

COMMUNITY VOICE

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DUBLIN 15's ONLY **FREE!** NEWSPAPER

Village Centre approved by Appeals Board

The controversial proposal by local development company Uxbridge to build a village centre in the heart of Castleknock village has been approved by An Bórd Pleanála despite strong local opposition to the scheme.

Last year Fingal County Council granted planning permission to the company for a development comprising shops, offices and apartments on a 2.3 acre site behind the old Post Office building on Main Street opposite the Church of Ireland church and cemetery.

by both the developers and local residents to An Bórd Pleanála. The developers sought to change some of the conditions while the residents sought to have the entire decision overturned.

The main concerns of residents centred on the scale, design and appropriateness of the development and the effect it

will have on traffic in the area.

These objections were countered at the time by the developers. According to one of the directors of Uxbridge, "all of us involved in this project are local residents and are anxious that what we do is sympathetic to and in keeping with the old village of Castleknock."

The planning inspector who examined the appeals recommended that the development be refused and the county council decision overturned. However the Appeals Board decided to make a number of amendments to the plans to meet the Inspector's concerns. These included a significant reduction in the number of apartments to be built, a reduction in the retail and commercial space and a reduction in the height of one building. These changes they said would make the development more suitable and acceptable for the site.

Local residents who had opposed the development were unwilling to speak to *Community Voice* about the decision or about whether they would be taking the matter further. While all professed great disappointment and anger at the decision none were prepared to

speak on record or make any official comment.

Labour Party TD Joan Burton said the decision as "extremely disappointing" and wondered "why An Bórd Pleanála would give the go-ahead for such a high density development at this point in time when the country is awash with unsold houses and over-development has been such a significant factor in the banking collapse and indeed in the collapse of the construction industry."

Deputy Leo Varadkar (FG) who together with his party colleague Cllr. Eithne Loftus held a large public meeting on the matter last year said "we are firmly committed to the sustainable and realistic development of Castleknock Village which preserves its character. Unfortunately, this development goes against all of that and will increase traffic in the village, cause spill-over parking problems in residential estates and will be an eye-sore."

Referring to the decision as "a black day for Castleknock village," Cllr. Loftus said "it is deeply unfortunate that An Bórd Pleanála has decided to side with the developers once more rather than with the residents of Castleknock."

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▲ Pupils from Scoil an Cheathrar Aláinn, Ladyswell pictured at the BT Young Scientists Exhibition (L-R): Natalia Sidlo, Daniel Vlas, Jordan Rankin and Toby Okechwu. See story on page 10. Photo: John Todd

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