



## **DublinTown submission in relation to Part VIII planning application 4552/17, the proposed public realm improvement works to Cathedral Street and Sackville Place.**

### **Introduction**

Dublin Town (formerly Dublin City Business Improvement District) is the city centre's Business Improvement District. Its mandate was provided by the city centre's 2,500 businesses following a plebiscite in 2007. This mandate was renewed by a further vote of businesses in 2012 and again in the summer of 2017.

Dublin Town welcomes the opportunity of making this submission in relation to the improvement works for Sackville Place and Cathedral Street. We believe that proposed improvements for the paving, lighting and wider public realm and will reinforce the character of the area as a destination for retail and hospitality while also improving pedestrian connections between the new Luas green line stops on Marlborough Street and O'Connell Street. This investment in the public realm is to be welcomed for the area especially the improved paving, shared space and accessibility provisions for the road surfaces and the improvements to lighting.

### **Access arrangements and work schedules**

We note that the planning application states that the "works will be programmed such that businesses can remain open and disruption is minimised", this will be of crucial importance to businesses operating in the area.

The streets affected are important for delivery access, not only for businesses trading on the street but for businesses in the wider area such as North Earl Street. With any reconfiguring of loading bays and taxi bays during the works it is crucial that deliveries, waste collection and other relevant access is maintained to ensure the smooth running of day to day operations. Temporary loading bays should be allocated if required. Also, an enforcement regime in coordination with Dublin Street Parking Services and An Garda Síochána should be prepared to deal with illegal parking if necessary both during and after the works.

A detailed work schedule, outlining the scale of worksites with specific information of timings of works must be required by the successful contractor. It is crucial that businesses have this information to hand so as to make all necessary arrangements. Similarly, a direct point of contact with the contractor and contact number should be made available to all businesses for the duration of the works so that any issues that do arise can be dealt with promptly.

In relation to the scheduling of works it is important that seasonal factors are taken into account. In other locations Dublin City Council has worked with DublinTown and local businesses and has had a moratorium on works during the crucial Christmas shopping period if required (mid- November to beginning of January).

It will be important that access for church services, weddings, and funerals is maintained for St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral. The disability access point for the building is also located on Cathedral Street. Longer-term, once works are completed, this should also be considered when locating street bollards or furniture near to the ramp entrance at the side of the Pro-Cathedral.

### **Communication**

The effective communication between the Grafton Street project team in Dublin City Council and the DublinTown members was of significant assistance in the smooth implementation of the scheme there and on neighbouring streets. We would hope to see this replicated in the Cathedral Street and Sackville Place.

Regular updates, including detailed information for access and deliveries well in advance of works meant that businesses could plan accordingly and minimise any impacts to their trade. This good practice should be continued with the upcoming works. As mentioned above the availability to all relevant businesses of a contact mobile number in order to address any issues or problems that may arise will be of crucial importance.

It has also been requested that specific locations and types of tree be discussed with local businesses when this has been decided. The location of the trees when in full foliage should not block views of the street.

### **Loading bay requirements**

The proposals call for a relocation of the present loading bay from the north side of Cathedral Street to the southern side of the street. The southern side of the street has more commercial premises and, despite some vacancy, more active frontage. There is a concern among businesses with this relocation and that the hours for loading may be not sufficiently controlled which could lead to their store frontages being obscured by parked vehicles for a large portion of the day. The times should be confined to early morning and should be well regulated.

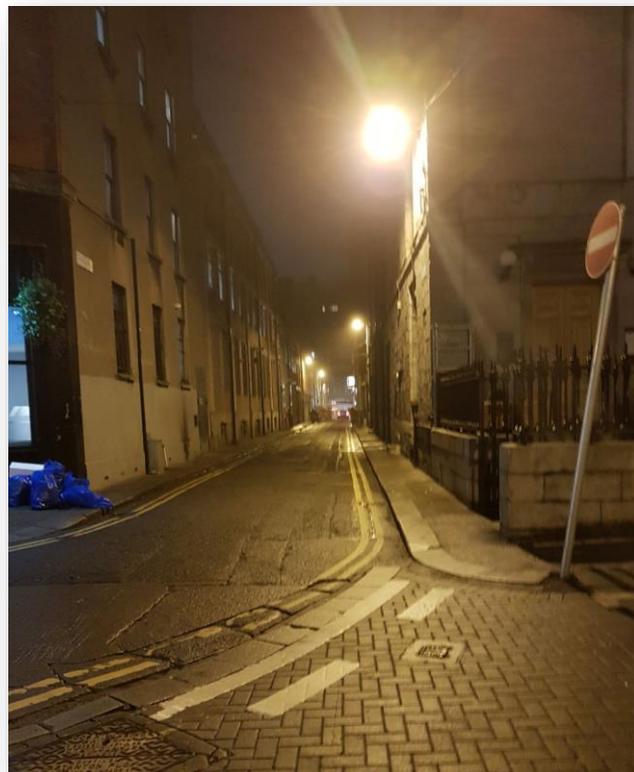
As mentioned Cathedral Street is already a relatively dark street and delivery vehicles should be controlled with hours of delivery being restricted to the morning time. The only major vacant premises or dead frontages on the street are on the south side of the street, the development of the street should encourage more active uses or new investment here but this would be difficult if these frontages were obscured from view by parked vehicles.

Four premises have asked if it is possible for loading bays to remain on the north side of the street or whether they could be facilitated via Thomas Lane.

### **Thomas Lane**

The changes to traffic orientation on Cathedral Street will mean a significant increase of vehicles (including delivery vehicles) exiting the street via Thomas Lane. This lane is narrow with very poor paving, road surfaces and lighting. It also services businesses such as the Gresham Hotel, car park, the Revenue offices and the Pro-Cathedral. Improvements to Thomas Lane should also be viewed as an essential add-on to the improvement works on Cathedral Street, the two streets are linked visually and practically, it does not make sense to separate them for the purposes of upgrading works.

These could include the provision of additional lighting and/or improvement of present lighting, improving the road surface as well as repairing broken footpaths and kerbstones. Thomas Lane can attract, at times, anti-social behaviours and when the area is dark feedback suggests many find it intimidating to walk down, a significant upgrade of lighting in both Thomas Lane and on Cathedral Street would help alleviate this concern.

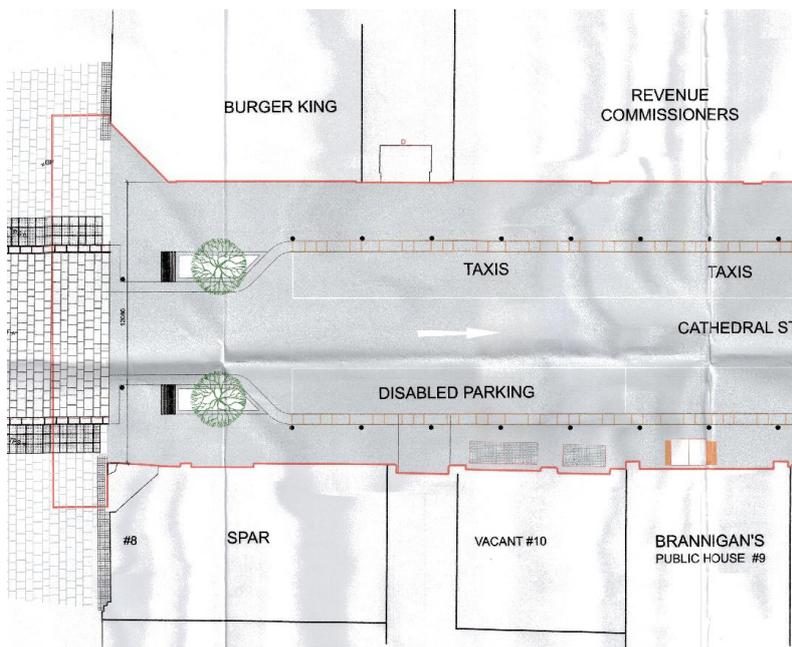


*Thomas Lane is it appears at present*

### **Dipped kerbstones and underground cellars**

We are pleased that discussions are taking place with businesses who have dipped kerbstones to facilitate deliveries and that these are being maintained for businesses that require them.

In relation to the relocation of the disabled parking spaces, as has been highlighted to businesses on the street whose patrons use wheelchairs, it is important that the kerb next to the parking bays be of a proper height to facilitate egress. Also while it is important to protect the cellars from vehicles mounting the pavement it is also crucial that bollards, bins, or lampposts (as shown in the plan below) do not make it difficult for people to exit their vehicles.



*Revised layout of Cathedral Street*

In relation to the construction phase of the works some of the buildings on the street have cellars which extend under the existing footpaths and roadways. It is a concern among business on the streets in question that works may result in damage to cellars or water ingress. Extreme care must be taken in relation to these works and may require individual consultations with each of the premises impacted during these specific works.

Premises on the street have queries in relation to the retention of glass lightwells/cellar covers; are these to be paved over or replaced after works? Other queries arising include the depth excavated for the installation of new paving slabs and also how the prevention of water ingress to basements and cellars will be monitored.

### **Sackville Place building works coordination**

It will be important that any works on Sackville Place are coordinated around the works due to take place at Sackville House as per planning permission reference 3919/15. These works are due to

begin by the end of the first quarter of 2018 and it is important that the improvement works and the demolition and construction are organised in such a manner that access can be continued.

The wider redevelopment of the Clerys buildings will effectively be occurring on Sackville Place and Earl Place over approximately a 3 year period and therefore the streets will effectively be a construction zone for quite a period of time. This will need to be considered carefully in terms of timing and scheduling of the works. It will be necessary for any contractor to liaise directly with the property developers and their contractors during these works.

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