

Inspector's Report ABP-314768-22

Development Permission for 2 no off-street car

parking spaces, EV charger, new vehicular gated entrance, refurbishment of existing pedestrian gate and paving, landscaping and associated building services and

works.

Location 18 Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Co.

Dublin (a Protected Structure).

Planning Authority Dublin City Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref. 4494/22

Applicant(s) David Wall

Type of Application Permission

Planning Authority Decision Refuse Permission

Type of Appeal First Party v Refusal

Appellant David Wall

Observer Philip O' Reilly

Date of Site Inspection 28th July 2023

Inspector Ian Campbell

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal property is located on the northern side of Lansdowne Road. The appeal property is a 4 storey, end of terrace, Victorian townhouse (c. 1860). Stepped access is provided to first floor level (Piano nobile arrangement).
- 1.2. The front boundary of the appeal site comprises a 1.3 metre high, granite capped, red brick wall, with railings mounted atop. There is a pedestrian gate on the front boundary. The front curtilage of the appeal property appears to have been recently cleared and now comprises gravel. The area indicated on the drawings as 'Victorian Tile' also appears to have been removed.
- 1.3. Development is currently being undertaken to the rear of the appeal site at 95 Lansdowne Park.
- 1.4. There is pay and display and permit parking along Lansdowne Road, including to the front of the appeal property, where there is a 3 space parking bay. A street tree is located to the front of the appeal site within the public footpath.
- 1.5. The majority of properties on this section of Lansdowne Road (No.'s 16, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 36 and 38) have carried out similar works, that being the creation of vehicular entrances.

2.0 **Proposed Development**

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises;
 - 2 no off-street car parking spaces;
 - EV charger;
 - Electric sliding vehicular gated entrance (3 metres wide);
 - Refurbishment of existing pedestrian gate and paving,
 - Landscaping and associated building services and works.
- 2.2. The planning application was accompanied by a Conservation Statement. The statement concluded that the proposed development allows for the use of the property as a contemporary family home, and that the proposal will not significantly adversely affect the character of the Protected Structure.

2.3. A revised proposal has been submitted with the appeal. *Drawing No. 1821-VP2-002*. indicates the repositioning of the proposed entrance to provide for a 3 metre buffer with the street tree and a reduction in the width of the entrance to 2.6 metres.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. **Decision**

The Planning Authority issued a Notification of Decision to <u>Refuse Permission</u> on the 6th September 2022 for 2 no. reasons which can be summarised as follows;

- 1. The proposed development would result in the loss of on-street parking which would reduce the supply available to residents and in the wider area, contrary to Policy MT14 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, which seeks to retain on-street parking. The development would impact on the street trees in front of the property and is contrary to the Section 16.3.3 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 and the Dublin Tree Strategy.
- 2. The removal of the historic principal street boundary and insertion of a new vehicle entrance together with the loss of a significant portion of soft landscaping to the garden would have a significant adverse impact on the curtilage and special character of the Protected Structure, contravening Policy CHC2 and Section 16. 10. 18 of the City Development Plan. Furthermore, the alteration of the principal street boundary would harm the setting of the Residential Conservation Area, contravening Policy CHC4 of the City Development Plan.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report

The report of the Planning Officer includes the following comments;

- The front boundary is more ornate than indicated on the submitted drawings.
- There is a lack of detail in relation to how the EV charger is to be connected to the building.

• The proposal would impact the Protected Structure, the Residential Conservation Area, a street tree and on-street car parking.

The report of the Planning Officer recommends a <u>refusal</u> of permission consistent with the Notification of Decision which issued.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Drainage Division: no objection subject to standard conditions.

Conservation Section: notes -

- that while the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has yet to complete a survey of this part of the City, the property and its surrounds are considered to make a significant contribution to the character and streetscape of Lansdowne Road and is considered to be of regional importance;
- that the wall, which it is proposed to remove a 3 metre section of, contributes to the setting of the Protected Structure and wider streetscape;
- that the cast iron cresting has not been recorded on the applicant's drawings nor have the pedestrian gate and gate piers been recorded in sufficient detail;
- that the roller gate is not appropriate;
- that the proposal entails substantial hardstanding to the front of the property to facilitate the area of car parking;
- that the EV charger is poorly located and would be visually intrusive;
- that insufficient details have been provided in relation to the proposal to replace
 Victorian tile to the front entrance and side access path.

The report of the Conservation Officer recommends a refusal of permission on the basis that the proposed removal of the historic boundary and the entrance along with the loss of soft landscaping to the front of the site will have a significant negative impact on the curtilage and special character of the Protected Structure.

Conditions are also recommended in the event of a grant of permission, including;

- a reduction in the width of the entrance from 3 metres to 2.6 metres;
- the provision of a traditionally hung double-leaf gate in lieu of the roller gate, the design of which should reflect the detailing and design of the pedestrian gate;

- the submission of a revised drawing, photographic and condition survey of the boundary wall, including the cast-iron cresting, and a method statement for the repair of the retained section of wall;
- the submission of a condition and photographic survey of the existing tiled entrance and side access path, and a method statement for the repair of the pathway;
- that the EV charger is repositioned to a discrete location;
- that a conservation expert is employed to design and oversee the works.

<u>Transportation Planning Division</u> – report notes;

- the site is one of the few remaining properties without off-street parking, however it appears to be served by a rear access.
- the proposal is similar to a previously proposed development on the site which was refused (PA. Ref. 3071/21).
- the proposal would result in the loss of 2 no. on-street car parking bays.
- the applicant's submission has not taken account of the requirement to dish the footpath and kerb, 0.9 metres either side of the entrance.
- the removal of pay and display parking is contrary to the policies and objectives
 of the Dublin City Development Plan. On-street parking is provided for residents
 and also all users of the City. Having regard to central location and multiple uses
 in the vicinity of the site, pay and display parking should not be removed.
- a 2.5 metre buffer is required between tree trunks and dishing to protect tree roots. The details submitted by the applicant do not accurately display the buffer and the dishing indicated is not to Dublin City Council standards.

The report of the Transportation Planning Division recommends a refusal of permission on the basis of the loss of on-street car parking and the impact on the street tree.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

None referenced in report of the Planning Officer.

3.4. Third Party Observations

The Planning Officer's report refers to 2 no. observations having been received in relation to the planning application. The report of the Planning Officer provides a summary of the main issues raised in the third-party observations, which are as follows;

- Loss of on-street car parking.
- Proposal previously refused.
- Loss of original fabric, including wrought iron elements.

4.0 **Planning History**

Appeal Site

PA. Ref. 5248/22 – Permission REFUSED for 2 no. off-street car parking spaces with 1 No. EV charging point, accessed by a new vehicular gated entrance from Lansdowne Road, repair and refurbishment of front boundary wall details and of the existing pedestrian gate entrance and repair/ replacement of tiled paving; landscaping and all associated building services and works.

Reasons for refusal concerned loss of on-street car parking and impact on street tree.

<u>PA. Ref. 3505/22</u> - Permission GRANTED for the demolition of an existing garden room and annex and the addition of 2 no. 3 storey townhouses with off street car parking, with charging points to No. 96 Lansdowne Park, to the rear of No.18 Lansdowne Road.

PA. Ref. 3071/21 – Permission sought for extension and alterations to building, garden room, widening of pedestrian entrance to create vehicular entrance in front boundary, 2 no. off street car parking spaces, charging point.

A slit decision was issued. Permission was <u>granted</u> for the extension, alterations and garden room and <u>refused</u> for the vehicular entrance and off-street car parking. Reasons for refusal included loss of on-street car parking, contrary to Objective MT14 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, and impact on street trees.

<u>PA. Ref. 3150/21</u> - Permission REFUSED for the demolition of existing garden room and annex and the provision of 2 no. 3 storey townhouses with off street car parking, with charging points to No. 96 Lansdowne Park, to the rear of No.18 Lansdowne Road.

Reasons for refusal concerned impact on Protected Structure, including loss of boundary walls, impact on Residential Conservation Area and impact on residential amenity.

<u>PA. Ref. 4024/21</u> – Permission REFUSED for modifications to PA. Ref. 3071/21, specifically alterations to second floor extension, a nursery over permitted sunroom and alterations to openings.

Refusal reason related to the loss of a historic round headed window.

Wider Area (40 Lansdowne Road)

PA. Ref. 3377/16 & ABP. Ref. PL29S.247388¹ – Permission REFUSED for 2 no. off street car parking spaces.

Refusal reasons concerned non-compliance with policy in respect of car parking in the curtilage of Protected Structures and Conservation Areas, and the loss of on-street car parking.

5.0 **Policy Context**

5.1. Development Plan

5.1.1. The proposed development was considered by the Planning Authority under the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 however the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect on the 14th December 2022 and is now the relevant development plan.

¹ In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation to grant permission, the Board noted the other similar development in the area and the planning history in the vicinity, and considered that it was unclear whether this development has had the benefit of planning permission. It was also noted that circumstances have materially changed since permissions were granted by the planning authority at some locations, including the policies of the Development Plan. It was considered that the effect of losing a public car park space would be greater in an area subject to high demand for such parking.

- 5.1.2. The appeal site is zoned 'Z2' (see Map E), the zoning objective of which is 'to protect and/or improve the amenities of residential conservation areas' under the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028.
- 5.1.3. The provisions of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022 2028 relevant to this assessment are as follows:
 - Chapter 11 (Policy BHA2) Protected Structures
 - Chapter 11 (Policy BHA9) Conservation Areas
 - Chapter 11 (Policy BHA 10) Demolition in a Conservation Area
 - Chapter 15 (Section 15.15.2.2.) Conservation Areas
 - Appendix 5 Transport & Mobility: Technical Requirements
 - 4.0. Car Parking Standards
 - 4.1. On-Street Parking
 - 4.3. Parking in Front Gardens
 - 4.3.1. Dimensions & Surfacing
 - 4.3.2. Impact on Street Trees (inc. fig 1)
 - 4.3.4 Sustainable Urban Drainage
 - 4.3.5. Treatment of Front Boundaries
 - 4.3.7 Parking in the Curtilage of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Area and Conservation Areas
 - 5.0. Electric Vehicles (EV)
 - 5.1.4. The appeal property is a Protected Structure (RPS Ref. 4280).

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The appeal site is not located within or close to any European Site.

5.3. EIA Screening

The proposed development does not fall within a class of development set out in Part 1 or Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, (as amended), and therefore is not subject to EIA requirements.

6.0 **The Appeal**

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

This is a <u>first-party appeal</u> against the decision to refuse permission. The grounds for appeal can be summarised as following;

- The applicant purchased the property and is converting it from commercial to residential use. The proposal is intended to support a change of use from a non-conforming commercial use to a conforming residential use.
- The proposal is consistent with the pattern of development in the area, with
 14 of the 16 houses on Lansdowne Road having on-site parking.
- On-site parking is required to facilitate the charging of EVs, which are supported in the Dublin City Development Plan. The charging of EVs is best undertaken at the owner's premises as car owners are not allowed to hog public chargers. EV chargers are often out of order and located a considerable distance from an owner's property.
- The applicant's car is at risk of vandalism during matches at the Aviva Stadium. During matches the Lansdowne Road is closed and residents cannot park on the street.
- The residents on Lansdowne Road are not reliant on on-street car parking as almost all residents have access to off-street parking.
- Redundant taxi parking in the area could be repurposed as on-street car parking.
- The Transportation Section has not acknowledged precedent decisions in the area or the local conditions on Lansdowne Road.

- Transport and sustainability policy is that access to the city central business districts should be by public transport or active transport means without reliance on on-street public paid parking.
- The proposal would take 2 no. cars off the street at the expense of pay and display and allow for the conversion of E-car use.
- There is much evidence that the 2.5 metre trunk to dishing is not applied in existing or new public realm applications.
- The proposed 3 metre wide entrance is the same as that permitted by Dublin City Council under PA. Ref. 2322/21 at 24 Lansdowne Road. This entrance width is practical and safe to accommodate modern family cars.
- Modified proposal submitted (see *Drawing No. 1821-VP2-002*) with on-site parking conforming with the Conservation Officer's recommended conditions. In this proposal the entrance width is reduced to 2.6 metres and moved to the boundary wall with the neighbouring site maximising the distance to the street tree, the original pedestrian access, its features and tiling are preserved and improved, the driveway is gravel facilitating drainage in the same way as soft landscaping.
- The existing gated pedestrian entrance is aligned with the granite steps and the original Victorian tiles are to be repaired and restored a part of the proposal.
- The creation of entrances facilitates the appreciation of the historic property from the street. On-street car parking also obscures views of the historic property.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

None received.

6.3. Observations

An observation from Phillip O' Reilly and was received in respect of the appeal. Issues raised in the observation may be summarised as follows:

- The refusal of permission should be upheld. Over the previous years, numerous refusals have been issued for similar developments in Dublin 4 and 6.
- Development Plan objectives in respect of the loss of historic content and the maintenance of on-street car parking are being correctly applied and must be upheld.
- On-street car parking is in demand at this location.

7.0 **Assessment**

- 7.1. I consider the main issues in the assessment of this appeal are as follows:
 - Refusal Reason 1 (loss of on-street car parking and impact on street tree)
 - Refusal Reason 2 (impact on Protected Structure and Residential Conservation Area)
 - Issues arising
 - Appropriate Assessment.

7.2. Refusal Reason 1

- 7.2.1. The first reason for refusal relates to the loss of 2 no. on-street car parking bays. The report of the Transportation Planning Division emphasises the importance of on-street parking as a resource which is intended to serve residents and all users of the City, and that having regard to the central location and multiple uses in the vicinity of the site, pay and display parking should not be removed.
- 7.2.2. The appellant's position is that the proposal should be permitted on the basis that it will facilitate EV's, which is promoted in the Development Plan, and that the approach of the Planning Authority is essentially supporting ICE (Internal Combustion Engine) vehicles over EVs. The appellant notes that not having EV charging capabilities within the curtilage of the property raises practical issues and results in him having to use public charging facilities and traveling to charge his car. The appellant notes due to the location of the appeal property close to the Aviva Stadium, in-curtilage car parking is required as the applicant's car is at risk of vandalism during matches, and that during matches the road is closed and residents cannot avail of on-street parking, an issue which the appellant notes has not been acknowledged by the Planning Authority.

- 7.2.3. Section 4.0 (Volume 2 Appendices) of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out policy in respect of car parking. The Development Plan notes that on-street car parking is necessary to the day to day functioning of the City, and that on-street parking will be preserved, where appropriate² (see Section 4.1). The Development Plan also states that there will be a presumption against the removal of on-street parking spaces to facilitate the provision of vehicular entrances to single dwellings in predominantly residential areas where residents are largely reliant on on-street car parking spaces, or where there is a demand for public parking serving other uses in the area (see Section 4.1). Elsewhere the Development Plan recognises that residential parking spaces are mainly to provide for car storage to support family friendly living policies in the City (see Section 4.0).
- 7.2.4. On-street car parking is a limited resource within the City and proposals which result in any loss of same need to be carefully considered in the context of prevailing local circumstances and site specific considerations. The proposal enables EV's, which in the context of climate change adaption and Government policy, which seeks to transition away from petrol and diesel cars to EV's, should be supported in my opinion. Additionally, I note that there are unique locational factors which should in my view be afforded due consideration, specifically the proximity of the appeal property to the Aviva Stadium and the inconvenience for the appellant in terms of accessing his property when the Aviva Stadium is being used, and in particular when Lansdowne Road is closed to traffic. Development Plan policy in respect of the removal of onstreet parking spaces to facilitate the provision of vehicular entrances is that such proposals should be resisted in predominantly residential areas where residents are largely reliant on on-street car parking, or where there is a demand for public parking serving other uses in the area. With the exception of the appeal property and one other property along Lansdowne Road all the other properties are served with off-street car parking. I also note that the apartment development opposite the appeal site has a basement car park. I consider therefore that the majority of residents in this area are not reliant on on-street car parking. Furthermore, based on my site inspection I did not observe a high demand for on-street parking. The appellant has submitted a modified proposal to the Board for consideration (see Drawing No. 1821-VP2-002). This

² My emphasis added.

proposal results in the loss of 1 no. space, as opposed to two spaces as per the original proposal. I submit to the Board that this proposal is considered as it addresses a number of the issues raised in the refusal. In light of the revised proposal, I consider that the loss of on-street car parking at this particular location is acceptable in this instance.

- 7.2.5. The first refusal reason also concerns the loss of/impact on a street tree as a result of the proposed vehicular entrance. The modified proposal provides a buffer of 3 metres between the trunk of the street tree and the dished kerb and accords with the requirements as set out in the Development Plan at Section 4.3.2 (Figure 1). I am satisfied that the revised proposal would not impact the street tree.
- 7.2.6. In summation I do not consider that refusal reason 1 should be upheld.

7.3. Refusal Reason 2

- 7.3.1. The second refusal reason concerns the removal of part of the front boundary and the consequent impact of the proposal on the character of the Protected Structure and setting of the Residential Conservation Area.
- 7.3.2. The appellant contends that the creation of the entrance will facilitate the appreciation of the property from the street, and that on-street car parking obscures views of the historic property. The concerns of the Planning Authority, as set out in the Planning Officer's report generally reflect the report of the Conservation Officer. The report of the Conservation Officer, whilst recommending that permission be refused also sets out a number of conditions should a grant of permission be under consideration. I note that the revised proposal, as set out on *Drawing No. 1821-VP2-002* conforms to the conditions recommended by the Conservation Officer, and includes a reduction in the width of the entrance from 3 metres to 2.6 metres, the provision of bi-folding gates in lieu of the roller gates, the original pedestrian access, its features and tiling preserved and improved, and a gravel driveway facilitating drainage in the same way as soft landscaping. Section 4.3.7 (Volume 2 – Appendices) of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 provides policy in respect of proposals for parking in the curtilage of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and Conservation Areas. Importantly, I note that the Development Plan does not prohibit car parking within the

curtilage of Protected Structures, subject to meeting specific criteria. The revised proposal accords with the criteria outlined in this policy (i.e. Section 4.3.7 – Volume 2 Appendices), in particular in terms of the width of the entrance, the design of the gates and treatment of the boundary. I also note that the area to the front of the appeal property is sufficiently sized to cater for the parking of two cars and that the Protected Structure remains visible and unobstructed. In my opinion the proposal as revised is appropriate in the context of the requirement to protect the character of the Protected Structure and adjoining Residential Conservation Area. I therefore do not consider that refusal reason 2 should be upheld.

7.4. Issue Arising

7.4.1. Victorian Tiles

The modified proposal to the Board indicates the preservation and improvement of Victorian tiling to the front of the property. The conditions recommended by the Conservation Officer, should permission be under consideration, had stipulated that a photographic survey of the existing tiled entrance and side access path and a method statement for the repair of the pathway be submitted. Based on my site inspection I note that the area indicated on the drawings as 'Victorian Tile' appears to have been removed and now consists of a concrete pathway. Should the Board be minded to permit the proposed development I recommend that a condition is attached stipulating that these tiles are reinstated.

7.4.2. EV Charger

I concur with the concerns of the Planning Authority in relation to the location of the EV charger. In my opinion the EV charger should be inconspicuous as possible, and preferably located to the side of the property, and not forward of the front wall of the house as proposed. I recommend that a condition is attached to any grant of permission requiring details, including the location of the EV charger and any screening proposals to be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.

7.4.3. <u>Development Contributions</u>

Section 10 of the adopted Dublin City Council Development Contribution Scheme 2023 provides that 'works to, and change of use from commercial to residential use to, of buildings included in the Record of Protected Structures' shall be exempt from development contributions. The Scheme stipulates that 'Protected Structure' refers to the actual existing structure(s) and does not include development within its curtilage. On this basis I consider that development contributions apply to the proposed development and should the Board grant permission for the proposed development a condition requiring same should be attached.

7.5. Appropriate Assessment

7.5.1. Having regard to the nature and limited scale of the proposed development, the developed nature of the landscape between the site and European sites and the lack of a hydrological or other pathway between the site and European sites, it is considered that no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect either individually or in combination with other plans or projects on any European site.

8.0 **Recommendation**

8.1. Having regard to the above it is recommended that planning permission be granted for the proposed development based on the following reasons and considerations

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

9.1. Having regard to the provisions of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, to the proximity of the appeal site to the Aviva Stadium and the associated access implications for the appeal property, to the nature, extent and design of the proposed development, as modified, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the development would not result in an unacceptable loss of on-street car parking, and would not seriously injure the setting or character of the Protected Structure or that of the adjacent Residential Conservation Area, or visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, 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, as amended by the plans and particulars submitted to An Bord Pleanála on the 6th October 2022, 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 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. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall agree the following in writing with the Planning Authority;
 - (a) Details and specifications of the proposed entrance gate, including any access control.
 - (b) A condition statement of the front boundary wall, including the crestiron detailing, pedestrian gate and gate piers, and a method statement for the proposed works.
 - (c) Details of the reinstatement of the Victorian tiles to the front of the property.
 - (d) Details of the design/appearance of the EV charger and its relocation to an inconspicuous location, or a suitable screening arrangement for the EV charger.

All works shall be overseen by a suitably qualified and experienced Conservation Architect.

Reason: To protect the character and setting of the Protected Structure, and the character of the Residential Conservation Area.

3. The entrance gate hereby permitted shall open inward only.

Reason: In the interests of traffic/pedestrian safety.

4. The car parking spaces hereby permitted shall not be sold, rented, or otherwise sub-let or leased to parties who are not resident in the house on the site.

Reason: In the interest of good traffic management.

5. Drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the detailed requirements of the Planning Authority for such works and services.

Reason: In the interest of public health.

6. The developer shall pay to the Planning Authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the Planning Authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.

7. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, 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 property in the vicinity.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Ian Campbell
Planning Inspector

31st July 2023