



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-309232-21

Development	Construction of a single storey dwelling and detached domestic garage.
Location	Boolykeagh, Longwood, Co. Meath.
Planning Authority	Meath County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	TA201536
Applicant(s)	Jennifer and Anthony Cunningham
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Jennifer and Anthony Cunningham
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	6 th of May 2021
Inspector	Angela Brereton

1.0 Site Location and Description

The site is situated in the rural townland of Boolykeagh and is accessed off the R160 approx. 1.7km west of the village of Longwood. The R160 is designated as a Strategic Route Corridor. It is a fast busy road, with a white line in the middle along this section. The site is located with frontage to the bend along a wide sweep of road and sightlines are more restricted to the west.

There is an existing cottage on site (owned by a relative) shown within the red line boundary, to the north of the proposed site for the dwelling. The entrance to this is currently to the north of the dwelling. There are trees along the application site road frontage, some of which would need to be removed to make way for the proposed entrance. The application site appears relatively flat and is to be taken off the larger field area.

There are a number of rural one-off dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site frontage is on a bend with mature trees and hedging. The Royal Canal lies further to the west.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. This is to consist of the following:

- The construction of a single storey dwelling, detached domestic garage;
- Secondary wastewater treatment system with soil polishing filter;
- To extend the pedestrian entrance on SW of adjacent site to vehicular access and form a shared entrance with the application site;
- Relocate roadside fencing and mature planting behind envelope of visibility of the application site to satisfy RD POL 41 of the Meath CDP 2013-2019 and lands to east outside application site comply with Section 2.1.3 Sight Lines of Appendix 15, all to conform with DMRB Section TD41/95 & TD9/07 of TII.

2.2. Documentation submitted includes the following:

- Traffic Report for the proposed development - J.V.Quinn & Associates
- Site Characterisation and Site Suitability Report – Traynor Environmental Ltd.

- Drawings including Site Layout Plan, Floor Plans and Elevations showing the proposed development.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

On the 15th of December 2020, Meath County Council refused permission for the proposed development for in summary reasons of lack of demonstrated local need being outside of a designated settlement in a Rural Area under Strong Rural Influence, traffic hazard, relative to the location of the access from the R160 strategic corridor, removal of substantial area of mature hedgerow to achieve sightlines, being contrary to planning policy and guidelines and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The Planner had regard to the locational context of the site, planning history and policy and to the inter-departmental reports submitted. Their Assessment in summary includes the following:

- They concluded that the proposed development by itself or in combination with other plans and developments in the vicinity, would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site. That an NIS is not required.
- They note the documentation submitted and consider that the Applicant has not addressed the previous reason for refusal relative to local need.
- Having regard to the mix of house types in the area the proposal if permitted would not adversely impact upon the visual amenities of the area.
- The proposed site is off a strategic route corridor the R160 thus sections 10.16.2 and 10.16.3 of the Meath CDP 2013-2019 are relevant in the assessment of this application.
- It is proposed to create a new shared access with his uncle in the adjacent property to the east directly off the R160 which is a strategic route.

- They note that the applicant has submitted a report from JV Quinn and Associates (Consulting Engineers).
- They are concerned that an extensive area of roadside boundary hedgerow is to be removed to facilitate sightlines, contrary to planning policy.
- They have regard to the report received from Transportation, which notes concern about the proposed development.
- They recommend that the proposed development be refused.

3.3. Other Technical Reports

Transportation

They have concerns about the access onto the R160 Strategic Corridor. They advise that the application should be refused if the applicant does not comply with the exceptions contained in the CDP. If the applicant does comply with these exceptions, they recommend conditions.

3.4. Prescribed Bodies

None consulted.

3.5. Third Party Observations

The Planner's Report noted that no submissions were made.

4.0 Planning History

As noted in the Planner's Report there is an extensive planning history noted on file. This includes the following relevant to the Subject Site:

- TA200256 – Permission refused to Anthony Cunningham for a single storey dwelling, domestic detached garage, secondary wastewater treatment system with soil polishing filter, extend pedestrian entrance on SW of adjacent site to vehicular access to form a shared entrance with the application site, relocate roadside fencing and mature planting behind envelope of visibility on the

application site and lands to the east outside application site to comply with current CDP policies and to conform with DMRB roads.

This was refused for 3no. reasons in summary relative to housing restrictions in a Rural Area under Strong Rural Influence, injurious to public safety by reason of traffic hazard onto the R160, removal of substantial length of mature hedgerow to achieve sightlines.

- TA190139 - Permission refused to Anthony Cunningham for a single storey dwelling, domestic detached garage, a wastewater disposal system, an existing entrance to neighbouring dwelling to be closed, relocated and upgraded to a shared domestic site entrance and all associated site works. This was refused for 3no. reasons to include lack of demonstrated local need in rural location under strong rural influence, traffic hazard, substantial removal of mature hedgerow to achieve sightlines.
- TA180782 - Permission refused to Anthony Cunningham for a single storey dwelling, domestic detached garage, a wastewater disposal system, a new domestic site entrance and all associated site works for 2no. reasons.

Copies of these decisions are included in the History Appendix to this Report.

Adjacent site

- TA70424 – Permission refused to David & Eileen Dixon for a dormer dwelling, domestic garage, and provision of a pwwts and associated works, to include the use of an entrance approved under TA30130 and the relocation of the proposed septic tank system and percolation area the dwelling also approved under TA30130.

This was subsequently refused under appeal to the Board.

- TA60396 – Permission refused to David & Eileen Dixon for the erection of dormer residence, domestic garage, pwwts, revision of site boundaries form that submitted under grant of permission TA30130 using modified entrance granted under same permission.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040

This refers to the growth and development of rural areas and the role of the rural town as a catalyst for this. It is recognised that the Irish countryside is, and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time renewing and regenerating rural towns and avoiding ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas into the countryside and protecting environmental qualities. Objectives 18 and 19 refer.

5.2. Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005

These guidelines require the planning system to facilitate people who are part of the rural community, including in areas under strong urban influence. The principles set out in the guidelines also require that new houses in rural areas be sited and designed to integrate well with their physical surroundings and generally be compatible with the protection of water quality, the provision of a safe means of access in relation to road and public safety and the conservation of sensitive areas. In Appendix 4 ribbon development is defined, by example, as 5 or more houses on any one side of the road, within 250m of road frontage.

5.3. Meath County Development Plan 2013 to 2019

The appeal site lies in a rural area that is identified as under Area 2 – Strong Rural Areas and within the ‘Central Lowlands’ landscape character area. This landscape is of high landscape character value and of moderate sensitivity to development.

The following policies are relevant to the proposed development:

Rural Housing

Rural Housing – These are set out in Chapter 10 of the Plan. The overall goal for rural housing is to ensure that rural generated housing needs are accommodated in the areas they arise, subject to good practice in site location, access, drainage and design (goal and strategic policy RUR DEV SP 2). Urban generated rural housing

needs are directed to built-up areas or land identified through the development plan process.

Map 10.1 (Volume 5) refers to Rural Area Types. The site is within a 'Strong Rural Area'. Area 2 of Section 10.4 provides that the Key Challenge is: *To maintain a reasonable balance between development activity in the extensive network of smaller towns and villages and housing proposals in the wider rural area.* Policies RD POL 4 to RD POL 5 apply. These include that individual housing developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which the development is proposed.

RD POL 4 - To consolidate and sustain the stability of the rural population and to strive to achieve a balance between development activity in urban areas and villages and the wider rural area.

RD POL 5 - To facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community as identified while directing urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages in the area of the development plan.

Section 10.4 of the Plan sets out criteria for applicants to demonstrate their rural housing need.

Ribbon development – Section 10.5 of the Plan sets out criteria for the assessment of applications for rural housing in all area types. Section 10.5.2 deals with ribbon development and defines this as a high density of almost continuous road frontage type development.

- Design standards – These are set out in the Meath Rural Design Guide (Appendix 15 of Development Plan) and Policy RD POL 9 requires all applications for development to comply with it.

The site is located to the west of and outside of the village of Longwood. Volume 5 of the Plan includes the Written Statement and Map for Longwood.

Roads

Section 10.16.2 refers to and provides the Policies relative to Regional and County Roads (Map 10.4 refers).

RD POL 38 - To ensure that all development accessing off the county's road network is at a location and carried out in a manner which would not endanger public safety by way of a traffic hazard.

RD POL 39 - To identify and protect those non-national roads of regional or local importance from unnecessary and excessive individual access/egress points, which would prejudice the carrying capacity and ultimately the function of the road.

RD POL 40 - To restrict new accesses for one-off dwellings where the 80km per hour speed limit currently applies in order to safeguard the specific functions and to avoid the premature obsolescence of identified regional and important county link roads (see Map No. 10.6) through the creation of excessive levels of individual entrances and to secure the investment in non-national roads.

Section 10.16.3 provides the Development Assessment Criteria – Exceptions.

Section 10.17 refers to Roadside Boundaries.

RD POL 41 - To avoid the removal of existing roadside boundaries where they are more than 3m from the road edge (edge of carriageway), except to the extent that this is needed for a new entrance, and where required for traffic safety reasons. (Please refer to policies contained in Section 9.7.8 Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees in this regard).

5.4. Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment Disposal Systems serving Single Houses

This document (2009) by the EPA relevant to single houses (p.e <10). The objective is to protect the environment and water quality from pollution and it is concerned with site suitability assessment. It is concerned with making a recommendation for selecting an appropriate on-site domestic wastewater treatment and disposal system if the site is deemed appropriate subject to the site assessment and characterisation report. The implementation of the Code is a key element to ensure that the planning system is positioned to address the issue of protecting water quality in assessing development proposals for new housing in rural areas and meeting its obligations under Council Directive (75/442/EEC).

5.5. EU Water Framework Directive

The purpose of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) 'is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater.

5.6. Natural Heritage Designations

The appeal site lies c.400m from the River Boyne and Blackwater SPA and SAC (site codes 004232 and 002299 respectively). Mount Heavy Bog SAC (site code 002103) is located approx. 5.8km from the subject site. The p NHA Royal Canal (site:002013) is located approx.100m from the site.

5.7. EIA Screening

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development (a single dwelling) and the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity/ the absence of any connectivity to any sensitive location, 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

J.V.Quinn & Associates have submitted a First Party appeal on behalf of the Applicants Jennifer & Anthony Cunningham. The Grounds of Appeal refer to the reasons for refusal and include the following:

Reason no.1

- The applicant satisfies Section 10.4 of the CDP 2013-2019.
- Documentation has been submitted to show intrinsic membership of the rural community as a resident of the Longwood area from birth – Appendices 1,2,3 & 4 *Statement of Compliance*.

- The applicant has continuing close family ties with the rural community.
- This includes that he has never owned a house, has a young family and strong ties to Longwood, and is in an unacceptable housing scenario in his uncles' house.
- The Planning Authority has not stated the specific policy of the CDP that outlines the extent of information requirement to support an application for a housing need at this location.
- The P.A has not identified the measurable extent of contravention of the sustainability and development of the area.

Reason no.2

- The P.A has stated an opinion without the benefit of supporting facts as to the measurable extent of traffic hazard.
- The site is exempt from RD Pol 38, 39 & 40 by endorsing Section 10.16.3 Development Assessment criteria. Details are included.

Reason no.3

- Policy RD POL41 is not applicable as access is now shared with an existing entrance, therefore unsubstantiated negative comment on visual and ecological impacts are no longer valid.

Conclusions

- The Meath CDP is flawed to the extent that broad ranging comments allow planning officials to express interpretation and opinion that maybe to the detriment of the applicant.
- A factual compliance requirement should be documented such that the code of practice by EPA, NRA and specific attached to Appendix 15 of the COP.
- Chapter 10.4 *Persons who are an Intrinsic Part of the Rural Community* contains considerable commentary without documenting the requirement needs for an applicant to qualify for rural community membership.
- The broadly stated text arrangement allows for opinions to support a refusal rather than a fact that may qualify for consent.

Observations

- Indications are that no quality control standards, Code of Practice or Policies and Procedures protocols are in place, active or monitored within the planning section of the Council.
- They are concerned that a culture of applying personal opinion, without the benefit of factual support, may exist.
- It is the opinion that any decision made must be on the basis or non-compliance with the specific policy of the CDP, the guiding instrument for the making of a planning application.
- Examples of in-house departures from policy are given and reference is had to the Exhibits enclosed. Reference is had to various planning decisions, including relevant to access from a regional road for Kilsaran and Keegan Quarries Ltd.
- An opinion is a judgement, viewpoint or statement that is not conclusive, rather than facts which are true statements.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

They note the Applicant's grounds of appeal. The application was assessed having regard to Section 10.16.2 Regional and County Roads as per Meath CDP 2013-2019. They refer to policies RD POL 38, 39 and 40 relative to restriction of access onto non-national roads of regional importance.

They note that Section 10.16.3 allows some exceptions, in certain specified circumstances. They note that the applicant is not the landowner, nor the son of the landowner. Strategic Route Corridors are only considered for immediate family members i.e the landowner or son/daughter of the landowner. The applicant does not comply with this policy.

The applicant has submitted a list of planning applications granted along a Strategic Route Corridor, all applicants are a son or daughter of the landowner and the family home is located adjacent to the proposed sites.

The applicant proposes to remove substantial hedging and mature trees in order to provide sightlines. This is considered unacceptable.

The Planning Authority is satisfied that all matters outlined in the submission were considered in the course of its assessment of the planning application as detailed in the Planning Officer Report. They request the Board to uphold the decision of the Council and to refuse permission.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Rural Settlement Strategy – Local Needs

- 7.1.1. The site is located in a Area 2 – Strong Rural Area as identified in the Meath CDP, Map10.1 relates. It is noted that the site is in an area under pressure for one-off housing and there are a number of one-off houses along the road frontage and is close to the western development boundary of the village of Longwood. Rural Development Policies RD POL 4 and RD POL 5 seek to direct urban generated development in such locations to towns and villages in the area of the development plan. Section 10.4 has regard to the criteria relative to *Persons who are an Intrinsic Part of the Rural Community* and has been noted in the Policy Section above.
- 7.1.2. Regard is also had to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 where the strategy indicates that there should be a presumption against urban-generated one-off housing in rural areas adjacent to towns. It is put forward that if the applicant has a proven local need and there should not be a blanket ban on genuine applicants in the area. Details of the Applicant's local need have been submitted.
- 7.1.3. A Statement of Compliance has been submitted with the Grounds of Appeal to demonstrate that the proposed development complies with the Terms and Objective of the Meath CDP 2013-2019. This notes that the applicant has resided in the area of Longwood, from birth, initially at the family Ardenew home for 31 years before residing with his uncle in the original Dixon family home, some five years ago. The location of the family home is shown in Appendix 7. Land Registry Folio details are in Appendix 1 attached. It is provided that the dwelling adjoining the application site for the proposed house, is the former home of the Dixon family including the applicant's mother. Details are given of Anthony Cunningham's education provided locally and

of his involvement in community activities. It is noted that the applicant trained as a carpenter joiner and is employed as a tradesperson. A letter is included from his employer in Appendix 11, noting the business provides services in the Leinster Region. It is provided that the documentation submitted demonstrates that the applicant is intrinsically part of the rural community, does not currently own a home, possesses a trade occupation that is predominantly rural and thereby satisfies all of Section 10.4 of the CDP 2013-2019.

- 7.1.4. It is submitted that the applicant wishes to reside on land adjacent to his uncle's house which is shown within the red line boundary of the subject site. Section 10.4 refers to close family ties within the rural communities such as being a mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law as being close family members. As per the letter in Appendix 11 his employment is regionally based in the Leinster area, with the base at Scurroughstown Business Park, Trim, Co. Meath. I would not consider that it has been demonstrated that the applicant has a local need or a site-specific need has been established to reside on this site in the unserviced rural area, or that they could not reside in one of the local towns or villages.
- 7.1.5. Regard is also had to National Policy Objective 19 of Project Ireland 2040. This provides: *In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in the rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.*
- 7.1.6. In this case I would consider that the applicants have not demonstrated that they have a particular need to reside on this site in the rural area. Their employment does not appear to be rurally based and that it has not been demonstrated that the applicants comply with the criteria relative to National Policy Objective 19, or to the local needs criteria as specified in Section 10.4 and Policies RD POL 4 and 5 of the Meath CDP 2013-2019.

7.2. Consistency with Rural Design Guide

- 7.2.1. The Rural Design Guide sets out guidelines on rural housing in County Meath, for example, from orientation and site layout to building design. The Guide recommends positioning a dwelling on a site having regard to existing shelter, topography and vegetation and design which draws from traditional forms of development and good design practice.
- 7.2.2. The Site Layout Plan shows that it is proposed to provide a single storey house, located centrally on site. The Floor Plans show that the floor area of this 3 bedroomed house is c.164sq.m. The ridge height is c.6.7m. External finishes are to include selected tiles/slates and smooth render finish, with a selected stone finish to the front porch area.
- 7.2.3. It is proposed to site a single storey garage further set back to the rear. This is shown c.60sq.m in floor area and with a pitched roof c. 5.5m. It is to be constructed in materials similar to the proposed dwelling house.
- 7.2.4. It is noted that the proposed dwelling is shown set back further than the existing cottage to the east. However, I would not object to this set back as that cottage is sited very close to the road. I would consider that the proposed design would comply with the Rural Design Guide in Appendix 15 of the Meath CDP 2013-2019.

7.3. Access issues

- 7.3.1. As shown on the Site Layout Plan this proposal is for a shared entrance with the adjoining property (owned by the applicant's uncle) on the eastern side of the site. The existing entrance to his house would then be closed off. It is noted that this would mean that the existing and proposed houses would use the same vehicular entrance with access from the R160. While this would mean that there would not be an additional entrance created, it would result in an intensification of use of the proposed revised shared entrance.
- 7.3.2. Regard is had to Council's second reason for refusal relative to access to the R160 Strategic Regional Corridor. Section 10.16.2 of the Meath CDP 2013-2019 relative to Regional and County Roads, and to Policies RD POL 38 to 40, which seeks to ensure that development will avoid endangering public safety by way of traffic

hazard. Also, to restrict new accesses for one-off dwellings where the 80km per hour speed limit currently applies, to avoid premature obsolescence of identified regional and important county link roads (Map 10.6 refers) through the creation of excessive levels of individual entrance and to secure the investment in non-national roads. Section 10.16.3 provides the Development Assessment Criteria which include exceptions relating to accesses to regional and county roads. This includes those who have a location specific rural housing need on family-owned lands and can demonstrate that they cannot provide access onto any other non-identified regional or county road. Unnecessary new accesses are to be avoided, and new accesses should be provided so as to provide effective visibility for both users of the entrance and users of the public road so that opportunities for conflicting movements are avoided.

- 7.3.3. It is noted that a Traffic Report for the subject site has been submitted with the application. This has regard to the proposed entrance onto the R160, and to Section 10.16.2 of the Meath CDP and to Policies RD POL 38-40 and considers that that the applicant complies with the exceptions criteria of Section 10.16.3 of said Plan. The Grounds of Appeal reiterate that the development is proposed on family-owned land with shared access to the Regional R160. This notes that the Land Registry Folio No. showing the Dixon family landholding road boundary with the R160 as the only available access. However, having regard to the applicant's lack of demonstrated local need to reside of this particular site, as noted above, I would not consider that they would comply with the exceptions to Policies RD POL 38- 40 as noted above.
- 7.3.4. The Council's Transportation Section notes that the R160 is a Strategic Corridor. This section of road is located on a bend and in within the 80km per hour speed limit. They noted the proposed shared access but considered the proposed width to be excessive. The applicant has proposed sightlines to the nearside edge of the road of 120m in a western direction and 160m in an eastern direction. As shown on the Site Layout Plan this will involve the removal of a sizable area of roadside boundary hedge along the frontage and roadside trees to achieve the sightlines. A replacement hedgerow would be provided set back. This would result in the loss of a considerable number of mature roadside trees close to the proposed shared access. A letter has been submitted from the landowner to consent to such works. However, I would consider that the proposal would not comply with policy RD POL 41 of the

Meath CDP 2013-2019, relative to the removal of existing boundary roadside boundaries, which contribute to the rural character of the area.

7.4. Drainage issues

- 7.4.1. The Site Layout Plan shows the proposed location of the new wwts and percolation area and soakaway to the rear of the site. Details on foul and surface water treatment has been submitted by Traynor Environmental Ltd. It is proposed to provide an O'Reilly Oakstown treatment system. The location of the septic tank to the rear of the existing dwelling to the east, is shown outside the redline boundary but within the blue line landholding boundary. It is proposed to connect to a private well, which is shown to the south west of the proposed house, within the red line boundary. The approx. location of the wells and septic tanks for the houses to the east and west outside of the subject site/landholding are also indicated.
- 7.4.2. Regard is had to the Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.< 10). Table 6.2 of this EPA Code of Practice provides the minimum depth requirements for on-site systems discharging to ground i.e.1.2m and at the base of polishing filter 0.9m.i.e minimum depth of unsaturated subsoil to bedrock and the water table. Table 6.3 provides an interpretation of percolation test results and "in cases where $3 < P < 75$ the site may be suitable for a secondary treatment system and polishing filter at ground surface or overground if the soil is classified as Clay..." The 'T' and 'P' test values given are within this range.
- 7.4.3. A Site Characterisation Report and Soil Suitability Assessment Report has been submitted by Traynor Environmental Ltd has been submitted with the application. The Aquifer Category vulnerability is classified as moderate and the groundwater protection response as R1. Annex B of the CoP refers to Groundwater Protection Response – Table B.2 'Response Matrix for on-site Treatment Systems' refers. This provides that a wwts is acceptable subject to normal good practice (i.e system selection, construction, operation and maintenance in accordance with the CoP).
- 7.4.4. It was provided that the depth of the trial hole is 2.1m and groundwater was encountered at 2.1m BWL in the trial hole, the Winter GWL expected to be up to 1.1m. Bedrock was not encountered in the trial hole. Modified test results for percolation found that the average 'T' result was 66.94 (subsoil characteristics).

Modified 'P' test results found that the average result was 49.95 (topsoil characteristics). Therefore, it is considered that the site is suitable for a pwwts. Traynor Environmental Ltd recommends that an O'Reilly Oakstown EN Treatment system of similar EN Certified System and percolation area be constructed in accordance with the EPA guidelines 2009.

7.5. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- 7.5.1. Taking into consideration the nature and scope of the proposed development, the wastewater treatment system proposed to serve the dwelling, the details provided on the site characterisation form and the existing residential and farm development in the intervening distance, I am of the opinion that no appropriate assessment issues arise and that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on any Natura 2000 site.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. I recommend that permission for the proposed development be refused for the reasons and considerations below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The subject site is located in proximity to the town of Longwood within a 'Strong Rural Area', which is an area under pressure for rural housing, where it is national policy, as set out in National Policy Objective 19 of the 2018 National Planning Framework and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in April 2005, 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 documentation submitted with the application and appeal, the Board is not satisfied that the applicants have sufficiently demonstrated a rural housing need to live in this rural area. It is, therefore, considered that the applicants do

not come within the scope of the housing need criteria, as set out in the Ministerial Guidelines and in national policy for a house at this location. The proposed development would, if permitted, be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines and to National Policy Objective 19. The proposed development would also be contrary to local planning provisions, in particular Section 10.4, Policies RD POL 4 and RD POL 5 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 to 2019. In the absence of an identified locally-based, site specific economic or social need to live in the area, it is considered that the proposed development would contribute to the development of random rural housing in the area, the proliferation of proprietary waste water treatment systems in the countryside and would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and the efficient provision of public services and infrastructure. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The proposed development while providing a new shared entrance would lead to an intensification of use of this vehicular entrance onto the R160 Regional Road which is identified as a Strategic Corridor in the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019. It would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard because of the additional traffic turning movements the development would generate at a point where sightlines are restricted particularly in a westerly direction. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed removal of a significant portion of a roadside boundary hedgerow and roadside trees to gain access to the site and to achieve the sightlines would have a detrimental effect on the rural character of the area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies RD POL 38, RD POL 39, RD POL 40 and RD POL 41 of the current Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019, and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Angela Brereton
Planning Inspector

12th of May 2021

