



An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
PL26.247886

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were further considered at a Board meeting held on April 6th 2018.

The Board decided to refuse permission, generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, for the following reasons and considerations.

Reasons and Considerations

The proposed development is located within the River Valley Landscape Character Unit, which is classified in the Landscape Character Assessment for the area as a sensitive landscape with a limited capacity to absorb development, and wherein Policy Objective L05 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 prohibits development which is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the landscape character and where there is no overriding need for the development in that location. It is considered, having regard to the generally elevated nature of the landform at this location, the significant scale and extent of the solar farm, and its immediate proximity to the River Slaney, that the proposed development would have a significant adverse effect on the character of this landscape, for which there is no overriding need in this location, and would interfere with the character of this landscape, which it is necessary to preserve. The proposed development would, therefore, contravene Objective L05 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Note 1: In reaching its decision, the Board noted the Inspector's concerns regarding the issue of Appropriate Assessment, and the need (see paragraph 7.10.13 of her report), to seek further information on this matter. However, the Board decided that it would not be appropriate to seek further information, in the light of the substantive nature of the refusal as set out in the Order, which would not be altered by any such information, and also decided not to include the Inspector's recommended reason for refusal number 3, on this issue.

Note 2: The Board noted the submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, submitted on the 19th day of April 2017, and was of opinion that a more detailed archaeological assessment of the site should have been submitted with the application. Such assessment, which would involve at the least geophysical surveys of the site, and potentially site investigations, would be necessary to assess the impact of the development on archaeological remains, including not only the environs of the two Recorded Monuments, but also the potential for impact on the post medieval house and formal gardens in the south west portion of the site. The Board considered that such assessment could not have been covered by the imposition of planning conditions (as it might result in material alterations to the layout and extent of the development), and would have required further information in advance of any decision. However, the Board decided that it would not be appropriate to seek such further archaeological assessment, given the substantive reason for refusal as set out in the Order.

[Please issue a copy of this Direction with the Board Order to the parties]

Board Member

Date: 11th April 2018

Philip Jones