



Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2020

Planning Authority: Westmeath County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: 20/7040

APPEAL by Tiane Limited care of MKO of Tuam Road, Galway against the decision made on the 3rd day of July, 2020 by Westmeath County Council to refuse permission for the proposed development.

Proposed Development: A 10 year planning permission for a commercial development on a site of 2.88 hectares located at the junction of the Golden Island and Carrick O'Brien Road, Golden Island (Kilmaine), Golden Island (Saint George), Athlone, County Westmeath. The proposed development comprises of the demolition of existing warehouse to the north of the site (4,600 square metres) and the provision of 10,992 square metres of commercial floorspace arranged in four number blocks (Block A, B, C and D). The existing commercial building to the east of the site and 22 number car parking spaces will be retained. The proposed development comprises the following: Block A - (Gross Floor Area: 2,865 square metres) maximum building height 9.27 metres, convenience supermarket (to include off licence use) with net retail floor area (1,665 square metres) including ancillary bakery, cold storage, warehousing, deliveries area, and welfare facilities on ground floor and ancillary toilet facilities, plant room, storage areas, staff room, administrative offices and terrace area on the first-floor (1,200 square metres). A HGV delivery/pick-up area is proposed to the south of the block. Block B – (Gross Floor Area 182 square metres) maximum building height 6.16 metres comprises a single storey Café with ancillary kitchen area, toilet facilities and

seating. A terrace area is proposed to the west and south of Block B. Block C – (Gross Floor Area: 3,247 square metres) maximum building height 11.9 metres, accommodates four number retail units on the ground floor and an office unit on the upper floor. The breakdown is as follows: Retail unit number 1: comparison (non-bulky) retail net floor area (1,575 square metres) with ancillary storage spaces and toilet facilities on the ground floor (58 square metres), Retail unit number 2: convenience retail net floor area (120 square metres) with ancillary toilet facilities on the ground floor (6 square metres), retail number 3: convenience retail net floor area (118 square metres) with ancillary toilet facilities on the ground floor (6 square metres), retail unit number 4: convenience retail net floor area (118 square metres) with ancillary toilet facilities on the ground floor (6 square metres), office unit with ancillary toilet facilities on the first floor including core areas and entrance lobby on the ground floor (1,240 square metres), Block D – (Gross Floor Area: 4,698 square metres) maximum building height 12.25 metres, comprises five number single storey bulky-use retail units located at the south west corner of the site and adjoins the existing commercial building to the south east of the site. An ESB sub station and switchroom is proposed in Block D (29 square metres). The breakdown of the retail units is as follows: retail unit number 1: comparison (bulky) retail net floor area 1,200 square metres with ancillary facilities (128 square metres), retail unit number 2: comparison (bulky) retail net floor area 445 square metres with ancillary facilities (101 square metres), retail number 3: comparison (bulky) retail net floor area 445 square metres with ancillary facilities (101 square metres), retail unit number 4: comparison (bulky) retail net floor area 445 square metres with ancillary facilities (101 square metres), retail unit number 5: comparison (bulky) retail net floor area 1,562 square metres with ancillary facilities (141 square metres). Access to the site will be provided via the Carrick O'Brien Road and Golden Island Road. The proposed development will be served by 267 number car parking spaces and 165 number bicycle parking spaces. The proposed development also includes for a HGV set-down area to the east of the site along the Carrick O'Brien Road, trolley bay, hard and soft landscaping works, signage, delivery set-down areas, public lighting, boundary treatments and all associated site development and ancillary works.

Decision

REFUSE permission for the above proposed development in accordance with 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. Having regard to:
 - (a) the nature and scale of the development proposed, including the quantum of convenience and comparison floorspace and car parking,
 - (b) the mixed-use zoning objective O-LZ3 for the site,
 - (c) the location of the development, outside of the town centre and Opportunity Sites identified in the Athlone Joint Retail Strategy 2019-2026,
 - (d) the retail hierarchy as set out in the current Development Plan for the area, and
 - (e) the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in April 2012,

it is considered that the development as proposed would be contrary to the retail policies as set out in the development plan and would negatively impact upon the vitality and viability of retail development in the town centre of Athlone and would consequently be contrary to the Retail Planning Guidelines. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. By reason of its generic form, dominant retail use and standardised design and layout, it is considered that the proposed development would be visually unsatisfactory and inappropriate in the context of the prominent location of the site on the edge of Athlone Town Centre. The proposed development would conflict with the provisions of Policy P-RET2 of the current Athlone Town Development Plan and its objectives to require new retail development to contribute positively to public realm and place-making, and to National Planning Framework Objective NPO 6 and NPO 11 in terms of their objectives to regenerate towns as environmental assets and encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing towns, which objectives are considered reasonable. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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

Dated this day of 2021.