



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL27.248294

Development	House, stables, entrance, wastewater treatment system & all associate works.
Location	Onagh, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow.
Planning Authority	Wicklow Co. Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	17/19
Applicants	Rose & Stephen Mathews
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellants	Rose & Stephen Mathews
Observers	(1) Stella Carmondy (2) Darren Flynn
Date of Site Inspection	21 st of May 2017
Inspector	Siobhan Carroll

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located in the townland of Onagh, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow. It is situated circa 4.6km to the south-west of Enniskerry. It is accessed off a minor road the L-1015-0. Which is accessed from the L-1011 to the north and the L-1036 to the south.
- 1.2. The site levels falls from 143m in the south-western corner to 115m in the north-east corner and has a gradient of 1:10. There are extensive views out to the east towards to the Sugarloaf and Bray Head. The confluence of the Glenree River and the Dargle River lies 560m to the south of the site. There is a tributary stream of the Dargle 27m to the north.
- 1.3. The site has a stated area of 3.2 hectares and it comprises a large grassed field. The site boundaries including the roadside boundary and formed by a mature hedgerow and trees. There is a traditional farmhouse and associated outbuildings clustered close to the road on the neighbouring lands to the north. The adjoining lands to the south is in agricultural use.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Permission is sought for a house, stables and new vehicular entrance. The main features of the scheme are as follows;
 - Site area – 3.2 hectares
 - Split level dwelling with floor area of 435sq m
 - Ridge height of between 5.09m and 7m
 - Stables with floor area of 114.3sq m
 - Wasterwater treatment plant
 - Bored Well

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Permission was refused for 4 no. reasons.

1. Having regard to the location of the development within a landscape designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Prospects 1 & 4 it is considered that given the elevated location of the development and visibility of the development in the listed prospects it is considered that the proposed development would impact detrimentally on this highly sensitive landscape and on listed Prospects and would therefore be contrary to the protection of this landscape area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as provided for under Objective NH49 of the County Development Plan 2016-2022, would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the area, and to proper planning and sustainable development.
2. The proposed development would be prejudicial to public health because inadequate information has been submitted to show that the site is suitable for effluent disposal.
3. Having regard to:
 - (i) the inadequacy of the road network serving the site in terms of width/ alignment/ structural condition
 - (ii) the number of existing dwellings served by this road network.

It is considered that the existing road network is only suitable to cater for traffic movements generated by existing permanent native residents who are local to this particular area, and therefore to allow this development would endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard.

4. The proposed development would not represent a necessary dwelling in this Landscape designated Mountain and Lakeshore AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) contrary to the provisions of Section 4.4 of the County Development Plan 2016-2022. These provisions are required to maintain scenic amenities, recreational utility, existing character, and to preserve views of special amenity value and special interest and to conserve the

attractiveness of the county for the development of tourism and tourist related employment.

The Council's settlement strategy is to encourage further growth of existing settlements and to restrict rural housing development to cases where there is a bona fide necessity to live in the rural area instead of in existing settlements. It is considered that the applicant does not come within the scope of the housing need criteria as set out under Objective HD23 of the County Development Plan 2016-2022. The proliferation of non-essential housing in rural landscape areas erodes the landscape value of these areas and seriously detracts from views of special amenity value.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report – Refusal recommended

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

E.H.O – Further information requested

Water and Environmental Services – Further information requested

3.3. External Report

3.3.1. Inland Fisheries – Conditions recommended

3.4. Third Party Observations

3.4.1. The Planning Authority received three submissions in relation to the planning application. The main issues raised are similar to those set out in the observations to the appeal.

4.0 Planning History

None on site

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

The operative plan for the area is the Wicklow County Council Development Plan 2016 - 2022.

- Chapter 4 – refers to Housing
- Objective HD23 - Residential development will be considered in the open countryside only when it is for those with a definable social or economic need to live in the open countryside.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.2.1. Wicklow Mountains SAC is located 2.5km from the site.
- 5.2.2. Wicklow Mountains SPA is located 2.5km from the site.
- 5.2.3. Knocksink Wood SAC is located 2.5km to the north-east of the site.
- 5.2.4. Ballyman Glen SAC is located 3.8km to the north-east of the site.
- 5.2.5. Bray Head SAC is located 7.4km to the east.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

A first party appeal was submitted by Aveen Byrne Associates on behalf of the applicants Rose & Stephen Mathews on the 3rd of April 2017. The main issues raised are as follows;

- The applicants Dr Rose and Dr Stephen Mathews are General Practitioners. Their practise is based in Enniskerry and many of their patients live in the rural catchment of Enniskerry. Their second eldest child Grace was diagnosed with autism at the age of 4. She is now 14.
- The Planning Authority refused permission for 4 no. reasons.

- Refusal reason no. 4 states that the proposed development would not represent a necessary dwelling in the designated landscape an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The Development Plan policy in relation to rural housing states that development in rural areas should be strictly limited to proposals where there is a social or economic need.
- Objective HD23 set out the development management criteria for proposals for houses in rural areas. There are 16 no. criteria listed. The appellants refer to no. 11 & no. 15.
- No. 11 states, “Persons whose work is intrinsically linked to the rural area and who can prove a definable social or economic need to live in the rural area.
- No. 15 states, “Permanent native residents of the rural area who require a new purpose built specially adapted house due to a verified medical condition and who can show that their existing home cannot be adapted to meet their particular needs.”
- The circumstances set out in no. 15 is considered flawed as it confines permission of houses in the rural area on medical grounds to permanent native residents of the rural area. The proposal is for a house and stables on a 3.2 hectare/ 8 acre site. Therefore, the proposal is for residential and agricultural activity and it is requested that it is assessed on that basis.
- The proposed stables and rural functions would provide therapeutic lifetime activity for Grace. Her therapeutic needs and the benefits of the proposed development are detailed in the letter from Professor Fitzgerald. A letter from her equine instructor is also attached which outlines the benefits to her wellbeing experience from equine therapy.
- A letter from the applicants details the difficulties which Grace experienced living in the village environment of Enniskerry. Since the family move to their rental property in the rural area of Knockbawn outside Enniskerry it has had a huge positive impact on Grace.
- The applicants Rose and Stephen Mathews have run the only medical practice in Enniskerry for the past 21 years. They do not fit the definition of

permanent native resident of a rural area as set out in the Development Plan. They have lived in the vicinity of Onagh for the past 21 years operating their General Practice and many of their patients live in the rural catchment of Enniskerry. Therefore, it is argued that they would qualify under circumstance 11 of policy HD23 as “persons whose work is intrinsically linked to the rural area and who can prove a definable social or economic need to live in the rural area”. It is considered that their work is intrinsically linked to the rural area and that they have a definable social need to live in the rural area by virtue of their need to provide Grace with a fulfilling future.

- The applicants state that should the Board decide to grant permission they would have no objection to a requirement for them to enter into a Section 47 agreement.
- The first refusal reason refers to the location of the proposed development being located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within listed Prospects 1 & 4 and that it is considered that the proposed development would detrimentally impact upon the sensitive landscape.
- The design and layout of the scheme was informed by the visual impact analysis carried out by ARC Consultants. It is considered that the site is only partially visible from one point on Prospect 1 from Curtlestown. It is considered that the proposed house and stables would not impact upon the landscape character or be highly visible in the landscape. The house and stables would be set back from the public road with the roadside planting maintained aside from that required to be removed to construct the entrance.
- The dwelling is split level and its highest point will be set into the ridge line. The presence of the driveway can be mitigated with planting as indicated on the revised drawing submitted with the appeal.
- Prospect 4 is from Rocky Valley Drive to the east. It is considered that the site when viewed from this prospect appears lost in the landscape and therefore any development would not appear obtrusive or incongruous. Therefore, it is contended that the proposed development cannot be considered inappropriate or unacceptable on the grounds of visual impact.

- Refusal reason no. 2 states that the proposed development would be prejudicial to public health due to inadequate information submitted to show that the site is suitable for effluent disposal.
- The concerns expressed in the report of the EHO and the report of the Executive Technician have been addressed. Surface water and foul water disposal from the stable building have been separated from the proposed waste water system serving the dwelling. The stable will not be used to house horses on a commercial basis therefore it would not generate additional foul waste loadings.
- The appeal submission includes reports from Biocycle Ltd and Kavanagh Mansfield Consulting Engineers which fully address the concerns set out in the report of the EHO and the report of the Executive Technician.
- Should the Board decide to grant permission a condition could be attached, which requires that the development be carried out and completed in accordance with the revised drawings and particulars submitted to the Board or alternatively to be submitted for agreement with Wicklow Co. Council
- Refusal reason no. 3 refers to the inadequacy of the existing road network serving the site and that it was considered only suitable to cater for traffic movements generated by existing permanent native residents.
- It is noted that the report of the Municipal Engineer was not available when the Planner's report was written.
- The Traffic Report prepared by Kavanagh Mansfield submitted with the application demonstrates that sightlines at the proposed entrance will more than meet the minimum requirements.
- It is the contention of the Planning Authority that the road network in the area is inadequate in width, alignment and structural condition and that increased usage would give rise to traffic hazard. The Planning Authority consider that the road network is suitable to cater for traffic generated by traffic movements of existing permanent native residents who are local while additional traffic generated by the proposed development would give rise to traffic hazard.

- The Report prepared by Kavanagh Mansfield included a traffic survey of the movements on the road at Onagh during a week in November. A total of 826 traffic movements were identified which is considered low and the risk of traffic encounters at bends is considered very low.
- The proposed dwelling would generate an average of 20 traffic movements per week which would represent a 2.5% increase which is not considered a significant level. It is noted that road accident statistics were examined for the road at Onagh from 2005-2013 and no accidents occurred in that period.
- The applicants request that the Board grant permission for the reasons set out in the appeal.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- None received

6.3. Observations

(1) An observation was submitted by Stella Carmody on the 2nd of May 2017.

The main issues raised are as follows;

- The proposed development would be detrimental to the character of the area.
- The observer fully supports the decision of the Planning Authority to refuse permission for the reasons set out.
- If the Board accepts the specific circumstances set out by the applicants constitutes exceptional health circumstances within the meaning of the Rural Housing Guidelines, permission should still be refused on the grounds of environment, traffic and access reasons.
- The observer does not agree with the case made by the applicants that their role as the local GP constitutes a rural housing need.
- They consider that the applicants have not provided justification for the development of a 'small working farm' and that their housing need does

not come within the scope of the rural housing need criteria of Objective H23 of the Development Plan.

- The applicants have made a case for the proposed dwelling in the rural area primarily based on exceptional health circumstances relating to their daughter.
- Should permission be granted in this case, the observer considers that other applications could be made for similar rural housing based on exceptional health grounds.

(2) An observation was submitted by Darren Flynn on the 2nd of May 2017. The main issues raised are as follows;

- The observer fully supports the decision of the Planning Authority to refuse permission for the reasons set out.
- The proposed development would have an adverse impact on the wildlife in the area and specifically local birds.
- The observer has included a number of photographs with his submission. The observer states that the photographs indicate the presence of a Red Kite on the site.

7.0 Assessment

Having regard to the above, and having inspected the site and reviewed all documents on file, the following is my assessment of this case. Issues to be considered in the assessment of this case are as follows:

- Rural Housing policy
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Vehicular Access
- Effluent Treatment
- Appropriate Assessment

7.1. Rural Housing policy

- 7.1.1. With regard to compliance with rural housing policy the proposal should be in accordance with the provisions of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and the provisions of the current Development Plan the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016 – 2022, as it relates to settlement in rural areas. The appeal site is located in an area identified as an Area Under Strong Urban Influence on Map No.1 – Indicative Outline of NSS Rural Area Types in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.
- 7.1.2. Objective HD23 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016 – 2022 refers to housing in the open countryside and it states that residential development will be considered in the open countryside only when it is for those with a definable social or economic need to live in the open countryside. There are sixteen categories set out under Objective HD23, whereby residential development will be considered in the countryside. The Planning Authority in their assessment determined that the applicants did not come within the scope of this policy.
- 7.1.3. As set out in the appeal submission and accompanying documentation the applicants are Dr Rose and Dr Stephen Mathews. They are both General Practitioners and their Practice is located in Enniskerry Village. The Practice is in operation for the past 21 years. Their current residence is a rental property at Knockbawn, a rural area outside Enniskerry. They have lived there for the past three

years and previously the family lived in a home which they owned located within the Village of Enniskerry.

7.1.4. While, the applicants state in the appeal that they do not fit the definition of permanent native resident of a rural area as set out in the Development Plan they request that they be considered on the basis that they have lived in the vicinity of Onagh for the past 21 years working in their General Practice and that many of their patients live in the rural catchment of Enniskerry.

7.1.5. Category 11 of Objective HD23 is as follows;

11. Persons whose work is intrinsically linked to the rural area and who can prove a definable social or economic need to live in the rural area.

7.1.6. While it is noted that the applicants work as General Practitioners and a number of their patients live in the rural catchment of Enniskerry, the surgery is located in Enniskerry Village and therefore I do not consider on that basis that the applicants have demonstrated that their work is intrinsically linked to the rural area.

7.1.7. The applicants have also requested that the Board consider their case on the basis of their family circumstances. Their daughter Grace who is 14 years old was diagnosed as Autist at the age of 4. The appeal which includes a letter from Grace's Consultant Professor Fitzgerald which outlines the therapeutic benefits which Grace would receive from residing in the rural area at Onagh. The submission notes that the rural area provides the opportunity for Grace to fully engage in her passion for outdoor living including the activities of horse riding, dog walking, cycling, gardening and looking after her chickens all of which serve to improve her health, wellbeing and communication. The Consultant notes that Grace's behaviour and communication with animals is neurotypical and not Autist and this improved behaviour and communication then carries through to her interactions with people.

7.1.8. A letter was also included in the appeal from Grace's equine instructor at Wicklow Equestrian which outlines the benefits to her wellbeing experience from equine therapy.

7.1.9. Category No. 15 of Objective HD23 is as follows;

15. Permanent native residents of the rural area who require a new purpose built specially adapted house due to a verified medical condition and who

can show that their existing home cannot be adapted to meet their particular needs.

- 7.1.10. In relation to this category of Objective HD23, I note that the applicants are not permanent native residents of the rural area as they have only moved to the rural area of Knockbawn, outside Enniskerry in the past three years. Notwithstanding the detailed and substantive documentation provided in relation to the applicants' daughter Grace, I would share the Planning Authority's view that the equine therapy can be provided at existing equestrian facilities within the Enniskerry area.
- 7.1.11. In conclusion, based on the documentation submitted as part of the application and appeal, including the nature and location of their employment in the Village of Enniskerry and their previous permanent residence within a suburban area in Enniskerry, I am not satisfied that the applicants have demonstrated that they come within the scope of the rural-generated housing need criteria for a house in this rural location, having regard to the provisions of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in April 2005, wherein it is indicated that it is policy to distinguish between rural-generated housing need and urban-generated housing need in Areas under Strong Urban Influence (such as applies in this instance) and accordingly considered that the proposed development would represent urban-generated rural housing.
- 7.2. Design and Visual Amenity
- 7.2.1. The Planning Authority refused permission on the basis that the proposed development would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area that it would detrimentally impact upon the highly sensitive landscape which is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Furthermore, it was stated that the site is located within listed prospects no. 1 and no. 4.
- 7.2.2. Map 10.13b of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022 indicates the Wicklow Landscape Category Map with reference to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These landscape areas are described as under very high vulnerability to development.
- 7.2.3. The site is located within an area designated 'Glencree/Glencullen Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. This area is described in the Development Plan as

based around the drainage pattern of the Glencree and Dargle Rivers and the surrounding road network and that the area is very scenic, with attractive views and number of tourist attractions such as Powerscourt House and Demesne, Charleville Demesne and Glencree Drive.

7.2.4. Section 5.3.4 sets out the general development considerations for Glencree/Glencullen as follows;

1. To protect listed views and vantage points across the valley and to resist development proposals that would negatively impact on the valley setting and views from the west at Glencree towards the Great Sugar Loaf.
2. To maintain and preserve views across the valley towards the Wicklow Mountains.
3. Through appropriate siting and design to ensure that developments along local roads will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate or dominating visual impact on the surrounding environment as seen from the local scenic routes and settlements.
4. To protect and facilitate the conservation of structures, sites and objects which are part of the County's cultural heritage, whether or not such structures, sites and objects are included on the Record Protected Structures.

7.2.5. Therefore, these matters should be fully considered in the case of the current proposal. The site is situated to the south-west of Enniskerry and at the eastern end of Glencree Valley located 1.7km to the south of the L1011. The site levels falls from roughly 140m in the south-western corner to 115m in the north-eastern corner representing a gradient of 1:10.

7.2.6. Map 10.15 of the County Development Plan 2016-2022 indicates Prospects of Special Amenity Value or Special Interest. There are Listed Prospects along the Glencree Valley. In relation to the appeal site it is situated within the Listed Prospect No. 1 – from L1011, L1015 & L5014 and Glencree which is a Prospect of mountain area around Glencree Drive, Prince William Seat, Glencree River and Sugarloaf Mountain. It is situated within Listed Prospect No. 4 from the L1033, Rocky Valley which is the prospect downhill from the road to the west, north and north-east towards Powerscourt, Enniskerry and Bray. It is also situated within Listed view 2

from the L1011 at Curtlestown, Glenree Drive towards the view of Bray Head, Sugarloaf and Djouce Mountain.

- 7.2.7. The house design is split level with a proposed floor area 435sq m and the proposed ridge height is between 5.09m and 7m. The proposed finished floor levels of the dwelling are indicated on the site layout plan as 129.75 & 130.75 OD. The dwelling would be located a minimum distance of 170m from road to the west and the closest residential property is situated 190m to the north-west of the appeal site. The proposed stables would be located 18m to the east of the dwelling. The stables have a floor area of 114.3sq m and a ridge height of 4.22m.
- 7.2.8. A Visual Impact Assessment produced by ARC Architectural Consultants Limited was been submitted with the appeal. A series of photomontages have been provided which indicate the location of the proposed dwelling in the landscape. Having reviewed the Visual Impact Assessment and visited the vantage point from which the views was taken on the L1011 at Curtlestown having regard to the elevated nature of the site and location of proposed dwelling and notwithstanding the existing and proposed landscaping I considered that the dwelling and its associated 240m long driveway would be prominent and would form a visually intrusive feature within the landscape.
- 7.2.9. The subject site is directly visible from Prospect no. 4 at Rocky Valley Drive west towards Glenree Valley. Having regard to the proposed siting of the dwelling at roughly 130m OD and the scale of the proposed dwelling and stables I consider that the proposed development would form a highly visible and intrusive feature within this visually sensitive location designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 7.2.10. In conclusion, having regard to the siting, design and scale of the proposed dwelling and stables and having regard to the visually sensitive nature of the site specifically its prominent location within views and prospects of special amenity along the Glenree valley, I consider that it would seriously injure the visual amenities of this sensitive rural area.

7.3. Vehicular Access

- 7.3.1. In relation to the proposed new vehicular access it is along a relatively straight section of the roadway. It is indicated on the site layout plan that sightlines of 90m can be provided to the north and south at the proposed entrance. Having inspected the site and viewed the location of the proposed entrance I am satisfied that an adequate sightline distance is available in both directions.
- 7.3.2. Access to the proposed development site is from a minor road the L-1015-0 which is accessed off the L-1011 to the north and the L-1036 to the south. Having inspected the site and the minor road at Onagh, Enniskerry (L-1015-0) it is considered to be seriously substandard in terms of width, vertical and horizontal alignment and surfacing. The road contains a number of dangerous bends and the narrow width of the road means there is difficulty for two vehicles to pass safely.
- 7.3.3. The appeal submission from Kavanagh Mansfield & Partners Consulting Engineers on behalf of the applicants agrees with the assessment of the Planning Authority in relation to the road network in the vicinity being narrow and having poor alignment. However, they contend that the proposed development would generate a total of 20 no. traffic movements per week. They also note road accident statistics for the L-1015-0 from 2005-2013 in which there were no recorded accidents.
- 7.3.4. While, the submission from Kavanagh Mansfield & Partners Consulting Engineers is noted I would consider having regard to the narrow nature of the minor road serving the site and the poor alignment and condition of the road that it is not suitable to accommodate the additional traffic movements the proposed development would generate.

7.4. Effluent Treatment

- 7.4.1. It is proposed to install a packaged wastewater treatment system and polishing filter. It is proposed to locate the treatment plant circa 20m to the north of the dwelling. The polishing filter is located on the layout plan 60m to the west of the dwelling and downhill. Regarding water supply a bored well is proposed on site uphill and 110m from the soil polishing filter. Table 6.1 of the EPA Manual – Treatment Systems for Single Houses sets out the minimum separation distances, the minimum distance from a watercourse or stream to a percolation area is stated as 10m and the

minimum distance from a road to a percolation area is stated as 4m. There is a watercourse within 27m of the site and a spring on site.

- 7.4.2. The reports from the Environmental Health Officer and the Environment Section of the Council both requested further information. Matters raised included the requirement for new percolation tests and design details of the polishing filter and biocycle unit. Concern was raised that surface water and foul water from the stables could enter the wastewater treatment system.
- 7.4.3. In response to these issues it is confirmed in the appeal that the surface water and foul water from the stables will be entirely separated from the proposed wastewater treatment system. A letter issued from BioCycle stated that the percolation value of 58.13 obtained showed a relatively slow drainage discharge rate. BioCycle stated that they are satisfied that a T value of between 51-75 is representative of the soil type encountered and that the location where the tests were carried out is a suitable area to locate the polishing filter.
- 7.4.4. A T value of greater than 50 and less than 75 means that the site is not suitable for a septic tank system and that it may be suitable for a secondary treatment system with a polishing filter at the depth of T-hole test. It is proposed to discharge the treated effluent to ground water. No rock was encountered up to a depth of 2.1m below ground level during the site testing. The groundwater protection response for the area is R1 which means the site is suitable for an on-site system subject to normal good practice.
- 7.4.5. P tests were also carried out and a P value of 55.69 was recorded. Table 6.3 of the EPA Manual advises that where the P value is greater than 3 and less than 75 then the site is suitable for a secondary treatment system with polishing filter at ground surface or overground. It is proposed to construct a raised polishing filter from imported permeable soil with an area of 350sq m. It is proposed to discharge the treated effluent to ground water.
- 7.4.6. Having regard to the information submitted including the site characterisation report and the proposal to install a secondary treatment system with soil polishing filter, I consider that site is suitable for the proposed on site secondary effluent treatment system subject to the system being constructed and maintained in accordance with the details submitted.

7.5. Appropriate Assessment

- 7.5.1. The appeal site is located in the townland of Onagh, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow. The site is located circa 2.5km at its closest location from Wicklow Mountains SAC Site Code 002122, Wicklow Mountains SPA Site Code 004040 and Knocksink Wood SAC Site Code 000725.
- 7.5.2. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and its proximity to these European sites, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. I have read the submissions on file, visited the site, and had due regard to the provisions of the Development Plan and all other matters arising. In the light of this and the assessment above, I recommend that permission be refused for this development for the reasons and considerations set out below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The subject site is located in the open countryside, in an area which would correspond to the rural area type "Area under Strong Urban Influence", as set out in the "Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities", issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in April 2005, wherein it is indicated that it is policy to distinguish between rural-generated housing need and urban-generated housing need. Furthermore, the subject site is located on an elevated and exposed field in a Landscape Zone designated as an "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" in the current Wicklow County Development Plan, in which Area it is reasonable and appropriate to restrict the spread of rural housing. On the basis of the documentation submitted in support of the application and appeal, including the nature and location of the employment of the applicants, it is considered that the proposed development of a dwelling at this location, which is not

linked to an essential rural-generated housing need, but which is urban-generated in nature, would be contrary to these Ministerial Guidelines and would add to the proliferation of development threatening to degrade the landscape within this area and consequently would result in the erosion of the area's existing rural and scenic quality. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The site of the proposed development is located in an area which is designated as an "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" in the current Wicklow County Development Plan. Furthermore, the site is located within views and prospects of special amenity along the Glencree Valley. The proposed development, by reason of its scale and siting in a prominent position within the designated landscape, would form a visually incongruous and intrusive feature and would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. The site of the proposed development is located on a minor rural road (L-1015-0) which is seriously substandard in terms of width, alignment, surfacing and carrying capacity to facilitate vehicular movements to and from the site. The proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard and obstruction of road users and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and development of the area.

Siobhan Carroll
Planning Inspector

11th of July 2017