

Appeal No. VA00/3/058

AN BINSE LUACHÁLA
VALUATION TRIBUNAL
AN tACHT LUACHÁLA, 1988
VALUATION ACT, 1988

Westport Golf Club

APPELLANT

and

Commissioner of Valuation

RESPONDENT

RE: Clubhouse and Land, Map Reference Lot No. 10B, 26C, Westport Demesne, E.D.
Kilmeena, R.D. Westport County Mayo

B E F O R E

Fred Devlin - FSCS.FRICS

Deputy Chairman

Michael Coghlan - Solicitor

Member

Finian Brannigan - Solicitor

Member

JUDGMENT OF THE VALUATION TRIBUNAL
ISSUED ON THE 24TH DAY OF JULY, 2001

By notice of appeal dated 11th day October, 2000 the appellants appealed against the determination of the Commissioner of Valuation in fixing rateable valuation of £145 on the above described hereditament.

The grounds of appeal as set out in the Notice of Appeal are that "(1) The valuation is excessive and inequitable. (2) The valuation is bad in law."

The appeal proceeded by way of an oral hearing, which took place on the 14th day of March 2001 at the Tribunal Offices, Ormond House, Ormond Quay, Dublin 7. The appellant was represented by Ms Sheelagh O Buachalla B.A. who is an Associate of the Society of Chartered Surveyors and is a Director of GVA Donal O Buachalla. The respondent was represented by Mr. Colman Forkin B. Sc. [surveying] M.R.I.C.S. A.S.C.S. M.I.A.V.I. who is a District Valuer with 20 years experience in the Valuation Office.

The Property

Location

The property is situated approx. two miles West of Westport town centre on the Golf Course Road which is off the Westport/Newport Road.

Description

The premises comprises a two storey Club House built in 1973 and the accommodation comprises of the following:

Ground floor comprises two offices, foyer, professional shop, ladies and gents locker rooms, store and plant room.

The first floor consists of bar/dining area, kitchen, toilets and veranda. There are also machinery sheds and a walled yard adjacent to the Clubhouse and 134 tarmac car spaces. In 1997 the property was extended and re-decorated. The internal layout on the ground floor was somewhat altered and the extension was incorporated into the male locker room. There were no changes to the first floor other than some re-decoration work. The floor areas have been agreed as follows.

Club House 863.7sq.m. (9,297sq.ft.)

Machinery Shed 507.79sq.m. (5,465sq.ft)

The property is in excellent condition and is located on an 18 hole golf

course. All main services are connected to the property.

Valuation History

The subject property was last valued in 1980 at £110 (domestic £5). This was appealed and subsequently reduced to £95 (domestic £5).

The 1998/04 revision request was to value any developments and this resulted in the RV increasing to £145 a figure which was left unchanged at first appeal stage. The decision of the Commissioner following first appeal submissions not to make any change to the RV of £145 on the clubhouse is now the subject of this Tribunal Appeal.

Oral Hearing

Appellant's Evidence

At the oral hearing held at the Tribunal Offices on the 14th March 2001 **Mr Paul O'Neill the General Manager** of the appellant golf club gave evidence on oath. He stated that he knew the Enniscrone Golf Club and that he had visited it and it seemed to be a slightly bigger club and that the building materials in the roof and the brickwork were much newer than in the subject premises. He said that Enniscrone Golf Club, which was Mr Forkin's comparison number 3, had three bars and a restaurant bar upstairs together with a small members bar and that the locker rooms were bigger. He said it had an 18 hole golf course together with a links course which was open 365 days a year. He said there were plans to expand it into a 27 hole golf course. He stated that because of flooding on the subject golf course, they struggled to keep the course open. In comparison, Enniscrone would hope to compete with the Rosses Point Club also known as County Sligo Golf Club and Mr Forkin's comparison number 2. He said that the Rosses Point Golf Club would traditionally be the best course in the West and that they had staged the West of Ireland Championship. He said they had a bar like the subject premises but they also had a private members bar which the

subject premises does not have. He went on to say that the Rosses Point Golf Club has a function room and that the club gets walk-in business from the public visiting Rosses Point.

Mr O'Neill stated that Strandhill Golf Club which was Mr Forkin's first comparison was 1 ½ miles away from the subject golf course but he was unable to get information in relation to size of membership in respect of this club. He stated that he was in Belmullet the day before the hearing and that there was a circuit training course and a function in progress but that the subject golf club was not in a position to advertise to outside agencies unlike Belmullet. He said that he could not get information about membership size in Belmullet Golf Club.

On cross-examination he stated that he believed that Westport Clubhouse compared unfavourably with Rosses Point, Enniscrone or Belmullet. He stated that the subject golf club did get visitors but their big event would be an open week in August and they had lost one week through flooding in August before. He said there were many different championships in golf and that Westport had held low level championship meetings such as the Irish Closed Championship which would be handicapped. He said he did not know what the situation was with regard to Mullingar or Nuremore in response to a question from Mr Forkin but that Rosses Point would get championships at level two or three and that the subject golf course would be at level five/six. He said that from November to February they would lose 2 ½ days per week on average due to wet conditions. He said the annual membership fee was £315 for full membership.

Ms Sheelagh O Buachalla on behalf of the appellant adopted her précis having taken the oath. She stated that the clubhouse was built in 1973 and in 1997 a corner of the clubhouse was extended and the ground floor was reorganised. She said she believed the Enniscrone clubhouse was better

than the subject and that it was a links course rebuilt in 1991. She said that this was her main comparison and that it was a better links course. She said that Rosses Point was a far superior golf course and people would travel to Rosses Point also known as County Sligo Golf Course and it would attract golfers from all over the country. She said that although Belmullet was in a nice more remote location at the same time it is a links golf course and would be superior in this respect to the subject. She stated that in her opinion Mr Forkin's first comparison, the Strandhill Golf Course, was not a reliable valuation because of the fact that it was never appealed.

With regard to the machinery shed which is part of the subject premises, she stated that this was made of corrugated iron and was a very basic structure covering quite a large area of almost five and a half thousand sq. feet. She further said that Westport was not a links course and that this had to be taken into account because of the flooding. She gave four comparisons;

1. Enniscrone Golf Club,
2. Rosses Point in Sligo,
3. Mullingar Golf Club,
4. The Nuremore Hotel, details of which are attached in Appendix 1.

With regard to her comparisons she stated that Enniscrone Golf Club was her main comparison but that she did not propose to rely on Mullingar or Nuremore except to say that in VA94/2/019 Mullingar Golf Club -v- Commissioner of Valuation, the Tribunal had remarked that they took into consideration the fact that the Mullingar Golf Course had to close on occasion as it was an inland course. She said that having regard to her précis and her oral evidence that she submitted a fair NAV/RV assessment as follows: -

Clubhouse 863.7sq.m @ £21.52 = £18,586 or 9261sq.ft @ £2 psf
 Machinery Shed 507.7sq.m @ £ 5.38 = £ 2,731 or 5465sq.ft @ .50p
 NAV £21,317

@ 0.5% = RV £106

say RV £105

Respondent's Evidence

Mr Forkin adopted his précis having taken the oath. He said the subject property areas were agreed and that a figure of £2.50p psf for the Clubhouse and £1 psf for the Machinery Shed was reasonable in his view. He said that in Strandhill the bar had a higher valuation than the rest of the clubhouse and the stores were outside. He said that Rosses Point had a good reputation but that he did not accept that Enniscrone was better than the subject. He said that Rosses Point was not a particularly good looking building. He said that although Belmullet was nearer to Westport that it was in a remote location and that therefore there was a £2.20p psf valuation put on it.

He cited 4 comparisons,

1. The Strandhill Golf Club,
2. The County Sligo Golf Club (Rosses Point),
3. The Enniscrone Golf Club,
4. The Belmullet Golf Club details of which are attached hereto in Appendix 2.

Under cross examination he said that he accepted that the championship course was not on the par with the one at Rosses Point. He said that he accepted Mr O'Neill's evidence in this regard as he himself was not an expert in this area. With regard to Strandhill Golf Club which was his comparison No 1, he did not accept the contention that because no appeal was made against the valuation it was less reliable as a comparison.

Mr Forkin went on to say that he did not think that Enniscrone was any better than the subject premises and he did not find the fact that Enniscrone had

three bars any way relevant. He said that Enniscrone had a smaller building and that he felt that £2.35p psf was a fair valuation.

With regard to his comparison No 4 Belmullet Golf Club, he stated that this was a smaller clubhouse but that since it was not an industrial building, and that it's location had more bearing on its valuation of £2.20p psf than its size.

Mr Forkin accepted that the fact that a course is not used would have a bearing but he said that it does not say that people will not use the clubhouse. He stated that similar places would have the same problem and he stated further that he would have taken this factor into consideration when arriving at his valuation. He clarified this further by stating that he did take it into consideration here.

With regard to the shed he stated that it was a corrugated iron structure which was in a walled yard beside the clubhouse and that it was quite a good building and it was of better quality than the building at Rosses Point, which was his comparison No 2.

Mr Forkin gave his valuation as follows;

Bls a-h Clubhouse 863.72M^2 @ £26.91 = £23,243

Bls I, j machinery stores 507.79M^2 @ £10.76 = £ 5,464
= £28,707

Estimated NAV £28,707 X .5% = £143.54 Say £145.00p

DETERMINATION OF THE TRIBUNAL

The Tribunal has considered the case for the appellant as presented by Ms

O Buachalla together with her comparisons. The Tribunal has also noted the evidence of Mr Forkin as contained in his oral and written submissions together with his comparisons contained in Appendix 2. The Tribunal particularly noted the oral evidence of Mr Paul O'Neill the General Manager of the subject Golf Club and notes that the Westport Golf Club has a problem with flooding, particularly in the winter months but that this could occur on a year round basis. The Tribunal finds that this would make the Westport Golf Club clubhouse less attractive to a hypothetical tenant. The Tribunal further notes that it is common case that the Golf Course of the subject premises is not a links Golf Course unlike comparisons such as Belmullet, Strandhill and Rosses Point. The course appears to be similar to Mullingar which is quite a good course but at the same time has a problem with flooding. Enniscrone Golf Club was a common comparison and is a links golf course with all year round play. The Tribunal consider it to be a very relevant comparison for the subject premises. Similarly the Tribunal have taken into account the valuation on the sheds in Rosses Point Golf Course and in our view a similar valuation should apply in this instance. With regard to the clubhouse the Tribunal finds that the limitations imposed by the fact that the clubhouse is on a non-links course prone to flooding, warrants a reduction in the valuation. With regard to the machinery shed the Tribunal accepts Ms.O Buachalla's evidence that this is a large basic structure and is much larger than that found in any of the comparisons. Accordingly therefore these factors should be reflected in the valuation attributable to this space and hence the Tribunal considers Ms.O Buachalla's valuation to be more appropriate. The Tribunal therefore determines the valuation to be as follows: -

Clubhouse 863.72sq.m @ £23.68psm (£2.20psf) = £20,445

Shed 507.79sq.m @ £ 5.38psm (£0.50p psf) = £ 2,732

£23,177

Say £23,200 X .5% = £116

The Tribunal determines the RV to be £116

APPENDIX 1

Enniscrone Golf Club RV£65 1992/FA V.O.Lot : On 1 a Bartragh

Clubhouse 5,707sq.ft @ £2.25 530sq.m @ £24.21

Store 271sq.ft @ £1.50 25sq.m @ £16.15

Clubhouse built in 1973, was reconstructed in 1991, with an extension to locker room at that time

New course which is a year round sandy course

18 hole golf course

Rosses Point, Sligo RV£125 1991 FA V.O.Lot : 23.26ab Rosses Upper

Clubhouse 9,462sq.ft @ £2.35 879sq.m @ £25.29

Machinery Shed 2,850sq.ft @ £1.00 265sq.m @ £10.76

Championship Golf Course

Good quality Clubhouse

27 hole golf course

Mullingar Golf Club RV£100 VA94/2/019

Clubhouse 12,702sq.ft @ £1.57 1180sq.m @ £16.90

Refurbished Clubhouse with new extension

18 hole golf course

Inland course has limitations during winter

Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross RV£1,200 1998 Revision

Clubhouse 5,360sq.ft @ £2

New golf clubhouse built as facility attaching to golf course & 4 Star
Hotel

RV agreed by GVA Donal O Buachalla at Revision

APPENDIX 2

Strandhill Golf Club RD Sligo ED Knocknaree

RV £125.00 Revision 1998/02. Clubhouse redeveloped at a cost of £500,000.

M2

Clubhouse 829 @ £26.91 = £22,308

Bar 80 @ £32.29 = £ 2,583

Stores 174 @ £10.76 = £ 1,872

£26,763

Est NAV say £25,000 X .5% = £125.00

County Sligo Golf Club RD Sligo ED Drumcliff West

RV £125.00 1991 First Appeal

M2

Clubhouse 870 @ £26.91 = £23,412

Sheds 263 @ £ 5.38 = £ 1,415

£24,827

Est NAV say £25,000 X .5% = £125

Enniscrone Golf Club RD Dromore West

ED Castleconor West RV £65.00 1992/02 First Appeal

M2

Clubhouse 530 @ £25.29 = £13,404

Est NAV £13,000 X .5% = £65

Belmullet Golf Club RD Belmullet ED An Geata Mor Thuaidh

RV £70.00 1998/01 First Appeal. New Clubhouse cost £380,000 Grant aided.

Remote location.

M2

Clubhouse 587 @ £23.68 = £13,900

Store 32 @ £10.76 = £ 344

£14,244

Est NAV £14,000 X .5% = £70.00