



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL06F.247466

Development	Change of use of part of house to Pre-School
Location	89 Pecks Lane, Castleknock, Dublin15.
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	FW16A/0065
Applicant(s)	Fiona & Marc Bowe
Type of Application	Planning Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant	Jarlath Lynn
Observers	Stephen Neylon John & Vera Fitzsimons Eamon & Leanne Bane
Date of Site Inspection	03 & 12 / 01 / 2017
Inspector	L. W. Howard

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. Located at Castleknock, the c.540m² application site is a corner site at the junction of Pecks Lane and the Old Navan Road. This section of the Old Navan Road is a cul-de-sac, and terminates at the entrance to St. Brigid's GAA grounds to the east.
- 1.2. Contextually the local area is characterised by residential development, mainly 2-storey semi-detached dwellings. The application site is developed with a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling, with previous extension apparent.
- 1.3. The site is located at the northern edge of this residential community, defined by the Old Navan Road.
- 1.4. The Navan Road dual carriageway is again adjacent, to the north and parallel with the Old Navan Road, linking Dublin City Centre with Blanchardstown and the N3 / M3 beyond.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. A part change of use from dwelling to a pre-school
- 2.2. The proposed development includes –
 - A single storey extension to the side and front of the dwelling, and
 - A single storey kitchen extension at the rear of the property.
- 2.3. The Pre-School to be located at the front and rear of the northern section of the dwelling, and to replace the garage to the front of the dwelling and the play-room at the rear.
- 2.4. Three new bathrooms to be constructed on the northern section of the property.
- 2.5. A bay window will replace the existing window at the front of the dwelling.
- 2.6. A play area to be introduced into the garden, along with a new soakaway in accordance with Bre Digest 365.
- 2.7. A new pedestrian entrance through the northern site boundary, is to facilitate the Pre-School, along with a new set down area at the curb on the Old Navan Road.
- 2.8. Pre-School 22no. children
2no. staff
- 2.9. Operational hours 09h00 – 12h00
12h30 – 15h30

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. Planning permission granted, subject to 10no. Conditions.

3.1.2. In the context of the 3rd Party Appeal and Observations lodged, the following are considered relevant –

C2 Temporary Permission only – to expire 3no. years from date of final grant of permission, unless by that time permission for its retention granted.

C3 Finishes, as per Drawing No.1616/PL02.

C4 Specification of operating hours and maximum number of children.

C5 (i) Pre-School use restricted to that shown in Drawing No.1616/PL02. No other commercial use / purpose permitted.

(ii) Use as Pre-School to be operated by a resident of the dwelling

(iii) Pre-School not to be sold or let independently of the main dwelling

C6 Register of attendance of the Pre-School to be maintained.

C7 Restrictions on advertising signs or structures

C8 (i) No set down parking within site curtilage. Onsite parking restricted to use by staff and the existing residential use

(ii) All works to be completed at applicant's expense, to the requirements of the Planning Authority.

C9 Requirements for surface water drainage and disposal.

C10 Requirements for water supply

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The key issues considered as follows :

Principle

- Childcare facilities are permitted in principle under the RS zoning objective.
- However, within the RS Zone, the primary objective is to provide for residential development, and to protect and improve residential amenity.
- The number of children, staff numbers and operational hours are contributing factors regarding potential threat to residential amenity.

Land Use Planning

- Within residentially zoned areas within Dublin 15, there is a precedent for permitting childcare facilities, which are ancillary to the use of the main dwelling as a residence.
- Application site is a large corner site, with capacity for development.
- Having regard to all of :
 - site location and size
 - the scale of development accommodating a maximum of 22no. children per session and
 - the proposed location of the pre-school on the northern side of the application site, away from the adjoining immediate neighbours to the South,the proposed development is considered as acceptable.

Design and Layout

- From a design and layout perspective, the proposed extension is considered acceptable.

Legal Interest

- The County Operations / Parks Section clarify that it is not possible for the applicant to construct a footpath at this location, on land which is dedicated Public Open Space.
- Consequently, a revised site layout plan submitted as F.I. with no development proposed along dedicated open space.
- As F.I., a set down area is indicated along the south curb of Castleknock Manor.

This is a through route, with low traffic movements. Therefore, a safe drop-off of children is enabled, without the need for any reversing or turning manoeuvres. Parents are to be formally notified to use the drop off area.

- Sufficient on-site car parking for 2 staff members, one of whom is a resident of No.89 Pecks Lane.
- The County Transportation Section has no objection, subject to Conditions.

Traffic / Parking

- Site location is within the urban 50k/hr speed limit.

- Short term ‘drop-off / collection’ parking can be accommodated on the Castleknock Manor access road, adjacent to the proposed development, by way of parallel parking on the street.
- Consequently, there would be no need for reverse vehicular movements in the vicinity of the site.
- The parking requirement for the existing dwelling is 2no. parking spaces.
- Comparatively, in small scale developments such as that proposed, one of the house occupants manages the crèche, and only one external staff member would be required. Therefore, off-street car parking is sufficient to accommodate necessary staff car parking.

Water Services

- Satisfactory water services available.

Operational Issues

- Applicants F.I. submission clarifies :
 - the sessional pre-school to cater for 22no. pupils, at any one time
 - the maximum number of staff will be two
 - hours of operation – c.09h00 – 12h00 and 12h30 – 15h30

Signage

- As F.I. the applicants clarify the proposed signage will be a single sign placed adjacent the side entrance.
- The signage is not to exceed exempted development limitations set out in the Planning and Development Regulations.

The ‘Early Childhood Care and Education’ (ECCE) Scheme

- Departmental circular PL3/2016 outlined the extension to the ECCE Scheme.
- This will result in a doubling of the number of children availing of the Scheme.
- In addition to expediting pre-planning applications, the Circular emphasised the need to “expedite, where possible, consideration of all planning applications for childcare facilities in order to facilitate the expansion of the required capacity as appropriate”.

Temporary Permission

- Conclude a temporary permission in this instance, would be appropriate.
- Appropriate Conditions in this regard, to be attached.

Appropriate Assessment

- The proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect individually, or in combination with other plans or projects, on a European site.

Conclusion

- Having regard to :
 - the location of the site
 - the location of the proposed pre-school within the site
 - the size and scale of the development
 - the accommodation of a maximum of 22no. children per session,
 the proposed development is acceptable, subject to Conditions.

3.2.2. **Other Technical Reports**

<u>County Water and Drainage</u>	No objection, subject to Conditions
<u>County Transportation</u>	No objection, subject to Conditions
<u>County EHO</u>	No objection
<u>County Parks / Operations</u>	Clarify that it is not possible for the applicant to construct a footpath at this location, on land which is dedicated Public Open Space. A revised site layout plan necessary, with no development proposed along dedicated open space.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

Irish Water No objection, subject to Conditions

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

3.4.1. Having regard to the many 3rd Party Submissions lodged both initially, and in response to the applicant's Further Information F.I. submission, the planning issues argued may be summarised as follows :

- increased traffic volumes locally
- traffic congestion
- lack of on-street car parking, with consequent traffic hazard
- insufficient within curtilage parking
- set down area is not in the applicants' ownership

- the no right turn on Auburn Avenue at the junction with the Pines, will result in people doing U-turns at the junction with Pecks Lane and the Old Navan Road
- double yellow lines exist on Castleknock Manor. Therefore, car parking at this location would be illegal.
- noise
- devaluation of property in the area
- excessive scale
- proliferation of childcare facilities in the area
- lack of information within the application with regard to the number of children, staff levels and operational hours
- flexible operating hours are not acceptable
- intrusion onto dedicated open space area
- potential for excessive signage
- proliferation of childcare facilities in the area
- contravene RS zoning which seeks to protect the residential amenity of the area
- proposed development contravenes Objectives CI14 and CI15 of the Fingal County Development Plan
- proposal is contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

4.0 Planning History

F97B/0214 Planning permission granted for a first floor extension over existing garage and utility.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

5.1.1. Fingal Co. Development Plan (2011-2017)

Relevant extracts include (see copies attached):

Ch.7 Urban Fingal

7.6 Childcare Facilities

Relevant provisions include :

- Objective CI11 “Encourage the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations, including residential areas,
- Objective CI12 “Ensure that new Childcare facilities are accommodated in appropriate premises, suitably located and with sufficient open space in accordance with the Childcare (Pre-School) Services Regulations 1996 (as amended)”
- Objective CI14 “Ensure that new Childcare facilities are designed and located so as not to cause nuisance by virtue of car-parking, traffic & noise generation to existing or future residents of an area and take careful consideration when planning such facilities”;
- Objective CI15 “Ensure Childcare facilities have adequate bicycle, car parking & set down facilities”;
- Objective CI16 “Implement the Childcare Guidelines for PAs’ – 2001, & the Fingal Co. Childcare Strategy”;
- Objective CI17 “Ensure Childcare facilities are accessible for pedestrians and cyclists to minimise car trips”

Ch.4 Physical Infrastructure

Table T03a: Residential Car Parking Standards (Norms)

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Standard</u>
House – Urban / Suburban 3-bedrooms or more	2no. spaces within the curtilage

Table T03b: Commercial Car Parking Standards (Maximum)

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Standard</u>
Childcare – Crèche, Montessori, After-School	1no. space per 2no. staff members (excluding set-down)

Ch.9 Land Use Zoning

Zoning Objective “RS” Residential

Objective: Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity.

Vision: Ensure that any new development in existing areas would have a minimal impact on and enhance existing residential amenity.

Use Classes Permitted in Principle, incl. – ‘Residential’ and ‘Childcare Facilities’

Zoning Objective “OS” Open Space

Objective: Preserve and Provide for Open Space Recreational Amenities.

Vision: Provide recreational and amenity resources for urban and rural populations subject to strict development controls. Only community facilities and other recreational uses will be considered and encouraged by the Planning Authority.

Use Classes Not Permitted, incl. – ‘Residential’ and ‘Childcare Facilities’

5.1.2. **National Policy: ‘Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ – June 2001**

- These Guidelines, provide the relevant national policy reference, for development such as that proposed.
- The Guidelines advocate :
 - a more pro-active role by Planning Authorities in the promotion of increased childcare provision, whilst protecting amenities.
 - new facilities should not create a nuisance for residents locally
- The following criteria require attention, in the assessment of the suitability of childcare facilities irrespective of location:
 - Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed;
 - Availability of outdoor play areas and details of management of same;
 - Safe access and convenient parking for customers and staff;
 - set down / pick up areas
 - Local traffic conditions;
 - Number of such facilities in the area; and
 - Intended hours of operation.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

None

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. Proposed Set Down and Footpath Area

- Acknowledge that in the applicants F.I. revised site layout plan (Drawing No.1616/PL10) –
 - the proposed new footpath has been omitted, and
 - the proposed new pre-school entrance is still located on the site's northern boundary, opening out onto zoned public open space.
- Argue that 88no. people per day crossing this open space area (c.6m-7m wide), would have “detrimental impacts on this green area, as stated in the Planners Report”.
- Further, the applicants have not submitted documentation demonstrating they have a legal title or consent to use this land for such purpose.
- Argue that by its daily use, a de facto path would be created, in contradiction of land-legal compliance.
- Daily use would also result in the deterioration of the quality of this zoned green space, resulting in displacement of parking to the front of the houses along Pecks Lane.

6.1.2. Car Parking Provision

- Old Navan Road is currently utilised as an unofficial ‘Park & Ride’ by commuters. Consequently, substantial constraint and limitation is placed on local parking.
- Consequently, the proposed development will result in exacerbation of current on street parking deficiencies, particularly due to the lack of exclusive off-street parking.
- Highlight the threats posed to pedestrian and traffic safety consequent of the fact that during morning peak time particularly, the only vehicular approach to the proposed childcare facility is from the west along the Old Navan Road.

6.1.3. Increase in Traffic Volume

- No provision for car parking, or a suitable set-down area within the proposed development. This is a requirement.
- Without such provision, the proposed development poses a traffic and pedestrian hazard consequent of increased loading, movements and serious traffic congestion.
- The 2001 Departmental Guidelines require that proposals for Childcare Facilities include safe access and convenient parking for both staff and customers.
- Suitable car parking provision is “undesirably absent”.
- Proposed development fails to comply with Objectives CI14 and CI15 of the County Development Plan 2011-2017.

6.1.4. Childcare Facilities in the Area

- Section 3.2 of the Guidelines requires assessment of the number of facilities in the area.
- Seven childcare facilities exist within 1km of the application site.

6.1.5. Loss of Residential Amenity

A significant loss of residential amenity to all surrounding properties locally, will result consequent of –

- increased traffic volumes
- increased congestion resulting in more frequent, higher levels of noise and increased competition for on-street car parking
- public safety issues consequent of the traffic hazard, with a mix of pedestrians, cyclists and school children
- negative visual externality in the streetscape

6.1.6. Noise

- Increased noise, consequent of increased traffic volumes and movements, will seriously disturb local residents, contrary to planning objectives.
- Noise generated by the children must also negatively impact local residential amenity.
- Accordingly, request the proposed development be refused by the Board.

6.1.7. **Devaluation of Adjacent Property**

- Negative impacts consequent of the proposed development include – parking, traffic, noise and general nuisance.
- These impacts will negatively affect the value of properties locally (ie. c.10% loss of overall market value).

6.1.8. **Contravention of Zoning**

- within the 'RS' Zone, protection of residential amenity is the principal consideration, in assessing applications for new development.
- Resultant increased traffic will seriously injure residential amenity locally.
- As the 'RS' Zoning Objective will be contravened, request that the proposed development be refused.

6.1.9. **Further Intensification of the Site**

- An increased number of people travelling to and using the application will result.
- Concern at future potential for and prospect of the application site establishing as a fully commercialised building, and being rented out as a pre-school.

6.1.10. **An Bord Pleanála Precedent**

- Under **Reg.Ref.No.PL06F.203628** the Board overturned the decision of the Planning Authority, and refused planning permission for a 'crèche / pre-school' in Castleknock (No.1 Beechpark Close, Castleknock, Dublin 15).
- the 2no. Refusal Reasons were :
 - traffic hazard and threat to road user safety, and
 - injury to residential amenity.

6.1.11. **Conclusion**

- proposed development –
 - is unsuitable for the application site,
 - will seriously impact the amenity and value of surrounding properties at Pecks Lane and the Old Navan Road, and
 - is not in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- Request the Planning Authority decision be set aside and that permission is refused for the proposed development.

6.2. Applicant Response – F. and M. Bowe

I summarise the applicants detailed comprehensive response as follows :

6.2.1. Need for Childcare Facilities in the area

- It is Government Policy to increase supply of Childcare Facilities, to cater for existing and future demand.
- Consequent of the provision of a free second preschool year for all children, the number of children eligible for free pre-school places has doubled, whilst capacity within the sector is unchanged.
- The number of Childcare Facilities must therefore increase significantly, in order to meet Government targets for accommodation.
- The creation of new Childcare businesses is necessary, and supported nationally by childcare bodies.
- Having regard to all of the Childcare Facilities locally, referenced by the 3rd party appellants –
 - childcare places are in great demand locally,
 - at present, all childcare facilities have waiting lists, with only waiting list spaces available for September,
 - currently, of the seven facilities referenced, only one facility has one afternoon space only, available,
 - currently, of the seven facilities referenced, the owner / operator of two facilities are retiring shortly, with expected closure of these facilities
- Departmental Circular PL3/2016 advocates that Planning Authorities expedite and facilitate planning applications for childcare facilities, particularly in the absence of substantive reasons for refusal.

6.2.2. Location

- The location of the application site could not be better suited to the development of a pre-school facility.

6.2.3. The nature of the property

- The large corner property is ideally suited for development as a pre-school facility, having regard to –
 - existing house and site configuration enables the extension to accommodate a pre-school at ground floor level,
 - the creation of a large play area for the pre-school, separate from the private domestic garden of the resident family
 - ample space capacity to meet the pre-school space regulations for both interior and exterior space
- Location and orientation of the facility facing north towards and having access from the pedestrian footpath along the sites northern boundary, and allowing for use of the local road by parents as a set-down facility.
- This eliminates need to drive into Pecks Lane.

6.2.4. **Planning Authority Assessment**

- The Planning Authority and the relevant County Departments concluded the proposed development to be acceptable, at this location, subject to Conditions.

6.2.5. **Conditions attached to Permission**

- No objection to the Condition requiring that the use cease when the current occupants (ie. applicant's) vacate the property.
- The Condition requiring that the building return to residential use, if the pre-school facility use is vacated, is reasonable
- However, the Condition determining the permission as temporary (ie. 3years), is not reasonable. Rather, it is unreasonable that the applicants be required to submit an application every 2-3 years.
- These requirements would undermine the smooth operations and stability of the facility, and therefore the confidence of parents in the future of the facility.
- Should the Board be minded to grant permission, request that Condition No.2 be omitted.

6.2.6. **3rd Party Appeal Issues**

Overdevelopment of the application site

- The site is a large corner property enabling

- an extension of ample interior space to comply with floor space standards for pre-schools, and
- a good sized outdoor play area for the pre-school separate from the domestic private garden
- This is not overdevelopment of the site

Serious Traffic Congestion

- Locally, Castleknock Manor passed the application sites northern lateral boundary, is a circulation route, with open space on one side, and the side gables of houses on the other.
- Therefore, the road is a frontage free road, with ample room for parallel parking by parents dropping off children
- Contrary to 3rd party appellant's opinion, argue that no evidence exists of significant car parking at this location.
- Clarify that any demand for on street car parking locally from the nearby GAA Club, will not conflict with that of the proposed pre-school facility, as they operate at different times of day, and days of the week.
- The GAA Club exists a considerable distance away from the pre-school.

The new building will stand out from its neighbours

- the extension is tastefully designed, and blends well with both the existing house' and with neighbours
- Planning Officer had no objection regarding the design and layout of the extension.

Excessive Noise

- the pre-school facility will not cause excessive noise, having regard to –
 - the limited hours of daily operation, restricted to during normal national school periods
 - children will generally be indoors
 - sounds of children outdoor play is not inappropriate
 - the facility will operate during normal national school periods.

Devaluation of property in the area

- Activity associated with land use, within the suburbs, is to be welcomed.

- No injury to the residential amenity of adjoining property, or the area generally will result.
- No devaluation of property locally, will result.

6.2.7. **Development Plan Considerations**

- Having regard to the application site location on the northern edge of the residential area, the large site area itself and the availability of ample set down parking, “minimal impact” on residential amenity locally will result.
- Convenient availability of sessional pre-school locally, will enhance the range of residential amenities available, all in accordance with the ‘RS’ Zoning Objective and the Childcare (Pre-School) Services Regulations.
- The proposed development complies with all Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017 requirements.

6.3. **Planning Authority Response**

6.3.1. In accordance with Objective CI11, the proposed development is located within a residential area, close to the population base.

6.3.2. The proposed development accords with the 2001 Childcare Facility Guidelines, has an area of open space to the rear and is nearby a large area of dedicated open space (Objective CI12).

6.3.3. Having regard to Objective CI14, the County Transportation Engineers concluded no objection to the proposed development, subject to 1no. Condition –

- prohibiting set-down parking within the site curtilage
- restricting parking within the curtilage to staff car parking, and for the existing residents only, and
- requiring that parents be informed of parking restrictions.

6.3.4. A Condition was attached specifying –

- a maximum of 22no. children accommodated at any one time
- the operating hours.

This Condition deemed as reasonable having regard to the location of the site, and the size and scale of the site and proposed pre-school.

- 6.3.5. In compliance with Objective CI17, the proposed childcare facility is located –
- within an established residential estate, close to a population base, and
 - where sufficient footpaths and cycle paths exist locally.
- 6.3.6. Departmental circular PL3/2016 outlines the extension to the “Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme” (ECCE). This will result in a doubling of the number of children availing of the Scheme.
- The Circular emphasised the need to “expedite, where possible, consideration of all planning applications for childcare facilities in order to facilitate the expansion of the required capacity as appropriate”.
- 6.3.7. No objection from the County Transportation Section, the Water Services Department and the EHO
- 6.3.8. Under the circumstances, a ‘temporary permission’ was considered appropriate, to expire 3years from the date of the final grant of permission, unless by that time permission for retention has been granted.
- 6.3.9. Request the Board uphold the decision to grant permission

6.4. **Observations**

6.4.1. **Stephen Nylon**

Increased Traffic Loading

- Increased traffic levels and consequent congestion, will negatively impact the local Pecks Lane environment.
- restricted right turn onto the Pines from Auburn Ave. means traffic can only access the proposed pre-school facility from the west, along the Old Navan Road from the Auburn / N3 roundabout.
- use of the Pecks Lane / Old Navan Road junction as a vehicle turning zone, threatens public safety due to traffic hazard.

Use of Old Navan Road as “Unofficial” Park and Ride

- negative impact on local on street car parking availability
- restricts sightline visibility driving from Pecks Lane onto the Old Navan Road
- the proposed development would exacerbate existing car parking deficiencies

Lack of parking provision with the proposed development

- Given the absence of safe car parking and an adequate set-down location, the proposed development poses a traffic and pedestrian hazard.
- Proposed development itself will result in serious traffic congestion on the Old Navan Road during times of peak traffic flow.

Departmental Childcare Facility Guidelines 2001

- All childcare proposals to include safe access and convenient parking for both staff and customers. The proposed development fails in this regard.

Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017

- Having regard to the negative impacts consequent of car parking provision, increased traffic, set-down facility and noised generation, the proposed development fails to comply with Fingal Objectives CI14 and CI15

Conclusion

- Having regard to –
 - the site location on a heavily utilised road,
 - the lack of safe off-street car parking provision,
 - an adequate set-down area, and
 - the overall intensification of use on this residential site,
 conclude support for the Lynn 3rd Party Appeal.
- Having regard to –
 - traffic hazard consequent increased traffic loading, vehicular movements and deficient car parking / set-down, and
 - negative impact on residential amenity due to increased traffic safety threat, noise and the pre-school land use activity on site itself,
 the proposed development will be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- Permission under these circumstances should be refused.

6.4.2. **John & Vera Fitzsimons**

Correct Road Name

- The Old Navan Road has been incorrectly named as Castleknock Manor.

- As both the planning application and the County Transportation Planning Section documents have incorrectly identified information in legal documents, planning permission should be overturned.

Parking and Safety

- Parking on the Castleknock Manor access road would be illegal.
- If necessary for Council to install double yellow lines along the existing road, how can it be safe to enable a drop point for young preschool children on a corner busier than Pecks Lane junction.

Bus Drop-Off Area

- The Old Navan Road passed the site and Pecks Lane junction is used by pedestrians and vehicles to access the Bus Stops located on the Navan Road (R147). A pedestrian crossing off the Old Navan Road enables safe pedestrian crossing of the dual carriageway to access the Bus Stops.
- Object to use of the term “drop off point” with respect to the proposed development. Rather, vehicles will be stationary for considerable time at the side of the road in order to safely ensure children get into the facility. There may be a line of up to 22no. vehicles.
- Object to threat of loss of the green space, consequent of drop off / pick up activity.
- Object to access via Pecks Lane, as any back up will result in residents being blocked from entering / leaving their homes.
- If cars were parked up on both sides of the Old Navan Road, the flow of traffic would be blocked, significantly increasing the safety of children particularly.

Greenbelt

- The “green belt” would deteriorate, becoming a mud path, because of the potential maximum number of pedestrian movements by parents and children at the beginning and end of each session, between the car drop off point and the entrance into the facility.
- this would cause the area to become a mud path.

Cycle Path

- The designated cycle lane is routed passed the proposed drop off point.
- This will result in further danger to young children and a hazard to cyclists consequent of opening car doors.
- No other route exists for cyclists.

Staff Parking

- For whatever reason, if extra staff required, where are the extra parking spaces.
- How are children with special needs being accommodated, particularly regarding their need for carers.

Note to Parents

- Challenge how the note to parents will be enforced.
- Sociologically, it takes just one parent to do their own thing, before the rest follow.
- Adults require information to make an informed choice. The proposed note is meaningless.

Operating Hours

- Applicants have not addressed the proposed operating hours.
- Object to up to 44 cars arriving and departing the service.

Childcare facilities in the Area

- The local area is well served with existing childcare facilities.
- Customers of the new service will be coming into the area.

New Build

- New build multi-unit residential developments on the go locally, can reasonably self-contain purpose built childcare / pre-school facilities.

Devaluation of Neighbouring Property

- The proposed commercial development will devalue nearby properties, particularly No.85 Pecks Lane, which adjoins the proposed development.

Ref: Record of Executive Business and Chief Executives Order PB/0276/16

- Highlight the confusion in terminology defining the proposed development.
- Is the development to be a pre-school or a crèche ?
- Until all legally submitted documentation are accurate, specific and correct, planning permission must be overturned.

6.4.3. **Eamon & Leanne Bane**

Road / Parking

- The applicants do not address how up to 166 traffic movements will impact local residents.
- 3 points turns by parents in the junction will be dangerous and cause nuisance to all road users, within an already busy local road network.
- Childcare / Pre-school facilities require appropriate parking and set down areas, to mitigate negative impact on local residents (eg. blocking driveways).
- the public green area adjacent the proposed drop-off / collection point will quickly deteriorate and become hazardous. No mitigation of this negative impact is proposed.
With deterioration, parents will resort to parking outside residents houses causing disruption and threat to safety.
- Loading / unloading children at this location is dangerous, given the corner nature of the site.

Existing Facilities

- adequate supply childcare facilities exist locally, with more planned.
- the emerging demand for childcare from new large residential developments in the area can be catered for in suitable planned developments, rather than commercialising existing residential areas and negatively impacting local residential amenity.

3-Year Planning

- the 3-year 'temporary permission' does not give comfort to local residents because –
 - childcare / pre-school developments are hard to monitor in terms of numbers and internal creep, and
 - the common opinion that once a site has planning, it is the first stage of further development.

Residential Amenity

- A significant impact on residential amenity in the area will result, with a greater impact on adjoining residents.
- The maximum limit of 22no. children (44no. per day) is already a very significant number, which should be reduced.
- Concern regarding the scope for growth of the facility.
- Major noise impacts will result on adjoining residents.

6.5. Further Responses

6.5.1. Planning Authority

None

6.5.2. Applicants'

None

6.5.3. Fingal County Childcare Committee

- Departmental Circular PL3/2016 outlined the expansion of the 'Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme' (ECCE).
- The expanded Scheme has resulted in a doubling of the number of children eligible to participate in the Scheme.
- Clarify that 3,526 children eligible for the Scheme within D15 alone, between September 2016 – April 2017.
- Demand within D15 has "increased dramatically".
- CSO statistics regarding births since 2013 "indicates the pressure being put on existing pre-school providers in Fingal, the need for additional pre-school care in Fingal, and in the case increased provision in the Dublin 15 area".
- Census 2011 showed Fingal to be
 - the youngest County in Ireland,
 - with a very high number of people in their 30's , and
 - a corresponding high number of children associated with this cohort.
- In their consideration of planning applications, request that Planning Authorities – "make best use of their position and remit to reinforce the principles of sustainable development, which includes the provision of pre-school services to meet local demand.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. I have examined the file and available planning history, considered the prevailing local and national policies, physically inspected the site and assessed the proposal and all of the submissions. The following assessment covers the points made in the appeal submissions, and also encapsulates my de novo consideration of the application. The relevant planning issues relate to :

- Principle, Need for and Location of the proposed pre-school facility
- Visual Amenity Impact
- Residential Amenity Impact
- Road Access and Traffic Safety
- Temporary Planning Permission
- Appropriate Assessment

7.2. Principle, Need for and Location of the proposed pre-school facility

- 7.2.1. In my view, the planning 'principle' of a pre-school facility development at No.89 Pecks Lane, Castleknock, has been established. Clearly zoned "RS", with the objective to provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity, the applicable zoning matrix designates pre-school land use as being permitted in principle, within the zone.
- 7.2.2. The challenge to the applicants therefore, having regard to both national policy, and the relevant requirements of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017, is to ensure their proposed new pre-school facility development, has no disproportionate adverse impact on the scale & character of existing residential development at Pecks Lane itself, and no unacceptable impact on the amenities enjoyed by the surrounding neighbours.
- 7.2.3. Within the residentially zoned areas of Castleknock, I note there are a number of existing childcare facilities, which are ancillary to the use of the main dwellinghouse as a residence. The 3rd party appellants acknowledge this in their reference to several childcare facilities existing within 1km of the application site.
- 7.2.4. At a national policy context, I note that Departmental Circular PL3/2016 clearly outlined the extension to the 'Early Childhood Care and Education' (ECCE) Scheme. The anticipated consequence of such extension, is that this will result in a doubling

of the number of children availing of the ECCE Scheme. This increase in demand must itself be reasonably expected to manifest itself locally within Castleknock. This significant demand increase for child places, must accordingly be expected to exceed the existing supply of childcare facility services referenced by the 3rd party appellants, as existing locally. In this regard I note the applicant's arguments, consequent of their own survey locally, that at present, all childcare facilities locally have waiting lists, with only waiting list spaces available for the September 2017 intake. Further, of the seven facilities referenced by the 3rd party appellants, only one facility has one afternoon space only, available. Also, the existing oversubscribed supply of childcare facility spaces, must be expected to be further undermined by the anticipated closure of two of the existing facilities.

7.2.5. The application site is a large corner property, with capacity for development. In my view, the existing house and site configuration enables the proposed extension to accommodate a pre-school at ground floor level. Having regard to all of the corner site location on the northern edge of the established residential area, the site size, the scale of development proposed, accommodating a maximum of 22no. children per session, and the location of the proposed extension accommodating the proposed pre-school on the northern side of the application site, away from the adjoining immediate neighbours to the south, I share the view of the proposed development by the Planning Authority, as acceptable.

7.2.6. Having regard to the discussions below, I believe that the proposed development is sufficiently compliant with the relevant provisions of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017 and the 'Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities', June 2001 and Departmental Circular PL3/2016, and subject to Conditions, would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the Pecks Lane residential area.

7.3. **Visual Amenity Impact**

7.3.1. I have taken note of the established, contextual scale and pattern of residential development along Pecks Lane generally, and proximate to the application site at No. 89, at the corner with the Old Navan Road specifically. What is certain in my view, and having regard to my own observations made at the time of site visit, is that disruption to the local streetscape and associated visual amenity has already

occurred consequent of the domestic residential extension previously permitted and consequently constructed under **Reg.Ref.No.F97B/0214**. Therefore, contrary to the arguments made by the 3rd party appellants against the proposed development, the existing front, east facing elevation itself stands out from neighbouring properties.

7.3.2. Having specific regard to the threat of negative visual externality posed from the proposed development, I have had detailed regard to the existing and proposed site plans, floor plans, sections and elevations shown on Drawings No. 1616/PL01-1616/PL03. In my view, when viewed particularly from the front from Pecks Lane, looking at the east facing elevation, the applicants have reasonably, successfully ensured that the height, size, width and scale of the proposed extension is comparable with that existing. In my view, no disproportionate increase in this regard is apparent. I share the applicants view in this regard, that the existing house and convenience of the corner site configuration enables the extension to accommodate the pre-school facility at ground floor level, and thereby minimising threat of negative visual impact. I have also had regard to the existing landscaping and front boundary planting which already screens much of the front, east facing elevation from view, from Pecks Lane.

7.3.3. Similarly, when viewed from the north along the Old Navan Road, I believe that no disproportionate negative impact will result, on the local streetscape and associated visual amenity. Satisfactory mitigation in my view is enabled by :

- the limitation of the proposed side extension to a single storey only, comparable with that existing,
- the single storey extension itself being framed by the height and bulk of the existing 2-storey main dwellinghouse,
- the retention of the existing solid block lateral boundary wall, supplemented with mature hedging along the eastern section, as screening, and
- that existing landscaping and planting exists at No.89 which must reasonably be expected to be supplemented with new landscaping and planting.

7.3.4. Clearly, a new opening is proposed within the existing site northern boundary wall, enabling pedestrian access into the proposed pre-school. However, I do not believe that any serious negative visual externality will result consequent of the insertion into the wall of this entrance.

- 7.3.5. I note that no obvious opinion by the Planning Authority, was apparent regarding design, colour, materials and finishing of the proposed extension. I am inclined to the view that as proposed, the new build has the potential stand out as distinct from the existing main house. I am rather of the view that where practical, the external finishes of the proposed pre-school, including roof tiles / slates, should be the same as those of the existing dwelling in respect of colour and texture. This would further contribute to the minimisation of potential for negative visual impact. This could reasonably be achieved by way of supplementary Condition, should the Board be mindful to a grant of planning permission.
- 7.3.6. Accordingly, I conclude that subject to compliance with Conditions, no disproportionate negative visual amenity impact will result.

7.4. Residential Amenity Impact

- 7.4.1. Having regard to all of the information available, and prioritising the applicants site layout plan, architectural drawings and associated documentation submitted, I am of the view that the proposed extension and change of use to pre-school located at No.89 Pecks Lane, will have no serious, or disproportionate negative impact on the prevailing residential amenity in the area. In this regard, I have given consideration to the scale of development proposed, accommodating a maximum of 22no. children per session, and to potential threats to residential amenity consequent of : visual obtrusion, loss of natural light or overshadowing, overlooking or freedom from observation, noise, onsite domestic private amenity / leisure space existing separately from the dedicated pre-school play area, in situ views and outlooks, on-site car parking serving both the existing main dwelling and the proposed pre-school, and access and traffic safety consequent of drop-of and pick-up movements on the Old Navan Road.
- 7.4.2. The minimisation and mitigation of threat of negative residential amenity impact, prioritised both at the national policy level and within the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017, is enabled by the application site being a large corner property, located on the northern edge of an established residential community, and with capacity for development. In addition, the existing house and site configuration enables the proposed extension to accommodate a pre-school at ground floor level

and on the northern side of the existing house, away from established adjoining residential properties to the south, and with ample space capacity to meet the pre-school space regulations for both interior and exterior space, as well as on-site staff car parking, whilst retaining capacity for existing domestic residential need.

7.4.3. Further, the location and orientation of the pre-school facility facing north towards and having access from the pedestrian footpath along the site's northern lateral boundary, practically enables the use of the Old Navan Road by the parents as a set-down and pick-up facility. This eliminates the need for parents to drive into Pecks Lane, the traffic safety consequences of which are a priority concern of the 3rd party appellants, the Observers and the original objectors.

7.4.4. Having regard to the limited hours of daily operation of the proposed pre-school, restricted to during normal national school periods through the year; to the fact that children will generally be indoors; and that in itself the sounds of children outdoor play, when possible, is not inappropriate, I am of the view that the proposed preschool facility will not cause excessive noise, so as to be deemed as a reason for refusal.

I do acknowledge the potential for negative impact of construction activity on contextual residential amenity locally at Pecks Lane / Old Navan Road, whilst site works and construction activity are on the go. However, I consider that these impacts are only temporary, are to facilitate the completion of the proposed development, and certainly cannot be regarded as unique to this development. Further, I consider that given these impacts are predictable and to be expected, they can be properly and appropriately minimised and mitigated by the attachment of appropriate supplementary conditions to a grant of permission, should the Board be mindful to grant permission, and deem such mitigation of negative impact necessary.

7.4.5. Accordingly, I am satisfied therefore that the proposed development will not seriously injure the residential amenity of neighbouring residents, or the area generally.

7.5. Road Access and Traffic Safety

- 7.5.1. I note this as the principal concern and objection by the 3rd party appellants and Observers, against the proposed development.
- 7.5.2. As a large corner property, the existing house and site configuration enables the location and orientation of the pre-school facility facing north towards, and having access from the pedestrian footpath along the site's northern lateral boundary. This practically enables the use of the Old Navan Road by the parents, as a set-down and pick-up facility, by way of short term parallel car parking on the street. Under the circumstances, I believe these arrangements are more suitable than the argument made by the 3rd party appellant for the provision of a suitable set-down area within the proposed development. Consequently, there would be no need for reverse vehicular movements into oncoming traffic, thereby interrupting traffic flow, in the vicinity of the application site.
- 7.5.3. I note that the off-street car parking standards set out at Table T03a require that 2no. Spaces be provided within the curtilage of the application site. Two spaces already exist on site, and will serve the proposed development. This is satisfactorily compliant with the Development Plan Standards, as well as Objectives CI14 and CI15.
- 7.5.4. Further, this enables the distinction and separation of the on-site car parking dedicated to the pre-school staff and owner operator, a resident in the main dwellinghouse, from dedicated on-street space on the Old Navan Road for the reasonable set-down and pick-up traffic movements by parents. In my view, this reasonably mitigates the threat of conflicting traffic movements between the two sets of users, as well as neutralising any need for parents to use Pecks Lane at all. I note that Condition No.8(i) of the decision to grant planning permission, explicitly prohibits set-down parking within the site curtilage. Condition No.8(i) further restricted use of on-site parking to pre-school staff and the existing domestic residential use only.
- 7.5.5. I note the 3rd party appellants arguments that having regard to the convenience of the pedestrian crossing across the Navan Road dual-carriageway to access public transport services, the Old Navan Road is currently utilised as a *de-facto* 'park and ride' by commuters. They argue that consequently, substantial constraint and limitation is placed on existing local on-street car parking availability, which will be seriously exacerbated consequent of the proposed development. Having regard to

the information available, and to my own observations at the time of site visits, I agree that some on-street car parking is apparent along the Old Navan Road, as argued by the 3rd party appellants. However, this on-street car parking was significantly further east along the Old Navan Road, from its junction with Pecks Lane and certainly separated from the proposed set-down and pick-up area adjacent the sites northern boundary wall.

- 7.5.6. As clarified by the applicants, I deem it a relevant consideration that the Old Navan Road passed the application site, has a verge screening the Navan Road dual carriageway along its northern frontage, and residual green space and the side gables of houses and lateral side boundaries with no direct vehicular access along the southern frontage. Accordingly, ample capacity exists for parallel car parking by parents, when dropping off and picking up children from pre-school.
- 7.5.7. Whilst referencing the serious concerns and objections regarding threat to local traffic safety, consequent of the proposed development, made by the 3rd party appellants and Observers, I am satisfied that the proposed development is compliant with all relevant provisions of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017. Further, I believe it a relevant consideration that the Fingal County Transportation Planning Section, together with other Departments, concluded the proposed development to be acceptable, at this location, subject to Conditions, all of which in my view, address issues argued in the appeal and other 3rd party submissions.
- 7.5.8. Accordingly, I believe that no serious, or disproportionate threat to traffic safety will result from the proposed development.

7.6. Temporary Planning Permission

- 7.6.1. In their assessment of the planning merits of the proposed development, the Planning Authority clearly expressed the consideration “that a temporary permission, in this instance, would be appropriate”, with appropriate conditions to be attached. No clear planning reason is apparent therefore, having regard to both of the Planning Officers planning reports. The ‘reason’ attached to Condition No.2 does however, indicate that the 3-year temporary planning permission, to expire unless retention permission is granted before the expiration of 3-years, was to allow the Planning Authority to “re-assess the situation in light of the circumstances at this time”.

7.6.2. In their response submission to the 3rd party appeal, the applicants express no objection to what I understand are Conditions No. 5(i) – (iii). However, they express objection to Condition No.2 determining the planning permission as temporary. Should the Board be minded to grant permission, the applicants request that Condition No.2 be omitted. However, the applicants did not formally lodge a 1st party appeal.

7.6.3. The “Development Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities”, June 2007, issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Paragraph 7.5) deals with “Temporary Permissions” (see copy of relevant extract attached).

7.6.4. I do not believe the three main factors set out initially at paragraph 7.5, as to whether Condition No.2 is appropriate, are material in the current case. Firstly, as discussed above, I am of the view that the proposed development, “of a permanent nature”, satisfactorily complies with the relevant provisions of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017. Secondly, any temporary permission granted, would not involve by consequence, the removal or demolition of a structure that is clearly intended to be permanent. Rather, Condition No.5(iii) as attached by the Planning Authority, requires that when no longer in use as a pre-school, that space previously used for such purpose “shall revert to use as part of the existing dwelling unit”. Thirdly, as concluded above, I believe no disproportionate negative impact will result on contextual residential amenity locally, consequent of the proposed development. Having regard to these three main factors, as set out initially at paragraph 7.5, I am inclined to the view that a temporary permission would not be appropriate.

7.6.5. However, I do note that paragraph 7.5 goes on to discuss that

“In the case of a use which may possibly be a “bad neighbour” to uses already existing in the immediate vicinity, it may sometimes be appropriate to grant a temporary permission in order to enable the impact of the development to be assessed, provided that such a permission would be reasonable having regard to the expenditure necessary to carry out the development”.

Whilst I affirm my conclusion that, on the information available, no disproportionate negative impact will result on contextual residential amenity locally, consequent of the proposed development, I am inclined to the view that there is merit in the current

instance to adopt a precautionary approach as reasonable, whereby the rear operational performance and impact of the proposed pre-school locally, may be assessed over a period of years, as opposed to solely from application motivational documentation and drawings.

- 7.6.6. I do note that the footnote to paragraph 7.5 directly references the 'Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities', June 2001 recommendation, "*that if a temporary permission is granted, the permission should be for a period of not less than 5-years*". I accept the 5-year temporary permission time period as preferential and reasonable, over the 3-year temporary permission set out by the Planning Authority at Condition No.2. In my view Condition No.2 should be amended to reflect the 5-year temporary permission recommendation of the Department in the June 2001 Childcare Facilities Guidelines.
- 7.6.7. Having regard to the applicant's objection to Condition No.2, I believe that no disproportionate expenditure would result from the applicants carrying out their development, noting also that Condition No.5(iii) requires that when no longer in use as a pre-school, that space shall revert to use as part of the existing dwelling unit. Further, rather than undermining the smooth operations and stability of the facility, and consequently the confidence of parents in the future of the facility, the amended 5-year temporary permission enables the applicants as the operators of the pre-school with a sustained period of time within which to both demonstrate successful operations of the proposed pre-school, whilst further addressing and smoothing over all issues to do with the smooth operations of a local community facility.

7.7. **Appropriate Assessment**

Having regard to the nature and modest scale of the proposed development, to the location of the site within a fully serviced urban environment, and to the separation distance and absence of a clear direct pathway to any European site, 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

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. I recommend that planning permission be Granted for the Reasons and Considerations set out below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the Zoning Objective “RS” for the area and the pattern of residential development in the area, it is considered that, subject to compliance with Conditions set out in the Second Schedule, the proposed development would be in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017 and the ‘Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, June 2001 and Departmental Circular PL3/2016; would not seriously injure the amenities of the Pecks Lane neighbourhood, or of the property in the vicinity; would not be prejudicial to public health; and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

10.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars submitted on the 24th day of August 2016, 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. This is a temporary permission only, and shall expire 5-years from the date of the final grant of permission, unless by that time permission for its retention has been granted by the Planning Authority, or by An Bord Pleanala on appeal.

Reason : To permit the Planning Authority re-assess the situation in light of the circumstances at this time.

3. The external finishes of the proposed pre-school, including roof tiles / slates, shall be the same as those of the existing dwelling in respect of colour and texture. Samples of the proposed materials shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of visual and residential amenity.

4. The proposed childcare facility shall not operate outside the period of 09h00 to 12h00 and 12h30 to 15h30 hours Monday to Friday inclusive, and shall not operate on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.

5. The number of children to be accommodated within the premises shall not exceed twenty-two (22no.) at any time on any day. Twenty-two (22no.) in any session.

Reason: To limit the development in the interest of residential amenity.

6. (i) Only the area indicated as the pre-school within Drawing No.1616/PL02 received on the 04th day of May 2016 shall be used as a pre-school and shall not be used for any other commercial use / purpose.

(ii) The use as a pre-school shall be operated by a resident of the main dwelling.

(iii) The part of the house used as a pre-school shall not be separated from the main house. In particular, it shall not be sold or let independently of the main house and, when no longer required for use as a pre-school, use of that part shall revert to use as part of the main house.

Reason : To prevent unauthorised development, and in the interest of residential amenity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7. A register of attendance of the pre-school shall be maintained by the provider, which shall be made available for inspection, at the request of the Planning Authority.

Reason : In the interests of orderly development and the protection of residential amenity.

8. No advertising signs or structures shall be erected, except those which are compliant with the exempted development provisions of the Planning and development Regulations 2001, or any statutory provision amending or replacing them, without the prior approval of the Planning Authority.

Reason : In the interests of orderly development and of visual amenity.

9. (i) No set-down parking shall be facilitated within the curtilage of the site. All parking within the curtilage shall be restricted to staff car parking and parking for the existing residential use, and parents are to be informed of this.
- (ii) All works are to be carried out at the applicants' expense, and to the requirements of the Planning Authority.

Reason : In the interests of traffic safety and orderly development.

10. The secure outdoor play area shown on Drawing No.1616/PL10, shall be provided for the use of children attending the pre-school facility, details of which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity and safety.

11. 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 interests of public health and to ensure a proper standard of development.

12. 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,
- provision of adequate off carriageway parking facilities for all traffic associated with the proposed development.
- measures to prevent and mitigate the spillage or deposit of debris, soil or other material on the adjoining public road network, and
- off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste.

The developer shall be obliged to comply with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice.

Reason : In the interests of public health and safety and residential amenity.

13. The applicants shall be responsible for the full cost of repair in respect of any damage caused to any adjoining public roadway arising from the construction work, and shall make good any such damage, to the satisfaction of Fingal County Council.

Reason : In the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

14. All waste generated during construction, including surplus excavation material to be taken off-site, shall be only recovered or disposed of at an authorised site which has a current Waste Licence or Waste Permit in accordance with the Waste Management Acts, 1996 to 2008. This shall not apply to the reuse of excavated material within the applicants site boundary.

Reason : In the interest of sustainable waste management and orderly development.

L.W. Howard
Planning Inspector

13th February 2017