



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-310970-21

Development	Amendments to a previously permitted development under RA/191224 to construct one additional two storey dwelling.
Location	Lands along the R149 & At Williamstown Stud, Clonee, Co. Meath.
Planning Authority	Meath County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	21934
Applicant(s)	John Hughes.
Type of Application	Planning Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission.
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	John Hughes.
Observer(s)	No Observers.
Date of Site Inspection	5 th May 2022.

Inspector

Elaine Sullivan

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site has a stated area of 0.055ha and forms part of a larger development site associated with Williamstown Stud. It is currently being developed for housing that was permitted under PA Ref. RA19/1224. The R149 regional road between Clonee and Lucan runs along the northern site boundary and the L2223 local road runs along the eastern boundary. Lands directly to the north and east of the site are rural in nature and comprise open fields. Directly adjoining the site to the west is the gated development of Holsteiner Park, which has been partially developed. Williamstown House adjoins the south-western boundary of the site. Houses located on Blackwood Crescent back onto the site along its south-eastern boundary.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for amendments to development permitted under PA Ref. RA 19/1224 to construct one additional two-storey, five-bedroom, detached house of 226m², on a site of 0.055ha. Parking for two vehicles would be provided within the curtilage of the house, along with all services and connections.
- 2.2. The proposed development would increase the number of houses on the site from 32 to 33.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Planning permission was refused by the Planning Authority for three reasons, which are listed below.

1. It is an objective of the Planning Authority, (RES OBJ 6), as set out in the Dunboyne / Clonee / Pace Local Area Plan 2009-2015, 'to facilitate the completion of 3 phases of the registered 'unfinished estate' residential development at Williamstown Stud as originally permitted under Meath County Council planning register reference number D4/40501. The 99 residential units at Williamstown Stud were included in the 'Committed Unbuilt

Units -Rural Houses in both Table 2.4 and Table 2.5 of the Core Strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 2103 – 2019, as varied. No extension of the duration of any planning permission shall extend beyond the lifetime of the existing County Development Plan, that being 16th December 2018'. The proposed development as presented, conflicts with the above objective and is therefore not considered to be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The application is located in a rural area outside of any designated settlement and in a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 where development which is not rurally-generated should be more properly located in settlement centres. It is the policy of the County Development Plan to restrict housing in this area to those who are intrinsically part of the rural community or who have an occupation predominantly based in the rural community. It is considered, based on the information submitted, that the applicant has not established a site specific rural generated housing need for a dwelling in this location. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3. The development, if permitted would establish an undesirable precedent for further such ad-hoc, piecemeal development on un-zoned lands and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The report of the Planning Officer dated the 7th July 2021 informed the decision of the Planning Authority and includes the following:

- The proposed development is in conflict with objective RES Obj 6 of the Dunboyne/Cloee/Pace Local Area Plan 2009-2015, which seeks *'To facilitate the completion of the 3 no. phases of the registered 'Unfinished Estate' residential development at Williamstown Stud as originally permitted under Meath County Council planning register reference DA/40501. The 99 no.*

residential units at Williamstown Stud were included in the Committed Unbuilt Units – Rural Houses in both Table 2.4 and Table 2.5 of the Core Strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019, as varied. No extension of duration of any planning permission shall extend beyond the lifetime of the existing County Development Plan, that being 16th December 2018’. For this reason, permission should be refused.

- The proposed dwelling design, layout and siting is considered to be acceptable in principle subject to normal planning considerations including traffic safety.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Transportation Department – No objection. Further information is requested with regard to sightlines and to provide an increased width to the access road to the south of the development.
- Water Services – No objection subject to planning conditions.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- Irish Water – No objection.

3.4. Third Party Observations

One third party observation was received from William Doran on behalf of various residents from Holsteiner Park, Clonee, Co. Meath. The following issues were raised:

- The additional house would be constructed on an area of open space.
- The proposed development does not provide a mix of house types and sizes.
- The development would lead to additional pedestrian and bicycle traffic on a substandard road network.

4.0 Planning History

- 4.1. There is an extensive planning history for the site. The following history is not comprehensive as minor permissions have been omitted;

ABP307822-20, (PA Ref. 307882-20) – Planning permission granted by An Bord Pleanála for alterations to a development permitted under RA/191224, to replace 5 no. 4 bedroom houses with 5 no. 5 bedroom houses at the same locations.

RA/191224 – Planning permission granted by the Planning Authority in February 2020 for the construction of 32 no. detached two storey dwellings, (12 no. 4 bedroom & 20 no. 5 bedroom), with all ancillary parking and works and a new vehicular entrance onto the L2223, Clonee to Clonsilla Road with associated footpath and cycle paths & the provision of a 4-arm roundabout at the L2223, (Clonee to Clonsilla Road) and the R149 (Lucan Road).

PL17.24904 – (RA/170511) – Planning permission refused by An Bord Pleanála in March 2018 for the development of 32 no detached 2 storey houses comprising 16 no. 4 bedroom and 16 no. 5 bedroom dwellings together with ancillary parking and new vehicular entrance on to the Clonee to Clonsilla Road with associated works. The reasons for refusal are as follows;

1. Having regard to the fact that the lands that are the subject of the application for development are not zoned for residential development, and that the only basis for permitting residential development on these lands relates to Objective RES OBJ 6 of the Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace Local Area Plan 2009 – 2015, which stated “To facilitate the completion of the three number phases of the registered ‘Unfinished Estate’ residential development at Williamstown Stud as originally permitted under Meath County Council planning register reference DA/40501...”, and having regard to the fact that the proposed development is materially different to the layout authorised by that planning permission, and does not encompass the entire site of that development, it is considered that the proposed development would represent haphazard and uncoordinated residential development which is not justified by any statutory Development Plan zoning or objective and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and development of the area.

2. The proposed development would give rise to additional vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic on a road network which is substandard and deficient in the provision of footpaths, cycle paths, pedestrian crossings and public lighting. The proposed development would be without safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access to community and social facilities in the nearby town centre of Clonee. Therefore, in the absence of definitive provision for the rectification of these deficiencies, the proposed development would be premature pending the determination by the planning authority of a road layout for the area and would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard. The proposed development would, therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

PA Ref. RA160186 – Extension of duration for Ref. DA/40501 was granted by the Planning Authority until the 17th December 2018.

PA Ref. DA/120904 – Extension of Duration granted by the Planning Authority for Ref. DA/70294 to extend the life of the permission to the 25/09/2015.

PA Ref. DA/40501 – Planning permission granted by the Planning Authority in 2005 for a development of 99 no. 4 and 5 bed houses, comprising 3 phases and with 3 vehicular access points off the Clonsilla, Dunboyne and Lucan roads respectively.

On the adjoining site at Holsteiner Park:

ABP-306533-20, (PA Ref. RA/190406) – Planning permission refused by An Bord Pleanala in July 2020 for the construction of 6 no. two storey, 5 bedroom dwellings with detached single storey garages.

RA/2008956 – Planning permission refused by the Planning Authority in September 2020 for the construction of 5 No. 2 storey 5 bedroom detached dwellings with garages on previously approved partially serviced sites 28 to 32 incl. Holsteiner Park, Clonee, Co. Meath and for the completion of internal access road and all associated services, landscaping and boundary treatments with vehicular and pedestrian access via the existing Holsteiner Park development and the provision of a temporary construction access to the R149.

PL17.247914, (RA161176) – A First Party Appeal was lodged against Condition No. 15 of RA161176 which related to a financial contribution. The Board directed the Planning Authority to remove the condition as it was not in accordance with the provisions of Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

5.1.1. The site is located within the administrative boundary of Meath County Council. The operative Development Plan for the area is the Meath County Development Plan, (CDP), 2021-2027, which came into effect on the 3rd November 2021.

5.1.2. The application was assessed by Meath County Council in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019, which was the operative Development Plan at the time.

5.1.3. On review of the contents of both plans I note that there are no material changes between the 2013 County Development Plan and the 2021 County Development Plan as they relate to the appeal site and the current proposal. In this regard I consider the proposal in accordance with the guidance and provisions of the operative Development Plan, namely the 2021 – 2027 Meath County Development Plan.

5.1.4. The following sections of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 are relevant to the proposed development;

Zoning - The subject site is zoned objective RA – ‘Rural Area’, which has the objective, *‘To protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and rural-related enterprise, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage’.*

Residential use is listed as a permitted use within this zoning.

Chapter 3 – Settlement & Housing Strategy

SH POL 2 – To promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the creation of compact urban forms through the utilisation of infill and brownfield lands in preference to edge of centre locations.

SH POL 3 – To support the creation of healthy and sustainable communities that encourages and facilitates walking and cycling and general physical activity through the implementation of best practices in urban design that promotes permeability and interconnecting spaces.

SH POL 5 - To secure a mix of housing types and sizes, including single storey properties, particularly in larger developments to meet the needs of different categories of households.

SH POL 8 - To support the creation of attractive residential developments with a range of housing options and appropriate provision of functional public and private open space that is consistent with the standards and principles set out in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the associated Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, DEHLG (2009) and any subsequent Guidelines.

SH POL 9 - To promote higher residential densities in appropriate locations and in particular close to town centres and along public transport corridors, in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG (2009).

SH POL 10 - To require that applications for residential development take an integrated and balanced approach to movement, place making, and streetscape design in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTS and DECLG (2013 and updated in 2019).

SH OBJ 5 - To prepare new local area plans for the following settlements within the lifetime of this Plan: Navan, Dunboyne/Dunboyne North/Clonee, Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East-Donacarne- Mornington, Oldcastle, Athboy, Duleek, and Stamullen.

11.5.1 – Residential Development

11.5.3 – Density - In general the number of units to be provided on a site should be determined with reference to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ (2009) or any update thereof.

DM POL 5 - To promote sustainable development, a range of densities appropriate to the scale of settlement, site location, availability of public transport and community facilities including open space will be encouraged.

DM OBJ 14 – The following densities shall be encouraged when considering planning applications for residential development;

- Smaller Towns and Villages: 25uph - 35 uph
- Outer locations: 15uph – 25uph

11.5.8 – Dwelling Design, Size & Mix

All residential schemes should ensure an appropriate mix of housing typologies and unit sizes to support the provision of a variety of household types and tenures that accord with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009).

DM POL 6 - To require that the unit typologies proposed provide a sufficient unit mix which addresses wider demographic and household formation trends.

DM OBJ 22 – The design of any housing scheme shall have regard to the requirement for connectivity between residential areas, community facilities etc. The design of any walkways, lanes of paths connecting housing estates or within housing estates shall be of sufficient width to allow for the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists. They shall be adequately overlooked and lit and not be excessive in length.

5.2. Dunboyne Clonee Pace Local Area Plan 2009-2015

The subject site is within the boundary of this LAP, which was amended in March 2015 to insert the following:

RES OBJ 6: *To facilitate the completion of 3 phases of the registered ‘unfinished estate’ residential development at Williamstown Stud as originally permitted under Meath County Council planning register reference number D4/40501. The 99 residential units at Williamstown Stud were included in the ‘committed unbuilt units - Rural Houses in table 2.4 and table 2.5 of the core strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 2103 – 2019, as varied. No extension of the duration of any*

planning permission shall extend beyond the lifetime of the existing County Development Plan, that being 16th December 2018’.

It is also of note that, whilst the subject site and the wider development site at the former Williamstown Stud are within the boundaries of the LAP, they are not included within the zoned land for the LAP.

This LAP has now expired, and the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 contains an objective to prepare a new LAP for lands at Dunboyne/Dunboyne North/Clonee, (SH OBJ 5).

5.3. National Policy

Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

The NPF 2040 was adopted on the 29th May 2018 with the overarching policy objective to renew and develop existing settlements rather than the continual sprawl of cities and towns out into the countryside. The NPF sets a target of at least 40% of all new housing to be delivered within the existing built-up areas of cities, towns and villages on infill and/or brownfield sites. It also seeks to tailor the scale and nature of future housing provision to the size and type of settlement.

Chapter 6 – People Homes & Communities

NPO 27 – Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

NPO 33 - Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.

Section 6.6 – It is envisaged that Ireland’s future homes will;

- be located in places that can support sustainable development – places which support growth, innovation and the efficient provision of infrastructure, are accessible to a range of local services, can encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling, and help tackle climate change;

- still be located in our smaller towns, villages and rural areas, including the countryside, but at an appropriate scale that does not detract from the capacity of our larger towns and cities to deliver homes more sustainably.

5.4. **Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Guidelines for Planning Authorities), 2009**

The guidelines set out the key planning principles which should be reflected in development plans and local area plans, and which should guide the preparation and assessment of planning applications for residential development in urban areas.

- **Section 5.11** - Outer Suburban / Greenfield sites – The greatest efficiency on these lands would be achieved by providing net residential densities in the general range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare and such densities, (involving a variety of housing types where possible), should be encouraged generally.

Development at net densities less than 30 dwellings per hectare should generally be discouraged in the interests of land efficiency.

5.5. **Natural Heritage Designations**

5.5.1. No designations apply to the subject site.

5.6. **EIA Screening**

5.6.1. The development is not within the thresholds for EIA.

6.0 **The Appeal**

6.1. **Grounds of Appeal**

6.1.1. Grounds of Appeal

The grounds of appeal address the reasons for refusal and include the following:

- Refusal reason No. 1 states that the proposed development conflicts with RES Obj 6 of the Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace LAP 2009-2015.

- This policy has been superseded by, and is inconsistent with, national and regional policy. Notwithstanding this, this proposed development is not in conflict with the objective.
- RES Obj 6 provides for a total of 99 houses to be built on the Williamstown Stud lands. Planning permission for 99 houses was permitted under DA/40501 and was to be delivered in 3 phases.
- To date 21 houses have been constructed in Holsteiner Park and 32 in Krebsis Manor. A decision is pending for an additional 6 houses in Holsteiner Park under PA Ref 21/1299. Along with the 32 houses permitted under PA Ref. RA 19/1224, there is still capacity for the proposed unit under the 99-unit allocation.
- Refusal reason No. 2 relates to the rural settlement strategy as the site is located in a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence. In response the applicant states that the subject site is currently located on lands being developed for 32 houses.
- It is c. 900m from Clonee village centre and 600m from Ongar village centre and all their attendant services and facilities. The site is c. 300m from high frequency Dublin Bus routes and 1.3km from Hansfield train station. It forms part of the contiguous urban area of Ongar within the Metropolitan Area and is subject to the provisions of the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.
- Section 2.3.2 of the Meath Development Plan states that 'it is necessary to direct development into the Metropolitan area and to promote consolidation of development'. Clonee is included in the Gateway Core Economic Area. CS OBJ 2 of the Development Plan seeks to encourage the sustainable development of these core economic areas.
- Increasing the number of units in the Williamstown Stud development will help to consolidate development within the Metropolitan Area.
- Refusal reason No. 3 states that, if permitted, the development would establish an undesirable precedent for further ad-hoc, piecemeal development on un-zoned lands. The appeal states that the development is not piecemeal

or ad-hoc as it would be integrated into a plan-led development that is under construction.

- The proposed development will represent a marginal increase in the permitted density from 4.8 units per hectare to 5 units per hectare. This is in accordance with National Policy Objectives as set out in the National Planning Framework.
- The approach to the assessment of the application as a 'one-off' rural house is incorrect and inappropriate within the context of the site which is being developed to provide 32 houses and is contiguous to the urban area of Ongar, which is within the Metropolitan Area.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

A response was received from the PA on the 24th August 2022.

- The PA are satisfied that all issues have been addressed in the report of the PO.
- The development proposed is not considered to be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

6.3. **Observations**

- No observers.

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:

- The Principle of Development
- Consistency with Planning Policy
- Appropriate Assessment

7.2. The Principle of Development

- 7.2.1. The proposed development is located within an area that is zoned RA – ‘Rural Area’ within the Meath County Development Plan. The wider area is also designated as a Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence. Residential use is listed as a permitted use within this zoning subject to the provisions of the Rural Settlement Strategy.
- 7.2.2. Based on the planning history for the site and the surrounding pattern of development, I am satisfied that the principle of residential development on the site has been established and is acceptable. The development proposal will be assessed against national and local planning policies and objectives.

7.3. Consistency with Planning Policy

- 7.3.1. The proposed development forms part of a larger legacy development which has a lengthy planning history. Planning permission was originally granted in 2005 under Ref. DA40501 for development of 99 houses on lands at the former Williamstown Stud, which included the subject site. This development was to be constructed in three phases with three no. vehicular access points from the Clonsilla, Lucan and Dunboyne roads respectively. All applications associated with the original parent permission have now expired. As per the original application, the development site has been divided into three phases.
- 7.3.2. The subject site is located within Phase 1 of the development, which is now being developed under PA Ref. RA/191224. This will allow for the construction of 32 no. detached, two storey houses with associated infrastructure works to provide footpaths and cycle paths along the public roads at the site boundaries and to extend to the residential development of Summerseat to the north.
- 7.3.3. Phase 2 comprises the north-western portion of the original lands, which has partially been developed as Holsteiner Park. This development was permitted under PA Ref. DA/800769 which allowed for the construction of 32 detached houses. This permission was not implemented, and it was extended to 2018 under PA Ref. DA/130515. To date 21 of the 32 houses have been constructed.
- 7.3.4. Phase 3 comprises the southern part of the site, which has been substantially developed as Kribensis Manor and comprises 35 houses.

- 7.3.5. Since the original permission was granted in 2005, there have been two County Development Plans. The unbuilt units were included in Tables 2.4 and 2.5 of the Core Strategy of the Meath CDP 2013-2019, and the Dunboyne, Clonee, Pace Local Area Plan, (LAP), 2005-2015 contained a specific objective to facilitate the completion of the 'unfinished estate'. This LAP has now expired, and the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 contains an objective to prepare a new LAP for lands at Dunboyne/Dunboyne North/Clonee, (SH OBJ 5).
- 7.3.6. Planning policy has evolved since permission was granted for the wider site in 2005 and there is now a strong focus on consolidating development in existing settlements and increasing density. National policy seeks to increase density in appropriate locations, i.e. near to public transport and on infill sites and the NPF sets a target of at least 40% of all new housing to be delivered within the existing built-up areas of cities, towns and villages on infill and/or brownfield sites.
- 7.3.7. Within the Sustainable Residential Density Guidelines, 2009, the wider development site would be categorised as a 'Greenfield Site', where development with a density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare should be discouraged, (Section 5.11). The Meath County Development Plan also has an objective, (DM OBJ 14) to encourage densities of 15-25 units per hectare in 'outer locations', which is appropriate to the site.
- 7.3.8. Development permitted under RA/191224 would yield a density of just 4.8 units per hectare. The proposed development would increase this density to 5 units per hectare. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed additional house would represent an infill development within a permitted development, it would not contribute to increasing the overall density of the development in any meaningful manner. As such it would not be in accordance with national and local policy to deliver high density development within existing settlements.
- 7.3.9. If permission was granted for the house, the overall development would comprise 25 no. 5 bedroom houses and 7 no. 4 bed detached houses. This mix of houses would not be in accordance with national policy as set out in the Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines, 2009 and Development Plan policy as set out in SH POL 5, which seeks to secure a mix of housing types and sizes in larger developments.

- 7.3.10. I am satisfied that the proposed development is not in accordance with national and local planning policy by virtue of its very low density and lack of diversity in housing unit typologies. For these reasons I recommend that permission be refused.
- 7.3.11. The proposed development is for a large detached 5-bedroom house which would be similar in design and size to houses previously permitted in the site. By virtue of its nature and scale, it would afford a satisfactory level of residential amenity for future residents. The house would be constructed on an area previously permitted as open space. However, I consider there to be an adequate amount of open space to serve the development should permission be granted for the proposed house.
- 7.3.12. Reason No. 2 of the PA's decision states that the applicant has not established a site specific rural generated housing need for a dwelling at this location. I note that the parent permission for the development of 32 houses, (PA Ref. RA/191224), does not contain any conditions that require future residents to demonstrate 'local housing need' as per the rural housing strategy of the time which was contained in Chapter 10 of the Meath CDP 2013-2019. Given the context of the proposed development within a permitted housing development which has not been subject to the any restrictions relating to 'local housing need', I do not consider it to be reasonable in this instance to apply the requirements of Section 9.4 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 which relates to the provision of individual dwellings in rural areas.
- 7.3.13. The lack of connections to and from the wider development site has been cited in previous reasons for refusal for the subject site and the adjoining sites. Access and movement around the site will be improved with the delivery of infrastructural development permitted under RA/191224. The works will include:
- The provision of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along the western and northern boundaries of the site along the L2223 and the R149 respectively,
 - A new roundabout at the junction of the L2223 and the R149 to upgrade the capacity of the junction along with pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and crossings and
 - Road upgrade works to include 600m of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along the eastern side of the R149 from the proposed roundabout to connect

with existing infrastructure at the entrance to the Summerseat residential development in Clonee.

- 7.3.14. Pedestrian and cycle connections to Clonee will be improved by the delivery of the infrastructure permitted. The grounds of appeal note the proximity of the site to the development of Ongar, (600m), and Hansfield train station, (c. 13.km). However, these developments are located to the south and south-east of the site where connections are still poor. To the south of the site and along the L2223 footpaths are poor and substandard and to the west of the site, pedestrian and cycle facilities do not exist along the R149 beyond the boundary of the site. Although facilities are in close proximity to the south of the site, the connections remain poor which encourages and/or necessitates car-based travel for short journeys.
- 7.3.15. I note that the application drawings for the wider site show a footpath and cycle path through the development and connecting with the adjoining Holsteiner Park and Kribensis Manor. This would allow for permeability through the sites and between the L2223 and the R149. On the occasion of the site inspection, I observed some landscaping works at the boundary between the subject site and the adjoining development at Holsteiner Park. This would indicate that some public realm works are underway. However, the connections through Holsteiner Park and Kribensis Manor are outside of the blue line on the application drawings and as such, there is no certainty as to how and when the through routes could be delivered.

7.4. Appropriate Assessment

- 7.4.1. A Stage 1 Screening report does not accompany the application. In accordance with obligations under the Habitats Directives and implementing legislation, to take into consideration the possible effects a project may have, either on its own or in combination with other plans and projects, on a Natura 2000 site; there is a requirement on the Board, as the competent authority in this case, to consider the possible nature conservation implications of the proposed development on the Natura 2000 network, before making a decision, by carrying out appropriate assessment. The first stage of assessment is screening.

- 7.4.2. The proposed development is one additional detached house within a development of 32 houses. The development would be connected to the mains water and waste-water infrastructure.
- 7.4.3. The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site and therefore it needs to be determined if the development is likely to have significant effects on a European site(s). The proposed development is examined in relation to any possible interaction with European sites designated Special Conservation Areas (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) to assess whether it may give rise to significant effects on any European Site in view of the conservation objectives of those sites.
- 7.4.4. The closest Natura 2000 site is the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC, (Site code 001398), which is c. 4.3km to the south-west of the site as-the-crow-flies. The Qualifying Interests of this SAC are;
- Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]
 - *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]
 - *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]
- 7.4.5. The Conservation Objectives for the SAC are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.
- 7.4.6. There is no direct hydrological connection between the subject site and the nearest designated site, and they are at some remove from each other overland. All of the relevant information has been reviewed and it is evident that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on any European site, either individually or in combination with any other plan or project.
- 7.4.7. Having reviewed the documents and submissions and having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the location of the site in a developed utility compound with no direct or indirect connection via a pathway to a European site, I am satisfied that no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1. I recommend that planning permission be refused.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The proposed development for one, five-bedroom detached house on lands which are zoned 'RA' would result in an inappropriate form of low-density development on rural lands with poor connections to services and adjoining settlements. As such the proposed development would not be in accordance with national guidance as set out in the National Planning Framework and the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Guidelines for Planning Authorities), 2009, which seek to deliver consolidated development at suitable densities. The proposed development would also not be in accordance with SH POL 2 and SH POL 5 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and would therefore not be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. The proposed development would give rise to additional vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic on a road network which is substandard and deficient in the provision of footpaths, cycle paths, pedestrian crossings and public lighting. The proposed development would be without safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access to community and social facilities in the nearby urban developments of Ongar and Hansfield. Therefore, the proposed development would be premature, pending the determination by the planning authority of a road layout for the area and would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Elaine Sullivan
Planning Inspector

11th May 2022

