



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report

### ABP-311847-21

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<b>Development</b>	Permission to construct an industrial workshop, administration offices, services yard, car park, site road and all ancillary site works and services.
<b>Location</b>	Ballindine Road, Carrowbeg East, Claremorris, Co. Mayo.
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Mayo County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	21/448
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	Parcan Ltd.
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Grant Permission
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	Third Party V. Grant
<b>Appellant</b>	Met Éireann
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	20th October 2022
<b>Inspector</b>	Fergal O'Bric

## 1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site has a stated area of 0.41 hectares and is located on the perimeter of Claremorris, approximately one kilometre south-east of the town centre. The access to the appeal site is from the R320, a regional route linking Claremorris with Ballindine. There are a number of established industrial buildings located further north of the appeal site, more proximate to the town centre, and a retail Park further north again and a Business Park north-east of the appeal site on the opposite side of the regional road. At present the appeal site is in pasture.
- 1.2. The main site entrance is located just inside the 50/80km/h speed control zone. The site levels fall from north-west to south-east on the site, levels being at 66.95 metres Ordnance Datum (mOD) at the main entrance to the appeal site and falling to 65.1 mOD to the south-east (rear) of the appeal site. There is a post and wire fence along the northern and eastern site boundaries and the site is open to the field along the southern and western site boundaries.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The development would comprise the erection of an industrial workshop, administration offices, services yard, car park site road and all ancillary site works and services at Ballindine Road, Claremorris, Co. Mayo.
- 2.2. Further information was submitted by the applicants on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of September 2021 in relation to: Precise use proposed within the workshop facility and the number of staff to be employed; Compliance with car parking standards as set out within the Mayo Development Plan; Boundary treatment details; Confirmation regarding location of the watermain on site and separation distance from the meteorological station south-east of the appeal site.

## 3.0 Planning Authority Decision

### 3.1. Decision

Planning permission was granted subject to 8 conditions. The pertinent conditions are as follows:

Condition number 2: Surface water management.

Condition number 3(a): Sight distance triangles shall be kept free from obstruction.

Condition number 7: Watermain connection.

Condition number 8: Development Contributions.

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

Planning Reports (25<sup>th</sup> day of June 2021 and the 4<sup>th</sup> day of October 2021).

Following the assessment of the further information request, the Planning Authority was satisfied that the industrial development was acceptable and recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions as set out within Section 3.1 above.

### 3.3. **Other Technical Reports**

**Area Engineer:** No objection, subject to conditions.

**Water Services:** No objection, subject to conditions.

**Municipal District Architect:** No objections

### 3.4. **Prescribed Bodies**

Comments were received from the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). The issues raised in the observations can be summarised as follows:

- The HSA does not advise against the granting of planning permission in this instance.
- Further development around COMAH establishments has the potential to adversely impact upon their ability to expand in the future.

### 3.5. **Third Party Observations**

A third-party observation was received from Met Eireann and the second. The issues raised within the Met Eireann observation are similar in nature to those raised within their appeal submission. The issues raised in the observations can be summarised as follows:

- There is a meteorological station located further east of the appeal site which has been in existence since 1943.

- This is one of 22 wind monitoring stations located around the Country and measures parameters such as air temperature, rainfall, wind speed and direction, atmospheric pressure and relative humidity.
- The station is a critical source for high quality long term climate records.
- Recommendations from the World Metrological Organisation (WMO) that for the measurement of wind speed and direction that wind gauges (anemometers) be located in open level terrain. If an obstruction is located more than 30 times its height from the anemometer, wind measurements are considered not to be affected by the obstruction.
- The UK Met Office recommend that the optimal exposure for wind measurements is over level ground with no large obstacles to be located within 300 metres of the anemometer tower.
- It is vital to ensure that the important meteorological station would not be impaired in any way by development.
- This could be achieved by locating the proposed development a minimum distance of 232.5 metres (30 times the height of the proposed workshop building) from the anemometer.
- This separation would be required in order to maintain the integrity of long-term wind climate data at Claremorris Meteorological station.

## 4.0 Planning History

### ***Subject Site***

I am not aware of any planning history pertaining to the appeal site.

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028

The site is located within the settlement boundary of Claremorris. Claremorris is identified as a Tier 11 self-sustaining growth town within the Core and Settlement Strategy set out within Section 2 of the current County Development Plan. The following is set out within Section 2.8 of the Plan in relation to these Tier 11

settlements “These are towns with a moderate level of jobs and services with capacity for continued commensurate growth, in order to become more self-sustaining”.

In terms of land use zonings, these are set out within Volume 3 of the Mayo County Development Plan (MCDP). It is apparent that an Enterprise and Employment land use zoning objective pertains to the appeal site where the objective is “To provide land for light industrial and appropriate commercial development”, The appeal site is located within an established industrial and enterprise area, with a number of enterprise units established and operating immediately west and north-west of the appeal site on both sides of the Ballindine Road.

Section 4 of the Development Plan pertains to Economic Development where the following is set out “Mayo County Council and its Local Enterprise Office work in collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders to actively promote and encourage economic development and enterprise development in the County”.

Section 4.4.2 sets out the following policies and objectives relating to economic development:

EDO 5-To encourage enterprise and employment development to locate in brownfield sites or unoccupied buildings in town centres or where appropriate in existing industrial/retail parks or other brownfield industrial sites in preference to undeveloped zoned or unzoned lands.

EDO 6-To facilitate the economic development of Mayo to create a viable and favourable economic environment for business and enterprise, whilst delivering sustainable jobs, employment opportunities and an enriched standard of living for all.

EDO 9-To encourage and facilitate home-based start up enterprises of appropriate type, size and scale, subject to compliance with the criteria outlined in 5.10 of Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) of the Plan, and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.

EDO 19-To support start-up businesses and small-scale industrial enterprise at appropriate locations throughout the County, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

EDO 21-To encourage and facilitate indigenous industries, at appropriate locations with good communication infrastructure, in recognition of their increasing importance in providing local employment and helping to stimulate economic activity within small communities.

Table 7 of the Development Plan confirms a car parking standard of 1 space per employee where the number of employees is known, or 1 space per 55 m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area of Industry/Manufacturing/Light Industry is required where the number of employees is unknown.

## **5.2. Natural Heritage Designations**

The closest Natura 2000 sites is the Carrowkeel Turlough Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 000475) which at its closest point is located approximately 6 kilometres south-west of the appeal site boundary and the appeal site is located approximately 8.5 kilometres east of the River Moy SAC (site code 002298).

The closest Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is the Carrowkeel Turlough pNHA which at its closest point is located approximately 6 kilometres south-west of the appeal site boundary.

## **5.3. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening**

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development within the confines of an established industrial area which is serviceable with proposed connections to the public foul sewer and watermains and to the nature of the receiving environment 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.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Screening report was not submitted with the application.

Class (10)(a) and (b) of Schedule 5 Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) provides that mandatory EIA is required for the following classes of development:

- Industrial estate development projects, where the area would exceed 15 hectares.
- Construction of a car park providing more than 400 spaces, other than a car park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of a development.

It is proposed to develop a workshop building with ancillary office space as part of a uPVC windows and doors enterprise. The area of the appeal site is approximately 0.41 hectares and is, therefore, well below the threshold of 15 hectares for an industrial estate development project. The number of car parking spaces proposed at 10 is well below the threshold of 400 spaces noted above. The site is located within an industrial part of the town where a number of other established enterprise and bulky retail premises permitted and established. The development of an industrial workshop in this part of the town will not have an adverse impact in environmental terms on surrounding land uses. It is noted that the site is not located within an area of landscape sensitivity or of natural or cultural heritage and the proposed development is not likely to have a significant effect on any European Site (as set out below in Section 7.6 of my report). There is no hydrological connection present such as would give rise to significant impact on nearby water courses (whether linked to any European site/or other). The proposed development would not give rise to waste, pollution or nuisances that differ from that arising from other development in the neighbourhood. It would not give rise to a risk of major accidents or risks to human health. The proposed development would connect to the public watermains of Irish Water and Mayo County Council, upon which its effects would be marginal.

Having regard to: -

- The nature and scale of the proposed development, which is under the mandatory threshold in respect of Class 10 - Infrastructure Projects of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended),
- The location of the site on lands that are identified for industrial and enterprise, development, by virtue of the land use zoning pertaining to the lands, and the

results of the strategic environmental assessment of the Mayo County Development Plan, undertaken in accordance with the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC),

- The location of the site within a permitted and established industrial area, which is served by public water services, and the existing pattern of industrial development in the vicinity,
- The location of the site outside of any sensitive location specified in Article 109 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and the mitigation measures proposed to ensure no connectivity to any sensitive location,
- The guidance set out in the “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development”, issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003), and
- The criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

I have concluded that, by reason of the nature, scale and location of the subject site, the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and that on preliminary examination an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the proposed development is not necessary in this instance.

## **6.0 The Appeal**

### **6.1. Grounds of Appeal**

A third-party appeal has been received from Met Eireann., the grounds of which can be summarised as follows:

#### **Principle of Development:**

- The development would be inconsistent with policies and objectives set out within the Development Plan.
- The proposals would be inconsistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



### **Potential for impact upon Meteorological station:**

- There is a meteorological station located within approximately 135 metres east of the proposed workshop building which has been in existence since 1943.
- This is one of only 22 meteorological monitoring stations located around the Country. This station measures parameters such as air temperature, rainfall, wind speed and direction, atmospheric pressure and relative humidity.
- The station is a critical source for high quality long term climate records.
- Recommendations from the World Metrological Organisation (WMO) for the measurement of wind speed and direction, that wind gauges (anemometers) are recommended to be located in open level terrain. The WNO set out that if an obstruction is located more than 30 times its height from the anemometer, wind measurements are considered not to be affected by the obstruction.
- The UK Met Office recommend that the optimal exposure for wind measurements is over level ground with no large obstacles to be located within 300 metres of the anemometer tower.
- It is vital to ensure that the important meteorological station would not be impaired in any way by development.
- This could be achieved by locating the proposed development a minimum distance of 232.5 metres (30 times the height of the proposed workshop building) from the anemometer.
- This separation would be required in order to maintain the integrity of long-term climate data at Claremorris Meteorological station.

### **6.2. Applicant's response to appeal submission**

A response to the grounds of appeal was received by the board from the applicant's Planning Consultants, MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants on the 1st day of December 2021, which can be summarised as follows:

Principle of Development:

- The development is consistent with the provisions of the National Planning Framework, specifically NSO 1 in relation to compact growth and NSO 5 in relation to a strong economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills.

- Within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region, Claremorris is identified as a small town and “has an important role in supporting the social, economic and cultural life within rural communities”.
- Section 1.4 of the RSES sets out a number of key focus points in terms of developing enterprise in the region as follows:” Increasing the emphasis on developing our Irish owned enterprises”.
- The applicants consider that the proposals are consistent with the economic policies and objectives within the Development Plan and consistent with the Enterprise and Employment land use zoning objective pertaining to the appeal site, which provides for light industrial and appropriate commercial development.
- The objective for Enterprise and Employment lands is “To provide land for light industrial and appropriate commercial development”.
- As the lands are zoned within the Claremorris LAP, the issue of distance from the weather station should have been addressed at the zoning stage.
- The appropriate mechanism by which development should be safeguarded is through the Development Pan process.
- There are no constraints identified within the Claremorris LAP, in respect of the weather station.
- Notwithstanding this, there are no impacts anticipated in respect of the weather station as a result of the proposed workshop development.

#### Design and Layout:

- Other established industrial/commercial buildings are located within the WMO buffer zone.
- It has not been possible to alter the location or height of the building as this would impact upon the viability of the development.

### **Potential for impact upon Meteorological station:**

- The applicants acknowledge that the appeal site is located within the WMO buffer zone as recommended by the World Meteorological Organisation for wind measurement over ground level.
- Met Eireann, in their initial observation to the Planning Authority (PA) recommended that the building be relocated outside of the recommended buffer zone or to engage a wind modelling expert to model the impact of the development on the anemometer.
- The applicants have engaged a wind modelling expert, Integrated Environmental Solutions (IES) to carry out a study of possible impacts of the proposed development on climate measurements at the weather monitoring station.
- Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) simulations were performed to assess the impact of the workshop development.
- Wind direction was taken as North East (NE) as this is the most direct wind direction from the workshop to the weather station.
- Wind speeds were taken at 9 metres per second, based on the 95 percentile wind speed with two scenarios examined, undeveloped site and developed site.
- Horizontal and vertical wind planes of defined parameters were analysed for both scenarios (no development scenario and with development scenario). The IES report concludes that there is discernible difference between the scenarios. The air flow contours are identified as being quite identical with or without the workshop being present.
- The IES report made the following conclusion: “Despite the concerns raised by Met Eireann, it is our opinion that the proposed workshop is unlikely to impact the quality of wind data collected by the weather station. The fitness of the weather station as a reliable measuring station will continue to be. On the basis of the above, it is concluded that the proposed development will have a discernible effect on the wind patterns in the vicinity of the existing weather station and therefore, no impact is anticipated in respect of the ability of the weather station to measure wind speed and other associated data”

### **6.3. Response of Appellant to first party appeal submission**

Met Eireann made a second appeal submission, received by the Board on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of January 2022. The following issues were raised:

- The appeal has been lodged as part of Met Eireann’s responsibility to maintain the integrity and quality of Claremorris Meteorological station, an important part of Ireland’s atmospheric/meteorological observations network.
- Protection of this station is of particular provincial and national importance. Data integrity is of paramount importance to Met Éireann, as holders of the national weather observations.
- The importance of the Claremorris Meteorological station for international climate change assessments cannot be overstated. It is vital that the data quality of observations at the Claremorris station are preserved. Construction nearby should not have the potential of impacting this significant meteorological record.
- Claremorris weather station is one of the few non-coastal stations, and as such observations during severe weather events become extremely important for the decision makers and coordinators of emergency services.
- The National Adaptation Framework recognises the important role played by Met Éireann who “alert local authorities directly when severe weather’s forecast. These warnings are received by a severe weather assessment team within a local authority. The severe weather assessment team take the appropriate action to scale a response and to ensure that resources are in place to support a response”.
- Wind data from Claremorris weather station is routinely used by Coastguard search and rescue helicopters, by Air Corps Air Ambulance helicopters and the Garda Air Support Unit during medical emergency, humanitarian and policing operations in the west.
- The IES report outlines the methodology of the external flow analysis but contains minimal detail on the model used and results. Met Éireann do not consider that the modelling and analysis within the IES report justifies the conclusion that the proposed workshop development is unlikely to impact the quality of the wind data collected at the Claremorris weather station.

- Met Éireann specifically reference the graphical simulation results over a suite of vertical and horizontal planes in the IES report, pages 24-61. Figure 36 shows the horizontal plane simulation at the 13 metre anemometer height and figure 54 shows the vertical plane simulation at the anemometer. These images provide a legend for wind speed only. No scale has been illustrated for vertical or horizontal distance. It is difficult for Met Éireann to assess the modelled impact on wind measurements (both vertical and horizontal) with this insufficient level of detail. If anything, the images within Figures 36 and 54 display that changes are likely to occur to wind measurements. Tabulated data for the images would be required to properly assess the impacts.
- The IES report models and analyses just one wind speed 9 m/s, which is in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile high wind speed for Claremorris weather station. For climate records and monitoring of climate change, with measurements at low, medium, high and extreme winds speeds are important records. Neither does the report model another important parameter, wind direction. Wind direction gives essential data on the various types of weather associated with air masses. The IES report does not address how the proposed workshop development will impact the measurement of wind direction and the full range of wind speeds.
- The computational fluid dynamics (CFD) model used by the IES Consultants is a linear wind model which has known limitations with respect to complex surroundings and the exclusion of non-linear effects.
- Met Éireann does not agree with the conclusion made by IES Consultants that the development is unlikely to impact upon the quality of the wind speeds observed at Claremorris Meteorological station.
- Met Éireann does not agree that the proposals would accord with the principles of sustainable development.

#### 6.4. Planning Authority Response

The Planning Authority made no comments in relation to the planning appeal.

## 7.0 Assessment

7.1. At the time the Planning Authority made its decision on the 6th day of October 2021, the appeal site was included within the settlement boundary of Claremorris as set out with Volume 2 and the Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020. The Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020 has since been superseded by the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, operational since the 10th day of August 2022.

7.2. The main issues are those raised in the grounds of appeal, the additional submission received from the applicants and the Planning Report. I am satisfied that no other substantive issues arise. In relation to the design and layout, access, traffic and services, I note that the Planning Authority raised no particular issues in regard to these matters and therefore, the proposals in relation to these specific matters are considered satisfactory. The issue of appropriate assessment also needs to be addressed. The issues can be dealt with under the following headings:

- Zoning and Principle of the Development
- Impact upon Claremorris meteorological station
- Other Issues
- Appropriate Assessment

### 7.3. Zoning and Principle of Development

7.3.1. The site is located approximately 1 kilometre south-east of Claremorris town centre and within the settlement boundary as set out within Volume 3 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. An Enterprise and Employment land use zoning objective pertains to the appeal site. There are established industrial and commercial units located west and north-west of the appeal site. It is apparent that the appeal site and the lands immediately west and north-west of the appeal site have been developed to provide for the creation and promotion of industry and enterprise and to facilitate opportunities for employment expansion and creation.

7.3.2. Section 4 of the Development Plan pertains to Economic Development. Section 4.4 of the Mayo County Development Plan provides for development of industry and enterprise, where the following is set out “Mayo County Council and its Local

Enterprise Office work in collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders to actively promote and encourage economic development and enterprise development in the County”. There are a number of specific economic Development Objectives that are pertinent to the current proposals including EDO 19 in relation to encouraging and facilitating start-up and small scale enterprises as is proposed in this instance and EDO 21 in relation to encouraging and supporting indigenous industries. I note that both of these objectives include the caveat “at appropriate locations”.

7.3.3. It is stated within the planning documentation submitted that the proposals would specifically provide for the development of a work shop facility for the assembly of uPVC windows and doors and for the manufacture of aluminium windows and doors and ancillary office and showroom space. Five people (three full time and 2 part-time) would be employed within the proposed facility. Having regard to the circumstances pertaining in this instance, and the applicant’s rationale for the development of the workshop facility, I am satisfied that the proposed development would accord with the policy objectives for the development of enterprise and employment as set out within the Development Plan. I am satisfied that the principle of the development is acceptable in this instance, subject to the issues below in relation to impact upon the adjacent Claremorris meteorological station being addressed in a satisfactory manner

7.3.4. The current proposal represents a unique scenario, in that in normal planning circumstances, the development would not likely be the subject of a planning appeal, given its location on appropriately zoned serviced lands within the 60km/h speed control zone and the lack of third party observations/appeals from adjoining land owners or residents. However, in this instance, despite the principle of development being acceptable, there is potentially an issue of national interest at stake here, which must be balanced and assessed against the merits of the workshop development. These issues will be assessed in further detail below.

#### **7.4. Impact upon Claremorris Meteorological station.**

7.4.1. An appeal against the proposed workshop development has been received from Met Éireann where they state that they are of the opinion that the development would adversely impact upon the accuracy of the wind data gathered at the Claremorris

meteorological station, in terms of speeds and direction that is gathered by them within the anemometer, a 13 metre tall structure used to measure wind data at the station which they state is a critical piece of national meteorological infrastructure.

- 7.4.2. The applicants have submitted results of wind monitoring data prepared by IES Environmental Consultants and from their analysis of the impact of the workshop development on the Claremorris weather station, they conclude that “the proposed development will have a discernible effect on the wind patterns in the vicinity of the existing weather station and therefore, no impact is anticipated in respect of the ability of the weather station to measure wind speed and other associated data”.
- 7.4.3. Met Éireann made a second appeal submission to the Board where they comment on the specifics of the IES report and also reiterate the importance of the Claremorris meteorological station in terms of the weather data collected and the importance of the accuracy of the data gathered in informing the emergency services, including the coastguard, air ambulance and the Garda Air Support unit. Met Éireann also set out the importance of the station in terms of gathering information which informs patterns in relation to climate change and therefore, the anemometer provides data that is of critical local, regional and national importance, and any development which could potentially impact upon the accuracy of the wind data recorded at the station should not be permitted.
- 7.4.4. In relation to the modelling and analysis conducted by IES, Met Éireann state that the report “contains minimal detail on the model used and results. Met Éireann do not consider that the modelling and analysis within the report justifies the opinion that the proposed workshop development is unlikely to impact the quality of the wind data collected at the Claremorris weather station”.
- 7.4.5. Met Éireann highlight a number of short comings within the graphical simulation results over a suite of vertical and horizontal planes set out within pages 24-61 of the IES Report. Figure 36 shows the horizontal plane simulation at the 13 metre anemometer height and figure 54 shows the vertical plane simulation at the anemometer. These images provide a legend for one parameter only, that being wind speed. No scale has been illustrated for vertical or horizontal distance. Met Éireann state that it is difficult for them to assess the modelled impact on wind measurements (both vertical and horizontal) without the sufficient level of detail. Met



Éireann set out that the data and analysis provided by IES “display that changes are likely to occur to wind measurements” and that “Tabulated data for the images would be required to properly assess the impacts”

- 7.4.6. The IES report provides data and analysis in relation to a single wind speed, that being 9 metres per second, which is in the 95 percentile of high wind speed. However, no data or analysis has been provided in relation to other wind speeds, including low, medium or extreme wind speeds. Neither does the IES report model wind direction which gives essential data on the various types of weather associated with air masses. The IES report does not address how the proposed workshop development will impact the measurement of wind direction across the full range of wind speeds.
- 7.4.7. Met Éireann set out that the computational fluid dynamics (CFD) model used by the IES Consultants is a linear wind model which has known limitations with respect to complex surroundings and the exclusion of non-linear effects.
- 7.4.8. I acknowledge that the applicants have attempted to address the issue of impact upon the adjacent Claremorris meteorological station. The IES report does provide a certain level of data and analysis in relation to the potential impact of the workshop development upon the weather station. However, it is apparent that certain detail has not been included within the report, specifically in relation to wind direction, which is an important parameter in terms of analysing air mass. A single wind speed has also been used by IES as part of their data and analysis, and although the wind speed analysed is in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile high speed range, low, medium and excessive wind speeds are not examined.
- 7.4.9. The CFD modelling used is a linear model which has limitations and therefore, on balance, I am of the opinion that there are shortcomings in the report submitted, and a more comprehensive report providing data for all of the wind speeds, detailing wind direction and the use of a non-linear model would cumulatively provide a more comprehensive range of data which would assist to determine more accurately any potential impacts upon the accuracy of the data gathered at the Claremorris meteorological station. Unfortunately, without this level of detail and analysis, it would not be possible to state with any degree of certainty that the proposed

workshop development would not adversely impact upon the accuracy of the data gathered at the Claremorris meteorological station.

- 7.4.10. In conclusion, I am not satisfied that the applicants have demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the proposed workshop development would not adversely impact upon the quality of wind data collected at the Claremorris Meteorological station. Given the local, regional and national importance of this piece of meteorological infrastructure and the importance of the infrastructure in terms of informing the emergency services and Met Eireann of extreme weather events and allowing Local Authority emergency response units to prepare for such weather events. The weather stations also provides critical data in terms of assisting in the monitoring of climate change., In conclusion, I am of the opinion that the development, should not be permitted given the possibility that the workshop development would adversely impact upon the integrity of the data gathered at the weather station and its ability to accurately gather meteorological data and specifically wind measurements and therefore, would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to national interest.

## 7.5. **Other Issues**

- 7.5.1. A decision on a planning application is based on an assessment of the development specific to the planning application i.e., in this case whether or not the development of a window and door workshop facility and ancillary office space on site is acceptable and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. This case presents a very unique situation and, I consider that the case itself does not establish a planning precedent. Having regard to the previous sections of this assessment, I consider that the proposed workshop development could potentially adversely impact upon the integrity of meteorological measurements at Claremorris weather station and therefore, I consider that the development proposals would not accord with the proper planning and sustainable development of the appeal site in this instance.

## 7.6. **Appropriate Assessment**

- 7.6.1. The closest Natura 2000 sites is the Carrowkeel Turlough SAC which at its closest point is located approximately 6 kilometres south-west of the appeal site boundary. There is a no hydrological pathway from the European site to the appeal site.

7.6.2. Having regard to the nature and scale of the development and to the nature of the receiving environment, in a fully serviced location with no hydrological pathway to any European site, 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

I recommend that planning permission be refused.

## 9.0 Reason(s)

- 1 It is considered that the proposed workshop development which is located in proximity to Claremorris Meteorological station would adversely impact upon the integrity and viability of the weather station by virtue of impacting/affecting the accuracy and quality of the atmospheric and meteorological observations that are recorded at the station and which represents an integral part of national meteorological infrastructure and, therefore, would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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Fergal Ó Bric

Planning Inspectorate

21st November 2022