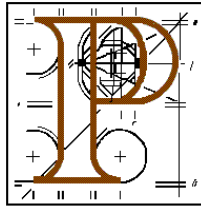


## An Bord Pleanála



## Inspector's Report

**Development:** Modifications of existing Parochial House including demolition of existing lean-to extension and boiler house. Extension to car park, construction of new Parish Centre with all associated site works at St. Joseph's Parish Church, Knocknahorgan, Glanmire, Co. Cork.

### Planning Application

Planning Authority: Cork County Council  
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.: 15/04519  
Applicant: St. Joseph's Parish Church  
Type of Application: Permission  
Planning Authority Decision: Grant Permission

### Planning Appeal

Appellant(s): John and Pauline O'Callaghan  
Type of Appeal: Third Party v Grant  
Observers: None  
Date of Site Inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**Inspector: Kenneth Moloney**

## **1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

The subject site is an elevated site overlooking Sallybrook and the site consists of a large church, parochial house, boiler house and surface car parking. The shape of the site is approximately L-shaped and the size of the site is approximately 0.68 ha (1.68 acres).

The vehicular access to the site is from a local road immediately to the south of the site. There is also a stepped pedestrian access from the R639.

The boiler house structure is a detached building and also contains toilets. The Parochial House including the lean-to extension is situated to the east of the appeal site. The existing car park is situated to the north of the site and slopes slightly upwards to the northern boundary of the appeal site.

There are several houses located between the appeal site and the R639, and these houses are situated on lower ground than the appeal site. There is a set of steps situated to the rear of one of these houses providing access to the northern end of the appeal site.

## **2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed development consists of modifications to the existing Parochial House including demolition of the existing lean-to extension.

The proposed development includes the following;

- a. Modifications to existing Parochial House
- b. Demolition of existing boiler room,
- c. Extension of car park
- d. Construction of new single storey parish centre to include meeting rooms, administration rooms, toilets and ancillary accommodation.

Additional information sought for the following (a) explore options of the relationship between the proposed parish centre and the Parochial House, (b) the relationship of a new building with that of the existing Parochial House, (c) the front elevation of the proposed parish centre, (d) written description and photographic record of the elements proposed for demolition to the existing Parochial House, (e) landscaping details, (f) car parking provision, and (g) details of the proposed staircase in the north-east corner of the site.

## **3.0 PLANNING AUTHORITY'S DECISION**

The Planning Authority decided to grant planning permission subject to 8 conditions. The conditions are all standard.

Internal Reports:            There are two internal reports on the file:

- Area Engineer: - No objections.
- Conservation Officer: Additional information sought.

Objections: There is one third party objection on the planning file and the issues raised have been noted and considered.

Submissions: There is a submission from Irish Water who have no objections to the proposed development.

#### **4.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- None

#### **5.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The operational development plan is the Cork County Development Plan, 2014 – 2020.

#### **6.0 LOCAL AREA PLAN**

The operational Local Area Plan is the Blarney Electoral Area Local Area Plan, 2011. In accordance with the settlement map for Glanmire the subject site is zoned 'Existing Built-up Area'.

#### **7.0 GROUNDS OF APPEAL**

Beamish & Co. Architects, lodged an appeal on behalf of the appellants John & Pauline O'Callaghan. The main grounds of appeal are summarised as relating to the following; -

- The proposal to replace existing concrete steps with steel structure is unacceptable due to its appearance and the height of the upper flights over adjoining ground levels. It is considered dangerous.
- It is requested that the concrete steps be reconstructed rising through the existing bank as shown on an enclosed sketch.

#### **8.0 RESPONSES**

The following is a response by the applicant's agent;

- It is submitted that the sketch proposal submitted by the appellant illustrates that the boundary line is moved 600mm west.
- It is submitted that this is Glanmire Parish land by title and there has been no dispute otherwise.
- This boundary title claim is supported with survey information attached.
- It is recommended to the Board that that clarity around this disputed boundary issue be settled in another forum.

- However should the Board feel it necessary to assess this appeal the following issues are submitted;
  - the existing stairs in question on the church grounds is dangerous in winter months
  - the existing stairs is outside the building regulations and provides a hazard to users with liability to the church.
  - The proposal before the Board addresses this issue and conforms to current design standards.
  - The submitted sketch by the appellant shows sunken steps into the car parking area. It is considered that this is unsatisfactory on health and safety grounds with the majority of mass goers being elderly and the appellant's proposal would make car parking more difficult.
- However the Parish, as a gesture of good will, submits three sketches for the Boards consideration.
- These options go some way to meeting the appellant's requirements and the proposals include the addition of further safety measures at the arrival point at the car park edge.
- The Parish is open to consider alternative construction techniques other than steel if this is required.

The following is the summary of a response submitted by appellant's agent;

- It is submitted that the appellant's approve the revised stair sketch prepared by Wilson Architects and submitted on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 provided that it is constructed in concrete.

## **9.0 ASSESSMENT**

The main issues to be considered in this case are: -

- Principle of Development
- Conservation
- Traffic & Access
- Access Steps

### **Principle of Development**

The main features of the proposed development include the following;

- removal of existing single storey lean-to extension to Parochial House
- construction of the proposed parish centre
- demolition of the existing boiler room and relocation within proposed parish centre
- extension of the existing surface car parking area

The context of the appeal site is important as the adjacent Church is a protected structure and this protection therefore includes the curtilage of

the church grounds. The proposal involves the removal of an existing single storey extension to the original Parochial House. The floor area of the existing lean-to single storey extension is 16 sq. metres. The impact of this demolition on the existing architectural character is important.

The proposal also includes the demolition of the existing boiler room (floor area of 33 sq. metres) and its relocation within the proposed parish centre. I would consider, based on a visual observation of the area, that this demolition is acceptable in principle. The proposed parish centre is single storey in height and the floor area of the proposal, in original application is 375 sq. metres however this floor area has been revised marginally downwards in the applicant's additional information response. The proposal also includes the additional car parking provision and overall the car parking area will provide for 112 car parking spaces.

Overall I would consider that having regard to the established use on the appeal site and the zoning of the subject site as 'Existing Built-up Area' that the proposed development is acceptable in principle provided that the proposal protects the architectural character and the adjoining amenities of the area.

### **Conservation**

The principle conservation feature on the site is the Church however having regard to the provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, the curtilage of the site is also protected.

The proposal involves the removal of the boiler room structure however I would not consider that its removal would impact on the special interest of the protected structure, i.e. the adjacent church. The proposal also involves the removal of the lean-to extension to the Parochial House and having regards to the provisions of the Act this lean-to is a protected structure. The lean-to would appear to be an extension to the original Parochial House and a photographic record of the lean-to was submitted as part of the applicants additional information response and this photographic record demonstrates that the lean-to is a modern extension.

As the lean-to is a modern addition its removal would not, in my view, have any adverse impact on the conservation merits of the appeal site.

The proposed development also includes the provision of a contemporary single storey structure i.e. the parish centre. The Heritage Officer of the local authority raised concerns that this structure, given its scale, might dominant the Parochial House. The applicant has submitted revised plans as part of the additional information response, and in these revised plans the layout of the proposed Parish Centre has changed and it is set back 7.5m from the Parochial House. This alteration, in my view, illustrates that the proposed building is separate from the Parochial House and in my view provides for an acceptable relationship between the Parochial House and the proposed contemporary single-storey Parish Centre.

Overall I would conclude that the proposed development would be acceptable and would not unduly impact on the architectural conservation merits of the appeal site.

### **Traffic & Access**

The proposal will result in an intensification of traffic accessing the site and as such includes the addition of car parking provision. The vehicular access serving the site is onto a local road immediately to the south of the subject site. I noted from a visual observation of the area that the sightline provision in either direction from the existing entrance is generally good. The Area Engineer, in his report dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015, stated that the existing sightlines are adequate.

In assessing car parking provision I would have regard to Appendix D of the County Development Plan which sets out the car parking standards. Table 1a of Appendix D requires 1 car parking space per 25 sq. m. for 'Cultural, Community and Recreational Buildings'. This would amount to an requirement for 15 car parking spaces for the proposed Parish Centre. It is also stated in Table 1a that 1 space per 7 sq. metres is required for 'Conference Centres'. This would amount to an requirement for 54 car parking spaces for the proposed Parish Centre. I would consider that the appropriate car parking provision for the proposed Parish Centre would be in between 15 and 54 spaces. I would consider that as the overall car parking provision on the site exceeds 112 spaces, including the established car parking on the site and the proposed car parking provision, that the car parking for the proposed and existing development would be adequate.

### **Access Steps**

The third party appeal submission solely relates to the proposed access steps situated at the northern end of the appeal site. The existing steps are located to the north of the site and are situated just beyond the existing car parking area. The existing steps provide access from the north of the appeal site, which is on higher ground, to a number of residential properties situated to the immediate east.

The existing steps are concrete steps with steel handrail on both sides of the steps. The applicant submits that the existing steps in their current form are a health and safety concern and proposes a steel staircase.

The appellant is mainly concerned with the proposed steps due to its appearance and considers a proposal rising through the bank as more acceptable.

In response the applicant submitted a revised proposal which goes somewhat to meeting the appellant's requirements. The applicant submits that they would be prepared to consider other construction techniques

than steel. The appellant submits a further response stating that they consider the revised proposal is acceptable provided the steps are finished in concrete.

Overall I would acknowledge, based on my site inspection, that the existing concrete steps would be a health and safety concern particularly during wet and icy conditions. Therefore the principle of replacing the existing steps with a safer option is in my view acceptable.

In my view, based on the submitted plans, the proposal includes a design solution which is acceptable in terms of visual amenities. The proposed landscaping, in my view, will reduce the visual impact of the proposed steps on the adjacent residents. The applicant proposes an alternative construction technique to steel steps which will address health and safety concerns.

Overall I would have no objections to the revised proposal and would recommend a condition to the Board, should they favour granting permission, allowing the applicant to propose an acceptable construction material for the steps.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

I have read the submissions on the file, visited the site, had due regard to the development plan and all other matters arising. I recommend that planning permission be **GRANTED** for the reasons set out below.

### **REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

Having regard to the 'Existing Built-up Area' zoning objective of the subject site as set out in the Barney Electoral Area Local Area Plan, 2011, and the established use on the site it is considered that, subject to compliance with conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience, and would, therefore be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### **CONDITIONS**

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application as amended by particulars received by the planning authority on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and by the further plans and particulars received by An Bord Pleanála on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

2. The proposed access steps situated to the north of the appeal site shall be modified as follows:

- (a) The access steps shall be designed and completed in accordance with submission to An Bord Pleanala received on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and the construction techniques of the steps shall be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Revised drawings showing compliance with the above requirement shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement prior to the commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interest of residential amenity of the adjacent properties.

3. The materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes to the proposed development shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority before the commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interest of the visual amenities of the area and of a proper standard of development.

4. Covered and secure bicycle parking spaces shall be provided within the site. Prior to the commencement of development, the layout shall be submitted to the planning authority.

**Reason:** To ensure an adequate bicycle parking provision is available to serve the development.

5. All service cables associated with the proposed development (such as electrical, communal television, telephone and public lighting cables) shall be run underground within the site.

**Reason:** In the interest of orderly development and the visual amenities of the area.

6. Water supply and drainage arrangements, including the disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

**Reason:** In the interest of public health and to ensure a proper standard of development.

7. The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including hours of



working, noise management measures and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste.

**Reason:** In the interest of amenities and public safety.

8. Lighting shall be in accordance with a scheme, which shall be designed to minimize glare and light pollution, and which shall be submitted for the written agreement of the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interest of residential amenity and public safety.

9. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit a detailed landscaping plan prepared by a suitably qualified landscape architect for the agreement of the planning authority. Such a plan shall include proposals for the retention of trees and hedgerows on the site where appropriate and measures for their protection during the construction phase. The landscaping plan shall include details of all boundary treatment.

**Reason:** In the interests of visual amenity and of the amenities of adjoining residences and to ensure a proper standard of development.

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Kenneth Moloney  
Planning Inspector  
18<sup>th</sup> December 2015