



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Addendum Report

ABP-314008-22

Development	House and garage with treatment plant and percolation area.
Location	Lackalea, Co. Galway
Planning Authority	Galway County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	22121
Applicant	Oisín Stratford
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant	Thomas Lyons
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	21 st December 2022
Inspector	Ian Campbell

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This report is an addendum report to the Inspector's report in respect of ABP-314008-22 (dated 22nd March 2023).
- 1.2. On 21st November 2023 the Board decided to defer consideration of this case and to issue a Section 137 notice as follows:
 1. The Board might consider that, the proposed development, when taken in conjunction with the existing pattern of development in the vicinity of the site and recent permissions, might consolidate the build-up of significant ribbon development in this open rural area.
 2. The Board might also consider that, when taken in conjunction with the existing pattern of development in the vicinity and recent permissions, that the proposed development might result in an excessive concentration of development served by septic tanks and/or individual wastewater treatment systems. Furthermore, given the absence of a public water supply and the reliance of the proposal and existing residential development on private bored wells, the Board might consider that the proposed development might lead to increase the risk of water pollution and might be prejudicial to public health.
- 1.3. This report considers the submission made on foot of the request for further information.

2.0 Applicant's Response to the Board's Decision to Request Further Information

- 2.1. The applicant made the following points in their submission to the Board.

Re. Ribbon Development:

- Whilst there are a number of houses in a row on one side of the road this pattern of development is not prevalent on the opposite side of the road.
- The houses along the road are screened by mature trees and as a result only two or three houses are visible from the road.
- The applicant proposes to retain a tree to the front of his site and to plant hedges and trees on the site.

Re. Treatment of Waste Water:

- The applicant resides in the locality and the additional loading on septic tanks/wastewater treatment systems is significantly reduced and may only be marginal as a result.
- Well pressure tests and percolation tests were completed. The Planning Authority indicated no concerns.

3.0 **Assessment**

3.1. Ribbon Development

3.1.1. The applicant contends that housing is prevalent on one side of the road only, that existing housing at this location is screened from view by trees, and that the proposed house will be screened.

3.1.2. I draw the Boards attention to the definition of ribbon development in the Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005), that being, '*5 or more houses on any one side¹ of a given 250 metres of road frontage*'. In this regard the applicant's contention that housing along the road is confined to just one side is immaterial when considering whether or not the proposal results/exacerbates ribbon development. As noted in my previous report, the proposed development would be the ninth dwelling on the western side of the road over a 250-metre distance. Having visited the site I note that houses along the road are particularly prominent given their size and design and whilst screening helps to soften the visual impact of development in rural areas the pattern of development remains. Furthermore, I note that the Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005) recommends against the creation of ribbon development for a variety of reasons, and not solely on the basis of visual impact. Ribbon development is also to be discouraged for reasons of road safety and the future demands for the provision of public infrastructure. In my opinion the applicant's submission does not sufficiently address the issue of ribbon development and on the basis of the forgoing I recommend that permission is refused.

3.2. Treatment of Waste Water

¹ My emphasis.

- 3.2.1. The applicant's position, as set out in his submission, appears to be that as he already resides locally the proposal would not result in a significant additional concentration of septic tanks/waste water treatment systems in the area. Additionally the applicant notes that site testing was considered acceptable in the first instance by the Planning Authority.
- 3.2.2. In my opinion it is not possible to resile from the fact that constructing a house served by a wastewater treatment system would not result in an increase in the concentration of treatment systems in the area. The applicant also appears to contend that as he resides in the area the proposal will result in the translocation of discharge from one location to another. I submit to the Board that the loading of the system proposed caters for multiple occupants and that should permission be granted there is no way of controlling the number of occupants and therefore it is not possible to conclude that the proposal would not give rise to an increase in effluent to the ground at a location where there is currently a proliferation of such systems. As noted in my initial report, there are approximately 13 dwellings on individual treatment systems/septic tanks within a 250 metre distance of the appeal site. Noting the fast draining nature of the soil on the site, as indicated by the subsurface and percolation test results, the proposed development would in my opinion be prejudicial to public health, with further implications for drinking water which is drawn in the locality from boreholes. Having regard to the foregoing, my concerns on this matter remain and I recommend that permission is refused

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1. I refer to the previous Inspector's Report and recommendation dated 22nd March 2023. Having regard to the additional submission received I conclude that the applicant has failed to adequately address the issues as raised by the Board in relation to ribbon development and the treatment of wastewater on the site. I therefore recommend that permission for the proposed development is refused.

5.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The proposed development, when taken in conjunction with existing development in the vicinity of the site, would consolidate and contribute to the build-up of ribbon

development in an open rural area. This would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and lead to demands for the provision of further public services and community facilities. The proposed development would be contrary to the Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005 and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. Taken in conjunction with existing development in the vicinity, the proposed development would result in an excessive concentration of development served by septic tanks and/or individual wastewater treatment systems in the area, and having regard to the subsurface and percolation test results which are indicative of a fast draining soils, the Board is not satisfied that the site is capable of treating foul effluent arising from the dwelling and considers that the method of foul water disposal will render the treatment of the effluent unacceptable and could increase the risk of serious water pollution. Accordingly, the proposed development would be prejudicial to public health and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Ian Campbell
Planning Inspector

14th February 2024