



An artist's impression of the 17-storey, 70-metre tower approved for Cork's Eglinton Street. Below: the tower as it would appear next to City Hall.

# Tall tale as tower gets green light

by Tommy Barker

PLANNING permission for the country's tallest building, to be constructed next to Cork's City Hall, has been rubber-stamped by the city council.

Unless appealed to Bord Pleanála, work on the 17-storey, 70-metre-high tower could start right away — and the project could be wrapped up in about two years, according to developer Michael O'Flynn.

"We're delighted with the planners' decision. We didn't apply for 17 storeys in the hope of getting 10 or 12 floors, we and our architects felt this was the right scale and design for such an important city gateway site," Mr O'Flynn said.

If it were constructed



right away, the €150 million apartment tower would be Ireland's tallest building, marginally higher than Cork County Hall.

However, Dublin has loftier plans for skyscrapers up to 32 floors tall.

The O'Flynn development and feature gateway

tower on Eglinton Street — a pivotal three-acre site on the approach to Cork city — was bought for €15m from An Post.

The tower building and its associated six-storey structures will have large 600sq ft to 1,990sq ft apartments, 20,000sq ft of

offices, a new link street and up to 40,000sq ft of retail space, with double basement parking for 550 cars.

And, critically, it may trigger a snowball effect on the city's fledgling south docklands developments, setting height and design standards for the future.

Positioned nearby for development in the next few years is CIE's Horgan's Quay site, where an application for a €500m plan is expected shortly, and other sites include properties occupied by Tedcastles, Fords, the Showgrounds, as well as those owned by LAWS and

Cork Harbour Commissioners.

The key decision to approve planning for the Eglinton Street site may be appealed to An Bord Pleanála, although the backing of the landmark building by City Hall will carry weight in its favour.

"It is Cork's first high-rise residential development," said city manager Joe Gavin.

"We were very happy to give permission for a scheme bringing people back to live in the city centre in a mixed-use development with large, well-designed apartments."

It was one of the largest and most important single planning applications submitted to the council in recent years, he said.