

21st September 2017

AN BORD PLEANÁLA
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PL 065- JA0040

Dublin Mountains Visitor Centre Strategic Development Initiative
Location: Hellfire Club/Montpelier Hill/Massey's Wood
Planning Authority: South Dublin County Council
Ref: JA0040

Dear Sir,

I wish to object to the above development (JA0040) on the grounds that it is contrary to sustainable development, it will be built in close proximity to archaeological remains of significant historical value and it will disturb and endanger precious wildlife that has protection in law.

The rich biodiversity of Masseys Wood and Montpelier Hill is neither respected nor protected by the proposed DMVC development. The EIA Report 1 page 95 refers to "minor losses of habitat" yet this claim is not backed up by adequate assessment and surveying of the area and the species that inhabit it, including those identified as Key Ecological Receptors. Throughout the report reference is made to surveying being undertaken outside of the optimal period (for example pages 75 to 76). Protection is offered to otters, bats and hen harriers among others under the Habitats Directive (1992) and the Wildlife Acts (1976 and 2000). The derogations under these laws refer to situations "where no satisfactory alternative" exists. This is untrue in the case of DMVC where there are multiple alternatives in less ecologically valuable areas that can and have been considered. The WOW factor referred to as a major determinant in choosing this particular site has no standing in planning law.

The rich archaeological value of this area is threatened by this development. Montpelier Hill is considered comparable to some world heritage sites and the EIA report (page 210) refers to the likelihood of further, as yet undiscovered, archaeological remains being present at Montpelier Hill.

The business plan is clear that the sustainability of this project rests on increasing footfall in the area by up to 200,000 over 10 years and attracting 40% of these visitors into the restaurant. No clear plan is evident in the report for managing this increase in usage considering the delicate nature of the environment. Masseys Wood and Montpelier Hill should be maintained in their state of natural beauty and commercial tourism and corporate orientated enterprise should be located in a more suitable setting.

I request an oral hearing.

Yours sincerely,
Deirdre Cronin
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