



The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a meeting held on 20 August 2026.

The Commission decided to refuse permission, generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, for the following reasons and considerations.

Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the layout and arrangement of internal rooms and particularly the lack of windows serving the kitchen area and bedroom number 4 at ground floor level within the proposed development, the Commission was not satisfied that the development would be in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Justice, *National Standards for Accommodation Offered to People in the Protection Process Apply to the Living Conditions and Services Provided to Residents within Accommodation Centres (2020)*, specifically in relation to providing good-quality living accommodation for residents and ensuring habitable rooms receives sufficient natural light. The Commission considered that the layout as proposed would result in substandard accommodation for future occupants and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The Commission is not satisfied on the basis of the information submitted with the application that there are adequate social infrastructure facilities to cater for the proposed development, particularly in conjunction with the proposed other facility to accommodate persons seeking international protection at Lennon's Bar to the north of the subject site. In the absence of a more comprehensive and robust audit of social, communal and educational facilities, the Commission considers that it has not been adequately demonstrated that sufficient social infrastructure exists to cater for the demand arising from the current proposal in conjunction with other proposed facilities within Durrow. The proposal is therefore considered to be premature pending a more comprehensive assessment of social infrastructure to cater for the proposed development.

Note: The Commission noted the inspectors concerns in respect of the absence of a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment particularly in light of the concerns raised by observers in relation to flooding. The Commission considered that any potential future application should address the issue of flood risk.

Likewise the Commission noted concerns expressed in the Inspectors Report and in third party submissions in respect of the potential adverse impact of the proposal on the Architectural Conservation Area, and particularly the requirement under DM ACA 1 of the Laois County Development Plan (2021-2027) that any applications for permission for the refurbishment/ change of use within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's) should be accompanied by an Architectural Assessment Report.

In respect of both this issues (Flood Risk Assessment and Architectural Heritage Assessment) the Commission considered requesting further information from the

applicant on these matters, however having regard to the substantive reasons for refusal the Commission decided not to pursue these matters any further.

Planning Commissioner:



Paul Caprani

Date:

20th day of August 2026