



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report

### ABP-318732-23

<b>Development</b>	Construction of 65 dwellings and all associated site works
<b>Location</b>	Lisnamult, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Roscommon County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	2360141
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	Glenman Corporation Limited
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Refuse
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	First
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	Glenman Corporation Limited
<b>Observer(s)</b>	Caroline & John Nally
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	06/06/24
<b>Inspector</b>	Darragh Ryan

## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The proposed site is located on a greenfield site in the townland of Lisnamult to the south of Roscommon town. The site is approximately 1.6km from the centre of Roscommon town. The area to the north of the site is a residential Housing estate known as Abbeyville. There are some houses within this estate currently under construction.
- 1.2. Access to the site will be via an internal road within the Abbeyville estate which in turn is accessed off the N63. The site will be set back off the N63 and the line of single dwelling houses to the east of the site which front onto the National Road.
- 1.3. The lands at this location would be considered underutilised with scrub and fill associated with the construction Abbeyville present. There is significant levels of overburden and vegetation on the site. To the very west and south of the site is a mature tree and hedge line.
- 1.4. The site area is stated at 2.548ha.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1. To construct 65 dwelling houses
- Internal access roads
  - Connection to existing services
  - Hard and soft landscaping
  - Provision of car parking, and lighting
- 2.2. This application is to complete the housing development granted under planning register reference numbers 00/1947, 05/19, 06/1191, 06/1686 and a change of house design granted under planning register reference numbers 16/170, and 21/3010 at Lisnamult, Roscommon.
- In support of the appeal the applicant has submitted:
- Traffic Transport and Road Safety Audit
  - Design Statement

## 3.0 Planning Authority Decision

### 3.1. Decision

The planning authority issued a decision to refuse for 4 reasons:

1. The proposed development is located for the most part on unzoned lands outside the Roscommon Town Local area Plan boundary would, if permitted undermine the principles of the core strategy set out in Volume 1, Chapter 2 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including in particular policy objectives CS 2.2, CS 2.3 and CS 2.5 which collectively promote sustainable settlement patterns, the direction of growth towards designated settlements and the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands to facilitate population growth and achieve sustainable compact growth. In addition, having regard to the proposed sitting of the majority of the development on unzoned land in Rural Policy Zone A – Area under strong Urban Influence..... the proposal for multi-unit housing fails to comply with Policy Objective PPH 3.13 which seeks to facilitate single houses in rural areas.....The principle of the proposed development is fundamentally unacceptable and accordingly is contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. Having regard to the proposed access arrangements to the subject site being off a heavily trafficked section of the N63 (National Secondary Road), it has not been demonstrated that the additional traffic movements arising from the proposed development would not adversely affect the capacity, safety or operational efficiency of the national road network. It is considered therefore that the proposed development has the potential to endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard and would interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic on this national road. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the applicant has sufficient legal entitlement to access the application site via the existing Abbeyville housing development and to gain access to essential infrastructure such as the public sewer and mains through this housing estate, which

constitutes an unfinished housing development and has not been taken in charge.

4. The proposed development by reason of its design and layout would fail to satisfactorily comply with the design principles set out in Section 12.6 (Residential Urban Development) of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 -2028 and would not provide a sufficiently high-quality residential environment. The proposed development if permitted, would adversely impact the residential amenity of future residents and the residents of existing Abbeyville Housing Development. The proposed development would therefore set an undesirable precedent for similar types of development and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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

3.2.1. There is a single planning report on file which can be summarised as follows:

- A small portion of the site .2ha to the north is zoned “existing residential” within the Roscommon Town LAP 2014-2020- this remains applicable and is a material consideration at this time.
- The remaining majority of the site lies outside of zoned lands, on lands identified as Area under Urban Influence as per Section 3.10 of RCDP
- General mix of house types is acceptable however overall design proposal lacks imagination in terms of design concept and layout.
- The provision of private rear open space particularly for units along the northern boundary do not meet minimum requirements for opposing rear gardens 22m, a number of developments do not have minimum 11m rear gardens.
- The extent of variation in house designs is excessive and fails to achieve an acceptable level of consistency that would be complementary across the development.
- No design statement has been submitted.

- The applicant has not demonstrated sufficient legal interest to access the site via the existing Abbeyville Housing estate.
- There is insufficient data submitted to determine that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the capacity, safety or operational efficiency of the national road network.
- The applicant has not supplied any statement of compliance with DMURS or Roscommon Smart Travel Initiative.
- Lack of nature-based solutions for the management for surface water

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Report

#### Roads Section –

- Have identified a desire line that could form a future strategic link between Lisnamult and the N63 and request that this area be sterilised for the provision of this link.
- A traffic and Transport Assessment is required.
- An auto track analysis should be carried out to ensure access to all areas.

#### Housing Section –

- No Part V agreement is in place.
- The proposed cluster is not acceptable, and units should be dispersed throughout the estate.
- Confirmation of ownership is required to determine whether 10% or 20% applies.
- Detail of calculations of methodology for calculating values for land, site costs, construction costs and profit from these costs are required.

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

#### Uisce Eireann-

- No objection to the grant of planning permission recommends a number of conditions

## Transport Infrastructure Ireland –

- Insufficient data has been submitted with the planning application to demonstrate that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the capacity, safety or operational efficiency of the national road network.
- The proposed development will be at variance with national policy
- A requirement that a (TTA) is carried out to assess the impacts of the proposed development in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the TII Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014)

### **3.4. Third Party Observations**

There were three valid submissions on file. The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- Concerns regarding traffic congestion and traffic safety.
- EV Parking has not been provided.
- Concerns with respect to shared access to the site with Abbeyville Housing estate and access of emergency vehicles
- Past failures of the applicant to carry out their obligations in Abbeyville housing the installation of speed bumps, replace pillars.
- The management company established by the applicant has lapsed.
- A construction method statement has not been provided.
- Impact on residential amenity due to construction noise traffic etc
- Query as to whether enforcement matters in Abbeyville have been addressed.
- No provision for childcare facilities, shops or recreational area
- The site is not appropriately zoned.
- Concerns regarding extra demand on existing infrastructure
- Concerns regarding compliance with building regulations

## 4.0 Planning History

- PA reg ref - 23/60049 – Invalid application for the erection of one hundred and twelve dwelling houses
- PA reg ref: 23/60112 – Invalid application for the erection of sixty-five dwelling houses
- PA reg ref: 21/3010 – Extension of duration permission granted to the Glenman Corporation for the following elements of PA 16/170. (1). The completion of 3 no. partly constructed dwelling houses; and (2) The erection of 2 no 2m high walls with associated pillars and security gates.
- PA reg ref: 16/170 – Permission granted to the Glenman Corporation on the 19/06/2016 for the retention and completion for 3 no. partly constructed dwelling houses and PERMISSION - for the erection of 2 no. 2m high walls with associated pillars and security gates on land
- PA reg ref: 05/19 – Permission granted to the Glenman Corporation Ltd on the 16/05/2005 to retain 8 no. Calor Gas Tanks and for Planning Permission for a change of house design with revised site boundaries from that previously granted under Planning Register Reference no. PD/00/1947 in the Register of Roscommon County Council from site numbers 34-96, 121-130 and 158-201 inclusive and for a change of house design on site number 142 from that previously granted under Planning Register Reference no. PD/00/1947 in the Roscommon County Council at
- PA reg ref: 00/1947 – Permission granted to Mr. Michael McSharry on 22/05/2001 for the erection of 201 houses.

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. National

#### 5.1.1. The National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040, (2018).

This document sets out the Government's strategic national plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland for the period up to 2040.

Of note National Strategic Outcome 1 (Compact Growth), sets out the focus on pursuing a compact growth policy at national, regional, and local level. From an urban perspective the aim is to deliver a greater proportion of residential development within existing built-up areas of cities, towns, and villages; to facilitate infill development and enable greater densities to be achieved, whilst achieving high quality and design standards.

#### 5.1.2. Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland to 2030, 2021.

The government's housing plan to 2030. It is a multi-annual, multi-billion-euro plan which aims to improve Ireland's housing system and deliver more homes of all types for people with different housing needs. The overall objective is that every citizen in the State should have access to good quality homes:

- To purchase or rent at an affordable price
- Built to a high standard in the right place
- Offering a high quality of life.

#### 5.1.3. Climate Action Plan, 2023.

Implements carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and sets a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050. By 2030, the plan calls for a 40% reduction in emissions from residential buildings and a 50% reduction in transport emissions. The reduction in transport emissions includes a 20% reduction in total vehicle kilometres, a reduction in fuel usage, significant increases in sustainable transport trips, and improved modal share.

#### 5.1.4. Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines

Having considered the nature of the proposed development sought under this application, its location, the receiving environment, the documentation contained on file, including the submission from the Planning Authority, I consider that the following



guidelines are relevant:

- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)

*Metropolitan Towns (>1,500 population) – Suburban / Urban Extension Suburban areas are the low density car-orientated residential areas constructed at the edge of the town, while urban extension refers to greenfield lands at the edge of the existing built-up footprint that are zoned for residential or mixed-use (including residential) development. It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that residential densities in the range 35 dph to 50 dph (net) shall generally be applied at suburban and edge locations of Metropolitan Towns, and that densities of up to 100 dph (net) shall be open for consideration at 'accessible' suburban / urban extension locations (as defined in Table 3.8)*

- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht 2011
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities', 2007.
- Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2012
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, August 2018 (updated 2019)

## 5.2. Other

- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) (2019).

## 5.3. Local Policy

### Roscommon Town Local Area Plan

There is currently no local area plan in place for Roscommon Town. The Draft Roscommon Town Plan is due to be adopted in circa October 2024.

### Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

#### 5.3.1. Core Strategy Policy Objective

- CS2.2 - Implement all land use planning policy and objectives consistent with the Core Strategy, in order to accelerate a transition to a greener, low carbon

and climate resilient county, with a focus on reduced travel demand through the promotion of sustainable settlement patterns.

- CS2.3 - Direct growth towards designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services as far as practicable
- CS2.5 - Support the regeneration of town centre and brownfield/infill lands along with the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands to facilitate population growth and achieve sustainable compact growth targets of 30% of all new housing to be built within the existing urban footprint of targeted settlements in the county. At least 40% of all new housing will be targeted within the existing built-up footprint of the Regional Growth Centre of Athlone (Monksland/Bellanamullia).

#### 5.3.2. Rural Housing Policy Objective PPH 3.13

- Facilitate single houses in rural areas subject to appropriate siting and design criteria, including demonstration of adherence to the principles set out in the County Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines. In addition, in the case of proposals for single houses in defined Areas under Urban Influence, applicants will be required to demonstrate a social or economic link (as per Table 3.2) to the rural area in which they proposed to build.

#### 5.3.3. Towns and Villages Policy Objectives

- TV 4.18 Promote development at sustainable densities that support compact growth and the consolidation of urban areas (with particular emphasis on Town Cores), and which are also appropriate to the local context and enhance the local environment in which it is located.

#### 5.3.4. Infrastructure

- ITC 7.1 - Support and facilitate the integration of land use with transportation infrastructure, through the development of sustainable compact settlements within the hierarchy of settlements as identified within the Core Strategy and which are well served by public transport.
- ITC 7.3 - Ensure primacy for transport options that provide for unit reductions in carbon emissions. This can most effectively be done by promoting public

transport, walking and cycling, and by actively seeking to reduce car use in circumstances where alternative options are available.

- ITC 7.49 - Ensure that developments in urban areas, both within developments and within the public realm, seek to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding Risks.

#### 5.3.5. Social Community & Cultural Development Policy Objectives

- SCCD 11.10 Require the delivery of new childcare facilities in conjunction with residential development proposals, in accordance with the Childcare Facilities - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

#### 5.3.6. Section 12.6 – Residential Development Urban

- All new urban development proposals will be assessed in accordance with national guidelines and any superseding guidelines for same
- Dependent on the scale and siting of residential development proposals, a Design Statement will be required, and should address the suitability of the proposed design solution to the site context, in accordance with the relevant urban design criteria.
- Table 12.1 – Car Parking Provision.

### 5.4. Natural Heritage Designations

- Ballinturly Turlough SAC – 3.3km away
- River Suck Callows SPA – 5.5km

## 5.5. EIA Screening

See completed form 2 on file.

Item (10)(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:

- Construction of more than 500 dwelling units
- Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2ha in the case of a business district, 10ha in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20ha elsewhere.

The proposed development comprises the construction of 65 residential units on a greenfield site of 2.54ha. The site is located outside the defined Roscommon town boundary. The site is adjacent to other zoned lands. As such, I am satisfied that the development does not fall within the identified classes of development and does not require mandatory EIA.

Having regard to: (a) the nature and scale of the development, (b) the location of the site adjacent to Roscommon town boundary, (c) the location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in article 109(3) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), it is concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

## 6.0 The Appeal

### 6.1. Grounds of Appeal

This is a first party appeal against the decision of the planning authority to refuse permission. The appeal can be summarised as follows:

#### 6.1.1. Zoning

- There are currently no zoning provisions for Roscommon Town CDP. The zoning was carried out in the LAP and Lap expired in 2020 and has not been renewed, replaced or extended. The Board must make a decision in the absence of current adopted plan.
- The original parent permission granted in 2000 was for 201 houses. This includes some of the lands that permission is sought under this application.
- Applicant currently seeking to have lands zoned “residential” within the draft Town Local Area Plan. The applicants sets out a number of reasons as to why these lands should be zoned.
- Lands are excellently located for residential development. (The applicant has provided a list of all services that are in walking distance of the site)

#### 6.1.2. Traffic and Roads

- The proposed access to the development is via the existing part of completed housing estate and utilises the same junction on the N63 as was envisaged in the original “parent” permission. The entrance was previously deemed satisfactory to service the development of this scale.
- The access is inside the 50kph speed limit for the town. There are existing housing developments further out from the town.
- A Traffic & Transport Assessment has been submitted as part of the appeal.

#### 6.1.3. Property Title

- The developer states there is adequate consents in place to gain access to roads and services through the adjacent housing estate. The developer is the same developer who constructed the dwelling on adjoining lands. A copy of

relevant folio has been provided that indicate the necessary roads remain in the same folio.

#### 6.1.4. Design and Layout

- The layout is broadly similar to that previously granted under PA 00/1947
- A variety of house types and sizes are provided. Although the council is concerned that there is an excessive mix in the proposal and its visual incongruence, the applicant contends the mix will work. The variety is not significant with some minor variations on design.
- Having taken note of some of the concerns of the planning authority the applicant has provided revisions for the following:
  - Revisions to the design of some of the gables and finishes of the dwellings
  - Relocation of some of the houses so that house designs of similar design are located beside each other
  - Revised detail either using or omitting brick
  - Revised design detail for house type A & D
- The applicant contends that the open space provision is in line with Section 12.6 of DM standards. Its put forward that the open space is usable large and has a regular shape.
- The applicant states the density of 25.5 units per ha is appropriate for the area.
- The applicant has supplied a design Statement as part of the appeal documentation.

#### 6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

- None

### 6.3. Observations

There is one observation on file. The observation is from a Caroline and John Nally, who made a valid submission to the Planning Authority under the original planning application. The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

#### 6.3.1. Traffic

- There is only one singular point of vehicular and pedestrian access and egress from the existing Abbeyville development. The addition of 65 dwelling units will totally incapacitate an already overwhelmed localised traffic system.
- The observer questions the validity of the Traffic and Transport Assessment carried out. The date of the traffic count was 13<sup>th</sup> of December the same day that utility civil works were ongoing on the N63 approaching Roscommon town. As a result of these works many people chose different routes. The results maybe flawed, and it would be more thorough to carry out traffic counts over multiple days.
- There is no secondary access route to the development.
- Construction traffic a serious concern for road safety.
- No EV parking is provided.
- There are no sustainable transport provisions with little or no permeability through the development except by vehicular routes.

#### 6.3.2. Site History and Maintenance

- Concerns that development will not be carried out in a timely manner.
- Questions over existing enforcement proceedings against the applicant
- Questions over maintenance and management of road network. Potholes and damaged footpaths need to be actioned in a timely manner.

#### 6.3.3. Zoning

- If permission is granted on unzoned land – question marks over public consultation.

- Should development be permitted will the existing civil infrastructure be upgraded to accommodate the development.

6.3.4. Concerns with regard to achieving required standards as set out in the Building regulations

#### 6.4. Further Responses

None

### 7.0 Assessment

Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including the appeal, and having inspected the site and having regard to the relevant national and local policy guidance, I consider the main issues in relation to this appeal are as follows:

- Zoning/ Planning Policy
- Design/ Layout/ Density
- Traffic
- Other Matters
- Appropriate Assessment

7.1.1. The applicant has introduced minor revisions as part of the appeal, including changes to the design of some front elevations and gables of the dwellings, relocation of similarly designed houses, and alternative designs that either incorporate or omit brick. These changes, however, are not material to the overall design and layout of the development. Consequently, I have assessed the application in light of these revised changes but maintain that they do not significantly impact the overall assessment of the proposal.

#### 7.1.2. Zoning/ Planning Policy

7.1.3. The Board is advised that there is currently no Local Area Plan for Roscommon Town. The site was not zoned in the previous Roscommon Town Plan and is not included for addition in the current draft Roscommon Town Plan 2024 - 2030



including material alterations. At the time of writing this report the draft zoning maps do not include the proposed site for a revised zoning of “New Residential”.

- 7.1.4. The site, located to the south of Roscommon town, is outside the designated town boundary as set out in previous Local Area Plan. The site is approximately 1km as the crow flies from the centre of Roscommon town and approx. 1.7km by road. Only a portion of the site to the north lies within the previous residential zoning, potentially accommodating approximately six houses of the overall development. The remainder of the development is situated in land designated as an Area Under Urban Influence, as outlined in Chapter 3 of the Roscommon County Development Plan. The site as proposed is to be accessed via a single access through the adjacent Abbeyville estate.
- 7.1.5. The applicant argues that due to the absence of a specific zoning for the site, its suitability for development should be considered. Its stated that the site is part of a larger area associated with parent permission 00/941, which received planning permission for the construction of 201 houses. Additionally, the applicant claims that the site can be easily serviced through the Abbeyville Housing Estate, which already has existing sewerage, surface water, and footpath connections to Roscommon Town. The applicant has provided details of the development's connectivity to Roscommon Town, with distances to neighbouring services ranging from 1km to 2.5km.
- 7.1.6. The planning authority did not accept the principle of development at this location, arguing that the proposal on unzoned land conflicts with Core Strategy policies CS2.2, CS2.3, and CS2.5. These policies emphasize directing development into settlements, promoting the regeneration of town centres, and providing zoned lands within existing settlements. Additionally, the principle was not accepted because the majority of the site lies in an Area of Urban Influence, where only one-off single dwellings may be considered for applicants who have demonstrated a social or economic need to reside in the local rural area.
- 7.1.7. Given the above considerations, I do not agree that the provision of 65 dwellings on unzoned land as an appropriate form of development for this area. This proposal does not align with the policy objectives of the County Development Plan regarding core strategy and compact settlement objectives. It is noteworthy that the material

alterations proposed in the draft plan do not include revised zoning for the proposed site.

- 7.1.8. Additionally, I consider the site to be significantly removed from the town centre of Roscommon. Roscommon County Council's policy aims to direct residential development to the town centre where possible, particularly in line with core strategy policies CS2.2, CS2.3, and CS2.5. The lands in question remain designated as an Area Under Urban Influence, where only one-off type rural dwellings are considered in limited circumstances. The planning authority, in carrying out a core strategy for the area, did not deem these lands suitable at the draft stage of the Roscommon Town Local Area Plan. This underscores the unsuitability of the location.
- 7.1.9. Therefore, I concur with the original assessment of the planning authority and do not consider the provision of residential development on unzoned lands to be warranted in this instance.

## **7.2. Design/Layout/Density**

- 7.2.1. The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) are the informing guidelines for the design, layout, and density of the development. Section 4.4 of Chapter 4 outlines key indicators for quality urban design and placemaking for settlements, and Appendix D provides a design checklist supplementing this section. Chapter 5 details the development standards for housing, broken down into key areas as follows with respect to layout :
- **Sustainable and Efficient Movement:** New developments should prioritize sustainable transportation by creating a permeable and legible street network that connects to the wider urban transport system. This enhances active travel through traffic-calming measures, minimizes car parking to manage travel demand, and ensures safe, comfortable environments for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - **Green and Blue Infrastructure:** Promote urban greening and nature-based solutions, such as sustainable drainage systems and slow-the-flow initiatives, for managing urban surface waters in all new developments and retrofitting existing areas to fully harness the benefits of ecosystem services.

- **Responsive Built Form:** Buildings should generally present well-defined edges to streets and public spaces to ensure that the public realm is well-overlooked with active frontages. Key characteristics should include narrow blocks, small plots, and compact layouts with varied forms of open space at multiple levels. Streets should be narrow with small setbacks and integrated parking solutions. New development should embrace good modern architecture and urban design that is innovative and varied, respecting and enhancing local distinctiveness and heritage. Materials and finishes should be of high quality, respond to the local palette, and be highly durable.

- 7.2.2. Having regard to the site layout I do not consider the proposed scheme adequately applies the indicators as set out in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines. The layout includes 65 units at a density of 25.5 units per hectare. However, the proposed layout exhibits a linear form of development accessible via a single entry point through the adjacent Abbeyville estate.
- 7.2.3. Despite the applicant's design statement emphasizing small clusters of housing overlooking useful open spaces, the proposal deviates from these principles. It features one large central open space overlooked by all houses, with no small housing clusters. The layout accentuates the linear development nature of the scheme, particularly evident in the alignment of houses. The easternmost section comprises a continuous row of 19 houses, the northern section bordering the adjacent estate includes 18 houses, and the southernmost section also has a row of 19 houses. This unbroken linear pattern is neither interrupted by landscaping nor diversified by varied building lines. The proposal as presented presents as a mirror of the adjacent Abbeyville estate in terms of layout, with wide spaces between dwellings, lack of sensible connectivity and lack of clearly defined edges to the streets and open space. The building form and layout are poor, as Chapter 4 and 5 of the Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines clearly outline the need for a responsive built form with narrow blocks, small plots, and compact blocks. The design as presented runs contrary to these principles.
- 7.2.4. Having regard to movement and permeability, the layout as presented is one dimensional with large roadways and footpaths. No bicycle lanes or integrated shared surfaces are provided as required by the guidelines. The Development Plan

requires one bicycle parking space per unit equating to 65 spaces – no bicycle parking has been provided in the proposed scheme. The layout is car-dominant, lacking balance between car parking and sensitive design. The scheme in no way establishes a permeable and legible network of streets and spaces within the site that optimises movement for sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and public transport)

- 7.2.5. Public Open Space – Policy Objective 5.1 of the Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines seeks the following. Public open spaces should be designed to cater for a range of active and passive recreational needs (including play, physical activity, active travel, cultural uses and community gardens and allotments, as appropriate to the context) and to conserve and restore nature and biodiversity. Policy Objective 5.1 sets out that public open space shall be not less than 10% of the net site area and not more than 15%.
- 7.2.6. While the quantity of open space meets the above objective approx 15.6% of site, I consider the layout of linear houses surrounding one large patch of open space to not satisfy the requirements of the guidelines. No details of potential for active/passive recreation has been provided. No details of how open space has been incorporated into a planned landscaping scheme or SUDS scheme for the site. The design principles being adopted do not adhere to the above policy or any modern planning principles rendering the layout generic and not tailored to the site's unique features.
- 7.2.7. Regarding carparking, there is a significant level of car parking provided throughout the site, with a total of 138 spaces. The level of car parking provided accords with Table 12.1 of the County Development Plan at 1.5 spaces per unit. However, according to the requirements under SPPR 3 – Car Parking of the Compact Settlement Guidelines, a justification for the proposed level of car parking is required. No details in this regard has been provided with the application. The car parking layout as presented for the most part equates to two spaces per dwelling with only a selected few of car parking spaces remote from the dwelling houses. The car parking is not integrated within the scheme in terms of landscaping. No on street parking is provided as required under the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS), which recommends on-street car parking as a measure for traffic calming while integrating the development into landscaped areas. As stated under point 7.2.4

the layout as proposed is designed for the car, with wide streets and off street car parking. The details as provided does not align with the key indicators for site layout and car parking as set out in the Compact Settlement guidelines.

7.2.8. Having regard to the above, the proposed development does not align with the guidelines for high-quality urban layout and sustainable development. The failure to create distinct housing clusters, the reliance on a single large open space, and the replication of the linear form of the existing Abbeyville estate are significant shortcomings that justify the refusal of planning permission. The design does not meet the requirements for a responsive built form, with a focus on movement and permeability as specified in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines, and thus does not provide a sufficiently high-quality residential environment.

7.2.9. Design/ Unit Mix

7.2.10. **The breakdown of units is as follows:**

House Type	Description	No of beds	Floor area	No of units
A	Detached two storey	4 bed	138.01m <sup>2</sup>	3
B	Semi-detached	4 bed	137.71m <sup>2</sup>	4
C	Semi detached - brick finish	4 bed	127.35m <sup>2</sup>	8
D	3 unit terrace	3 bed	83.5m <sup>2</sup>	6
K	6 terrace units-L-shaped	5 no 3 bed 1 no 4 bed	102.2m <sup>2</sup> to 146.58m <sup>2</sup>	6
M	Detached single storey	2 bed	90m <sup>2</sup>	1
N	Detached single storey	3 bed	98m <sup>2</sup>	5
O	Detached single storey	2 bed	84.56m <sup>2</sup>	1
P	Semi-detached single storey	2 bed	77.63m <sup>2</sup>	4

Q	Detached single storey – brick finish	3 bed	87.33m <sup>2</sup>	5
R	Detached single storey	3 bed	91m <sup>2</sup>	2
T	Terrace of 4 units – brick finish	2 bed	91.58m <sup>2</sup>	12
U	Dormer style semi- detached	4 bed	142m <sup>2</sup>	2

- 7.2.11. The applicant has not submitted a housing assessment table. However, a comparison of the submitted house type plans with Table 5.1 of the Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Best Practice Guidelines suggests that compliance could be either achieved or potentially achievable. While the unit sizes and mix largely align with these guidelines, there are significant reservations regarding the level of detail provided on house design.
- 7.2.12. According to Appendix D of the Compact Settlement guidelines, the proposed design should have a coherent architectural and urban design strategy necessary for ensuring the development is sustainable, distinctive, complements the urban structure, and promotes a strong sense of identity. In my opinion the development as proposed does not align with these principles. The design statement submitted with the appeal lacks comprehensiveness and fails to provide a justification or contextual basis for the proposed house designs. No details have been provided for the design rational for any of the dwellings proposed or details or architectural consistency. The applicant has changed the location of some of the dwellings from the original application, however I do not consider these changes alleviate any of the design concerns present around the scheme.
- 7.2.13. The overall unit mix of 13 different types is excessive. Although uniformity is not an absolute requirement, there should be an effort to maintain a consistent design theme and finishes throughout the scheme. Specifically, the southernmost elevation between units 20-30 proposes five different house types, comprising a mix of semi-detached and detached dwellings. Some houses are oriented towards side gables and rear gardens of other properties rather than facing the estate road. The row of

detached units from house numbers 29 to 30 on the southernmost elevation is oriented to the west, failing to address the public open space or roadway. Similarly, the northernmost elevation, comprising semi-detached houses numbered 48 to 65, includes four different house types. These house types do not bear an architectural resemblance to the properties on the south. Across the scheme in terms of design there is no architectural consistency, the window openings vary between horizontal and vertical, the proportions between floors are inconsistent, and there is no clear detail provided on finishes or materials. In light of the general lack of detail supplied in relation to design, I am not satisfied the finished house types will represent a high quality design intervention that the site requires.

7.2.14. The overall design proposal, in terms of layout, car parking, and unit design and mix, lacks a coherent design strategy and does not adhere to the principles outlined in the Compact Settlement guidelines. The applicant heavily relies on the neighbouring estate for context in terms of design parameters and layout. The applicant's proposal does not adequately apply the indicators and principles of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines. The excessive unit mix, lack of architectural consistency, and insufficient design details fail to create a high-quality residential environment. The proposal should be reconsidered to ensure it aligns with the Compact Settlement guidelines, emphasizing sustainable, distinctive, and well-integrated urban development.

7.2.15. Density – New Issue

While I do not accept the principle of the development as per section 7.1 above, for the sake of completeness, I believe it is appropriate to assess density within the context of overall design and layout. Therefore, I will evaluate density according to what I consider to be appropriately outlined in the Compact Settlement Guidelines as set out under Section 12.6 of the Roscommon County Development Plan. I note the planning authority did not raise objections on the grounds of density, however the appellant has referenced same under this appeal.

The proposed development's stated density is 25.5 units per hectare. The applicant asserts that this density responds positively to the established neighbouring housing estate and optimizes pre-existing infrastructural investments. Upon review, it is

evident that the applicant has not adequately considered national or local policies regarding density in this residential scheme.

- 7.2.16. Roscommon is designated as a "Key Town" within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). Accordingly, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas & Compact Settlement Guidelines recommend a residential density of 30 to 50 units per hectare for suburban locations. (Table 3.5) The proposed density of 25.5 units per hectare falls significantly below this recommended range. Furthermore, the proposed density does not align with the Core Strategy principles outlined in the Roscommon County Development Plan. Therefore, I consider the proposed density is inadequate and fails to meet both national guidelines and local policy requirements.

In conclusion, having regard to the detail submitted in relation to design, layout and density, I do not consider the proposal accords with the development management standards Section 12.6 of the Roscommon County Development Plan or Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for planning authorities. Having regard to the foregoing I recommend planning permission be refused.

### **7.3. Traffic Impact**

- 7.3.1. The second reason for refusal by the planning authority pertains to the proposed access arrangements to the subject site via the N63 (National Secondary Road). It has not been demonstrated that additional traffic movements would not adversely affect the capacity, safety, or operational efficiency of the national road network. The applicant asserts that the access arrangements for the proposed development were agreed upon under parent permission 00/1947. As part of the appeal, the applicant commissioned a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) prepared by Traffic Transport and Road Safety Associates Ltd. This report was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2014. The assessment follows the following format:

- Chapter 1: Introduction – Proposed development and scoping
- Chapter 2: Existing local conditions, including the nature of the road network and existing traffic levels



- Chapter 3: Traffic-related impacts of the proposal, including trip generation, distribution, assignment, and junction operation
- Chapter 4: External access and internal access within the proposed development

7.3.2. A traffic count survey was undertaken on Wednesday, 13th December 2023, for an AM peak period from 07:45 to 09:44 and a PM period from 16:00 to 17:59. Based on the traffic count survey data, the local peak traffic hours were established as an AM peak hour of 08:15 to 09:14 and a PM peak hour of 17:00 to 17:59. Concerns were raised by observers regarding road works occurring on the same day as the traffic count. However, given that the N63 is the main thoroughfare into Roscommon town and TII traffic counter sites indicate that traffic was approximately 6.3% above average on the day, I consider the traffic count submitted to be a fair representation of actual traffic conditions around the proposed site.

7.3.3. The assessment of opening and future year traffic generated through the site considers TII Central Growth assumptions, which account for changes in population, job locations, trip distribution, and transport types. The summary of the output for the existing N63/Abbeyville Estate junction, both without and with the proposed development, indicates no significant impact, with only minor queuing and minimal delays expected. The traffic count data is comprehensive and clearly details potential future traffic in the Abbeyville Estate as part of the development. I do not foresee a significant traffic impact resulting from the development during the operational phase.

7.3.4. However, there is a lack of detail regarding construction traffic and its potential impact. The number of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) entering and leaving the site during the construction phase has not been provided. Although potential numbers of workers on site have been supplied, the quantification of trucks entering and leaving the site through the existing estate is missing. In the absence of this information, and considering the potential for significant impact on the amenity of adjoining residential developments, I am not satisfied that the traffic impact has been adequately assessed. Furthermore, the agent for the applicant acknowledges road safety issues at the N63 junction, warranting further consideration through a Stage 3 Road Safety

Audit prior to the commencement of development. Traffic calming measures within the proposed development are also required before development begins.

- 7.3.5. While the applicant has demonstrated that there will be no significant impact from operational traffic on the adjoining Abbeyville Estate and N63 Junction, concerns remain regarding construction traffic and its potential impact on the neighbouring estate. These impacts should be addressed either through traffic and transport assessment or through a comprehensive construction management plan, which is necessary for a full assessment of the impacts. Given the foregoing, I do not consider that adequate information has been submitted to allow for a full and rigorous assessment of the traffic impact during construction phase of development.

#### **7.4. Other Matters**

##### **7.4.1. Private Open Space/ Separation distances**

Concerns are also raised by the planning authority about private open space provision whereby it was determined that a number of units along the northern boundary do not meet the requirements for opposing rear gardens of 22m and a number of other units do not have 11m rear gardens, hence the development would adversely impact upon residential amenity of existing and future residents in the area. Having examined the open space provision in the context of Chapter 5 of the Sustainable and Compact Settlement guidelines, I consider the quantum the private open space provision aligns with SPPR2 – minimum private open space Standards for Houses. Having regard to separation distances, SPPR1 of the compact settlement guidelines is the informing guideline for development. In considering a planning application for residential development, a separation distance of at least 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses is advised. Having reviewed the proposed site layout, I note all separation distances are in excess of this guideline. I consider the development accords with SSPR 1.

##### **7.4.2. SUDS**

While the lack of SUDS measures was not cited as a reason for refusal, the planning authority expressed concern regarding the absence of such measures in the proposed design. The applicant contends that the proposed site is serviced and that there is adequate capacity within the existing surface water sewer. Additionally,

the applicant has proposed incorporating surface water "filter strips" from the internal roads and attenuation tanks in the open space if required.

- 7.4.3. I find the applicant's response insufficient. SUDS should be an integral part of the design and layout, often incorporated comprehensively into the landscaping proposals for the scheme. The applicant's approach may address the quantity aspect of surface water management, but it fails to consider the other essential pillars of SUDS: quality, biodiversity, and amenity.

Although this concern alone may not be substantial enough to warrant a refusal, it highlights the overall design inadequacies of the scheme. A more holistic approach to SUDS implementation is necessary to ensure a well-rounded and effective drainage strategy that enhances the environmental and aesthetic value of the development.

7.4.4. Property title

The third reason for refusal cited by the planning authority is the applicant's failure to provide sufficient information to demonstrate legal title for accessing the site via the existing Abbeyville Estate and to access essential services such as the public sewer and mains. In response, the applicant has submitted land registry documentation and a folio indicating that the developer of the proposed site is the same entity as the developer of the adjoining Abbeyville Estate. The relevant folio and maps provided confirm that the ownership of the site is identical, thereby establishing that permission exists to access the site through the Abbeyville Estate and connect to other essential services. Based on the submitted documentation, I consider that the applicant has now demonstrated sufficient legal interest to access the site and utilize the necessary services. However, the Board should be aware of Section 34(13) of the Planning and Development Act, which states that a grant of planning permission does not entitle the applicant to carry out any development unless they have sufficient legal interest in the land to do so.

This statutory provision ensures that the granting of planning permission does not override the necessity for the applicant to secure the appropriate legal rights to execute the development. Therefore, while the applicant appears to have addressed the legal title concern, it remains incumbent upon them to ensure all necessary legal permissions are in place prior to commencing development.

## 8.0 AA Screening

8.1.1. I have considered the construction of a residential development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The subject site is located 3.3km north of Ballinturly Turlough SAC

8.1.2. The proposed development comprises:

- To construct 65 dwelling houses
- Internal access roads
- Connection to existing services
- Hard and soft landscaping
- Provision of car parking, and lighting

8.1.3. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The proposed works are located on a greenfield site adjacent to serviced land, the applicant has demonstrated connections into public sewer. There are no impacts/effects predicted in this regard.
- Surface Water will be managed through connections in to public waste water network with filter paths proposed to be utilised for the internal road network. Due to the distance of the site and intervening land uses from any SAC and SPA, no impacts/ effects are predicted in this regard.
- There are no identifiable hydrological/ecological connector pathways between the application and the SAC or SPA. This combined with the distance and built up intervening environment between the application site and the SAC & SPA removes any potential connector/receptor pathways. Therefore no impacts/effects are predicted.

I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (stage 2) (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

I recommend that planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

## **10.0 Reasons and Considerations**

1. The proposed development which is located on unzoned land outside of the defined Roscommon Town Boundary would, if permitted, would undermine the principles of the core strategy set out in Volume 1, Chapter 2 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 -2028, including in particular policy objectives CS2.2, CS2.3 and CS 2.5, which collectively promote sustainable settlement patterns, the direction of growth towards designated settlements and the delivery of zoned and serviced land to facilitate population growth and achieve sustainable compact growth. In addition, having regard to the proposed sitting of the majority of the development on unzoned land in Rural Policy Zone A- Area under urban influence as identified in Volume 1, Chapter 3 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 -2028, the proposal for a multi-unit housing development fails to comply with Policy Objective PPH 3.13 which seeks to facilitate single houses in rural areas subject to appropriate sitting and design criteria and in the case of such housing proposals in Areas under Urban Influence requires applicants to demonstrate a social or economic link to the rural area in which the development is proposed. The principle of the development is fundamentally unacceptable and accordingly is contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The "Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities " published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2024, require a high quality approach to the design of new housing. It is the policy of the planning authority, as set out in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 for the area, to ensure that the design and layout of all new housing estates on urban lands to achieve attractive and sustainable development through better design. Having regard to the proposed site layout and house designs, it is considered that the development would constitute an unattractive and inappropriate housing scheme, which would not accord with the design principles as set out in Section 12.6 Residential Development of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 -2028. It is considered that the proposed development would, therefore, conflict with provisions of the said guidelines and with the policies of the County Development Plan, would seriously injure the amenities of the area and of property in the vicinity, and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3. The development would generate a significant volume of construction traffic, including a high number of movements by heavy goods vehicles within the adjoining Abbeyville estate – the single point of access to the site. In the absence of sufficient information to demonstrate that this construction traffic can be accommodated safely and adequately within the existing road network, the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposed development would not, therefore, give rise to traffic congestion and would not 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.

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.

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Darragh Ryan  
Planning Inspector  
22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2024


## Appendix 1 - Form 1

### EIA Pre-Screening

[EIAR not submitted]

<b>An Bord Pleanála Case Reference</b>	318732-23			
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Construction of 65 dwellings, internal access roads, landscaping, connection into existing public sewer and water supply network			
<b>Development Address</b>	Lisnamult, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon			
<b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?</b> (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)		Yes		
		No		
<b>2. Is the proposed development of a class specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and does it equal or exceed any relevant quantity, area or limit where specified for that class?</b>				
Yes		Class.....	EIA Mandatory EIAR required	
No			Proceed to Q.3	
<b>3. Is the proposed development of a class specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) but does not equal or exceed a relevant quantity, area or other limit specified [sub-threshold development]?</b>				
		<b>Threshold</b>	<b>Comment (if relevant)</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
No		N/A		No EIAR or Preliminary Examination required
Yes		Class/Threshold... Item (10)(b) of Schedule 5 Part 2..		Proceed to Q.4



4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?		
No		Preliminary Examination required
Yes		Screening Determination required

Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Form 2

### EIA Preliminary Examination

An Bord Pleanála Case Reference	318732-23	
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of 65 dwellings, internal access roads, landscaping, connection into existing public sewer and water supply network	
Development Address	Lisnamult Roscommon, Co Roscommon	
<b>The Board carries out a preliminary examination [Ref. Art. 109(2)(a), Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)] of, at least, the nature, size or location of the proposed development having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Regulations.</b>		
	Examination	Yes/No/ Uncertain
<p>Nature of the Development</p> <p>Is the nature of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?</p> <p>Will the development result in the production of any significant waste, emissions or pollutants?</p>	<p>The proposed development is on a greenfield site circa 2.5ha adjacent to existing zoned land. The lands at this location are not zoned. The proposed development is not exceptional in the context of existing environment.</p> <p>The proposed development will not result in the production of any significant waste, emissions or pollutants.</p>	No
<p>Size of the Development</p> <p>Is the size of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?</p> <p>Are there significant cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted</p>	<p>No. The site area is 2.54ha.</p> <p>There are no other developments under construction in proximity to the site. All other developments are established uses.</p>	No

projects?		
<p>Location of the Development</p> <p>Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or does it have the potential to significantly impact on an ecologically sensitive site or location?</p> <p>Does the proposed development have the potential to significantly affect other significant environmental sensitivities in the area?</p>	<p>No. The proposed development is not within a designated Natura 2000 site. Ballinturly Turlough SAC – 3.3km and River Suck Callows SPA – 5.5km both located south of the site</p> <p>There are no other locally sensitive environmental sensitivities in the vicinity of relevance.</p>	No
<b>Conclusion</b>		
<p>There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>EIA not required.</p>		

**Inspector:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DP/ADP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(only where Schedule 7A information or EIAR required)