



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL 06D.248072

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| Development | Construction of a single-storey extension to the front of school. |
| Location | Saint Patrick's Boys National School, Hollypark, County Dublin. |
| Planning Authority | Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council |
| Planning Authority Reg. Ref. | D16A/0316 |
| Applicant(s) | Board of Management St. Patrick's Boys National School |
| Type of Application | Permission |
| Planning Authority Decision | Grant |
| Type of Appeal | Third Party |
| Appellant(s) | Hugh & Emer O'Donnell Hollypark and Foxrock Avenue Residents' Association |
| Observers | Bridget & Tony Suttle Tony & Cathy Hastings Kieran Egar Mary & Christopher Kelly Sally Eibhlín Nic Eoin |

Date of Site Inspection

24th May, 2017

Inspector

Kevin Moore

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site of the proposed development comprises an area of 2.8 hectares that incorporates St. Patrick's Boys National School, St. Patrick's Girls National School, and Lycee Francais d'Irlande (a French school). The boys school is located at the north/north-east end of the complex with frontage and access onto New Grange Road. The existing school is a single-storey, flat-roofed structure. There is off-street parking to the north of the school. The location for the proposed extension is at the north-east end of the school, a surfaced area projecting into a green area where a number of trees exist at present. The Girls School and French School are located within the southern half of the site and are accessed from Foxrock Avenue. The play area for the schools is behind and between the school building complexes. The school site is bounded by residential properties.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development would consist of a single-storey extension to the front of St. Patrick Boys' National School and would comprise an additional classroom and two SET (Resource) rooms with a new link to the existing building. The development would have a stated floor area of 150 square metres. The original proposed finishes of the extension were to match those of the existing structure. The finishes were revised in response to the planning authority's request for further information. It is intended that the maximum number of trees would be retained and additional landscaping would be completed.
- 2.2. In a covering letter with the application, it was submitted that the classroom would not result in an increase in pupil numbers or an intensification of use and that it would allow the original Computer Room to revert from classroom use to computer room use once again.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

The planning authority decided to grant permission for the development subject to 8 no. conditions on 27th January 2017.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

Planning Reports

The Planner noted third party submissions made, the site's recent planning history, the departmental reports received, and development plan provisions relating to the proposal. Arising from the departmental reports received, further information was considered necessary. It was considered that the proposed building line would not seriously injure the visual amenities of the area. Changes to the elevation addressing New Grange Road were considered necessary. It was considered the proposal would not seriously injure residential amenities visually or by way of overlooking or overshadowing. A request for further information was recommended.

Other Technical Reports

The Parks Superintendent considered the proposal acceptable in principle but raised concerns in relation to encroachment on existing trees. Conditions were recommended in the event of a grant of permission.

The Drainage Engineer had no objection subject to conditions.

The Transportation Planning Engineer noted continuing traffic issues associated with the schools at this location. Further information was requested in relation to student and staff numbers, details of rooms within the school, evidence of implementation of traffic management plan measures, details of off-street parking, and existing available cycle facilities.

The planning authority sought further information on 28th June 2016 and a response to this request was received by the planning authority on 23rd December 2016. This

included details on staff and student numbers, room use within the school, comments on the school's traffic control and management plan, details on off-street parking and bicycle use, a tree report, and changes to wall finishes for the north-east facing elevation of the extension.

Following this submission, the reports to the planning authority were as follows:

The Transportation Planning Engineer requested clarification and revised drawings and details to comply with the Section's original recommendation.

The Parks Superintendent had no objection subject to conditions.

The Planner noted the departmental reports received and the applicant's response. It was recommended that a detailed drawing indicating existing off-street parking be submitted by way of a compliance condition to meet Transportation Planning requirements, with a further compliance condition being proposed to address deficiencies in the response to the issue relating to cycle facilities. The response to the further information request was considered satisfactory and a grant of permission, subject to conditions, was recommended.

3.3. Third Party Observations

Third party submissions were made to the planning authority by Tony and Cathy Hastings, Dermot Ryder, Hugh and Clare Finlay, Bridget and Tony Suttle and others, Martin and Tríona McCarthy, Liam Mac Con Iomaire, Lorcan and Marie O'Raghallaigh, Patrick Kavanagh, Paul and Pauline Roche, Hugh and Emer O'Donnell, Kieran Egar, Hollypark and Foxrock Avenue Residents' Association, Peter R. Scales, Mary O'Dwyer, Christopher Martin, Mary and Christopher Kelly, Arthur and Una Hudson, Mary Toomey, Peter Bennett, Donal and Rita O'Driscoll, George Mackay, Alastair and Mary Brown, Mary and Neil Twomey, Hugh Larkin, Isobel Butler, Sally Eibhlín Nic Eoin, Jim and Mary O'Donnell, Damien and Patricia McCoy, and Lucy Woods and others. The third party appeals address the principal planning issues raised.

4.0 Planning History

ABP Ref. PL 06D.242306

Permission was granted by the Board in 2013 for the construction of two single-storey extensions to the side providing two classrooms and a resource room at the school. Condition 6 of that permission required the submission to the planning authority of a Traffic Control and Management Plan.

I note from the Planner's report a wide range of other planning applications relating to the school complex.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022

Zoning

The site is zoned 'A' with the objective "To protect and/or improve residential amenity."

6.0 The Appeals

6.1. Appeal by Hugh and Emer O'Donnell

The appellants reside at 14 New Grange Road. The grounds of the third party appeal may be summarised as follows:

- There is a need for an overall strategic review of the 3 school campus.
- With regard to the planning authority's conditions in their decision:
 - Condition 3a): The informal one-way system on the local road network breaks down daily, causing severe confusion and traffic gridlock.
 - Condition 4 - There must be a collective requirement for the 3 schools to adhere to the condition given their location.

- Condition 7 – The off-street parking is already full. There is no additional parking available for site workers unless some staff are refused off-street parking during the construction period.
- The Council has previously set limits on school student sizes and the limits have not been adhered to. This has not been acted on and it is surprising it has not requested a similar limit in granting permission in this application.
- The school has been granted permission for a single-storey extension. The proposed height of the gable wall facing New Grange Road is effectively a two-storey extension.

6.2 Appeal by Hollypark and Foxrock Avenue Residents' Association

The grounds of the third party appeal may be synthesised as follows:

- Residents are affected by school traffic issues, which exacerbate problems with access for service vehicles and which leave residents at great risk.
- The appellants were not informed about the request and supply of additional information.
- With regard to conditions, the appellants request to see the further information, raise concern about foundations, and assume they will be given the opportunity to see drawings and photographs.
- It is absurd to state that the Travel Plan has been implemented. A one-way system is absent and traffic is seriously disruptive. An all-inclusive meeting should be held to resolve the problem.
- The Council's Condition 5 reference to dwellings has no meaning.
- Condition 6 - Deliveries should be suspended at all times. If required, they should be offloaded on school grounds only.
- Condition 7 - If site worker vehicles are accommodated, they will take the place of school staff cars, who will then park on the road and obstruct residents.

6.3 Planning Authority Response

The planning authority considered the grounds of appeal do not raise any matter that would justify a change of attitude to the proposed development.

6.4 Applicant's Response to Appeals

The response to the appeals may be summarised as follows:

- The requirement for additional accommodation is driven by the current population, for which there is an inadequate number of appropriately sized rooms. The additional classrooms will not result in an increase in pupil numbers or in any intensification of use.
- Whilst the appellants have legitimate traffic concerns, the application will not impact at all on the traffic situation.
- Direct representation to the Council on the traffic issue would be more constructive.
- Further to the Board's previous decision under PL 06D.242306, a Traffic Control and Management Plan and a Mobility Management Plan were completed and submitted to the Council. The further information in the current application confirmed that measures set out in the Plans were implemented.

7.0 Observations

7.1 Observation by Bridget and Tony Suttle

The observers raise concerns about adverse traffic impacts, lack of access for emergency vehicles, and loss of visual amenity by removal of trees.

7.2 Observation by Tony and Cathy Hastings

The observers raise concerns about the overdevelopment of the school complex, the traffic impacts resulting for the community and school children and the siting of the extension to the front of the existing block.

7.3 Observation by Kieran Egar

The observer raises concerns about the traffic and congestion implications of the further enlargement of the school.

7.4 Observation by Mary and Christopher Kelly

The observers raise concerns about traffic impacts and breaches of the Road Traffic Act, the lack of implementation of the Traffic Control and Management Plan conditioned by the Board in the previous decision, the removal of trees to accommodate the development, and breaking of the building line.

7.5 Observation by Sally Eibhlín Nic Eoin

The observer raises concerns about the need for a long term plan for the 3 schools, lack of access for emergency vehicles, the need for the schools to be getting smaller, lack of enforcement of conditions with previous applications, and the impact of an above average number of pupils in the schools.

8.0 Assessment

8.1 The application before the Board is one to improve classroom conditions for school children, i.e. to address the inadequate number of appropriately sized classrooms in the St. Patrick's Boys National School. It is not a proposal to greatly add to the number of pupils attending the school and, as a result, cause a substantially increased level of traffic congestion on the public road network in the vicinity of the school.

8.2 The principal concerns of the appellants and observers in this instance relate to the traffic impacts that result from the complex of three schools that exist on the overall site and the potential impact of the proposed extension to exacerbate these traffic concerns. In considering this issue, it must first be pointed out that the traffic issues arising from the functioning of the existing three schools and addressing the concerns of the residents in the wider community are matters for the relevant bodies

and authorities with responsibility, including the Boards of Management of the schools, the local authority, An Garda Síochána, and residents' associations. This is the issue at the heart of residents' concerns and it is not an issue that can, or will, be resolved by the Board dealing with an appeal relating to a one classroom extension to one of the schools. Secondly, the nature and extent of the development proposed indicates that the development does not seek to expand pupil numbers at the school but rather address a deficiency in the present layout and accommodation facilities for pupils. It does not seek to exacerbate any existing traffic difficulties.

- 8.3 With regard to the Board's role in traffic management at the school, the Board are evidently aware of the attachment of conditions in the previous planning decision relating to the school under Appeal Ref. 06D.242306, and in particular Condition No. 6. This condition required the preparation of a Traffic Control and Management Plan to be submitted to the planning authority. It is understood from the details contained in the application that a 'School Travel Plan & Mobility Management Plan' has been submitted to the planning authority and is being implemented, with details provided in the further information response. It is the role of the local authority to ensure that requirements of the Plan are met and that the Plan is adequate to address traffic concerns in the interest of the wider community. It is not the role of the Board to enforce provisions set out in such a Plan.
- 8.4 Suggestions have been made in the submissions to the Board that there is a need for a strategy, or long-term plan, for the three schools on the overall site. This is a matter for the relevant Management Boards and educational authorities and is beyond the scope of An Bord Pleanála's remit in determining an appeal relating to a small extension to one of the schools.
- 8.5 On the issue of traffic impact arising from the proposal, it is my submission that understanding the nature and extent of the proposed development would imply that such development would not result in any significant adverse traffic impact or adverse public safety implications. Addressing residents' concerns about the functioning of the three schools on this complex within the wider community is a matter of engagement among relevant parties, bodies and agencies, working to a

plan, and enforcement, each of which are beyond the remit of the Board in dealing with this appeal.

8.6 With regard to other miscellaneous issues raised, the development of the proposed extension would result in the removal of a small number of trees. The applicant has provided substantial information in the further information response to the planning authority on how the impact on trees will be minimised. I note the planning authority's Parks Superintendent is satisfied with the proposal. It is accepted that the extension necessitates the removal of a few trees as proposed. Their removal will not adversely impact on the amenities of the area. In relation to the breaking of the building line and incongruity with the established form of development, I consider the proposed development is designed to be compatible in form, scale and finishes to complement the established development, that the proposed siting would not have any adverse impacts on adjoining residential property, and that it would not be out of character with the school such as to result in any obtrusive visual impact on the wider community.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 I recommend that permission is granted in accordance with the reasons and considerations, and subject to the conditions, that follow.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the limited nature and extent of the proposed development, to pattern of development in the area and the siting of the proposed development within an established school complex, it is considered that the proposed development would not adversely impact on the visual or residential amenities of the area, would not endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard and would otherwise be in accordance with the provisions of the current Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

11.0 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 drawings and details submitted to the planning authority on the 23rd December, 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. Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes to the proposed extension shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity

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

Reason: In the interest of public health.

Kevin Moore
Senior Planning Inspector

24th May 2017