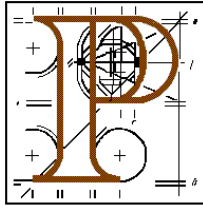

An Bord Pleanála



Inspector's Report

Development: Removal of existing temporary classrooms and construction of a two storey extension to include 3 classrooms, 3 resource rooms, toilets, plant room, lift and associated site works at Summercove National School, Ardbrack, Kinsale, Co.Cork

Planning Application

Planning Authority : Cork County Council

Planning Authority Register Reference : 14/5770

Type of Planning Application : Permission

Applicant : Board of Management Summercove National School

Planning Authority Decision : Refuse

Planning Appeal

Appellant : Board of Management Summercove National school

Type of Appeal : 1st Party v. Refusal

Observers : Joseph O'Dowd
Susan Horgan
Jack & Deirdre Daly
Miriam Walsh
Rosita Hellstern
Jim Hayes
Fiona Reilly
Alan & Cora Roche

Jerry Walsh
James & Maureen Curran
Michael O'Sullivan
Susan Draper
Lesley & Colin Pereira
Josephine & Philip Horgan
Johnny Walsh
Fortview Residents Association
(submission on its behalf by J. & N.
Murphy Ltd.
Lia Walsh (submission on her behalf by
J. & N. Murphy Ltd)
Alan Steel
Tony Cournane

Inspector : Pauline Fitzpatrick

Date of Site Inspection : 20/11/15

Appendices

1. Photographs
2. Extracts from the Cork County Development Plan and Bandon Electoral Area LAP 2011

1. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site, which has a stated area of 0.215 hectares, is located at the junction of High Road and Ardbrack Road in Summercove c. 1.5 km to the east of Kinsale town centre.

The site is roughly rectangular in shape with vehicular and pedestrian access from Ardbrack Road. It is bounded by Fortview housing estate to the north the access to same immediately abutting the north-eastern corner of the appeal site. Fortview comprises a small estate of approx. 23 houses of varying designs. In view of the north to south falls in the area the said estate is higher than the appeal site.

The site is higher than High Road with its southern boundary delineated along part by a high hedge and trees with a wall and hedge along the remainder. Detached dwellings bound the site along High Road to the west. A small enclave of housing is immediately to the south-east of the site accessed from Ardbrack Road with detached one off houses to the south of High Road.

A footpath runs along the perimeter of the site along Ardbrack Road and extends for a short distance northwards with a railing along same. There is no footpath on the opposite side of the road or along High Road to the south. Double yellow lines precluding on street parking run the length of the site on Ardbrack Road, on both corners of Fortview, (extending further on one side than the other) at the junction of Ardbrack Road and High Road and along High Road. A dedicated on-road bus stop and disabled parking space are delineated opposite the school entrance on Ardbrack Road.

The accommodation on the site comprises the original single storey school house which provides for two classrooms, resource room, secretary's office and toilet. Three pre-fabs are located to the north/north-west (rear) of the school building providing for two classrooms and resource rooms. There are a further 5 pre-fabs to the south/south-west providing for a further four classrooms, staff room and principal's office. The northern site boundary to Fortview is delineated by a hedge.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Application as Lodged:

The application as lodged with the Planning Authority on the **20/08/14** entails:

- Demolition of the 3 no. existing prefabricated buildings to the north of the original school building and construction of a two storey extension to said building providing for 3 no. classrooms and 3 no. resource rooms in addition to toilets, plant room and lift. External finishes are to be a mix of roughcast render and teak cladding with two ridge heights, the higher being 8.775 metres which is c. 1 metre higher than the existing school building.
- The existing prefabricated classrooms along the southern extent of the site are to be retained which provide for 3 classrooms and staff room whilst the original school house provides for 2 classrooms. The prefab currently housing the permanent 5 day learning support to the north-west of the original school house is to be retained.

Further Information:

Further Information was requested on 13/10/14 seeking details on school numbers, road and parking management and preparation of a Road Safety Audit. A response was received on **16/01/15** providing the following details:

- The school currently has 221 pupils enrolled with projected enrolment numbers of 219 in 2015 and 214 in 2016 and 2017. It has 10 teachers, a part time teacher, SNA and secretary.
- A Masterplan for the anticipated future development on the site was submitted entailing a further 2 storey extension, removal of remaining prefabs and provision of underground carparking along the south-western boundary. The masterplan is stated as incorporating the recommendations of TGD-020 General Design Guidelines for Schools (Primary and Post Primary) and TGD -022 Primary School Design Guidelines.
- A Road Safety Audit prepared details a number of recommendations.

Clarification of Further Information

A clarification of FI was issued 10/02/15 requesting the applicant to consider measures to implement the recommendations of the said Audit as part of the current

application. The notice states that the Local Authority does not have any proposals or funding in place to implement the recommended improvements.

A time extension to allow for the applicant to respond to same was granted on the 26/03/15.

A response to the clarification of FI submitted **20/07/15** states:

- the proposal is to replace existing run-down prefabs and not to increase the size of the school.
- It is proposed to acquire a strip of land to allow for the inseting of a bus stop and disabled parking from their current on-road position into the field immediately adjoining and to allow for provision of a footpath. The consent from the landowner accompanies the submission.
- Consent to realise a number of the recommendations in the Road Safety Audit are detailed.

Revised public notices were submitted **05/08/15**.

Note: Objections to the proposal received by the PA have been forwarded to the Board for its information. The issues raised are comparable to those raised in the observations summarised in section 7 below.

3. INTERNAL REPORTS

Irish Water in a report dated **24/09/14** has no objection subject to conditions.

The **1st Area Engineer's** report (undated) notes that this is the first time the PA is in receipt of an application that confirms this site as the permanent home for a school of a capacity well in excess of what the original school on the site was designed for. The granting of permission would copper fasten the notion that this site is suitable for such a development and no other site need be sought. There have been requests for infrastructural improvements in the area and the parents own perception from various representations is that the roads around the school are dangerous. The school at present has inadequate parking facilities for staff, no set down areas for parents or school buses, very poor access routes (footpath infrastructure) and is located on a junction. The site does not have any scope to improve the current congestion or circulation problems. Any intensification of this school would increase traffic congestion and traffic safety concerns. As the site is already at capacity any increase in level of activity is not favoured. The view is that the site is unsuitable as

previous development plans have zoned land for its eventual relocation. An assessment of the suitability of the site relative to guidelines is required.

The **Engineering Report** dated **09/02/15** following FI notes that the road safety audit does not adequately deal with the fact that this is an unsuitable site and that no proper parking facilities are provided. Any requirements highlighted by its own road safety audit should be provided by the application as part of phase 1 of the development. Without parking and set down facilities it is an unsuitable permanent site for a 221 pupil school. A **further report** dated **27/08/15** following clarification of FI expresses concerns about the safety of vulnerable road users ie. pedestrians, owing to the school's close proximity to road junctions with narrow road widths and limited visibility/sightlines. The proposed bus set down area and disabled parking spaces are located in an area currently used as a waiting area for vehicles picking up/dropping off children. The removal of these spaces without an alternative will further exacerbate traffic congestion. Refusal of permission for two reasons is recommended.

The **1st Executive Planner's** report dated **10/10/14** considers that there is strong policy support in the County Development Plan 2009 for the proposal. It is noted that the Guidance on Provision of Schools and the Planning System recommends a pragmatic approach with regards to extensions. The overall design is considered acceptable. Its height levels and relationship with the Fortview estate will not result in any visual intrusion or loss of privacy to occupiers living in nearby houses. It will not seriously block off any distant views of the harbour. The angle of one of the classrooms on the east facing gable at 1st floor has 2 no. windows that might cause a degree of overlooking with the adjacent property 18 metres to the north. Although there is a hedge which partially screens the development the potential of intrusion, if any, will be minimal given that the students in the classroom are focussed on the teacher or activities at their table. A FI request is recommended seeking details of number of pupils, teachers etc., parking provision and a Road Safety Audit. The **2nd report** dated **10/02/15** following the FI submission states that he would favour a grant of permission but is aware that the Manager would prefer to get a clearer picture about the cost, deliverability and funding of the various measures proposed in the Road Safety Audit. Clarification of FI is recommended. The **3rd report** dated **28/08/15** following clarification of FI notes that the school cannot make a commitment towards the bigger, more substantial improvements that are ultimately needed and proposed in possible future phases. The delivery uncertainties and practical difficulties highlighted by the Local Engineer cannot be sorted out through planning conditions. A refusal of permission for two reasons is recommended.

The **1st Senior Executive Planner's** report dated **13/10/14** notes the contents of the Area Engineer's and Executive Planner's reports above and concurs with the FI recommendation. The **2nd report** dated **10/02/15** following FI concurs with the

request for clarification of FI. The **3rd report** dated **28/08/15** following clarification of FI notes that there is no additional time available so the PA has to reach a decision about the suitability of the proposal in its current form. It is clear that the Area Engineer is not satisfied with the traffic management proposals and also that there is a degree of uncertainty as to whether these proposals can be delivered. A refusal of permission for two reasons is recommended.

The comments from the **Senior Planner** dated **31/08/15** notes that the applicant has been given every chance to resolve the traffic issues. A refusal of permission is recommended by the Area Engineer. A myriad of mitigation measures have not been resolved to their satisfaction. He therefore agrees with the Senior Executive Planner's recommendation to refuse permission for two reasons.

4. PLANNING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

The PA decided to refuse permission for the above described development for two reasons which can be summarised as follows:

1. The proposed substitution of an important set down area for an allocated bus stop and disabled parking area would exacerbate traffic congestion where existing on-road parking and traffic movements generated by the school interferes with the free flow of traffic and impinges on residential amenity and therefore conflicts with Objective TM3-3 of the County Development Plan which seeks to improve standards and safety of public roads.
2. The proposal would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard because it is deficient in terms of adequate measures to enhance the safety and accessibility of the school where no or limited footpaths, pedestrian priority measures and public lighting exist to facilitate the pedestrian traffic generated. The proposal therefore conflicts with Objective TM2-1 of the County Development Plan which seeks to ensure all development is accessible, permeable, and as safe as possible within an overall coherent network.

5. GROUNDS OF APPEAL

The submission by McCutcheon Halley Walsh on behalf of the 1st Party against the PA's decision to refuse permission can be summarised as follows:

5.1 Purpose of Development and Development Plan Provisions

- The proposal, whilst improving the accommodation, will not increase the capacity of the school.
- Attempts to secure alternative sites for a new school have been unsuccessful.
- There is no specific proposal in the LAP to relocate the existing school to a more suitable site. The absence of a viable alternative in the Bandon LAP in conjunction with LAP policy (DB-06) to maintain the separation between Summercove village and Kinsale would indicate that it is the PA's objective for the school to remain in its current location.
- Neither the 2011 LAP nor the 2009 Kinsale Transportation Plan sought to address issues associated with Summercove NS.
- The proposal accords with Development Plan policies and objectives TM3-3 including provisions which will improve standards and safety of public roads.
- In terms of Policy TM 2-1 the applicant, through the road and parking improvements, is committed to ensuring that the school is accessible, permeable and as safe as possible within an overall coherent network. The PA has responsibility to provide the coherent network.
- The Cork County Development Plan recognises that development required to address a shortfall or improve existing primary school facilities can be catered for within existing school sites. In addition Government Guidance encourages PA's to take a pragmatic approach with regard to extensions to existing school complexes.
- In view of the absence of a viable alternative a masterplan for the school has been prepared. The proposed development constitutes phase 1.

5.2 Roads and Traffic

- The applicant has agreed to acquire land opposite the school for bus and disabled parking which will be an improvement over the current situation. The proposal would improve traffic flows in the area.
- The proposal also includes the upgrade of the current main school entrance gate and steps.
- The applicant is committed to resolving the issues and recommendations of the Road Safety Audit. It would require assistance from the Local Authority on three of the recommendations, namely lack of continuous pedestrian facilities beyond the extents of the school, yield designation at nearby junctions and assigned pedestrian crossing at adjoining junctions. These

should be provided by the LA as part of their programme of providing a coherent network around Summercove village and to fulfil their obligations under TM 2-1 of the County Development Plan.

- The school has piloted a traffic management system that provides for a one way system with drop off/pick up at the bus stop with teachers on hand to help children cross the road. A survey carried out shows that the majority of traffic arrives from Cobh Cross and then uses High Road or Summercove Hill to leave the area. This has significantly improved traffic flow and safety.
- The Board of Management is willing to investigate possibilities of staggering traffic by piloting a Breakfast Club and extension of the Homework Club in the afternoon. They have applied to Cork County Council for a school warden which would also help. The parents are committed to the proposed improvements.
- The applicant is willing to formalise existing successful arrangements and investigate new innovative solutions which ensure safety and improve traffic flow.
- The applicant would have no objection to a condition requiring the preparation of a Mobility Management Plan.
- Teachers do not park along the road of the school.
- In terms of the PA's concerns regarding the lack of clarity regarding the implementation of the commitments made, the same will form part of any permission granted and are enforceable in the same manner as any other development. A letter from the Department of Education and Skills confirming its commitment to fund the required traffic management issues accompanies the appeal.

5.3 Visual Amenities

- Revised plans accompanying the appeal reduce the height of the school building by 1165mm in response to concerns from Fort View residents.

6. PLANNING AUTHORITY'S RESPONSE TO GROUNDS OF APPEAL

None received

7. OBSERVATIONS

Observations have been received from:

1. Joseph O'Dowd
2. Susan Horgan

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3. Jack & Deirdre Daly
 4. Miriam Walsh
 5. Rosita Hellstern
 6. Jim Hayes
 7. Fiona Reilly
 8. Alan & Cora Roche
 9. Jerry Walsh
 10. James & Maureen Curran
 11. Michael O'Sullivan
 12. Susan Draper
 13. Lesley & Colin Pereira
 14. Josephine & Philip Horgan
 15. Johnny Walsh
 16. Fortview Residents Association (submission on its behalf by J. & N. Murphy Ltd.)
 17. Lia Walsh (submission on her behalf by J. & N. Murphy Ltd)
 18. Alan Steel
 19. Tony Cournane

The issues raised in the submissions can be summarised as follows:

7.1 Scale of Development and Compliance with Policy Provisions

- The school has outgrown its location.
- The proposed building is three times the size of the prefab area being replaced. The proposal entails demolition of 144 sq.m. and its replacement with 438 sq.m. giving a total floor area of 1004 sq.m. which is a 41% increase on existing. The play area is to be dramatically reduced.
- The school caters for pupils further afield than the local catchment area resulting in large volumes of traffic. The fact that only 38 children walk to school further suggests the non local makeup of the school. There is capacity in the national school in Kinsale.
- All recent development in the Kinsale area and the vast bulk of any zoned land are at the opposite side of the town. Given this, it is arguable that the sensible approach would be not to seek an alternative site but, instead, to scale back the school to a size commensurate with local needs.
- Whilst it is stated that the extension would not result in an expansion beyond the current 8 classrooms this does not account for the 3 additional resource rooms.
- The proposal could also be considered as contrary to the guidance provided in the document 'Schools and the Planning System' which states that PA's are required to ensure that school sites are fit for purpose in terms of their location, access to services and provision of space for recreation and that

they are situated in a manner which encourages sustainable mobility by walking, cycling and public transport. It also recommends locating schools close to areas of greatest expansion. Other documents have limited influence on the planning process. The proposal can be seen to be at odds with many of them.

- Permission would have been granted for the prefabs on the basis that they were temporary and were to be removed. Thus the justification for their permanent replacement is unfounded.
- The Development Plan has been selectively interpreted.
- The Masterplan will not realistically be implemented.

7.2 Access and Parking

- There are three peaks in terms of traffic - morning and two in the afternoon. Each lasts for up to 45 minutes. The two afternoon peaks almost merge.
- The school site does not provide any parking for teachers or parents. Illegal parking arises from the staff and parents on the roads adjoining the site including parking in Fortview. No consent was given for the parking by teachers in Fortview.
- The area does not have adequate footpaths or lighting to facilitate pedestrians.
- The roads in the area are not capable of coping with the traffic generated by the school.
- The proposal will result in increased congestion, traffic obstruction and greater safety risks. The measures proposed will make little difference. The problem is that the 110 vehicles that arise would require parking/stopping places.
- The measures introduced including the voluntary one way system have not worked. Non-school users would be unaware of same and it only takes one car travelling northwards to cause obstruction.
- Despite the appellant's proposals following the Road Safety Audit there are significant shortcomings.
- The letter from the Department of Education referring to an increased grant, while noting that there will be traffic management costs, makes no firm commitment to any particular figure.
- The provision of a footpath opposite the school does not join a footpath, to the north or south. The zebra crossing will result in fewer parking spaces.
- The ability of emergency services to access the area during drop off and pick up times is compromised.
- It is unreasonable to suggest that development works in the future which would include underground parking would represent a cost effective design solution as required by the Guidelines. Such a proposal is problematic and would cause traffic hazard.

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- The proposal would present serious fire safety concerns which would be made worse by the irregular shape of the site and the multiple traffic and access safety issues that exist contrary to legislative requirements.
 - A reduction in pupil numbers by transfer to the town centre schools would actually improve sustainable travel patterns.

7.3 Visual Impact

- There are concerns regarding the height, scale and design of the proposed extension. It would be visually obtrusive and would impinge on the privacy of adjoining residents.
- The extension will block views onto the harbour from Fortview and would devalue property.
- Views from Route S62 and from James Fort would be impacted upon by the development. The area is designated as a scenic landscape.
- The proposed lowering of the roof introduces a new lower pitch roof which is at odds with the characteristic steep pitch of the original school.

8. SECTION 131 NOTICE

The Department of Education and Skills in response to a section 131 notice states:

- The Department has sanctioned the replacement of the prefab accommodation with permanent classrooms. The overall capacity of the school is not being increased.
- With regard to the PA's reasons for refusal the Department is willing to fund traffic management safety improvements within the school's boundary. These will be delivered as part of the building project cost which is subject to tender.
- With regard to the traffic management improvements essential to the development and external to the site the Department is willing to contribute a proportion of the costs to be agreed with the local authority.

9. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

10/5036 – outline permission refused in January 2011 for two storey national school, gym, staff accommodation and ancillary works at Cove Crossroads c. 600 metres to the north of the existing school accessed from Ardbrack Road. The reason for refusal referred to the location of the site outside the established development boundary of Kinsale Environs as defined in the Bandon Electoral Area LAP 2005 and the absence of any pedestrian connection to Summercove.

An earlier application for a comparable development was refused on the site under ref. 07/11917.

12/05336 – permission granted in September 2012 for erection of temporary classroom and associated site works. As per the covering letter accompanying the application the classroom is to be in place for a period up until the construction of the new Summercove School. A condition attached to the grant limited the duration of permission to seven years.

10. DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROVISIONS AND POLICY GUIDANCE

10.1 Bandon Electoral Area LAP 2011

The site is within the designated 'existing built up area' of Kinsale Environs.

Section 2.2.15 – the Council strongly supports the provision of a new primary school to replace the existing school in Summercove. It is considered that such a site should be identified on the basis of location, linkages and convenience to existing residential areas.

10.2 Cork County Development Plan, 2014

Objective - SC 4-1: Educational Facilities

Facilitate the provision of educational services in the community such as schools, crèches and other educational and childcare facilities. Multiuse facilities which can accommodate both educational and childcare facilities are also encouraged.

11. ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT

I consider that the issues arising in the case can be assessed under the following headings:

1. Nature and Extent of Development
2. Principle of Development and Suitability of Site for Scale of Proposal
3. Access and Parking
4. Visual Amenities
5. AA - Screening

11.1 Nature and Extent of Development

The proposal before the Board is as described in the public notices that accompany the application, namely demolition of existing prefabs, two storey extension to the existing school building and ancillary works. In the interests of clarity further proposals as set out in the Masterplan drawn up for the site which was submitted by way of further information, including replacement of further prefabs with permanent construction and an underground car park, do not form part of the application and therefore are not before the Board for assessment.

11.2 Principle of Development and Suitability of Site for Scale of Proposal

The school, with a stated area of 0.215 hectares, comprising the original school building and prefab accommodation, provides for 8 classrooms and a pupil enrolment of in the region of 221 with 10 no. permanent and 1 no. part time teachers in addition to a Special Needs Assistant. Resource, staff and administrative accommodation is also provided. As a consequence the site is largely covered in buildings with restricted outdoor space and no parking or set down/pick up provision.

On the basis of the following facts I consider it reasonable to surmise that the development on the site to date was intended as a temporary measure:

- Permission was sought by the applicant on two previous occasions dating back to 2007 for a new school on lands to the north of the current site under planning references 07/11917 and 10/5036.
- The covering letter accompanying the application for a temporary classroom under ref 12/05336 granted in September 2012 stated that the provision was required for a period up until the construction of the new Summercove School.
- Prefabricated accommodation is a tacit acknowledgement of temporary provision.

It appears from the details available that a site that had been zoned for a school to the east of the existing site in the previous Bandon Electoral Area LAP could not be realised. Whilst the current LAP does not specifically zone a site for such purposes Section 2.2.15 states that the Council strongly supports the provision of a new primary school to replace the existing school in Summercove. The plan states that such a site should be identified on the basis of location, linkages and convenience to existing residential areas. In view of same I would not subscribe to the view as expressed by the agent for the applicant that as there is no specific proposal in the LAP to relocate the existing school to a more suitable site and the absence of a viable alternative in the Bandon LAP in conjunction with LAP policy (DB-06) to maintain the separation between Summercove village and Kinsale that it is the PA's objective for the school to remain in its current location. Were this the

case it is not unreasonable to suggest that the LAP would have explicitly stated so and indeed the zoning provisions for the site modified accordingly. I note that such regard was had in the zoning provisions for the existing primary school to the west of Kinsale town centre (objective C-02 provides for its extension).

I submit that the size of the existing school on this site should be considered a temporary situation with the provision of temporary emergency accommodation being a stop gap measure to allow for proper planning for educational provision in this area.

I have sympathy for the applicant in that its efforts to secure alternative provision have not been successful. However although I accept that the proposal would not increase the capacity in terms of pupil numbers the proposal is now de facto acknowledging the permanency of the site for the capacity as existing.

Whilst I fully acknowledge that the Department of Education and Skills guidance for Primary Schools requires a flexible pragmatic approach where an extension, conversion or renovation is proposed, I submit that the acceptance of the site for the permanent accommodation of in the region of 210-210 pupils going into the future is a significant issue. Relative to the recommended space requirements for a new 2 storey 8 classroom primary school as set out in Table 1 of *TD-025 – Identification and Suitability Assessment of Site for Primary Schools, 2nd Ed. Jan 2012* which details a site area requirement of 0.71 hectares including outdoor play areas and parking provision, the current site at 0.21 hectares falls materially short. To allow the proposal on the basis that it will not exacerbate the current situation does not acknowledge the fact that it would effectively reinforce the inadequacies and deficiencies of the site which consequently give rise to negative impacts on the amenities of the area notably manifesting as traffic congestion and traffic hazard. I propose to address this matter in further detail below. Should the principle be accepted then an oversized and overscaled provision relative to the site size would be copper fastened which would not meet the basic needs of the children attending and thereby result in a substandard level of development. It is considered that the 0.21 site area is too restricted to provide for the essential elements required for a primary school of this size and I therefore recommend that permission be refused.

11.3 Access and Parking

Following on from above the total absence of any provision for staff parking or off road setdown/pick up for children constitutes one of the biggest concerns for residents in the area.

By way of further information a Road Safety Audit was prepared and takes as its starting point the school as it currently stands. As noted earlier the existing scale of

development includes temporary classrooms permitted by temporary permissions. The audit details 9 recommendations of which the applicant is in a position to realise 6 with the remaining 3, namely footpath provision in the vicinity, pedestrian crossings and yield designation at nearby junctions outside its control. However whilst the measures detailed may allow for a safer pedestrian environment and interface between vehicle and pedestrian they do not address the issues arising in terms of congestion and unsafe vehicular manoeuvres.

The school is at the junction of High Road and Ardback Road with access to the school from the latter. On-road provision for disabled and bus parking are provided for on the opposite side to the entrance although it does not appear that the school has a bus service. Double yellow lines prevail in the vicinity. From the details provided in support of the application a voluntary one way access system is in place whereby vehicles dropping off/picking up children would travel south along Ardbrack Road and then leave via High Road with teachers on hand to assist children crossing the road.

On the day of my inspection I noted that the peak drop off period was between 8.40 and 9.05am with the majority of children driven to the school. Whilst I noted that the main approach route taken was in line with the voluntary arrangement detailed above many others approached from the south with vehicular manoeuvres undertaken to allow vehicles to return the way they came. At its peak congestion was evident with conflicting vehicular and pedestrian movements with many drivers leaving their vehicles to escort children across the road despite teachers being present to assist. Vehicles availing of parking in Fortview and the small estate to the south-east when on road parking was not available outside the school was also evident. The congestion is further compounded by other vehicles using the public road in both directions which would not be party to the said voluntary one way arrangement.

The applicant is proposing to acquire lands on the opposite side to the school entrance on Ardbrack Road so as to provide for an alternative off road arrangement for the disabled and bus parking which is currently provided by way of on road markings by the Local Authority. However I do not consider that this would, in any manner, address the level of congestion experienced at peak times where in excess of 8-10 vehicles stopping on the road to allow for drop offs/pick ups is not uncommon. Indeed the proposed arrangement could actually exacerbate congestion and conflicting vehicular movements.

Staff parking occurs along on the Fortview estate road in proximity to the junction with Ardbrack Road on the stretch of road not governed by double yellow lines. Whilst the estate residents are frustrated about such a pattern and consider that

same contributes to congestion and difficulty in vehicular movement, such parking is not precluded.

Although I would accept that traffic and congestion is a common issue in the vicinity of schools during morning and afternoon peak, in this instance the matter is compounded by what I consider to be the overdevelopment of the site, albeit on a supposed temporary basis. To copper fasten such a substandard arrangement on a permanent basis would consolidate a level of traffic congestion and conflicting vehicular and pedestrian movements that give rise to traffic hazard contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

11.4 Visual and Residential Amenities

I consider that the design and scale of the proposed two storey extension to the existing school building is acceptable in principle. As viewed from a distance the extension would not be obtrusive taken in the context of the existing built environment in the vicinity. Whilst the view of the harbour as currently available from a number of the properties in Fortview may be obscured/curtailed this is not considered a justifiable reason for refusal.

In view of the orientation of the proposed extension relative to the nearest residential property to the north-west and the hedge delineating the shared boundary I do not consider that the proposed extension would give rise to concerns regarding overlooking.

11.5 AA - Screening

Having regard to the nature and scale of the development within a developed and serviced area of Kinsale, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

12. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The site at 0.21 hectares was never intended to provide school accommodation for in the region of 221 pupils and the provision as facilitated to date must be viewed for what is it, namely a temporary arrangement until a suitably located and sized site which can provide for the appropriate level of facilities for the number of children is identified and developed. This would require the co-ordination of the relevant authorities namely the Local Authority and the Department of Education and Skills. To allow for the development of the site as proposed is a tacit acknowledgement of a move from short term expedient requirements to a more permanent arrangement

which falls materially short of what is considered appropriate, the ramifications of which extend beyond the site itself impacting negatively on the amenities of property in the vicinity. I therefore recommend a refusal of permission for the following reasons and considerations.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

1. Having regard to the restricted size of the site and to the scale and extent of the proposed development which will result in the removal and permanent replacement of temporary prefabricated classrooms it is considered that the proposed development would result in an overdevelopment of the site which would consolidate the substandard level of accommodation for pupils and staff of the school and thus would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. By reason of the absence of any parking provision or a set-down/pick-up area and the lack of adequate pedestrian facilities in the vicinity, it is considered that the proposed development would exacerbate traffic congestion in the vicinity and would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard.

Pauline Fitzpatrick
Inspectorate

January, 2016