

Notification of Intent to submit the Chief Executive's Report to the City Council in relation to Part VIII for two lightweight steel bridges over the mouth of the Royal Canal into the Liffey, one bridge for pedestrians and the other for cyclists.

Introduction

This report is presented to the Central Area Committee for information and consultation purposes in relation to a Part VIII planning application currently being assessed, that is located within the Area Committee's district. It is the intent to submit the Chief Executive's Report to the City Council for consideration at January's Council Meeting.

As a bridge proposed by Dublin City Council, the proposed development requires a Part 8 permission, as defined in the Regulations (Article 80 (1) (c)).

The reason for proceeding with this project now is that there is an urgency in the need due to the current "bottleneck" at this location for pedestrians and cyclists. The increased numbers of people working and living and commuting through the North Wall area has resulted in people and cyclists queuing regularly to pass each other on the current bridge arrangement; with people choosing to use the road at this pinch point, which is not ideal. As construction is active on a significant number of large sites in the area, with completions and occupations likely through 2019, 2020 and 2021, the pressure on this location is significantly growing. It is intended that this work will integrate with the planned upgrade of the Campshires which will also come forward at a later date as a separate Part 8 planning application.

Site & Project Description

The application is at Spencer Dock, where the Royal Canal meets the River Liffey, on the river side of the existing historic Scherzer Bridges; which are protected structures, along with the stonework associated with them. (RPS Ref: 912).

The proposal involves the construction of two lightweight steel bridges over the mouth of the Royal Canal into the Liffey, one bridge for pedestrians and the other for cyclists, both 12m long. The bridge closest to the Liffey will cater for pedestrians, connecting the existing pathway on the Campshires across the mouth of the Canal. The cycleway bridge will be closer to the Scherzer Bridges, and will integrate with the current cycle arrangement through some ground work around the bridge. It is expected that the cycle route approaching the bridge will be significantly upgraded in the coming years, and the cycle bridge has been designed to facilitate this. The works will require repaving and some works on both sides, to address level changes, moving electrical control boxes associated with the Scherzer Bridges and Samuel Beckett Bridge, and removal of a number of trees to the west of the bridges to allow for a safe guided approach onto the bridges to segregate cyclist and pedestrians.

The decision to have two separate bridges as opposed to one large bridge is based on

- advice from the conservation department of DCC on minimising impact on the protected structures
- to provide clear connections to existing and planned cycleway infrastructure
- to allow the pedestrians to be segregated from cyclists so people are more inclined to linger on it and look down at the canal meeting the Liffey
- to preserve a sense of connection with the water of the canal as it is crossed.
- to allow for ease of lifting

The design of the bridge is shaped by an aim to ensure that the impact on the stone quay walls and visually on the Scherzer bridges is minimised. A simple, lightweight metal form, which can be fabricated off site and installed with minimal impact on the quays is proposed. The proposed bridges can also be relatively easily removed so are temporary in function, and can be moved to allow navigation of the canal by Waterways Ireland if required in future and for maintenance and repair, avoiding risk to the waters of the canal, the river and the Bay.



Policy Context

The proposed development is located within the North Lotts & Grand Canal Dock SDZ. Relevant to the proposal is Section 4 (Movement) and Section 5.5.21 (Blocks 21 & 22). Specifically relevant are:

Objective MV3 “to provide additional cycle and pedestrian bridges across the canals and rivers in the SDZ to form part of strategic cycling and walking routes”; and

Objective MV4 “to create and support a well-designed network of pedestrian infrastructure to promote and facilitate walking and cycling; provide priority for pedestrians and cyclists along key desire lines, developing routes within the Docklands and linking with the surrounding walking and cycling networks in Dublin City.”

The provision of improved pedestrian and cycle connections at this location is compatible with the policies and objectives of the SDZ and also in keeping with the Public Realm Strategy prepared for the SDZ area.

Current Status:

The “Part 8” planning application for this project has been submitted to the planning department for assessment. The process commenced when the application was lodged on the 24th of September, with the plans and particulars of the proposed development on public display in Wood Quay Council office and in the Docklands Office for a period of 4 weeks, with submissions in relation to the application accepted for a 6 week period, with Tuesday the 6th of November, being the final day submissions were accepted.

Five submissions were received in relation to the proposal, all supportive of the project.

A report has been prepared by the area planner and the proposal will then be considered by the City Council, who will make a decision as to granting or not the application.

Currently we are aiming to have the decision made at the January 2019 Council meeting, which, if positive, would give an anticipated completion date for construction of September 2019.

Next Steps:

- The Chief Executive’s report is currently being prepared and will be presented to the Council for decision at the January Council meeting.
- Proceed to detailed design stage

Appendix- Photomontages.