



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP-309309-21

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<b>Development</b>	Construction of a dwelling house, effluent treatment system and associate site works.
<b>Location</b>	Drumcroagh, Donegal Town, Donegal PO, Co. Donegal
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Donegal County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	2051699
<b>Applicant</b>	Diane McCadden
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Grant Permission
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	Third Party
<b>Appellants</b>	Patricia & Fintan Boyle and John McCadden
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> April 2021
<b>Inspector</b>	Máire Daly

## 1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site has a stated area of 0.59 ha and is located in the townland of Drumcoagh, on the western side of the L-6765-3 approximately 1.5km east of the N15 National Primary Route in rural Donegal. Donegal Town is located approximately 2.5km to the northwest of the subject site.
- 1.2. The site slopes downward from the public road, with the site levels at the bottom/ western part of the field c.5 metres below that of the public road. The site forms part of a larger agricultural field which has vast rush outcrops in parts. The northern boundary of the site has a deep drainage channel running along it with an established hedgerow and treeline running above, with the eastern boundary or front of the site with interspersed deciduous trees along same. A vacant old farmstead is located to the immediate south of the site, which is identified as the family home on the submitted aerial photograph. This dwelling is currently up for sale evidenced by the for-sale sign on the dwelling's front boundary. Another two, two-storey dwelling houses are located on more elevated sites to the proposed site's immediate east and northeast, on the opposite side of the local road.
- 1.3. The immediate area comprises rolling agricultural fields bordered by hedgerows and trees, combined with rural housing and agricultural buildings mainly fronting onto local roads.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development would comprise the following:
  - construction of a four-bedroom detached single-storey dwelling house with a stated gross floor area (GFA) of 184sq.m and ridge height of 7.715 metres;
  - Installation of a packaged wastewater treatment system and polishing filter;
  - Vehicular access onto a local road;
  - Connection to public mains water supply;
  - All associated groundworks and landscaping.
- 2.2. In addition to the standard planning application documentation and drawings, the application was accompanied by a traffic survey, a supplementary housing

application form, a site suitability assessment report addressing on-site disposal of effluent and a letter of support from an elected member of Donegal County Council (Cllr. Noel Jordan) referring to the applicant's rural housing need.

### **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 15 conditions, including the following:

Condition No.2 – occupancy clause;

Condition No.3 – provision of visibility splays of 70m at the entrance.

#### **3.2. Planning Authority Reports**

##### **3.2.1. Planning Reports**

The report of the Planning Officer (December 2020) noted the following:

- The applicant has submitted a letter of bona fides that demonstrates compliance with rural housing policy RH-P-3. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable.
- The third-party comments are noted, however it is considered that the development as proposed can be successfully integrated into the landscape at this lower site level below the local road. The proposed design can be accommodated on this site.
- The required 70m sightlines can be achieved without impinging on 3<sup>rd</sup> party lands.
- The planning authority concurs with the site assessment report submitted which concludes that the existing ground conditions can successfully treat effluent within the site area and that a wastewater treatment system and soil polishing filter is to be installed.
- No Appropriate Assessment or Environmental Impact Assessment issues arise.

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- None received.

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- None received.

### 3.4. Third Party Observations

- 3.4.1. Two third party observations were received from the adjoining residents to the east of the appeal site Patricia & Fintan Boyle and John McCadden, with the main issues raised covered also in the grounds of appeal below. However, an additional issue in relation to the concentration of septic tanks on the area was raised under the third party observation.

## 4.0 Planning History

- 4.1. There is no planning history on the subject site.

- 4.2. The following planning histories on nearby sites were noted:

- P.A. Ref. 2050201 – Permission **granted** in July 2020 to Elaine McCadden for construction of a storey and half type dwelling house and installation of a wastewater treatment system and all associate site works. Concerns were raised within the planner's report of same application regarding ribbon development and the cumulative impact of individual wastewater treatment systems. In addition, the planner noted that given the impact from ribbon development no further development whether family or otherwise could receive a positive assessment in this locality.
- P.A. Ref. 2050594 – Outline Permission **refused** in July 2020 to Eilidh McCadden for the construction of a dwelling house and installation of a wastewater treatment system and all associate site works. The following refusal reason was given '*Having regard to the extent of all excavations works required in order to obtain a level platform and to the steeply sloping nature of the subject site on a crest of a hill it is considered that the proposed dwelling complete with all necessary site development / access road works would*

*result in the scarring of the local landscape, results in a visually strident and obtrusive physical development imposed upon the landscape, would be injurious to the visual amenity and character of the host rural environment and would set an undesirable precedent for similar developments which would serve to erode the amenities of this scenic rural area. Accordingly, to permit the proposed development would materially contravene the aforementioned policy provisions of the County Development Plan 2018-2024 and would thereby be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area’.*

- P.A. Ref. 1951906 – Outline Permission **granted** in March 2020 to Caitlin McCadden for the construction of a dwelling house and installation of a wastewater treatment system and all associate site works

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. National Guidance

#### National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040

- 5.1.1. In planning for the development of the countryside, the NPF acknowledges that there is a need to differentiate between demand for housing in areas under urban influence and elsewhere, as per the following objective:
- 5.1.2. National Objective 19: Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:
- 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 a 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;
  - In rural areas elsewhere, 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.

### Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities

- 5.1.3. 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 Guidelines also outline how rural-generated housing need to reside in these areas should be defined in the Development Plan and examples of categories of persons that may be used to define same.
- 5.1.4. The appeal site is located in a 'stronger rural area', as set out under Section 5.2 below. Appendix 3 to the Guidelines outlines that the key Development Plan objective in relation to stronger rural areas should be 'to consolidate and sustain the stability of the population and in particular to strike the appropriate balance between development activity in smaller towns and villages and wider rural areas'.

### EPA Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009)

- 5.1.5. This code of practice provides guidance on the design, operation and maintenance of on-site wastewater treatment systems for single houses (PE≤10).

## 5.2. Development Plan

- 5.2.1. The policies and objectives of the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024 are relevant. The following Plan objectives are particularly relevant:

- **Objective RH-O-3:** To ensure that new residential development in rural areas provides for genuine rural need;
- **Objective RH-O-5:** To promote rural housing that is located, designed and constructed in a manner that is sustainable and does not detract from the character or quality of the receiving landscape having particular regard to the Landscape Classifications illustrated on Map 7.1.1...

- 5.2.2. Map 6.2.1 of the Plan identifies the appeal site as being within a 'stronger rural area'. Within such areas the Plan states that one-off rural-generated housing will be facilitated subject to compliance with all relevant policies and provisions of the Plan. **Policy RH-P-3** of the Plan specifically outlines that applications for rural housing in

stronger rural areas need to comply with **Policies RH-P-1 and RH-P-2** of the Plan and that the applicant must demonstrate that they fit into at least one of the following categories:

- ‘persons whose primary employment is in a rural-based activity with a demonstrated genuine need to live in the locality of that employment base, for example, those working in agriculture, forestry, horticulture etc.;
- persons with a vital link to the rural area by reason of having lived in this community for a substantial period of their lives (7 years minimum), or by the existence in the rural area of long established ties (7 years minimum) with immediate family members, or by reason of providing care to a person who is an existing resident (7 years minimum);
- persons who, for exceptional health circumstances, can demonstrate a genuine need to reside in a particular rural location’.

5.2.3. Limitations to the policy are addressed in the Plan, including provisions for exceptional circumstances and restrictions on holiday-home development. Policies RH-P-1 and RH-P-2 provide guidance for rural housing with particular attention to design, integration of proposals into the landscape and the environment, development parameters, suburbanisation and the erosion of the rural character of an area.

5.2.4. **Part B: Appendix 4 Building a House in Rural Donegal – A Location Siting and Design Guide**

The guide advocates an integrated approach to the design of a dwelling in the countryside considering the three key elements of ‘Location, Siting and Design’.

In summary a house in the countryside should;

- Integrate satisfactorily within the landscape.
- Reflect its location and contribute satisfactorily to the character of the area, expressing local influences and materials appropriate to the rural area.
- Be well designed informed primarily by site specifics.

5.2.5. The following Roads Policies contained under **Section 5.1.3** are also relevant:

- **Policy T-P-15:** It is a policy of the Council to require that all development proposals comply with the Development and Technical Standards set out in Appendix 3 to promote road safety.

## **Part B: Appendix 3 Development Standards and Technical Standards**

- 5.2.6. **Section 2.3** This section states that a roadside boundary in rural areas shall be setback to the minimum distance specified in Table 01 Appendix 3 below to facilitate the entrance – in the case of the current application the setback required from centre line of road is 5m.
- 5.2.7. **Section 2.10 Vision Lines** - Vision Lines at junctions with the Non-National Public Road in rural areas outside a 60kph speed limit zone shall be in accordance with Table 03 Appendix 3 and Figure 02 Appendix 3. Deviation from the requirements in Table 03 Appendix 3/Table 04 Appendix 3 may be considered upon certification by the Applicant's Designer to be designed and constructed in accordance with the NRA DMRB/DMURS as appropriate.
- 5.2.8. **Table 3 Appendix 3:** Vision Lines at accesses to Non-National Rural Roads, outside 60kph speed limit zone states that the x-distance in the case of the current application should be 2.4m.
- 5.2.9. The following Landscape Policies as contained under **Section 7.1.3** are also relevant:
- **Policy NH-P-7** - Within areas of 'High Scenic Amenity' (HSC) and 'Moderate Scenic Amenity' (MSC) as identified on Map 7.1.1: 'Scenic Amenity', and subject to the other objectives and policies of this Plan, it is the policy of the Council to facilitate development of a nature, location and scale that allows the development to integrate within and reflect the character and amenity designation of the landscape.
- 5.2.10. The subject site is located in an 'Area of High Scenic Amenity (HSA)' as defined under Map 7.1.1 Scenic Amenity under the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024– the development plan states that these areas have the capacity to absorb sensitively located development of scale, design and use that will enable assimilation into the receiving landscape and which does not detract from the quality



of the landscape, subject to compliance with all other objectives and policies of the plan.

### **5.3. Natural Heritage Designations**

5.3.1. The subject site is located approx. 1km south of the: Lough Eske and Ardnamona Wood Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Site Code: 000163).

### **5.4. EIA Screening**

5.4.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the location 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. A third-party appeal against the decision of the Planning Authority was submitted jointly from Patricia & Fintan Boyle and John McCadden and the issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- No evidence that previous concerns raised at planning application stage have been taken into account in consideration of this application.
- Concerns expressed regarding the applicant's compliance with Rural Housing Policy RHP3. The applicant's links are tenuous at best. The applicant is one of three sisters, one of whom has already received planning in 2020 for a nearby site. All three sisters were left land in a will in 2018, prior to this they had little/no interest in visiting Donegal.
- To date the farmhouse on the same lands has been left untouched and unmaintained and is falling into disrepair which is having a negative impact on the area. The appellants query why this farmhouse was not renovated to

provide accommodation thereby reducing the need for a new dwelling to be constructed in the area.

- It is the appellants strong belief that the farmhouse and remainder of the farmland will be sold off.
- It is felt that this is a financial exercise to maximise inheritance rather than a desire to live in the area. All three sisters' lives are very much based in Scotland/England.
- The appellants feel that misrepresentations of fact were made to Councillor Jordan prior to him signing off on his support of the application.
- From discussions with the planning authority the appellants note that the approval was heavily swayed by the councillor's support for said application. Greater investigation into these matters should have occurred as part of the assessment process.
- Concerns raised in relation to the urbanisation of the rural area. The development would therefore be in direct conflict with Policy RHP2 of the Donegal County Development Plan.
- The small townland of Drumcroagh has 3 existing houses and 2 permissions already granted for new homes. An additional dwelling house in the area is not considered acceptable.
- The appellants have raised concern in relation to the access entrance to the proposed new dwelling house, which is directly across from the driveway of their existing house.

## **6.2. Applicant Response**

- None received.

## **6.3. Planning Authority Response**

- 6.3.1. The Planning Authority response to the grounds of appeal can be summarised as follows:

- The applicant has complied with Policy RH-P-3 of the County Development Plan 2018-2024 and has submitted a letter of bona fides from a local elected representative. The planning authority accept this letter as evidence of the applicant's ties to the area and the rural housing need of the applicant.
- The siting and design of the dwelling are considered to be acceptable and the development will not unduly impact on existing residential and visual amenities.
- In addition, vision lines in accordance with the standards outlined in the development plan can be achieved at the proposed entrance.
- The planning authority is satisfied that all correct procedures were followed with regard to the assessment and determination of the application.

#### 6.4. **Observations**

- None received.

### 7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, following an inspection of the site, and having regard to the relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are as follows:

- Rural Housing Policy
- Design
- Wastewater Treatment
- Access and Traffic Safety
- Appropriate Assessment

#### 7.2. **Rural Housing Policy**

7.2.1. Concerns were raised in the 3<sup>rd</sup> party appeal regarding the legitimacy of the applicant's rural housing need. The appeal states that the applicant received inheritance which included the subject site and other lands including the farmhouse

to the site's south. Map 6.2.1 of the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024 identifies the appeal site as being within a 'stronger rural area'. Within such areas the Plan states that one-off rural-generated housing will be facilitated subject to compliance with all relevant policies and provisions of the Plan. Policy RH-P-3 of the Plan specifically outlines that applications for rural housing in 'stronger rural areas' need to comply with Plan Policies RH-P-1 and RH-P-2 and that the applicant must demonstrate that they comply with one or more of the following: 1. the applicant's primary employment is in a rural-based activity or 2. the applicant has a vital link to the rural area or 3. that there are exceptional health circumstances.

7.2.2. In the case of the current appeal, the applicant submitted a letter of support from a member of Donegal County Council, Cllr. Noel Jordan. The planning authority have stated in their response to the appeal, that this represents a letter of bona fides from a local elected representative and that they accepted same letter as evidence of the applicant's ties with the area and that same satisfied the rural housing need of the applicant. The Supplementary Rural Housing Application Form submitted with the application indicates that the applicant wishes to use the proposed dwelling as her primary, principal and permanent residence and that they satisfy the following category of housing need: "*A person with a vital link to the rural area by reason of the existence of immediate family members in the community for a minimum of 7 years*". Policy RH-P-3 clearly states that applicants will have to demonstrate that they are in compliance with one of the requirements listed. Having examined the documentation submitted with the appeal I can find no other evidence in support of the applicant's rural housing need.

7.2.3. NPO19 of the NPF states that in rural areas such as that where the current site is located, that the provision of single housing in the countryside should be facilitated 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. The current site is located approximately 2.5km south east of Donegal Town and the applicant has not presented any detailed justification for her need to live within this rural area. In my opinion the development would, without this justification, result in the encroachment of random rural development in the area and would militate against the preservation of the rural environment.

7.2.4. In conclusion, the proposed development would not comply with Policy RH-P-3 of the Development Plan, as the applicant has not demonstrated that they have a housing need to reside in this 'stronger rural area'. Permission for the proposed development should be refused for this reason.

### 7.3. Design

7.3.1. The proposed dwelling house is to have an overall floor area of 184sq.m with a ridge height of 7.715m. The house would be sited approximately 10m from the public road to the front of the site. The design is to comprise of a double height front projection, with skylights along the roof plane and above the front door and wallplate dormers to the rear. A part natural stone finish is proposed on the ground floor of the front elevation with the remainder of the dwelling to be completed in a smooth rendered finish. The proposed dwelling would not be highly visible from the local road (L-6765-2) which runs along the east of the site given that the position of the proposed dwelling on site would be located approx. 3 metres below the level of the public road at a FFL of 45.50. In addition, I noted on site visit that the site is also not highly visible from the busier local road to the west (L-6765-1) due to its lower elevation on the landscape and existing landscape screening within the area which includes established coppices of trees and hedgerows.

7.3.2. Views from the wider area would largely be restricted by virtue of the undulating topography of the area and the site is not visible from any protected views, prospects or features of interest identified in the Development Plan. The site is located within an 'Area of High Scenic Amenity (HSA)' as defined under Map 7.1.1 Scenic Amenity under the Development Plan. The Development Plan states that these areas have the capacity to absorb sensitively located development of scale, design and use that will enable assimilation into the receiving landscape and which do not detract from the quality of the landscape. Policies RH-P-2 and RH-P-9 are clear on the importance of siting and design in considering new rural dwellings and the Development Plan states that new rural dwellings should be designed in accordance with the principles set out in Appendix 4 of the County Development Plan, entitled 'Building a House in Rural Donegal – A Location, Siting and Design Guide'. Where visible from the local road network and the immediate lands, the house would be viewed from the west against a backdrop of rising lands surrounding the site, hedgerows and trees, agricultural buildings and neighbouring rural houses. When

viewed from the east, the site as discussed falls away from the public road to the west and would be screened by existing and additional proposed vegetation to the site boundaries. Furthermore, I consider the proposed design and site layout arrangements would be in accordance with the provisions set out within Appendix 4 to the Development Plan, relating to the location, siting and design guidance for 'Building a House in Rural Donegal'.

- 7.3.3. In conclusion, the design, form and scale of the proposed house would be capable of being absorbed within this 'Area of High Scenic Amenity'. Consequently, I am satisfied that the proposed development should not be refused for reasons relating to siting and design, and the resultant impact on the visual amenities of the area.

#### 7.4. **Wastewater Treatment**

- 7.4.1. The relevant standard for domestic wastewater treatment is *the EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009)*. On site visit I noted wet conditions and the prevalence of rushes on the lower (western) area of the subject site in the area where the proposed percolation area is to be located. The applicant's Site Suitability Assessment Report records the underlying aquifer as poor, with the groundwater having extreme vulnerability. The subject site is located within a groundwater protection scheme with a groundwater protection response of R2<sup>1</sup>. The EPA CoP indicates that for sites which fall within the R2<sup>1</sup> response category, an on-site system is acceptable subject to normal good practice.
- 7.4.2. The trial hole results record a depth of 1.4m from ground surface to water table, with soil characterised as gravelly silt/clay to a depth of approx. 1.25m. The site suitability test recorded a T-value of 55.41 by modified method. Subsequently a P Test was carried out which showed a result of 53.47. Table 6.3 of the EPA Code of Practice confirms that the site is not suitable for a septic tank system but may be suitable for a secondary treatment system with a polishing filter at the depth of the T-test hole. The applicant's Site Suitability Assessment recommends the undertaking of upgrading to existing land drainage, geology and topography and to install a package wastewater treatment system with polishing filter system to treat effluent from the proposed dwelling house. The system to be installed is to have a minimum PE capacity for at least 6 persons, with gravity flow to a stilling chamber and in turn

onto a soil polishing filter. Given the topography of the site and the recorded water table at 1.4m below ground level, infiltration pipes on site are to be placed at existing ground level. A minimum of 72m of percolation pipe will be required for the site.

7.4.3. While the applicant proposes to connect to the public water main at a point on the northern boundary of the site, details of water supply for the surrounding properties are unavailable. I note that no indication of domestic water supplies/wells have been presented on the site layout plan, and in particular I note the presence and proximity of the old farmhouse to the south of the site. Given the high water table on site and the fact that visibly the site has poor drainage given the presence of a significant concentration of rushes on site, in tandem with the concentration of other existing and permitted dwellings in the area, I would have concerns with regard to the proliferation of individual wastewater treatment units in the immediate vicinity and the resultant impact that this may have on groundwater quality. In addition, I note that an open land drain is located within 8.1m to the north of the proposed percolation area and therefore the required minimum separation distance stated at 10m as outlined under Table 6.1 of the CoP would not be complied with. The site suitability assessment also recommends that a land drainage upgrade programme and new lands drains should be installed in conjunction with the wastewater system works. It will be necessary to install these up gradient of the proposed dwelling/percolation area to protect same from surface water run off from higher grounds. Again, this presents another concern about the level of engineering works required on site to ensure a satisfactory system can be installed and operate into the future without the risk of overland surface water flow impacting on the percolation area.

7.4.4. The subject site is located in an un-serviced area with a current proliferation of individual wastewater treatment systems. While the site characterisation form submitted indicates the wastewater treatment system proposed can adequately deal with wastewater from the proposal, the presence of an aquifer in the area with an extremely high vulnerability rating and the fact that the water table on site is at 1.4 BGL in my opinion may result in a potential target risk cumulatively with existing septic tanks/wastewater treatment systems in the area. In addition, there is the risk of surface water runoff from areas upslope of the proposed wastewater treatment unit and also the fact that the minimum separation distance to an open drain as outlined in the EPA CoP has not been met. Based on the aforementioned, I am

therefore not satisfied that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to public health and consider that permission for the proposed development should be refused.

## **7.5. Access and Traffic Safety**

- 7.5.1. As part of the planning application a Traffic Survey Report was submitted which assessed the average speed of vehicles using the local road to the front (east) of the appeal site. Speeds measured in the range between 25.7km/hr to 45km/hr were recorded between two fixed points on the road. Table 3 to Appendix 3 of the Development Plan outlines that proposals for single accesses onto local roads, such as that fronting the appeal site where an 80km/hr speed limit applies, require 90m to 120m vision lines in both directions from a point 2.4m setback from the roadside. The Plan also states that deviation from these requirements may be considered upon certification by the applicant's designer. Vision lines from the entrance cannot meet the 90m to 120m required in the Development Plan. The site layout plan drawing (Ref. WD-125-DC-01) submitted with the planning application illustrates that 70m visibility would be achievable in both directions at the entrance to the site off the local road. Having visited the site and noted traffic speeds achievable, the capacity of the road and the results of traffic speed survey undertaken, I am satisfied that the proposed sightlines, though deviating from Development Plan standard requirements, would be appropriate.
- 7.5.2. I also consider that the traffic movements which would be generated on foot of 1 no. additional dwelling at this location would not generate any significant intensification of development that would result in a traffic hazard and that to refuse permission on this basis would be unreasonable.
- 7.5.3. In conclusion, I am satisfied that the sightlines available at the access to the public road are adequate to cater for the traffic that would be generated by the proposed development. It would not, therefore, give rise to traffic hazard and permission should not be refused for this reason.

## **7.6. Appropriate Assessment**

- 7.6.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and separation distance to the nearest European site, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a



significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

## 8.0 Recommendation

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

## 9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the location of the site of the proposed development within a 'stronger rural area' as identified in the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024, it is considered that, the applicant has not adequately demonstrated a genuine local housing need, in compliance with the relevant rural housing policy and criteria set out in the current Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024, in particular Policy RH-P-3, National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework (2018) and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005). It is therefore considered that the applicant does not come within the scope of the housing need criteria as set out in the Guidelines and in national policy for a house at this location. The proposed development would contribute to the encroachment of random rural development in the area 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. It is considered that, taken in conjunction with existing development in the vicinity, the proposed development would result in an excessive concentration of development served by individual wastewater treatment systems and septic tanks. The proposed development, would, therefore, be prejudicial to public health.

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Máire Daly  
Planning Inspector  
31<sup>st</sup> May 2021