

Catherine Flynn

From: Verona Murphy <Verona.Murphy@oireachtas.ie>
Sent: Friday 19 January 2024 09:51
To: Catherine Flynn
Subject: FW: Response to An Bord Pleanála case ref ABP-318709-23
Attachments: Peoples Section 5..pdf; WX Co Co 12 12 2023.pdf; similarity of Sect 5 references 318455 -23.pdf sub 18 1 23.pdf; statutory declaration John Murphy & exhibit GSH1 sub 18 1 24.pdf

Morning Catherine,
I'm resending as I've left out the dot in your email address.
Kind regards
Verona

From: Verona Murphy
Sent: Thursday 18 January 2024 18:57
To: cflynn@pleanala.ie
Subject: Response to An Bord Pleanála case ref ABP-318709-23

Dear Catherine,
Wishing all at ABP a very happy New Year for 2024.

Thank you for your assistance earlier today.

Please see attached as discussed a response to your letter dated the 19th of Dec 2023 the attached submission.
As discussed please let me know if there are any issues.

Kind regards

Verona

VERONA MURPHY TD

New Ross Office
Ph: 083 010 5374

Wexford Office
Ph: 087 988 9081
verona.murphy@oireachtas.ie

Beartas ríomhphoist an Oireachtais agus séanadh. oireachtas.ie/ga/email-policy/
Oireachtas email policy and disclaimer. oireachtas.ie/en/email-policy/



Verona Murphy TD
INDEPENDENT WEXFORD
A Strong Independent Voice

The Planning Department
Wexford County Council.
Carriglawn,
Wexford.
Y35 WY93.

14th November 2023

Dear Sirs,

Proposed use of premises at Saint Martin's Road Rosslare, formerly the Great Southern Hotel, for the purpose of accommodating persons seeking International Protection.

Following a meeting of the residents at Rosslare Harbour on Sunday 12th November 2023, I have been mandated by that meeting to make a Submission under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act concerning the above development.

In accordance with Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, I on behalf of the People of Rosslare Harbour am seeking a declaration from the Council confirming the use of the above property for the purpose of accommodating persons seeking international protection, is not exempted development.

I enclose herewith statutory fee in the sum of €80 and attach an OS map of the site concerned.

Background

Planning permission was granted by Wexford County Council On the 11th of June 2021 to Domal Developments Limited under planning reference number 2021 0283 for the following development:

"Change of use of former hotel to 90 bedroom nursing home, including day rooms, offices, meeting rooms, mortuary, laundry, kitchen, dining room, staff rooms, various bedrooms, treatment room, and ancillary accommodation, 24 one bedroom assisted living apartments and one studio apartment, second floor extension to existing north and west wings, single story extensions at south and east of existing building, two storey extensions at south and west of existing building, 3 storey extensions to south and west of existing building, alterations to all elevations, external steps and ramps, front boundary wall with railing engage at St. Martin's Road, walled service area,

new boundary fencing with gate to northern boundary, ancillary site works and car parking for 77 cars."

In May 2022 a further application reference number 2022 0711 was lodged by Amhola Rosslare Nursing Home Trading Limited and granted on the 22nd August 2022 for the following development:

Permission for alterations to the 90 bedroom nursing home scheme permitted by Wexford County Council (Ref: 2021/0283). The proposed works include: 1) The demolition of part of the rear of the hotel building including the existing ESB substation; 2) Modifications to the internal layout of the building; 3) Modifications to the elevations including changes to openings and facade materials and the construction of rooftop plant rooms; 4) The construction of a plant room and waste management enclosure; 5) All associated car parking, landscaping and site development works. Access to the nursing home will be provided via St. Martins Road located to the south.

A commencement notice was served by the developers of the nursing home in May 2023 and the development is in the course of construction, prima facie based on the plans and particulars approved by the planning authority and for the purpose identified in the planning application document submitted as part of that application i.e., a Nursing Home.

During the course of construction of the permitted development the developer submitted a second commencement notice issued in respect of permission 2022 0711 citing the description of the works as:

It is proposed to convert the existing hotel into an emergency accommodation centre. The work will be done in two phases. Phase 1 (The West Wing) for which this application applies is the fit out of the existing West Wing and a small extension which consists of a new stair

It would appear the developer erroneously believes that the proposed change of use is exempted development, it is not .

I have set out below the grounds of the referral and the reasons and considerations on which they are based.

Issues

To determine whether the intended use is permissible the council must assess two issues.

- Is the intended change of use from a nursing home as permitted to the intended use as IPAS Centre material in nature and therefore constitutes development.
- If the answer to this question is yes then the council must assess whether the change from the permitted use of a nursing home to a facility for the

accommodation of persons seeking international protection, is or is not exempt development.

Assessment

It is my submission that the character of the intended use involves a fundamental difference in purpose to what has been permitted. What has been permitted is a facility for the residential care of elderly people on a medium to long term basis. By contrast, the proposed intended use would involve providing a different service to a completely different user group, with no significant element of care being provided.

Secondly, one must consider whether the terms of the planning permission granted would have encompassed the material change use now being proposed.

The Chief Executives order approving of the proposed change of use makes plain that what was being approved was the change of use from a former hotel to a nursing home and did not encompass or permit any subsequent or alternative material change of use.

Condition number 1 of the permission granted by the council is quite explicit in that it states:

"the proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application".

What is proposed now by the developer materially contravenes condition number one and no approval has been given for any alternative use.

Thirdly, the planning considerations and standards required to be taken into account for the proposed use differ from those that were required to be considered in assessing the application for the nursing home. Specifically, matters such hours of operation, frequency of visits, visitor turnover, and parking requirements would be materially different.

Rosslare is a small settlement that has seen its population increase by 87% since 2016 to a total of 2247 persons. The proposal involves adding 400 people incrementally, which equates to an increase of approximately 18% in the local population. Based on Ireland's average household size of 2.74 persons, this equates to adding approximately 146 housing units to the settlement.

It is considered that this level of increase in such a short period of time will put significant pressure on critical social infrastructure in the area. Moreover, it will have significant impacts and consequences in planning terms on the capacity of local schools and medical services, which are already at breaking point.

Furthermore, a nursing home will serve a more local catchment, with visitors during social hours and contribute to the local economy. It is evident from the council's

planner's report on the nursing home application, that he considered such matters to be relevant and material factors in grounding the recommendation to grant permission for the nursing home where he in summary stated:

- Nursing homes of the scale proposed provide approximately 60 full and part time jobs when operational.
- They provide care for the elderly in the community, and
- The socio-economic benefits for the village of Rosslare would be significant.

None of these material considerations apply in the case of the proposed change of use.

The question as to whether a change of use is a material one was addressed by the High Court where the court stated that the issues of relevance to this question are:

“ the matters which the planning authority would take into account in the event of a planning application being made for the use. If these matters are materially different (from the original use) than the nature of the use, must be equally materially different” – Monaghan County Council V Brogan [1987 I.R.33].

The current developers are proposing to intensify the use of the building by 500% representing a significant intensification of use in terms of bed spaces and in terms

of the scale of activities and accordingly this is a significant intensification of the use of the property in material contravention of the existing permission.

Based on all the foregoing, it is evident that the proposed change of use is material in nature and therefore constitutes “development” for the purpose of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

One must now address whether the proposed use as a facility to for accommodating persons seeking international protection falls within the scope of the exempted development regulations.

Regulations.

Article 6 (1) Of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended provide that subject to article 9, development of a class specified in column 1 of Part 1 of schedule 2 shall be exempted development.

Class 20 F was inserted by article 2 of SI 376 2023- Planning and Development (Exempted Development) (No.4) Regulations. 2023.

Class 20 F sets out a list of structures used for particular purposes, the temporary use of which to accommodate or support displaced persons or persons seeking international protection is exempted development, as follows.

Temporary use by or on behalf of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to accommodate or support displaced persons or persons seeking international protection of any structure or part of a structure used as a school, college, university, training centre, social centre, community centre, non-residential club, art gallery, museum, library, reading room, sports club or stadium, gymnasium, hotel, convention centre, conference centre, shop, office, Defence Forces, barracks, light industrial building, airport operational building, wholesale warehouse are repository, local authority administrative office, play centre, medical and other health and social care accommodation, event and exhibition space, or any structure, or part of a structure normally used for the public worship or religious instruction.

The word “use” here must be interpreted as it is understood in the Planning Acts and the Regulations made thereunder.

The premises in Rosslare has **not been used** as a Nursing Home, (which use is not specified in class 20 F) or used for any other purpose within the use classes in Class 20F. Simply put, the **use** of the property as a nursing home in line with the permission granted has never been implemented.

Therefore, as the existing structure does not fall within the scope of Class 20F the proposed IPAS centre is not exempt.

Abandonment of Use

Does the use as a former hotel fall within the scope of class 20F?

The concept of abandonment is well established in Irish Planning law. Discontinuance of a use can result in a situation where the former development is taken to have been abandoned and the land left with a nil use (See David Browne - Simons on Planning Law, 3rd edition.)

Furthermore, the right to resume a use which had been lawfully carried out in the past, is lost because of cessation of that use.

The Supreme Court explained the concept as follows: Where a previous use of land has been not merely suspended for a temporary and determined period, but has ceased for a considerable time, with no evidenced intention of resuming it at any

time, the tribunal of fact was entitled to find that the previous use had been abandoned. (*Dublin County Council V Tallaght Block Company Limited*).

Browne states that an intention to resume development is an important factor in determining whether there has been abandonment. In addition, Browne points out that in determining if abandonment has taken place, an objective test is applied.

In summary, therefore, in determining whether the use of the former hotel has been abandoned several tests are generally applied and include-

1. The physical condition of the premises- e.g., is it derelict?
2. The length of time of abandonment – see *Cork County Council V Ardfert Quarries*, where there was a lapse of four years in the use of an industrial building, and the use was held to have been abandoned.
3. Evidence of any intention to resume the former use.
4. Objectively, would a reasonable person looking at the derelict former hotel conclude that its use as a hotel had been abandoned.

The documentation accompanying the application for the nursing home application confirms that the former Hotel became derelict in 2007.

Applying the tests and the criteria of the courts, as outlined above, the use as a hotel has long been abandoned.

The overarching point is, that if the use of a property, as in this case, has been clearly abandoned and lost its former use rights, a change of use ordinarily exempt will require planning permission.

Consequently, it would be impermissible to conclude that the use as a former hotel brings the premises within the ambit of Class 20F.

Conclusion.

For all the reasons set out above, I trust that the council will concur with my submission that the proposed change of use of the premises at St Martins Road is development and secondly, is not exempted development.

I note the council may have made or are about to make a referral to ABP in relation to this matter. This is now not required in circumstances where you are now in receipt of this Section 5 referral and accordingly the motivation for making the referral to ABP no longer exists. If Wexford County Council have made such a referral same can be withdrawn.

Wexford County Council are empowered by legislation to make this determination pursuant to Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act as amended and decide that this is not exempted development.

Finally, any attempt to defer your decision in relation to this application would be very controversial and an abdication of your responsibility as a Planning Authority. It would be regarded by the public as evading responsibility for making a decision that might not be popular with certain other organs of the state.

I await hearing from you with your determination within the 4-week statutory period permitted by law.

Yours Faithfully

Verona Murphy

An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.

16th January 2024

Dear Sirs

**Re: Section 5 Reference to Wexford County Council dated 14th November 2023
Regarding the Site of the former Great Southern Hotel, Rosslare Harbour.**

I attach letter from Wexford County Council dated the 12TH of December 2023 in response to my Section 5 Reference which was submitted to the Council dated the 14th of November 2023, concerning the above property.

The Council have failed to decide the Section 5 reference within the specified period permitted.

I am now formally requesting the Board to make that decision in compliance with Section 5 (3)(b), and enclose a copy of my reference dated the 14th of November 2023.

In relation to the issue of abandonment, which forms a substantive element of the relevant considerations in my reference, I enclose Statutory Declaration confirming that the use of the property was abandoned based on the evidence of adjacent property owners.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of same and oblige.

Yours Faithfully


Verona Murphy TD

12th December 2023

To: Verona Murphy,
Ramsgrange,
New Ross
Co. Wexford
Y34D525

Re: **EXD01050: Referral, pursuant to s.5(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), by Wexford County Council regarding former Great Southern Hotel, Rosslare Harbour, Co Wexford.**

Dear Deputy Murphy,

We refer to your application made to Wexford County Council ("**the Council**") pursuant to s.5(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ("**the 2000 Act**"), received on the 15th November 2023.

We note that your application relates to development and a proposed change of use of building/property located at the site at the former Great Southern Hotel, Rosslare Harbour, County Wexford. In this regard, based on the submissions set out in your application, you have raised an issue/query as to whether the proposed use of the buildings/properties/structures located at Saint Martin's Road Rosslare, former Great Southern Hotel, Rosslare Harbour, Co Wexford, for the purposes of accommodating persons seeking international protection is development, and if so, is same exempted development.

As you are aware, on 10th November 2023, and prior to your application, the Council made a referral to An Bord Pleanála ("**the Board**") pursuant to s.5(4) of the 2000 Act in relation to the said site at the former Great Southern Hotel, Rosslare Harbour, County Wexford (ABP-318455-23). The Council, in the said referral, raised the following issues:

- (1) Is the intensification or increased occupancy of bedrooms covered under Planning and Development (Exempted Development) (No. 4) Regulations 2023 (S.I.376/2023) when consent for the nursing home was based on one occupant per room.
- (2) Can the part use of the building for accommodation for those seeking international protection, which is undergoing renovation for use as a nursing home, be considered exempted development.



Comhairle Contae
Loch Garman
Wexford County
Council

An Charralg Leathan, Loch Garman
Carricklawn, Wexford Y35 WY93
053 919 6000 | customerservice@wexfordcoco.ie
www.wexfordcoco.ie | [www.twitter.com/wexfordcoco](https://twitter.com/wexfordcoco)

- (3) Can exempted development status accrue when the building is under extensive renovations commenced under an approval permitted as a nursing home but not completed.

The said referral, which detailed, *inter alia*, the factual basis relevant to same, including the relevant planning history, has not yet been determined by the Board ("the Extant Referral").

As is apparent from your submissions, your application made under s.5(1) of the 2000 Act, in substance, seeks a determination of similar/related issues as those currently before the Board in the Extant Referral made by the Council. The Extant Referral before the Board and your said application relate to the same development/substantially the same development and raise similar/related issues.

In this respect, the Council is conscious of not undermining the legal certainty granted by a valid Section 5 Determination (*such as the one that may issue as a result of the Extant Referral before the Board*) and wishes to avoid a situation which potentially undermines the utility of the Section 5 procedure and the objective of same for providing an authoritative ruling of whether a particular development is or is not development or is or is not exempted development. As you can appreciate, the Council wishes to avoid a situation whereby the said objective cannot be attained if there is the possibility of a series of conflicting Section 5 Determinations – which might arise if the Planning Authority and the Board were simultaneously considering the similar/related issues relating to the same site and the same development in the context of two separate Section 5 Application/Referral.

Further, noting that the Council has already sought guidance from the Board on the same development in the context of the Extant Referral before the Board, and consistent with that position, it is noted that s.5(4) of the 2000 Act provides:

- "(1) If any question arises as to what, in any particular case, is or is not development or is or is not exempted development within the meaning of this Act, any person may... request in writing from the relevant planning authority a declaration on that question....
- ...
- (4) Notwithstanding subsection (1), a planning authority may, on payment to the Board of such fee as may be prescribed, refer any question as to what, in any particular case, is or is not development or is or is not exempted development to be decided by the Board"

In light of the foregoing, the Council will now make a further Section 5 Referral to the Board, pursuant to s.5(4) of the 2000 Act, and **seek a determination on the following issue:**

Is the proposed use of the buildings/properties/structures located at Saint Martin's Road Rosslare, former Great Southern Hotel, Rosslare Harbour, County Wexford, for the purposes of accommodating persons seeking international protection development, and if so, is same exempted development?

As outlined above and as detailed hereinafter, the within referral arises out of the same factual circumstances, relates to the same development and raises similar/related issues as those currently before the Board in the Extant Referral. In light of the foregoing, and noting the issues raised in your submissions, the Council consider that this further s.5(4) Referral is both necessary and appropriate.

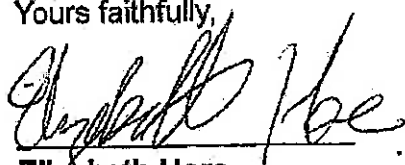
The Council will copy you into the said Referral, together with the Developer/land owner.

For the reasons outlined above, the Council have considered this the most appropriate course of action in circumstances where the issues raised are of some complexity and relate to the same development currently before the Board in the Extant Referral.

As you are further aware, if you are not satisfied with the Council's approach to this matter, it remains open to you to make your own referral to the Board pursuant to s.5(3)(b) of the 2000 Act, which provides:

"Without prejudice to subsection (2), in the event that no declaration is issued by the planning authority, any person who made a request under subsection (1) may, on payment to the Board of such fee as may be prescribed, refer the question for decision to the Board within 4 weeks of the date that a declaration was due to be issued under subsection (2)."

Yours faithfully,



Elizabeth Hore

Director of Services

Economic Development and Planning

053 9196000

An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.

16th January 2024

Dear Sirs

**Re: Section 5 Reference to ABP Regarding the Site of the former Great Southern Hotel, Rosslare Harbour.
Observation on Wexford County Council second referral made on the 12th of December 2023.**

I refer to your correspondence dated 19th December 2023.

Similarity of Section 5 References

The Local Authority asserted in its reference made directly to the Board dated the 12th of December, that the People of Rosslare Section 5 reference, made to the local authority on the 14th of November, is similar and on all fours with their original reference, made directly to the Board on the 12th of November 2023 (ABP reference 318455-23).

That proposition is completely misleading and untrue.

Wexford County Council have failed to address the core issue of abandonment in both Section 5 references. This is central in determining whether the proposed change of use is exempt or not. It is a matter of fact that the buildings use as a hotel was abandoned in law. I attach a Statutory Declaration from adjoining landowners concerning the abandonment of use as a Hotel.

The reasons and considerations set out in The People of Rosslare Section 5 reference in relation to whether the proposed change of use was material, in planning terms, were also distinct and different from how that issue was addressed by the Wexford County Council.

Multiple Section 5 References

The planning authority contend in their submission that there cannot be more than one Section 5 reference at any time in relation to the same property, yet they have made two Section 5

references in relation to this property. The authority is conflating the issue of references with declarations.

There is no provision in Section 5 capable of being construed as restricting the number of Section 5 references that can be made in any particular case, nor is there a provision as to the order of priority in which Section 5 references are decided.

The question for the Board is fundamental, is the proposed change of use to an IPAS centre exempt irrespective of the number of references. Logic would dictate, that the board would issue one determination to all the stakeholders i.e the landowner and the People of Rosslare who made the Section 5 reference and notify the local Authority concurrently.

The local authority through their actions have now removed themselves from the decision-making process and have no further roll in relation to the Section 5 process.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of this observation and oblige.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verona Murphy', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Verona Murphy TD

In the Matter of the Statutory Declarations Act 1938

I, John Murphy, Vehicle Body Repair Supervisor, of Castledaly, St. Martin's Road, Rosslare Harbour in the County of Wexford, aged 18 years and upwards in accordance with the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act of 1938 MAKE OATH AND SAY as follows:-

1. I am the owner and occupier of property situate at Castledaly, St. Martin's Road, Rosslare Harbour, Co. Wexford. I have been the owner and occupier of the said property since 2005. The said property is adjacent to the former hotel known as the Great Southern Hotel at Rosslare Harbour in the County of Wexford.
2. The said former hotel known as the Great Southern Hotel at Rosslare Harbour ceased operating and closed in 2010 and became a derelict building within the space of a year lying idle and unsecured, full of debris and rubbish, a major eyesore and concern to the residents of Rosslare Harbour. These concerns and the state of the building were made known to Wexford County Council. In this regard I beg to refer to extract from the Independent Newspaper dated 1st November 2011, upon which and marked with the letters "GSH1" I have endorsed my name prior to the swearing hereof.
3. My understanding is that the then owners were given permission to demolish the building known as the Great Southern Hotel at Rosslare Harbour and the fixtures and fittings were donated to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to auction off and an auction was duly held and the said fixtures and fittings were sold. I beg again to refer to exhibit "GSH1".
4. To the date hereof the said former Great Southern Hotel at Rosslare Harbour never reopened as a hotel or otherwise and remained derelict and unoccupied. I further understand the then owners did not intend continuing the use of the site of the former Great Southern Hotel Rosslare Harbour as a hotel but had other plans for the said site. I beg again to refer to exhibit "GSH1".
5. I make this Statutory Declaration knowing that it is an offence to make a statement herein that is false and which I know to be false.

Signed by

John Murphy
John Murphy

Dated: the 18 day of January 2024

Signed and sworn by the said John Murphy
Before me Patrick Raymond Corish, Commissioner for Oaths
At Spawell Road, Wexford.

And I know the Deponent.

Dated 18 day of January 2024

Patrick Raymond Corish,
Commissioner for Oaths,
Spawell Rd.,
Wexford
95 912288

PR Corish

Identified to me by Mr. Paul Parnell CB4113505
on 17/4/2018 with photo

Exhibit GSH1

John Murphy
McConn 18/1/2014

Wexford (/regionals/wexford)

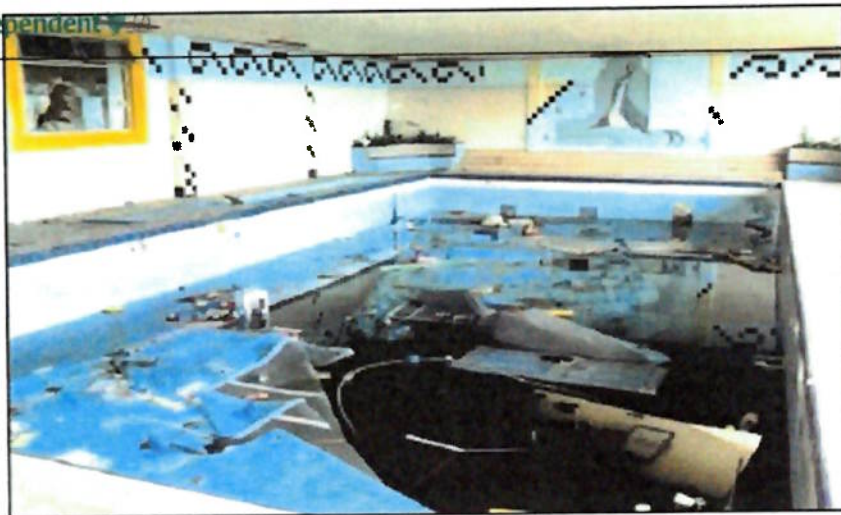
Change county (/regionals/change-county)

[News \(/regionals/wexford/news\)](#) [Sport \(/regionals/wexford/sport\)](#) [Business \(/regionals/wexford/business\)](#) [Lifestyle \(/regionals/wexford/lifestyle\)](#)
[Wexford & District \(/regionals/wexford/wexford-district\)](#) [Enniscorthy \(/regionals/wexford/enniscorthy-news\)](#)
[New Ross \(/regionals/wexford/new-ross-news\)](#) [Gorey \(/regionals/wexford/gorey-news\)](#)

HEARTBREAK HOTEL

THE DEMISE OF THE 'GREAT SOUTHERN' HOTEL IS CAUSING CONCERN LOCALLY AND ACTS AS A REFLECTION OF THE STATE OF OUR COUNTRY'S ECONOMY

Irish Independent



HOTEL



CONOR CULLEN

Tue 1 Nov 2011 at 14:12



A ONCE pristine hotel in the heart of Rosslare Harbour has been allowed go to rack and ruin, with locals now increasingly concerned about the type of activity taking place there.

The Great Southern Hotel (which later became St Helen's Hotel) was once a favourite with tourists, but has now become a derelict building in the space of a year.

However, not only is the building now an eyesore for locals and visitors alike, residents of Rosslare Harbour have become increasingly concerned that the former hotel is a magnet for anti-social behaviour and a safety hazard.

The owners of the hotel, Merchant Properties Limited, with a registered address in Dublin, were given the go-ahead in October 2010 by An Bord Pleanála for 25 apartments on the site, to be used as sheltered housing for the elderly.

However, no work has ever taken place and the hotel has instead been lying idle and unsecured since it closed last year.

As the owners were given permission to demolish the hotel, they gave the St Vincent de Paul permission to sell off all the fixtures and fittings – from beds to radiators and kitchen equipment to mirrors – that were left in it when it closed.

The hotel has since been stripped even further and is now instead full of all kinds of debris and rubbish, like broken glass and beer cans, while it is completely accessible from all sides, through a huge amount of doors and broken windows.

Local resident Michael Delaney, a member of the Rosslare Harbour Environment Group, said that their primary concern is a safety one.

'It's dangerous right now, that's the most important thing. Kids are in and out of it and it appears there have been people sleeping in it too. Every day you look at it more and more damage is being done,' he said.

'You just can't stop people going in there the way it is right now - it's wide open,' he added.

Mr Delaney said that the hotel is also 'a terrible eyesore on the place' and pointed out that it was mentioned a number of times in Rosslare Harbour's latest Tidy Towns report. 'Things like that just don't help, it's in an awful state,' he said.

Local TD Liam Twomey said the hotel has been the cause of 'loads of complaints' to him in recent times.

'This is causing huge annoyance for people living in Rosslare Harbour,' said Dr Twomey. 'It really is dangerous.'

The Rosslare Strand-based Fine Gael TD said that he has been in touch with Wexford County Council and the requests they have made to Merchant Properties for works to the building have gone unheeded so far.

Local residents have also contacted Wexford County Council directly about the situation with the hotel, with one stating that they wrote to the local authority 'not only over its tragic demise, but also the anti-social activity it has now attracted'.

Craig Innes, Wexford Area Engineer, has inspected the hotel and compiled a report. He said that they are corresponding with Merchant Properties and are hoping the situation can be resolved with recourse to planning enforcement.

'We'd be anxious that something is done sooner rather than later to make the site safe,' said Mr Innes.

The engineer said they are 'still at a point where the owner of the property can do something about this himself without our intervention', adding that the council would rather people would take responsibility for their own buildings without them having to take legal action.

Mr Innes said that there are two main priorities. Firstly, the hotel needs to be cleaned up. He said this would just be a clear out as 'there's nothing of value in it anymore'.

He said that site also has to be made secure, which will involve boarding it up, while retaining secure access for maintenance/security work. Mr Innes said this will have to be done in a particular way.

'We don't want it left as an eyesore either, we want it look presentable,' he said, pointing out that it may be some time before the planned development for the site goes ahead - if it ever does.

However, Mr Innes pointed out that structurally the building is 'pretty sound', so there's no concerns in that respect, but that all the other issues will need to be addressed soon.

The council engineer said it's up to Merchant Properties what the next step will be.

Merchant Properties is a property development vehicle for Chartered Accountants Hilary Haydon and Fiona Cottell of Dublin-based Haydon Chartered Accounts.

Mr Haydon failed to respond to this newspaper when asked to comment on the situation last Thursday. A ONCE pristine hotel in the heart of Rosslare Harbour has been allowed to go to rack and ruin, with locals now increasingly concerned about the type of activity taking place there.

The Great Southern Hotel (which later became St Helen's Hotel) was once a favourite with tourists, but has now become a derelict building in the space of a year.

However, not only is the building now an eyesore for locals and visitors alike, residents of Rosslare Harbour have become increasingly concerned that the former hotel is a magnet for anti-social behaviour and a safety hazard.

The owners of the hotel, Merchant Properties Limited, with a registered address in Dublin, were given the go-ahead in October 2010 by An Bord Pleanála for 25 apartments on the site, to be used as sheltered housing for the elderly.

However, no work has ever taken place and the hotel has instead been lying idle and unsecured since it closed last year.

As the owners were given permission to demolish the hotel, they gave the St Vincent de Paul permission to sell off all the fixtures and fittings - from beds to radiators and kitchen equipment to mirrors - that were left in it when it closed.

The hotel has since been stripped even further and is now instead full of all kinds of debris and rubbish, like broken glass and beer cans, while it is completely accessible from all sides, through a huge amount of doors and broken windows.

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it's dangerous right now, that's the most important thing. Kids are in and out of it and it appears there have been people sleeping in it too. Every day you look at it more and more damage is being done,' he said.

'You just can't stop people going in there the way it is right now -it's wide open,' he added.

Mr Delaney said that the hotel is also 'a terrible eyesore on the place' and pointed out that it was mentioned a number of times in Rosslare Harbour's latest Tidy Towns report. 'Things like that just don't help, it's in an awful state,' he said.

Local TD Liam Twomey said the hotel has been the cause of 'loads of complaints' to him in recent times.

'This is causing huge annoyance for people living in Rosslare Harbour,' said Dr Twomey. 'It really is dangerous.'

The Rosslare Strand-based Fine Gael TD said that he has been in touch with Wexford County Council and the requests they have made to Merchant Properties for works to the building have gone unheeded so far.

Local residents have also contacted Wexford County Council directly about the situation with the hotel, with one stating that they wrote to the local authority 'not only over its tragic demise, but also the anti-social activity it has now attracted'.

Craig Innes, Wexford Area Engineer, has inspected the hotel and compiled a report. He said that they are corresponding with Merchant Properties and are hoping the situation can be resolved with recourse to planning enforcement.

'We'd be anxious that something is done sooner rather than later to make the site safe,' said Mr Innes.

The engineer said they are 'still at a point where the owner of the property can do something about this himself without our intervention', adding that the council would rather people would take responsibility for their own buildings without them having to take legal action.

Mr Innes said that there are two main priorities. Firstly, the hotel needs to be cleaned up. He said this would just be a clear out as 'there's nothing of value in it anymore'.

He said that site also has to be made secure, which will involve boarding it up, while retaining secure access for maintenance/security work. Mr Innes said this will have to be done in a particular way.

'We don't want it left as an eyesore either, we want it look presentable,' he said, pointing out that it may be some time before the planned development for the site goes ahead - if it ever does.

However, Mr Innes pointed out that structurally the building is 'pretty sound', so there's no concerns in that respect, but that all the other issues will need to be addressed soon.

The council engineer said it's up to Merchant Properties what the next step will be.

Merchant Properties is a property development vehicle for Chartered Accountants Hilary Haydon and Fiona Cottell of Dublinbased Haydon Chartered Accounts.

Mr Haydon failed to respond to this newspaper when asked to comment on the situation last Thursday.



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