

Inspector's Report PL09.248536.

Development Change of use from house and farm

buildings to artisan shop, café and pet

farm.

Location Firmount Cross, Clane, County

Kildare.

Planning Authority Kildare County Council.

Planning Authority Reg. Ref. 17/207.

Applicants Sharon and Knut Hylle.

Type of Application Permission.

Planning Authority Decision Refusal.

Type of Appeal First Party

Appellants Sharon and Knut Hylle.

Observers None.

Date of Site Inspection 21st August2017.

Inspector Derek Daly.

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located in a rural area approximately 1.5 kilometres to the west of the village of Clane in County Kildare. The site is located at the southern side of a five handed crossroads referred to as Firmount Cross with frontage onto the R403 Clane to Prosperous and a local road on the northern boundary and a local road on the eastern boundary. The remaining boundaries adjoin open lands. The site has a relatively high level of residential development consisting of dwellings fronting onto the local road network. The site is within a 60kph speed limit area and approaches to the junction from Clane advise of a concealed junction ahead. There are bus stops on either side of the regional road immediately to the west of the appeal site.
- 1.2. On the site itself is a traditional two storied dwelling located at the junction with a number of outbuildings located along the northern and eastern boundaries immediately adjoining the road. There is a single storied building located immediately to the west of the dwelling with frontage onto the local road. There are a number of other buildings located internally on the site forming an enclosed courtyard area to the south of the dwelling. The courtyard has a paved surface. There are also two haybarn type structures located to the south of the enclosed courtyard area. The site has a number of access points onto the two roads bounding site comprising of gateways. There are open paddock lands within the site outside of courtyard area in proximity to the western and southern areas of the site.
- 1.3. The buildings on the site are currently not in use.
- 1.4. The site has a stated area of 0.5 hectares.

2.0 **Proposed Development**

- 2.1. The proposed development as submitted to the planning authority on the 27th of February 2017 was for;
 - The change of use from house and former post office and agricultural outbuildings to artisan/craft shop, display rooms, café/organic food outlet and for the provision of a pet farm.

- The dwelling will, it is proposed, be changed in use to an artisan/craft shop, with the shop on the ground floor and display rooms on the upper floor. The overall area of the use will be 218m² representing no alteration in the existing floor area and access to the shop will be from the rear via the paddock/courtyard area.
- The proposed café, it is proposed, will be located in the single storey building to the west of the house and has a stated area of 115m². It is proposed to extend this building to provide for an orangery and an enclosed children play area with a new roof and this located at the rear of this building and part of the existing perimeter out buildings
- The overall increase in floor area arising from the development is approximately 41m².
- The relocation and construction of a new site entrance which will be located to the west of the café building in close proximity to the western boundary with access onto a local road.
- The provision of an internal access road in close proximity to the western boundary before veering east to the rear of the existing buildings to a proposed parking area located to the south of the courtyard with the provision of a total of 24 spaces proposed.
- A pet farm area with eight holding pens located to the west of the haybarns with provision for effluent control and the provision of a dungstead/holding tank of sized to accommodate the farm animals.
- A new effluent treatment system and percolation area. The system is
 designed based on anticipated loading from the various activities proposed on
 the site and site tests carried out.
- Associated site works including landscaping and paved areas.
- 2.2. The development has and will continue to utilise an existing public mains water supply.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision.

3.1. **Decision**

The decision of the planning authority was to refuse permission. Two reasons were stated the first of which refers to policy RE9 of the county development plan and that the development would materially contravene this policy. The second reason for refusal refers to traffic hazard arising from increased traffic movements on the R403 at the busy junction of Firmount Cross.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The planning report dated the 21st of April 2017 refers to;

- Provisions of the County Development Plan.
- It is considered in the context of table 10.2 of the plan and considered to be
 excessive and the use is not considered appropriate. It is also considered that
 the emphasis is on the café and retail unit and more appropriate to an urban
 location.
- Issues in relation to traffic would require to be addressed.
- Refusal recommended.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Area office raises no objections.

The environmental health officer report outlines a number of recommendations.

The environment section report dated the 11th of April 2017 requests clarification on matters relating to the housing proposed for the animals, surface water and the sizing of grease separators.

The transportation report requests information in relation to the access options, parking projected traffic volumes and analysis of the movement of HGVs within the site. Refers to serious concerns in relation to the proposed development.

4.0 **Planning History**

No relevant planning history.

Applicant submissions refer to similar type developments in the county.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. **Development Plan**

Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023.

- 5.2. Chapter 5 economic development, enterprises and tourism.
- 5.2.1. Section 5.12 relates to Rural Enterprise. The focus is on settlements but it is acknowledged that certain kinds of rural enterprises, especially those that involve natural resources and serve rural communities at an appropriate scale, have a role to play in rural development.

Relevant policy. ECD 27: Support and facilitate sustainable agriculture, agri-food, horticulture, forestry, renewable energy and other rural enterprises at suitable locations in the county.

- 5.2.2. Section 5.16 relates to Tourism and Kildare's Economy.
- 5.2.3. Relevant policy ECD 28: Promote, protect, improve, encourage and facilitate the development of tourism throughout the county as an important contributor to job creation in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- 5.2.4. Section 5.22 relates to Agriculture based tourism.

Relevant policies are:

ECD 40- Support agri-tourism initiatives including but not limited to visitor accommodation and supplementary activities such as organic farmers' markets, health farms, heritage and nature trails, pony trekking, boating, walking, eco-tourism, open farms and pet farms, ensuring that all built elements are appropriately designed and satisfactorily assimilated into the landscape

- ECD 41- Facilitate and encourage the re-use of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate owner-run agri-tourism enterprises subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- 5.3. Chapter 10 rural development.
- 5.3.1. Section 10.4 relates to Kildare's Rural Economy
- 5.3.2. Section 10.4.10 refer to Rural Enterprises and indicates that within the rural settlements / nodes and the rural countryside, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism, energy production and rural resources-based enterprise should be facilitated.

Key considerations for rural enterprise will include:

- In general, existing 'footloose' commercial or industrial activities in towns and villages will not be permitted to re-locate to unserviced rural areas.
- One-off enterprises in the rural area may be located in the open countryside only where the Council is satisfied that the enterprise is suitable for that location in the first place and that it will comply with the criteria outlined in Table 10.2.
- Commercial / industrial developments in rural areas may be acceptable subject to proper planning considerations, where the Council is satisfied that the proposed development requires to be located in the rural area due to its dependence on an existing local resource or source material that is required for the carrying out of the industrial process / commercial activity / service.
 The local resource or source of material shall be in close proximity to the location of the proposed development.

Table 10.2 outlines criteria for Assessment of One-off Enterprises in Rural Areas which include;

- As a general guide, development proposals shall be limited to the small-scale business development with a floor area circa 200 sq. m. and shall be appropriate in scale to its location;
- The development will enhance the strength of the local rural economy;

- The proposed development shall be located on the site of a redundant farm building / yard or similar agricultural brownfield site;
- There is a social and economic benefit to be located in a rural area:
- The proposal will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the landscape;
- The development will not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby properties,
 and in particular the amenities of nearby residents;
- The existing or planned local road network and other essential infrastructure can accommodate extra demand generated by the proposal;
- The proposal should be accompanied by a mobility plan catering for employees' home to work transportation;
- Adequate proposals to cater for any waste arising at the facility;
- All advertising should be kept to a minimum and be suitable in design and scale to serve the business;
- Proper planning and sustainable development;
- The proposals should conform to other objectives of the County Development Plan.

Section 10.5.6 refers to Policies for Rural Enterprise Relevant policies include;

RLE 1: Encourage expansion and employment in local enterprises and industries such as agriculture, horticulture, forestry, peatlands, food, crafts, tourism and energy.

RLE 2: Encourage the sustainable and suitable re-use of farm buildings in the county and to ensure that such works, where relevant, have regard to *Re-using Farm*Buildings – A Kildare Perspective produced by Kildare County Council in 2006.

RLE 4: Encourage the development of alternative rural based small-scale enterprises. The Council will consider the use, nature and scale of developments when assessing such applications. In addition, the Council will also consider the requirement to locate such developments in rural areas.

Section 10.5 and in particular 10.5.1 set out policies in relation to the rural economy. Relevant policy RE 9: Protect agriculture and traditional rural enterprises from unplanned and/or incompatible urban development.

6.0 **The Appeal**

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The appellant in the grounds of appeal refers to

- Finding a use for a cluster of farm buildings is essential to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- There is no ideal solution.
- The applicant was not afforded the opportunity to address matters by way of further information.
- Reference is made to permitting similar type development.
- The appeal includes amendments the Board may wish to consider including the omission of the orangery, one access with other entrances and exits closed, increasing parking provision to 29 spaces and addressing other matters raised in relation to environmental health.
- There are no objections to the development.
- In relation to reason no. 1 it is considered that reference to materially contravening the plan is incorrect.
- Reference is made to section 37 in relation to material contravention.
- The reference to materially contravening section 10.4.10 must be seen in context and to contravene it must contravene a specific policy, objective or zoning.
- Reference is made to other policy in the plan such as RLE 1, RLE 2, ECD 40 and ECD 41.
- As the development will utilise existing buildings it would be unreasonable to limit the scale to 200m2 referred to in table 10.2.

- Consideration can be given under section 37(2)(b)(iv) having regard to development granted since the making of the development plan and reference is made to P.A Ref. No. 15/1145 in this regard.
- The planning authority have indicated how the proposal contravenes policy
 RE 9. The proposal does not involve a working farm and cannot be described as incompatible urban development.
- The issues appear to revolve around table 10.2 in particular excessive scale.
- The development does not include a restaurant as referred to in the planning report and it is for a café which is moderate in scale 182m² and 36 seats and a revised proposal removing the orangery reducing the café to 24 seats and 112m² gfa is submitted for consideration of the Board.
- In relation to the craft shop which has an overall area of 219m² only 67.8m² is retail space.
- The pet farm is ancillary to the café and craft shop.
- 5-7 persons will be employed.
- The development is directly in accordance with policy RLE 1 in encouraging local enterprises.
- A business plan is submitted.
- Car parking is addressed in accordance with development plan standards and 29 spaces can be provided and are indicated in a revised proposal but the original proposal of 16 spaces is considered sufficient.
- The craft uses to be displayed and sold are specified.
- Other businesses in Clane will not be impacted upon.
- In relation to reason no. 2 on traffic related matters and the key issue relates to the nature and scale of the development and anticipated traffic arising.
- A transportation report addresses matter raised in the transportation report.
- No buses will be catered for.
- Revised entrance proposals are submitted.

- The uses proposed will be phased and a condition relating to phasing would be acceptable.
- The appellant refers to precedence of granting similar proposals.
- The proposed buildings are not protected structures but the approach is a minimalist approach in intervention and an architectural heritage assessment is submitted in support of this approach.
- The submission includes revised drawings addressing amendments referred to in the appeal submission.
- A traffic assessment outlining revised access arrangements and closure of existing multiple access points.
- An architectural heritage assessment is submitted indicating that the proposal as submitted will not detract from the special character of the house.
- A business plan is also submitted.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

The planning authority in a response refer to

- Reference is made to the revised plans submitted.
- Reference is made to section 10.4.10 of the plan and that the development as submitted any of the enterprises outlined and only includes a pet farm which may be tourism related but the pet farm only constitutes an ancillary aspect of the development to the café.
- There is no justification for this development.
- The other developments referred to were permitted as they met criteria outlined in the county development plan though aspects of similarity to a number of these developments is acknowledged.
- The revised transportation proposals were assessed but it is considered that
 the proposal is a footloose activity very dependent on cars. Given the scale of
 the development and its proximity to the cross roads it is considered that the
 development will interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic.

• The Board are requested to uphold the planning authority's decision to refuse planning permission.

6.3. Applicant Response.

The applicant in a response to the planning authority's response refers to;

- There is no commentary on the revised submissions made.
- Although the submission makes reference to doubling of what is allowed under section 10.4 of the plan it does not take into account that it is using existing vernacular buildings and the plan refers to the matter as a general guide.
- Issues relating to traffic and the issues of the treatment system, rural location and business plan referred to in the grounds of appeal are not addressed in the planning authority submission.
- In relation to the reference made in the grounds of appeal to other similar type developments it is difficult to see how the planning authority distinguish these from the proposal currently under appeal.
- The revised traffic arrangement is not addressed by the planning authority.
- The planning authority should be consistent in its approach to similar developments.
- The Board is requested to overrule the planning authority's decision.

7.0 Assessment

- 7.1. The proposal as submitted to the planning authority is for the change of use from house and former post office and agricultural outbuildings to artisan/craft shop, display rooms, café/organic food outlet and for the provision of a pet farm.
- 7.1.1. The dwelling will, it is proposed, be changed in use to an artisan/craft shop, with the shop on the ground floor and display rooms on the upper floor. The overall area of the use will be 218m² representing no alteration in the existing floor area and access to the shop will be from the rear via the paddock/courtyard area.

- 7.1.2. The proposed café, it is proposed, will be located in the single storey building to the west of the house and has a stated area of 115m². It is proposed to extend this building to provide for an orangery and an enclosed children play area with a new roof and this located at the rear of this building and part of the existing perimeter out buildings. The overall increase in floor area arising from the development is approximately 41m².
- 7.1.3. The proposal also provides for the relocation and construction of a new site entrance which will be located to the west of the café building in close proximity to the western boundary with access onto a local road; the provision of an internal access road in close proximity to the western boundary before veering east to the rear of the existing buildings to a proposed parking area located to the south of the courtyard with the provision of a total of 24 spaces proposed.
- 7.1.4. A pet farm area with eight holding pens located to the west of the haybarns with provision for effluent control and the provision of a dungstead/holding tank of sized to accommodate the farm animals.
- 7.1.5. In relation to drainage a new effluent treatment system and percolation area. The system is designed based on anticipated loading from the various activities proposed on the site and site tests carried out.
 - 7.2. In the grounds of appeal, a revision of the initial proposal is submitted for the Board's consideration including the omission of the orangery, one revised access with other entrances and exits closed, increasing parking provision to 29 spaces and addressing other matters raised in relation to environmental health.
- 7.2.1. With the removal of the orangery this reduces the café to 24 seats and 112m² gfa.
- 7.2.2. A transportation report addresses matter raised in the transportation report; no buses will be catered for and revised entrance proposals are submitted and closure of existing multiple access points.
- 7.2.3. The submission includes revised drawings addressing amendments referred to in the appeal submission.
 - 7.3. Section 37(2)(b)
- 7.3.1. In relation to this appeal the reason for refusal in reason no. 1 refers to the proposed development would contravene materially section 10.4.10 of the current

- development plan. The applicant in the grounds of appeal has questioned whether the development would contravene materially the plan and also to section 37(2)(b)(iv) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.
- 7.3.2. I would note that the wording of the act refers to a proposed development materially contravenes the development plan.
- 7.3.3. Section 37(2)(b) indicates that the Board may only grant permission in accordance with *paragraph* (a) where it considers that—
 - (i) the proposed development is of strategic or national importance,
 - (ii) there are conflicting objectives in the development plan or the objectives are not clearly stated, insofar as the proposed development is concerned, or
 - (iii) permission for the proposed development should be granted having regard to regional planning guidelines for the area, guidelines under *section 28*, policy directives under *section 29*, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area, and any relevant policy of the Government, the Minister or any Minister of the Government, or
 - (iv) permission for the proposed development should be granted having regard to the pattern of development, and permissions granted, in the area since the making of the development plan.
- 7.3.4. As indicated in section 5 of this report there are many provisions in the development plan which relate to rural development and rural tourism which I consider permit consideration of this development and where there are many criteria outlined for consideration of development proposals which do not necessarily avoid conflict. In relation subsection (iv) the development plan is only recently adopted but the appellant has referred to similar type development permitted which may predate the current plan. I do however consider based on subsection (ii) consider that the Board a permission for the proposed development.
 - 7.4. In relation to the matter of the actual development I propose to consider the development in relation to planning policy and matters specific to the site and will refer to the original proposal and the revised details to the Board where they are considered relevant.
 - 7.5. Policy.

- 7.5.1. The grounds of appeal contend that the development as submitted is in accordance with current policy.
- 7.5.2. Chapter 5 of the current KCDP refers to economic development, enterprises and tourism and section 5.12 specifically relates to rural enterprise. It is important to state that the focus is on settlements but it is acknowledged that certain kinds of rural enterprises, especially those that involve natural resources and serve rural communities at an appropriate scale, have a role to play in rural development and policy. ECD 27 in particular supports and facilitates sustainable agriculture, agrifood, horticulture, forestry, renewable energy and other rural enterprises at suitable locations in the county and policy ECD 28 restates this. Agriculture based tourism is also referred and policies are ECD 40- Supports agri-tourism initiatives including but not limited to visitor accommodation and supplementary activities such as organic farmers' markets, health farms, heritage and nature trails, pony trekking, boating, walking, eco-tourism, open farms and pet farms, ensuring that all built elements are appropriately designed and satisfactorily assimilated into the landscape. The proposal, it is noted, incorporates a pet farm. Policy ECD 41 outlines facilitating and encouragement of the re-use of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate owner-run agri tourism enterprises subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- 7.5.3. The issue in relation to this appeal is whether the development can be considered an appropriate owner run agri tourism enterprise. It is primarily a retail business and a café. The pet farm is largely ancillary to the main business. It does utilise an existing vernacular building with agricultural farm buildings which I accept have difficulty of reuse but other than the pet farm possibly, the other and more dominant activities and uses proposed could be accommodated in a settlement and are not necessarily a rural based activity.
- 7.5.4. Chapter 10 of the plan refers to rural development and section 10.4 relates to Kildare's rural economy. Section 10.4.10 is of particular relevance as it refers to rural enterprises and indicates that within the rural settlements / nodes and the rural countryside, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism, energy production and rural resources-based enterprise should be facilitated.

- 7.5.5. Support for rural enterprise are outlined in RLE 1, RLE 2, which encourages the sustainable and suitable re-use of farm buildings in the county and RLE 4 which encourages the development of alternative rural based small-scale enterprises.
- 7.5.6. Key considerations for rural enterprise are outlined which include that in general, existing 'footloose' commercial or industrial activities in towns and villages will not be permitted to re-locate to unserviced rural areas and that one-off enterprises in the rural area may be located in the open countryside only where the Council is satisfied that the enterprise is suitable for that location in the first place and that it will comply with the criteria outlined in Table 10.2.
- 7.5.7. The presumption is, I consider, that enterprise would locate in settlements but suitable enterprises may be acceptable in rural areas and there is reference that the proposed development requires to be located in the rural area due to its dependence on an existing local resource or source material that is required for the carrying out of the industrial process / commercial activity / service. The local resource or source of material shall be in close proximity to the location of the proposed development.
- 7.5.8. In relation to criteria to be considered table 10.2 outlines criteria for the assessment of one-off enterprises in rural areas.
- 7.5.9. It is indicated that as a general guide, development proposals shall be limited to the small-scale business development with a floor area circa 200 sq. m. and shall be appropriate in scale to its location. The development exceeds floor area but as indicated by the appellant it is utilising existing vernacular buildings. It is a general guide and I consider that developments in excess of 200 sq. metres are not therefore of necessity excluded or require to be excluded.
- 7.5.10. The proposed development is located on the site of redundant farm buildings and yards which permits consideration within the criteria.
- 7.5.11. The development should or will enhance the strength of the local rural economy be a social and economic benefit to be located in a rural area. As already indicated the focus is that enterprise would locate in settlements but suitable enterprises may be acceptable in rural areas due to its dependence on an existing local resource. In this context the development as proposed does not I consider a strong local dependence to the site and could locate in a settlement.

- 7.5.12. Issues in relation to traffic and infrastructure are also considered as criteria and will be considered later in this report.
- 7.5.13. Given the nature of the development and minimal intervention in relation to the existing buildings the proposal will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the landscape and will not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby properties, and in particular the amenities of nearby residents.
- 7.5.14. In an overall conclusion I would accept that the planning authority have considered similar developments and granted planning permission in some cases and these are referred to in the grounds of appeal. The development by its nature has to be considered on individual merits against the stated provisions of the development plan.
- 7.5.15. The development as proposed does comply with criteria set out but the overriding consideration is whether it is or can be considered rural based enterprise and activity and it is my consideration that it is not. It is a development not dependent on the particular location in which it is proposed and could be located in a settlement. The primary uses are as a craft/artisan shop and a café and the pet farm is an ancillary use for the site. The planning authority's decision to refuse is therefore reasonable irrespective of consideration of the scale of development as submitted to the planning authority of the revised proposals as submitted with the grounds of appeal.
 - 7.6. Site specific matters.
 - 7.7. Transportation.
- 7.7.1. The development is located on a five handed junction and fronts onto a busy regional route and is within the 60kph speed limit area. The site has four access points currently and the rationalisation and reduction of access points as indicated in the revised details submitted in the grounds of appeal is desirable from the point of view of traffic safety. The additional parking is also, I consider, desirable as parking on road network and in particular the approaches to the junction would be hazardous to road users and pedestrians.
- 7.7.2. It is difficult to assess the level of traffic which the proposed development will generate notwithstanding the projections outlined in the applicants traffic submissions. It is likely that visitors will primarily visit the site by road vehicles.

- 7.7.3. The applicant has submitted details indicating the visibility sightlines that can be achieved but the main issue arises from the site's location on a busy junction with concealed visibility on its approaches. The addition of additional traffic movements and turning on and off the regional road is a concern and in particular the nature of the junction with two access points for local roads on the southern side of the junction, one of which, is a local road to Sallins and the other which would serve the local road providing access to the proposed development raises concerns in relation to the safety and movement of traffic at the junction and into and out of the site.
- 7.7.4. I would therefore consider the stated reason for refusal as reasonable. I would note that the transportation report of the planning authority did refer to serious concerns about the scale of the development and the impact of additional traffic movements located near a busy junction. The revised proposals as indicated does in part address matters raised but do not I consider remove the concerns as stated.
 - 7.8. Other site specific considerations.
- 7.8.1. I would have no objections in relation to matters of architectural design and layout and would have no objection to the retention of the orangery as initially proposed. As indicated the 200 sq. metres is a general guide and a small addition of floor area over the existing floor area is not at issue.
- 7.8.2. The applicant has submitted details in relation to drainage. Surface water arising from the development can be addressed within the site. In relation to effluent the applicant has submitted reports in relation to the site and ground conditions and a sizing of tank and treatment capacity to address effluent treatment and discharge. Animal dung and waste arising from the pet farm and its treatment and disposal is also adequately submitted.

8.0 **Recommendation**

8.1. I recommend that permission be refused.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The planning authority in the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 development in particular in chapters 5 and 10 outline policies and provisions

for the assessment of rural based enterprise with an emphasis on promotion of enterprise in settlements but permitting consideration of rural based enterprise outside of settlements where considered appropriate to do so. Section 10.4.10 and table 10.2 in particular set out guidance for the assessment of proposals based on the overriding policies with section 10.5 of the plan outlining rural development policy and in particular policy RE 9 to protect traditional rural enterprises from incompatible urban development. The stated provisions of the plan are considered to be reasonable. The proposed development does not meet the criteria set out in the plan for consideration of an enterprise to be located in a rural area and is a development not dependent on the particular location in which it is proposed and could be located in a settlement. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The proposed development is located at the crossroads and a busy junction. It is considered that the proposed development by reason of the additional traffic it would generate would interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic at this cross roads and junction. The proposed development would therefore endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard and constitute a hazard to the safety of pedestrians and road users.

Derek Daly Planning Inspector

23rd August 2017