



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-308324-20.

Development	Permission for single storey house, new entrance and driveway, landscaping and WWTP system.
Location	An Pointe, An Cheathrú Rua, Co. Gaillimh.
Planning Authority	Galway County Council.
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	20/966.
Applicant(s)	Rhona Ni Chearbhaill.
Type of Application	Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse.
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Rhona Ni Chearbhaill.
Observer(s)	None.
Date of Site Inspection	26 th November 2020.
Inspector	A. Considine.

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located approximately 2km to the south of the village of Carraroe, Co. Galway, in the townland of An Pointe. The site is accessed via a small, narrow local road which has evidence of significant development pressure for one-off houses with a ribbon of development, on both sides of the road. While the road is narrow, it can accommodate two cars passing slowly. The wider area includes a variety of house types.
- 1.2. The site has a stated area of 0.86ha and lies to the east of the local access road. The site includes essentially 2 fields which are divided by a stone wall which runs roughly in a north-south direction. The site is undulating, rising from the public road towards the centre, and to the east of the stone wall referred to above. The high point of the site comprises a granite hillock with the site with a level of +103.8m. Further to the east, the site slopes sharply towards the sea, located approximately 100m to the east. This area of the site is wet and marshy.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Permission is sought, as per the public notices, Don fhorbairt lena na-áirítear teach cónaithe aon stór amháin, bealach nua isteach sa suíomh agus cabhsán, tírdhreachú mar aon le córas cóireála fuíolluisce. Spás urláir comhlán na n-oibreacha beartaithe: 208 sqm. (ie for the construction of a for single storey house, new entrance and driveway, landscaping and WWTP system. Gross floor space of proposed works, 208sqm), all at An Pointe, An Cheathrú Rua, Co. Gaillimh.
- 2.2. The application included a number of supporting documents including as follows:
 - Plans, particulars and completed planning application form
 - Design Statement
 - Rural Housing Need details including birth cert, educational details.
 - Site Characterisation form
 - Tricel Site Recommendation Report
- 2.3. The proposed house will be set back into the overall site, approximately 75m from the roadside boundary. The house design proposes a modern single storey dwelling

with a flat roof and a floor area of 208m². The house will rise to 3.25m at its highest point and includes 4 bedrooms, large open plan kitchen, dining room and lounge area, as well as a utility and separate living room and family bathroom. The master bedroom will include an en-suite, dressing / walk in wardrobe and separate study area and a second of the 4 bedrooms will be ensuite. The external finish of the building will combine a mix of stone and self-coloured render with the eastern elevation using extensive glazing. The building is rounded on the northern and southern elevations.

- 2.4. A Tricel wastewater treatment system is proposed to serve the dwelling and will be located downhill from the proposed house in the north eastern area of the subject site.
- 2.5. The section through the site suggests that significant excavation and ground works are proposed to accommodate the house on the eastern slope of the highest point within the site. The proposed finished floor level of the house is indicated at +99.5m with the cut starting from +103m.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

The Planning Authority decided to refuse planning permission for the proposed development for the following stated reasons:

1. Having regard to the following:
 - The setting within an open, exposed, elevated and coastal Class 3 (high sensitivity) landscape category area of the county,
 - The unsatisfactory site configuration traversing natural field boundaries,
 - The excessive development siting setback necessitating manipulation of site levels and an associated elongated access provision,
 - The unconventional form and sprawling linear footprint of the proposed dwelling house which would not effectively assimilate its sensitive rural setting,

It is considered that the proposed development would constitute an obtrusive feature and disorderly development, would result in a built form that would not fit appropriately or integrate effectively into this rural location, would contravene Objective RHO9 and DM Standard 6 of the Galway County Development Plan. Accordingly, to grant the proposal would interfere with the character of the landscape, would detract from the visual amenity of the area, would militate against the preservation of the rural environment, would materially contravene an objective and a development management standard contained in the Galway County Development plan and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. Having regard to the following:

- The inability of the planning authority to obtain access to the trial hole and observe the subsoil characteristics of the subject site and the lack of photographic survey of the test area accompanying the EPA site characterisation report,

The Planning Authority is not satisfied that the safe disposal of domestic effluent on site can be guaranteed in strict accordance with the EPA Code of Practice Manual 2009 for Wastewater Treatment and disposal systems serving single houses. Accordingly, to grant the proposed development would be prejudicial to public health, would be contrary to the EPA Code of Practice Wastewater Manual and to Objective WW5 of the county development plan.

3. The subject site is located within a Class 3 (high) landscape area of the county and within the GTPS where Objective RHO 1 of the 2015-2021 Galway County Development Plan is applicable. Based on insufficient information submitted with the planning application, it is considered that the applicant does not comply with the requirements of Objective RHO 1. Therefore, the proposed development is considered contrary to the rural housing provisions of the said county development plan. Accordingly, to grant the proposed development would contravene materially Objective RHO 3 contained in the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021, would be contrary to ministerial guidelines issued to the planning authorities under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), would set an undesirable precedent for similar future development in the area and

would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The Planning report considered the proposed development in the context of the details submitted with the application, internal technical reports, planning history and the County Development Plan policies and objectives. The report also notes that pre-planning was conducted in January 2020 where the PA expressed reservations to siting and potential for the proposal to be out of character with the built form, the overall configuration and design not adhering with the content of the Galway Rural Design Guidelines. The report includes an Appropriate Assessment Screening and Flood Risk Assessment section.

The Planning Report concludes that the applicant is considered to comply with the requirements of Objective RHO1 of the CDP, as it relates to compliance with rural housing policies. The planning report, however, raises concerns in terms of the siting and design of the proposed development as well as the manipulation of existing site levels in the form of excavation of circa 3m. The elevated setting is deemed to result in the proposal being prominent from the bay/inlet to the east. The report concludes that proposed development is not acceptable, and the Planning Officer recommends that permission be refused for the proposed development.

This Planning Report formed the basis of the Planning Authority's decision to refuse planning permission.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

None.

3.2.3. Prescribed Bodies

None.

3.2.4. Third Party Submissions

None

4.0 Planning History

Two previous applications submitted on the site were deemed incomplete (20/331) and invalid (19/1562).

5.0 Policy and Context

5.1. National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040, DoHP&LG 2018

- 5.1.1. The National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040 is a high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland to 2040. A key objective of the Framework is to ensure balanced regional growth, the promotion of compact development and the prevention of urban sprawl. It is a target of the NPF that 40% of all new housing is to be delivered within the existing built-up areas of cities, towns and villages on infill and/or brownfield sites with the remaining houses to be delivered at the edge of settlements and in rural areas.
- 5.1.2. National Policy Objective 19 refers to the necessity to demonstrate a functional economic or social requirement for housing need in areas under urban influence, i.e. the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment. This will also be subject to siting and design considerations. In rural areas elsewhere, it refers to the need to facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

5.2. Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines 2005

- 5.2.1. The Rural Housing Guidelines seek to provide for the housing needs of people who are part of the rural community in all rural areas and makes a distinction between 'Urban Generated' and 'Rural Generated' housing need. Chapter 4 of the guidelines relates to rural housing and planning applications and states that in areas under significant urban influence, applicants should outline how their proposals are consistent with the rural settlement policy in the development plan. Examples are given of the types of circumstances for which 'Rural Generated Housing Need' might apply, including 'persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community' and 'persons working full time or part time in rural areas'.

5.2.2. The Guidelines further require that new houses in rural areas be sited and designed in a manner so as to integrate well with their physical surroundings and generally be compatible with water protection, roads, traffic and public safety as well as protecting the conservation of sensitive areas.

5.3. **Development Plan**

5.3.1. The Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 is the relevant policy document relating to the subject site. The site is located outside the development boundary for the village of Carraroe and lies within a Rural Area under Strong Urban Pressure (GTPS) and within An Gaeltacht.

5.3.2. Section 3.8.1 of the Galway CDP deals with rural areas under strong urban pressure and Objective RHO 1 Rural Housing Zone (Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure – GTPS) is relevant in this regard. The key objective of the Council is to facilitate genuine housing requirements in local rural communities, subject to satisfactory site suitability and technical considerations. The plan also seeks to direct urban generated development to areas for new housing development in the adjoining urban centres (towns and villages as identified in the County Settlement/Core Strategies).

5.3.3. Objective RHO3 relates to rural housing zones within landscape categories 3, 4 and 5. This objective notes that documentary evidence will be required to justify the development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

5.3.4. Objective RHO4 deals with development in An Gaeltacht. It is an objective of the Council that consideration will be given to Irish speakers who can prove their competence to speak Irish and who can demonstrate their ability to be a long term asset to the traditional, cultural and language networks of vibrant Gaeltacht communities. A language enurement clause of 15 years duration is applicable to approved developments in this category.

5.3.5. Objective RHO9 states that it is an objective of the Council to have regard to the Council's Design Guidelines for Single Rural Houses with specific reference to the following:

- (a) It is an objective to encourage new dwelling house design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape.

- (b) It is an objective to promote sustainable approaches to dwelling house design and encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in the design and layout.
- (c) It is an objective to require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominantly indigenous/local species and groupings.

5.3.6. Objective RHO11 states that it is the objective of the Council to preserve and protect the open character of transitional lands outside settlements in order to maintain a clear demarcation and distinction between urban areas and the countryside.

5.3.7. DM Standard 6 deals with assimilation of development into landscape and requires that all permissible buildings should avoid locally obtrusive elevated locations and should be located on mid slopes or lower slopes of rising ground where possible. Development should seek to preserve traditional field patterns and established hedgerow and woodland. A visual impact assessment may be required where the proposal is located in an area identified as “Focal Points/Views” in the Landscape Character Assessment of the County or in Class 4 and 5 designated landscape sensitivity areas.

5.3.8. DM Standard 7 relates to site size for single houses using on-site wastewater treatment systems. A minimum site size of 2,000 square metres is generally required for a single house so as to provide adequate effluent treatment, parking, landscaping, open space and maintenance of rural amenity. For house sizes greater than 200 square metres, the site size shall be increased by 10 square metres for each square metre above the house area above 200 square metres. Special consideration will be given to existing houses and to proposed developments who can demonstrate rural housing need and comply with EPA Guidelines where minimum site size is not totally achievable.

5.3.9. Carrore and its environs are located in an area with a designated landscape value rating as ‘high’. The landscape sensitivity is classed as 3 – ‘medium’.

5.4. **Natural Heritage Designations**

The site is not located within any designated site. The closest Natura 2000 site is the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC (Site Code 002111), is located approximately 2km to

the west of the site. The Connemara Bog Complex SAC (&pNHA) (Site Code 002034), is located approximately 5.2km to the east.

5.5. EIA Screening

Having regard to nature and scale of the development, together with the brownfield nature of the site, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. This is a first party appeal, submitted by de Blacam and Meagher Architects, against the decision of the Planning Authority to refuse planning permission for the proposed development. The issues raised are summarised as follows:

- The appeal initially requests that the Board consider the site entrance as shown on the planning application drawings. Should the Board agree with the Planning Authority that the location of the proposed driveway is unacceptable, the applicant is willing to offer a concession and relocate the site entrance if conditioned by ABP. Two drawings constituting their proposals to relocate the entrance to the southern corner of the site to coincide with the right of way entrance to the site are submitted.
- The appeal sets out the background to the planning application, including the evolution of the house design, the form of which relates directly to a building designed by the Architects on Inis Meain (hotel / suites building).
- In addition, the appeal contents that the plain, simple and straightforward form of single storey with a reduced parapet is entirely in keeping with the spirit of traditional Connemara building.
- Due to the passing of time since the percolation tests, and the extended planning history of the site, the access to the percolation test holes became

restricted. It is submitted that the issue raised by the PA could have been dealt with by means of FI and should not have formed part of the reasons for refusal.

- Photos of the original trial holes are submitted, and clear access is available for the ABP inspector.
- In terms of Rural Housing Need, the appeal submits that a copy of the applicants birth certificate was submitted, with the names of her parents evident on the certificate.
- The record of pre-application consultation with the Planning Authority were submitted. It is questioned whether the Design Statement submitted was reviewed.
- It is requested that the Board note the use of inappropriate language in the Planners Report and Determination Letter.

The Appeal includes a number of appendices.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

None.

6.3. Observations

None.

7.0 Assessment

Having undertaken a site visit and having regard to the relevant policies pertaining to the subject site, the nature of existing uses on and in the vicinity of the site, the nature and scale of the proposed development and the nature of existing and permitted development in the immediate vicinity of the site, I consider that the main issues pertaining to the proposed development can be assessed under the following headings:

1. Principle of the development & Compliance with National Guidelines & Standards, the County Development Plan & General Development Standards
2. Visual Impacts
3. Site Suitability Issues
4. Other Issues
5. Appropriate Assessment

7.1. Principle of the development & Compliance with National Guidelines & Standards, the County Development Plan & General Development Standards:

- 7.1.1. The subject site is located within the rural area and approximately 2km south of the designated settlement boundary of Carraroe. The site is not zoned and is within an area identified as being under Strong Urban Pressure in the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021. This pressure for one off housing is evident on the ground. There is a presumption against development in such areas save for in instances where it can be demonstrated that an applicant complies with the Planning Authority's policies relating to the rural area. Should the Board be minded to grant planning permission in this instance it should be satisfied that the appellant adequately complies with the requirements of these stated policies, as well as National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework.
- 7.1.2. Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework seeks to ensure that in rural areas under urban influence, the provision of single housing in the countryside will be 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. The Galway County Development Plan also seeks to facilitate the rural generated housing needs of the local rural community with urban generated housing directed to the zoned and serviced areas of settlements, villages and towns. Objective RH01- Rural Housing Zone 1 (Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure – GTPS) of the CDP provides for the limited circumstances within which rural housing within an area under strong urban pressure may be facilitated.

- 7.1.3. In addition to the above, the Board will note that the site is located within An Gaeltacht and as such, Objective RHO4 is applicable in this instance. The applicant has submitted adequate evidence to suggest that she has strong local links to the area and her parents appear to have owned the subject site since 1991. She has attended local schools, works locally with MeasMedia, located in Carraroe, and as a Director, Language & Educational Adviser with Fíbin Teo & Meangadh Fíbin, located in Inverin. The applicant is currently living, with her husband and children, in her parents' home at An Caoran Beag, An Carthru Rua, approximately 0.9km to the north of the subject site. The applicants' parents' house is also located outside the development boundaries of Carraroe, approximately 1km to the south of the village.
- 7.1.4. I note that the third reason for refusal from Galway County Council states that it is considered that that the applicant does not comply with the requirements of Objective RHO1. The planning officers report however, suggests that subject to the submission of appropriate evidence to illustrate that she is the landowners' daughter, she is considered to comply. The applicant included her birth certificate with the planning application which clearly identifies her as the landowners' daughter. As such, I would be satisfied that the applicant complies with the said development plan requirements. Having regard to the requirements of Objective RHO4, I am satisfied that the applicant is an Irish speaker and has demonstrated her ability to be a long-term asset to the traditional, cultural and language network of this vibrant Gaeltacht community.
- 7.1.5. However, while I acknowledge and accept the bone fides of the applicant in this instance, and in particular, the need for Ms. Ni Chearbhaill to reside within the Gaeltacht area to continue her committed work in the promotion of the Irish language and the nurturing of local culture, and to ensure her children are raised with Irish in the Gaeltacht, I am satisfied that she does not have a specific need to live on the subject site in the rural area, where her housing need might reasonably be met within the settlement boundary of nearby Carraroe.
- 7.1.6. In addition, I note Objective RHO11 of the Galway CDP states that it is the objective of the Council to preserve and protect the open character of transitional lands outside settlements in order to maintain a clear demarcation and distinction between urban areas and the countryside. In light of the above, and while I acknowledge the 2km distance between the site and Carraroe, I consider that a grant of permission in

this instance would militate against the consolidation of the village of Carraroe and would result in urban sprawl, setting a precedent contrary to the policy objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2015. Having regard to the level of existing housing development already in existence in this rural location, it is considered that the proposed development would exacerbate the existing excessive density of development in this rural area, would contribute to the further suburbanisation of the area and would, therefore, result in a haphazard and unsustainable form of development in an unserviced area.

- 7.1.7. As such, I am satisfied that the proposed development does comply with the policy objectives of the County Development Plan as they relate to rural housing, Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework or the guidance provided within the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.

7.2. Visual Impacts

- 7.2.1. The appellant seeks to make a case for the proposed development noting the proposal respects the character, pattern and traditions of the area. The design seeks to nestle the building into the landscape such that it will not be visible from the access road. The proposed building is to be located on the downslope of the highest point of the site, and on the side away from the public to further protect the visual amenity of the area. The siting of the proposed house will result in panoramic views across the sea which is located approximately 100m to the east.
- 7.2.2. The site is located in the Landscape Character Area 17 – Carraroe (Cashla Bay to Glencoh) and within a Class 3 landscape in terms of sensitivity with a high landscape value and with the coastal strip class 4 special. The site is located on an elevated position and rises from the roadside (east) towards the centre of the site and then slopes down towards the sea, also in an east/north easterly direction. The site has a range in levels from +93m to the eastern boundary and +96m to the western boundary, rising to +103.8m in the centre. The proposed finished floor level of the house is indicated to be +99.5m and the house will rise to an overall height of 3.2m. It is further proposed that the house will be built into the hillock on the seaward side.
- 7.2.3. The Board will note that the Planning Authority was not satisfied that the proposed house design and siting were in accordance with requirements of the CDP. I note in

particular Objective RHO9, which states that it is an objective of the Council to have regard to the Council's Design Guidelines for Single Rural Houses with specific reference to the following:

- (a) It is an objective to encourage new dwelling house design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape.
- (b) It is an objective to promote sustainable approaches to dwelling house design and encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in the design and layout.
- (c) It is an objective to require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominantly indigenous/local species and groupings.

7.2.4. In terms of the proposed house design, I have no objections. I consider that the design has had due regard to the sensitivity of the landscape in which it is proposed to be located and consider that the scale and proposed materials are acceptable at this location.

7.2.5. With regard to the siting of the house on the site, DM Standard 6 requires all permissible building to avoid locally obtrusive elevated locations and that they should be located on mid slopes or lower slopes of rising ground where possible. I would acknowledge the efforts of the applicant to ensure that the visual impact associated with the building would be minimised from the public road. However, and while I agree that the views of the sea represent a significant amenity for the future occupants of the house, I suggest that the house could be relocated on the lower slopes of the site which would minimise any potential visual impacts, without the loss of the views.

7.2.6. In terms of the views from the east, and from Cashla Bay, I consider that the overall design, height of the house and the proposed materials to be employed would minimise any visual impacts. as indicated above, I would also note that there is potential to relocate the house to the east and northeast, and further downslope, which would further reduce the finished floor level of house and minimise further the visual impacts arising. Should the Board be minded to grant permission in this instance, I recommend that the finished floor level of the proposed building should be no higher than +97.5m. This matter could be dealt with by way of condition with the

requirement to submit amended plans and particulars to the PA for agreement prior to the commencement of development.

7.2.7. However, I would have to agree with the Planning Authority in their concerns with regard to the nature of the site layout and the location of the proposed access road. The construction of the access road would, in my opinion, have a significant visual impact on this landscape. Certainly, the proposal to cut through an existing stone wall is also unacceptable, as is the proposals for the extent of cut and fill required to accommodate both the house and the access driveway. As such, I am satisfied that these elements of the development would be visible in the wider area. The necessary cutting of the site to accommodate the proposed development would also result in a visual scar at this location.

7.2.8. I note the amended access proposals submitted with the appeal. This amendment would eliminate the need to cut through the existing stone wall which traverses the site and would utilise the identified right of way which exists along the southern boundary of the site. I would accept that the use of this area would minimise any interference with site levels which in turn, will minimise the visual impact of this element of the development. I also note that the relocation of the entrance as indicated in the appeal documents would see the retention of the existing roadside boundary and the achievement of required sight distances. Should the Board be minded to grant permission in this instance, I recommend that this access be implemented by condition.

7.2.9. Having regard to the above, and subject to the amendments recommended above, I am satisfied that the proposed development could be accommodated on the site without contravening the relevant provisions of the Galway County Development 2015-2021, including Objectives RHO9, LCM 1 and LCM 2 and DM Standard 6.

7.3. **Site Suitability Issues**

7.3.1. In terms of site suitability, the Board will note that the Planning Authority included a reason for refusal for the proposed development based on concerns to public health associated with the disposal of domestic effluent on the site. The proposed development is to be served by a private wastewater treatment system, and it is intended to install an Tricel Novo Package Plant which will discharge to a soil

polishing filter. The soil polishing filter will have a stated area of 144m². It is also noted that the house is to be serviced via the public water supply.

- 7.3.2. Having considered the information provided with regard to the proposed development, I am satisfied that the applicant submitted a robust and complete site assessment regarding its suitability in terms of the treatment and disposal of wastewater generated on the site. The site assessment appears to have been carried out by a suitably qualified professional. I note that no photographs of the trial hole were submitted with the report. The applicant included said photographs in the appeal documentation. While I acknowledge the size of the proposed development site, I note that the submitted plans fail to identify the location of the wastewater treatment systems for the houses immediately adjacent to the site to the west, north and to the south. In the context of the subject site, I would advise that there is a high concentration of houses with individual WWTPs.
- 7.3.3. The Site Assessment Report notes that the bedrock was encountered in the trial pit at a depth of 0.6m bgl, while the water table was not identified. The depth of the trial hole was 0.6m. The assessment identifies that the site is located in an area where there is a Groundwater Protection Scheme. The site is categorised as being a Poor Aquifer (PI), bedrock which is generally unproductive except for local zones, and has an extreme vulnerability. A Groundwater Protection Repose of R2² is indicated. The soil is described as till derived from granite with very high organic content and the bedrock type is Granites. The report notes that there is generally a shallow overburden in small pockets of soil between rock outcrops and rocky outcrops are visible within the site. Stone walls comprise the site boundaries.
- 7.3.4. Due to the shallow nature of the soils, no *T tests were carried out on the site. *P tests were also carried out at the site at a level of 0.4m bgl, yielding an average value of 87.33 and a *P result of 26.94. The report concludes, recommending a packaged wastewater treatment system and polishing filter, with a PE of 6. The filter will be constructed over existing ground level and the system will discharge to groundwater at a hydraulic loading rate of 8l/m².d.
- 7.3.5. I would raise concerns in terms of the concentration of individual wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of the site and on lands which are characterised by shallow soils over aquifers of extreme vulnerability. I again restate that the submitted

planning application details do not provide details as to the location of the existing wastewater treatment systems associated with the closest house, approximately 40m away. I would note that the submitted plans identify that there is no information available on adjacent WWTPs.

- 7.3.6. Overall, I am satisfied that the applicant has submitted a robust and complete site suitability assessment regarding the suitability of the proposed site in terms of the treatment and disposal of wastewater generated on the site. However, and notwithstanding the submission of the applicant in the appeal, I note that the locations of the trial holes were not identified on any map and though I searched, I could not locate them on the day of my inspection. In any case, I am generally satisfied that the site appears capable of accommodating the development in the context of wastewater treatment and disposal in principle.

7.4. Other Issues

7.4.1. Roads Issues

The access road to the site is narrow and at the proposed entrance to the site can only accommodate 1 car. That said, I do not consider that the scale of the proposed development will generate excessive traffic giving rise to a traffic hazard.

7.4.1. Development Contribution

The subject development is liable to pay development contribution, a condition to this effect, in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme 2016, revised August 21st 2019, should be included in any grant of planning permission.

7.4.2. Appropriate Assessment

The site is not located within any designated site. The closest Natura 2000 site is the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC (Site Code 002111), is located approximately 2km to the west of the site. The Connemara Bog Complex SAC (&pNHA) (Site Code 002034), is located approximately 5.2km to the east.

Overall, I consider it is reasonable to conclude on the basis of the information available that the proposal individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site having regard to the

nature and scale of the proposed development and separation distances involved to adjoining Natura 2000 sites. It is also 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.

8.0 Recommendation

I recommend that planning permission be Refused for the proposed development for the following stated reason and subject to the following stated conditions.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The site of the proposed development is located within an “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 policy to distinguish between urban-generated and rural-generated housing need. Furthermore, the subject site is located in an area that is designated under urban influence, where it is national policy, as set out in National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework, to facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside, based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

Having regard to the location of the site outside the settlement boundary for the village of Carraroe, within an unserved area, it is considered that the proposed development would result in and exacerbate a pattern of haphazard development at this location outside of an urban area, and would by itself and by the precedent it would set for similar such development, militate against the consolidation of the adjoining settlement including the more efficient use of services and infrastructure within this settlement and would contribute to the encroachment of random development, resulting in urban sprawl into the countryside at this location, contrary to the requirements of the Galway County development Plan 2015. Furthermore, the Board is not satisfied that the applicant’s housing needs could not be satisfactorily met in an established

town or settlement centre. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines, to the over-arching national policy and having regard to the provisions of the current Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

A. Considine
Planning Inspector
09th January 2021