



<b>Development</b>	Replacement of 1 No. illuminated advertising display with 1 No. digital advertising display. Permanent decommissioning of 1 No. advertising display located adjacent to the western side of the R772.
<b>Location</b>	Gorey corporation lands, Gorey Urban.
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Wexford County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	20251487W
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	JCDecaux Ireland Limited
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Refuse Permission
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	First Party Normal Planning Appeal
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	JCDecaux Ireland Limited
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>Inspector</b>	Patricia Byrne

## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The subject site concerns No. 1 Main Street, Gorey, Co. Wexford, a two-storey commercial property occupied by the Firehouse Bakery. Specifically, the appeal relates to the north-eastern gable elevation of the structure which currently hosts a static billboard with overhead lighting.
- 1.2. The billboard has a north-easterly aspect, clearly visible to traffic and pedestrians approaching Gorey Main Street from the R772, Arklow Road.
- 1.3. The property is located within the Gorey Town Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).
- 1.4. The area of the site is given as 0.001Ha.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1. Permission is sought to upgrade the existing illuminated paper billboard advertising display with a digital display. Luminosity will comply with best practice guidelines, not exceeding the recommended maximum 300 candelas per sq.m. from dusk until dawn.
- 2.2. A curfew between 2.00a.m. and 6.00a.m. is proposed in the interests of sustainable operations and energy efficiency, to be agreed by condition.
- 2.3. Advertisements displayed will be static with no motion and will be remotely changed at intervals of 10 seconds with a smooth transition.
- 2.4. The dimensions of the extant sign are given as 6.4m by 3.35m.
- 2.5. The proposed digital signage will extend to a stated 6.28m by 3.4m, approximately 3.2m above ground level.
- 2.6. A camera positioned above the display will be trained on the screen so as to monitor images remotely.
- 2.7. The application also provides for the permanent decommissioning of 1 no. 6.3m x 3.5m advertising display sited adjacent the western side of the R772 at Ballylough, Ferns, Co. Wexford. This site is approximately 24km south-west of Gorey town.

## **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

### **3.1. Decision**

3.1.1. Wexford County Council by Order dated 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026 issued a decision to refuse permission for the reasons set out below:

1. *Section 2.13 (Volume 2) of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 states that all signage proposals within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) should be in keeping with the character of the buildings and adhere to best conservation principles. The proposed digital sign, by reason of its scale, dominant position and visibility, would be injurious to the character and amenities of this sensitive streetscape and create visual clutter within the Gorey Town ACA. The development would therefore be inconsistent with Section 2.13 (Volume 2) of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028, would set an undesirable precedent and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*
2. *It is considered by reason of its scale, dominant position and visibility of this digital advertising sign at this busy junction off the R772 that the proposed development has potential to create hinderance and distraction to public road vehicle users. The development would therefore be inconsistent with Section 2.13 (Volume 2) of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028, would set an undesirable precedent and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*

### **3.2. Planning Authority Reports**

#### **3.2.1. Planning Report**

- The planning report provides a description of the development and its location within Gorey Town ACA. The report refers to planning policy relating to advertising and signage as set out in the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028, specifically referring to Volume 2, Table 2-2 *Advertising and Signage*. Concerns were expressed in relation to the introduction of digital advertising at the site given its highly visible nature, its location within the Gorey Town ACA and the impact on visual amenities. Concerns were also expressed that the proposal had the potential to create hindrance

and distraction to drivers at the R772 roundabout. A recommendation to refuse permission was made, reflective of the decision of the planning authority.

### 3.2.2. **Other Technical Reports**

- Roads Inspection Report-Roads Department

Report recommends refusal on road safety grounds given the potential of the development to cause hindrance and distraction to public road vehicle users.

### 3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

None on file

### 3.4. **Third Party Observations**

None on file

## 4.0 **Planning History**

4.1. The following relate to the appeal site:

#### **P.A. Reg. Ref. 20211335**

Permission GRANTED for the change of use of the existing ground floor retail and first floor storage space to a sit-down restaurant and bar space.

#### **P.A. Reg. Ref. 20071138**

Permission GRANTED to upgrade the existing static 6m x 3m advertising display to an illuminated 6m x 3m trivision advertising display.

Date of Permission: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007.

Condition No. 2

*'This permission shall be for a period of five years only and at the end of that time the proposed sign shall be removed, unless otherwise granted planning permission for its retention for a further period by the Planning Authority or An Bord Pleanála, on appeal. Reason: In the interests of visual amenity of the area and to facilitate the review of the effect of the structure on the said amenity'.*

**P.A. Reg. Ref. 941732**

Permission GRANTED to erect a commercial store for the storage and display of motorcycles to the north (rear) of No. 1 Main Street.

**Ref. EXD00016**

Billboard at Ballylough Ferns Co. Wexford deemed not to be exempted development. The assessment indicated the structure was already in place, having been erected in 2000.

## **5.0 Policy Context**

### **5.1. National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision**

**NPO 89** Protect, conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural, cultural and built heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their cultural and environmental significance.

**NPO 90** Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, environmental, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets, including streetscapes, vernacular dwellings and other historic buildings and monuments, through appropriate and sensitive investment and conservation.

### **5.2. Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities**

#### **Section 3.8 Features and Structures Detrimental to the Character of the Area**

An ACA will not necessarily be of uniform character, nor its built fabric be found, or continue to be, in good condition. Where it is possible to identify them, structures or features that detract from the character of the area should also be noted. This could include buildings or

derelict sites that have a clearly detrimental effect on the character of the area. Other aspects of an area which detract from its character could include excessive traffic or intrusive traffic signage, advertising hoarding, inappropriate replacement windows and the like.

### 5.3. **Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028**

The Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 is the operational Development Plan for the appeal site, and came into operation on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. The following provisions are relevant:

#### 5.3.1. **Volume 1 Written Statement**

##### **Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy**

**Objective TS17** To ensure that any signage on public roads, footpaths or cycle paths shall not cause an obstruction to any transport user.

**Objective TS53** To provide for effective directional signage for all users of roads and streets and to strictly control other signage and advertising on the road network in the interests of public safety and amenity having regard to:

- Spatial Planning and National Roads, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012);
- The National Roads Authority's policy statement on the Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads (March 2011); and
- Any updated versions of these documents.

##### **Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation**

**Objective ACA01** To protect and enhance the character of the designated Architectural Conservation Areas in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross, Gorey and Bunclody, including the views and prospects to and from these areas.

**Objective ACA05** To ensure that all new advertising hoardings, signage, awnings, canopies, flagpoles, banners, satellite dishes, masts, pylons, lighting, cctv cameras and car

parking provision within an Architectural Conservation Area are designed, constructed and located in a manner that is complementary to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area.

### 5.3.2. Volume 2 Development Management Manual

#### Section 2.13 Signage and Advertisements

Signage has the potential to give rise to visual clutter and to alter the character of an area and as such will be carefully assessed. All advertisements and advertisement structures, other than those exempted by the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), shall be the subject of a planning application.

The Section requires development proposals in towns and villages which include signage, to take account of the certain criteria. These include:

- Signs should be proportionate to the scale of the building to which they are attached and sensitive to the surrounding environment.
- Signs attached to Protected Structures and in Architectural Conservation Areas should be in keeping with the character of the buildings and adhere to best conservation principles.
- Any sign or associated structure should not create an obstruction to pedestrian or cyclist movement or create a traffic hazard.

#### Table 2-2 Advertising and Signage

Table 2-2 provides details of sign type, restrictions on use and design criteria.

##### Digital Signs

**Restrictions on Use:** Generally not appropriate. May be considered in town centres and/or large retail precincts and at other suitable locations throughout the County. Not permitted on major roads unless signage relates to traffic management and safety.

**Design Criteria:** Should make a positive contribution to the public domain, omit no sound, have a minimum dwell period of 30 seconds (with a crossfade), not result in obtrusive light that will create unacceptable glare (adjusting to environmental conditions), have limited

hours of operation (especially at night), not contain dynamic content (i.e. video) and not constitute a traffic hazard.

## **Section 7 Heritage and Landscape**

### **Section 7.3 Architectural Conservation Areas**

All proposals for development within an ACA shall comply with the requirements of the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (DAHG, 2011) and shall seek to protect the historic character, existing amenities, visual setting and streetscape character of the ACA.

All development works within ACA's should seek to limit, reduce and remove urban and visual clutter including building signage, traffic signage, bollards, utility boxes and other free-standing installations.

In addition to the general requirements of this Plan, signage proposals within ACAs shall have regard to the requirements outlined in Chapter 12 of the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (DAHG, 2011).

#### **5.3.3. Volume 6 Conservation Areas**

Architectural Conservation Area Map No. 6.4 Gorey Town ACA.

#### **5.4. The Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (extended to June 2026)**

The Gorey Local Area Plan (LAP) 2017-2023 was made on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2017 and extended for a further period of three years by resolution of Wexford County Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The Plan will expire on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2026.

## **Section 8 Retail**

### **Map 6 Retail Core Area and Opportunity Sites**

The appeal site is located within Opportunity Site 6- defined in Section 8.3.1.4 as the '*Supervalu car park and adjacent lands*'.

Section 8.3.1.4 Opportunity Sites states that these sites have been included as their development will assist in adding urban structure by creating strong building lines. Where development is permitted on such sites it will be on the basis that commensurate parking is provided underground or elsewhere

## **Section 9 Heritage**

### **Map 8 Proposed Architectural Conservation Area**

#### **Objective ACA02**

To preserve the character of designated Architectural Conservation Area(s) by ensuring that all proposed development within these areas are carried out to the highest architectural and urban design standards.

## **Section 11 Land Use Zoning and Matrix**

The appeal site is located on lands zoned Central Business Area (CBA) on Map 11- Land Use Zoning. The zoning states *'to provide a mix of uses, primarily business, services, residential, civic and recreational'*. The purpose of the zoning *'is to continue to enhance the vitality and viability of this area through the development of under-utilised land and brownfield sites and by encouraging the mix of uses which make a town centre an attractive place to visit, shop and live in. The character of the area shall be protected and enhanced'*.

Advertising Structures/Signage are not listed as a use class within the Land Use Zoning Matrix. The matrix is a guideline and the listed uses are not exhaustive.

## **5.5. Natural Heritage Designations**

5.5.1. The site is not located within or bounding designated sites. The following are located within the vicinity.

Cahore Marshes SPA (Site Code 004143) c. 14.0km

Seas off Wexford SPA (Site Code 004237) c.16.0km

Slaney River Valley SAC (Site Code 000781) c. 3.3km

Cahore Polders and Dunes SAC (Site Code 000700) c. 14.6km

Kilmuckridge Tinnaberna Sandhills SAC (Site Code 001741) c. 19.3km

Blackwater Bank SAC (Site Code 002953) c. 19km

Courtown Dunes and Glen pNHA (Site Code 000757) c. 5.2km

Ballymoney Strand pNHA (Site Code 000745) c. 5.7km

Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC (Site Code 001742) c. 10.4km

## 6.0 EIA Screening

- 6.1. The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (or Part V of the 1994 Roads Regulations). No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of this report.

## 7.0 The Appeal

### 7.1. Grounds of Appeal

The decision of the Planning Authority made on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2026, is the subject of a First-Party appeal by JCDecaux Ireland Ltd. The appeal is accompanied by a Conservation Report prepared by Mr. Paul Keenan, BArch FRIAI Dip. ARB RIAI Grade 3 Conservation Accreditation. The matters raised in the appeal, including Conservation Report, are set out below:

- The proposal concerns an upgrade to an existing advertising display which has been *in situ* since 1977. Planning Permission for amendments date to 2007.
- Modernisation of the structure will improve quality and urban setting and comprises a significant visual improvement to the existing structure.
- The application provides for the permanent decommissioning of an advertising display to the western side of the R722 at Ballylough Ferns Co. Wexford.

- Luminosity will comply with best practice guidelines, operating below recommended maximum levels (300 candelas per m<sup>2</sup> dusk to dawn).
- The appellant would accept a condition providing a curfew between 2a.m. and 6a.m. with the display powered down during this period.
- A camera above the display is trained on the screen only.
- The proposal is appropriate given the sites location within the Central Business Area (CBA) land use zoning and in Retail Core Opportunity Site 6 of the Gorey Town Local LAP
- Advertising Structures are not referred to in the Land Use Zoning Matrix, noting that uses listed are not exhaustive.
- The scheme is consistent with Table 2-2 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028. Digital Displays may be considered in town centres and/or large retail precincts and other suitable locations.
- There is no evidence the planning authority assessed the development under the zoning objective for the area and the report does not duly consider the site's location at the edge of the Retail Core of the town in Opportunity Site 6.
- The planning authority's assessment of planning policy is inadequate, selective of negative policies and fails to distinguish between generic and general policies for signage under Section 2.13, versus objectives for advertising displays under Table 2-2. Misanalysis of Development Plan policy is the framework for the flawed decision.
- An Coimisiún Pleanála has consistently found that digital displays do not give rise to traffic safety issues. References are provided.
- Precedent decisions provided with the application were not adequately considered by the planning authority and the reason for refusal is not consistent with such precedents.
- The proposal will not have a negative impact on traffic safety and the conclusion that the replacement signage would create hinderance and distraction is without evidence and ignores planning precedent.
- The gable façade of No. 1 Main Street is not visible from the roundabout. Advertising displays must be placed above head-height to avoid hazard on footpaths. Relevance to cyclist movement as referred to in the planning report is unclear.

- The refusal of permission is not consistent with precedent decisions by An Coimisiún Pleanála or other local authorities (Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council) in respect of conservation or traffic safety.
- The replacement display is on the edge of the ACA, does not face and is not visible from Main Street and has no interaction with the rationale for the designation of the ACA.
- The ACA Objectives contained in the LAP are generic in nature and do not provide detailed rationale for the designation. The proposal is not injurious to the character and amenities of the sensitive streetscape within the Gorey Town ACA.
- There are no residual adverse impacts on either the ACA or the associated building. No new or greater negative impact on the gable façade or the main elevation result.
- The planning authority's analysis is not supported by a report from the Conservation Officer.
- Reference to applications for outdoor advertising signage determined by other planning authorities and/or An Coimisiún Pleanála, including in relation to protected structures and/or conservation areas. Demonstrate that appropriately designed digital advertising can be permitted in such contexts and along major thoroughfares, provided they represent an upgrade over existing signage.
- Statement by senior executive planner within the planning report is without evidence.
- Reference to precedent decisions for digital advertising displays by An Coimisiún Pleanála where no condition is attached limiting the duration of the permission.
- An Coimisiún Pleanála is invited to overturn the decision of the planning authority.
- Appendix 1: Professional Lighting Guide 05/23 (PLG 05): Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays.
- Appendix 2: Decision of Wexford Co. Co. P.A. Reg. Ref. 20251487W

**Conservation Report prepared by Paul Keenan Barch, FRIAI Dip ARB RIAI Grade 3 Conservation Accreditation, Keenan Lynch Architects.**

- Purpose of report is to assess the Gorey Town ACA, to identify impacts of the proposed signage, and to assess the architectural heritage impact of the development.

- Report provides commentary in relation to the historical and architectural context of Gorey town, identifying buildings of note and referring to the site's location within the ACA and the CBA land use zoning.
- The subject site is located on a secondary façade.
- Fig. 12 indicates the ACA and protected structures relative to the site. No. 1 Main Street is not a protected structure. A wide selection of buildings within the environs of the town have protected status. Main Street is the prime element of the ACA and is not affected by the proposal.
- No input from the Conservation Department of the planning authority.
- Removal of top-mounted lighting which overhangs the display represents an improvement and is less impactful on the building and more sympathetic to the receiving environment.
- The façade is established as an advertising space. Referral by the planning authority to policy regarding Signs in Architectural Conservation Areas is applicable to new signage and not replacement signage. The modification is minimal and results in an overall improvement.
- No residual adverse impacts on the building result.
- Materials are durable, high quality and reversible. Works relate to the gable elevation and not the more prominent Main Street frontage. The signage would not be injurious to the cityscape being a modernisation and a slight reduction in display size.
- Reference to the 'poster and glue' technique requiring the area to the base of the sign being cordoning off when new signage is erected in order to align with health and safety protocols. Little maintenance would be required in relation to the replacement sign.
- The impact of the proposal in comparison to the existing street lighting will be minimal. The brightness of the screen will be minimal to immediate surroundings.
- Report concludes that the replacement display does not have a new or greater negative impact on the gable façade and would not negatively impact the ACA or Gorey Town.

## 7.2. Planning Authority Response

None on file.

### 7.3. Observations

None on file.

### 7.4. Prescribed Bodies

7.4.1. The appeal was referred by An Coimisiún Pleanála to the following; however, no reports were received:

- An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- The Heritage Council
- Fáilte Ireland
- An Taisce
- Development Applications Unit

## 8.0 Assessment

8.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, the reports of the local authority, having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local, regional, national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Development Plan Policy
- Gorey Town Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)
- Traffic Safety
- Other Matters

### 8.2. Principle of Development

8.2.1. The appeal site comprises the north-east facing gable elevation of No. 1 Main Street Gorey Co. Wexford. An advertising display, extending to a stated area of 6.4m x 3.35m is in situ, approximately 3.2m above ground level. I note from the documentation on file that

signage/display has been situated at this position since the 1970's. This is not disputed by the planning authority, and I refer to P.A. Reg. Ref. 20071138 under which permission was granted to upgrade a static display at this location to a television display. The planning report prepared at that time referred to the structure being in place for some time.

8.2.2. The particulars provided refer to the modernisation and upgrading of the display, and improvements to its quality and urban setting. I am satisfied therefore, that the development under consideration relates to works to an existing advertising display and I am satisfied that the principle of development is acceptable, subject to assessment of other matters including the design and extent of the upgrade works, impacts on the Architectural Conservation Area, compliance with planning policy and road safety considerations.

### **8.3. Development Plan Policy**

8.3.1. Signage and advertisements are addressed under a number of sections of the Wexford County Development Plan, including under Section 2.13 and Table 2-2 Volume 2. Section 2.13 prescribes criteria which should be taken into account when assessing signage and advertisements in towns and villages. This includes a requirement to be proportionate to the scale of the building to which it is attached and to be sensitive to the surrounding environment; that signs in Architectural Conservation Areas should be in keeping with the character of the buildings and adhere to best conservation principles; and that any sign or associated structure should not create an obstruction to pedestrian or cyclist movement, or create a traffic hazard. Table 2-2 provides further detail with respect to restrictions on use and design criteria.

8.3.2. The appellant contends that the scheme is consistent with Table 2-2 and that digital displays may be considered in town centre locations. It is also contended that the planning authority was selective of negative policies and failed to distinguish between generic and general signage policies under Section 2.13, versus objectives for displays under Table 2-2, resulting in misanalysis.

8.3.3. From my reading of the Development Plan, I am not of the view that the planning authority has not been overly selective of Development Plan provisions against which the proposal

has been assessed, including as set out under Section 2.13. The planning report acknowledges the location of the sign within the CBA land use zoning and does not raise concerns as to its compliance with same. I agree that the proposal broadly aligns with the zoning requirement *‘to provide a mix of uses, primarily business, services, residential, civic and recreational’* and noting that signage is not listed as a specific use class. The Gorey Town and Environs LAP states that the purpose of the CBA zoning is to *‘continue to enhance the vitality and viability of this area through the development of under-utilised land and brownfield sites and by encouraging the mix of uses which make a town centre an attractive place to visit, shop and live in. The character of the area shall be protected and enhanced’*.

- 8.3.4. Considerations under Section 2.13 relating specifically to impacts on Architectural Conservation Areas and to obstruction/traffic hazard are examined in later sections of this report. However, the Commission is advised of broad concerns highlighted in the Section wherein it is acknowledged that signage has the potential to give rise to visual clutter and to alter the character of an area. Table 2-2 Advertising and Signage in identifying digital signs as a distinct form, suggests they are not generally appropriate but could be considered in town centres and/or large retail precincts and at other suitable locations.
- 8.3.5. The design criteria listed under Table 2-2 requires a minimum dwell period of 30 seconds (with a cross fade). The subject proposal refers to signage change at 10 second intervals, however, this and other aspects such as omission of sound, control of light emissions, hours of operation and avoidance of dynamic content may be addressed by condition, should the Commission be minded to award permission.
- 8.3.6. I am not satisfied however, that all aspects of the associated design criteria are satisfied and I point in particular to the requirement that such signage make a positive contribution to the public domain. In this regard, a change from a paper billboard with limited overhead lighting to an illuminated digital display would be a pronounced alteration to the appearance and impact of signage at this prominent location. I am not of the view that such alteration would make a positive contribution to the public domain or that the character of the area would be protected and enhanced as envisaged under the purpose of the land use as set out under Section 11.2 of the Gorey Town and Environs LAP.

8.3.7. While I note the location of the appeal site within a wider area identified as Opportunity Site 6 (Supervalu Car Park and adjacent lands) of the LAP, there are no specific policies identified relating to advertising structures which are relevant to the subject appeal.

#### 8.4. **Gorey Town Architectural Conservation Area**

8.4.1. I refer to the location of the appeal site within the Gorey Town Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) as set out in Volume 6, Map No. 6.4 of the Wexford County Development Plan and to Objective ACA01, *‘to protect and enhance the character of the designated Architectural Conservation Areas in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross, Gorey and Bunclody, including the views and prospects to and from these areas’*, and to Objective ACA05 which requires that *‘all new advertising hoardings, signage, awnings, canopies, flagpoles, banners, satellite dishes, masts, pylons, lighting, cctv cameras and car parking provision within an Architectural Conservation Area are designed, constructed and located in a manner that is complementary to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area’*.

8.4.2. Map No. 6.4 illustrates the appeal site to the north-eastern corner of the ACA. I note that the junction of Main Street, St. Michael’s Road, Esmonde Street and Arklow Road is also included within the boundaries of the ACA. The gable elevation of No. 1 Main Street is in effect, one of the first sights encountered on entering the ACA from the north-east on the R772, Arklow Road.

8.4.3. I have reviewed in full the Conservation report prepared by Paul Keenan in support of this appeal and the finding that the works do not negatively impact the Gorey Town Architectural Conservation Area or the wider context of Gorey Town centre.

8.4.4. The appellant contends that given its orientation, the eastern gable elevation of No. 1 Main Street (secondary façade) and the associated signage is not visible from Main Street which is the prime focus of the ACA. As such, it is not affected by the proposal and has no interaction with the rationale for the designation of the ACA. It is also contended that such objectives as apply to the ACA are generic and do not provide detailed rationale for the designation.

- 8.4.5. I agree with the appellant that the proposed digital display will not be visible from Main Street. Additionally, only oblique views of the sign would be available from Esmonde Street approaching the junction with Arklow Road, Main Street and St. Michael's Road. Notwithstanding, I do not agree with the contention that the updated signage does not give rise to a greater negative impact on the gable façade than that existing. The appeal site commands a pivotal location at one of the prime entrances to Gorey Main Street from the east and coincides with the entry into the designated ACA. As such, while not being visible from Main Street it is nonetheless visible within the ACA and importantly, is highly visible from a main arterial approach to the ACA from the east.
- 8.4.6. I note the concerns of the appellant that referral by the planning authority to policy regarding signs in Architectural Conservation Areas is applicable to new signage and not replacements. While I acknowledge that a display at this location has been *in situ* for some time, the proposal for a digital display is a significant departure from current static paper billboard with overhead lighting. The dimensions of the new display, while not dissimilar to those of the current display, would continue to align poorly with the roof slopes of No. 1 Main Street, jutting out beyond same. Furthermore, the display, extending to a surface area of 21.35sqm (using the given dimensions of 6.28m x 3.4m) in digital form would have a pronounced impact at this sensitive approach to Main Street and to the Gorey Town ACA. Accordingly, I am of the view that the provisions of the Development Plan relating to new advertising signage in ACA's are relevant and have been correctly applied in this instance.
- 8.4.7. I contend therefore, that the replacement digital signage would detract from the ACA designation in question and would fail to make a positive contribution to the public domain or enhance the visual appeal of Main Street. The development would therefore be contrary to the provisions of Objective ACA05 of the Development Plan requiring that *'all new advertising hoardings, signage, awnings, canopies, flagpoles, banners, satellite dishes, masts, pylons, lighting, cctv cameras and car parking provision within an Architectural Conservation Area are designed, constructed and located in a manner that is complementary to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area'* and would be contrary to ACA01 *'to protect and enhance the character of the designated Architectural Conservation Areas in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross, Gorey and Bunclody, including the views and prospects to and from these areas.* [own emphasis].

## 8.5. Traffic Safety

- 8.5.1. Reason No. 2 of the planning authority decision considered that by reason of scale, dominant position and visibility at a junction off the R772, the development had potential to create hinderance and distraction to public road vehicle users and would have been inconsistent with Section 2.13 (Volume 2) of the Development Plan thereby setting an undesirable precedent.
- 8.5.2. I note the report of the Roads Department which refers to concerns of hindrance and distraction and recommends refusal of permission on road safety grounds. No further commentary is provided within the report.
- 8.5.3. The appellant contends that An Coimisiún Pleanála has accepted on numerous occasions that such displays do not give rise to traffic hazard. The installation and operation of the display would be in accordance with ILP parameters (Professional Lighting Guide 05/23 PLG 05 Brightness of illuminated advertisements including Digital Displays) would ensure the display posed no risk to traffic safety.
- 8.5.4. I note Table 2-2 Advertising and Signage contained in Volume 2, Development Management Manual of the Development Plan which requires under Design Criteria that digital signage should have a minimum dwell period of 30 seconds (with a cross fade); should not result in obtrusive light creating unacceptable glare; that limited hours of operation (especially at night) apply; that such signage not contain dynamic content and should not constitute a traffic hazard.
- 8.5.5. The signage is positioned on a heavily trafficked roadway as acknowledged in the planning application assessment and is in proximity to a junction of four roads, including Main Street. While oblique views of the sign would be available travelling west on Esmonde St. the sign is not visible travelling north-east on Main Street or north on St Michael's Road; the primary area of concern is the impact travelling south-west towards Main Street from the Arklow Road, R772.
- 8.5.6. While I note levels of illumination are to comply with best practice guidelines and will operate below the recommended maximum of 300 candelas per m<sup>2</sup> -dusk to dawn, the level of the

signage relative to a driver's eye level, the display dwell time proposed, the relatively constrained approach to the Main Street and the heavily trafficked nature of the Arklow Road, would, I believe, give rise to increased levels of hindrance and distraction approaching this busy junction. While no analysis is provided in relation to the variation in illumination from that currently presenting i.e. overhead lights, as opposed to the digital illumination proposed; it is likely, given the surface area (21.35sqm), that digitalisation of the advertising signage would have a markedly enhanced impact above that of the overhead lighting currently in place.

8.5.7. While I note the willingness of the appellant to accept a condition imposing a curfew daily between 2.00a.m and 6.00a.m, as traffic levels would be expected to be significantly reduced during these hours, the impact would of such a curfew would be limited.

8.5.8. I am of the view therefore that the replacement signage, changing from a paper billboard to a digital display would, given the prominent nature of the site; the scale of the structure relative to surrounding buildings and the heavily trafficked nature of the intersection at the entrance to Main Street, give rise to increased levels of hinderance and distraction to road users. The development would not therefore accord with the provisions of Section 2.13 Volume 2 of the Wexford County Development Plan requiring that any sign or associated structure not create an obstruction to pedestrian or cyclist movements or create a traffic hazard.

## 8.6. Other Matters

8.6.1. I note reference within the appeal to decisions by other planning authorities and by An Coimisiún Pleanála regarding digital advertising displays. The appellant contends that precedent decisions were not given adequate consideration by the planning authority and the refusal is inconsistent with same. While I have no information to conclude that the planning authority did not consider all information pertaining to the application, including the applications listed, I am nonetheless of the view that the subject appeal must be decided on its own merits, the particular circumstances presenting and its compliance with relevant Development Plan and Local Area Plan policies.

- 8.6.2. As part of the application, it is proposed that an advertising billboard display adjacent the R772 at Ballylough Ferns Co. Wexford would be permanently decommissioned. The subject site is situated approximately 24km south-west of Gorey town. In my view, that notwithstanding the proposal to remove the feature under this application, the matter is otherwise entirely separate and unrelated to the appeal at hand.
- 8.6.3. I note concerns raised by the appellant that the report of the planning authority did not include commentary from the Conservation Officer. I do not agree however that the assessment conducted, particularly in relation to the impact of the development on built heritage was lacking as a result.

## **9.0 AA Screening**

- 9.1. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
- 9.2. The subject site is located c. 3.3km from the Slaney River Valley SAC (Site Code 000781).
- 9.3. The proposed development seeks to replace an existing illuminated advertising display with 1 no. digital advertising display. The proposal also concerns the decommissioning of 1 no. advertising display at Ballylough Ferns, adjacent the R772.
- 9.4. No nature conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 9.5. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site.
- 9.6. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- The urban nature and small scale of the works,
  - The location of the site removed from any waterbodies and lack of any hydrological connectivity and
  - Taking into account the Appropriate Assessment Screening report undertaken by Wexford County Council.

- 9.7. I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 9.8. Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

## **10.0 Water Framework Directive**

- 10.1. The subject site is located c.340m from the River Banoge IE\_SE\_11B020200 to the east, is c.1.1km from Coolnqveagh IE\_SE\_11B020200 to the south and is c. 410m from the route of the Ballyowen11 IE\_SE\_11B020100 to the north. The proposed development seeks to replace an existing illuminated advertising display with a digital advertising display located on the gable elevation of No. 1 Main Street Gorey. The proposal also proposes to decommission 1 no. advertising display located adjacent the R722 at Ballylough, Ferns, Co. Wexford.
- 10.2. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 10.3. I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface and ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.
- 10.4. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- The urban nature and small scale of the works.
  - The location of the site removed from any waterbodies and lack of any hydrological connectivity.

I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or

otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

## **11.0 Recommendation**

I recommend that planning permission is refused.

## **12.0 Reasons and Considerations**

1. The proposed replacement digital advertising display would, given its prominent location at an important approach to Main Street Gorey from the east and having regard to its location within the Gorey Town Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), have a significant negative visual impact on the ACA and would fail to comply with the provisions of Section 2.13 of Volume 2 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028, requiring signs in Architectural Conservation Areas to be in keeping with the character of the buildings and to adhere to best conservation principles. Furthermore, the proposal would contravene Objective ACA01, Volume 1 of the Development Plan which seeks to protect and enhance the character of designated Architectural Conservation Areas, including the views and prospects to and from these areas, and furthermore would contravene Objective ACA05 which requires all new advertising hoardings, signage, awnings, canopies, flagpoles, banners, satellite dishes, masts, pylons, lighting, cctv cameras and car parking provision within an Architectural Conservation Area to be designed, constructed and located in a manner that is complementary to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area. The development as proposed would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. Having regard to the prominent location of the replacement signage on a heavily trafficked arterial route to Gorey town from the east, the proximity of the signage to a multi-arm junction, including the R772 Arklow Road; the Commission is not satisfied that the development would accord with the provisions of Section 2.13 Signage and Advertisements, Volume 2 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 and

is not satisfied that the proposal would not give rise to increased levels of distraction and hinderance to public road users. The proposal would therefore be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

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 me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

---

Patricia Byrne  
Planning Inspector  
27<sup>th</sup> May 2026

### Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

<b>Case Reference</b>	<b>PL-500782-WX-26</b>
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Replacement of 1 No. illuminated advertising display with 1 No. digital advertising display. Permanent decommissioning of 1 No. advertising display located adjacent to the western side of the R772
<b>Development Address</b>	No. 1 Main Street, Gorey, Co. Wexford
<b>IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK</b>	
<b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q.2.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
(For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	
<b>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. <b>EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.</b>	<b>State the Class here</b>

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
<b>3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. <b>No Screening required.</b>	The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development asset out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development regulations 2001, as amended (or Part V of the 1994 Roads regulations). No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. <b>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</b>	<b>State the Class and state the relevant threshold</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.  <b>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</b> <b>OR</b> <b>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</b>	<b>State the Class and state the relevant threshold</b>
<b>4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?</b>	

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ .