

Submission made by Jim Hurley via email on 4 May 2021 to the Foreshore Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (foreshore@housing.gov.ie) regarding Wexford County Council's application for a foreshore lease and licence for a proposed slipway at Fethard Harbour, Co Wexford (<https://www.gov.ie/en/foreshore-notice/4079e-wexford-county-council-fethard-slipway/>).

Submission. I welcome the proposed provision of a slipway at Fethard Harbour as the facility is needed. However, at 10m wide, I feel that the width of the proposed slipway is excessive. Mindful of the ongoing loss of habitat and biodiversity, I request that consideration be given to reducing the width from 10m to 5m to halve land-take from the SAC and MPA. My justification for making this request is as follows.

1. Fethard Harbour is a very small port, with room for less than 10 small vessels. The harbour has a narrow entrance and dries out at low tide (Plate 1 and Plate 2). There is no slipway access to the harbour.



Plate 1. Fethard Harbour with the application site (right).

(Photo: Jim Hurley, 25 April 2021)



Plate 2. Fethard Harbour with seven vessels present.

(Photo: Jim Hurley, 25 April 2021)

2. On 25 April 2021 there were seven vessels in the harbour (Plate 2). There were no boats moored offshore, and all swing moorings were without any moored vessels (Plate 3) suggesting that the moorings are used only during the summer season and probably exclusively by pleasure craft.



Plate 3. Swing moorings off Fethard Harbour.

(Photo: Jim Hurley, 25 April 2021)

3. There are no boat-storage yards or facilities at Fethard Harbour. Consequently, any vessel being brought ashore via the proposed new slipway would have to be removed from the area. Similarly, any vessel being launched from the proposed new slipway would have to be brought into the area via the public roads network.
4. Fethard Harbour is located at the end of a narrow, 2.4km-long cul-de-sac. That third-class local road, known locally as 'Quay Road', is 4.3m wide (Figure 1). As a result, boat-transporting trailers wider than 4m cannot access Fethard Harbour.

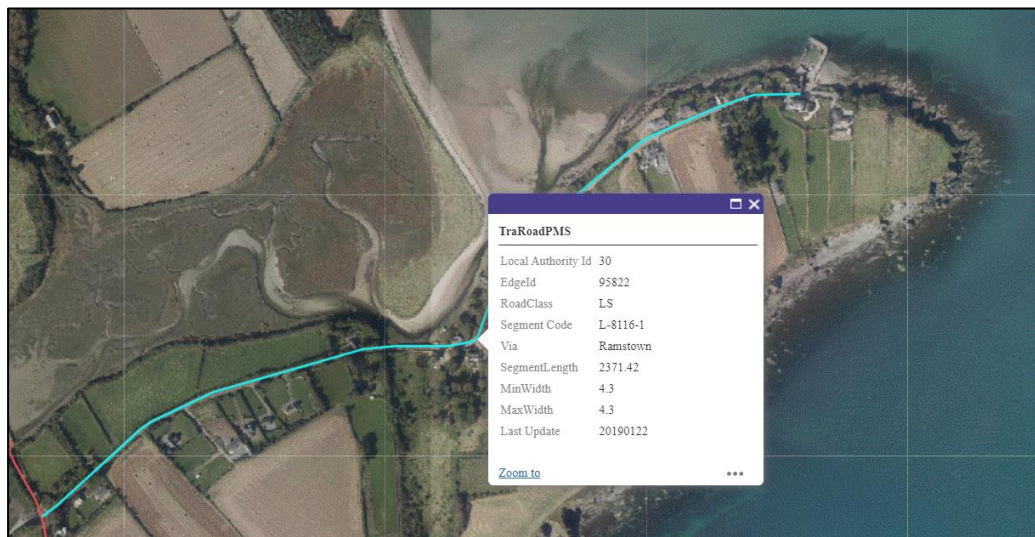


Figure 1. Access to Fethard Harbour via Quay Road.

(Source: <https://maps.wexford.ie/imaps/>)

5. The existing slipway that serves the area for launching via the beach is 4m wide approximately (Plate 4). It is currently used by a small number of boat owners.



Plate 4. Existing slipway beside Fethard Harbour.

(Photo: Jim Hurley, 25 April 2021)

6. It follows, therefore, that a 10m-wide slipway is excessive to accommodate loads of maximum width 4m as determined by the width of the approach road. The size and scale of the proposed development is also out of kilter with the existing infrastructure (Figure 2 and Plate 1).

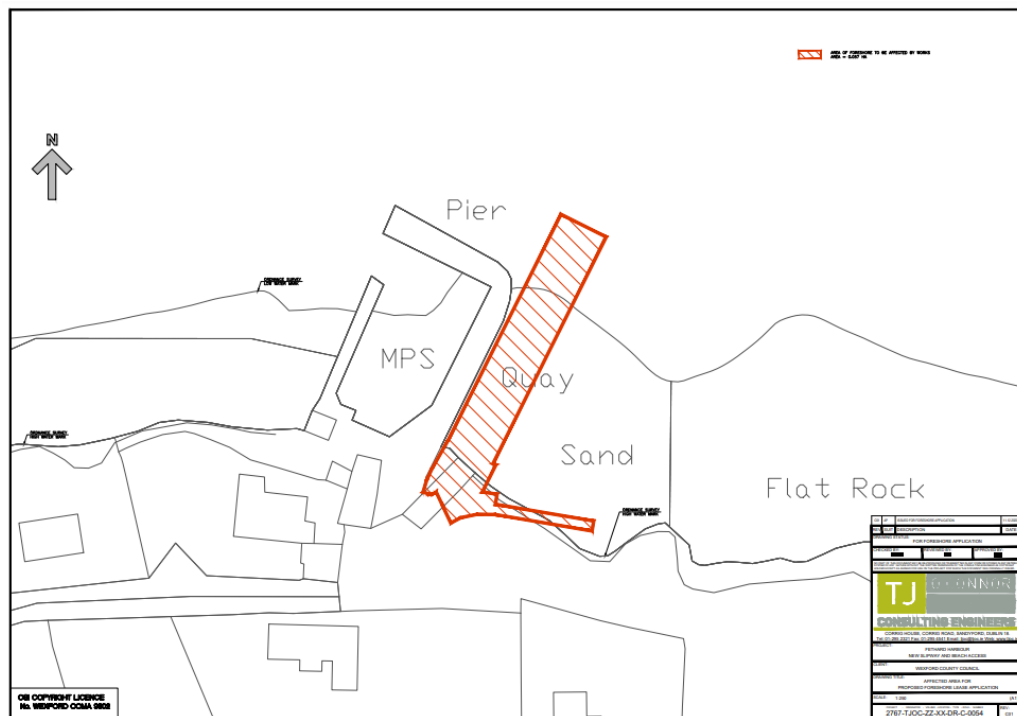


Figure 2. Affected area for the foreshore lease application.

(Source: T J O'Connor & Associated, Consulting Engineers,
Drawing No 2767-TJOC-ZZ-XX-DR-C-0054)

7. Reducing the width of the proposed new slipway from 10m to 5m would provide the required facility, and would, in addition, in my view, have significant benefits in that it would halve the presently proposed land take of some 0.057 hectares of foreshore from the protected area: Hook Head Special Area of Conservation (SAC No IE000764) (Figure 3), and Hook Head Marine Protected Area (MPA), it would increase the area of sand available for beachgoers, it would be less visually intrusive, and it would be more in keeping with the size and scale of the existing harbour infrastructure (Plate 5).

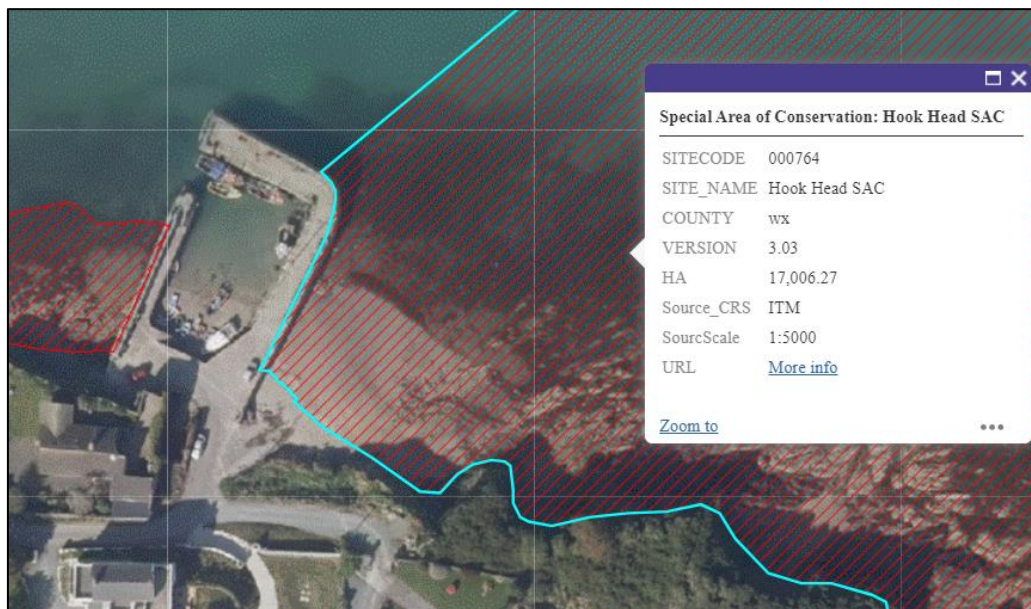


Figure 3. Hook Head SAC/MPA (right; red lines) and 2019 aerial image.

(Source: <https://maps.wexford.ie/imaps/>)



Plate 5. Existing 4m-wide slipway (foreground) with stick (arrowed) positioned 10m from the harbour wall (left).

(Photo: Jim Hurley, 25 April 2021)