



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP310940-21

Development	Construction of a dwellinghouse incorporating basement and ground floor together with proprietary wastewater treatment system.
Location	Tumna, Carrick-on-Shannon, County Roscommon.
Planning Authority	Roscommon County Council.
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	20236.
Applicant	Ciaran King.
Type of Application	Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse.
Type of Appeal	First Party -v- Refusal.
Appellant	Ciaran King.
Observers	None.
Date of Site Inspection	15 th November, 2021.
Inspector	Paul Caprani.

Contents

1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Site Location and Description	3
3.0 Proposed Development	4
4.0 Planning Authority's Decision	4
4.1. Decision	4
4.2. Documentation Submitted with the Planning Application	5
4.3. Planning Authority's Assessment of the Application.....	6
4.4. Further Information Submission	7
4.5. Further Assessment by Planning Authority	7
5.0 Planning History.....	8
6.0 Grounds of Appeal.....	9
7.0 Appeal Responses.....	11
8.0 Development Plan Policy	11
9.0 Planning Assessment	13
10.0 Appropriate Assessment	17
11.0 Conclusions and Recommendation.....	18
12.0 Reasons and Considerations	18

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. ABP310940-21 relates to a first party appeal against the decision of Roscommon County Council to issue notification to refuse planning permission for the construction of a two-storey dwellinghouse and associated works in the townland of Tumna to the north-west of Carrick-on-Shannon in County Roscommon. As the crow flies the subject site is located approximately 2.5 kilometres north-east of the town of Carrick-on-Shannon.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1. The site incorporates an elongated parcel of land which fronts onto a local third-class road which links up with the N4 National Primary Route approximately 1 kilometre to the south. The River Shannon is located approximately 400 metres to the east of the site while Lough Eidin is located approximately 150 metres to the west of the rear boundary of the site. The site and its surroundings are rural in character and the site comprises of the northern portion of a large field which is currently used for livestock grazing. The site is relatively level with a slight upward incline as you move towards the rear of the site. It has a road frontage of approximately 90 metres. The site has an overall area of just over 1 hectare and extends a total depth of approximately 250 metres from the roadway. A hedgerow runs along the northern boundary of the site and along the roadside boundary. The southern and rear boundary of the site are not demarcated on the ground. An ESB powerline traverses the site.
- 2.2. In terms of surrounding development, there is no residential development on lands immediately contiguous to any of the site boundaries. The nearest dwellinghouse to the north is located approximately 60 metres from the northern boundary, while a single dwellinghouse setback a considerable distance from the access road is located approximately 150 metres to the south-west of the subject site. The access road serving the site ends in a cul-de-sac to the north. There is a cluster of farmhouses and farmbuilding near the end of the cul-de-sac approximately 250 metres north-east of the site.

3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1. Planning permission is sought for the construction of a two-storey dwellinghouse on the subject site. The dwellinghouse is to be located approximately 170 metres back (to the north-west of) the public road. The driveway is to run adjacent to the northern boundary of the site before swinging southwards to the entrance gates c.60 metres from the northern boundary of the site. The dwellinghouse is to incorporate a large basement area (216.5 square metres) which is to accommodate a kitchen/living room/dining area, a garage area which faces westwards towards the lake as well as a bedroom, bathroom, gym, theatre room and utility room. The ground floor area is to accommodate a separate living kitchen and dining area at the northern end of the dwelling as well as three bedrooms and a study room in the southern portion of the dwelling. The total area of the ground floor plan is 275 square metres giving an overall area of just over 490 square metres. The single storey element of the dwelling face eastwards towards the access road while the two-storey element (ground floor and basement area) faces westwards towards the lake. The maximum height of the dwellinghouse is 8.29 metres (on the lakeside elevation) however, the eastern single storey elevation rises to a height of 5.29 metres. The dwelling is to incorporate a pitched roof finished with blue/black slates/tiles and a natural stone cladding finish is proposed.
- 3.2. A proprietary wastewater treatment plant is proposed to incorporate a BAF sewage treatment system discharging to a 15 square metre polishing filter which will in turn discharge to a drip irrigation pumping chamber which will pump the effluent to drip irrigation pipes to the rear of the polishing filter.

4.0 Planning Authority's Decision

4.1. Decision

- 4.1.1. Roscommon County Council issued notification to refuse planning permission for two reasons which are set out in full below.

- 1. The Planning Authority is not satisfied that the site is suitable for the safe disposal of effluent having regard to previously observed water in the test holes, the overall characteristic of the land (including extensive growth of*

rushes) and the soils on site which generally demonstrate poor percolation characteristics and also have regard to the consultation response received from the Environment Section of Roscommon County Council. The proposed development would therefore be prejudicial to public health and contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. *The proposed dwellinghouse design, by reason of the inclusion of a basement on land where the natural contour levels cannot facilitate such a feature without excessive excavation and alteration to the natural landform, is unacceptable and fails to comply with Section 9.5 (Rural Siting and Design) of Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 and associated Siting and Integration Principles set out in the accompanying County Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines. Additionally, given the extent and form of excavation and the potential for water ingress, it is considered that the development may have the potential to endanger the health and safety of persons occupying or employed in the structure. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*

4.2. Documentation Submitted with the Planning Application

- 4.2.1. The planning application was accompanied by drawings, public notices, completed planning application form and planning fee etc. Also submitted was a site characterisation and an assessment report for an on-site proprietary wastewater treatment system. It is proposed to provide a BAFPE6 sewage treatment system which holds an EN12566-3 certification. Effluent from the BAF treatment system would be distributed over a sand polishing filter located within a sealed unit. The treatment effluent from the sand filter will then flow by gravity to a sealed pumping chamber from which the effluent will be distributed over a 450 sq.m drip irrigation bed. Details of a previous application on site and the additional information submitted by the engineers in relation to the proposed wastewater treatment system is also attached.

4.3. Planning Authority's Assessment of the Application

- 4.3.1. A report from the Environment Section notes that at the time of site inspection the site was very wet underfoot and extensively covered in rushes which indicates poor percolation conditions. It is noted that there had been little or no rain in the 2 or 3 days preceding the site inspection. It was also noted that a high water table was encountered during the site visit. It is noted that the site characterisation assessment relates to an assessment carried out in 2009. The Environment Department had concerns over the ability of the soils on site to attenuate effluent from any domestic wastewater treatment system.
- 4.3.2. The planner's report notes the concerns of the Environmental Section with regard to the suitability of the site to accommodate an on-site wastewater treatment system. It is noted that the subject site is located in rural area type identified as a 'structurally weak area' within Rural Housing Policy. It was also located in a 'Category C' area, designated as an area in need of regeneration. In such areas, it is the policy of the Council to accommodate substantiated rural generated housing need subject to good practice. Information submitted indicates that the applicant is the legal owner of the subject site. On this basis, the applicant is considered to comply with the rural housing need criteria set out in the development plan. It is noted in terms of road and traffic considerations, that the applicant has demonstrated 90 metre sightlines in each direction.
- 4.3.3. It is also noted that the subject site is located in an area of exceptional character value, and the site is contained within the visual envelope of Viewpoint V8 in the Landscape Character Assessment of the Roscommon County Development Plan. It is considered that the proposed split-level design with a low profile together with the retention of mature vegetation on site will assist in the satisfactory assimilation of the proposed development on the subject site. It is also considered that the proposed development will not give rise to any residential amenity problems.
- 4.3.4. On the basis of the above assessment, Roscommon County Council requested further information in relation to the following:
- Further details of the suitability of the site to attenuate effluent from a domestic wastewater treatment system and that a site characterisation assessment in accordance with EPA requirements is required.

- Concerns are also expressed in relation to the associated extensive 'digging out' of the area to facilitate the basement area and further details are required in relation to protection measures to safeguard the structure from water infiltration. The applicant is also requested to clarify all construction methods used in the construction of the basement and the associated recontouring of the area.

4.4. Further Information Submission

4.4.1. Further information in respect of same was received by Roscommon County Council on 2nd June, 2021.

4.4.2. The site characterisation form submitted with the additional information notes that the subject site is located in an area underlain by a regionally important aquifer with low vulnerability. It is also noted that the site is located within a groundwater protection scheme. It is stated that the depth of the trial hole was 1.2 metres and the depth of the water table was 0.6 metres below ground level. Mottling was also noted within the trial hole. No T test were carried out on site. The result of the P test was 67.7.

4.4.3. In response to the test undertaken it is proposed to install the same proprietary wastewater treatment system together with sand polishing filter and drip irrigation as originally proposed.

4.4.4. With regard to the structural integrity of the basement level, it is stated that the proposed development will be designed and constructed in accordance with BS-81-02:2009 "Code of Practice for Protection of Below Ground Structures Against Water from the Ground". The detailed construction methods are further outlined in the additional information response.

4.5. Further Assessment by Planning Authority

4.5.1. A report from the Environment Section reiterates grave concerns over the ability of the soils on site to adequately treat and attenuate effluent from the proposed development and on this basis recommends planning permission be refused.

4.5.2. A further planner's report notes the recommendation of the Environment Department and also notes the further details in respect of the construction of the basement

which were submitted by way of further information. It is noted that the level of protection afforded to the basement from water ingress will be subject to detailed structural design and proposed construction methods. The original assistant planner's report considered the submitted response in respect of basement construction to be acceptable as per the report dated 24th June, 2021 (also dated 25th June, 2021).

- 4.5.3. A further addendum report was prepared by the Senior Planner (dated 28th June, 2021) which notes the longstanding concerns regarding the unsuitability of the site to accommodate a private wastewater treatment system as evidenced on previous files relating to the site as well as the report from the Environmental Section on the current application. It is considered appropriate to refuse planning permission on the basis of the unsuitability of the site to accommodate an on-site wastewater treatment system.
- 4.5.4. Additionally, having regard to the extent of excavation required to introduce a basement element onto this site and the associated construction works required to prevent water ingress it is considered that the design concept is inappropriate for the site.

5.0 Planning History

- 5.1. Full details of two planning applications relating to the site are contained in pouches to the rear of the file.
- 5.2. Under PD/09/75 planning permission was granted for the construction of a four-bedroom single storey dwellinghouse and garage along with the installation of a sewage treatment plant and percolation area on the subject site. It is noted that, before granting planning permission, Roscommon County Council requested further information in relation to the suitability of the site to accommodate a wastewater treatment system having regard to the high water table. It appears that the applicant prior to submitting additional information, carried out a number of drainage measures on the subject site which lowered the water table to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority to enable it to grant planning permission.
- 5.3. Under PD/17/11 planning permission was granted for the construction of a four bedroom single storey dwellinghouse and garage along with the installation of a

sewage treatment plan and percolation area on the subject site. Planning permission was granted on the 13th April, 2017. This planning permission is due to expire on 12th April, 2022.

6.0 Grounds of Appeal

The decision of Roscommon County Council was the subject of a first party appeal submitted by Collins Boyd Engineers and Architects on behalf of the applicant. The grounds of appeal are outlined below.

- It is argued that the planning history associated with the site has not been fully considered. It is stated that the planning history associated with the site extends to over 10 years where planning permission was originally granted under Reg. Ref. 09/75 for a four-bed single storey dwelling. It is acknowledged that there are documented issues with regard to the suitability of the site to accommodate a wastewater treatment plant. It is stated that works were carried out on the site which were instrumental in lowering the groundwater table. This shows that technical interventions can significantly improve ground conditions on site. This drainage infrastructure still exists and can be used for the same purposes with this application.
- Planning permission was also granted for a similar development under Reg. Ref. 17/11 on the subject site. The current proposal seeks to incorporate the garage permitted under 17/11 into the basement. This will positively impact on the visual amenities of the area. It is noted that under the latter permission, a Council report noted that while the current live permission remains in place the Environment Section have no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions (extract from this report is contained in Attachment 2 of the Grounds of Appeal).
- However, the Council have moved from this position and require a full reinvestigation of the site despite a live permission being in existence. It is contended that the principle of development of a sewage treatment plant has been established on the subject site.
- Notwithstanding the above, the applicant has endeavoured to improve the environmental outcome of the development and provide a bespoke sewage

treatment system professionally designed on foot of a comprehensive site investigation.

- The applicant has not attempted to hide or disguise the high water table issues and the site investigation and solution is predicated on the P tests undertaken on the site.
- In relation to the second reason for refusal, the applicants are surprised that the Planning Authority have come to the conclusion that the proposed basement area may have the potential to endanger health and safety of persons occupying the structure without any supportive engineering evidence. A comprehensive technical information on water proofing system have been provided during the course of the application and these were accepted by the planner. It is understood that a decision maker can disagree with any recommendation received from a planner for stated reasons but are unsure if a decision maker is acting with his or her powers in amending or rejecting a report. The Board are asked to assess the application de novo and not to introduce any non-planning issues into their assessment process.

The Board are asked to take into consideration the following points:

- The design of the dwelling still reads as a single storey dwelling when viewed from public areas.
- The applicant has had full regard to the high landscape designation of the area in the Landscape Character Assessment and it is on this basis that a basement would be constructed, and the garage would be omitted as per the grant of planning permission under Reg. Ref. 17/11.
- In the current option before the Board, the applicant seeks the option of working from home which is a pragmatic solution to the current Covid pandemic.
- The two storey solution results in a more compact development which is appropriate in both rural and urban areas.
- In conclusion, it is stated that the application for a dwelling fully complies with the policies set out in the current County Development Plan. There is an existing permission on site and the proposed development is considered to be

an appropriate design response to current work/life/balance issues and the constraints imposed by the current pandemic.

7.0 Appeal Responses

7.1. It appears from the documentation contained on file that Roscommon County Council have not submitted a response to the grounds of appeal.

7.2. Natural Heritage Designations

7.2.1. The site is not located within or contiguous to a Natura 2000 site. The nearest Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity are the Lough Arrow SPA and SAC both of which are located c.14.5 kilometres from the subject site. All other Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity are in excess of 15 kilometres from the subject site.

7.3. EIAR Screening Assessment

7.3.1. Having regard to the nature of the proposed development comprising of a single dwelling in a rural area a considerable distance from surrounding Natura 2000 sites, it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and the need for an environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded by way of preliminary examination.

8.0 Development Plan Policy

8.1. The site is governed by the policies and provisions contained in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020¹. In terms of the settlement hierarchy, the subject site is located in Tier 4 – ‘serviced and unserviced villages and the countryside’. Section 2.3.8 notes that the projected population increase over the lifetime of the County Development Plan will be in part accommodated by one-off rural housing. Development of this kind will be assessed for consideration on a case-by-case basis as is the current practice within the context of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines. The subject site is located in a structurally weak area in

¹ The County Development Plan is currently being updated and the 2014-2020 Plan is still the operational plan

Category C – an area in need of regeneration. It is noted that the pressure for urban generated housing development is typically lower in these areas and housing vacancies in towns and villages in urban areas is more prevalent. In this context it is considered that individual housing development can be facilitated in principle in these areas. This includes individual rural housing which meets rural generated housing need criteria as well as urban generated housing development on a site-specific basis in this area. It is noted that urban generated housing need will be accommodated in towns and villages and in principle on a site-specific basis in rural areas within Rural Policy Area Category C.

8.2. In terms of scenic amenity, the subject site is located between Landscape Areas 2 and 3 both of which are considered to be landscapes of very high value. In addition, the subject site is also located within the visual envelope of Scenic View No. 8 which comprises of views westwards from Hartly Bridge to the north of Slieve Anierin westwards towards Lough Eidin.

8.3. Section 9.5 of the development plan relates to rural siting and design for all categories of development. It notes the following:

- Development proposals in the countryside must be integrated into their rural setting and must satisfy high standards of location, siting, design issues such as massing, orientation, choice of materials and landscaping.
- In selecting a location for proposed development in rural areas, regard should be had to the topography and vegetation cover so as to integrate the proposal with the existing landscape. The good use of natural features, such as enclosed fields with hedgerows or stone walls or the rolling landscape, can help to integrate a new building into the open countryside.
- Consideration should also be given, especially in vulnerable open areas to the visibility of the proposal, including long-distance views. Proposals must avoid the disruption of existing views from tourist routes or important vantage points on public roads. Development proposals that break the skyline shall not normally be permitted.
- The Council is not prescriptive in terms of site size. Nonetheless the site should be large enough to comfortably accommodate the proposal and to allow for any required set back from the road well as any specific separation distances

imposed by effluent treatment design as specified by EPA design guidelines and the provision of any suitable storage sheds site. Careful use of natural features of the site any backdrop of rising land, trees or hedgerows and interaction with existing buildings can enhance the presentation of a development.

- The design of a proposal should reflect its setting, including the topography, the scale, height and character of existing buildings in the vicinity. Building form and integrity with adjacent developments especially in the case of residential developments in the countryside must be considered. Buildings should be kept simple and uncluttered
- Wherever possible, buildings should be built into sloping land rather on the side of a hill. Particular care needs to be given to ancillary elements, such as car parking, access roads and driveways (which should respect site contours, crossing them gently) and garages and outhouses, (which should be grouped with the house rather than standing alone).

9.0 **Planning Assessment**

9.1. I have read the entire contents of the file, visited the subject site and its surroundings, have had particular regard to the Planning Authority's reason for refusal and the applicant's rebuttal of these reasons. I consider the critical issues in determining the current application and appeal before the Board are as follows:

- Housing Need
- Suitability of the Site for an On-site Wastewater Treatment System
- Visual Impact/Design Issues
- Excavation Issues

9.2. **Housing Need**

9.2.1. Having regard to the fact that there is an extant permission granted to the applicant, (Ciaran King) under Reg. Ref. 17/11 and the policies in the development plan relating to the subject site in the context of rural housing policy, I am satisfied that subject to site specific requirements which would be assessed in more detail below that the principle of housing development on the subject site is acceptable. The site is located in an area designated in a structurally weak area within Rural Housing

Policy Category C – Areas in Need of Regeneration. It appears from the planner’s report that the applicant in this instance is the legal owner of the subject site and the subject site is situated within a structurally weak area in need of regeneration where there is no specific requirement to substantiate housing need as per the current Roscommon County Development Plan. On this basis and on the basis that the principle of housing need has already been established under Reg. Ref. 17/11, I consider that the Board can be satisfied that the applicant has complied with criteria set out in the development plan in respect of housing need.

9.3. Suitability of the Site for an On-site Wastewater Treatment System

- 9.3.1. It is apparent from the information contained on file, that the subject site is innately unsuitable for the accommodation of a wastewater treatment plant. I predicate this view on the basis that the subject site possesses an inherently high water table which is, on the basis of the site characterisation form submitted, and on the basis of my site inspection, either at or just below ground level. This implies that the site is permanently saturated. Furthermore, it was apparent from my site inspection that the surface soil was extremely wet and sodden underfoot which would further support the conclusion that the subject site has extremely poor percolation characteristics. Extensive rush growth throughout the site would also support the conclusion that inadequate percolation characteristics exist on site. The fact that the subject site is in close proximity to a lake and within a groundwater protection scheme would further raise concerns regarding unsuitability of the subject site to accommodate an on-site proprietary wastewater treatment plant.
- 9.3.2. Notwithstanding the above points, the Board should be cognisant of the fact that there is an extant permission on the subject site which includes the provision of an on-site wastewater treatment plant notwithstanding the inherent unsuitability of the site to accommodate this wastewater treatment plant. This is a material consideration in my view as the extant grant of planning permission incorporates a “puraflo” proprietary wastewater treatment system which will flow by gravity to a raised polishing filter incorporating a medium loam soil with a P and T value of between 5 and 20. The level or standard of wastewater treatment that can be expected from the puraflor system would be less than that which could be expected

to occur from the higher standard of treatment which can be expected under the proprietary wastewater treatment system under the current application.

- 9.3.3. A much higher treatment of effluent can be expected under the proposed BAF system to treat effluent to secondary standard before transferring the effluent to a mounded tertiary polishing filter. Most importantly for the purposes of a site which possesses a high water table and slow percolation characteristics, the effluent will then be transferred to a 450 metre long drip irrigation bed to ensure that the treated effluent load from the wastewater treatment system will be more evenly distributed over a very substantial area in order to ensure that the hydraulic loading on the receiving soil and subsoil is less than intense than that associated with a more typical puraflo system.
- 9.3.4. In conclusion therefore notwithstanding the fact that I consider that the subject site is inherently unsuitable to accommodate a proprietary wastewater treatment system of any sort, due to the slow percolation characteristics of the soil but more importantly the high water table, I nevertheless consider that the current option before the Board would be more preferable than the option proposed under the extant permission. The method of treatment under the current application is more likely to protect groundwater than the disposal methods proposed under the extant permission.

9.4. **Visual Impact/Design Issues**

- 9.4.1. As noted above, the subject site is located in an area designated as being visually sensitive or visually vulnerable. Views westwards from Hartly Bridge towards Lough Eidin which encompass the subject site are designated as scenic views which should be protected and preserved in the development plan. The applicant argues in the grounds of appeal that the current application before the Board is more preferable in visual terms than the extant permission. This is on the basis that the current application incorporates the garage in the basement. While this point is acknowledged, the Board will note that the garage area associated with the extant permission was relatively modest at 48 square metres whereas the size and scale of the dwellinghouse that has the benefit of planning permission is similar to that under the current application. I do not consider that the omission of the garage under the current application will have any significant or material impact on the visual amenities of the area.

9.5. Excavation Issues

- 9.5.1. The second reason for refusal issued by Roscommon County Council expresses concerns that the proposed incorporation of a basement would impact on the natural contour levels and would result in excessive excavation and the alteration of natural landforms. It is suggested that the proposed development fails to comply with Section 9.5 of the Roscommon County Development Plan and the County Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines.
- 9.5.2. The reason for refusal also makes reference to potential for water ingress which could potentially endanger health and safety of persons occupying or employed in the structure.
- 9.5.3. The grounds of appeal refute this reason for refusal and argue that there are sound engineering method statements and construction techniques which would ensure the structural integrity of the basement area so as to ensure that no water ingress would arise. Details of the construction methods and the materials to be used in order to ensure the structural integrity were submitted by way of additional information.
- 9.5.4. I would concur with the applicant that there are tried and tested methods of excavation and construction to ensure that structural design measures can be put in place including waterproof systems etc. to ensure that the health and safety of future occupants or construction workers would be protected and maintained.
- 9.5.5. I would however have significant concerns in relation to the size and scale of intervention into the natural landscape which would be required in order to facilitate the basement area. The footprint of the building is large with the basement area extending to an area of over 216 square metres (c.20 metres by 11 metres). It is also to be excavated to a depth in excess of 3 metres and the Board should note that this is c.3 metres below the water table. If the Board are minded to grant planning permission for the proposed development, it is recommended that more information is sought as to how such a large excavation below the water table may impact on the groundwater regime in the immediate vicinity and whether or not it could lead to groundwater seepage or groundwater displacement to other areas of the site.
- 9.5.6. Perhaps more importantly however is the fact that the size and scale of the excavation proposed will have a significant impact on the natural landform in the vicinity of the lake. The development plan in Section 9.5 highlights the importance of

the design and setting of a rural dwellinghouse in the landscape. It makes reference to the fact that '*regard should be had to the topography of the existing landscape incorporating the good use of natural features in order to integrate the new building into the open countryside*'. The size and scale of the intervention proposed to incorporate the basement in my view will profoundly impact on the natural landscape setting and in this regard will have a profound impact on the visual amenities of the area particularly any views from the lake. The development plan notes that buildings should be built into the sloping land rather than sited on platforms sitting into the side of the hill. I consider that the proposed development has little regard to the natural topography. To suggest that the size and scale of the basement proposed represents a planning gain in omitting a 48 square metre garage at ground level is in my view disproportionate. The excessive excavation and alteration of the natural landform would in my view have a greater adverse visual impact than that associated with a relatively modest sized garage. Section 9.8.3 of the development plan which specifically relates to construction elements of rural housing states that "*care should be taken to provide a design solution that is site specific and does not attempt to impose an inappropriately designed or scaled building form on its environment*". I do not consider that the proposed development complies with this aspect of the siting and design guidance.

- 9.5.7. Arising from my assessment above therefore I consider that the size and scale of the proposed basement is excessive and adversely impacts on the natural topography of the site and I consider that this aspect of the planning authority's decision to refuse planning permission is appropriate and should be upheld.

10.0 **Appropriate Assessment**

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and nature of the receiving environment together with the proximity 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.

11.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

Arising from my assessment above I consider that the decision of Roscommon County Council should be upheld in this instance and planning permission should be refused for the reasons and considerations set out below.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. It is considered that the proposed house design by reason of the inclusion of an extensive basement area which requires excessive excavation would adversely impact on the natural contour levels of the existing site and result in an unacceptable alteration of the existing natural topography and landform in close proximity to Lough Eidin. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the provisions of Section 9.5 (Rural Siting and Design) of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 and would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area and therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Paul Caprani,
Senior Planning Inspector.

5th January 2022.