



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL06D.249076

Development	Provision of 2 no. self service laundry units with integrated signage and retention of preparatory site development and services provision works.
Location	Park Pointe Neighbourhood Centre, Upper Glenageary Road, Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin.
Planning Authority	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	D17A/0497
Applicant(s)	Cosgrave Developments
Type of Application	Permission and Retention Permission
Planning Authority Decision	To Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Cosgrave Developments
Observer(s)	Michael Frisby on behalf of the residents of Dargan Drive

Date of Site Inspection

24th October 2017

Inspector

Erika Casey

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located in the Park Pointe Neighbourhood Centre on the Glenageary Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. The neighbourhood centre forms part of a larger residential estate known as Honeypark. The centre accommodates a number of retail units, a convenience store, gym and coffee shop.
- 1.2. The proposed self-service laundry units are located along the eastern boundary within the car park area that serves the neighbourhood centre. The subject site is located on a former planted area between the car park area and the retaining wall to the main development access road. There is an existing security hut located to the north.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises the provision of 2 no. self service laundry units with integrated signage. The laundry units each comprise one 18 kg wash drum, one 8 kg wash drum and one 18 kg dryer. The laundry units are open to the front but are within a structure that incorporates a roof and clear perspex side panels. The overall height of the structure accommodating the units is c. 2.4 metres. The development also provides for 2 no. roof top mounted illuminated signage cubes. These extend approximately 850mm above the roof structure. The site has an area of 85 sq. metres.
- 2.2. Retention permission is also sought for preparatory site development and service provision works. Works undertaken include the installation of a revised retaining wall, concrete plinth and new footpath with associated hand rail from the car park area to the laundry units. The wall has been faced with reconstituted stone to match the existing. Water supply and foul drainage to serve the units have also been installed.
- 2.3. It is stated that the purpose of the laundry units is to provide an additional service within the existing retail/services centre and that they will provide large capacity washing and drying facilities, in excess of standard domestic loads. The washing cycles take approximately 30 minutes and the dryer approximately 15 minutes. The machines operate on a 24/7 basis.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

To Refuse Permission for 1 no. reason:

“The proposed self service laundry units, by virtue of their design and prominent location at the entry to the existing Neighbourhood Centre would appear visually obtrusive when viewed from the adjoining footpath and roadway to and from the proposed Park Pointe Neighbourhood Centre. It is considered that the proposed development would be out of character with the area, would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area and, if permitted, would set an undesirable precedent for similar development in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.”

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report (25.07.2017)

- It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principal from a land use zoning objective and planning perspective. It would be a complementary activity to a neighbourhood centre.
- Concern regarding the location of the self-service laundry structure at the main entrance to Park Pointe Neighbourhood Centre. Due to the prominent location, it is considered that the development would detract from the visual amenity of the centre.
- Operation of the units on a 24 hour, 7 day a week basis would conflict with a condition attached to an earlier application pertaining to the neighbourhood centre – Planning Authority Reference: D06A/0927. Any such proposal should adhere the permitted business hours. Concern that the 24/7 operation would detract from adjoining residential amenities.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Transportation Planning (19.07.2017): No objection subject to condition.

Drainage Planning (18.07.2017): No objection.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- No submissions received.

3.4. Third Party Observations

3.4.1 10 third party observations were received in respect of the application. The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- There is a limited requirement for the proposed development. Similar developments elsewhere are not located in proximity to family homes.
- The operational hours of the laundry units are not in accordance with the current permission pertaining to the neighbourhood centre. It will set a precedent for future planning applications in the retail park.
- The development will generate a significant increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic and result in a serious health and safety risk. No additional parking proposed to serve the development.
- The development will have an adverse visual impact.
- Concern regarding potential impacts arising from noise, environmental impacts and anti-social behaviour.

4.0 Planning History

4.1 There have been a number of previous applications pertaining to the site which relate to the construction of the Pointe Park Neighbourhood Centre. These include Planning Authority References D06A/0927, D08A/1208, D10A/0303, D11A/0232, D11A/0435 and D13A/0296.

4.2 The parent permission for the development D06A/0927 was granted by An Bord Pleanála in June 2008. The following condition was attached:

“The business hours of retail units within the proposed Neighbourhood Centre shall be limited to between 0700 hours and 2200 hours only, unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

Reason: *In the interest of the residential amenity of the area.”*

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

5.1.1 The operative Development Plan is the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022. The subject site is zoned 'NC': *"To protect, provide for and/or improve mixed neighbourhood facilities"*. There is a Specific Local Objective pertaining to the site - SLO No. 64: *"To improve pedestrian and cycle permeability to and from the former Dun Laoghaire golf course lands at Honeypark"*.

Section 8.2.6.8 (ii) Signage: *"Advertising signs, where permitted, should be simple in design and sympathetic to the surroundings and features of the building on which they will be displayed. The number of signs located on a property should be limited and no sign should be unduly obtrusive or out-of-scale with the building façade"*.

Policy RET6: *"It is Council policy to encourage the provision of an appropriate mix, range and type of uses – including retail and retail services in areas zoned objective 'NC' subject to the protection of the residential amenities of the surrounding area."*

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

5.2.1 There are no European sites in close proximity to the subject site.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

- Laundrette facilities are activities typically provided for within neighbourhood centres. It will provide an additional service and amenity for the area. The development will be a particularly useful facility for apartment owners who do not have private gardens for drying larger items.
- The proposed laundry units are in a location tucked away in a previously unused area and will not impinge on the views into the neighbourhood centre area from Maypark Avenue. The main body of the units are located so as not to protrude above the height of the existing railing on the adjacent footpath. The site location was given careful consideration to ensure that the development would seamlessly, physically and visually incorporate into the existing neighbourhood centre.

- The height of the development is 2.4 metres and is lower than the existing security hut. The scale of the development is modest and is not obtrusive in terms of its bulk, scale or mass. The materials selected are reflective of materials and colours already permitted and constructed in the vicinity. The signage will only be clearly visible from within the car park area. Views of the development are restricted due to the presence of the existing security hut.
- A series of photomontages are submitted with the appeal to demonstrate the visual impact of the development, two of which are taken from the footpath/roadway approach to the neighbourhood centre. These demonstrate that the development will have no adverse visual impact.
- It is detailed that the development will be barely visible from outside the neighbourhood centre and has no realistic potential to impact on the character or setting of the wider area. The location of the site is within a busy car park and not an area of high townscape or streetscape sensitivity. The development is similar to that of a bring centre, which are seen as a necessary and integral part of neighbourhood centres.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- It is considered that the grounds of appeal do not raise any new matter which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would justify a change of attitude to the proposed development.

6.3. Observations

Michael Frisby on behalf of the residents of Dargan Drive.

- The proposed installation of a 24 hour, self-service laundry is not in accordance with the operational hours of the current grant for the Park Pointe retail park. The development will set an undesirable precedent for future applications within the retail park.
- The development will generate a significant increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic to the retail park. The car park is utilised by people visiting the Honeypark playground and an increase in the volume of vehicular traffic would compromise pedestrian safety. Notes that no additional parking provided to serve the development.

- The proximity of the development to a loading bay and truck turning circle will further exacerbate health and safety risks.
- The proposed illuminated signage is inappropriate and will have an adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residences.
- There is no necessity for the development. The development is not located adjacent to apartments within the development. Such developments are more typically located in service stations or to the rear of large shopping centres where their visual impact would be minimised and where there would be no impact to residential amenities.
- Concerns raised in relation to potential noise impacts and anti-social activities arising from the proposed development.

7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. The main issues in this appeal are those raised in the grounds of appeal and observation and it is considered that no other substantive issues arise. Appropriate Assessment also needs to be addressed. The issues can be dealt with under the following headings:

- Principle of Development.
- Design and Visual Impact.
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Appropriate Assessment.

7.2 **Principle of Development**

7.2.1 The proposed development comprises the development of a stand alone, self-service laundry unit within the car park serving the Park Pointe Neighbourhood Centre. It is detailed in the application documentation and the first party appeal, that the purpose of the facility is to provide facilities for residents in the catchment of the neighbourhood centre to launder larger bulky items. It is noted that the facility will be particularly useful for residents of apartments within the vicinity who have limited outdoor drying areas.

- 7.2.2 It is noted that the Planning Authority do not object to the principle of the development but are of the view that the location is inappropriate. I am satisfied that the proposed development will provide a necessary and appropriate facility for a neighbourhood centre development. It will enhance the range of services and facilities for local residents at this location and complement the existing uses. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable.
- 7.2.3 Concerns have been raised by the Planning Authority and the observers regarding the hours of operation of the laundry facility. It will be available on a 24 hour basis, 7 days a week. A condition was imposed on the parent permission (Planning Authority Reference D06A/0927) relating to the overall neighbourhood centre restricting its hours of operation from 0700 hours and 2200 hours only. It is contended that the facility will therefore contravene this previous condition.
- 7.2.4 The applicants have been clear regarding the intended use and operational hours of the facility. Permission has been sought for the development and must be considered on its merits notwithstanding a condition that was attached to a previous permission. It is considered that given the nature and function of the facility, it is unlikely to generate significant use after normal business hours. Activity and use is unlikely to be to such an extent that it would give rise to significant or adverse impacts to the residential amenities of properties in the vicinity. It is also noted that existing residential properties are located a significant distance away from the facility. In this regard, I am satisfied that the hours of operation are appropriate.
- 7.2.5 With regard to the development setting an undesirable precedent, any future application pertaining to a change of operating hours within the neighbourhood centre would be subject to planning permission and would be considered on its own merits.

7.3 Design and Visual Impact

- 7.3.1 The principle concern regarding the development raised by the Planning Authority relates to the visual impact of the development. It is considered that due to the prominence of the location, that the development would significantly detract from the visual amenity of the neighbourhood centre.
- 7.3.2 The proposed development is located within the car park of the neighbourhood centre. The units are located to the east of the car park area abutting the retaining

wall structure of the adjoining internal road from Maypark Avenue. Due to level differences in the site, they are located below the level of the existing railing and footpath on Maypark Avenue, and thus are not highly visible. There is an existing security hut located to the immediate north of the facility which largely screens views of the development. A pedestrian footpath, railings and car parking spaces are located to the immediate west. A raised landscaped flower bed is located to the east.

7.3.3 As outlined by the applicant, I am of the view that the existing site context and character comprises an active car park, security hut, stone walls and railing. It is not considered to be a visually sensitive environment. There are no views or prospects of any importance. The development in my view is not located in a highly visible or prominent location and it is considered an appropriate location for the facility. It is noted that the main pedestrian entrance to the retail park is located further north of the subject site.

7.3.4 The development itself is modest in nature. The facility has a limited footprint and an overall height of just 2.4 metres. Materials and finishes comprise perspex screens and powdered coated silver /grey metal canopy. I am satisfied that the development will assimilate well with the existing environment and in this context, that the development would not be incongruous with the existing setting. The applicant has submitted a number of photomontages which demonstrate the visual impact of the development. It is apparent from these, that the development will have no material or significant visual impact.

7.3.5 Concerns have been raised regarding the extent of signage and its visual impact. Two illuminated rooftop signage cubes are proposed. These protrude 850 mm above the roof and have a width of 700 mm. Whilst it is set out by the applicant that the signage is only visible from within the car park area, it is considered that in this instance, the extent of signage is somewhat excessive given the limited size and scale of the development. This can be addressed by way of appropriate condition.

7.3.6 In conclusion, having regard to the location of the development, its limited scale and the proposed finishes and materials, subject to modifications to the proposed signage, it is considered that the development would not give rise to an adverse visual impact or detrimentally impact on the visual amenities of the neighbourhood centre.

7.4 Impact on Residential Amenity

- 7.4.1 A number of concerns have been raised by the observers regarding the potential impact of the development on the residential amenities of the area. The issues raised primarily relate to noise impact, potential anti-social behaviour and traffic impacts.
- 7.4.2 In relation to noise impact, it is noted that the proposed units will be located within an existing car parking area. They are surrounded by car parking spaces and by a busy roadway to the east. The units are adjacent to existing retail and commercial units and are well separated from existing residential properties by existing surface parking and a boundary comprising concrete wall and hedging. In this regard, it is not considered that the development would give rise to material impacts in terms of noise.
- 7.4.3 In terms of potential additional pedestrian and vehicular traffic generated by the development, the comments raised in this regard appear somewhat anecdotal. As detailed above, it is envisaged that the development will be a complementary facility to the existing neighbourhood centre and it is likely that its use would be part of a linked trip to the neighbourhood centre where patrons could avail of the retail facilities in the adjoining neighbourhood centre whilst waiting on the washing cycle to complete. In this regard, it is not considered that the development is likely to be a significant generator of traffic in its own right.
- 7.4.4 In relation to the proximity of the facility to an existing turning circle and loading bay and potential health and safety risk that may arise, it is noted that the Transportation Department of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council has no objection to the proposed development. The development is separated from the car park area by a railing and is accessed via a pedestrian footpath. In this regard, it is considered unlikely that the development would result in a traffic hazard and it is convenient to use by pedestrians.
- 7.4.5 Concerns have been raised that the facility may generate anti-social behaviour due to the presence of an unsupervised cash device. This is considered to be more of a management issue and not a planning matter. Having regard to their location within a car park and distance from residential properties, it is not considered that the

development will give rise to any material impacts on the residential amenities of nearby properties.

7.5 Appropriate Assessment

7.5.1 Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, a laundry facility within an established neighbourhood centre in an urban area, located on zoned serviced land, and the distance to the nearest 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. It is recommended that permission be granted subject to conditions for the reasons and considerations set out below

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

9.1 Having regard to the provisions of the current Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, to the character of the existing neighbourhood centre and to the nature, form, scale and design of the proposed laundry facility, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the visual or residential amenities of the area. The proposed development would 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 except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The site and building works required to implement the development shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 to 1800 Monday to Fridays, between 0800 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the residential amenities of adjoining property in the vicinity.

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

Reason: In the interest of public health.

4. 1 no. illuminated roof top signage cube is to be omitted from the development.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

Erika Casey

Senior Planning Inspector

25th October 2017