recognized that the success of the project requires an in-depth local knowledge, and as such there have been many contacts with the public, elected representatives, local community groups, businesses and institutions, both as part of the original EIS prepared in 1994 and in relation to the recently prepared Integrated Area Plan for Liberties-Coombe, which includes the whole of the Cork Street/The Coombe Corridor.

The extent of the public consultation process is detailed below i.e.

- representations on the 1991 Draft Dublin City Development Plan
- pre 1994 EIS consultations
- outcome of public consultations as part of the 1994 EIS
- representations on the 1998 Draft Integrated Area Plan for the Liberties / The Coombe area
- outcome of preliminary consultations on 1998 Draft Dublin City Development Plan

3.4.2

Representations on 1991 Draft Dublin City Development Plan

The 1991 Draft Review of the then Development Plan, attracted a number of submissions, including those from An Taisce, the Dublin Crisis Conference and S.A.D.D. (Society against the Destruction of Dublin). The main objections raised may be summarised thus:

- (a) The new road would destroy local landmarks such as 10 Ardee Street, St. Bridgid's School, Gaffneys Public House and Dean Street.
- (b) The widened road would lead to increased traffic, and dangerous speeding, particularly by commuters.
- (c) The re-insitatement of the streetscape had not been fully considered.
- (d) The Compulsory Purchase Order procedure does not allow for challenging the principle of a road scheme.

In 1991 the Council having had regard to the above views, amended the line of the road proposal to avoid No. 10 Ardee Street and to avoid a vast junction at New Street.

3.4.3

Pre 1994 EIS Consultations.

On 17th February 1992 An Coiste Cuspoirtí Coiteann approved the 'Coombe Relief Road Scheme' in principle to enable an Environmental Impact Study to be undertaken and Department of the Environment approval and funding to be sought. However, the City Council at its meeting on 2nd March 1992 decided to defer confirmation of the scheme to enable consultation with local communities to take place.

A model of the proposed scheme was prepared and was put on display in Warrenton Mount Convent and Carmen Hall Parish Centre on the evenings of May 5th and 7th, 1992, respectively. Notice of the intention to display the model was brought to the attention of the public by advertisements in the three daily and two evening national newspapers, announcements at masses in Donore Avenue and Francis Street

Churches, posters in local shops and commercial establishments, notices to An Taisce for distribution and delivery of notices to all properties along The Coombe and Cork Street.

The displays of the model were well attended on both evenings. Three members of the Corporation's Inter-Disciplinary Team, who prepared the Scheme, were in attendance each evening to explain details of the proposed road and its impact in the area, and to answer questions. The response to the revised Scheme was generally favourable.

Following this consultation process, the City Council at its meeting on 8th June, 1992 adopted the following resolution:

"That the Dublin City Council approves in principle the proposed Coombe Relief Scheme to enable (a) detailed design of the scheme to proceed, (b) an Environmental Impact Study to be undertaken and (c) Department of the Environment approval and funding to be sought".

3.4.4

Public Consultation as part of 1994 EIS

Dublin Corporation held a manned exhibition on the proposed Cork Street/The Coombe Relief Route from March 15th to March 29th 1993 and continued the exhibition unmanned in Dolphin's Barn Library for a further month. The exhibition was visited by 800 people in the two weeks' manned display. The exhibition was held in three different locations to facilitate local attendance. Written notification of the exhibition was sent to over 750 households and businesses adjoining the route. All community, residents and environmental groups (including An Taisce and the Society Against the Destruction of Dublin, SADD) in the area were notified, as well as the Statutory Agencies affected. General notification of the exhibition was provided by means of advertisements in the evening papers and by announcements in all churches in the area.

The exhibition was held to provide information on the proposal and also to encourage a public input into the planning of the scheme before carrying out the Environmental Impact Study. From the Corporation's viewpoint, the exhibition was regarded as a two-way learning process, particularly in regard to scoping, i.e. determining what were the important issues.

The concerns expressed and recorded at the public exhibition and the written submissions were analysed. The main concerns expressed were:

- i) The impact of the schemes on St. Brigid's Primary School on The Coombe in terms of physical fabric and safety aspects.
- ii) The residents of Chamber Street and Chamber Court were opposed to the line of the route south of No. 10 Ardee Street (a List 2 building) and wished to see it reduced to a single-carriageway width going north of no. 10 Ardee Street.
- iii) Clearing the blight and dereliction caused by the road widening line (in existence on Cork Street for 40 years) and the possible time lag before the numerous redevelopment sites along the route were developed.

In general, there was widespread agreement for a scheme which would improve the physical conditions and which would remove traffic from The Coombe and Meath Street and rat running from adjoining residential areas.

Although the 1994 EIS concluded that the alignment south of Ardee Street was the preferred option, Dublin City Council, at its meeting on 9th May 1994 adopted the following motion:

"That the Cork Street/The Coombe Relief Road should be a dual carriageway and pass to the north of 10 Ardee Street; and that all reasonable mitigating measures should be put into place to address the concerns of residents of Chamber Street/Chamber Court in relation to noise levels, security, and development of derelict sites left behind by the road development".

Although the EIS was submitted to the Department of Environment, the scheme did not proceed due to a combination of factors, including lack of finance and site acquisition issues.

Nevertheless, it is considered relevant to refer to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, which resulted in 121 submissions to the Minister for the

Environment (102 in the form of a petition). The main concerns are summarised as follows:

- scheme biased towards private car; more money should be spent on public transport; cycleways; and pedestrian links
- excessive noise levels e.g. a Weaver Street need for double glazing referred to.
- increased air pollution
- community severance
- no need for dual carriageway; it will encourage more cars, speeding, and congestion in city centre.
- loss of car parking facilities on existing "reservations"
- individual submissions raised concerns about need to retain Gaffneys pub; loss of workplaces; destruction of medieval streetscape, the need to encourage more private development along near route, with tax incentives, need for a safer junction at South Circular Road/Dolphins Barn; need to retain grotto and playing pitch at Weaver Street.

Consultations as part of the 1998 Liberties Coombe IAP.

3.4.5

- In December 1997 the Corporation embarked on the preparation of a number of Integrated Area Plans to regenerate disadvantaged Inner City Areas under the 1998 Urban Renewal Scheme proposed by the Department of the Environment. One of the IAP's relates to the south west inner city, an area of some 260 Ha with a population of 18000 extending from the Liffey to the Grand Canal.
- One of the essential features of the IAP was the wide ranging consultation process, which was carried forward on a number of fronts i.e.
- The Corporation worked in partnership with SWICAN, an umbrella group with over 50 affiliated community groups operating in the area, to chair a series of evening meetings to explore the issues which should be addressed in the IAP. Further separate meetings were held with the Rialto network and the former "Quartier En Crise" Group.

- Over 120 consultation letters were sent to local representatives, local businesses, schools, community groups and individuals in the area.

- Meetings were held with the elected representatives and with a cross-section of groups and organizations in the employment/training field eg. FAS, IDA, Chamber of Commerce. Linkages were also established with state agencies operating in the area, such as EHB and Department of Education and Science.

- Public notices were placed in the Irish Independent, and in Community Newspapers, e.g. Dublinite and Fountain News.

- Although it was made clear to the community groups that the IAP process was not part of the formal EIS on Cork Street / The Coombe, they were also assured by the Project Team that relevant views on the transportation issues would be used to scope and refine options in the revised EIS.

The outcome of the IAP consultation process which included groups such as SWICAN, Rialto Network and the Cork Street Residents Association in relation to transportation is as follows:

- Whilst there was general acceptance from community and business interests that the Cork Street/The Coombe Relief Route must be built as a priority in order to remove decades of urban blight there was also a consensus of opinion that it should not be a suburban style dual carriageway severing communities and parishes. Additional recurring concerns were the growth of commuter runs through residential areas eg. Donore Avenue and the "Tenters Area" and the spread of commuter parking into residential areas. The main suggestions put forward during consultations were:

- The new Cork Street route should be a vibrant area with mixed uses. The surplus areas of land to either side should be allocated for community uses/social housing primarily. It was generally considered that the new road should be as narrow as possible without a central reservation, but including a bus corridor, cycleway, wider footpaths and purposeful landscape treatment.

- The new road must provide for north-south pedestrian linkages (for shopping, schools etc) e.g. at St. Brigid's School, Newmarket, Pimlico, Marrowbone Lane and Dolphins Barn.

- The entire area should be subject to coordinated traffic management schemes to prevent commuter traffic especially along Donore Avenue, Hanover Street West, Marks Alley and Tenters Area.

- Bus routes from Clondalkin and other suburbs should go via The Coombe, to ensure the retail vitality of The Liberties is retained.

- Thomas Street should be upgraded to encourage retailing and tourism. Street trading stalls should be sited to ensure access to shops. All streets in the IAP area need proper, well maintained lighting to enhance usage of the public domain.

- "Clearway" zones should incorporate lay-bys for local residents and businesses as appropriate.

- Special measures should be taken at specific locations; e.g. Dolphins Barn junction, to provide for safe passage of pedestrians.

The IAP is now under consideration by the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

1998 Draft Dublin City Development Plan.

3.4.6

The draft development plan went on display at the end of April for the statutory three months until the end of July 1998. It includes an objective to implement the Cork Street/The Coombe route. No submission from the public in respect of the route have been made to date to the Draft Dublin City Development Plan.

3.5 Description of the Existing Route

Commencing at the South Circular Road, the existing route follows a north-east direction as far as Ardee Street. Over this length (1.0km) the route passes through

mixed development comprising residential enclaves, factories, shops, hospitals and retail outlets.

Between Cork Street and The Coombe (0.1 km) the route veers northwards with residential development on the east-side and commercial development on the west-side.

On turning right at the junction of Ardee Street/The Coombe, the road follows an easterly direction to the junction of Kevin Street/ Patrick Street (0.52 km). The adjoining development along this section of the road is mainly residential as far as Hanover Street West, with commercial development and schools dominating the remainder of the route to Patrick Street.

The overall length of the existing route from South Circular Road to Patrick Street is 1.75 km.

The existing carriageway varies in width from 6.08 metres at its minimum on Cork St. / Dolphin's Barn Street, to a maximum of 11.79 metres on The Coombe. Footway widths also vary between 1.35 metres and 4.15 metres.

There is a significant amount of on-street parking, particularly on the northern side of Cork Street, and much of the vacant land on the southern side has become temporary car parking for the adjacent businesses and hospitals.

Dublin Corporation has included all of the vacant and under utilised land adjoining the road within the proposed acquisition line. These lands have been included to allow for an integrated rejuvenation of the entire area in the vicinity of the route, and thus mitigate the worst effects of a major new road running through the existing urban fabric. Along Cork Street itself, the proposal to set back the road line has been in existence for over 40 years, with incremental purchase and set back throughout this time. This has caused enormous difficulties for local residents and small businesses in the area due to the uncertainty involved, the loss of potential business, and the dereliction and blight.

General Description of the Proposed Road Scheme

3.6

The line of the proposed Cork Street/ Coombe Relief Route starts at Dolphin's Barn Village Centre. It follows Dolphin's Barn Street and Cork Street, passing through a mixed development of residential enclaves, factories, shops, hospitals, etc. The route skirts to the north of No. 10 Ardee Street and utilises the road reservation, which was retained between The Coombe and Newmarket, before veering northwards to a signalised junction with The Coombe to the west of Dean Street. The total length of the scheme is 1.375km.

The road will comprise nominally 3.0 metre footways, a 1.25 metre cycle lanes, 3.0 metre bus lanes, and a 3.35 metre traffic lane in each direction. Short term parking / service bays will be provided at various locations adjacent to shops and other commercial premises on the northern side of the road. The proposed level of the new road will be set at or as close as possible to existing ground level thus ensuring that earthworks are kept to a minimum.

The junctions of Cork Street / Marrowbone Lane / Donore Avenue and Cork Street / Ardee Street will be signalised, and controlled pedestrian crossing points will be provided adjacent to Emerald Square / The Coombe Hospital, Ormond Street and Brabazon Row.

Refer to Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, & 3.4.

This scheme was agreed by An Coiste Cuspoiri Coiteann on the 18th May 1998 adopted by the City Council on 8th June 1998.

Associated Works

3.7

Various traffic management proposals will be implemented in conjunction with the improvement of the Cork Street/ Dolphin's Barn Street and the construction of The Coombe Relief Route. These are as follows (see Figure 3.5 for general locations):

- Banning the right turn from Meath Street into Thomas Street. This will have the following effects:-