



Board Direction

Ref: PL04.239408

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 15th December 2011.

The Board decided by 2:1 to refuse permission generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, subject to the draft reasons and considerations set out below.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

1. The proposed development is located in an area zoned "A1 Green Belt lands" in the Cork County Development Plan, 2009, which is awarded the highest degree of protection. The stated objectives for this zone are that the land uses remain in use as agriculture, recreation or open space, that the strategic, largely undeveloped gaps between the main green belt settlements be preserved from development, and that protection be given to those prominent, open hilltops, valley sides and ridges that give Cork its distinctive character. These objectives are considered reasonable and are consistent with the current national policies. It is the policy of the planning authority to resist the loss of these green belt lands to development which could otherwise be located within zoned lands except in the case of strategic and exceptional development as set out in Objective RCI 8-10 of the County Development Plan, and in such circumstances the impact on the specific functions and open character of the Greenbelt should be minimised. It is considered that the proposed development by reason of its nature of use would not qualify as a strategic and exceptional development as defined in RCI8-10, would result in the loss of agricultural land on an important ridge which forms an important part of the visual setting for Cork City, and would fail to maintain the function and character of the greenbelt. Furthermore, the Board had regard to the prominent location of the site in a rural landscape which forms a strategically important visual setting for Cork city, the elevated and exposed nature of the site and its proximity to the N71, which is a main arterial route, and considered that the proposed development by reason of the design, height and layout, and the significant level of excavation required to facilitate it, would result in an unduly prominent and visually obtrusive feature in the landscape. The proposed development would, therefore, by itself and by the precedent it would set, seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, contravene materially this development plan zoning objective and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The Board had regard to the isolated location of the proposed site, which is severed from the community by the heavily-trafficked N71, and to the absence of footpaths and public transport, and considered that the proposed development would be cut off from the community, would constitute an isolated development for the future users of the proposed facility, thereby seriously injuring their amenities, and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Board Member: _____ Date: 23rd December 2011
Mary MacMahon