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**Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2021**

**Planning Authority: Westmeath County Council**

**Planning Register Reference Number: 21/175**

**Appeal** by Pat and Anne Eighan of Redwood House, Piercetown, Rochfortbridge, County Westmeath against the decision made on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021 by Westmeath County Council to grant subject to conditions to Ian Kenny care of McMahon McBennett of Barleyhill, Kingscourt, County Meath in accordance with plans and particulars lodged with the said Council.

**Proposed Development:** A new two-storey dwelling with single storey living area to the south, associated detached double garage, opening of a new vehicular entrance to site, new private water well and septic tank and percolation area together with all associated site development works at Piercetown, Rochfortbridge, County Westmeath.

**Decision**

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

## Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to: -

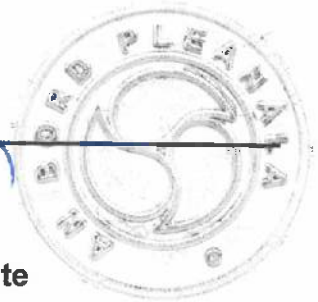
- (a) the location of the site within a rural area identified as being under Strong Urban Influence in accordance with the 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities' published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in April, 2005,
- (b) the National Policy 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 relevant 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, and
- (d) the totality of the documentation on file, including the third party appeal which referenced inter alia wording (incorporating development plan policy then applicable, relating to rural housing need) from planning register reference 20/6206,

the Board is not satisfied, on the basis of the information submitted with the application and the appeal, that the applicant has a demonstrable economic or social need to live in this specific rural area. It is considered, therefore, that the applicant does not come within the scope of housing need criteria, as set out in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and in national policy, for a house at this location. In the absence of any identified locally based need for the house at this location, it is considered that the proposed development 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, would result in a loss of hedgerow at this rural location and would be contrary to the settlement strategy and the relevant provisions relating to rural housing need as set out in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The proposed development would be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines and to the overarching national policy, having regard to the provisions of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



**Chris McGarry**

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



Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of November 2022.