

## **Summary of presentation to An Bord Pleanála Oral Hearing by An Taisce in relation to visual impact of proposed National Paediatric Hospital, Eccles Street, Dublin 7 -- 27 Oct. 2011**

- In respect of its scale, bulk, form and location, the proposed development should be considered in the context of development in the city in the last 15 years or so.
- One of the earliest regenerations of the period of prosperity was at Temple Bar. The dozen or so new buildings built here were all about carefully stitching into the fabric of the area and maintaining the existing scale of the area.
- In the 2000s, the city lost interest in small-scale repair of the city like was carried out in Temple Bar and began to see bigger, bulkier buildings proposed for the historic streetscapes of the city (egs. former ESB office, Fleet Street; Smithfield Market, Smithfield) which lose the consistent and coherent scale for which Dublin's inner city is renowned.
- The city also saw a series of 'crazy' proposals in this time ("mini-Manhattan" for the Digital Hub; park in the sky, O'Connell Street).
- An Bord Pleanála should put the proposed development in the context of the building boom; we are assessing this Children's Hospital proposal against the backdrop of a crazy, excessive period, but what would the city have made of the proposal 10 or 15 years ago, in terms of its scale, bulk, form and location.
- Caution is urged in viewing the applicant's supplied photomontages in respect of conveying the true vastness of the proposal. Photomontages use a wide-angle camera lens in order to give a wide context, but this also distorts proportion / size relationship between foreground and background elements in the view. Photographs of D'Olier Street, Dublin 2, showing the difference between 'normal' and 'wide angle' views illustrate this.
- The reducing effect of the wide-angle lens is apparent in the applicant's view of the proposal with St. George's Church (does not convey true size). True relationship can be seen in the applicant's scale model available in An Bord Pleanála reception.
- The applicant's photomontage view along O'Connell Street shows that the proposed hospital would encroach into the view north along O'Connell Street, the city's most important street. This is indicated as a "key view" in Chapter 4 of the DCDP 2011-17.
- The absence of a view of the proposal from the Kings Inns Park, Dublin 7, is a significant omission from the applicant's photomontage study. Maps clearly show that the proposed hospital would be visible from the park in conjunction with the front of the Kings Inns building, a major historic landmark of Dublin.

- The proposal must protect residential amenity as per the zoning of residential-zoned streets adjoining.
- The proposed building is unlike anything added to skyline of the city in the past 20 years. It is a new departure for the city in scale and mass.
- The proposal is compared to Brussels which destroyed its historic core in the decades after the war by allowing free rein to commercial development. In particular the proposal is comparable with Centre Monnaie in downtown Brussels, which has 4-storey base with sprawling 12-storey section sitting on top (16 storeys altogether) adjacent to a historic street / scale pattern.
- Photographs of Centre Monnaie in context show the looming impact which a 16-storey building would produce in a historic-scale area.
- Dublin is proposing a building of this scale directly next to an area (Georgian Dublin) seeking UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.
- European modern building examples given by the applicant's witness Mr. O'Toole to support the proposed development not are comparable in scale. If these examples are used to illustrate that a modern building won't necessarily damage a historic setting / town there are examples of that here.
- Dublin will not achieve the UNESCO designation if the proposal goes ahead.