



The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on January 19th 2017.

The Board decided to refuse permission generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, as set out in the reasons and considerations below.

Reasons and Considerations

1. It is a strategic aim of the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2016-2022 to support the consolidation of commercial activity within the LAP area around a District Centre, which is located to the south-east of, and not contiguous with, the application site. In addition, the land use zoning objective for the application site is 'New Residential' as indicated on Map 13 of the LAP. Both the strategic aim and the land use zoning objective are considered reasonable. Having regard to the quantum of retail and commercial uses proposed (including a discount food store/supermarket of stated area of c. 1,518 sq.m. which is not normally permitted on lands zoned 'New Residential') and also having regard to the limited number of residential units being proposed, 6 no. apartments, it is considered that the proposed development would conflict with the above mentioned strategic aim of the LAP and would materially contravene the land use zoning objective for the site. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. Having regard to the Retail Strategy for County Roscommon 2014, and the land use zoning objective for the site as indicated in the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2016-2022, it is considered that the overall quantum of retail proposed would not be justified at this time, or at this location, considering the vacancy rates that currently exist within the Monksland area. In addition, having regard to the level of permitted retail floor space in this area that is not currently operational as set out in the retail strategy, it is considered that the quantum of retail use proposed would have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of Athlone Town Centre. It is considered that the proposed development would, therefore, be contrary the “Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities” issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in April, 2012 and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. Having regard to the dominance of surface car parking and road layout, and the absence of usable public open space, it is considered that the proposed development would present a poor public realm and would not provide adequate amenity to future residents. The proposed development would, therefore, seriously injure the visual amenities of the area and the residential amenities of future occupants of the development and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Board Member

Paul Hyde

Date: 19.01.17