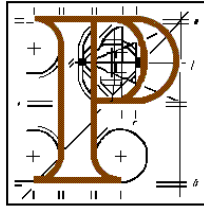


An Bord Pleanála



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTS 2000 TO 2015

Westmeath County

Planning Register Reference Number: 15/6145

An Bord Pleanála Reference Number: PL 25M.245628

APPEAL by Line Investments Partnership care of McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Limited of Block 1, G.F.S.C., Moneenageisha Road, Galway against the decision made on the 21st day of September, 2015 by Westmeath County Council to refuse permission in accordance with plans and particulars lodged with the said Council.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: Retention of an existing 35 metres high mast with stay wires together with attached telecommunications/broadband antennas and dishes, existing telecommunications cabins/units all of which are within the confines of the existing compound, security perimeter fence and all associated site works. Planning permission is also sought for the demarcation of a new access route from the existing shared access road to the existing compound. This route does not involve any physical ground excavations and will be demarcated from surrounding lands, all at Frewin Hill, Wattstown, Mullingar, County Westmeath.

DECISION

REFUSE permission for the above proposed development based on the reasons and considerations set out below.

MATTERS CONSIDERED

In making its decision, the Board had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

1. The site lies within an area which is the subject of an archaeological preservation order made for the summit of Frewin Hill under the National Monuments Acts, 1930-2004, and contains two barrows which comprise National Monument number 606. The 'Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in July, 1996 advise that telecommunication facilities should not be sited close to archaeological sites. Policy P-AH1 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014–2020 undertakes to preserve in-situ all archaeological remains and sites of importance, such as national monuments, their setting and context and zones of archaeological potential. On the basis of the documentation accompanying the current application and appeal, it is considered that the development for which retention is sought adversely affects the setting of these archaeological remains. Accordingly, it is considered that the subject development contravenes Policy P-AH1 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014–2020 and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. By reason of the height of the telecommunications structure/mast for which retention is sought and the utilitarian appearance of the overall facility including the site compound, it is considered that the appearance of the facility is wholly unsympathetic to its archaeological setting and fails to preserve the setting of the National Monument and Recorded Monuments. Furthermore, it is considered that this telecommunications structure/mast dominates the appearance of the summit of Frewin Hill which is located within the Lough Owel High Amenity Area as designated under the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014–2020 and is visible from the designated Protected View and Prospect number 28 at the shores of Lough Owel to the east. Accordingly, the development for which retention is sought would conflict with the provisions of this Development Plan and would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area. The subject development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**Member of An Bord Pleanála
duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Board.**

Dated this day of 2016.