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**Campbell, Jacqui**

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**From:** Roads Eastern Srit  
**Sent:** 10 March 2015 15:29  
**To:** 'mark@forumbelfast.org'  
**Subject:** York Street Interchange Formal Consultation

Mark

Thank you for your responses to the consultation on the proposals for the York Street Interchange. Your views have been recorded as part of this process and will contribute to the decision on whether The Department should hold a Public Inquiry into the scheme.

Regards

*Colin Pentland*

Strategic Road Improvements

RD - Eastern Division, Hydebank, 4 Hospital Road, Belfast BT8 8JL.

Campbell, Jacqui

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**From:** Mark Hackett [mark@forumbelfast.org]  
**Sent:** 09 March 2015 23:24  
**To:** Roads Eastern Srit  
**Subject:** York Street comment and submission  
**Attachments:** Interchange - general.pdf; ATT00001.htm; Interchange - L Georges St.pdf; ATT00002.htm; forum logo signature email .jpg; ATT00003.htm

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Aii

Please find inclosed two letters for submission to the York Interchange process

regards  
Mark Hackett

Mark Hackett architect  
c/o  
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The Divisional Manager

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**York Street Interchange  
Draft Orders response and for submission to Public Enquiry**

Dear Sir/Madam

In connection with the draft orders exhibit and recent information talk given by DRD Transport NI and URS at North Queen Street, I write with the following issues regarding the houses on Little George Street. This letter was circulated to the residents at late notice, they had already completed their group letter process.

1

In places the proposals raise the road up between 600-900mm and also one lane closer to many of the houses. This has a major impact on the only sunlight, amenity, health, well-being and safety of residents, along with that of future generations and children in these houses. Housing should and does last longer than its current inhabitants.

The road further impacts on their south and private amenity garden aspect. Good access to sunlight, fresh air ventilation and freedom from excessive noise are essential aspects of healthy living, which the NI Executive and all its departments are committed to at a high policy level.

I do not believe these issues have been assessed and addressed within a best practice, professional and legislative context.

2

The current landscape, whilst it has not been topped or maintained (it is in DRD ownership) nonetheless provides permeable and natural visual screening, being deciduous it also allows screened sun light through the canopy during winter when light is most needed for health and wellbeing. This does not compare with the solid banks and walls being proposed, the solid aspects of which will be 2 or 2.5m taller than the existing road line and moving closer to the housing.

3

The residents and houses have an established 'right to light'.

4

Whilst air quality issues for the overall area may appear neutral to DRD - It is clear the study has not been specific to this street and its houses, those living closest to the motorway and below it.

Residents confirm that Air Quality was not monitored at the rear elevation of the houses and compared to a standard in a nearby street. Without such 'control' readings, such studies as DRD have conducted cannot claim to address the issue in this specific case.

5

Notwithstanding the major issues noted above, the landscape proposals on the retained bank are not detailed and well enough considered. At the end of the building process individual gardens will suffer and there is no provision for betterment or compensation in providing good quality planting on a garden by garden basis. Good landscape can cover many ills, and well designed landscape at all scales will be key to integrating this project. One observes other parts of the road network, in more rural and suburban areas, where landowners have been compensated for the loss of existing hedges, lanes, gateposts and walls.

6

There has been no early or detailed professional study of the building issues noted above.

**Firstly**, an assessment should have been made on the retention of the houses

**Secondly**, if retention would meet the professional and legal standards required of decent family housing, what aspects are needed to ensure its habitability?

**Thirdly**, the question of road alignment adjustment would have been raised at an earlier stage

This proposal has been designed the 'wrong way around' - DRD have designed a roads and engineering solution, rather than assess the context first with the relevant professionals. (who in this case of existing houses and buildings could only be fully qualified architects)

If such an assessment by a professional RIBA architect suggests the houses could be retained and meet decent housing needs (I express my professional doubts regarding this) then a professional and technical study should specify and agree the measures to address the light, sunlight, air, noise and garden amenity issues. I believe such a process is necessary if Transport NI and URS are to fulfil their professional 'duty of care' and meet regulations.

Such a DRD employed architect should act within their **code of conduct and duty of care to residents**, not DRD, as their primary professional concern. I cite the relevant RIBA Code of Conduct issues such an architect will be required to address in an appendix.

7

Transport NI should resource the residents to have access to independent technical assistance to deal with the issues the proposal is inflicting on them.

8

Finally - and most relevant for the expenditure of public funds. The recent proposals for the elevated motorway at this street indicate:

- difficult and restricted excavation between existing housing and a motorway
- the installation of two piles at frequent centres. (are these bored not driven piles?)
- a large continuous pile cap slab.
- off this is built a specialised steep slope.
- an expensive sound barrier (possibly perspex although this will get dirty and grubby)
- the costs involved in addressing point 6/
- acoustic glazing, ventilation and sound reduction measures, enhanced landscape

I find it difficult to believe that the linear cost of piling, ground slab, retaining structures and mitigating measures will not exceed the value of the properties to rebuild or rehouse in more appropriate location.

Should this matter not be resolved, I suggest it is referred to the auditors for review, is this a good use of public funds?

As mentioned in the recent meeting, such a solution would not be advocated, I believe, in any other part of the EU. What this illustrates is a failure, in my view, in joined up governance where the urban design / cost / impacts and benefits for the city would be assessed in a holistic manner, by all agencies in a team approach.

Motorway funds ultimately come from EU funds, I doubt that the EU will want photographs showcasing children playing in the shadow (literally) of this road in 2023 as an example of EU infrastructure quality.

Finally, we would ask the engineers and people working on this project to reflect on their designs and positions from a human and professional point of view, and work with the relevant professionals to propose humane solutions that respect the right of local people to decent health, home and family life.

Yours faithfully

Mark Hackett architect

## APPENDIX

RIBA code of conduct required of architects

1.1 Members are expected to act with integrity in all their professional and business activities. This means acting with honesty, **fairness and impartiality** at all times and not allowing oneself to be improperly influenced either by self-interest or the interests of others.

*(in this case the expediency of DRD interests)*

1.3 Members should not be a party to any statement which they know to be untrue, misleading, unfair to others, or contrary to their own professional knowledge, either by making it themselves, or acquiescing to its being made by others.

1.4 Members should seek appropriate advice when faced with a situation which they recognise as being outside their own or their practice's experience, knowledge or competence.

1.7 Members must not undertake any architectural functions which require independence and impartiality (such as the issue of Architect's Certificates) if they are connected to the contracting party.

*(a DRD employed architect will need to assure themselves that their contract allows them to meet high standards of independence and impartiality from DRD vested interests)*

2.1 Members are expected to apply high standards of skill, knowledge and care in all their work. They must also apply their informed and impartial judgment in reaching any decisions, which may require members having to balance differing and sometimes opposing demands (for example, the stakeholders' interests with the community's and the project's capital costs with its overall performance).

3.1 Members should respect the beliefs and opinions of other people, recognise social diversity and treat everyone fairly. They should also have a proper concern and due regard for the effect that their work may have on its users and the local community.

3.2 Members should be aware of the environmental impact of their work.