

22126-01-001

# Main Street, Borris, Co. Carlow

## Parking Assessment

for

## Carlow County Council



November 2022

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## 1. Background

Carlow County Council requested Roadplan Consulting to carry out an assessment of car parking in Borris Town, Co. Carlow, specifically in the area of the site of a small residential development The Council intends to provide.

The site is located on the R702 at the west end of Main Street, Borris, at the location shown in following photo.



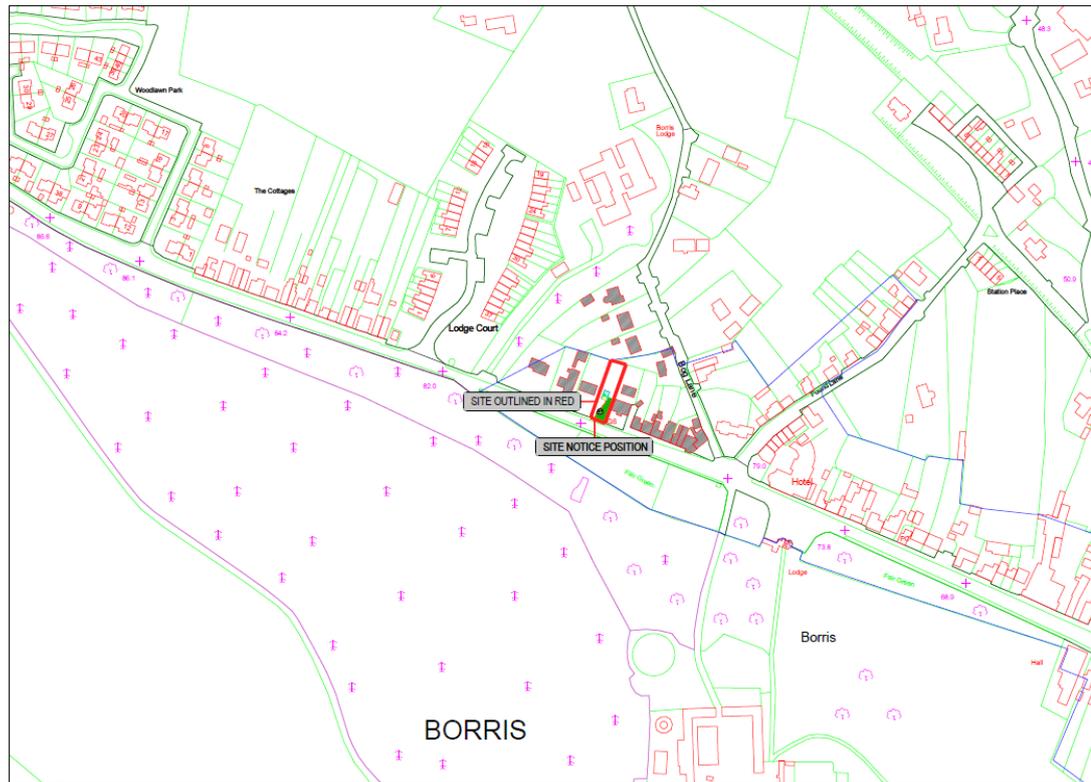
**Figure 1 – Site Location**

The picture above shows the site (marked by a red arrow) on the right-hand side of the picture. The site contains a shed which is used by the Local Authority. The access to the site can be seen in the picture and is approximately 3.5m wide.

To the left of the site is the existing Post Office (marked by an envelope symbol on the picture) and a takeaway Coffee Shop (The Fermentary) located to the right of the Post Office. The Post Office and the Coffee Shop both occupy the one building. The building is single storey, and its overall size is approximately 140m<sup>2</sup>. It appears that both uses have approximately equal floor areas of 70m<sup>2</sup> or so each.

## 2. Location

The location of the site in the context of the roads and other developments is shown on the following drawing.



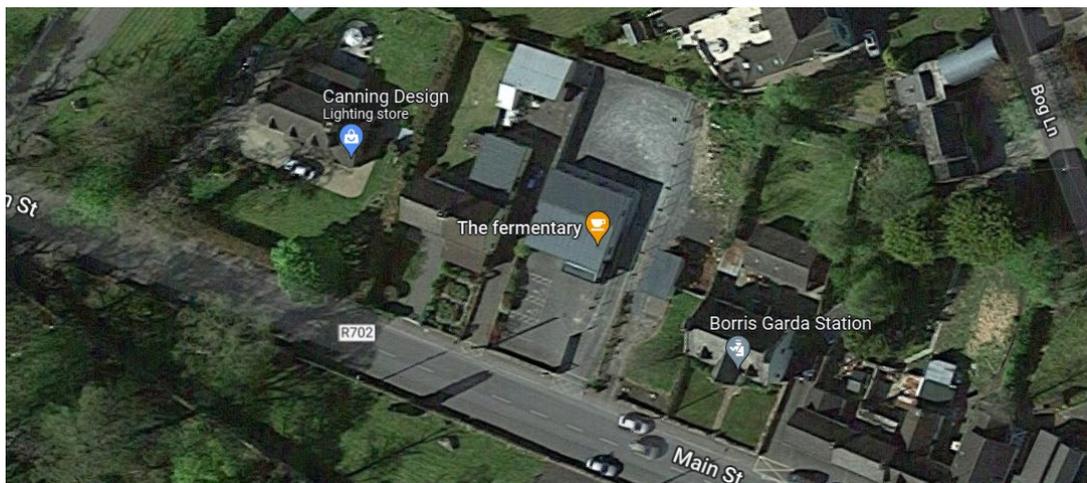
**Figure 2 – Map of Borris – Site Location**

Main Street is developed along its north side only. The land to the south is generally part of Borris House and Estate, although there is a playground located on the south side. The demand for parking at this location is therefore mainly on the north side of the street and the south side is generally not used for parking except by parents bringing children to the playground.

### 3. The Existing Site

The existing site can be seen on the following images (Figure 3) and drawing (Figure 4). It is a narrow site approximately 11m in width and the depth of the site from the public road to the rear boundary is approximately 48m.

To the front of the existing Post Office / Café development there are four parking spaces of which two are standard spaces and two are accessible spaces. To the rear of the development there are six more spaces. The forecourt that contains the four parking spaces is surfaced while the parking area to the rear of the building is unsurfaced (it has a stoned finish). There is a sign in the forecourt advising users that customer parking is located behind the building.



**Figure 3 - Parking to the rear of the Post Office and Café**



**Figure 4 – Proposed Development Site**

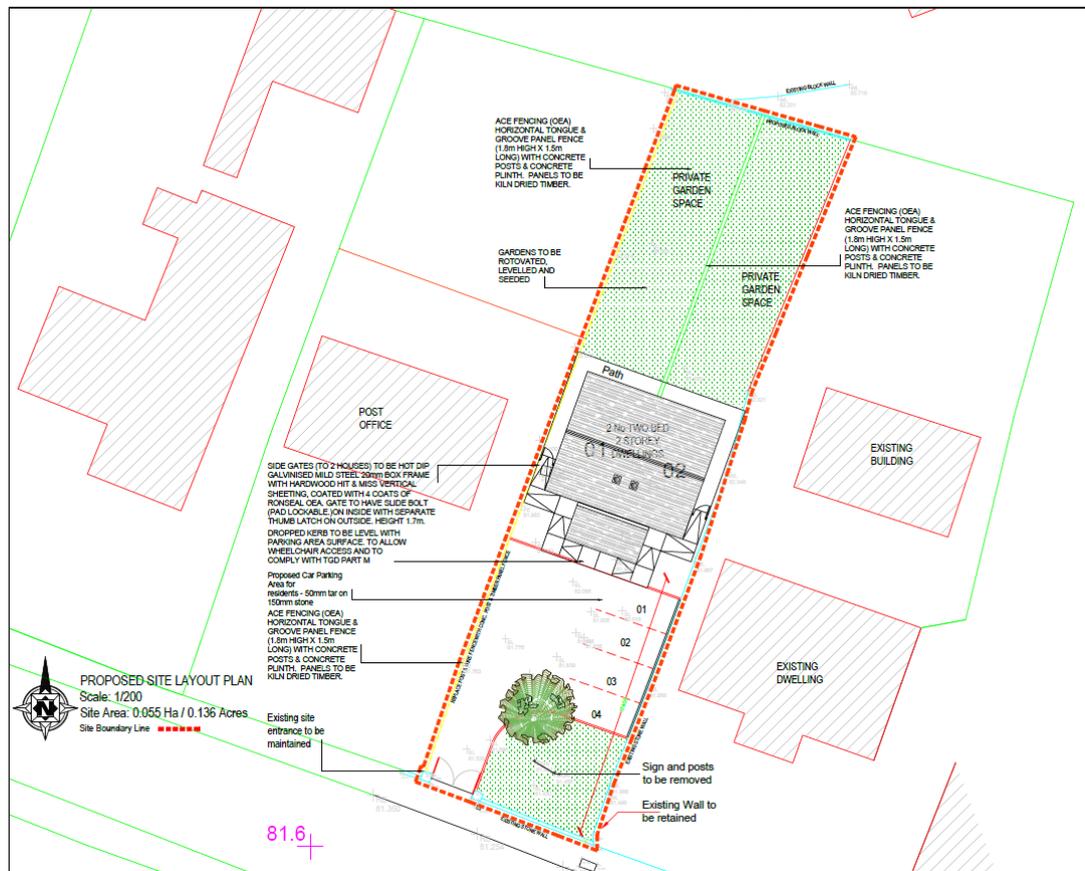
The site on which the residential development is intended was in use by Local Authority personnel on the day of the site visit. Two cones were in place on the roadside at the access to the site to ensure that it was not blocked by parking (these cones are also visible on the Google Streetview image, suggesting that they are semi-permanent).

There was one car parked on the site over the full period of the site visit and there was a second car parked for half the time. Both cars were associated with Local Authority personnel working at the site and no parking associated with the Post Office, Café or any other external use was observed.

The width of Main Street, from the wall on the south side to the kerb on the north side is approximately 9.5m, which is wide enough to accommodate on-street parking on one side. However, the road centreline is located closer to the kerb on the north side of the street than to the wall on the south side. This layout is not ideal in that it leads to cars being parked partially on the footpath on the north side of the street (drivers consider it better to park partially on the footpath out of the way of inbound traffic). In addition, some drivers park along the south side because the outbound lane width is very wide and it is possible to park without obstructing the lane.

## 4. The Proposed Development

The proposed development is a single building comprising two number 2-bed, 2-storey dwellings located centrally within the site. The existing access is proposed to be retained to serve the two dwellings. Four number parking spaces are shown to be provided to the front of the proposed building, two per housing unit. The existing shed is shown to be demolished, and the existing use of the site would therefore cease as would the parking demand associated with that existing use.



**Figure 5 – Proposed Development**

The existing entrance to the site is in use at present and users of the adjacent development do not park across it. There are two cones placed at the access to deter such parking. No on-street parking would therefore be lost by the proposed development.

## 5. Parking Assessment Methodology

The methodology used to assess the potential impacts on parking of the proposed small residential development was as follows:

- The site was visited to record the existing demand for parking.
- The parking demand of the development was assessed by reference to the County Development Plan.

## 6. Site Assessment

The site was visited on Friday the 25<sup>th</sup> of November between the hours of 9a.m. and 11a.m. This was considered to be a day and time that would represent a busy period for the Post Office and the adjacent café.

Parking demand was noted as follows:

- At 9:15 a.m. two cars were parked within the front car park of the Post Office / café and 2 cars were parked on the roadside fronting the Post Office (as shown on the photos below).



- Turnover at the Post Office / Café was quite brisk; the visits to the Post Office and café tended to be short, leading to quick turnover of parking events.
- Because the visits were short, many of the parking events were on the roadside and it was noted that many people chose to park on the roadside rather than to enter the parking area even when there were spaces available internally. It may be the case that some drivers are reluctant to enter because the available spaces may not be usable by them (they may be reserved for blue badge holders). One driver was seen to reverse out and park on the road because an appropriate space was unavailable in the forecourt parking area (although there were spaces available in the rear car park).
- Parking by some non-blue badge vehicles occurred in the two accessible spaces. No blue badge vehicles were observed in the accessible spaces during the period of the site visit.
- The six car parking spaces located behind the Post Office / café building were not well used. In general, there were one to two cars parked there over the period of the site visit (both possibly staff cars); during the visit just one car was observed to travel to the rear of the building to use the rear car park. The maximum occupancy of the rear car park was three of which two were parked all day.
- Of the cars parked in the forecourt parking area, one remained parked over the duration of the site visit.

- The largest number of cars seen to park on road was five and at that time there were four cars parked within the parking areas of the Post Office / Café (two to the front of the building and two behind).



- Some vehicles park on the southern roadside but none were observed to block the pedestrian crossing located on the town centre side of the area.
- Customers generally arrived by car. There may have been a pedestrian trip or two, but no cyclists were observed.
- Some drivers considered the access to the Post Office car park to be wide enough for one vehicle only at a time. This sometimes cause minor interruption of traffic flow on the regional road at the access when drivers turning into the Post Office car park waited for a vehicle to exit. At the time of the site visit there were bins at the access awaiting collection and this could have been a factor.
- Parking on both sides of Main Street did occur on occasion and it was noted that while cars generally had sufficient space to get past, HGVs and other large vehicles (tractors etc) needed to stop to allow opposing vehicles to pass. The issue is that cars parking along the south side of the street cannot park close to the wall when a passenger has to alight, so the car protrudes more into the road, limiting the available space for traffic. The parking events were short-duration the impacts – congestion etc – were likewise.

The situation in relation to parking was compared to other locations within the town:

- The public car park at the east end of the town by the former Bank of Ireland had three cars parked cars at 10:15. The number of spaces in that car park is 29. Drivers appear to prefer on-street parking located beside their destination.



- The busiest area for parking, in terms of the demand for on-street parking, is at the Centra Supermarket.



The photo above, taken at 10.30 am approx, show that parking is present over the almost the full available area of both street-sides and that some drivers double park for short periods to drop or collect a passenger.

## 7. County Development Plan Parking Requirements

The Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 contains, in Chapter 16: Development Management Standards, the following text:

*“Developments shall be required to provide adequate provision within the site for the servicing of the proposal and for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles associated with it (Refer Tables 16.6 and 16.7). Reduced car parking provision maybe considered for commercial town centre sites in accordance with Section 5.14. In dealing with planning applications for change of use or for replacement buildings, allowance will be made for the former site use in calculating the car parking requirements generated by the new development. Where the provision of on-site parking is not possible, the Council may, in exceptional circumstances, accept a financial contribution in respect of the shortfall in the number of spaces.”*

Table 16.7 – *Car and Bicycle Parking Standards* – sets out the parking requirements for different classes for development.

In relation to the proposed residential development, the parking requirement for such development is provided in Table 16.7. The requirement for a dwelling house is two car parking spaces per unit, which for the two dwellings being provided is four spaces. This is same as the number of spaces being provided. The proposed development is serving its own parking requirement fully within the development.

In relation to a Café the parking requirement is stated to be one car parking space per 10m<sup>2</sup> of dining area. The dining area is approximately one third of the total floor area; most of the business appeared to be takeaway but there is some outdoor seating to the front of the café. The estimated parking requirement would be 3 spaces.

There is no classification in Table 16.7 for a Post Office. The nearest appropriate class for the estimation of parking demand is considered to be Bank and Financial institutions. The parking requirement of that class is one space per 20m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area. The parking for 70m<sup>2</sup> is therefore 4 spaces.

The overall recommended parking for this building housing the Post Office and a café is therefore eight spaces. The number of spaces actually provided is ten. The building is therefore considered to be self-sufficient in terms of its parking.

## 8. Conclusions

1. The amount of on-site parking available at the café and Post Office (10 spaces) is adequate for the needs of that existing development as determined in two ways: by site observation and by reference to the requirements of the county development plan. The maximum parking demand observed during the site visit was for nine spaces. The development plan requirement is ten spaces.
2. The area is served by both off-street and on-street parking. What was observed is that since both forms of parking are available drivers choose the one they consider to be most convenient for their short-duration trip. The off-street spaces to the rear of the building were not generally used by customers. The preference is for forecourt parking or on-street parking at the access. The visits are short; customers pop in and out and want to park within a short walk of the building and in a place where manoeuvring the vehicle is easy. This is similar to the other end of the town where the off-street parking provided is underutilised because on-street parking is more convenient.
3. The proposed development provides for its own parking needs within the site. The County Development plan requirement is for four parking spaces and that number of spaces is being provided.
4. There would be no loss of on-street parking resulting from the development. The existing entrance is in use at present so roadside parking at that location is not feasible.
5. In the longer term, consideration could be given to amending the street layout in the area of the proposed development by moving the road centreline to the south, marking on-street parking on the north side and providing measures along the south side to prevent parking (planted buildout or similar). The intention of these changes would be:
  - a) to traffic-calm speeds on entry to Main Street;
  - b) to provide sufficient width to the inbound traffic lane so that drivers do not need to park on the northern footpath, and
  - c) to deter parking on the south side of the street.