



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL61.248269

Development	Removal of 2 no. illuminated 12 metre by 6 metre advertising displays and replacement with 2 no. 6 metre by 3 metre LED advertising displays and associated works.
Location	Dublin Road (East of Moneenageishal) Galway.
Planning Authority	Galway City Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	17/4
Applicant(s)	JC Decaux Ireland Limited
Type of Application	Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	JC Decaux Ireland Limited
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	15 th June, 2017
Inspector	Stephen Kay.

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located to the south of the Old Dublin Road and immediately to the north of Lough Atalia. The Dublin Road is located immediately to the north with commercial development in the form of the G Hotel and retail outlets located opposite on the northern side of the road. To the south, the site adjoins an area of amenity space which has a pedestrian path through it. This path forms the southern boundary of the appeal site. The area to the east and west of the site similarly comprise lands that are zoned for amenity use. Further to the west is located the car park serving the Huntsman Inn and adjoining retail units.
- 1.2. The stated area of the appeal site is 0.03521 ha. The site currently occupied by an advertising structure that comprises two panels measuring c. 12.8 metres in width and c. 3.2 metres in height. The panels are orientated facing east and north west and are mounted on a timber frame that is triangular in plan form. The overall height of the structure is 5.77 metres above ground level. The area of each panel is c. 40 sq. metres.
- 1.3. The existing structures are mounted with adhesive advertising panels which are externally illuminated. It is noted that at the time of inspection only the north west facing panel had light fittings.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises the removal of the existing advertising panels and the erection of a replacement advertising structure on the site. The public notices describe these replacement panels as LED advertising displays. The size of the proposed replacement panels is stated to be 6 metres by 3 metres. I note that the submitted drawings show the proposed panels as measuring 6.4 metres in width by 3.35 metres in height. The overall height of the structure is indicated on the submitted drawings as being 5.77 metres which is the same overall height as the existing advertising structure on the site.
- 2.2. The proposed panels are shown on the submitted drawings as having a thickness of 834mm.

- 2.3. The submitted layout indicates the provision of two seating benches adjoining the existing path at the southern side of the site.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Galway County Council issued a Notification of Decision to Refuse Permission for three reasons which can be summarised as follows:

1. That the development plan prohibits large scale internally illuminated signs and displays and requires signage to be located in a manner that is unobtrusive. The proposed development would be contrary to this policy and by virtue of their size and use of LED would not be in the interests of visual amenity and would set an undesirable precedent for similar developments.
2. That the proposed panels would be located on a heavily trafficked road and would be contrary to the road signs manual published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and would constitute a traffic hazard.
3. That the proposed signage is located in an area that is zoned for recreation and amenity purposes in the Galway City Development Plan 2017 – 2023 and an area where there is an objective for an amenity park (section 4.7 of plan). The proposed development would compromise this objective by virtue of visual obstruction and would be contrary to the zoning of the site.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The report of the Planning Officer notes the zoning of the site and the submissions received from other departments, notably traffic and recreation and amenity departments. Considered that the proposed LED signage is not something that would complement the specific local objective for the preparation of a masterplan for the upgrading of the amenity park in this area. Notwithstanding the existing signage

on the site which it is noted does not have permission, it is recommended that permission be refused for reasons which are consistent with the notification of decision which issued.

3.2.2. **Other Technical Reports**

Transportation and Infrastructure Department – Recommends that permission be refused for reasons including the creation of a traffic hazard and being contrary to the road sign manual published by DTTAS.

Recreation and Amenity – Recommend refusal on the basis that the proposal is inappropriate in this context and inappropriate on lands zoned recreation and amenity.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs – state that prior to the granting of any permission Galway City Council must be satisfied that the proposed development would not have a negative impact on any conservation sites.

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

There were no third party submissions received by the Planning Authority.

4.0 **Planning History**

There is no planning history relating to the appeal site. It is stated in the report of the planning officer that the signage on site was erected prior to 1963 and that it was removed in 1987 at the time of road widening works in the vicinity on the Dublin Road. Signage was subsequently re-erected following completion of the works.

The report of the planning officer refers to refusals of permission for retention and replacement of signage at other locations in the city.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

The appeal site is located on lands that are zoned Objective RA (Recreation and Amenity) *'to provide for and protect recreational uses, open space, amenity uses and natural heritage.'*

The site is located in an area that is designated as containing views of special amenity value and interest, notably V3 seascape views of Lough Atalia from Lough Atalia Road, College Road, Dublin Road and Lake Shore Drive.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The bulk of the appeal site is located within the Galway Bay Complex SAC.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The following is a summary of the main issues raised in the first party grounds of appeal:

- That the site is statute barred as there was an advertising structure on the site prior to 1963. The existing structure on the site comprises two 96 sheet advertising panels. Noted that section 11.1 of the Plan notes that there are a significant number of non conforming uses throughout the city and that extensions of improvements to these structures / uses may be granted where the proposed development would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and would not prejudice the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- That the replacement signage has been inaccurately described in the original application documentation. Not considered that the description in the public notices is inaccurate but the level of detail provided has led to some confusion

regarding what is proposed and the assessment undertaken by the planning authority.

- That the signage sought is not LED but rather is JC Decaux's 'premiere' signage which is static in nature and internally illuminated. Examples of this signage are given in Appendix 2 of the appeal.
- Noted that the original application provided for the inclusion of a public bench. It is proposed that there is scope for the provision of a greater level of landscaping in this area and that this could be required by the Board by way of condition.
- That the proposed design of signage and landscaping of the site would result in a significant enhancement of the public realm in this location.
- That policy in section 11.6 of the plan referred to in the report of the Planning Officer is flawed as it relates to advertising signage on shopfronts and not external advertising. The Galway City Plan is deficient in relation to specific policies regarding outdoor advertising.
- Noted that Ref. 13/222 for development on a site opposite the current appeal site included free standing advertising signage. The report of the planning officer on this development notes that the policy set out at 11.6 relates normally to signage affixed to buildings. The policy regarding signage contained at 11.6 of the Plan was the same at the time of determination of Ref. 13/222.
- That the fact that the sign is not a variable message LED sign and is internally illuminated at a low level of luminosity which will mean that it would not result in the creation of a traffic hazard.
- That the sign is not proposed to be located any closer to the public road and would not be any higher.
- A report by CST Group attached with the appeal concludes that the proposed development would not reduce the effectiveness of other signage adjacent to it, and would not impact on the visibility at junctions.
- That the sign proposed is not a VMS sign and is not therefore covered by the 3.4.7 of the Traffic Signs Manual.

- Section 4.5.3 of the Plan notes that views are not static and that some change can be accommodated without impacting on the integrity of the view.
- It is submitted that the proposed development would make an overall positive contribution to composition of the protected view in this location.
- Section 4.7 of the Plan seeks to prepare a masterplan for Lough Atalia and Renmore Lagoon to include the upgrading of the amenity park and walkways. It is also noted that 11.3 of the Plan includes an objective to consider the development of lands with an area of 0.5 ha. to the west of the site and within the Objective RA zoning for sports facilities and an amphitheatre. It is submitted that the proposed development is consistent with both of these aims.
- Suggested that in the event of a grant of permission that the Board would attach a condition requiring the submission of a landscaping plan for agreement. The applicant wishes to engage with the council with regard to upgrading of the public realm in this location.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

The following is a summary of the main issues raised in the response submission received from the Planning Authority:

- That the existing advertising structure has been in place for some years and has never been assessed against the Councils development plan or granted permission. It is considered questionable if the existing structures would be considered compatible with the current development plan.
- That the application was assessed by the Planning Authority on the basis of the information submitted with the application. This information indicated that the signage was LED type.
- Considered that the description of the signage as provided in the appeal is rather confusing. States that not LED but internally illuminated. Also stated that internal illumination is similar to the existing signage which is not clear as the existing is externally illuminated.

- Considered that internally illuminated signage would be unacceptable in this location for the reasons set out in the planning report. The internally illuminated sign would have a much greater impact than the existing notwithstanding the reduced size.
- That section 11.6 of the Plan is not flawed as contended by the first party and does not relate solely to shopfronts.
- The proposal is considered not to be consistent with the zoning objective and the addition of two benches and the landscaping of the area would not address the councils concerns.

6.3. Further Responses

A further submission from the first party raised the following issues:

- That the use of the site was established prior to 1st October 1964 and have been in position for more than 7 years.
- That section 11.1 of the Galway City Plan relates to non conforming uses and references the fact that extensions or improvements to non conforming uses may be granted. This is the case in the current proposal which presents an opportunity to improve the public realm in this location.
- That JC Decaux's Premier signage is static in nature and internally lit with LED bulbs. The assessment of the Planning Authority appears to be based on the fact that the proposed signage was movable and a VMS.
- The statement of the Planning Authority that section 11.6 of the Plan is not limited to shopfronts is heavily contested. Reference is again made to application Ref. 13/222 on the site opposite on the Dublin Road.
- That JC Decaux's Premier signage are more visually aesthetic structures and due to their size and form will have a greatly reduced visual impact. No precedent will be created as each application needs to be assessed on its merits.

7.0 Assessment

The following are considered to be the main issues in the assessment of this appeal:

- Principle of Development and Land Use Zoning
- Visual Impact
- Traffic Safety
- Appropriate Assessment
- Other Issues

7.1. Principle of Development and Land Use Zoning

- 7.1.1. The appeal site is located on lands that are zoned Objective RA (Residential and Amenity) under the provisions of the *Galway City Development Plan, 2017*. This land use zoning has a stated objective as follows, *'to provide for and protect recreational uses, open space, amenity uses and natural heritage'*. Uses compatible with the zoning objective are listed as *'outdoor recreation'*. Those that may contribute to the zoning objective are listed as recreational / cultural buildings, public utilities and burial grounds.
- 7.1.2. The proposed outdoor advertising use is not one that is compatible with the Objective RA land use zoning Objective. Both the report of the Planning Officer and the first party appeal submission note the fact that the existing use of the site was in place prior to 1st October, 1964 and that the use is therefore an established one prior to the coming into effect of the planning legislation. On the basis of the information presented I would accept the contention of the first party appellant that the site is statute barred as there was an advertising structure on the site prior to 1st October, 1964. I would also accept that the decision at hand in this appeal is effectively an assessment of the relative merits of the existing and proposed advertising structures albeit that some regard needs to be had to the fact that while the existing structure may be statute barred, it does not have planning permission and is not authorised.
- 7.1.3. Reference is made by the first party to the provisions of section 11.1 of the Plan which relates to non conforming uses. This section states that *'extensions or improvements of premises accommodating these non conforming uses may be*

granted where the proposed development would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and would not prejudice the proper planning and sustainable development of the area'. The first party contend that the proposed development would result in an improvement in the visual appearance of the site and in the public realm in this location such that it would be compatible with the provisions of section 11.1. The visual impact and design of the proposed development is assessed in section 7.2 below and will inform the recommendation as to whether an extension of the existing use should be recommended notwithstanding its non conforming status.

- 7.1.4. I note the fact that the development plan contains a specific objection at 4.7 for the preparation of a masterplan for the Lough Atalia and Renmore lagoon that would include proposals for the upgrading of the amenity park and walkways. I also note that Figure 11.3 indicates an area to the west of the appeal site which is proposed for the development of a sports facility and an amphitheatre. These plan provisions indicate the importance of the environs of the site as an amenity area.

7.2. Visual Impact

- 7.2.1. The first party note the fact that the nature of the proposed development was not well described in the original application documentation submitted to the Planning Authority. Specifically, it is contended that the assessment by the Planning Authority of the proposal as a VMS sign and the resulting assessment of the negative impact on traffic safety is not appropriate. I note that the report of the Transportation and Infrastructure section of the council makes reference to VMS signage and on the basis of the information submitted I would agree that what is proposed is clearly not a variable message sign. There remains however in my opinion a degree of inconsistency in the statements of the first party regarding the exact nature of development. Specifically, in the first party appeal it is stated on page 7 that the original description of the proposed development as *'....two 6 metre by 3 metre LED advertising displays and associated works'*, *'was not an appropriate description of the proposed development as Light Emitting Diode (LED) signage is not proposed in this instance'*. In the subsequent response submission received by the Board dated 25th May, 2017 the proposed sign is described as *'...JC Decaux's 'premiere signage (which is static in nature) is internally illuminated using LED light bulbs'*. The nature

of the proposed signage would therefore appear to be static signage which is internally illuminated using LED lighting and this is supported by reference to information on the 'Premiere' signage range sourced on the internet and which is attached with this report.

- 7.2.2. The impact of the proposed signage is therefore in my opinion clearly significantly different from the existing signage which is externally illuminated only. The examples of the 'Premiere' signage reviewed indicate a very bright night time appearance which, notwithstanding the LUX levels cited by the appellants in their response submission, is significantly different from the existing in terms of its night time appearance. The impact of the internal illumination would in my opinion be potentially significant in terms of increasing the visual prominence of the signage at this location particularly during times of low daylight and is such that would introduce a new element for consideration in terms of compatibility with the land use zoning of the site and the impact on views of Lough Atalia from Dublin Road.
- 7.2.3. The basis for the first party contention that the proposed development would result in an enhancement of the site, improvements to the public realm and compatibility with the recreation and Amenity zoning objective relate to the reduction in scale of the signage, its more modern design and the proposed landscaping and upgrading of the site. The width of the signage is proposed to be reduced from the existing 12.8 metres to 6.4 metres however the overall height of the signage and of the signage structure is proposed to remain the same as existing. The area of signage panels is therefore proposed to be halved with resulting reduction in visual prominence and, combined with the cleaner design of the proposed Premiere signage type, an overall improvement in appearance during daylight hours. This improvement does however in my opinion have to be set against the potential visual impact and visual prominence of the proposed signage during evening and night time when light levels are low and the proposed signage would be significantly more visually prominent than is the case with the existing structure. On balance, I do not consider that the overall visual impact would be improved having regard to the proposed internally illuminated LED design of the new structure. The proposals for the landscaping of the site are noted however, such works while of some benefit to the local environment in the area of the existing pedestrian pathway to the south would not in my opinion offset the likely adverse visual impact from the revised format of the illuminated signage.

7.2.4. Section 4.5.3 of the Plan relates to views of special amenity value and interest and View 3 identified under this heading relates to the panoramic protected views of Lough Atalia from Lough Atalia Road, College Road, Dublin Road and Lakeshore Drive. The proposed development clearly impacts on this view as does the existing structure on the site. As set out above, it is my opinion that the internally illuminated design of the proposed signage and the brightness of the LED lighting proposed would constitute a very visually prominent element in this location and one that would be contrary to the Recreational and Amenity zoning of the site. Similarly, it is my opinion that the visual prominence of the proposed signage would impact negatively on existing views of Lough Atalia from the Dublin Road as identified in View 3 listed in section 4.5.3 of the development plan.

7.2.5. Reason for refusal No.3 attached to the Notification of Decision to Refuse Permission makes reference to the fact that the site of the proposed development forms part of an area with a specific objective for an amenity park and that proposed development would compromise this objective by virtue of its visual obtrusiveness. Section 4.7 of the Plan sets out the short term objective to prepare a masterplan for Lough Atalia and Renmore Lagoon to include the upgrading of the amenity park, walkways, ecological area and development of water based recreation. I also note that Figure 11.3 of the Plan identifies lands to the west of the appeal site adjoining the car park to the Huntsman Inn as having potential for development for sports facilities and an amphitheatre. Due to its brightness and visual prominence, the provision of an internally illuminated LED sign of the scale proposed would not in my opinion be clearly compatible with these objectives and particularly that for the preparation of a masterplan for the upgrading of the area.

7.2.6. The first party appellants contend that references by the Planning Authority to section 11.6 of the development plan and the restriction on large scale internally illuminated signs have are not appropriate as the provisions of this section of the development plan relate to signage to buildings and not free standing signage. I note that the title of section 11.6 is Advertisements and Signage and consider that while most of section 11.6 relates primarily to signage to retail and commercial premises, the provision restricting large internally illuminated signs is not restricted to such circumstances. I also note that there is no other section of the development plan that specifically relates to the design of free standing or other commercial

advertising signage. The first party have highlighted the fact that under Ref. 13/222 for development on a site opposite the current appeal site which included free standing advertising signage, the report of the planning officer noted that the policy set out at 11.6 relates normally to signage affixed to buildings. The policy is therefore open to some interpretation however, in the absence of any specific policy regarding commercial outdoor advertising signage in the Plan, it is my opinion that section 11.6 is of relevance to the assessment of this appeal.

7.3. Traffic Safety

- 7.3.1. Reason for refusal No.2 attached to the Notification of Decision to Refuse Permission issued by the Planning Authority relates to the potential impact of the proposed signage on traffic safety. The first party appeal contests the conclusions and the Transportation and Infrastructure Department of the council regarding traffic safety and specifically note the fact that the report of the transportation section refers to the proposed signage as variable message signage. As discussed at 7.2 above this description is clearly not correct and the proposed signage would be static in nature.
- 7.3.2. The first party appeal submission includes a report from CTS Group chartered consulting engineers which provides an assessment of the traffic safety implications of the proposed development. This assessment concludes that the proposed sign would not act to restrict the visibility of road users to forward visibility, road signage or traffic signals and would not therefore impact negatively on traffic safety. The report also clarifies that the proposed signage is not a variable message sign (VMS) as defined in the Traffic Signs Manual published by the Department of Tourism Transport and Sport.
- 7.3.3. On the basis of the information presented and from an inspection of the appeal site and environs I firstly, agree with the first party that the nature of the proposed signage is such that it would not comprise a VMS as defined in the Traffic Signs Manual and that refusal of permission on the basis of contravention of this aspect of the manual is not warranted. In general traffic safety terms, I note the existing signage in this location, that the site of the signage is located on the outside of a bend for traffic approaching from the east and that there is no obstruction of existing

signage. Notwithstanding the illuminated nature of the proposed signage, given its static nature I do not consider that the proposed development would have any adverse impacts on traffic safety over and above those arising from the existing advertising signage on site.

7.4. **Appropriate Assessment**

7.4.1. A screening for appropriate assessment was undertaken by the first party and submitted with the application to the Planning Authority.

7.4.2. Almost the entirety of the appeal site and the entire area on which the existing and proposed advertising structures are sited, is within the Galway Bay Complex SAC (site code 000268). The following additional site is located in relatively close proximity to the appeal site and such that there is a potential hydrological connection between the development site and this Natura 2000 site:

- Galway Bay SPA (site Code 00004031)

7.4.3. The features of interest of the **Galway Bay Complex SAC** (site Code 000268) are as follows:

- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- Coastal lagoons
- Large shallow inlets and bays
- Reefs
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks
- Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts
- Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*)
- Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)
- Turloughs
- *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)
- Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the Caricion davallianae
- Alkaline fens
- Limestone pavements
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter)
- *Phoca vitulina* (Harbour Seal)

The site specific conservation objectives for the site are contained in a document dated April, 2014 and require the maintenance or restoration to favorable conservation status the above features of interest.

- 7.4.4. The nature of the proposed development is such that it would be contained entirely within the site of the existing development. The form of development is such that there would be no services other than electricity which is an existing connection to the site. The development would require some excavation to remove the existing advertising structure and works to provide a foundation for the support of the proposed new signage structure. These foundations are not detailed on the submitted drawings however there are no works proposed outside of the area of existing development. Mitigation measures in the form of proposed best practice construction measures are set out at section 1.2.2 of the submitted Ecological Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted by the first party. These details include measures for the storage of plant, equipment and materials on site and the nature of these measures is such that they are considered to be best practice construction methods that can be considered to form an integral part of the development and which it is therefore appropriate to take into account in the screening assessment.
- 7.4.5. The site of the proposed development is characterized by generally low ecological value and is located in close proximity to the R338 road with resulting high levels of lighting and disturbance. The characteristics of the site are not clearly conducive to

supporting any of the flora or fauna features of interest for which the site is designated and for which conservation objectives have been identified.

There is limited other permitted development in the general vicinity of the site and no permitted development in the immediate vicinity being on the Lough Atalia side of the R338. I note the identification in the development plan of lands to the west for the possible future development of sports / recreational facilities however there is no clear proposal for this site. I also note the development plan objective for the preparation of a masterplan for the Lough Atalia and Renmore Lagoon area and that to date no such plan has been prepared.

7.4.6. Having regard to the above, it is in my opinion reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider to be adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on European site No. 000268 (Galway Bay Complex SAC) or any other European site in light of site's conservation objectives and a stage 2 assessment (and submission of a NIS) is not therefore required.

7.4.7. The features of interest of the **Inner Galway Bay SPA** (site Code 00004031) are as follows:

- Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*)
- Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)
- Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)
- Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*)
- Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)
- Teal (*Anas crecca*)
- Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)
- Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)
- Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)
- Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

- Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)
- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)
- Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)
- Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)
- Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)
- Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)
- Common Gull (*Larus canus*)
- Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)
- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)
- Wetland and Waterbirds

The site specific conservation objectives for the site are contained in a document dated May, 2013 and require the maintenance or restoration to favourable conservation status the above features of interest.

- 7.4.8. The nature of the proposed development is such that it would be contained entirely within the site of the existing development. The form of development is such that there would be no services other than electricity which is an existing connection to the site. The development would require some excavation to remove the existing advertising structure and works to provide a foundation for the support of the proposed new signage structure. These foundations are not detailed on the submitted drawings however there are no works proposed outside of the area of existing development. Mitigation measures in the form of proposed best practice construction measures are set out at section 1.2.2 of the submitted Ecological Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted by the first party. These details include measures for the storage of plant, equipment and materials on site and the nature of these measures is such that they are considered to be best practice construction methods that can be considered to form an integral part of the development and which it is therefore appropriate to take into account in the screening assessment.

- 7.4.9. The site of the proposed development is characterised by generally low ecological value and is located in close proximity to the R338 road with resulting high levels of lighting and disturbance. The site is separated from the boundary of the Inner Galway Bay SPA site by c. 12 metres at the closest point and the proposed signage would be c. 22 metres from the closest part of the Natura 2000 site. The characteristics of the site are not clearly conducive to supporting any of the features of interest for which the site is designated and for which conservation objectives have been identified.
- 7.4.10. There is limited other permitted development in the general vicinity of the site and no permitted development in the immediate vicinity being on the Lough Atalia side of the R338. I note the identification in the development plan of lands to the west for the possible future development of sports / recreational facilities however there is no clear proposal for this site. I also note the development plan objective for the preparation of a masterplan for the Lough Atalia and Renmore Lagoon area and that to date no such plan has been prepared.
- 7.4.11. In conclusion, it is in my opinion reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider to be adequate in order to issue a screening determination , that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on European site No. 004031 (Inner Galway Bay SPA) or any other European site in light of site's conservation objectives and a stage 2 assessment (and submission of a NIS) is not therefore required.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. In view of the above, it is recommended that permission be refused based on the following reason and considerations.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the internally illuminated LED lighting to the proposed advertising structures, to their location within an area zoned for Recreation and Amenity uses in the Galway City Development Plan, 2017-2023 and where there is a specific objective for the preparation of a masterplan for the upgrading of the amenity use of the area, to the existing amenity use of the environs of the site and to the visual prominence of the site in views of Lough Atalia from the Dublin Road as reflected in listed view V3 in section 4.5.3 of the plan, it is considered that notwithstanding the reduction in the area of the structure from that existing on site that the proposed development would have an overall adverse impact on the recreational and visual amenity of the site and on the visual amenity of the area. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the Objective RA Recreation and Amenity zoning objective of the site and contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Stephen Kay
Planning Inspector

21st June 2017