

Bord Pleanála Reference (06S.JA0040)

53 Upper Beechwood Ave.,
Ranelagh,
Dublin 6.

23-03-20

AN BORD PLEANÁLA
LDG- 025424-20
ABP- _____
23 MAR 2020
Fee: € 56 Type: Charge
Time: 16:30 By: hwb

Dear Sir/ Madam,

As a retired professional forester I am interested in the intended visitor centre at Massy Hellfire forest and have looked at the planning proposal. I have the following comments and suggestions to make.

This forest area was purchased by the State in the 1930s by the then Forestry Division at the time under the direction of Dr. Otto Reinhart a German who was Chief Inspector of Forests at the time. The concept as envisioned by Reinhart was to establish a city forest for Dublin along European lines.

The lower (Massy) area was established by planting a mixed conifer/ broadleaved woodland with a wide range of species suited to site and soil. The upper portion (Hellfire) comprised more conventional conifer forest along with old beech.

I note that among the measures, some of which have considerable merit, it is intended to rehabilitate Massy but also to convert conifer to mixed broadleaved and to fell mature Douglas fir close to the new carpark.

I would suggest the following:

Some of the impressive Douglas fir at Hellfire should be maintained- they are stable and healthy, should not seriously impact on the car park and help retain the forest ambience , originally intended.

I agree that Massy should be rehabilitated by planting protected young trees in gaps and controlling the spread of laurel. However there are numerous excellent specimens of older broadleaves and conifers which should be retained as long as possible as well as a magnificent grove of Western Hemlock. Though they may eventually have to be replaced they now contribute to the sense of awe that mature trees inspire and the experience of outreach and nature trailing especially for young people. There are also some reasonably thriving plots of young broadleaves through Massy well worth retaining and improving.

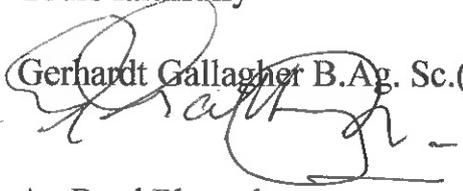
With regard to Hellfire I understand the Upper western part is to continue as commercial forest but as it will adjoin the centre, Coillte might be prevailed on to tidy

up wind damaged areas and insightly edges which the public will access.

The felled area now adjoining the proposed building should indeed be landscaped and replanted with broadleaves but with enough density to create a forest setting rather than a garden, albeit with views to the sea and city. The young recent plantings adjoining the public road on the Hellfire side should be retained as far as possible and filled in as necessary as they will maintain continuity with the present landscape..

A city forest is not a repository for solely conserving native species . Other approaches such as the numerous native woodland and conservation schemes deal with this. A city forest should offer the citizens adventure and the opportunity to experience the wide range of deciduous (of which larch is one) and coniferous species in their appropriate setting which thrive in the moderate oceanic climate of South Dublin. Massy/Hellfire has a unique place in Dublin memory and mythplogy and should be allowed maintain an element of unmanicured wildness

Yours faithfully


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