



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-301933-18

Development	Retention of Building as constructed and all associated site works
Location	27 Florence Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Planning Authority	Wicklow County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	17/1272
Applicant(s)	Bray Christian Assembly
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Bray Christian Assembly
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	31 st August 2018
Inspector	Emer Doyle

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located at 27 Florence Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
- 1.2. The Bray Christian Assembly Church is located on the site. The use has been in existence for many years but the previous church was recently demolished and rebuilt. There are photographs on file of the previous building. The existing building has a timber cladding finish.
- 1.3. The uses in this location are typical of the town centre location and include hairdressers, retail, florists, computer repair etc.
- 1.4. Lands to the rear of the site are designated as an 'opportunity site' in the development plan and permission was granted by ABP for redevelopment of this brownfield site for use as a town centre, retail, office, restaurant, and cinema development.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Permission is sought by Bray Christian Assembly for their building as constructed and all associated site works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Wicklow County Council issued a notification to grant permission subject to 3 No. conditions.

Condition No. 2 is as follows:

'The external finish of the front façade of the building shall be plastered and painted. These works shall be completed within four months of the date of the final grant of permission.'

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

3.2.2. The initial Planning Report (29th November 2017) outlined that under a history file on the site, an F.I. Request was issued requiring the applicants to submit a design report outlining how the timber cladding would integrate with the streetscape. The F.I. Response failed to demonstrate that the finish would integrate with the streetscape. A condition was attached to the history file requiring a render finish.

It is stated that whilst there is no objection to the design and scale of the building, the planning authority has already adjudicated on this matter. The cladding does not integrate satisfactorily into the existing urban streetscape and is not acceptable.

An F.I. Request was issued requiring the applicant to justify the timber finish. The planners second report (23rd May 2018), considered that the timber finish was not in keeping with the existing streetscape.

3.2.3. Other Technical Reports

Roads - No objection.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

None.

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

None.

4.0 Planning History

PA 16/1109

Permission granted for demolition of No. 27 and the rear single storey extension of No. 26 along with a boundary wall between No. 26 and No. 27. The proposed works will consist of construction of a new 254m² replacement building along with all associated site and drainage works.

PA 15/732

Permission granted for demolition to No. 27 front façade and back room at the rear of the building and also the demolition of the rear attached shed to No. 26 and the party boundary wall between No. 26 and No. 27. The proposed work will consist of alterations and extensions.

PA 12/630003

Permission granted for amendments to previously approved planning application PA 10/91.

PA 10/630091

Permission for development at Nos. 26 and 27 Florence Road. The development will consist of double storey extension to rear.

Local Authority Development on adjoining site to rear:

ABP 27. JA0036

Permission granted for redevelopment of an existing brownfield site of c.968 hectares for use as a town centre, retail, office, restaurant and cinema development.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2018

Zoning- TC – Primarily Town Centre Uses - To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including retail, commercial, office and civic use, and to provide for ‘Living Over the Shop’ residential accommodation or other ancillary residential accommodation.

Section 2.2.5 notes that the quality of the shopfronts in Bray Main Street and the surrounding side streets is relatively poor. It is a priority of the Planning Authority to facilitate development that would contribute to the improvement of the overall appearance and aesthetic appeal of the streetscape, including shopfront improvements, regeneration of vacant sites and public realm.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

- Appeal against Condition No. 3 which states: ‘The external finish of the front façade of the building shall be plastered and painted. These works shall be completed within four months of the date of the final grant of permission.
- The buildings on Florence Road ‘are of low quality with badly maintained designs in a variety of finishes from brick, render, variance in unattractive timber shop fronts with the exception of the modern glass and timber façade Ironworks Fitness building.’
- ‘Our building is of high quality design with a 2m setback distance from the existing building line along the streetscape. This setback distance gave us a unique character and opportunity of enhancing the low quality streetscape in designing a building with a carefully selected natural external renewable

timber finish which enhances Florence Road and assists in creating a strong sense of place than currently exists.'

- The timber cladding material is called Canjaere Classic Timber Cladding by A Proctor Group. Canjaere cladding is treated with a unique process to protect the wood against moisture and preserve the finished look and is backed by a 30 year maintenance against rot and decay.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

- None.

6.3. **Observations**

- None.

7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. Further to my examination of the planning file and the grounds of appeal that relate to one condition only i.e. Condition No. 2 of the notification of the decision of the planning authority to grant permission, and having assessed the documentation and submissions on file, I consider it is appropriate that the appeal shall be confined to this single condition. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the determination by the Board of this application as if it had made to it in the first instance would not be warranted and that it would be appropriate to use the provisions of Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended in this case.

7.2. Condition No. 2 requires that the external finish of the building shall be plastered and painted. These works shall be completed within four months of the date of the final grant of permission.

7.3. The site is located within Bray Town Centre and is zoned as town centre. The description of this objective in the 2018 Local Area Plan is as follows:

‘To develop and consolidate the existing town centres to improve vibrancy and vitality with the densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments ensuring a mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure, residential uses and urban streets, while delivering a quality urban environment which will enhance the quality of life of residential, visitor and workers alike.’

- 7.4. The plan states that *‘the quality of shopfronts within Bray Main Street and surrounding side streets is relatively poor. In addition, some parts of the centre have suffered from high degrees of vacancy. It is a priority of the Planning Authority to facilitate development that would contribute to the improvement of the overall appearance and aesthetic appeal of the streetscape, including for example shopfront improvements, regeneration of vacant sites and public realm improvement schemes.’*
- 7.5. There is a wide variety of development in the vicinity of the site, much of it poor quality. Photos of adjoining buildings have been submitted with the planning application. The design of the Christian Assembly building is attractive in my view, however I consider that the finish is not compatible with the existing streetscape. The majority of the existing buildings are rendered and I consider that the condition requiring the applicant to render the building would enable the building to integrate to a greater degree with the area. I note that this issue was raised with the applicant in a history application on the site (PA 16/1109 – F.I. Request and Condition 3) and again in the current retention application (F.I. Request and Condition 2).
- 7.6. Having regard to the concerns raised regarding the poor quality of existing designs in the area, I am of the view that careful attention needs to be paid to the finish in order for the buildings to integrate with the streetscape. The existing building is very dominant in the streetscape by reason of the front facing gable, the 2.3m setback and the finish which is out of character with other finishes in the area. There are a lot of photos submitted on the planning drawings which indicate that render is the predominant finish on Florence Road.
- 7.7. As such, I consider that timber cladding would be an inappropriate and dominant finish and would adversely affect the character and seriously injure the visual amenity of this town centre site. Furthermore, it could set an undesirable precedent for similar finishes in the area. As such, I condition that condition 2 is necessary and should be attached by the Board.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. Having regard to the nature of the condition the subject of the appeal, the Board is satisfied that the determination by the Board of the relevant application as if it had been made in the first instance would not be warranted and, based on the reasons and considerations set out below, directs the said Council under subsection (1) of section 139 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to ATTACH condition number 2 and the reason therefor.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the zoning objective for the area as set out in the Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2018 and the established pattern of development in the area, it is considered that the timber cladding would fail to integrate the church within the streetscape, would be visually dominant and would adversely affect the character and seriously injure the visual amenity of this town centre street. The existing finish, by itself and by the undesirable precedent that would be set for similar development in the vicinity would seriously injure the visual amenities of the streetscape in a prominent town centre site.

Emer Doyle
Planning Inspector

9th October 2018