



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report APB-311011-21 – Addendum report

Development

Demolition of commercial unit and construction of 32 dwellings.

Location

Yellow Lane, Arklow, County Wicklow.

Planning Authority

Wicklow County Council.

Inspector

Philip Davis

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1.0 Introduction

This addendum report is written with regard to a response by the applicant to a Section 132 further information request by ABP for a 32 unit residential development in Arklow. The FI request relates to geotechnical issues on the site.

2.0 Assessment

The Board set out the following in its S.132 notice:

The Board considered that on the basis of the information on file, it cannot be certain that the proposed residential development can be constructed to the levels shown on the submitted drawings and require further information as follows:

The applicant is requested to outline the proposal for the imported material/made ground that evidently exists on the site, i.e. whether it is intended to remove the material or to carry out soil improvement/consolidation techniques of the material in situ.

Should the proposal be to excavate the imported material/made ground and remove it from the site, details shall be provided of the proposed methodology, the volume of materials and details of arising traffic movements and all environmental considerations.

Should it be intended to retain the imported material/made ground in-situ, details shall be provided of the suitability of the imported material/made ground and any soil improvement/consolidation techniques that may be proposed shall also be fully detailed.

The information shall be prepared or informed by a qualified professional with specialist expertise in this field.

The response shall be accompanied by a topographical drawing(s) and representative sections across the site with details of the current depths and nature of the filled material/made ground at representative locations. The proposed finished ground levels and finished floor levels of the proposed residential units shall also be illustrated on drawings.

The applicant's response includes drawings indicating the site contours, the location of site investigation locations, and cross-sections. There is also a point by point response to the S.132 notice submitted with the plans.

I would summarize their points made by the applicant as follows:

- It is the considered view of the engineering consultants that the foundations can be constructed at or near existing ground levels throughout the construction site. Therefore, no excavation of made material or importation of construction fill would be required.
- It is confirmed that there is no proposal to remove soils from the site - there will therefore be no reduction in existing site levels other than standard site surface stripping. This will reduce the need for additional heavy vehicular movements during construction.
- The Board is referred to a site investigation survey carried out in 2007-8 (on file) which concluded that the made ground consists of soil and stone that is considered largely inert in nature and poses no risk to the environment.
- It is indicated that vibro stone columns or pile driven foundations are most likely to be utilized on this site for deeper areas of made ground (3 metres or more in depth). In addition, dynamic compaction, or the use of a polygonal drum roller to carry out compaction on the site for shallower areas of made ground would likely be the favoured option.
- It is concluded in the assessment, carried out by Brian Keenan, BE MSc, CEng MIEI of Golder-WSP, that ground conditions on the site do not prohibit the construction of the development and that no alterations to ground levels are required.

I have assessed this submission along with the S.132 letter and my previous report. I note that the plans submitted indicate the ground level of the proposed development to be more or less that of the existing levels. Notwithstanding the statement within the response, it does seem to me to be likely that even if the removal of made ground is not required, the compaction and reconsolidation of material on the site is likely to result in a lowering of the topography if no infill

materials are imported. It is difficult to assess whether such a lowering would be material or significant in planning terms.

I note of course that in the interests of reducing waste and traffic on the roads, it is desirable to utilise as much material on the site as possible and not import fill material unless absolutely necessary. Given the heterogenous nature of the material, presumably some of the fill will have to be moved around the site to create an adequate base for the buildings and hardstanding. As such, I would consider it reasonable to allow a certain degree of flexibility when it comes to constructing the buildings so long as any minor changes in levels are not material in terms of the appearance, amenity or safety of the development, in particular with regard to any impacts on the adjoining dwelling or to the drainage characteristics of the site.

I am satisfied, therefore, that sufficient information has been provided by the applicant to decide this appeal, and that the development can be constructed as proposed without the importation of fill material. I note that my recommended condition no.10 should provide an element of certainty for the planning authority that the works would be carried out in accordance with best practice.

3.0 Recommendation

I recommend that the Board grant permission for the proposed development for the reasons and considerations outlined in my report. I do not recommend amending or adding conditions beyond those I have suggested in my report.

4.0 Conditions

Philip Davis
Planning Inspector

28th April 2023