



An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Order PL 27.247942

Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2017

Planning Authority: Wicklow County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: 16/1099

Appeal by Dymrna and Roger Boffey and others care of Sheridan Woods Architects of 14 Baggot Street Lower, Dublin against the decision made on the 6th day of January, 2017 by Wicklow County Council to grant subject to conditions a permission to Gaelectric Renewal Energy Developments Limited of Portview House, Thorncastle Street, Ringsend, Dublin in accordance with plans and particulars lodged with the said Council.

Proposed Development: A 10 year planning permission for the development of a solar photovoltaic (“PV”) energy development to include: a single storey electrical substation building, electrical inverter and transformer stations, solar PV panels mounted on metal frames, new access tracks, underground cabling, perimeter fencing with infrared closed circuit television and access gates, temporary construction compound, spare parts container, weather station, an upgraded access (north access) from the L2127 (Greenane Road), a new access (west access) from the L6145 (Ballyknockan Road) and all ancillary infrastructure and associated works within a total site area of up to 38 acres. All at Garrymore Upper, Rathdrum, County Wicklow.

Decision

GRANT permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the said plans and particulars based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions 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

Having regard to:

- the nature and scale of the proposed development,
- the suitability of the topography of the site,
- the pattern of development in the vicinity,
- the provisions of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022, and
- to regional and national policy objectives in relation to renewable energy,

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would have acceptable impacts on visual amenity, would not seriously injure the residential amenities of property in the vicinity, would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience, and would not create a risk of flooding or of environmental pollution. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Having regard to the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted with the application, the report of the Inspector, the nature, scale and location of the proposed development (including the indicative grid connection route), and the separation distances to European Sites, the Board is satisfied that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of their conservation objectives. In this regard, the Board concurred with and adopted the Planning Inspector's conclusions in respect of Appropriate Assessment Screening.

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars submitted on the 13th day of December, 2016, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The period during which the development hereby permitted may be carried out shall be 10 years from the date of this Order.

Reason: Having regard to the nature of the proposed development, the Board considered it reasonable and appropriate to specify a period of the permission in excess of five years.

3. (a) All structures including foundations hereby authorised shall be removed not later than 25 years from the date of commissioning of the development, and the site reinstated unless planning permission has been granted for their retention for a further period prior to that date.
- (b) Prior to commencement of development, a detailed restoration plan, providing for the removal of the solar arrays, including all foundations, anchors, inverter/transformer stations, substation, CCTV cameras, fencing and site access to a specific timescale, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority. On full or partial decommissioning of the solar farm, or if the solar farm ceases operation for a period of more than one year, the solar arrays, including foundations/anchors, and all associated equipment, shall be dismantled and removed permanently from the site. The site shall be restored in accordance with this plan and all decommissioned structures shall be removed within three months of decommissioning.

Reason: To enable the planning authority to review the operation of the solar farm over the stated time period, having regard to the circumstances then prevailing, and in the interest of orderly development

4. This permission shall not be construed as any form of consent or agreement to a connection to the national grid or to the routing or nature of any such connection.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

5. The proposed development shall be undertaken in compliance with all environmental commitments made in the documentation supporting the application.

Reason: To protect the environment.

6.
 - (1) Existing field boundaries shall be retained, and new planting undertaken in accordance with the plans submitted to the planning authority on the 13th day of December, 2016.
 - (2) All landscaping shall be planted to the written satisfaction of the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Any trees or hedgerow that are removed, die or become seriously damaged or diseased within five years from planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or hedging of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of biodiversity, the visual amenities of the area, and the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

7. (a) No artificial lighting shall be installed or operated on site unless authorised by a prior grant of planning permission.
- (b) CCTV cameras shall be fixed and angled to face into the site and shall not be directed towards adjoining property or the road.
- (c) Each fencing panel shall be erected such that for a minimum of 300 millimetres of its length, its bottom edge is no less than 150 millimetres from ground level.
- (d) The solar panels shall have driven or screw pile foundations only, unless otherwise authorised by a separate grant of planning permission.
- (e) Cables within the site shall be located underground.
- (f) The inverter/transformer stations shall be dark green in colour. The external walls of the proposed substation shall be finished in a neutral colour such as light grey or off-white and the roof shall be of black tiles.

Reason: In the interests of clarity, of visual and residential amenity, to allow wildlife to continue to have access to and through the site, and to minimise impacts on drainage patterns and surface water quality.

8. The developer shall facilitate the preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features that may exist within the site. In this regard, the developer shall –
- (a) Engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist (licenced under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004) to carry out pre-development testing at the site. No sub-surface work shall be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without his/her express consent.
 - (b) The archaeologist is required to notify the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of site preparations. This will allow the archaeologist sufficient time to obtain a licence to carry out the work.
 - (c) The archaeologist shall carry out any relevant documentary research and may excavate trenches at locations chosen by the archaeologist, having consulted the proposed development plans.
 - (d) Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report to the planning authority and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
 - (e) Where archaeological material is shown to be present, avoidance, preservation in situ, preservation by record (excavation) and/or monitoring may be required and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht will advise the developer with regard to these matters.

- (f) No site preparation or construction work shall be carried out until after the archaeologist's report has been submitted and permission to proceed has been received in writing from the planning authority in consultation with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Reason: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the area and to secure the preservation (in situ or by record) and protection of any archaeological remains that may exist within the site.

9. The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including but not limited to, hours of working, noise and dust management measures, surface water management proposals, the management of construction traffic and off-site disposal of construction waste.

Reason: In the interests of public safety, residential amenity and protection of the environment.

10. Water supply and drainage arrangements including the disposal of surface water shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

Reason: In the interests of environmental protection and public health.

11. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the planning authority, to secure the reinstatement of public roads which may be damaged by construction transport, coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To secure the reinstatement of public roads that may be damaged by construction transport.

12. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the planning authority, to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site on cessation of the project, coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To secure satisfactory reinstatement of the site.

