

Inspector's Report 304100-19

Development Retention of change of use of part of

former creamery to metal fabrication

workshop.

Location Durrus, Bantry, Co. Cork

Planning Authority Cork County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref. 1800645

Applicant(s) Patrick O'Driscoll

Type of Application Planning permission

Planning Authority Decision Granted permission s.t. conditions

Type of Appeal Third party

Appellant(s) Tony Doyle

Observer(s) None

Date of Site Inspection 29th May 2019

Inspector Mary Kennelly

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site is located on the outskirts of Durrus Village, which is located c.10km to the southwest of Bantry on the R591. Durrus is situated at the head of the Sheep's Head Peninsula and the Mizen Head Peninsula and contains a small number of shops and bars/restaurants in the heart of the village. The site is located within the Development Boundary for Durrus. It is accessed from the L4705-0, which is a local road that branches off the R591 in an easterly direction at a fork in the road in the middle of the village. The site is situated approx. 200m along this road to the east of the village. The Durrus River flows to the north of the road. The area in which the site is situated is semi-rural with a small number of one-off houses and farmland to the south of the road. The appeal site is a former creamery building which fronts onto the road on the southern side of the carriageway. There is a single dwelling located to the south-east and a further dwelling (appellant's) on the opposite side of the road beyond the river. The appellant's property is situated between the R591 (to the northwest) and the L4705-0 and river (to the southeast), but is not visible from the appeal site, as it is well screened from the road. There is a further dwelling house (visible from appeal site) which is on the northern side of the R591.
- 1.2. The appeal site comprises a large single-storey building which has been subdivided into two parts. There is a lean-to extension to the rear. The site area is given as 630m². The existing building has a stated floor area of 268.67m² and the proposed development relates to an area of 151.04m², which is the eastern half of the building and also includes the lean-to shed and yard area. There is a large concrete apron in front of the building which adjoins the public road, and a large yard to the rear, which is accessed by means of a vehicular entrance on the eastern side of the building. A sign has been fixed to the front elevation above the front (sliding) door together with a security light.
- 1.3. The remainder of the building (western section) is owned by the landlord and is stated to be used for the storage of personal artefacts. This section of the building is served by a further entrance and yard and by the concrete apron at the front. There is an additional storage building to the west of this section of the former creamery building. I noted from my site inspection that there is no demarcation of the boundary between the tenancies nor is there any impediment to movement between the two

parts of the site. However, the interior of the building is subdivided and separate from the site of the workshop. The lean-to structure (part of appeal site) is attached to the rear of the western section of the building.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. It is proposed to retain the use of the eastern section of the building, together with the lean-to and eastern section of the side/rear yard, as a metal fabrication workshop. The proposed development includes a small forge and metal working equipment for cutting, hammering and welding. The products made include gates and railings. The works are carried out within the building. The lean-to area at the rear is used for storage of materials.
- **2.2.** The proposed development includes the retention of a security light and signage on the front façade. The signage was recently relocated from the front façade of the western section of the original creamery building, which lies outside the red line boundary, to a position above the front sliding door to the workshop.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

The planning authority decided to grant permission subject to 8 no. conditions:

Condition 2 Signage

Condition 3 External lighting

Condition 4 Use restricted to metal fabrication unit and areas within red

line.

Condition 5 Hours of operation for machinery/equipment and noise

generating activities restricted to 08.00-20.00 Mon-Fri and none

on Saturdays, Sundays or Public holidays.

Condition 6 Removal of existing sign within 6 months.

Condition 7 Waste management including a requirement to recycle solid waste arising on site and that all exported material to be managed/disposed of at a licensed waste facility.

Condition 8 Management of end-of-life metal equipment with none allowed to accumulate on site and a requirement to recycle all end-of-life equipment wastes arising as much as possible and otherwise to be removed to an approved facility.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The Area Planner's report (19/12/18) includes information about the planning history of the site and area and enforcement investigations regarding the appeal site. The creamery building was the subject of a permission in 1966, it was noted, which related to three large buildings and a yard with cattle pens. Enforcement investigations commenced following a complaint in May 2018 regarding unauthorised use as ironworks business, which resulted in the current application/appeal. It was noted that although the western part of the building was outside the red line boundary, a sign had been erected relating to the ironworks on that part of the front façade. It was further noted that a recently constructed house, which had been built to the south-east of the site, was not shown on the submitted layout plans.

The proposed light industrial use was generally considered to be acceptable in principle given that the previous use was as a creamery. It was stated that this was a long-established commercial use which included delivery of goods, holding/movement of cattle, deposition and collection of milk churns, coupled with a historical use involving the sale of petrol (two petrol pumps on site). The main issue was identified as noise emissions and the impact on residential amenities. The prospect of relocating the sliding door or requiring to be kept closed was considered to be impractical. The lack of objection from the Environment Unit was noted including the likelihood of a high ambient background noise level due to proximity to the R591 and the river and to the noise levels associated with the previous use. It was concluded that the application should be deferred pending the receipt of further

information in respect of amended plans showing the recently built house to the rear and revised location of signage on the front elevation.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

<u>Area Engineer's Report</u> – (23/11/18) – Sightlines were considered to be acceptable, but surface water should not be allowed to flow onto the public road. Recommends permission with no specific conditions required.

Estate Engineer's Report – (26/11/18) – No objection. Proposal was assessed against the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. It was noted that the site was in Flood Zone B, but no objection was raised as it is a "less vulnerable use" and there is no requirement for a Justification Test.

Environment Report (12/12/18) – Recommends permission subject to 2 conditions relating to waste management. The report addresses the issues of noise and waste management. It was recommended that waste and end-of-life equipment should not be allowed to accumulate on site and should be disposed of appropriately. The noise generating elements of the creamery use were noted, which would have included operations on most days of the week throughout the year. The facility was considered to be small in scale and the work activity was largely confined to inside the building. However, it was noted that the large sliding door at the front is left open periodically due to the need for natural light etc. No objections were raised.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

Irish Water (30/11/18) – No objections subject to a connection agreement.

3.4. Third party observations

An objection was submitted by the neighbouring resident of the property to the north, which is on the opposite side of the road. It is stated that the previous use as a creamery by Drinagh co-op has not been used as such for 10 years and that the recently commenced use has had a severely adverse effect on his quality of life.

Objection was raised to the following elements of the proposal:-

- Unacceptable noise levels due to loud hammering, drilling and sawing of metal:
- Work occurs not just during weekdays but also at weekends;
- The building was not designed for industrial use and is wholly unsuitable for the business of an ironworks. It is in a residential area and the main front doors are always open. No attempt has been made to insulate the building.

3.5. Further information dated 20th December 2018

Revised drawings were submitted showing the location and footprint of the house to the rear (south-east) of the site and indicating signage associated with the proposed workshop, which was moved to a position above the sliding door.

3.6. P.A. response to FI

The Planner's report (5/03/19) noted the location of the house to the SE as being c. 60m distant. The revised location for the signage was considered to be acceptable. It was stated that a further site inspection had been carried out and that the noise levels, while the door was left open, was audible but of short duration and not considered to be unduly excessive. It was noted that the building is located c. 60m from both the objector's residence and from the house to the rear, but that no objection had been received from the latter. Consideration was given to imposing a noise condition (as had been applied in the case of a workshop granted by the Board at Dunboy near Castletownbere, PL88.236570). However, it was considered that

"controlling intermittent noise through decibel conditions is not advocated since the planning resources, which are limited, must be in place in the first instance to be realistically enforceable, if decibel levels are to be used and constant monitoring is not possible."

It was considered that a condition controlling the hours of operation would be preferable. It was further considered that having regard to the lawful use as a creamery, no development contribution would be payable for the proposed change of use. Permission was recommended subject to conditions.

The Senior Executive Planner (5/03/19) agreed with the assessment and recommendation. It was stated that the hours of operation should be restricted between 0800 and 2000 and limited on weekends.

4.0 Planning History

414/66 – Planning permission granted for creamery and cattle pen. (Reference to this permission made in P.A. reports but details not provided). The P.A. reports state that the permission was granted subject to 2 conditions relating to drainage associated with the cattle pens and that the approved drawings show 2 petrol pumps at the rear.

02/4446 - permission granted by the planning authority for a house on the opposite side of the road to the north of the site (appellant's).

16/444 – permission granted in 2017 by P.A. for a one and a half storey dwelling house to the south east of the site.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Planning Framework - Project Ireland 2040

National Policy Objective 21 – Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.

5.2. Cork County Development Plan 2017-2023

RCI 7-3 – Small Scale Rural Businesses/Tourism – encourage the development of small-scale rural businesses and tourism in rural areas.

EE-9-1 – Business Development in Rural Areas – to be encouraged where the scale and nature of the development is appropriate to its surroundings, it will enhance the strength and diversity of the local rural economy, the landscape will not be adversely affected, the road network can accommodate the extra demand and safe access to the public road can be achieved.

TM 3-3 – ensure all new vehicular accesses are designed to appropriate standards to ensure the safety of other road users.

GI-6-1 Landscape

- (a) Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork's built and natural environment.
- (b) Landscape issues important factor in all land-use proposals
- (c) Ensure new development meets high standards of siting and design.
- (d) Protect skylines and ridge lines for development
- (e) Discourage development requiring the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

5.3. West Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017

- 5.3.1. Durrus is designated as a Key Village, with a population of c.334, in the West Cork Municipal District LAP. It is described as representing a 'gateway' to the Sheep's Head and Mizen Peninsulas, and as having an impressive range of services for a village of its size. These include a variety of shops, pubs, churches, primary schools, a health centre, a nursery and some industry. The village has experienced strong growth in recent years, but the footprint of the village has remained quite compact.
- 5.3.2. The appeal site is located within the Development Boundary for the village. It is situated at the eastern extremity of the Development Boundary, which extends to the north and to the south of the site. There no specific zoning but the area is located within Flood Zone B. Relevant Objectives include:
 - **DB-07** Other business/industrial development can be accommodated on suitable sites within the development boundary subject to normal proper planning and sustainable development criteria.
 - **DB-08** Support the development of tourism and other forms of indigenous employment uses within the village where they can be suitably integrated into the setting of the village.

5.4. Natural Heritage Designations

Dunbeacon Shingle SAC (002280) approx. 4km to southwest

Reen Point Shingle SAC (002281) approx. 6km to southwest

Sheep's Head SAC (000102) approx. 6km to west

Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC (000101) approx. 9km to southeast

Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA (004156) which lies approx. 15km to the southwest.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The third-party appeal was submitted by the resident of the house on the opposite side of the local road, to the north of the appeal site. The main points raised may be summarised as follows:

- The noise generated by the development seriously affects the appellant's
 quality of life. It involves the cutting, hammering and drilling of metal. As the
 doors are always left open, the noise is channelled directly to the appellant's
 property, which means that he must stay indoors with the windows shut and the
 radio on to drown it out.
- The First Schedule of the permission states that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in the Second Schedule, the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of adjoining property in the area. However, the sound level is such that the occupants of the house cannot enjoy the amenities of the garden.
- The hours of operation are restricted to 08.00-20.00 Mon.-Fri., which means
 that the appellants cannot use the garden during daylight hours during the
 week. Since permission was granted, unacceptable noise has been made on
 Saturday 16th March and Saturday 23rd March in contravention of the
 conditions.
- A more appropriate condition would have been to require the doors to be kept shut while making noise.

- The building was not designed for a use such as this. No steps have been taken to insulate the building.
- Condition 3 requires the security lights to be cowled and directed away from the public roadway. These lights shine directly into his bedroom windows and no steps have been taken to prevent this.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

The P.A. responded to the grounds of appeal on the 25th April 2019. This submission primarily reiterates the reasons for granting permission. It is pointed out that the decision to grant took account of 6 mitigating factors as set out in the Planner's Report of 5/3/19. The imposition of a condition requiring the door to remain shut would be unenforceable.

6.3. First party Response to Grounds of Appeal

The first party responded to the grounds of appeal on the 1st of May 2019. This was accompanied by several letters of support from neighbouring residents and members of the wider community (with a site location plan identifying the neighbouring properties), photographs and information regarding the security lighting at the premises. The main points of the response may be summarised as follows:

- The applicant has brought a derelict commercial building back to life, a
 building which was once a bustling hub of the community. This represents a
 reversal of rural decline and is supported by the wider community.
- The building was a creamery and agri stores where generations of the community came with cars, tractors and lorries every day to do their business.
 The current use is also a commercial enterprise.
- The business operates between 8.30am and 5.30pm which are normal business hours during which you cannot expect complete silence. The appellant's claim of unacceptable noise on Saturdays is disputed. Whilst the planning condition stipulates no noise on a Saturday, the building must remain open as this is the time that people drop off jobs and make orders.
- The source of the light nuisance is disputed as there is a street light which is twice the height of his security light and it is more likely that this is the source

of the nuisance. It is also stated that there is a dense tree screen between the appeal site/road and the appellant's property. Photographs are enclosed to demonstrate this.

7.0 Assessment

- 7.1. It is considered that the main issues arising from the appeal are as follows: -
 - Principle of development
 - Impact on residential amenities from noise
 - Impact on residential amenities from light

7.2. Principle of development

- 7.2.1. The site lies within the Development Boundary for the Key Village of Durrus, wherein the policy is to support indigenous employment uses and to accommodate business/industrial development (DB-07/DB-08). I also note that the National Planning Framework Policy Objective 21 supports innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through diversification of the rural economy. It is stated that the development of a strong enterprise culture is central to the economic and societal vibrancy of rural communities and that micro-enterprises, (less than 10 employees), are particularly relevant to the sustainability of smaller towns and rural areas. The County Development Plan policy relating to the rural economy (Chapter 6) is also quite supportive of small-scale businesses, such as EE 9-1, and this is also reflected in Policy RCI 7-3 which encourages small-scale rural businesses.
- 7.2.2. Policy EE 9-1 encourages businesses where the scale and nature is appropriate to the rural area, where it would enhance the strength and diversity of the local economy, where the landscape would not be adversely affected and where the road network can accommodate the extra traffic and safe access can be provided. It is considered that the nature and scale of the proposed development, comprising a metal fabrication workshop, would be consistent with the policies favouring small scale rural enterprise and is appropriate in this rural location, within the development boundary for the village, subject to normal planning considerations. The previous commercial use of the premises can also be considered to have some weight.

However, the fact that the site was previously used as a creamery is not considered to be sufficient justification in itself for a change of use to a light industrial unit, as the nature of the activities associated with each use is quite different. The appropriateness of the proposed use will depend on whether the activities can be carried on without causing undue nuisance to the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. These matters will be discussed below.

7.3. Residential amenities - noise

- 7.3.1. The site is located on a public road and is in an area which is semi-rural in character. There are a number of residential properties in the vicinity and the applicant has provided a map showing the location of some of these houses, together with letters of support from several neighbours. I noted from my site inspection that there were two dwelling houses that were clearly visible from the rear yard of the workshop. These were the dwelling house recently constructed to the south-east, (letter of support Tim McCarthy), and the residence to the north, on an elevated site, (letter of support from James & Bridie Tobin). The appellant's residence is directly opposite, c.60 metres distant. The McCarthy residence is at a similar distance to the southeast. The appellant's dwelling is very well screened by dense vegetation and trees to the south. It is at a considerably lower level than the R591 which runs to the north of this dwelling and appears to be screened by trees from the regional road also. The Tobin residence is approx. 50m further to the north but is elevated at the level of the R591, and as a result directly overlooks the workshop premises.
- 7.3.2. The activity carried on from the workshop is the fabrication of items such as iron railings and gates. This essentially involves cutting metal using precision machinery, welding and hammering which would generally be associated with a blacksmith forge. The applicant has not provided any details regarding the sound levels or the frequency, duration or nature/character of any particular noise level that would be generated. It is considered, however, that the nature of the noise levels associated with the metal fabrication workshop would differ quite markedly from those associated with a creamery use. The elements of the latter use are likely to have involved noise on a more continuous basis involving vehicles moving (including tractors and milk lorries), milk churns being moved around, cattle noises, people talking etc. The nature of the noise associated with the workshop is likely to be more

- intermittent but also have a different tonal character and with a likelihood of greater intensity, impulsivity and/or highly pitched noise levels. The current use also involves vehicles moving around the site, as witnessed during my site inspection.
- 7.3.3. One of the aspects of the use raised by the appellant relates to the sliding door on the front elevation. It is considered that even if attenuation was to be provided to insulate the building itself, the large sliding door, which would inevitably be left open from time-to-time, would negate the effects of any such attenuation. The Planning Authority weighed up the benefits of requiring the sliding door to be kept closed and the possibility of attaching a condition to restrict noise levels. These suggestions were dismissed on the basis of being difficult to monitor and enforce. It is considered, however, that if the use cannot be carried out without detriment to the residential amenities of neighbouring properties, [which would normally require compliance with a 55dB(A) noise level (at nearest noise sensitive location) during business hours] and should a condition to this effect be too difficult to enforce, the application should be refused.
- 7.3.4. Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that the sliding door should be relocated or removed, and a noise level restriction should be placed on the use. The sliding door should be relocated to the rear of the building, where it would open onto the rear yard. There is a vehicular agate at the side which allows for deliveries to the rear. In addition, a noise level restriction of 55dBA rated sound level (i.e. corrected sound level for a tonal or impulsive noise component) at the nearest sensitive location, during specified operational hours, and 45dB(A) at all other times would be appropriate to protect the residential amenities of nearby properties, together with procedures to determine compliance with these limits. This would allow the applicant to decide whether any other attenuation methods would be required in order to comply with the noise level restrictions.
- 7.3.5. It is further considered that normal working hours should not exceed 0800-19.00 Monday to Friday and 0800-1400 on Saturdays. Although the P.A. restricted the hours to Monday to Friday, it is normal practice to allow commercial/industrial units to operate on a Saturday morning and the applicant has indicated that he operates from the premises on a Saturday as clients come to place orders etc. It is considered that with such mitigation together with noise limits and the relocation of the door, the workshop would not be likely to give rise to any undue adverse impact on residential

amenity. Should the Board be minded to grant permission, appropriately worded conditions should be attached to any such permission.

7.4. Residential amenities – light pollution

7.4.1. The security light is located on the front elevation just above the signage for the building. The appellant has complained that it shines directly into his bedroom. The applicant has stated that it is more likely to be the street light which is located outside the appellant's boundary that is causing a nuisance. It is considered that given the distance involved (c.60m), the dense vegetation within the appellant's garden which provides an effective screen from the road, and the position of the streetlight, it is unlikely that the security light would give rise to any significant loss of amenity. However, it is considered reasonable to attach a condition with similar wording to Condition No. 3 of the P.A decision to any permission, should the Board be minded to grant permission. This required that any external lighting be cowled and directed away from the public roadway.

7.5. Environmental Impact Assessment

Having regard to the nature, size and location of the proposed development, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

7.6. Appropriate Assessment

There are five European sites in the vicinity of the site, which are as follows:

Dunbeacon Shingle SAC (002280) which lies approx. 4km to the southwest.

Reen Point Shingle SAC (002281) which lies approx. 6km to the southwest.

Sheep's Head SAC (000102) which lies approx. 6km to the west

Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC (000101) which lies approx. 9km to the south and

Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA (004156) which lies approx. 15km to the southwest.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the distances from the said designated sites, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise. It is considered that the proposed development would not 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. I recommend that planning permission should be <u>granted</u> for the proposed development for the reasons and considerations set out below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the planning history of the site as a creamery, which has until recently lain vacant, to the semi-rural character of the area which is located within the Development Boundary for the Key Village of Durrus and to the nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would be in accordance with the policies and objectives for the area as set out in the Cork County Development Plan 2014 and the West Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017, would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity 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.

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by further plans and particulars submitted to the planning authority on the 22nd day of February 2019, 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 proposed development shall be amended as follows:
 - (a) The existing sliding door on the front elevation shall be removed and relocated to the rear (south-eastern) elevation of the building. The door opening shall be blocked up and plastered and painted to match the remainder of the front elevation. The existing sliding door may be replaced with a small pedestrian sized door. These works shall be carried out within two months of the date of this order.

Revised drawings showing compliance with these requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed with, the planning authority prior to commencement of the works.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.

3. The development shall be used solely as a commercial metal fabrication workshop as described in the documents submitted to the planning authority and the Board. A change of use or intensification of this use shall not take place without the benefit of a further planning permission, notwithstanding the exempted development provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

Reason: In the interests of orderly development and to safeguard the amenities of the area.

4. The workshop shall not be used for any commercial activity outside the hours of 0800 to 1900 Monday to Friday inclusive and 0800 to 1400 on Saturdays and shall not be used 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: To safeguard the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

5. The noise level shall not exceed 55dB(A) rated sound level, (that is corrected sound level for a tonal or impulsive component) as measured at the nearest occupied dwelling between 08.00 and 20.00 hours Monday to Friday inclusive and shall not exceed 45dB(A) at any other time. Procedures for the purpose of determining compliance with this limit shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority within two months of the date of this order.

Reason: To protect the amenities of property in the vicinity of the site.

- 6. No goods, raw materials or waste products shall be placed or stored outside the building, other than in receptacles approved by the planning authority.
 Reason: In the interests of public health and the visual amenities of the area.
- A plan containing details for the management and storage of waste (and in particular recyclable materials and end-of-life metal equipment) within the development, including facilities for the storage, separation and collection of waste, and in particular recyclable materials and for the ongoing operation of this facility shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority within two months of the date of this order.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of the area and to ensure the provision of adequate refuse storage.

8. Any external lighting shall be cowled and directed away from the public roadway. Specific details of all lighting locations and type, if any, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority within two months of the date of this order.

Reason: in the interest of the amenities of the area.

9. Apart from the fascia signage shown on the plans submitted on the 22nd day of February 2019, no advertisement or advertisement structure, the exhibition or erection of which would otherwise constitute exempted development under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, or any statutory provision amending or replacing them, shall be displayed or erected within the curtilage of the site unless authorised by a further grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

10. Water supply and drainage arrangements for the site, including the disposal of surface water shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services. No surface water shall be discharged onto the public road or adjoining properties.

Reason: In the interests of environmental protection and public health.

Mary Kennelly Planning Inspector 24th June 2019