

Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2021

Planning Authority: Westmeath County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: 21/197

APPEAL by Rachel Scanlon and James O'Rourke care of Vitruvius Hibernicus of Convent Road, Longford against the decision made on the 9th day of June, 2021 by Westmeath County Council to refuse permission to Rachel Scanlon and James O'Rourke.

Proposed Development Construction of a five-bedroom dwelling, a new entrance, domestic garage and all associated site works and drainage, all at Garnafailagh, Athlone, County Westmeath.

Decision

REFUSE permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the reasons and considerations set out below.

Matters Considered

In making its decision, the Board had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

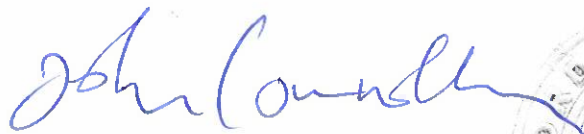
Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to:

- (a) the location of the site within a rural area identified as being under strong urban influence in accordance with the "Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities" issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in April, 2005;
- (b) National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework (February 2018) which, for rural areas under urban influence, seeks to facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstratable economic or social need to live in a rural area, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;
- (c) the provisions of the Westmeath County Development Plan, 2021 - 2027 which provide for consideration to be given to the development of rural housing in areas under strong urban influence for those with a definable social or economic need to live in the open countryside,

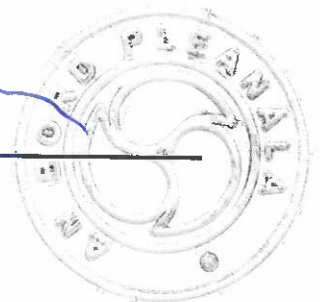
the Board is not satisfied, on the basis of the information submitted with the application and the appeal, that the applicants come within the scope of either the economic or social housing need criteria, as set out in the overarching national guidelines or the definition of a person with strong links to the area and who is an intrinsic part of the rural community in accordance with the relevant criteria, as set out in the current Development Plan for the area. The proposed development, in the absence of any identified locally based need for the house at this location, would result in a haphazard and unsustainable form of development, would contribute to the encroachment of random rural development in the area, would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and the efficient provision of public services and infrastructure and would undermine the settlement strategy set out in the Development Plan. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. It is the policy of the planning authority, as set out in the current Development Plan to control urban sprawl and ribbon development. This policy is considered to be reasonable. The proposed development would be in conflict with this policy because, when taken in conjunction with existing and permitted development in the vicinity of the site, it would consolidate and contribute to the build-up of ribbon development in an open rural area. This would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and the need to maintain a clear distinction between the urban area of Athlone town and its rural hinterland, would lead to demands for the provision of further public services and community facilities, and would be detrimental to the visual amenity and rural character of the surrounding area. The proposed development would, by itself and the precedent it would set for further such development, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



John Connolly

**Member of An Bord Pleanála
duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Board.**



Dated this th 27 day of APRIL 2022.