

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION TO
AN BORD PLEANÁLA

FOR APPROVAL OF (I) THE N6 GALWAY CITY RING ROAD
PURSUANT TO SECTION 51 OF THE ROADS ACT 1993 (AS
AMENDED); (II) THE N6 GALWAY CITY RING ROAD
MOTORWAY SCHEME 2018; and (III) THE N6 GALWAY CITY
RING ROAD PROTECTED ROAD SCHEME 2018

ABP Ref. ABP-302848-18 and ABP-302885-18

ORAL HEARING

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE

Responses to NUIG Sports Masterplan

Objections/Submissions

by

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1 Qualifications and Experience

1.1 My name is Gareth Maguire. M.R.IA.I., RIBA, ARB, M.Arch BSc (Hons), Dip. PM.

I am RIAI Registered Architect. I have a Masters of Architecture from the Mackintosh School of Architecture, 1st Class Honors Degree, Bachelor of Science Degree in Architecture from Queens University of Belfast and a Diploma in Project Management from Trinity College Dublin.

1.2 I have over twenty-five years' experience working at a senior Director level in International Integrated Design practices across Ireland and the UK. I led BDP Architects in Ireland for over twenty years in both their Dublin and Belfast offices. During that period I have led numerous major development projects with in house multi-disciplinary design teams. I have in depth specialist knowledge of University Campus Planning in Ireland. My Campus Masterplans include Maynooth University Masterplan, Limerick Institute of Technology Our Places Campus Masterplan, University College Cork Campus Development Plan Reviews, University of Limerick and NUIG's Nuns' Island Campus Masterplan. I have also advised Third Level Capital Development Boards of major third level institutions on their capital development plans, including the development of their major sports campus facilities.

2 Role in Proposed Road Development

2.1 My role in the N6 Galway City Ring Road project was to examine, assess and report on the potential impacts that the proposed road development would have on NUI Galway and in particular to advise on the potential impacts identified on their sporting campus and to recommend mitigation measures to minimise any impact identified.

2.2 I have been involved in this role on the N6 GCRR project since route options studies.

3 Key issues in relation to NUI Galway's Sporting Campus

- 3.1 Chapter 15 of the EIAR is to be taken as read in its entirety and is not replicated here. To assist the Board in its consideration of the applications for approval and for the convenience of all participants at this hearing and to put some context to the responses to objections/submissions, the key items pertaining to the assessment of potential impacts on NUI Galway's Sporting Campus detailed in Chapter 15 of the EIAR are summarised briefly below.
- 3.2 The proposed road development will result in a 20 per cent reduction of the NUI Galway Sporting Campus at Dangan, due to the encumbrance caused by the viaduct support structures upon which the N6 GCRR traverses the campus. This will result in the removal of two grass based GAA sized playing pitches. As a consequence, the NUI Galway Sporting Campus will require a new University Sports Masterplan. The provision of a viaduct structure at the NUI Galway Sporting Campus will provide access to the north and south of the Sporting Campus and the River Corrib during the operational phase, maintaining connectivity and permeability beneath the proposed road development.
- 3.3 The proposed road development intercepts the existing sports pavilion resulting in direct impacts to its western end and the building will be modified as follows:
- the existing western plant room, 1 no. changing room, 1 no. storage area, 1 no. weights area and associated access hallways on both ground floor and upper levels will be demolished
 - the western plant room and its associated plant will be relocated
 - Construction and reconfiguration of the internal and external walls, roof, windows and door locations
- 3.4 As part of the mitigation of the impacts to the existing sports pitches, alternative pitches were included in the EIAR submitted to the Board in October 2018. This mitigation was based on previous meetings with NUI Galway at the time.
- 3.5 The residual impact on NUI Galway's Sporting Campus, taking cognisance of the mitigation was identified in Section 15.6.2 of Chapter 15 of the EIAR as 'very significant', in the absence of a new University Sports Masterplan.

4 Responses to Submission/Objection

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 This Statement of Evidence is intended to address the submission/objection made to An Bórd Pleanála (ABP) in respect of the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and Motorway Scheme (MS) in relation to the impacts on NUI Galway's Sporting Campus as submitted by NUI Galway only. The specific issue addressed is the impacts on the University Sports Masterplan.
- 4.1.2 All other submissions/objections which raise issues in relation to NUI Galway are dealt with elsewhere as appropriate.

4.2 NUI Galway's Sporting Campus

Issue

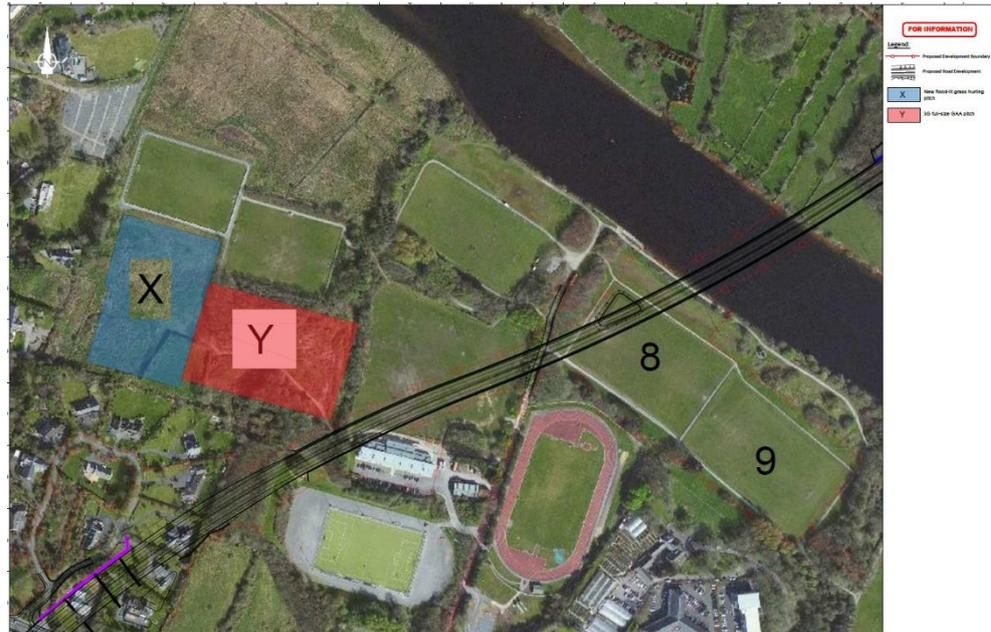
- 4.2.1 Submission/objection Ob_528_541_543_557 raised the following issue in relation to their university masterplan. *"We have, since March 2015, consistently advised TII's Project Team of the impact which the propose N6 GCRR will have on university strategy, business development and operations, particularly in respect of student recruitment and retention, sports programmes, future facilities development, internalisation, philanthropy and biodiversity.The scheme as proposed will result in the loss of two playing pitches and two training pitches for the duration of construction...The sports pavilion which is critical to supporting the entire north campus will also be affected by the scheme."*

Response

- 4.2.2 Whilst extensive consultation took place during the design development period, a new NUI Galway sporting campus plan and strategy was not complete at the time of publication of the EIAR. Since publication and following receipt of the NUI Galway's submission/objection, NUIG have confirmed the completion of their sporting campus plan and strategy and identified requirements and plans for the Sporting Campus and the position is as follows:
- they do not want the mitigation measures originally proposed in the EIAR
 - they are pursuing their own plans in terms of providing for the pitches that they believe they need to mitigate the impacts of the proposed road development and have a planning application pending before Galway City Council Ref 19/372 in this regard

- 4.2.3 This planning application was lodged on 23 December 2019 and is stated to be “for the development of 1 no. 3G pitch and 1 no. grassed GAA/soccer pitch plus all ancillary infrastructure, ball stop fencing, floodlighting, drainage, an enhanced biodiversity area and all associated site development works” and for “permission for temporary changing room facilities and a shared access lane for emergency/maintenance vehicles and pedestrians during the construction phase of the proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road.” (see below)

Figure 1: NUI Galway’s planning application for new pitches



- 4.2.4 The report prepared by MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants which accompanied NUI Galway’s planning application, entitled “*Planning Application Cover Report – NUI Galway Dangan Sports Pitches*” dated 20 December 2019 states as follows at section 1.2:

“NUI Galway remain concerned about the impact of the proposed road on the overall functional operation of the sports campus. The proposed road development will effectively divide the sports campus into two, removing the two centrally located grass-based pitches. Additionally, the context of the existing sporting changing facilities setting and curtilage will be altered completely.”

The purpose of this planning application is to propose an alternative to the mitigation measures proposed in the submitted EIAR ‘Appendix A.15.1 NUIG Sports Facilities Mitigation Proposals’, with a proposal for 2 no. new pitches and associated infrastructure on a site located to the north-west of the proposed N6 GCRR route. For clarity, this application proposes to replace the existing pitches lost by the proposed N6 GCRR and there is no intensification of the existing facilities.”

This statement is repeated in section 7.2 of that report, with the added comment that *“The current proposal is more compatible with NUI Galway’s strategic vision for the sports campus from an operational perspective.”*

4.2.5 In light of all of the above:

- the mitigation measures outlined in the EIAR in relation to the construction of an all-weather full size GAA pitch on the site of the existing pitch 9 are no longer required by NUI Galway and are therefore not being pursued as part of the application for approval for the N6 GCRR and are no longer being proposed as a mitigation measure in the Scheme. There will be resulting changes to the Protected Road Scheme Schedules as the plots associated with pitch 9 are being removed from the Protected Road Scheme Schedules.
- the mitigation measures outlined in the EIAR in relation to the construction of a training area on the site of the existing pitch 8 are no longer required by NUI Galway and are therefore not being pursued as part of the application for approval for the proposed road development and are no longer being proposed as a mitigation measure. Pitch 8 which is being temporarily acquired by Galway County Council will be reinstated as a grass training area, with appropriate sand base and drainage in line with its current construction post construction and returned to NUI Galway. This will be set out in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

4.2.6 The removal of this mitigation does not alter the residual impact on NUI Galway and it remains as ‘very significant’.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Having considered the submissions and objections, and the removal to the proposed mitigation in relation to the sporting pitches at NUI Galway, the conclusions of my appraisal as presented in Chapter 15 of the EIAR remains the same. The residual impact is ‘very significant’, in the absence of a new University Sports Masterplan.