



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-300562-18

Development	Construction of a part single, part-two storey four-bedroom dwellinghouse and associated works
Location	Ballinagard Road, Ballinagard, Roscommon, County Roscommon
Planning Authority	Roscommon County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	PD/17/361
Applicant(s)	Edward Conlon & Blaithin Kinsella
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant
Type of Appeal	Third-Party
Appellant(s)	1.) Gerry O'Dowd, 2.) Martin Lambe
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	6 th April 2018
Inspector	Colm McLoughlin

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located in the townland of Ballinagard to the south of Roscommon town, approximately 1.8km from the town centre. The site sits between two dwellings on similar size plots to the appeal site and the immediately surrounding area is characterised by single-dwelling developments fronting onto a local road with low-lying agricultural fields bordered by hedgerows and trees to the rear.
- 1.2. The appeal site comprises c.0.18ha of agricultural land and is located along a local road (L-1814) that connects the N63 national road, approximately 260m to the west of the appeal site, with another local road (L-1812), approximately 940m to the east of the site. This local road has a 60km/hr speed limit and serves numerous dwellings, one of which is stated to be the family home of one of the applicants, and agricultural lands, including lands to the rear of the site that are stated to be in control of the family of one of the applicants. The site includes over 31m frontage onto the local road. Mature hedgerows and trees mark the western and eastern boundaries of the site, the rear boundary is not marked on the ground, while the roadside boundary is formed by a stone wall with a line of mature trees inside this and an entrance to the east side. There is approximately a 1m drop in levels from the northwest rear corner of the site to the front southeast corner.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development would comprise the following:
- construction of a four-bedroom detached part-single, part-two storey dwellinghouse with a stated gross floor area (GFA) of c.232sq.m;
 - provision of a vehicular entrance/egress from the Ballinagard Road, connections to local engineering services, landscaping and boundary treatments.
- 2.2. In addition to the standard planning application documentation and drawings, the application was accompanied by a letter of consent from the landowner to submit the application, land registry details and correspondence and documentation addressing

'rural-generated housing need', which was subsequently supplemented in response to the Planning Authority's further information request. During the Planning Authority's consideration of the application, the applicants submitted a rebuttal of the third-party objections to the proposed development via unsolicited further information.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. The Planning Authority issued a notification of a decision to grant permission for the proposed development subject to 13 conditions of a standard nature, including the following:

Condition No.2 – occupancy clause;

Condition No.3 – details and amendments required to the vehicular entrance area and front boundary treatment;

Condition No.11 – additional restrictions to removal of trees along the side boundaries.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report

The initial report of the Planning Officer (October 2017) required further information in relation to the proposed development and noted the following:

- the site is within an 'area under strong urban influence' and the applicants would need to prove that they have a 'rural-generated housing need';
- professions of the applicants would indicate that they are not engaged in agriculture and further information would be required to substantiate whether or not the applicants comply with the criteria for rural-generated housing need;
- an unsolicited further information response from the applicants reconfirmed the extent of the family landholding incorporating the appeal site;

- amendments are required to the roadside boundary to address neighbouring boundary setbacks and traffic safety concerns;
- continued access arrangements to the lands to the rear of the site are required;
- the siting and design of the proposed house is acceptable and would be typical for the area;
- existing trees and hedgerows along the side boundaries would provide an adequate screening mechanism to restrict potential for overlooking of neighbouring properties. In comparison to the subject proposals, other properties in the area are located much closer together.

The final report of the Planning Officer (November 2017) reflects the decision of the Planning Authority. The Planning Officer noted the following:

- the further information submitted, including letters from representatives of local bodies, confirms that the applicant has a rural-generated housing need, compliant with the criteria set-out under 'Category A - Urban Periphery' of Table 5.4 of the Development Plan;
- the revised proposed site layout plan drawing (No. 3004 dated 04.11.2017) submitted shows a gate to the rear boundary to allow the family lands to the rear to be maintained;
- sightline visibility to the west would be restricted to 70m, but would be acceptable given the predominantly residential nature of Ballinagard Road and the 60km/hr speed limit.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- None.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- Irish Water – no response received, according to the Planning Officer's report.

3.4. Third-Party Submissions

3.4.1. Two submissions were received by the Planning Authority during consideration of the application. These submissions were from the adjoining residents to the east and to the west along Ballinagard Road. The issues raised are covered within the grounds of appeal below, but also included the following:

- Ballinagard Road does not have capacity to absorb and support additional traffic with an absence of footpaths and appropriate lighting;
- proposed development would not overcome previous reasons for refusal dating from July 2016 for a similar development on site under Roscommon County Council (RCC) Planning Register Reference PD/16/209;
- the proposed house would be too close to the side boundary hedge with the adjoining property;
- sightline visibility to the west would be restricted by an existing large tree not initially identified on the drawings;
- the primary façade would face onto the neighbouring property;
- queries raised in relation to land-ownership and site boundaries.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Appeal Site

4.1.1. The Planning Officer's report states that a pre-planning meeting was held in March 2016 regarding development of the site and the applicant was advised to review proposals with respect to the previous refusal of planning permission on site, rural housing need, sight visibility from the vehicular exit and the house design. The following recent planning application relates to the appeal site:

- RCC Ref. PD/16/209 – Permission refused in July 2016 for a two-storey dwelling and a domestic garage for two reasons relating to:
 - R.1 – traffic safety concerns arising from vehicular exit arrangements;
 - R.2 – applicants would not fulfil a rural-generated housing need.

4.2. Surrounding Sites

4.2.1. There have been a number of planning applications relating to the neighbouring lands that form part of the appeal site landholding, including the following recent application:

- RCC Ref. PD/16/44 – Permission refused in April 2016 for a two-storey dwelling and a domestic garage on a site approximately 80m to the south of the appeal site. Permission was refused for two reasons relating to:
 - R.1 – backland and piecemeal development;
 - R.2 – applicants would not fulfil a rural-generated housing need.

4.2.2. The Board has made decisions in relation to the following recent applications along Ballinagard Road:

- ABP Ref. PL20.247493 / RCC Ref. PD/16/340 – Permission refused in March 2017 for a dwellinghouse and a garage on a site 270m to the east of the appeal site for two reasons relating to:
 - R.1 – applicants would not fulfil a rural-generated housing need;
 - R.2 – ribbon development.
- ABP Ref. PL20.245955 / RCC Ref. PD/15/265 – Permission refused in May 2016 for a dwellinghouse and a garage on a site 640m to the east of the appeal site for two reasons relating to:
 - R.1 – applicants would not fulfil a rural-generated housing need;
 - R.2 – ribbon development.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Guidance

National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040

5.1.1. Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework outlines that within areas under urban influence, single housing in the countryside will be facilitated based on the core consideration of a demonstrable economic or social need to live in the rural area.

Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities

- 5.1.2. The Guidelines provide criteria for managing rural housing requirements, whilst achieving sustainable development. Planning Authorities are recommended to identify and broadly locate rural area typologies that are characterised as being under strong urban influence, stronger rural areas, structurally weak, or made up of clustered settlement patterns. The appeal site is located in an area under strong urban influence, as set out under Section 5.2 below.
- 5.1.3. Within Appendix 4 of the Guidelines, the creation of ribbon development via rural housing is not recommended, due to road safety concerns, future demands for the provision of public infrastructure and the visual impacts arising.

5.2. Roscommon County Development Plan

- 5.2.1. The policies and objectives of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020 are relevant. The site is outside the area covered by Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2014-2020.
- 5.2.2. Section 5.11 of the Development Plan outlines patterns of rural housing development that are of low benefit to the County, including ribbon development, urban sprawl and high concentrations of non-essential development in the rural hinterlands of large settlements in the County. Policy 5.35 of the Plan reasserts the position set out within the Rural Housing Guidelines, in discouraging development from extending 'strip-like along public roads'. Policy 5.50 of the Development Plan requires new entrances to rural housing to be provided with adequate visibility.
- 5.2.3. The appeal site, situated outside the development boundaries of Roscommon town, forms part of 'the countryside' which is identified within Tier 4 of the county settlement hierarchy. For the purposes of establishing rural housing policy, County Roscommon is divided into two distinct areas. Map 11 of the Development Plan identifies the appeal site as being located in a rural 'area under strong urban influence'. Based on Map 12 of the Development Plan (and Map 18a of the Local Area Plan), the appeal site is within the rural housing policy area comprising 'Category A – Urban Periphery', which covers the environs of Roscommon town with the Ballinagard Road area marking the southern periphery. Policy 5.32 of the Plan sets out that within the 'urban periphery', individual housing developments will only

be facilitated where applicants can substantiate, through documentation, a rural-generated local housing need, based on the qualifying criteria set out in categories (a) and (b) of Table 5.3 of the Plan. Policies and suitability criteria for rural area types are set out in Table 5.4 of the Plan. Section 5.11.5 includes specific guidance for housing in the urban periphery (Policies 5.29 to 5.36).

5.2.4. The following other sections of the Development Plan are also relevant in assessing the proposed development on the appeal site:

- Section 7.6 – Landscape Protection;
- Section 9.38 – Additional Development Management Standards (Traffic Safety & Sight Line Visibility);
- Section 9.5 - Rural Siting and Design;
- Section 9.8 - Rural Residential Considerations.

5.2.5. Objectives 7.37 to 7.40 of Section 7.6 to the Development Plan refer to landscape protection. The appeal site is within the ‘Roscommon Town and Hinterland’ landscape character area, according to the Landscape Character Assessment of County Roscommon and falls within the ‘dry farmland’ landscape character type. This area is of ‘High Value’ from a landscape perspective because of its cultural heritage significance.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. Two third-party appeals have been submitted, both of which are from the adjoining residents on either side of the appeal site. The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

Rural Housing Policy

- the subject landholding has decreased in size and there is an existing house along the N63 that previously formed part of the original landholding;

- the applicants do not meet the rural-generated housing need criteria set out in Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 of the Development Plan and the proposed house should not be permitted;
- reference to precedent set under ABP Refs. PL20.247493 and PL20.245955 relating to proposals for one-off housing along Ballinagard Road, where permission was refused by the Board in both cases for reasons relating to non-compliance with rural housing policy and the facilitation of ribbon development;
- proposals would contribute to ribbon development and urban sprawl on the outskirts of Roscommon town, which would be contrary to Development Plan policy;

Traffic Safety

- overdevelopment along Ballinagard Road has resulted in traffic safety issues and related problems, and the subject proposals would serve to exacerbate this situation;
- the Planning Authority has not comprehensively addressed road design and traffic safety matters, and the design and layout of the proposed entrance to the site continues to present a traffic hazard for pedestrians and other road users;
- the required visibility splay (90m) would be restricted to 25-30m viewing to the west from the proposed vehicular egress due to the existence of a mature tree and hedgerows in an adjoining appellant's property, which the applicant does not have consent to maintain or remove;
- the design and condition of the existing road coupled with the proposed development would lead to an increased risk of collisions;

Local Amenities

- the further information submission from the applicant states that land to the north of the appeal site would be used for private residential and recreational purposes, but this was not considered significant following submission of the further information response. The application should have been re-advertised

at further information stage or refused based on the impact on the amenities of the adjacent properties;

- living rooms to the proposed house would overlook the neighbouring property to the east;

Other Matters

- conditions requiring a new boundary wall and other details of the proposals to be agreed, would not allow for input from third parties and doubt is expressed regarding the enforceability of the conditions attached by the Planning Authority;
- drainage along the front boundary is not addressed and the capacity for the soils to suitably attenuate surface water is questioned;
- preplanning documentation was not included with the planning application;
- proposals would result in devaluation of neighbouring properties due to the impacts on amenity, traffic hazard and overdevelopment of the area.

6.2. Applicants' Response

- 6.2.1. The response of the applicants to the grounds of appeal can be summarised as follows:

Rural Housing Policy

- the Development Plan recognises the positive impact that rural housing can have in facilitating the continuity of rural communities;
- Information submitted with the application substantiated the applicants' rural-generated housing need based on rigorous suitability criteria, as recognised in the Planning Authority's decision;
- owing to the strict adherence to planning policy, the proposed development cannot be considered to constitute overdevelopment;

Traffic Safety

- the applicants would be willing to adhere to the conditions of the permission and they recognise the necessity for same, including those conditions addressing traffic safety;
- the further information response comprehensively addresses the issue of visibility from the proposed vehicular exit;

Local Amenities

- the proposed house would be a significant distance from the adjoining boundaries and the dwellings of both the appellants;
- the present greenfield context should not restrict the principle of development on the appeal site;
- overlooking of property would not occur due to the separation distances achieved, the existence of an outbuilding, the absence of proposed side-facing first-floor windows, orientation of the proposed house and the mature hedgerows and trees along the boundary;

Other Matters

- Proposals would not result in devaluation of neighbouring properties based on the response provided by the applicant addressing rural housing policy, traffic safety and local amenities;
- Motivation for the submissions and appeals of the appellants is questioned.

6.3. Planning Authority Response

6.3.1. None.

6.4. Observations

6.4.1. None.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Introduction

7.1.1. The proposed development is for a part-single, part-two storey detached dwellinghouse on a site to the south of Roscommon town. In July 2016 planning permission was refused by the Planning Authority for a two-storey house and a garage on the appeal site (RCC Ref. PD/16/209). The refusal was issued on the basis of traffic safety concerns arising from the site access arrangements and as the applicants would not fulfil a rural-generated housing need. The applicants for the subject application differ from those of the previous application (RCC Ref. PD/16/209). In recent times the Board has adjudicated on two appeals involving proposals for single houses on Ballinagard Road (ABP Refs. PL20.247493 and PL20.245955).

7.1.2. I consider the substantive planning issues arising from the grounds of appeal and in the assessment of the application and appeal, relate to the following:

- Rural Housing Policy;
- Siting & Design;
- Traffic Safety.

7.2. Rural Housing Policy

7.2.1. The grounds of appeal assert that the applicants do not fulfil a rural-generated housing need and the proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to policy contained in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020. Following submission of further information, the Planning Authority considered that sufficient documentation had been submitted to substantiate that one of the applicants fulfilled the housing need criteria of the Development Plan and that the proposed development would, therefore, comply with rural housing policy.

Rural Area Type

7.2.2. Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework outlines that within areas under urban influence, single housing in the countryside will be facilitated based on the core consideration of a demonstrable economic or social need to live in the rural

area. Section 5.11 of the Development Plan outlines policy with regard to ‘housing in the countryside’. In addressing appropriate locations for rural housing, the Plan sets out the need to firstly establish an areas capacity to absorb individual housing developments and secondly to establish suitability criteria for prospective developers of rural housing. To identify rural housing ‘capacity’ areas, two steps are followed, the first of which identifies areas based on ‘recent population change’. Map 11 of the Development Plan locates the appeal site in an ‘area under strong urban influence’ based on recent population change. The Plan clarifies that rural ‘areas under strong urban influence’ are:

- ‘areas within commuting distance of larger towns, where urban-generated housing in the open countryside is increasing and population growth has been significant in recent years. As shown in Map 6, these include the rural areas surrounding Monksland/Bellanamullia, Roscommon Town, Athleague, Lanesborough, Termonbarry and Roosky, as well as the rural areas around Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon’.

7.2.3. Following on from Map 11, the Plan assesses the broad economic factors impacting the County and concludes that suitability criteria should be tailored for three distinct rural area types, each of which will have a different approach to rural settlement policy. For the purposes of identifying the suitability criteria for rural housing on the appeal site, Map 12 locates the site within ‘Category A – Urban Periphery’, which covers the environs of larger towns, including Roscommon town, with the Ballinagard Road area marking the southern periphery.

Housing Need

7.2.4. Within the ‘urban periphery’, Policies 5.29 and 5.32 of the Development Plan outline that single housing developments will only be facilitated where the applicants can substantiate, through documentation, a rural-generated local housing need. A definition of rural-generated housing need is set out in Table 5.3 of the Plan and that within the ‘urban periphery’ applicants must fulfil the qualifying criteria for categories (a) and (b) stated in Table 5.3 to be as follows:

- a) ‘People who have lived in a rural area of County Roscommon for a large part of their lives or who have rural roots in terms of their parents being of rural origin. These would include farmers or close relatives of farmers who can

substantiate that they are also engaged in agriculture or otherwise dependant on the immediate rural area (rather than a nearby town or village) for employment, and/or anyone taking over the ownership and running of a farm. It would also include people who have no family lands but who wish to build their first home within the rural community in which they have spent a large and continuous part of their lives. or

- b) People working full-time in a rural-based activity, who can show a genuine need to live close to their workplace and have been engaged in this employment for over five years. This would include those working in agriculture, horticulture, farming, forestry, bloodstock, peat industry, inland waterway or marine-related occupations, as well as part-time occupations where the predominant occupation is farming or natural resource-related’.

7.2.5. Information provided by the applicants within the application states that the family home of one of the applicants, Edward Conlon, is the existing house located on the opposite side of Ballinagard Road to the appeal site and various submissions and documentation from local organisations and individuals are included with the application and appeal to substantiate same. The documentation claims that the applicant resided in the Ballinagard Road area for periods during the 1980s and 1990s and that they currently reside in Roscommon town. The applicants are also stated to currently work within an engineering practice in Roscommon town. The Planning Authority considers that the information provided by the applicants substantiates that they have a genuine rural housing need.

7.2.6. As stated above, the information and evidence provided must confirm that the housing need of the applicants can reasonably fall within either of the Category (a) or (b) definitions outlined in Table 5.3 of the Development Plan. Category (a) includes persons who have lived in a rural area of County Roscommon for a large part of their lives and I note the information on file referring to the previous address of the applicant as being Ballinagard Road, which would appear to confirm same. However, category (a) stipulates that such persons must be farmers or close relatives of farmers who can substantiate that they are also engaged in agriculture or who are otherwise dependant on the immediate rural area (rather than a nearby town or village) for employment, and/or anyone taking over the ownership and running of a farm. Documentation submitted with the application and appeal does

not substantiate this in the case of the applicants. Furthermore, the applicants have outlined that the proposed house would be located on family lands, which are identified in the application, therefore, the applicants cannot be reasonably considered to conform to the subcategory of persons 'who have no family lands but who wish to build their first home within the rural community in which they have spent a large and continuous part of their lives'. Category (b) relates to persons working full time in a rural-based activity, whereas the present employment status of the applicants does not conform to same.

- 7.2.7. While one of the applicants may be originally from this area, neither of the applicants are currently dependent on the immediate rural area for employment. Furthermore, the applicants have not demonstrated that they are taking over ownership of a family farm, and moreover, the applicants currently reside in Roscommon town. Consequently, I consider that the applicants do not conform to the criteria set out in categories (a) and (b) of Table 5.3 applying to the 'urban periphery', therefore, the applicants do not have a genuine rural-housing need and the proposed development would be contrary to Policies 5.29 and 5.32 of the Development Plan. The proposed development should be refused permission for this reason.

7.3. Siting & Design

- 7.3.1. The grounds of appeal assert that the proposals would contribute to ribbon development and urban sprawl on the outskirts of Roscommon town, which would be contrary to Development Plan policy, and they highlight concerns with regard to the relationship of the proposed house to their adjacent properties. The Planning Authority considered the design and siting of the proposed house to be acceptable, primarily on the basis of the surrounding houses. Section 9.5 of the Development Plan contains development management guidelines and standards for siting and design of rural housing. It is stated that the design of a proposal should reflect its setting, as well as the scale, height and character of existing buildings in the vicinity, with building forms being kept simple and uncluttered.
- 7.3.2. The proposed house would occupy a C-shaped building footprint and would feature elements consistent with traditional rural housing. The proposed house would be over 22m distance from the closest neighbouring windows directly-facing the appeal site and would be 7 to 11m from the side boundaries, which are reasonably deep

comprising mature planting. Consequently, the proposed house would not significantly impact on neighbouring residential amenities as a result of excessive direct overlooking. House types in the immediate area vary considerably and include single-storey, dormer-style and two-storey houses setback 10m to 15m from the roadside, often featuring front gable projections. The proposed dwelling would feature a two-storey element to the rear and a lower single-storey element with rooms in the roofspace to the front. This would not represent a balanced traditional approach in rural design terms, whereby the rear element would normally be formed by a lower subsidiary element. Notwithstanding this, my concerns regarding the design of the proposed house are insignificant in the context of the unsustainable pattern of suburban style housing that has persisted in the immediate area. Similar to the scenario encountered in assessing recent appeals on neighbouring sites along Ballinagard Road (ABP Refs. PL20.247493 and PL20.245955), the proposed development presents more significant concerns arising from the manner in which it would not facilitate the sequential growth of Roscommon town, and as it would further extend single developments along a public road, thereby leading to ribbon development.

- 7.3.3. Policy 5.35 of the Development Plan states that ribbon development and urban sprawl will be discouraged. The Rural Planning Guidelines give the example of five or more houses existing on any one side of a 250m stretch of road on the edge of town, as conforming to ribbon development. The proposed development would result in the sixth dwelling within a 160m stretch of Ballinagard Road. The proposed development would therefore contribute to unsustainable ribbon development at this location and would erode the visual amenity of the area consequent to the form, massing, orientation and design, and relationship to existing neighbouring properties. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the Rural Housing Guidelines and Policy 5.35 of the Development Plan, and permission should be refused for this reason.

7.4. Traffic Safety

- 7.4.1. The appeal site is positioned adjacent and to the inside of a slight bend on a local road that has a speed-limit restriction of 60km/h. There are no footpaths fronting the appeal site or along Ballinagard Road and the carriageway width fronting the appeal

site is approximately between 5m and 6m. Public lighting has been installed along Ballinagard Road. The existing site is served by an access on the east side of the frontage, which would also be the location of a new widened vehicular access to serve the proposed house. Policy 5.50 of the Development Plan requires new entrances to provide adequate visibility. Standards relating to 'Traffic Safety & Sight Line Visibility' are set out in Section 9.38 of the Development Plan, which outlines that a visibility splay of 90m would be required from a position setback 3m from the back edge of a local road, unless a safety audit is provided to justify a reduction in visibility. Furthermore, the Plan states that third-party consent may be required to maintain visibility and that this should be provided as part of a planning application.

- 7.4.2. Following a request for further information, the applicants submitted a revised drawing (No. 3004 dated 04.11.2017) to clarify sightline visibility splays achievable at the proposed exit. The Planning Authority considered that sight visibility to the west would be restricted to 70m, but that this would be acceptable given the predominantly residential character of Ballinagard Road and the 60km/hr speed limit restriction. The grounds of appeal assert that the required sightline visibility (90m) to the west would be restricted to 25-30m from the proposed vehicular exit due to the existence of a mature tree and hedgerows along one of the appellant's properties, which the applicants do not have consent to maintain or remove.
- 7.4.3. Visibility along the local road fronting the appeal site from the proposed vehicular exit location would be significantly obstructed by virtue of the slight bend in the road and the boundary treatments to the adjacent property to the west, including mature hedgerows and a large tree. In presenting a sight visibility splay of 70m to the west of the access, this has not been measured from a point 3m back from the edge of the local road, as required in the Development Plan, nor has a safety audit to justify the sight visibility splays been provided. The 60km/hr speed limit is noted, but on my site visit, it was clear that traffic speeds could readily exceed this, being facilitated by long straight stretches of road leading to the east and to the west of the appellants' properties. In conclusion, the proposed access would be contrary to Policy 5.50 of the Development Plan, as it does not meet the standards required and the proposed development would give rise to traffic hazard. Accordingly, permission should be refused for this reason.

8.0 Appropriate Assessment

- 8.1. The Ballinturly Turlough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000588) is approximately 2.7km south-west of the site and the Lough Ree candidate Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000440) is approximately 4.2km to the east. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was not submitted with the application. Nonetheless there is sufficient information on the file and available to allow me to carry out an Appropriate Assessment screening.
- 8.2. Having regard to the minor nature of the proposed development including the proposed connections to environmental engineering services, the location of the site in a serviced area and the separation distance to the nearest European site, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise, and it is not considered that the development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1. I recommend permission be **refused** for the reasons and considerations set out below.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The site of the proposed development is located in a rural area under urban influence (Category A - Urban Periphery) as identified in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020, wherein policies restrict housing to specified categories of persons who can establish that they have a rural-generated housing need. Based on the documentation submitted with the application and appeal, it is considered that the applicants do not meet the criteria for a rural-generated house under the provisions of the Development Plan. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to Policies 5.29, 5.32 and the provisions of the Development Plan, and 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 identified as being under pressure for urban-generated housing and where there is a high density of almost continuous road frontage type development. The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2005 and Policy 5.35 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 recommend against the creation of ribbon development. The proposed development, by reason of its location, would contribute to ribbon development as defined in the Guidelines and, by reason of its form, massing, orientation and design, and relationship to existing neighbouring properties, would erode the visual amenity of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines and Policy 5.35 of the Development Plan and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. Policy 5.50 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020 requires new entrances to provide adequate visibility, in accordance with the standards set out in Section 9.38 of the Plan. Having regard to the location of the proposed vehicular entrance/egress to serve the house on the inside of a slight bend to the local road, it is considered that given the restricted sightlines to the west, by virtue of existing boundary treatment to a neighbouring property including a mature tree and hedgerows that the applicants do not have consent to maintain or remove, and where traffic turning movements generated by the development would interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic along the public road, the proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard and would be contrary to Policy 5.50 and the provisions of the Development Plan. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Colm McLoughlin
Planning Inspector

17th April 2018