

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-319942-24

Development	Demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings on site for the construction of 12 dwellings and all associated site works.
Location	Togher More, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow
Planning Authority	Wicklow County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2360451
Applicant(s)	Olive Green Roundwood Holdings Ltd.
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Olive Green Roundwood Holdings Ltd.
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	31 July 2025
Inspector	Gillian Kane

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located on the outskirts of Roundwood Village, in south Wicklow. The site is located on the northern side of the R755 that leads south from the centre of the village, towards the village of Annamoe. Currently on site is a large two-storey detached dwelling, with a two-storey extension to the rear and a number of small outbuildings to the rear. The dwelling formerly served as a parochial house and heavily landscaped pedestrian path leads from the eastern side of the site to the rear of the Catholic Church St. Lawrence O'Toole. Access to the site is via a recessed gated entrance, over a footpath.
- 1.1.1. South of the site is a community facility with playground, east and west of the site are detached dwellings.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1.1. On the 27th November 2023, planning permission was sought for a development comprising the demolition of an existing two-storey detached dwelling (243.3sq.m.) and the construction of 12 no. dwellings, revision to the existing site entrance, all on a site of 0.67ha. In addition to the required plans and particulars, the application was accompanied by the following:
- Archaeology report,
 - Arboricultural report,
 - Tree survey,
 - Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment
- 2.1.2. Unsolicited additional information was submitted to the Planning Authority on the 25th of March 2025. In addition to drawings, the UnSol AI included the following:
- Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment,
 - Response to the Planning Authority's Request for Information (The Board will note that there was no request for information but an initial planning report on file recommended refusal. This is addressed in section 3.5 below)
 - Speed Survey Report
 - Photographic Record
 - Stage 1 Road Safety Audit

- Site Notes

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. On the 24th May 2024, the Planning Authority issued a notification of their intention to REFUSE permission for two reasons as follows:

1. Having regard to the special architectural and artistic interest of the Parochial House (Roundwood), which has an NIAH rating of 'Regional Importance', Objectives CPO 8.20 and CPO 8.25 of the County Development Plan 2022, which seek to protect structures of historic character or architectural interest, and S9.2.3 of the Development & Design Standards of the County Development Plan 2022, which requires a strong justification for the demolition of such structures, it is considered that it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposed demolition of the building is fully justified, which would be contrary to the Objectives and Development & Design standards of the County Development Plan 2022- 2028. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. Insufficient information has been submitted in relation to the design of the proposed entrance and the achievement of appropriate sight distances in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, the capacity of the receiving stormwater network to cater for surface water generated on the site and the provision of adequate SUDS proposals. Therefore, to permit the proposed development in the absence of such information, would endanger public safety by reason of serious traffic hazard and would not provide a sustainable design response for the treatment of surface water and would therefore be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports following submission of Application

3.2.1. **Roads:** Further information required on road details for shared surfaces, taking in charge proposal, auto-track analysis, Stage 1 RSA, pedestrian crossing points, turning facilities. Two conditions recommended if permission is to be granted.

- 3.2.2. **MDE:** additional comments to Roads report: pedestrian crossings required to be at desire lines, notes that no details of traffic counts or speeds on R755 provided, final outfall for drainage line has not been checked, complete survey should be carried out to make sure there is capacity in the storm network line, concerns re. sightlines, no details that adjoining landowners are agreeable to set back boundaries, no footpaths to link houses no. 1-3 to footpaths in the development, gully locations to the rear of the development are limited and concerns of water ponding. If permission is granted, detailed lighting design required, ramps at roadside entrance, removal of ESB pole and new concrete footpath to replace existing tarmac footpath required.
- 3.2.3. **Housing:** Submission to comply with Part V noted
- 3.2.4. **Chief Fire Officer:** Four conditions recommended should permission be granted.
- 3.2.5. **Environment / Waste Management:** Construction and demolition management plan must be prepared.
- 3.2.6. **Planning Report:** Notes the proposed demolition of a habitable house of NIAH Regional Importance, considers it to be contrary to policies of the development plan and Climate Act 2021 given that no justification for demolition as been given. Queries the landholding of the applicant. Considers the density of the proposal to be an inefficient use of serviced land within the town. Housing mix is limited, proposed layout should be revised to create clearer small town morphology rather than low-density suburban estate. Lack of clear, consistent boundary treatments, lack of passive surveillance of open space area B. Considers proposal to use Laurel (an invasive species) in landscaping plans unacceptable. Concurs with the recommendation of the Roads department and MDE regarding access/ parking and services for further information. Notes that an archaeological assessment may be required.
- 3.2.7. **Senior Planners Report:** Site is best described as edge of centre, given its secondary zone designation therefore appropriate density would be 20-356 dwellings per ha. At 18 no. dwellings per ha, this is below range but context of site is such that it is acceptable. Therefore reason no. 2 unwarranted. Lack of dedicated turning are is an issue and with sightline information insufficiency, design of internal road network and design of shared surface area, reason no. 3 should be modified. Also notes that sightlines and junction / entrance should accord with DMURS, surface

water drainage design needs further expansion, surface of existing footpath not a planning requirement. Recommends refusal as modified.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- 3.3.1. **Uisce Éireann:** conditions recommended should be permission be granted.

3.4. Third Party Observations

- 3.4.1. Two observations on the application raised concerns regarding site boundaries, impact on agricultural land and residential amenity.

3.5. Unsolicited Further Information

- 3.5.1. On the 26th January 2024, the applicant requested as four-month extension of time. A letter dated 29th January 2024 to the applicant, the Planning Authority consents to the request noting a new decision date of 25/05/2024. On the 21st March 2024 in a letter to the Planning Authority, the applicant refers to the planning reports on file and states that they would like to address the concerns that led to the development being recommended for refusal.
- 3.5.2. A cover letter submitted with the unsolicited information provides the following:
- Submits that the Regional Importance status of the parochial house not longer applies as the house no longer fulfils the role of terminating the village on the south side. Notes that house is not a protected structure. Refers to AHIA report.
 - Pathway to the Church is no longer in the ownership of the property and ceases to provide access to the Church. Notes that architecture of the house is not complimentary to the Church, curtilage protection is tenuous.
 - States that applicant has not purchased the entire landholding. Remainder of lands are not zoned.
 - Floor plans submitted with new AHIA. Refers to construction of house (shuttered mass concrete), dampness, mould and that house should be considered an unmanageable health hazard.
 - Replacement of an energy consuming mass concrete structure with two A2 rated dwellings will balance the carbon footprint within ten years.

- Two independent experts agree that the dwelling is of no importance and should be demolished.
- Engineering response to issues raised by Roads department, including speed survey report.

3.6. Reports on file following submission of UnSAI

3.6.1. **Waste Management:** no comment on new information

3.6.2. **MDE:** Restates concerns noted in first MDE report regarding turning facilities, excessive speeds noted in traffic survey, consent to set back boundaries for sightlines, lack of footpath between house no.s 1-3 and limited gullies leading to ponding. 5 no. conditions recommended should permission be granted.

3.6.3. **Planning:** Applicants response to the proposed reasons for refusal regarding the NIAH rating of the dwelling has not been overcome. Opinion that proposed development would balance the carbon footprint of demolition is not supported. Notes the report of the MDE. Notes the concerns regarding sightlines and surface water drainage. Planner states that there does not appear to be a credible surface water drainage solution, no proposal to provide an overflow linkage and the problems that could arise if surface water flows on to the footpath and regional road. States that the information submitted has not overcome the reasons for refusal. Recommends that permission be refused for two reasons.

4.0 Relevant Planning History

4.1.1. None on the subject site.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Planning Framework First Revision – April 2025

5.1.1. Both Houses of the Oireachtas have approved the Revised National Planning Framework (NPF). The approval by the Seanad and the Dáil followed the decision of Government to approve the Final Revised NPF on 8th April 2025.

5.1.2. Relevant National Policy Objectives include:

- National Policy Objective 12 Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.
- National Policy Objective 22 In urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth.
- National Policy Objective 43 Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.
- National Policy Objective 45 Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration, increased building height and more compact forms of development.

5.2. Climate Action Plan 2025

- 5.2.1. Climate Action Plan 2025 builds upon last year's Plan by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and it should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024.
- 5.2.2. It is noted that the Board performs its functions in relation to decision making, in a manner consistent with Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, (consistent with Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the national long term climate action strategy, national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans set out in those Plans and in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State).

5.3. National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBPA) 2023-2030

- 5.3.1. The 4th NBAP strives for a “whole of government, whole of society” approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness

of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, while also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to “act for nature”. This National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023- 2030 builds upon the achievements of the previous Plan. It will continue to implement actions within the framework of five strategic objectives, while addressing new and emerging issues:

- Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity
- Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs
- Objective 3 - Secure Nature’s Contribution to People
- Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity
- Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland’s Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

5.4. Sustainable Residential Development & Compact Settlement Guidelines

- 5.4.1. The 2024 guidelines expand on the higher-level policies of the National Planning Framework (NPF) in relation to the creation of settlements that are compact, attractive, liveable and well-designed. There is a focus on the renewal of settlements and on the interaction between residential density, housing standards and placemaking to support the sustainable and compact growth of settlement.
- 5.4.2. In accordance with the provisions of Section 34 of the Act when making a decision in relation to an application that includes a residential element or other elements covered by these guidelines, the planning authority is required to have regard to the policies and objectives of the Guidelines and to apply the specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs).

5.5. Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028

- 5.6. Roundwood is designated in the CDP as a Level 6 small Town – Type 2. The plan notes the rural character of such areas and their potential to consolidate rural development needs and support the maintenance of essential rural social and community infrastructure such as schools, shops, public houses, post offices and

local sporting organisations. The plan states that in these settlements it is essential that appropriate growth is supported while also strictly controlled so that development is undertaken in a manner that is respectful to the character of these towns, the capacity of infrastructure and the environmental sensitivities of the rural area. It is of utmost importance to ensure that the design of development is appropriate to the rural setting within which these towns are situated.

5.7. Part 5 of the Wicklow CDP refers to Roundwood, providing specific development objectives.

5.8. Policies of relevance to the subject proposal include:

- 5.8.1. **CPO 5.17** To harness and integrate the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive reuse, recognising its important contribution to placemaking. New development should respect and complement the historic fabric of existing towns and villages – the traditional street patterns, plot sizes, mix of building types, distinctive paving and attractive street furniture.
- 5.8.2. **CPO 5.18** To protect, integrate and enhance heritage assets, including attractive streetscapes and historic buildings, through appropriate reuse and regeneration and restrict inappropriate development that would undermine the settlement's identity, heritage and sense of place.
- 5.8.3. **CPO 6.5** To require that new development be of the highest quality design and layout and contributes to the development of a coherent urban form and attractive built environment in accordance with the following key principles of urban design:
- ♣ Strengthening the character and urban fabric of the area;
 - ♣ Reinforcing local identity and sense of place;
 - ♣ Optimise the opportunities afforded by the historical and natural assets of a site / area;
 - ♣ Providing a coherent, legible and permeable urban structure;
 - ♣ Promoting an efficient use of land;
 - ♣ Improving and enhancing the public realm;
 - ♣ Conserving and respecting local heritage;

- ♣ Providing ease of movement and resolving conflict between pedestrians/cyclists and traffic;
- ♣ Promoting accessibility for all; and
- ♣ Cognisance of the impact on climate change and the reduction targets for carbon emissions set out by the Government.

- 5.8.4. **CPO 8.10** To protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of Wicklow and to encourage sensitive and sustainable development to ensure its preservation for future generations.
- 5.8.5. **CPO 8.11** To support the work of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in collecting data relating to the architectural heritage, including the historic gardens and designed landscapes of the County, and in the making of this information widely accessible to the public and property owners.
- 5.8.6. **CPO 8.12** To have regard to 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011) in the assessment of proposals affecting architectural heritage.
- 5.8.7. **CPO 8.18** To seek (through the development management process) the retention, conservation, appropriate repair and reuse of vernacular buildings and features such as traditional dwellings and outbuildings, historic shopfronts, thatched roofs and historic features such as stonewalls and milestones. The demolition of vernacular buildings will be discouraged.
- 5.8.8. **CPO 8.19** Development proposals affecting vernacular buildings and structures will be required to submit a detailed, true measured survey, photographic records and written analysis as part of the planning application process.
- 5.8.9. **CPO 8.20** Where an item or a structure (or any feature of a structure) is considered to be of heritage merit (where not identified in the RPS), the Planning Authority reserves the right to refuse permission to remove or alter that structure / item, in the interests of the protection of the County's architectural heritage.
- 5.8.10. **CPO 8.25** To protect and facilitate the conservation of structures, sites and objects which are part of the County's distinct local historical and cultural heritage, whether or not such structures, sites and objects are included on the RPS.

5.9. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.9.1. The subject site is 0.755km from the pNHA Vartry Reservoir (001771), 2.2km from the Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122) and Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040).

5.10. EIA Screening

- 5.10.1. The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for environmental impact assessment (refer to Appendices to this report). Having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development and the types and characteristics of potential impacts, it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. The proposed development, therefore, does not trigger a requirement for environmental impact assessment screening and an EIAR is not required.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

- 6.1.1. An agent for the first party has submitted an appeal against the decision of the Planning Authority to refuse permission. A cover letter attached to the appeal raises the following:
- The Coimisiún is requested to place weight on the favourable items such as the principle of the proposed development, the provision of public and private open space, car parking arrangements and construction management.
 - It would be difficult for the site to be developed if the former Parochial House must remain in situ. The structure would interfere with site layout and a requirement to respect its setting would leave lands as an undeveloped open area.
 - The appellant queries whether the unimportant house should be treated as a de facto protected structure.
 - The structure is not a protected structure and the applicant's conservation expert and the NIAH agree that the structure is of little importance.
 - It is regrettable that the Planning Authority did not seek further information on the technical items outstanding. The applicant is willing to accept conditions should permission be granted.

6.1.2. The grounds of the appeal can be summarised as follows:

- The Planning Authority endorsed almost all of the elements of the proposal, with just two grounds of refusal. The second reason is a technical issue that the Coimisiún could address by way of condition.
- The single issue therefore is the merits of the building on site. The structure is not a protected structure, but the Planning Authority seek to treat it as if it were statutorily preserved.
- It is submitted that the proposed development wholly accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, given the peri-urban location, the pattern of land use and built development in the area and the availability of services and infrastructure.
- The appeal provides details of the site and its environs, with photos and maps, planning history and details of the proposed development. With regard to the county development plan, the appeal notes table 3.1 growth projections, the land zoning of the site, policy SC01 regarding sustainable settlement patterns, and section 8.3 regarding vernacular buildings.
- Referring to the planning assessment of the proposal, the appellant states that the Planning Authority endorses the redevelopment of the site, that a condition for Part V can be attached and that the Planning Authority accepts the proposed public and private open space. The appellant notes the Planning Authority comments on the proposed landscaping and request for a construction management plan.
- The appellant notes that there is a national housing emergency, that the development is clearly needed and that the proposal would not contravene any policies of the development plan.
- The subject structure is not a protected structure and is not on the RPS. It is submitted that the omission of the dwelling from the list is indicative of how the proposal should be treated.
- The appellant notes that while the application was accompanied by a Grade One Conservation Architect report, the planning assessment is not endorsed by an equivalent specialist.

- It is submitted that the Planning Authority seek to treat the structure as if it were a protected structure. It is noted that the adjoining Catholic Church, to which the house was historically connected is on the RPS.
- The Coimisiún is requested to note that none of the Wicklow County Development Plans have ever sought to have the structure included on the RPS.
- The structure was added to the NIAH in 2003. The Planning Authority have been aware of the structure for some time. It is suggested that the Planning Authority places little weight on its value.
- The Planning Authority consideration of the structure as 'vernacular' and referencing CPO8.18 is not explained or supported.
- Policy CPO 8.11 does not seek to elevate the status of NIAH buildings to protected structures but seeks to support the work of the NIAH.
- It is submitted that no evidence has been presented, in a reasonably scientific way that the house is worthy of protection. The appellants expert provides evidence otherwise.
- The NIAH entry is inaccurate and misleading as it suggests that the building was built in 1900-1920, or 1910 whereas it was not built until 1940. Also, the building is not faced with roughcast plaster but pebbledash.
- The applicants Conservation Architect Grade One report concludes that the building was probably built in 1940.
- The NIAH listing states that the dwellings 'is not the most interesting of properties', which may explain why the building was never included on the RPS.
- Given that the Planning Authority had no Conservation Report, the assessment that 'the essential character remains, that it contributes to the special character of the area', is inconsistent with the expert views.
- As newer development has occurred along the road, the role of the dwellings in 'terminating the village' no longer applies. While the dwelling originally marked the edge of Roundwood, it is now adjacent to a range of residential and recreational uses.

- It is submitted that the dwelling is not a heritage asset and is not of regional importance as it does not make a 'significant' contribution to the architectural heritage of the region.
- It is submitted that the Planning Authority sought to treat the dwelling as it were a protected structure. Where a divergence exists between national planning policy such as the NIAH and local planning policy such as the county development plan, the latter always prevails (*Brophy & Nulty v An Bord Pleanála*).
- It is submitted the Planning Authority failed to offer the applicant the opportunity to address the technical shortcomings of reason no. 2. The Coimisiún's attention is drawn to *Boland v An Bord Pleanála* in which it was held that items of a specialist or engineering character would be appropriately dealt with by relevant experts after permission had been granted.
- An RSA and a traffic survey were undertaken after the Planning Authority's internal road departments report. The planning report after the submission of these accepts a 2m wide footpath to the front of the site and a visibility of 59m achievable along the R755. It is submitted that it is open to the Coimisiún to impose a condition requiring sightlines of particular dimensions at the site entrance.
- The concerns raised regarding surface water, infiltration tests on site and sufficiency of drainage can be addressed by planning condition.
- The appeal, in conclusion, requests that the Coimisiún grants permission with conditions.
- The appeal is accompanied by a letter from an Engineering Company, providing the following details:
 - The speed survey undertaken found the 85th percentile speed to be 55.73kph at the entrance.
 - According to table 4.2 of DMURS and using a 60kph design speed, a 59m sightline is required for a non-bus route. Drawing submitted to the Planning Authority clearly details the proposed sightlines achieved.
 - SuDs measures for the development include each property dealing with storm water via private soakaway in rear gardens and permeable paved driveways.

The estate road is drained via a long trench soakaway with the proposed network providing additional storage in the event of the soakaway being backed up.

- With these measures all storm water generated within the site is catered for in the site and will not be discharged to the public surface water sewer as noted in the Planning Authority refusal.
- Drawing submitted to the Planning Authority shows the design intent to cater for surface water on site.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- A Planning Authority should not seek further information where there is a fundamental issue which warrants a refusal of permission.
- The applicant had full access to planning reports during the extension of time period.
- The technical issues raised in reason no. 2 could not be dealt with by way of condition.
- A national housing emergency is not a reason to ignore relevant planning considerations.
- The non-inclusion of the subject structure on the RPS is a matter of fact and noted in the planning reports. The lack of a conservation architect report on the proposal does not undermine the Planning Authority's decision.
- The NIAH rating for the structure is 'Regional Importance'. The Planning Authority assessed the structure having regard to its heritage and architectural features, its location and objective of the development plan.
- The Planning Authority requests the Board to uphold its decision to refuse permission.

6.3. Observations

- 6.3.1. None on file.

6.4. Further Responses

- 6.4.1. None on file.

7.0 Assessment

7.1.1. I have examined the file and the planning history, considered national and local policies and guidance and inspected the site. I have assessed the proposed development. I am satisfied that the issues raised adequately identify the key potential impacts and I will address each in turn as follows:

- Principle of Proposed development
- Heritage
- Traffic
- Storm water / Surface Water

7.2. Principle of the Proposed Development

7.2.1. The subject site is located within the settlement boundary of Roundwood village on zoned and serviced land. I note section 5.4.2 of the CDP which encourages the use of infill and brownfield development sites as a significant opportunity to consolidate the town and village centres.

7.2.2. The proposed development has a density of 18 units per ha. I note table 6.1 of the CDP which provided density standards for three different types of settlements. Roundwood, being a 'small town and village' has three options for density: centrally located sites, edge of centre sites and edge of small town / village sites. I consider the subject site to be 'edge of small town / village' and therefore the applicable recommended density of 15-20 dwellings per hectare, as an alternative to one-off housing. The caveat for such a density is that the development must not represent more than 20% of the total new planned housing stock for the small town or village.

7.2.3. I note section 3.3.5 of the 2024 Compact Settlement Guidelines which notes that rural towns and villages should grow at a limited pace that is appropriate to the service and employment function of the settlement. Similar to the CDP, the guidelines recognise that such areas can provide an alternative to rural one-off housing.

7.2.4. I consider the proposed density to be appropriate, considering the pattern of development in the immediate area is detached housing on individual plots. The subject site can be integrated into the established settlement of Roundwood Village.

- 7.2.5. I note that the Planning Authority raised concerns regarding the layout of the proposed development, the provision of open space and the suburban design of the proposed dwellings but these concerns did not form part of a reason for refusal.
- 7.2.6. I consider the proposed development to be acceptable in terms of public open space, notwithstanding that area B is not directly overlooked by dwellings within the site. I consider that the two areas of green soft landscaping along the southern boundary / entrance to the site to represent the presentation of the new development rather than active open space / recreational space. Both areas of open space will be open to the adjoining public road with footpath and so will benefit from natural passive surveillance by passers-by.
- 7.2.7. In terms of the design of the proposed dwelling, I consider the scale of the subject site to be such that a site specific response is warranted. The proposed designs are not uncommon in established residential areas. The housing mix (three and four bed dwellings only) is not ideal but not of such concern that it warrants a revision or a reason for refusal.

7.3. Heritage

- 7.3.1. The appellant submits that the subject structure on site is not a protected structure, that its NIAH rating is inaccurate and unwarranted and that the retention of the structure would make the site un-developable. The appellant submits that the Planning Authority have placed too much weight on the heritage value of the dwelling and sought to treat it as if it were a protected structure.
- 7.3.2. In response, the Planning Authority state that they assessed the structure having regard to its heritage and architectural features, its location and the relevant objectives of the development plan.
- 7.3.3. With regard to the 'weight' or 'value' to be assigned to the structure vis a vis it not being on the RPS, I draw the Coimisiúns attention to Objective CPO8.20 within which the Planning Authority state that they reserve the right to refuse permission to remove or alter that structure / item, in the interests of the protection of the County's architectural heritage, where a structure is of heritage merit but not on the RPS. Likewise, Objective CPO8.25 seeks to protect and facilitate the conservation of structures, sites and objects which are part of the County's distinct local historical

and cultural heritage, whether or not such structures, sites and objects are included on the RPS. That the subject structure is not on the RPS does not preclude the Planning Authority or the Coimisiún from assessing the heritage value of the structure and deciding that it is worthy of retention. To that end, I note section 8.3.2 of the CDP which refers to vernacular heritage and other structures or items of heritage value. The plan states that while these historic buildings may not be on the RPS, they are nonetheless of merit, making a positive contribution to the character of the landscape and the distinctive character of a particular area.

- 7.3.4. This is backed up by Objective CPO8.10 which seeks to safeguard the vernacular heritage, and encourage the rehabilitation and appropriate re-use of the vernacular building stock in recognition of the vital role it plays in the sustainable development of the County, Objective CPO 8.10 which seeks to protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of Wicklow and to encourage sensitive and sustainable development to ensure its preservation for future generations and Objective CPO 8.18 which seeks to provide for the retention, conservation, appropriate repair and reuse of vernacular buildings and features such as traditional dwellings and outbuildings, historic shopfronts, thatched roofs and historic features such as stone walls and milestones. This policy also states that the demolition of vernacular buildings will be discouraged.
- 7.3.5. I am satisfied that the development plan actively seeks to preserve and maintain structures of architectural / heritage merit, notwithstanding that they may not be listed on the RPS. I note section 5.3.1 of the development plan which encourages heritage to be seen not be seen as a constraint but as a resource to create interesting, attractive and distinctive places. This is further supported by Objectives CPO5.17 and CPO 5.18, which seek to harness and integrate the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive reuse, recognising its important contribution to placemaking and to protect, integrate and enhance heritage assets, including attractive streetscapes and historic buildings, through appropriate reuse and regeneration and restrict inappropriate development that would undermine the settlement's identity, heritage and sense of place
- 7.3.6. The appellant submits that the subject structure no longer fulfils the role assigned to it by the NIAH – that of terminating the village on the south side, also noting that the

functional relationship of the dwelling to the adjoining Church has been terminated. While the lands to the east and west of the site have been developed, the setting and context of the structure – large, ‘somewhat unusual’, detached dwelling on a significant plot, set back and elevated from the road results in structure of visual interest. I concur with the analysis of the NIAH that this is carried out in an authoritative manner. I concur with the finding of the Planning Authority that the structure contributes to the special character of the area and that its demolition would be contrary to the policies of the development plan that seek to preserve and maintain the architectural interest of the County.

- 7.3.7. The Planning Authority, in their planning report, note that the reuse of the existing structure as part of a wider development of the site has not been adequately considered. In response, the applicant stated that any carbon emission from the demolition of the structure would be off-set in ten years by the construction of two A-rated dwellings.
- 7.3.8. I note the policies of the development plan that demolition of a structure with heritage and / or vernacular interest shall not be the first option, that rehabilitation and appropriate re-use is encouraged and that a strong justification for demolition (section 9.2.3 of Appendix 1 of the CDP) is required. To that end, I note that the applicant submitted a revised Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (March 2024) as unsolicited additional information to the Planning Authority. The AHIA submits that the specialist interest of the dwelling has been eroded, and such its demolition is justified.
- 7.3.9. I note that the applicant did not submit a construction and demolition management plan, in accordance with Policy CPO15.1 of the development plan. The decision to demolish a structure, without robust analysis of its suitability for re-use, is entirely at odds with national and local policies on transitioning to a carbon neutral and climate resilient Society (NSO no. 8 of NPF 2025). The national commitment to reducing GHG emissions by 40% by 2030 can not be achieved by demolishing structures because they hamper the re-development of a site where all other options have not been considered. Compliance with the Climate Action Plan 2025 demolition cannot be the first option, that refurbishment, extension or retrofitting must be considered and only dismissed where they “are not possible”. Not cost-efficient does not equal “not possible” and is not in keeping with the national climate objective (to reduce the

extent of further global warming, pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy). The appellant submits that the emission arising from the proposed demolition will be off-set by the construction of two A-rated houses within ten years but I am not satisfied that this has been robustly demonstrated with regard to the ‘embodied carbon’ of existing structures as well as the additional use of resources and energy arising from new construction relative to the reuse of existing structures.

7.4. Traffic

- 7.4.1. The Planning Authority’s second reason for refusal refers to the design of the proposed entrance and the achievement of appropriate sight distances in accordance with DMURS.
- 7.4.2. In response, the appellant notes the RSA, traffic survey and updated engineering drawings submitted to the Planning Authority as unsolicited additional information. The appellant request the Coimisiún to address sightlines by way of condition attached to a grant.
- 7.4.3. The RSA submitted to the Planning Authority identified (section 3 refers) safety problems associated with the proposal. Section 3.1 states that sightlines detailed on the development drawings are 45m and that an existing utility pole is within that line of sight. The audit states that inadequate sightlines and stopping sight distances (SSD) could lead to traffic hazard. The recommendation is that the design team provide a sight line showing that obstructions are outside the sightline envelope and ensure clear visibility in both directions. The Coimisiún will note that the drawing was reviewed by the RSA team (appendix A lists the drawings and documents reviewed as part of the RSA) are the original submissions to the Planning Authority upon application.
- 7.4.4. Drawing no. 221288-ORS-ZZ-00-DR-TR—700-RevP02 was submitted to the Planning Authority as part of the unsolicited additional information. The revised drawing shows a “visibility of 59m achievable along the R755 from a distance of 2.4m setback. The utility pole noted by the RSA is to be “relocated outside of the sight triangle”.

- 7.4.5. The speed survey submitted to the Planning Authority (as part of the unsolicited additional information) states that a speed survey was undertaken on the 50kph road, over a period of three days. The 85th percentile speed limit in the northern direction was found to be 56.86kph and 54.176kph in a southern direction. This resulted in a cumulative 85th percentile speed limit of 55.73kph. The report noted that as this was under 60kph, a visibility splay of 59m would be appropriate as per Table 4.2 of DMURS.
- 7.4.6. The planning report following the submission of the revised drawings, RSA and speed survey, notes that it is 'hard to see how the above sightlines can be achieved without the removal of the mature trees located (to the Roundwood Village centre side) at the current entrance' and notes that the MDE is of the opinion that the applicants haven't provided adequate sightlines to the Annamoe side based on the traffic speed on the R755.
- 7.4.7. I do not consider this to be a fundamental issue, incapable of resolution. Were all matters of the application acceptable, or should the Coimisiún decide to grant permission, the provision of a safe and compliant entrance to the subject site can be achieved by way of condition attached to permission.

7.5. Stormwater / Surface Water Drainage

- 7.5.1. The Planning Authority second reason for refusal referred to the capacity of the receiving stormwater network to cater for surface water generated on the site and the provision of adequate SUDS proposals. The planning report leading to the refusal noted that the MDE raised concerns regarding the proposal that rear gardens are dependent on soakways which are dependent on infiltration tests. The planning report notes that this could result in the development being permitted without a credible surface water drainage solution. Concerns are also raised regarding surface water draining on to the adjoining public road.
- 7.5.2. In response, the appellant requests the Coimisiún to allow such information to be provided by way of condition attached to a grant.
- 7.5.3. As with the site entrance proposal, I consider this an issue that is not fundamentally flawed. Solutions exist for addressing such matters within a site. This is particularly the case on zoned and serviced land within the settlement boundary of an existing

village. I consider it reasonable that the applicant be afforded the opportunity to address the matter by way of compliance with condition.

8.0 AA Screening

- 8.1.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed residential development of six dwellings in a fully serviced built-up urban area, no appropriate assessment issues arise and it is considered that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on a European site.
- 8.1.2. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is 0.755km from the pNHA Vartry Reservoir (001771), 2.2km from the Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122) and Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040). The proposed development comprises the construction of 12 no. dwellings on a brownfield site.
- 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 it could not have any appreciable effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is due to the small scale of the proposed residential development in a zoned and serviced area and the distance to the nearest European site and lack of connections.
- 8.1.4. I consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect individually, or in-combination with other plans and projects, on a European Site and appropriate assessment is therefore not required.

9.0 Water Framework Directive Screening

- 9.1.1. I have concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment (refer to form in Appendix 3 for details)

10.0 Recommendation

I recommend permission be refused for the following reason and considerations:

- 1 The former Parochial House on site listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) and is a building attributed a rating value of regional importance which is of architectural, artistic and social special interest. It is an objective of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 to protect, conserve and manage the built heritage of Wicklow and to encourage sensitive and sustainable development to ensure its preservation for future generations (CPO8.10) and to seek the retention, conservation, appropriate repair and reuse of vernacular buildings (CPO8.18). It is considered that a robust and comprehensive justification for the demolition of the subject dwelling, having regard to the embodied carbon of existing structures as well as the additional use of resources and energy arising from new construction relative to the reuse of existing structures, has not been demonstrated. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

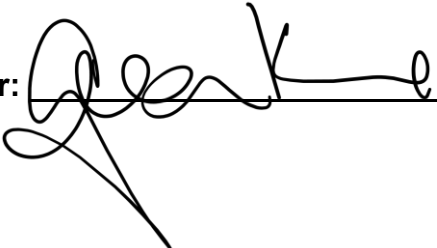
I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.


Gillian Kane
Senior Planning Inspector

13 August 2025

11.0 Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	
Proposed Development Summary	Demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings on site for the construction of 12 dwellings and all associated site works.
Development Address	Togher More, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow
	In all cases check box /or leave blank
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☒ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)	10(b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector:  Date: 13/08/2025

12.0 Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	
Proposed Development Summary	Demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings on site for the construction of 12 dwellings and all associated site works.
Development Address	Togher More, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.	
Characteristics of proposed development	Proposed development of 12 no. dwellings on brownfield, serviced urban site, comes forward as a standalone project, and it does not involve the use of substantial natural resources, or give rise to significant risk of pollution or nuisance. The development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, or is vulnerable to climate change. It presents no risks to human health.
Location of development	Fully serviced urban site within development boundary of well established rural town. No environmental sensitivities
Types and characteristics of potential impacts	Having regard to the nature of the proposed development, its location removed from sensitive habitats/ features; likely limited magnitude and spatial extent of effects; and, absence of in combination effects, there is no potential for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Act
Conclusion	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector:  Date: 13/08/2025

13.0 Appendix 3 WFD

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT: SCREENING			
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality			
An Bord Pleanála ref. no.	ABP-319942-24	Townland, address	Togher More, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow
Description of project		Demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings on site for the construction of 12 dwellings and all associated site works.	
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,		Brownfield site in residential use, on edge of established rural village. Site is located in Flood Zone C.	
Proposed surface water detail		Surface water from proposed dwellings,	
Proposed water supply source & available capacity		New connection to public mains via Uisce Éireann	
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues		New connection to public sewer	
Others?		n/a	
Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection			

Identified water body		Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
River ¹		0.04km	Vartry_020	The status of this waterbody is described as ‘good’ for the period 2016-2021	Not at risk	Urban surface water	Municipal surface water system
Lake ²		0.6km	Vartry Lower	As above	Not at risk	As above	As above
Groundwater body ³		Underlying	Wicklow IE_EA_G_076	As above	At risk	As above	As above
Step 4: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.							
Construction Phase							
No.	Component	Water body receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if ‘screened’ in or ‘uncertain’ proceed to Stage 2.

¹ https://www.catchments.ie/data/#/waterbody/IE_EA_10V010100?_k=3n5m7s

² https://www.catchments.ie/data/#/waterbody/IE_EA_10_10?_k=vjnhbk

³ https://www.catchments.ie/data/#/waterbody/IE_EA_G_076?_k=bs4qrm

1.	River	Vartry_020	None	None	None	no	Screened out
2.	Lake	Vartry Lower	None	None	none	No	Screened out
3.	Ground	Wicklow IE_EA_G_076	Drainage	Hydrocardbo n spillages	Standard construction measures / conditions		Screened out
Step 4: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.							
Operational Phase							
1.	River	Vartry_020	None	None	None	No	Screened out
2.	Lake	Vartry Lower	none	None	none	No	Screened out
3..	Ground	Wicklow IE_EA_G_076	None	None	None		Screened out