



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

**Inspector's Report**

**PL09.247129**

**Development**

Works at St. Brigid's Church in Straffan, to include reordering the Sanctuary, Confessional and Sacristy within the Church, and the partial demolition of the boiler house and WC and the construction of a 96sq.m. pastoral room to the south-west of the Church.

**Planning Authority**

Kildare Co. Co.

**Planning Authority Reg. Ref.**

16/588

**Applicant(s)**

Fr. Paul Taylor

**Type of Application**

Permission

**Planning Authority Decision**

Grant with Conditions

**Appellant(s)**

Fergal and Deirdre Allan

**Observer(s)**

None

**Date of Site Inspection**

28/11/2016

## **1.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

1.1 The site is located in the centre of Straffan village, and includes St. Brigid's Church, a protected structure. The site is 0.113Ha. The church is positioned at the main crossroads in the village. There is a bungalow immediately to the south of the subject site. There is a limited carparking area to the rear of the church which is accessed from a gate along the northern site boundary, New Road.

## **2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

2.1 The proposed development includes for a number of internal changes to the existing church (212sq.m.) and a new extension to the rear 96sq.m. which will be single storey. The following is a listed of the proposed works:

- Removal of existing oil storage tank
- Provide new single storey extension to provide accessible toilet facilities, boiler room, meeting room, including a kitchenette and store.
- Changes to the Sanctuary includes relocation of the alter, reorder the Baptismal and Choir area.

## **3.0 PLANNING AUTHORITY DECISION**

### **3.1 DECISION**

Kildare County Council granted the proposed development subject to 17No. conditions.

### **3.2 TECHNICAL REPORTS**

Water Services: No objection

Roads: Carparking provision

EHO: No objection

Irish Water: No objection

Conservation Officer: Prepared a detailed report and had no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions.

Environment: No objection

Planning Report: The principle of the development is acceptable. The extension is modest. The ridge height of the new sacristy is 4.5metres, and it is located to the north east with no overshadowing. There is an architectural report stating the proposed changes will not impact on the

protected structure. There is no scope for additional parking within the site.

### **3.3 THIRD PARTY SUBMISSIONS**

The neighbouring residents expressed concern regarding loss of light into their kitchen, the close proximity of the toilets to their kitchen, the amenities been provided are unnecessary.

### **4.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 There is no relevant planning history.

### **5.0 POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **5.1 Development Plan**

The relevant plan is the Kildare County Development Plan 2011. Straffan is designated as 'village' in the County Settlement Strategy. The site is located within a 'Village Centre' of the Straffan village Plan.

The site is located within a designated area which is liable to flooding.

St. Brigids is a protected structure.

### **6.0 THE APPEALS**

6.1 Fergal and Deirdre Allen, of Straffan village has taken this third party appeal against the planning authority's decision to grant planning permission for the proposed development. The following is a summary their grounds of appeal.

1. The proposed extension is of excessive bulk and scale for the small area and it should not be permitted. There will be overshadowing and blocking of sunlight onto their dwelling due to the height and scale of the proposed extension. Their kitchen window will be blocked by the proposal.

2. The proposed toilet facilities would be directly opposite their window and the rear entrance to their dwelling. These facilities will greatly degrade their environment, amenity and living standards.

3. St. Brigid's Church is a protected structure, and the proposed extension is unsympathetic to the original architectural design of the church. The church was totally refurbished in 1986 to meet with the needs of the Parish at the time, and attendances have dropped since then
4. All of the boundary trees and hedgerow planting will be removed as part of the proposed development. It was conditioned to be retained in a previous permission.
5. The location of the universal toilet affects them and it could be relocated.

## **6.2 RESPONSES**

There was no further comment from the planning authority.

- 6.3 The applicant responded stating the proposal was modest in scale and bulk, and would not overpower the protected structure, nor does it overshadow or block the neighbours light. The bulk and the scale of the development is to make it subservient to the protected structure. It is to the north of the appellants house and will not overshadow the property. The loss of light to the kitchen window will be minimal having regard to the height of the existing boundary wall, and distance from the window. The proposed water tanks can be moved west to reduce height. The proposed toilets are no closer than the existing toilets to the dwelling house. The hygiene requirements of the building will be strict. Straffan has grown considerably since the n1980s, and there are 35No. weddings/ annum in the church. The RC primary school has doubled in capacity in past 8 years and the Holy Communion class is 48No. children. The room at the rear is an overflow area. The secure garden area is for children.

## **7.0 ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 St. Brigids Church in Straffan is a small church located in the centre of the village. The application is for a number of internal changes and to construct a single storey sacristy/ meeting room to the rear of the church. According to the appeal submission, there are over 2000 attend Sunday mass in the parish, and the church has a capacity for two Sunday masses which is only 340people. There are 35No. weddings held in Straffan annually, and funerals are large. The proposed meeting room will cater for some of the overflow capacity, and there will be a small enclosed garden for children. The primary school has doubled in capacity due to the rate of new housing in Straffan since the 1990s, and the Holy Communion class is now 48No. children.
- 7.2 The proposed extension includes the new meeting room, replacement of existing toilets and enclosed garden area. Internal changes to the church a new organ, a new tabernacle and baptismal font. The proposed development is 96sq/m. at a height of 4.5metres and is acceptable in principle and it will not

detract from the overall architectural integrity of the protected structure. The site is zoned Village Centre in the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017. The planning authority carried out a comprehensive assessment of the case in terms of design, conservation, roads, flood risk, and services, and granted planning permission for the proposed development.

- 7.3 The third party appellants reside in the dwelling house immediately south of the subject site and church. There are two windows along the northern elevation of the dwelling, the most notable been the kitchen window which currently faces onto the communal boundary wall between the dwelling and the church grounds. In the first instance, the proposed development will not result in any overlooking or overshadowing onto the adjoining dwelling to the south. The proposed extension is single storey, flat roofed and to the north of the dwelling house with no windows along the southern elevation. The proposed extension to the church is modest in scale having regard to the scale of the existing church. The concerns regarding the loss of light to their kitchen window are unfounded and no technical evidence has been submitted by the appellants. The applicant has however demonstrated the angle of the sun relative to the adjoining kitchen window and the height of the adjoining boundary wall and new extension, and the projected loss of light will be minuscule, and not material. I examined the proposed extension from the adjoining residential property, and do not consider the proposed height, scale and massing to be excessive. I consider the issue relating to odours from the toilets to be unsubstantiated. The proposed toilets, including a disabled toilet are located in close proximity to the existing W.C. and there is no cause for concern from the existing toilets relative to the neighbouring kitchen window. The applicant has proposed to relocated the water tank associated with the toilets and boiler further west away from the residential property which is deemed to be acceptable.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

Overall, the development is acceptable in principle on the subject site, and the planning authority's decision to grant planning permission for the proposed development should be upheld by the Board.

## **REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

Having regard to the scale, height and layout of the proposed structure, it is considered the proposed development is in keeping with the Village Centre zoning objective in the current development plan, it will not detract from the protected structure, and would not seriously injure the amenities of the property in the vicinity by way of overshadowing or overlooking, and it would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## CONDITIONS

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

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

2. The materials and colour of the render/stone finish to be used on the external walls shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity.

3. 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 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 interests of public safety and residential amenity.

4. Water supply and drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and 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.

5. Prior to the commencement of the development, the applicant shall engage a Conservation Architect for the detailing and supervision of the proposed works in consultation with the Conservation Architect of the planning authority.

**Reason:** In the interests of protecting the special architectural quality of St. Brigid's church.

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**Caryn Coogan**

**Planning Inspector**

**29/11/2016**