



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP310395-21

Development	Create new vehicular entrance with associated works.
Location	Rose Lann, St Johns Road, Wexford, County Wexford.
Planning Authority	Wexford County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2021/0370
Applicant(s)	John & Moira Fortune
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Type of Appeal	First Party V Refusal
Appellant(s)	John & Moira Fortune
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	1 st October 2021
Inspector	Hugh Mannion

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The application site comprises a detached house at 'Rose Lann' at St Johns Road, Wexford town, County Wexford. The application site boundary with the public footpath comprises a random stone wall about 2m high. There are two existing entrances through this wall; to the east and closer to the junction of St Johns Road with Johns Street is a splayed gated vehicular entrance and to the west is a gated pedestrian entrance. There is paid public parallel parking along both sides of the street interspersed with mature trees along the site frontage. There are houses fronting onto the street facing the application site.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises alterations to an existing boundary wall and creation of a new vehicular entrance with associated works at 'Rose Lann', Saint Johns Road, Wexford, County Wexford.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Permission refused.

The proposed additional entrance would cause the loss of at least one car parking space in a pay-and-display area zoned for 'Town Centre' uses. The proposed entrance is unnecessary, would give rise to a precedent for additional site entrances in a town centre location, give rise to traffic hazard and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The planner's report recommended refusal as set out in the manager's order.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

The **Borough District Office** recommended refusal on the basis of the loss of car parking spaces and setting of an undesirable precedent for further such development.

4.0 **Planning History**

4.1. Permission was granted for development of a granny flat on the application site under 20191573.

5.0 **Policy and Context**

5.1. **Development Plan**

The area is zoned 'town centre' in the Wexford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 (lifetime extended).

5.2. **Natural Heritage Designations**

Not relevant.

5.3. **EIA Screening**

5.4. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and its location in a built-up area I conclude that there are no potential likely significant impacts on the environment and that submission of an EIAR and carrying out of an EIA is not required.

6.0 **The Appeal**

6.1. **Grounds of Appeal**

- The proposed entrance will not give rise to traffic hazard as it would cut by half the movements associated with the existing entrance, placing traffic movement further away from the St Johns Road/Johns Street junction and removing the requirement to reverse out of the application site.

- The proposed development would improve the health and safety of the applicant's family, pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- Public safety in the town centre should be prioritised over the revenue generated by pay-and-display parking.
- The removal of an on-street parking space may not be required.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

6.3. No comments.

6.4. **Observations**

6.5. No observations.

7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. **Traffic Hazard.**

7.2. The covering letter submitted with the application makes the case that at present there is a single access/exit from the applicant's house and that the applicants must drive in and reverse out of the application site and that this gives rise to traffic hazard on Saint John's Road. The proposed development of an additional exit further along St John's Road to the southwest is designed to address this point.

7.3. The planning authority refused permission because the proposed development would require the loss of on street pay-and-display parking in an area zoned town centre and would give rise to traffic hazard. The appeal, *inter alia*, makes the point that by moving half of the site access movements away to a new exit further from the junction of St John's Road/Johns Street that this would enhance traffic and pedestrian safety.

7.4. The application does not demonstrate that a drive in/drive out arrangement cannot be provided within the application site given a front garden depth of between 14m and 16m. I conclude therefore that removing a traffic hazard is not a sound justification for the proposed additional entrance. Having regard to the relatively narrow nature of St John's Road, the availability of parking on both sides, the

multiplicity of individual domestic entrances onto the street and the speed limit of 50kph which applies in the area I conclude that a new entrance would not endanger public safety as stated by the planning authority.

7.5. Zoning Policy.

7.6. The site is zoned 'town centre' in the Wexford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 (lifetime extended). The zoning objective is to enhance the special physical character of Wexford Town Centre and to provide for and improve retailing, commercial, office, cultural and other uses in the town centre. Part of improving these characteristics and activities in the town centre is providing access to the centre. In the present case the planning authority had gone some way to improving the public realm in the area of the application and there is a mix of footpaths, planted and maintained trees, pedestrian crossings and paid car parking along the street fronting the application site. I consider that these elements contribute to the accessibility and amenity of the town centre. I am satisfied on the basis of the submitted drawings and site inspection that the proposed access would require the loss of a public car parking space to achieve an aim which could be met within the application site boundary. Additionally, I consider that a further access point over the public footpath would, unnecessarily, hamper pedestrian movement.

7.7. Appropriate Assessment

7.8. Having regard to the modest scale of the proposed development, the absence of any emissions therefrom, and the separation distances from any European site I am satisfied that 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. I recommend refusal.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

The proposed development is located in an area zoned for town centre uses in the current Wexford Town Development Plan where the objective is to provide for and improve retailing, commercial, office, cultural and other uses in the town centre. The provision of public paid parking contributes significantly to the achievement of this objective and the proposed new vehicular access would require the removal of a public paid parking space thereby undermining the zoning objective to protect town centre uses. The Board is not satisfied that the proposed new vehicular access is justified on traffic safety grounds and the proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the provisions of the Wexford Town Development Plan and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Hugh Mannion
Senior Planning Inspector

27th October 2021