



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-501242-CC-26

Development	Change of use of a vacant ground floor commercial unit to a cafe with internal and external alterations and construction of third storey.
Location	53 Gerald Griffin Street, Blackpool, Cork
Planning Authority	Cork City Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2544194
Applicant(s)	CC and H Imperial Ltd
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission + Conditions
Type of Appeal	Third Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant(s)	Madeleine Murray
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	17 th July 2026
Inspector	Michele Beirne

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1.1. The site is located at No. 53 Gerald Griffin Street, Blackpool, Cork City. It is located at a prominent corner between Gerald Griffin Street and St. Marys Road and at the meeting point of Gerald Griffin Street, St. Marys Road, Cathedral Street and Shandon Street. The site contains a two-storey vacant building, with a small external yard to the west of the building. The property adjoins No. 54 Gerald Griffin Street to the north of the site and the HSE occupy the building to the west on St Marys Road. The site has a stated area of 0.009 hectares.
- 1.1.2. The site is in a city suburb c1km from Cork city centre and within the Blackpool Architectural Conservation Area. It is in proximity to the Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Anne, which is a protected structure and located in the adjacent Shandon Architectural Conservation Area.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1 The proposed development is described as follows:
- Change of use of a vacant ground floor commercial unit to a cafe,
 - Alterations that include demolition works and elevational changes and the construction of a third storey to accommodate two apartments at first and second floor levels,
 - An awning over the ground floor entrance,
 - Partial demolition of external wall and a new pedestrian entrance to new yard,
 - Ancillary site development works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

- 3.1.1. Cork City Council (CCC) issued notification of a decision to grant permission on the 1st April 2026 subject to 15 conditions. Conditions 1, 2, 3, 6, 12, 13 and 14 are of note:
- Condition 1: Development shall be as per revised plans unless amended.

- Condition 2: All external materials shall be carried out in accordance with revised drawings. No uPVC is to be used to the south and east elevations.
- Condition 3: Signage shall be restricted to the fascia of the existing shopfront only and agreed in writing. Roller shutters, CCTV units, alarm boxes, satellite dishes, extractor fans and internally illuminated signage shall not be permitted without the benefit of planning permission.
- Condition 6: Full details of waste management disposal shall be submitted for written agreement before any works.
- Condition 12: A construction traffic management plan shall be agreed with the Council in consultation with An Garda Síochána before any works.
- Condition 13: Four cycle stands are to be provided and their location agreed with the Council before any works.
- Condition 14: The public footpath is to be kept free from obstructions and appropriate licencing is to be obtained for any street furniture.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The initial SEP report can be summarised as follows:

- Agree with further information request.
- This is a vacant prominent building and further information is sought in particular from a conservation point of view.

The SEP report on further information received can be summarised as follows:

- Agree with recommendation to grant with conditions.

The initial planners report can be summarised as follows:

- The site is zoned objective ZO1 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods and is permitted in principle.
- A café use at this location would make a positive contribution to the wider neighbourhood.

- There is no objection in principle to an additional floor. It is within the Plans target building height range and in keeping with properties in the vicinity.
- The density is acceptable and consistent with the principles of compact growth.
- This is a highly visible site opposite the protected structure St. Mary's Cathedral. A key consideration is potential impact on the character and setting of the ACA and built heritage assets.
- The Conservation Officer has raised concern about the design and lack of detail submitted. Further information on the design and signage to be sought in line with their report.
- The proposed studio apartments would provide a good standard of accommodation. They exceed the minimum floor areas and widths, dual aspect and internal storage requirements in the 2025 Apartment Guidelines. The proposed floor to ceiling height is consistent with the Guidelines.
- The non-provision of private or communal amenity space is acceptable having regard to Section 3.8 of the Guidelines, the small scale of development, the nature of the development, the size of the site and the standard of accommodation provided.
- The proposal will not result in negative impacts on the residential amenity of adjoining neighbours by way of overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light etc.
- Further details on the operation of the proposed café will be sought.
- Further information will be sought to clarify the new stepped area in the yard.
- No dedicated parking is acceptable as on street parking exists and development is located centrally and on/close to bus routes.
- Drainage, environment and traffic section reports stating no objections subject to conditions are noted.
- Cycle parking numbers and the requirement to agree their location is noted.
- Water and wastewater proposals are acceptable in principle. It is noted there is no report from Uisce Eireann.

- Street furniture is controlled by a separate licencing process and no furniture forms part of the application.
- A contribution requirement is provided for the proposed development.
- The environmental screening reports section states drainage seek further information on the flood risk assessment submitted.

The planners report requesting further information can be summarised as follows:

- The proposals must have regard to Objective 8.23 of the Development Plan. Submit a revised design for the proposed change of use, façade alterations and extension. The façade design and external details of upper floors of the south facing elevation are of particular concern. The applicant is advised that details require careful design to not impact negatively on the special character of the surrounding built environment or views of the cathedral. The input of a registered conservation architect is recommended. uPVC will not be permitted. Detailed drawings must be provided and include sufficient detail to adequately assess the proposal and potential impacts on the ACA and protected structure. All proposed demolition works should be clearly indicated.
- Provide details on the proposed cafés operating hours, the type of food that will be prepared/served and any mechanical ventilation or similar type apparatus.
- Clarify the purpose of a new stepped area in the yard and provide a section.

The additional further information report can be summarised as follows:

- The applicant amended the design, provided demolition drawings and details on proposed external finishes. The response is acceptable.
- The applicant states the proposed opening hours are 7am-7pm, 7days a week. No food will be cooked or prepared on site. The offering is proposed as hot and cold drinks and confectionery. All food will be produced off site and no mechanical ventilation is proposed. The response is acceptable.

- The applicant provided sections of the yard, states it provides access to the apartments and is to be provided at a split-level arrangement. Part of the yard will be raised up to the external boundary, bringing it to the road level to provide direct access from St Mary's Road and bin storage. The remaining yard area will be retained at its existing level to maintain boundary conditions and avoid drainage and structural issues. The response is acceptable.
- There is no objection subject to conditions from the conservation officer and the contribution report is noted.
- Grant permission with conditions.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Traffic Regulation and Safety report: No objection subject to conditions relating to a construction traffic management plan, cycle parking requirements, façade lighting and that the public footpath is kept free from obstructions and appropriate licencing obtained for any street furniture.
- Conservation report: No objection subject to conditions relating to the design, external materials and signage. This report is after further information was received, it notes the amended proposal has been informed by a Conservation Architect and states the proposal would not negatively impact the wider ACA or the setting of St Mary's Cathedral. The initial Conservation report raised concern about the design and lack of detail submitted and requested further information outlined in the planners report.
- Drainage report: No objection subject to conditions on the separation of drainage, storm runoff, avoid negative impact on existing drains/ sewers.
- Environment report: No objection subject to conditions relating to construction waste, noise control, waste management and disposal and noise level and construction hours, construction management works.
- Contributions reports: Grant with a contribution condition.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

None.

3.4. Third Party Observations

- 3.4.1. One third party submission was made to the Planning Authority. Observations raised largely reflect the grounds of appeal set out in Section 7.

4.0 Planning History

4.1.1. Site

- PA. Ref: 14/36082. Permission granted in 2014 for a 1.1m wide access door.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028:

Zoning:

- 5.1.1 The area is zoned 'ZO1 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods', the zoning objective is to 'protect and provide for residential uses and amenities, local services and community, institutional, educational and civic uses'. The proposed development is permitted in principle in this zone.

Summary of key policy:

5.1.2 Chapter 2: Core Strategy:

- Objective 2.10: The 15-Minute City
- Objective 2.31: Compact Growth

5.1.3 Chapter 8 Heritage, Arts and Culture:

- Objective 8.23: Development in Architectural Conservation Areas.
- Objective 8.24: Demolition in Architectural Conservation Areas

5.1.4 Chapter 11 Placemaking and Managing Development in particular:

- Section 11.90 Apartment Design and Section 11.91 Quantitative Standards
- Section 11.185 Cafes/Restaurants
- Section 11.193 Shop Fronts and Commercial Façades
- Section 11.199 Street Furniture

- Section 11.202 Architectural Conservation Areas
- Section 11.248 Bicycle Parking

5.2. Relevant National or Regional Policy / Ministerial Guidelines

5.2.1. Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2025.

The 2025 Guidelines set out requirements and guidance for the design of apartments. It includes Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) and guidance on apartment mix, internal space standards for different types of apartments, dual aspect ratios, floor to ceiling heights, stair/lift core ratios, storage spaces and amenity spaces.

5.2.2. Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024.

The 2024 Guidelines set out requirements and guidance on sustainable residential development, compact settlements and standards for housing. It provides guidance on quality design and placemaking and SPPRs on separation distances, provision of open space, car parking and cycle parking.

5.2.3. Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, 2011.

The Architectural Protection Guidelines provide guidance on protecting structures or parts of structures and preserving the character of Architectural Conservation Areas.

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.3.1. The closest European sites are Cork Harbour SPA (004030) located 5km southeast of the site and Great Island Channel SAC located 9km east of the site (001058). Lough Lee pNHA (000094) is located 3km southwest of the site and Douglas River Estuary pNHA is located 4.6km southeast of the site.

6.0 EIA Screening

- 6.1.1. The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for environmental impact assessment (refer to Form 1 and Form 2 in Appendices of this report). Having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed

development and the types and characteristics of potential impacts, it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. The proposed development, therefore, does not trigger a requirement for environmental impact assessment screening and an EIAR is not required.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1.1. Grounds of Appeal

A third party appeal was lodged by a resident to the north in the vicinity of the site regarding the decision to grant permission. It is summarised as follows:

- The appellant states they were not entitled to make any further comment on the further information submitted. The original application was insufficient and queries how revised drawings were so insignificant that the Council could grant permission.
- The additional information has not adequately addressed the concerns raised in the further information request.
- The changes would be contrary to guidelines, best practice and have an adverse impact on the protected structure and character of the ACA, including the view of the cathedral.
- The addition of an additional storey is of particular concern. This changes the character and look of the building and how it sits in the landscape.
- The appellant highlights provisions under Objectives 3.9, 11.139, 8.17, 8.18, 8.23, 8.27 and Section 11.185 of the Development Plan.
- Objective 3.9 and Section 11.139 cover the conversion of upper floors and not the construction of additional floors.
- The existing two storey building has blended into its environs and to change it would not uphold Objective 8.17 Conservation of the City's Built Heritage.
- The conservation of the building in its current form would be more environmentally sustainable and minimise waste.

- The applicant's reference the top floor extension at 54/54A Gerald Griffith Street. An inappropriate decision at this location does not justify a third storey.
- The proposed development does not respond respectfully to the historic environment in particular finishes. Information provided on materials does not add substantially to the original application.
- It is noted revised drawings were not available for inspection on the day at the office and the appellant accessed drawings online.
- The restrictive nature of the site makes it unsuitable for use as a café.
- The site is unsuitable for safe deliveries. Concerns were raised about pedestrian access and safety relating to vehicles blocking roads and paths, no room to pass due to cycle stands, tables and chairs.
- Cycle parking requirements are impossible as space is limited on the path.
- The proposed hours of operation are excessive, concerns are raised about noise, fumes, litter and general disturbance.
- The proposed development has limited waste storage facilities and no direct access from the yard to the street.
- The site is in proximity to six schools. The applicants company operates dessert bar businesses selling items high in sugar and fats. The selling of such goods at this location would be contrary to Government policy which seeks to prohibit the placement of unhealthy food outlets within 400m of primary and secondary schools. The area is already well served by cafes and restaurants.
- Conditions are difficult to enforce. They may go some way to compliance, it would be better to ensure compliance from the outset than enforcement.

7.2. **Applicant Response**

- None received within the statutory timeline.

7.3. **Planning Authority Response**

- None.

7.4. **Observations**

- None.

8.0 **Assessment**

Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal, 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**
- **Built heritage impacts**
- **Traffic and pedestrian impacts associated with the cafe**
- **Operation impacts associated with the cafe**
- **Other matters**

8.1. **Principle of development**

- 8.1.1. The proposed development is located at the meeting point of Gerald Griffin Street, St. Marys Road, Cathedral Street and Shandon Street and at a prominent corner between Gerald Griffin Street and St. Marys Road. The site contains a two storey vacant building with a small external yard. The proposal includes alterations of the existing structure to accommodate a proposed change of use of the ground floor from a vacant commercial unit to café use and a studio apartment at first floor level. A new second floor is proposed to accommodate a second studio apartment. The appellant states the restrictive nature of the site makes it unsuitable for use as a café.

8.1.2. I note the site is in an area zoned 'ZO1 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods' and the zoning objective is to 'protect and provide for residential uses and amenities, local services and community, institutional, educational and civic uses'. As part of this zoning objective, ZO1.4 of the Development Plan states 'uses that contribute to sustainable residential neighbourhoods are also acceptable in principle in this zone provided they do not detract from the primary objective of protecting residential amenity and do not conflict with other objectives of this Development Plan. Such uses include but are not limited to: small-scale local services including local convenience shops; community facilities; cultural facilities; hotels and hostels; live-work units; service stations (petrol filling stations); local medical services; third level education institutes; community based enterprise or social enterprises, health facilities including hospitals.' I would consider the proposed change of use from a vacant ground floor commercial unit to a café use with two apartments at upper floor levels to be permitted in principle, subject to compliance with development management standards. These are now considered further in the assessment.

8.2. **Built heritage impacts**

8.2.1. The site is located at a prominent location at the southern edge of the Blackpool Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). The statement of character for the ACA states it is of architectural, archaeological, historical, and social significance and this varies as you move northwards. The site is across the road from the protected structure St. Mary's and Anne Cathedral, which is in the Shandon ACA. The statement of character for this ACA states the area is of significant social, economic, cultural, and religious importance and the tower of the cathedral, known as the 'North Cathedral', marks the point where the road north out of the city crosses the ridge.¹

8.2.2. I note that the applicant submitted a conservation report by a registered conservation architect with Design Forum Architects, which illustrates the prominence of the site, states the structure is reasonably sound and that the

¹ Volume 3, Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

significance of the building/site lies more in the setting. I also note the existing building is not a protected structure.

8.2.3. The proposal as submitted to the Planning Authority was amended in design at further information stage. In this regard, further information was sought seeking a revised design for the proposed change of use, façade alterations and extension. The applicant was advised the façade design of upper floors of the south facing elevation were of particular concern and details require careful design to not impact negatively on the special character of the surrounding built environment or views of the cathedral. The appellant has raised concern that the proposal has not adequately addressed the further information sought by the Council. They state the proposal would have an adverse impact on the special interest of the protected structure and the character of the ACA. The addition of a third storey, the impact on the view of the cathedral and how the proposal would change the character of the area are of particular concern. They state the existing two storey building has blended into the area and its conservation would be more environmentally sustainable.

8.2.4. I have reviewed the final permitted proposal and note they provide details on proposed demolition works, the shopfront, fenestration arrangements and external finishes. The proposed demolition works involve the roof of the existing two storey building and a rear stairway and the removal of a portion of the existing yard wall to accommodate a gate. Demolition proposals are clearly indicated on the drawings as requested. The drawings indicate that the proposal involves maintaining and refurbishing the existing shopfront, excluding the entrance door and signage, individual signage lettering, an awning to the outdoor entrance area and proposed aluminium windows with a painted render surround. The external finish of upper floors is a painted render finish. I am satisfied that the drawings address the requested information and provide sufficient information to facilitate a balanced and reasoned assessment. I note the Councils conservation report and planners report on the additional information considered the response acceptable and that the Conservation report stated that the amended proposal has been informed by a conservation architect and the proposal, subject to conditions, would not negatively impact on the wider ACA or the setting of St. Mary's Cathedral.

- 8.2.5. I observed on my site inspection that the property is vacant and the ground floor was previously used as a barber. There is no ground floor window facing Gerald Griffin Street and the existing shopfront faces onto St. Marys Road. The shopfront is in reasonable condition. I also observed that the adjoining building No. 54 Gerald Griffin Street and building beside the cathedral on Gerald Griffin Street are four-storey in height, these buildings are at a lower level as the street slopes downhill. The adjoining building on St Marys Road is two storey in height, of modern design and is not within the Blackpool ACA. Graffiti is prominently visible on the third-floor gable wall of No. 54 Gerald Griffith Street. I note that the appellant referred to 54/54A Gerald Griffith Street and that an inappropriate decision at this location does not justify a third storey. I also note that compact growth is supported in the Development Plan (Objective 2.31 Compact Growth) and that the planners report states residential density is acceptable and the increase in height is within the target building height range set out in the Plan.
- 8.2.6. Objective 8.23 of the Development Plan states the design and detailing of development in ACAs should respond '*respectfully to the historic environment in a way that contributes new values from our own time. ... Repairs or the addition of new materials should be appropriate and in keeping with the character of the original structures.*' Having regard to the final design and materials, the retention and refurbishment of the existing shopfront, the existing mixture of styles in proximity to the site and the character of the ACA, I consider that the proposed design and materials appropriately reflects the character of the ACA and that the proposal would therefore enhance the architectural interest associated with the ACA character.
- 8.2.7. I note the decision to grant permission included a condition that external finishes are to be carried out in accordance with revised drawings submitted and no uPVC to be used to the south and east elevations (Condition 2). A further condition was included that signage is restricted to the fascis of the existing shopfront only and agreed in writing and that roller shutters, CCTV units, alarm boxes, satellite dishes, extractor fans and internally illuminated signage shall not be permitted without the benefit of planning permission (Condition 3). I concur with the Councils assessment that signage be restricted

to the existing shopfront only and I consider these conditions appropriate, to avoid visual clutter and to conserve the character of the ACA, in line with the requirements of Section 11.193 Shopfronts and Commercial Facades and Section 11.202 Architectural Conservation Areas.

- 8.2.8. I note the drawings do not state the selected colour of the external finish and the 2011 Architectural Heritage Guidelines identifies that colours used can potentially have significant impact on the character of an ACA. I therefore recommend that Condition 2 also includes for the colour of the external finish to be sympathetic to the character of the ACA, should the Commission be minded to grant permission. The appellant was concerned about the level of detail provided on plans and the use of conditions to control development. As outlined above, I am satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to enable assessment and I consider it reasonable to include conditions to ensure proposals accord with development management standards.
- 8.2.9. With regard the proposed demolition of the existing roof and the addition of a third floor, I note that Objective 8.24 of the Development Plan states *'Demolition of structures and parts of structure will in principle only be permitted in an Architectural Conservation Area where the structure, or parts of a structure, are considered not to contribute to the special or distinctive character, or where the replacement structure would significantly enhance the special character more than the retention of the original structure'*. I observed on my site inspection that the third storey would affect the view of the cathedral on the approach from St Marys Road. While it would block a portion of the view, the cathedrals tower remains the dominant feature. Having regard to the location of the vacant building on site, that the building is not a protected structure, its prominent location in the ACA near the protected structure, the scale, design and finishes of the proposed development and the height of adjoining buildings, I consider that the proposal respects the sites context and would enhance the ACA. I am satisfied that the proposal will not give rise to unacceptable visual impacts or form an overbearing or incongruous feature and would not have negative impacts on the setting of the protected structure or the character of the area.

8.3. **Traffic and pedestrian impacts associated with the cafe**

- 8.3.1. Section 11.185 Cafes and Restaurants of the Development Plan include that *traffic implications including adequate and safe delivery areas* are a consideration when assessing applications for cafes. The appellant raised concern about traffic and pedestrian access and safety relating to vehicles blocking roads and paths, no room to pass due to cycle stands, tables and chairs. They state cycle parking requirements are not possible as space is limited on the footpath.
- 8.3.2. I note that the Development Plan supports compact growth where communities can access amenities within a walking and cycling distance (Objective 2.10 The 15-Minute City). Section 11.248 sets out bicycle parking standards to support the delivery of cycle infrastructure and the decision to grant permission included a condition that four cycle stands are provided and their location agreed with the Council (Condition 13). Having regard to the above, the sites location and the existing building on site, I consider the condition acceptable. I observed on my site inspection existing bicycle storage is available across the road c30m from the site, which demonstrates that cycle parking infrastructure can be accommodated in the local area. I note these stands are also available for patrons of the proposed café.
- 8.3.3. In relation to deliveries and parking associated with the proposed café, I observed on my site inspection that there is controlled on-street parking in the area and parking restrictions at the junctions. I also note that the site is c80m from a bus stop on Cathedral Street. Considering the sites location, its proximity to public transport and the likelihood that patrons will be local residents, it is my opinion that the proposal will be adequately served by the existing on-street parking and sustainable transport options. I note there was no objection from the Traffic section subject to conditions. The application does not include street furniture and I note the decision to grant permission included a condition public footpath is to be kept free from obstructions and appropriate licencing is to be obtained for any street furniture (Condition 14). I also note that no changes are proposed as part of the proposed development to the existing road layout and that the decision to grant permission included for a construction traffic management plan to be agreed before any works (Condition 12). Given

the sites location, I consider this condition appropriate in the interests of traffic safety. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed development would not create adverse impacts in terms of traffic generation or safety and would not negatively impact pedestrian access or safety.

8.4. Operation impacts associated with the cafe

- 8.4.1. Section 11.185 Cafes / Restaurants sets out the following considerations for assessing applications for cafes: *'The need to retain, protect and strengthen the vitality and multi-use function of designated centres; The number/frequency of cafes / restaurants in the area; The effect of noise, fumes, hours of operation, and general disturbance on nearby amenities and residents.... and Waste storage facilities'*. The appellant states that area is already well served by cafes and restaurants and raised concern that such a premises would be contrary to government policy which seeks to prohibit the placement of unhealthy food outlets within 400m of primary and secondary schools.
- 8.4.2. I note that this policy primarily targets hot food takeaways and I observed that the site is in proximity to cafes and shops in the local area and along Shandon Street leading to the city centre. I also note that Section 11.185 recognises the positive contribution cafes can make to the vitality of the city and measures in the Development Plan that support creating sustainable communities (Objective 2.10 The 15-Minute City). Having regard to the above, it is my view that a café at this location would make a positive contribution to the area and accord with Section 11.185 Cafes/ Restaurants. I note the Council came to a similar conclusion.
- 8.4.3. The appellant states the proposed development has limited waste storage facilities and there is no direct access from the yard to the street. I have assessed the proposals submitted and I note there is a designated space in the yard for bin storage. The applicant clarified at further information stage that the removal of a portion of the existing yard wall is to accommodate a gate and that part of the yard will be raised up to the external boundary, bringing it to the road level to provide direct access from St Mary's Road and bin storage. I also note that the proposed studio apartments above the café exceed the minimum floor

areas and storage requirements in the 2025 Apartment Guidelines and have access to the yard. I am therefore satisfied that waste storage facilities are acceptable. The decision to grant permission included a condition that details of waste management shall be submitted for written agreement (Condition 6). I consider this appropriate in the interest of orderly development.

8.4.4. The appellant also raised concerns that the proposed hours of operation are excessive and in relation to noise, fumes and general disturbance. I note that the proposal is in a city suburb and that the proposal does not include external seating. The applicant states the proposed opening hours are 7am-7pm, 7 days a week. No food will be cooked or prepared on site, the offering is proposed as hot and cold drinks and confectionery, all food will be produced off site and no mechanical ventilation is proposed. Having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal, its location and that the operation hours are not after 7pm, I am satisfied that any potential noise, fumes or activities associated with the café will not unduly impact residential amenities.

8.5. Other matters

8.5.1. *Technical considerations:* The appellant states they were not entitled to make any further comment on further information submitted. The response to the further information did not include significant changes for example relating to height or access arrangements and I note the planning authority did not determine the information to be significant and considered it acceptable. The appellant also stated revised drawings were not available for inspection on the day at the office and the appellant accessed drawings online. I note this matter did not prevent the appellant making an appeal and ACP accepted it as a valid appeal.

8.5.2. *Clarification:* The environmental screening section of the initial planners reports states drainage seek further information on the flood risk assessment submitted. The site is not within a flood zone and I have reviewed the drainage report and there is no comment on a flood risk assessment nor was further information sought on the matter. Having regard to the above, I am satisfied that flood risk is not an issue.

- 8.5.3. *Construction and demolition works:* Conditions were included relating to restrictions on noise level, construction and demolition management, to ensure no appreciable negative environmental impacts and that waste is removed by authorised waste contractors. Having regard to the location and the nature of the proposal, I consider it appropriate to include a condition that a Construction Management Plan be agreed with the Planning Authority should the Commission grant permission. This should incorporate details on disposal of demolition/construction waste, intended demolition/construction practice, hours of working, noise and dust management measures in the interests of public safety and residential amenity. I also consider it appropriate to include a condition controlling the hours of construction in the interests of residential amenity.

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 5km northwest of Cork Harbour SPA (004030) and 9km west of Great Island Channel SAC (001058).
- 9.3 No nature conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 9.4 Having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site.

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The nature of the development proposal.
 - The location of the development in a serviced area.
 - The distance to the Natura 2000 network and the absence of pathways to any European Site.
- 9.5 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. 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. An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken with regard to the objectives set out in Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive.
- 10.2. Having considered the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, it is concluded that the proposal will not result in any risk of deterioration in the status of any water body, including surface waters (rivers and lakes), groundwater, transitional waters, or coastal waters. This applies to both qualitative and quantitative status, and in respect of temporary and permanent effects.
- 10.3. In addition, the proposed development will not adversely affect the achievement of established environmental objectives, including the protection, maintenance, and improvement of water body status, as required under the Directive.
- 10.4. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the requirements of Article 4.

11.0 Recommendation

- 11.1. I recommend that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions, for the reasons and considerations as set out below.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 12.1.1. Having regard to the location and existing development on site, the nature and scale of the proposed development, the character of the surrounding area and the provisions of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure residential or visual amenities and would not detract from the setting of protected structures or the character of the Architectural Conservation Area. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

13.0 Conditions

1.	The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars submitted to the planning authority on 25/09/2025, as amended by the Further Information plans and particulars submitted to the planning authority on 05/03/2025, except as may be otherwise required by the following conditions. REASON: To clarify the plans and particulars for which permission is granted.
2.	All external materials to be carried out in accordance with the drawings submitted in response to the request for further information dated 19.11.2025. The colour of the external finish shall be sympathetic to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area. No uPVC to be used to the south or west elevations of the building, including windows, doors, shopfront, rainwater goods, soffits, fascias etc. REASON: To conserve and enhance the character of the Architectural Conservation Area.
3.	Signage shall be restricted to the fascia of the existing shopfront only. Full details of fascia signage (and any associated lighting) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the unit. The following shall not be permitted to the front elevation of the building without the benefit of planning permission: a) The erection of roller shutters, cctv units or alarm boxes. b) The erection of satellite dishes. c) The erection of extractor fans of similar appliances. d) Internally illuminated lighting. REASON: To conserve and enhance the character of the Architectural Conservation Area.

4.	Drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services. REASON: In the interest of public health and surface water management.
5.	A Construction Traffic Management Plan for the proposed development including dedicated haulage routes, a protocol to be followed by HGV drivers and allowable operational times for the HGV's on the city's road network shall be agreed with the Planning Authority in consultation with An Garda Síochána before works commences on site REASON: In the interest of traffic safety.
6.	The total cycle parking supply associated with the development shall be as follows: a) The provision of minimum 2 secure covered cycling parking spaces for the 2no. Studio Apartments. b) The provision of minimum 2 cycling parking stands to serve the café. The location of same is to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to construction. REASON: In the interest of sustainable development and traffic safety.
7.	The public footpath is to be kept free of obstructions such as, but not limited to, furniture bins and signage related to the development. Appropriate licencing is to be obtained for any street furniture to be placed on the public footpath. REASON: the interest of pedestrian safety.
8.	A plan containing details for the management of waste (and, in particular, recyclable materials) within the development, including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of the waste and, in particular, recyclable materials shall be submitted to, and agreed in

	writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. REASON: In the interest of orderly development.
9.	Prior to commencement of works, the developer shall submit to, and agree in writing with the planning authority, a Construction Management Plan, which shall be adhered to during construction/demolition works. This plan shall provide details of intended construction/demolition practice for the development, including hours of working, noise and dust management measures and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste. REASON: In the interest of public safety and residential amenity.
10.	Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Friday 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 the interest of residential amenity.
11.	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 Coimisiún 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.
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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.”

Michele Beirne
Planning Inspector

4th August 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	501242-CC-26
Proposed Development Summary	Change of use of a vacant ground floor commercial unit to a cafe with internal and external alterations and construction of third storey.
Development Address	53 Gerald Griffin Street, Blackpool, Cork
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA?	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q.2.
	☐ No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
☒ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
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?	
☒ 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.	

No Screening required.	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.	State the Class and state the relevant threshold Class 10 (b) (i), threshold > 500 dwellings
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)?	
Yes ☐	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	501242-CC-26
Proposed Development Summary	Change of use of a vacant ground floor commercial unit to a cafe with internal and external alterations and construction of third storey.
Development Address	53 Gerald Griffin Street, Blackpool, Cork
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.	
Characteristics of proposed development (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	The site is located in a serviced urban area. The development has a modest footprint, comes forward as a standalone project and does not require the use of substantial natural resources. It does not give rise to significant risk of pollution or nuisance. The development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, or is vulnerable to climate change. It presents no risks to human health.
Location of development (The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity	The site is located in a serviced urban area. The dwelling is not a protected structure, within an ACA or in the immediate area of protected views. The site is not located in a designated site. The closest European sites are Cork Harbour SPA (004030) located 5km southeast of the site and Great Island Channel SAC (001058) located 9km east of the site. Screening for AA concluded that the proposed development would not

of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The site is within the Blackpool ACA and adjacent to the Shandon ACA. The site is partly within a Zone of Archaeological Potential.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	The site is in a serviced urban area. Having regard to the modest nature of the proposed development, its location removed from sensitive habitats/features, likely limited magnitude and spatial extent of effects, and absence of in combination effects, there is no potential for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Act.
Conclusion	
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____