

The Planning Department,
Kildare County Council,
Aras Cill Dara,
Devoy Park,
Naas,
Co. Kildare.



10th July 2019.

Re. Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020 - 2026.

Dear Sirs,

I am aware that you are considering rezoning the area known as KDA2 in the Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020 - 2026.

I wish to make the following submission.

Previously, when it was proposed to rezone the area KDA2 for housing, I contacted every Councillor in Co. Kildare to explain why I believe this area is unsuitable for housing. Several local Councillors have visited and stood on the ground at KDA2 and have immediately understood why **this area is totally unsuitable for housing use**. They have informed and convinced those Councillors who have not visited the site of this and if you were to stand there yourself, you would immediately see the same. **I don't expect you to do so, but if you send a trusted person to do it for you, you, too, will be convinced of it's unsuitability for housing**. The information below will give you a sense of why all the Councillors voted against it. **It is not possible to see this from looking at a map. You need to actually stand there and it will be completely clear to you.**

There are a number of issues and concerns regarding building residential units on KDA2.

- a) **The land at KDA2 was radically altered during the building of the M4 motorway.** Previously it lay at approximately the same height as the land that Leixlip Park, Wogansfield, Highfield Park and the other detached homes on that side of Celbridge Road were built on. All these estates were built on the same level as the existing Leixlip Demesne boundary wall. The wall itself was hand made from rough-hewn rock so its height is not uniform but it averages at almost 2 metres high. **The land behind it on KDA2 now stands anywhere from 1 to 2 metres higher than that wall. It is not possible to see this unless you actually stand there. No map will show just how high it is.** This raises concerns among residents of these estates as regards privacy. All residents are aware that when housing units are built behind an existing estate there will be a loss of some level of privacy. However such a large disparity between ground level heights will mean that an average sized person on the land in KDA2 will be at an eye-level when standing on the street in KDA2 with the bedroom windows of the adjacent estates and homes. This level of intrusion borders on dangerous as most homes are only 6 to 10 metres from KDA2. **This also means that housing units of a 2 or 3 story size would in fact be at least an entire story higher in comparison to the adjacent estates and will completely overshadow them, blocking out a lot of natural light.**
- b) The additional height of the land in KDA2 will also result in drainage from the site naturally flowing downhill to the adjacent estates causing increased risks of minor flooding to those homes.
- c) Current residents of these estates, especially those with homes running along the boundary wall, can hear the motorway noises quite clearly as their homes are only 200-300 metres in

places from the motorway. It is concerning that KCC envisage placing a large number of housing units in such close proximity to a major motorway.

See Images below showing height differences existing between Leixlip Park and KDA2.

1st image shows a man 1.8 metres tall, Traffic cone on KDA2 site is a metre above his head.

2nd Image shows KDA2 site level remains constant so this issue is not isolated to one spot.

3rd image shows view from KDA2 into Leixlip Park, clear height disparity and privacy/security concerns of residents.

4th image shows how narrow KDA2 is between boundary wall and motorway in sections, this will mean conceptual plan on LAP to build units rising in height towards motorway will not work as to avoid noise of motorway the units will be built right on boundary with existing estates.

Note; The pictures show the trees providing some "screening" as a form of provision of privacy.

When they shed their leaves in Autumn and Winter, this is gone completely. What form of "screening" would be provided if houses were there?





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1) Lack of planning.

It is my belief that the LAP in relation to KDA2 has shown a lack of planning prior to its recommendation for rezoning. Fundamental studies seem to have been pushed out, with the option elected by KCC to complete them only if rezoning takes place. This seems to be a haphazard and backwards approach to sustainable town planning. It would be recommended that prior to any rezoning application the following should occur;

- a) A Traffic Impact Assessment should be completed along Celbridge road and should take into account the Residential development of both KDA1 (already being built) and KDA2 (seeking rezoning). Additionally figures used by the TIA should reflect the higher population estimates as envisaged by the 2016 Census for potential residential uptake on both KDA1 and KDA2.
- b) An environmental study should be conducted on both the KDA2 site and the Hedgerows and Trees along Pound Street and Celbridge Road that would be affected by any development at KDA2. This study should include (and not be limited to) existing flora and fauna, hunting patterns and zones for local predators (squirrels, foxes and owls have been in evidence on site), and Bat activity and loss of privacy for existing estates.
- c) A Noise study as part of the Kildare County Council Noise action plan and any recommendations to be included into the rezoning application. **The raised level of the ground in KDA2 was done to provide noise protection to the existing estates. What provision for noise protection will be there for the residents of KDA2? Also, I am not aware of any planning permission for raising the height of KDA2 ever having been sought or granted. If that is so, would any building there not be illegal?**
- d) Drainage and flood risk assessment, again any recommendations added to rezoning application.
- e) A comprehensive and detailed approach to minimise the effects of the height disparity in the lands designated KDA2 in relation to a) Adjoining residential units in existence and b) Leixlip Castle. All recommendations to be included in the rezoning application.

However, if KDA2 should be rezoned, **the very minimum** that any developer must be compelled to do is;

1. **Lower the ground level to where it was before the motorway was built**, ideally lower and move this earth to beside the motorway as a sound barrier for both existing and proposed housing.

2. The walls of Leixlip Castle are hundreds of years old and are, in places, close to falling. If there were to be entrances to Leixlip Park, or Wogansfield, as I understand is the case, I suspect the holes would weaken it to where it may be in danger of falling, so if that was to happen, **perhaps it would be better to remove it completely and build a new one?**

3. The trees along the boundary wall of Leixlip Castle are also hundreds of years old and some are bordering on being unsafe. **Perhaps a survey could be done and any considered dangerous be removed?**

Joseph Close.



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