



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL.06S.248485

Development

Extension to Junior and Senior National Schools, refurbishment works to both buildings and associated landscaping and site works.

Location

St. Thomas' JNS and Scoil Aine Naofa SNS, Esker, Lucan, Co. Dublin.

Planning Authority

South Dublin County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

SD16A/0299

Applicant(s)

Boards of Management

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Grant subject to conditions

Type of Appeal

Third Party vs. Grant

Appellant(s)

Cannonbrook Residents Committee

Observer(s)

Cllr. Vicki Casserly & Cllr. William Lavelle

Date of Site Inspection

30th August 2017

Inspector

Susan McHugh

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located 1km south of the village of Lucan in the western suburbs of Dublin and south of Junction 4 on the N4. It is approx. 4.5km west of the M50/N4 junction and the Liffey Valley Shopping Centre.
- 1.2. Lucan Shopping Centre and a significant amount of surface car parking is located to the west and southwest and is accessed via a roundabout on the R120. Lucan Community College is located opposite the Shopping Centre, and to the south of the appeal site.
- 1.3. The site is bounded to the west by St. Patrick's Church and a row of cottages known as Beaumont Cottages with access from the Newcastle Road R120, a typical single lane urban trunk road. To the south the site is bounded by Esker Drive, and to the east by Cannonbrook Avenue and the rear boundaries of existing houses on Cannonbrook Park within the Cannonbrook estate. The site is bounded to the north by open space and to the north east by a short cul de sac which terminates at the boundary of the site.
- 1.4. The appeal site has a stated area of 2.5 ha and comprises two existing senior and junior national schools, surface car parking and hard play areas. There is a fall of approx. 2.5m across the entire site from south to north.
- 1.5. Scoil Aine Naofa (Saint Annes) Senior National School is a single storey block and includes 14 no. classrooms with 4 no. temporary classrooms located in the south-eastern corner of the site. It has an overall stated floor area of 1,948sq.m.
- 1.6. St. Thomas's Junior National School is located to the north and includes 16 no. classrooms with 4 no. with temporary classrooms located to the east and west of a hard play area to the north. It has an overall stated floor area of 1,946sq.m.
- 1.7. The existing vehicular and pedestrian entrance to both schools is from the Newcastle Road directly south of the Church. There is also a vehicular entrance from Esker Drive just before the entrance to the Community College to the south. A second pedestrian access to the site is from the Cannonbrook estate approx. 50m from the entrance to the estate and the junction with Esker Drive.
- 1.8. The surface car park located along the western boundary of the site is for staff parking and is shared with the Church with access from the Newcastle Road. There

is also surface car parking located to the east of St. Thomas's National School directly along the rear boundary with the Church.

- 1.9. Existing boundaries to the school include palisade fencing with 2m high boundary walls to adjoining residential properties to the east and west. There is a continuous footpath along the perimeter of the school. Double yellow lines precluding on street parking run the length of Newcastle Road, Esker Drive and along one side of Cannonbrook Park. There are speed ramps, road markings and school signage along Esker Drive and Cannonbrook Park
- 1.10. The open space yard areas associated with both schools extends to the south and north of the existing school buildings.

2.0 Proposed Development

Application as Lodged:

The application as lodged with the Planning Authority on the **15/08/16** entails:

Scoil Aine Naofa Senior National School

- Demolition of the 4 no. existing prefabricated buildings to the south east of the original school building and construction of a new two storey extension to Scoil Aine Naofa Senior National School of 1008sq.m. providing six new classrooms, seven special education teaching rooms, library and resource room and universal access toilets along with a single storey entrance lobby extension of 25 sq.m.
- External finishes are to be a mix of painted render and selected brick finish, painted render panels to first floor windows. There are two ridge heights, the higher being 10.125 metres.

St. Thomas' Junior National School

- Demolition of the 4 no. existing prefabricated buildings and store to the north of the original school building and construction of a new single storey extension to St. Thomas' Junior School of 975sqm providing four new classrooms, seven special education teaching rooms, general purpose room, storage, male and female and universal access toilets. A new library and

resource room is proposed next to the existing boiler house with a link into existing classrooms at the southern end of the existing block.

- External finishes are to be a mix of painted render and cladding panels to selected colours. The single storey extension will have a ridge height of 5.34 metres, while the general-purpose hall will have a ridge height of 7.332 metres. The extension includes a small internal courtyard.

Access and Parking

- Creation of new vehicular access to the northern part of the site via an existing cul de sac at Cannonbrook Park to provide for staff carparking with a total of 60 car parking spaces arranged to the north and north east of the site.
- Creation of a new one-way vehicular set down system and parking for 25 no. cars with access from the existing entrance from Esker Drive and exit onto Newcastle Road. The existing pedestrian access from Newcastle Road is to be repositioned with a designated pedestrian walkway and pedestrian crossing. A swing pedestrian access gateway is proposed from Esker Drive.

Hard Play Areas and Landscaping

- Creation of new hard play area with four courts to the north of the extended Saint Thomas's school with informal play areas to the north and west.
- Landscaping is proposed along the southern boundary and existing schools in addition to the linear strip of open space play area to the north west of the site.

The application was accompanied by:

- Architects Report
- Civil Engineering Report

Further Information:

Further information was requested on **04/10/16** seeking details on revised public notices, letter of consent from the planning authority, transport issues, drainage and water supply, and preparation of a project construction and demolition waste management plan.

A response and revised public notices were received on **28/03/17** providing the following details:

- Signed letter of consent.
- Revised drawings indicating safe access for large vehicles within the set-down area, bicycle parking, additional drop-off spaces on Esker Drive with a footpath and cycle path from the proposed vehicular entrance at Cannonbrook estate to the bicycle parking area and retention of the existing pedestrian access from Cannonbrook estate.
- Revised drainage proposals.
- A Project Waste Management Plan details a number of recommendations.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

The planning authority decided to grant permission subject to 12 conditions which include;

Condition No. 2 – Boundary, landscaping and planting requirements.

Condition No. 3 – Public lighting requirements.

Condition No. 4 – Surface water drainage requirements.

Condition No. 5 – Noise, odours and refuse storage requirements.

Condition No. 6 – Transport, parking and roads requirements.

Condition No. 7 – Advertising

Condition No. 8-12 – Waste enforcement and licencing, construction waste and demolition management plan, hours of construction requirements.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planners Reports (dated 15/08/16 and 21/04/2017).

Basis of the Planning Authority decision. Include;

- The two existing schools cater for 1,000 pupils with no increase in pupil numbers proposed as the new extensions are to replace existing temporary classroom accommodation on site.
- Notes the addition of 2,008 sq.m to the existing floor area of 3,894 sq.m. giving a total floor area of 5,902 sq.m.
- Notes the proposed extension is 10m from the nearest dwelling and is single storey, and the closest two storey element would be 18m from housing, both of which are located across the road. The development would not have a significant negative impact on residential amenities.
- Roads Issues - Recommends that a financial contribution be paid in the event of a grant of permission to provide a cycle path in the vicinity of the two schools given the large residential catchment area of Lucan and the close proximity of the Adamstown Strategic Development Zone (SDZ).

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Roads – (Reports dated **03/10/16** and **03/04/17**). Recommends no objection subject to conditions.

Water Services – (Reports dated **16/09/16** and **04/04/17**). Recommends no objection subject to conditions.

Environment, Water and Climate Change – No objection subject to conditions.

Environmental Services – Recommends further information in relation to Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan.

Parks and Landscape Services – No objection subject to conditions.

Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions.

Economic Development and Tourism – Recommends further information in relation to land ownership and require a letter of consent.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

Irish Water – (Reports dated **20/09/16** and **05/04/17**). Recommends no objection subject to conditions.

3.4. Third Party Observations

A number of submissions were received by South Dublin County Council in relation to the proposed development from the following parties:

- Cannonbrook Residents Committee
- Pamela Martin
- Paul and Gillian Comerford
- Cllr. Paul Gogarty
- Cllr. William Lavelle
- Cllr. Vicky Casserly
- Frances Fitzgerald T.D. Tánaiste, Minister for Justice & Equality

The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

Cannonbrook Residents Committee object to the development. The submission was accompanied by a petition and a number of individual letters from residents in the estate.

Traffic

- Concerns in relation to traffic congestion associated with the adjoining church and funerals during the week, at the roundabout at Newcastle Road/Esker Drive which also serves the shopping centre and a secondary school entrance on Esker Drive and the existing housing estates along the Newcastle Road Esker Drive and Cannonbrook Estate.
- Object to the location and new entrance to the staff car park.
- The number of cars entering Cannonbrook during drop-off/collection times exceeds the number of car spaces in the proposed new zone.

- Object to the proposed drop-off/collection zone entrance and exit.
- The access gate to the school from Cannonbrook Avenue gives rise to excessive traffic entering the Cannonbrook Estate.
- Attempts by both schools to address issues of parking at the entrance to the schools and suggesting parents park at a safe location and walk the remainder of the way was merely moving the problem of safety rather than dealing with.
- Concern that the parking places to the front of the school may be closed again.
- The existing school yards are used at weekends for church parking and other events. Concern that the new staff car park will be used by the church also.
- There have been a number of incidents where people have in essence been held prisoners in their driveways due to the excessive traffic on the estate.
- Questions the opening and closing times for the proposed teacher's car park.
- The proposed plans have made no allowance for the traffic volumes associated with the secondary school located opposite the junior school and Esker Drive.
- Buses entering the estate have caused damage to trees.

Safety

- Excessive traffic and congestion leads to increased dangers for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.
- The use of the gate on Cannonbrook Avenue which is used for fire evacuation which passes the boiler house which itself is a fire hazard is unsafe.
- Notes the majority of the proposed green play area is out of sight from the main school buildings and queries the size of safe play areas.

Other Concerns

- Queries the land ownership and status of transfer of lands.
- Considers that the school was allowed to grow rather than build other schools in the area.

- Considers very little consideration has been made towards the wellbeing of the residents of the estate and asks if there are any proposals to landscape the estate.
- Concerns in relation to construction traffic and site entrances through Cannonbrook estate and impact on residential amenity.
- Concerns in relation to lighting in the staff car park.
- Lack of consultation with the residents.
- Request that traffic calming measures be installed and that car parking be limited to residents of the estate
- Concern that the schools will not have a large enough play area to facilitate the number of children attending.
- Cars parked blocking driveways and parking on double yellow lines and green verges maintained by the residents.
- Concern that the new access to the staff car park will be used by construction traffic. Concern in relation to noise from playground and construction noise.
- Anti-social behaviour at new entrance to staff car park.

Pamela Martin – objects to additional traffic and safety of children, and concern in relation to emergency vehicles gaining access to the estate.

The submissions received from Cllrs. Casserly, Lavelle, Gogarty and Frances Fitzgerald TD were in support of the proposed development.

- Cllr. Paul Gogarty - Suggests that the pedestrian access from Cannonbrook is closed and a new pedestrian entrance is provided from Esker Drive. Access to the school should be from the Newcastle Road with an exit onto Esker Drive and not vice-versa. Application should have an environmental impact study.

A note from the Lucan Area Committee meeting of 28th March 2017 states that Councillors W. Lavelle, P.N. Gogarty and L. O'Toole support the proposal.

4.0 Planning History

Appeal Site

PA Reg. Ref. SD14A/0078 Permission **granted** 08/09/2014 for temporary accommodation for 2 classrooms to be located at the rear of the permanent building with all associated site and drainage works. *St. Thomas Junior National School.*

PA Reg. Ref. SD13A/0056 Permission **granted** 01/07/2013 for a 5 year permission for 4 no. single storey prefabricated buildings incorporating 5 classrooms, 2 resource rooms and ancillary accommodation to replace 3 of the existing prefabricated buildings on site and for retention of 1 no. single storey prefabricated building which incorporates 4 no. learning support rooms. *Scoil Aine Naofa National School.*

PA Reg. Ref. SD08A/0361 Permission **granted** 02/09/2008 for 2 prefabricated classrooms at the rear and for the retention of four existing prefabricated classrooms on the same site. *St. Thomas Junior National School.*

PA Reg. Ref. SD03A/0568 Permission **granted** 12/11/2003 for retention of 4 temporary prefabricated classroom blocks (each containing 2 no. classrooms) previously granted permission S00A/0506 and for the relocation of 2 no. of these classrooms blocks at the above schools. *St. Thomas and St. Anne's National School.*

PA Reg. Ref. S00A/0506 Permission **granted** 06/11/200 to place eight temporary classrooms to the rear. *St. Thomas Junior National School.*

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

5.1.1. South Dublin County Council 2016-2022

The site is zoned '**RES: To protect and/or improve residential amenity**'.

'Education' is a use 'open for consideration' within this zoning objective.

Chapter 3 refers to Community Infrastructure.

Section 3.11.0 Educational Facilities contains policies having regard to The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, a Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, (2008) published jointly by the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government.

Policy C9 (a): - *'It is the policy of the Council to work in conjunction with the relevant education authorities to promote and support the provision of primary and post-primary schools in the County.'*

Policy C9 (b): - *'It is the policy of the Council to engage with the Department of Education and Skills and to support the Department's School Building Programme by actively identifying sites for primary and post primary schools at suitable locations, based on forecast need.'*

Chapter 6 refers to Transport and Mobility

Section 6.3.0 Walking and Cycling

TM3 Objective 2: - *'To ensure that connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists is maximised in new communities and improved within existing areas in order to maximise access to local shops, schools, public transport services and other amenities, while seeking to minimise opportunities for anti-social behaviour and respecting the wishes of local communities.'*

TM3 Objective 5: - *'To provide that planning permissions granted for the development of all new schools or for existing schools where 25% or greater expansion of classrooms is proposed, should include a requirement for the provision of cycle paths from the school to join the nearest cycle network, where feasible.'*

Chapter 11 refers to Implementation.

Section 11.3.12 - *'Applications relating to schools and school sites should be assessed with regard to the requirements of The Provision of Schools and the*

Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, DES & DEHLG (2008).'

5.2. **Natural Heritage Designations**

None of relevance.

6.0 **The Appeal**

6.1. **Grounds of Appeal**

The third party appeal by Sandra Lee on behalf of the Cannonbrook Residents Committee against the planning authority's notification of decision to grant permission can be summarised as follows:

- Traffic – Object to the extra volume of traffic that will further congest the estate of Cannonbrook.
- Need for Traffic Study - No evidence of a full traffic assessment by South Dublin County Council at peak school times in the Cannonbrook Estate. A previous permit restriction parking arrangement for parents resulted in more traffic in the Cannonbrook Estate.
- Lack of consultation with Residents - Assert that an offer was made for all parties to sit down and discuss solutions in advance of any planning application being submitted but this offer was not taken up.
- Use of existing pedestrian access gate - The existing pedestrian entrance at Canonbrook was never a permanent pedestrian entrance for children and was put in place to access a boiler. It is not safe and needs to be closed.
- Staff Car Park - Bringing staff cars through a residential estate will only add to existing serious congestion issues.
- Drop off – The drop off as planned will not mitigate the problem as long as the side entrance is open and parents continue to use Canonbrook as a short-cut to park and drop-off/collect children.

- Traffic Management – Need for traffic management in Cannonbrook Estate. Queries whether an alternative access for staff parking was considered, whether it was expected the school would get this big, what the actual school catchment is and whether there is an active mobility strategy in place.
- Bicycle Parking and Safety – Bicycle parking in proximity to the new staff car park accessed from Cannonbrook Estate. Concern that there are no cycle lanes or space in Cannonbrook and issues in relation to safety with cyclists and pedestrians.
- Loss of footpath on Esker Drive – Concerns in relation to pedestrian safety where a section of footpath on Esker Drive is to be removed for a 'set down zone' which will leave this section with no dedicated pedestrian footpath.
- Traffic Assessment – Considers that a traffic assessment on the average school week should have been done, and was requested and queries when it will be done.
- Large Vehicles – Concern in relation to access for large vehicles such as coaches and buses and emergency vehicles both during construction and post construction.
- Church Car Park – The Church currently uses the school grounds as a car park during mass times, communions, confirmation etc. This will be reduced and questions whether the staff car park will be used by the Church.
- Request for an oral hearing.

6.2. Applicant Response

A response was submitted by Newenham Mulligan and Associates on behalf of the applicant. It can be summarised as follows;

- The proposal is in accordance with the Department of Education's brief and current educational design standards.

- There is no proposed increase in the number of pupils attending the school, as the new extensions are to replace existing temporary accommodation on the site and to improve the quality of the existing school facilities.
- The design approach included consultation with the Local Authority and the School's Board of Management in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills Project Brief and Technical Guidance Documents.
- The site is zoned RES within the South Dublin Development Plan 2016-2022 where the existing and proposed usage for educational facilities is consistent with this zoning.
- A number of pre-planning consultations were held with the planning officials of South Dublin County Council and further pre-planning consultation including specific to roads and traffic requirements were held with the relevant engineering and technical officials of the Council.
- Hayes Higgins Partnership Consultant Engineers developed a proposed traffic management and layout options for review and approval.
- The current existing arrangement for vehicle drop off /set down to the front of the schools leads to congestion and delays for all vehicle users at drop off and collection times. As part of the works, it is proposed to rearrange /formalise the drop off /set down arrangement.
- The proposed new arrangement is to improve the usage of the set down by providing a dedicated in and out set down solely for the use of parental drop off and to segregate the staff car parking to an alternative area on the site.
- The proposal includes for the provision of a one way drop off / set down arrangement with entry access from Esker Road and exit onto Newcastle Road.
- All existing staff parking is to be repositioned to the northern part of the site with access to same from Cannonbrook Avenue. This will be limited to staff car access only.
- Understand that residents of Canonbrook have been historically very unhappy with the number of parents picking up and dropping off in their estate. The new proposal will help alleviate this considerably and will improve the traffic

situation for the Cannonbrook estate with the overall number of trips into Cannonbrook significantly reduced.

- Both schools strongly promote walking and cycling to school with a relatively high percentage of pupils coming from the catchment area within walking distance.

The applicant's response was accompanied by correspondence prepared by the School Principals and the local Parish. The issues raised can be summarised as follows;

- Delighted the Cannonbrook Residents Committee support the school extension and are willing to work constructively with the residents to address their concerns.
- The existing pedestrian entrance on Cannonbrook Avenue is used by a significant number of parents who walk to school with their pupils. Parents have set up a walking group to promote a more active lifestyle.
- Note that while staff cars would access the proposed new staff car park via the Cannonbrook entrance this increased traffic flow would occur in one direction only and be at earlier and later times to pupils arriving and leaving.
- Alternative options for staff parking were explored, but consider moving staff parking to the north freeing up the school/ church car park can be a gamechanger for overall congestion as it will allow for a one way set down zone for parents of both schools.
- The proposed building project will not increase the size of the school.
- The Church will not be seeking to use the new staff car park for church business.

6.3. Planning Authority Response

The planning authority confirms its decision and the issues raised in the appeal have been covered in the planner's report.

6.4. Observations

An observation was submitted by Cllr. Vicki Casserly & Cllr. William Lavelle in support of the application. It and can be summarised as follows;

- Request the Board to endorse the decision of the planning authority and to confirm the grant of permission.
- Note the concerns of certain residents at Cannonbrook in relation to traffic management and parking.
- Believe that the planned provision of a new drop-off facility as part of the new development will greatly aid parking and traffic management, particularly in terms of the potential for the removal of parking from within Cannonbrook estate.
- The provision of the new drop-off to the front (west) of the site will only be possible if the staff parking is relocated to the rear (northeast) of the site, accessed through Cannonbrook estate.
- Believe the resultant traffic through Cannonbrook estate will not lead to any detrimental effect on traffic management, road safety or residential amenity if coupled with the potential removal of parking from within Cannonbrook estate.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. I consider that the issues arising in this case can be addressed under the following headings;

- Nature and Extent of Development
- Access, Traffic and Parking
- Appropriate Assessment

7.2. Nature and Extent of Development

7.2.1. The proposal before the Board is as described in the public notices, (and as subsequently revised) that accompany the application, namely demolition of existing

prefabs, two storey extension to one of the existing schools and a single storey extension to the other. In the interests of clarity, it is also proposed to create a new vehicular entrance and car park for staff with access from an existing cul de sac within the Cannonbrook estate, and to create a new one way drop off route for parents dropping children to school entering from Esker Drive and exiting onto Newcastle Road.

7.2.2. I am satisfied that there is no increase in the number of pupils attending each school and as such there is no intensification of use. I also consider that the proposed works, which include new hard play areas and landscaping, will improve the quality of the existing school facilities.

7.2.3. As noted earlier the development includes the replacement of temporary classrooms permitted by temporary permissions. I consider the proposed extensions to the existing schools, which are established uses on site, and which are open for consideration within areas zoned residential, are acceptable in principle.

7.3. Access, Traffic and Parking

7.3.1. Access

Bringing staff cars through the Cannonbrook residential estate to the new staff car park, and the drop-off as planned, constitutes one of the biggest concerns for the residents in the area. By way of further information revised notices were submitted which clearly described the proposed works which include a new vehicular entrance to the school grounds at the end of an existing cul de sac from Cannonbrook Park, and a new one-way system with access from Esker Drive and egress onto the Newcastle Road.

The appellants have raised serious concerns in relation to the extra volume of traffic that will further congest the estate of Cannonbrook, and assert that there is no evidence of a full traffic assessment by South Dublin County Council at peak times in the estate.

The issue of traffic management is acknowledged by the applicants and, in preparing the application, they have proposed measures to address the problem. The appellants have raised serious concerns with respect to these proposed measures and I intend to address these in turn.

7.3.2. *One Way Drop Off System*

The schools are located at the junction of the Newcastle Road and Esker Drive and at the entrance to Cannonbrook Estate. The main vehicular access to the schools are from Newcastle Road and Esker Drive respectively, with pedestrian side access from the Cannonbrook Estate where parents currently park for drop off/pick up children. I would note from my site inspection that the vehicular entrance from Esker Drive principally to the yard area was not in use, and the vehicular entrance from the Newcastle Road is for access to the car park only and is used by staff of the school on a permit basis and by the Church.

From the details provided in support of the application a one-way access system is proposed whereby vehicles dropping off/picking up children would travel along Esker Drive and then inside the perimeter of the school grounds and then leave via the Newcastle Road. By way of further information, a revised parking layout which included the provision of footpaths on both sides of the set down area was also submitted.

The appellants have raised serious concerns in relation to the traffic congestion currently experienced, both within the estate and on the approach roads to the appeal site and neighbouring secondary school, and consider that the proposed one way drop off system will not mitigate the problem, as long as the side entrance onto Cannonbrook Avenue is open, and parents continue to use Cannonbrook as a short cut to park and drop-off/collect children.

On the day of my site inspection I noted that the peak drop off period was between 8.40 and 9.05am. Whilst I noted that the main approach route taken was from the

Newcastle Road, many others approached from the Cannonbrook Estate and Esker Drive. It was evident that a significant number of parents parked in the surface car park in front of the Lucan Shopping Centre and crossed the Newcastle Road to the main entrance to the school from Newcastle Road. Pedestrians were facilitated by both sets of pedestrian traffic lights located to the north and south of the roundabout on the R120 and to the east along Esker Drive. There did not appear to be significant traffic congestion along the R120 with direct access to the shopping centre car park from the roundabout.

At its peak traffic congestion was evident within the Cannonbrook Estate, and it was evident that children were walking from the surrounding estates. I did not witness conflicting vehicular and pedestrian movements as drivers left their vehicles to escort children across the road. Vehicles availing of parking in the surrounding residential estate, when on road parking was not available outside the school, was also evident.

I note the Transportation section of the planning authority had no objection to the proposed development subject to an agreed mobility management plan and details in relation to bicycle parking. I concur with the applicant that the proposed formal drop off/set down arrangement and segregation of staff parking to an alternative area of the site will help alleviate the traffic situation and reduce the overall number of trips into the estate significantly.

I am satisfied that the proposed one-way drop off system with pull in parking which is to be located within the school grounds will help to address the level of congestion experienced at peak times within the Cannonbrook Estate and reduce conflicting vehicular movements at the main entrances to the schools.

7.3.3. Staff Car Park

The applicant is proposing to use lands to the north of the school site with access from Cannonbrook Park to provide alternative off-road staff car parking and which is currently provided for within the school grounds adjacent to the existing school

buildings and St. Patricks Church. This is also required to facilitate the creation of the new one way drop off system described above.

The estate residents in their appeal are frustrated with the use of the estate for parking. The proposed access to the new staff car park through the estate, will not address congestion and will be a traffic hazard for residents with small children.

The car park is designed to cater for approx. 60 no. staff car parking spaces and is accessed via a short cul de sac bounded on either side by the side gables of house no. 10 and 11 Cannonbrook Park.

On the day of my site inspection I noted that the peak arrival period for staff parking in the existing staff car park was from between 8.00 and 8.30am. I am satisfied that staff arriving at the earlier times before school commences will assist in reducing traffic congestion. I would also concur with the applicant that while staff cars would access the proposed new car park via the Cannonbrook entrance, the increased traffic flow would occur in one direction only and be at earlier and later times to pupils arriving and leaving.

The appellants have questioned whether this car park will be used by the Church. I have examined the plans and there is no indication that this car park is intended for use by the Church. The applicants have also clarified in their response to the third party appeal that it is not intended for such use. I would concur with the residents that, given the nature of the requirements by the Church for car parking typically at the weekends, this would be better provided proximate to the Church. I recommend that an appropriate condition be attached that the staff car park be limited to use by the school.

7.3.4. Traffic Safety

The appellants have raised serious concerns in relation to traffic safety both as residents and for pedestrians and the conflict with large vehicles such as coaches and buses and emergency vehicles. They note that the use of the existing

pedestrian access gate at Cannonbrook is not safe and needs to be closed. They also note that the loss of footpath on Esker Drive, which is to be removed for a 'set down zone', is a concern.

I note that the further information submitted to the planning authority included a vehicle swept path analysis for the access to/from the set-down area demonstrating safe access for school buses and refuse vehicles along with a revised parking layout which included the provision of footpaths on both sides of the set down area.

I consider that the existing pedestrian access from Cannonbrook Estate, is convenient for pedestrians from the surrounding area. I consider that pedestrian safety can be controlled with appropriate supervision by a school crossing patrol officer which is currently the case at peak times.

I am satisfied that the proposed drop off facility will potentially reduce the level of parking and traffic within the Cannonbrook estate and that the measures detailed allow for a safer pedestrian environment and interface between vehicles and pedestrians.

7.3.5. Conclusion

I would accept that traffic congestion is a common issue in the vicinity of schools during morning and afternoon peak times. However, in this instance, I am satisfied that both schools have endeavoured to make every effort and are committed to improving traffic congestion in the interest of safe access for children and parents and local residents.

I am satisfied, on the basis that there is no increase in the number of pupils attending the schools, that the existing traffic volumes should not increase. With the improved traffic arrangements proposed, I am satisfied that the proposed works will help to alleviate traffic congestion and conflicting vehicular and pedestrian movements, and would, therefore, be in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7.4. Appropriate Assessment

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development within an established urban area on a fully serviced site and, the considerable separation distances to the nearest European Sites, 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

I recommend that permission be granted subject to conditions for the following reasons and considerations.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the established use of the site as a school, to the zoning objective pertaining on the site, and to the planning history, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, that the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential amenities of the area 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 the 28th March 2017, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed 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 extensions 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. Details of all external lighting associated with the development shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of visual and residential amenity.

4. 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.

5. The developer shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority with respect to off-site parking, site entrance details, signage, and road markings which shall be ascertained and agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety.

6. The proposed car park located to the north of the site and accessed from Cannonbrook Park shall be used for school purposes only.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

7. Prior to commencement of development, details of the following shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority:

(i) A hard landscaping plan with site boundary details including the entrance finishes.

(ii) A soft landscaping plan incorporating native/indigenous species.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

8. Prior to the opening of the development, a Mobility Management Strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority. This shall provide for incentives to encourage the use of public transport, cycling, walking and car pooling by staff employed in the development and to reduce and regulate the extent of staff parking. The mobility strategy shall be prepared and implemented by the Board of Management. Details to be agreed with the planning authority shall include the provision of centralised facilities within the development for bicycle parking, shower and changing facilities associated with the policies set out in the strategy.

Reason: In the interest of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

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

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

Susan McHugh
Planning Inspectorate

4th September 2017