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**Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2022**

**Planning Authority: South Dublin County Council**

**Planning Register Reference Number: SD22A/0156**

**APPEAL** by Equinix Ireland Limited care of Brock McClure Planning and Development Consultants of 63 York Road, Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin against the decision made on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of August 2023 by South Dublin County Council to refuse permission.

**Proposed Development:** 10 year permission on a site is bounded to the east and south by Grange Castle Golf Club, to the north by Nangor Road (R134) and to the west by an estate road known as Falcon Avenue) for modifications to the permitted data centre granted under planning authority register reference SD21A/0186 comprising the following, reconfiguration and alterations to the data centre building to include removal of front of house offices at third floor level, alterations to floor levels at second floor to provide consistency between front of house and data halls, parapet height increase of front of house to circa 16.8 metres, provision of storage at second floor level in lieu of relocated internal generators to the external generator yard and associated elevational alterations; extension of loading dock at ground floor level by circa 60 square metres in area with minor height increase to circa 5.3 metres; removal of three air plenums to the front (north) elevation and provision of screening to generator flues in lieu of omitted plenums; alterations

at roof level to include removal of two metres high gantry screening; alterations to the permitted generator plant yard to the north of the data centre to include the removal of fuel tanks, reconfiguration of plant and generators, provision of two additional external generators (increase from five to nine external generators), provision of 4 additional external plant rooms, provision of diesel pump tank cabinets and stepover, relocation of generator yard doors and enlarged generator yard to accommodate the proposed modifications; increase in plant areas by circa 77square metres; reconfiguration of plant within the permitted chiller plant yard to the south of the data centre; removal of one sprinkler/water tank and removal of stairs and door to the side of the waste compound; reconfiguration of car parking and motorcycle spaces and removal of one accessible space. 64 total number of car parking spaces; the proposal also includes provision of on-site gas power generation compound (circa 2,604 square in area) in the area previously reserved for a future data centre; the compound comprises seven modular plant rooms (totalling circa 180 square metres in area), 10 gas fired generators and associated flues circa 14.7 metres high, gas skid, associated modular plant, boundary treatment surrounding the compound circa 6.5 metres high and two vehicular access points including general and emergency access; all associated site development works, services provision, drainage works, access, landscaping and boundary treatment works; no buildings are proposed above the existing ESB and SDCC wayleaves to the west and north of the site; the overall Gross Floor Area of the development is reduced by circa 44 square metres to circa 9,795 square metres from previously permitted under planning authority register reference SD21A/0186, all on Plot 100, Profile Park, Nangor Road, Clondalkin, Dublin.

## **Decision**

**REFUSE permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the reasons and considerations set out below.**

## Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the existing capacity constraints in the electricity network (grid), the lack of a fixed connection agreement to connect to the grid as confirmed in the documentation on file, the lack of significant on-site renewable energy to power the proposed development, the lack of evidence provided in relation to the applicant's engagement with Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) in Ireland, and the reliance on a gas powered plant to provide energy to the development, it is considered that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development is acceptable on EE zoned lands, in accordance with EDE7 Objective 2 and Section 12.9.4 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028. Furthermore, on the basis of the information submitted with the application and appeal, including confirmation that there is no available grid connection and that if granted permission, the sole energy source for the data centre would be in the form of on-site gas powered generation in the absence of a confirmed grid connection, it is considered that the proposed development, would not be in accordance with the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy, July 2022, which states that "islanded' data centre developments that are not connected to the electricity grid and are powered mainly by on-site fossil fuel generation, would not be in line with national policy' and would not be in accordance with the overarching objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2024, by reference to reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions. Having regard to the detail submitted with the application and appeal, the Board determined that a grant of permission for the proposed development, would be inconsistent with national climate ambitions and with the relevant provisions of the Climate Action Plan 2024. In reaching this decision, the Board has performed its functions in relation to the making of its decision, in a manner consistent with Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2021. The proposed development would,

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therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation to grant permission, the Board noted and agreed with the commentary of the inspector at paragraph 7.3.7 of her report that, the Government's Statement on the Role of Data Centres 2022, confirms such developments are considered core digital infrastructure which play a vital role in the Irish economy and society, but also that 'islanded' data centres are not in line with national policy. The Board further agreed with the Inspector that in this specific case, the operation of the proposed on-site gas power generation system (OSPG) on a long-term basis in the absence of a grid connection would be inappropriate and contrary to national climate obligations.


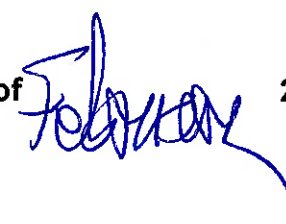
However, the Board did not share the opinion of the inspector that a shorter-term usage of the OSPG (suggested at eight years and controlled by condition) would be appropriate. In not sharing this opinion, the Board acknowledged the intent of the inspector's recommendation, but considered that a conditioned grant of permission in such form, would mean the powering of the data centre solely by fossil fuel for a period such as eight years, providing in effect an 'islanded' data centre. Furthermore, it would not address the substantive issue, namely that on the evidence on file, there is no available grid connection.

In this context, the specific case details provide no ability at this time (nor with any measurable and guaranteed timeline) to avail of renewable energy via a grid connection, such that the broader principles and allowances as set out in the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres, could then reasonably be factored into an assessment of the case at hand.

In conjunction with consideration of the relevant development plan policies and objectives and on the basis of consistency with national climate obligations, the Board therefore determined that a refusal of permission was warranted in this case.

  
Chris McGarry

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

Dated this  day of  2025.