



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-320965-24

Development	Renovation and extension of existing cottage, and new septic tank.
Location	Corkagh Beg, Skreen, Co. Sligo
Planning Authority	Sligo County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2460244
Applicants	Frank Caheny
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellants	Frank Caheny
Observers	None
Date of Site Inspection	10 th February 2025
Inspector	Jim Egan

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site, with a stated area of c. 0.268ha, is located on the western side of local road L6302-0 in the townland of Corkagh Beg, c. 500 metres south of the Atlantic coast and c. 17km west of Sligo Town, in northwest County Sligo.
- 1.2. The surrounding area is characterised by a mostly unspoilt open undulating rural landscape with views of the Ox Mountains to the south and intermittent views towards the headlands and Atlantic Ocean to the north. The roadway on which the site is located is more akin to a laneway with a grass median strip, single carriageway and bounded by traditional low dry-stone walls, exposed in parts and with ditch otherwise. The road is a cul-de-sac, commencing at a T-junction with the L2204, c. 850 metres south of the site and terminating at the coast, c. 690 metres to the north. There is a handful of rural dwellings dotted along the laneway, with the nearest one to the appeal site located c. 100 metres to the south (appellant's primary dwelling) and after that the nearest dwelling on the same laneway is c. 400 metres to the northeast.
- 1.3. The appeal site comprises a single-storey stone building, partially in ruin, set back c. 45 metres from the road. The structure sits on an elevated position relative to the surrounding area, making the site and structure largely visible from the wider area, particularly from the north.
- 1.4. The site is accessed from the L6302-0 on the eastern boundary of the site. During a site inspection, I observed that the entrance arrangement comprises a farm style gate set in off the road with stone wall splays in both directions. The structure sits within the field with no driveway from the entrance and no boundaries that differentiates it from the larger field within which it sits.
- 1.5. The existing structure is c. 200 metres from the 'Corcagh Old Graveyard' and 'Templeboy Church' (in ruins), both recorded monuments, ref. SL012-025002- and SL012-025001-.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for the renovation and extension of an existing cottage and installation of a new septic tank with percolation area.

- 2.2. Surface water run-off would be discharged to an on-site soak-pit and potable water would be supplied via public mains.
- 2.3. With reference to the submitted drawings, the proposal comprises the restoration of the existing structure (58sq.m, which includes the floor area of the collapsed section of the building), to accommodate a living room and two bedrooms; and construction of a new single storey rear extension (30sq.m) to accommodate a kitchen / dining room and bathroom.
- 2.4. The plans also show a new driveway to be constructed between the cottage and the existing entrance.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Permission was refused for the following reason:

1. *Based on the information provided with the application and details available to the Planning Authority it has not been demonstrated that the existing structure on the site is a dwelling. As such the proposed development is unwarranted and furthermore the proposed development would result in the provision of a new one-off dwelling within a visually prominent rural area. It is the policy of the planning authority to manage development to restrict the provision of one-off rural housing in accordance with the criteria set out within the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied and extended). As such, the proposed development would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and would set an undesirable precedent.*
2. *It is the policy of the Planning Authority as set out in the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied), to protect the physical landscape, visual and scenic character of County Sligo (P-LCAP-1) areas and to ensure that new development in rural areas can be absorbed and integrated successfully into the rural setting. In designated visually vulnerable areas, it is the policy of the Planning Authority to discourage any developments that would be detrimental to the unique visual character of designated Visually Vulnerable Areas (P-LCAP-2). In addition, it is the policy to generally restrict development in the coastal zone*

except where it can be demonstrated that it does not detract from views, visually intrude on the coastal landscape or impact on environmentally sensitive areas (P-DCZ-1). It is considered given the exposed and elevated nature of the site, its location within the coastal zone and proximity to the visually vulnerable coastline and scenic route the proposed development would seriously injure the visual amenity of the area. The development would therefore not be in accordance with P-DCZ-1, P-LCAP-1 and 2 of the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 and accordingly would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The planner's report, dated 4th September 2024, contains an assessment of the proposed development. Points of note include:

- The structure is not clearly recognisable as a dwelling and is not substantially intact. The structure does not have an assigned Eircode. This indicates that the use of the structure as a dwelling has not occurred for a substantial period. As such the proposal does not comply with Policy PDHOU-1.
- The subject site is exposed in nature and visible from a significant distance away. Given the visual interconnection between the proposed site, the designated scenic route and visually vulnerable area it is considered that the proposed development would not comply with Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 policies P-DCZ-1, P-LCAP-1 and P-LCAP-2. It is considered that the proposed development would seriously injure the visual amenity of the area and would form an obtrusive feature on the landscape.
- Recommended that permission be refused.

Other Technical Reports

Area Engineer – No objection subject to conditions relating to access / sightlines and surface water drainage.

Environmental Services – no objection subject to conditions relating to wastewater treatment and potable water.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

None received.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None

4.0 Planning History

None relevant.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030

The Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 (CDP) took effect on the 11th November 2024 except for those parts of the Plan which are subject to a Draft Ministerial Direction. The Draft Ministerial Direction was issued on the 8th November 2024 and relates to land use zonings in a number of settlements and separately to text relating to access onto national primary roads. I am satisfied that the Draft Ministerial Direction has no direct implications for the appeal site.

Chapter 5 (Settlement Strategy), Chapter 23 (Landscape Character), Chapter 25 (Built Heritage), Chapter 26 (Residential Development) and Chapter 33 (Development Management Standards) of the CDP are all considered relevant.

Chapter 5 (Settlement Strategy)

Strategic settlement policy for Remote Rural Areas:

SP-S-9 Strengthen existing rural communities by facilitating sustainable rural settlement in accordance with the National Planning Framework and the National Policy Objective 19, which requires that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence and rural areas elsewhere.

- A. In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing

in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;

- B. In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

Policy SP-S-11 Accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in Remote Rural Areas, subject to normal planning considerations and compliance with the guidance set out in Section 33.4 Housing in rural areas (development management standards).

Chapter 23 (Landscape Character)

The Landscape Characterisation Map contained within the County Development Plan identifies the following designations:

- **Normal Rural Landscapes:** areas with natural features (e.g. topography, vegetation) which generally have the capacity to absorb a wide range of new development forms – these are farming areas and cover most of the County. Certain areas located within normal rural landscapes may have superior visual qualities, due to their specific topography, vegetation pattern, the presence of traditional farming or residential structures. These areas may have limited capacity for development or may be able to absorb new development only if it is designed to integrate seamlessly with the existing environment.
- **Sensitive Rural Landscapes:** areas that tend to be open in character, highly visible, with intrinsic scenic qualities and a low capacity to absorb new development – e.g. Knocknarea, the Dartry Mountains, the Ox Mountains, Aughris Head, Mullaghmore Head etc.
- **Visually Vulnerable Areas:** distinctive and conspicuous natural features of significant beauty or interest, which have extremely low capacity to absorb new development – examples are the Ben Bulbin plateau, mountain and hill ridges, the areas adjoining Sligo's coastline, most lakeshores etc.
- **Scenic Routes:** public roads passing through or close to Sensitive Rural Landscapes, or in the vicinity of Visually Vulnerable Areas, and affording unique scenic views of distinctive natural features or vast open landscapes. In addition

to remote views, scenic routes have often a distinctive visual character conferred by old road boundaries, such as stone walls, established hedgerows, lines of mature trees, adjoining cottages or farmyards together with their traditional, planted enclosures etc., all of which warrant protection.

A footnote on the map (Note 2) states that *‘Scenic routes are public roads from which the views and prospects to Visually Vulnerable features are to be preserved’*.

Appendix A (Designated Scenic Routes)

Aughris Head (L-2301 turning onto L-6301), between junctions with Beltra-Dromore West coastal road (L2302)

- Views of Knocknarea, Ben Bulbin, the coast and Sligo & Donegal Bays

Policy P-LCP-1 Protect the physical landscape, visual and scenic character of County Sligo and seek to preserve the County’s landscape character. Planning applications for developments that have the potential to impact significantly and adversely upon landscape character, especially in Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas and along Scenic routes, may be required to be accompanied by a visual impact assessment using agreed and appropriate viewing points and methods for the assessment.

Policy P-LCP-3 Preserve the scenic views listed in Appendix C and the distinctive visual character of designated Scenic Routes by controlling development along such Routes and other roads, while facilitating developments that may be tied to a specific location or, in the case of individual houses, to the demonstrated needs of applicants to reside in a particular area. In all cases, strict location, siting and design criteria shall apply, as set out in Section 33.4 Housing in rural areas (development management standards).

Chapter 25 (Built Heritage)

Section 25.3.3 Sligo’s built heritage is not fully reflected in the Record of Protected Structures or ACA designations. There are many modest historic buildings which enrich the character of towns, villages and rural areas throughout the County. Most were built by local people using local materials, in the vernacular tradition, to be used as homes and workplaces. The form, scale, materials, detailing and layout of such

structures contribute positively to the rural landscapes or to historic villages and towns across the County, adding historic and architectural interest, as well as visual amenity. Considering the 'embedded carbon' contained within the older building stock, their retention and continued use or reuse represent sustainable development and best energy conservation practices.

Policy P-VH-1 Generally require the retention, sensitive restoration and sustainable re-use of historic building, structures and features in the County, including vernacular dwellings, farm buildings, paving, historic boundary treatments or layouts. There will be a presumption against the demolition of older buildings where restoration and adaptation are feasible.

Chapter 26 (Residential Development)

Section 26.5.3 (Derelict Houses) - The Council will encourage the renovation and re-use of derelict houses, in preference to their demolition and replacement. Consideration will be given, on a case-by-case basis, to proposals to provide replacement dwellings where restoration is not practical. Whether it is proposed to renovate or replace a derelict house, the subject structure should be clearly recognisable as a dwelling. This means that the main characteristics of a house (i.e. external walls, roof, and openings) must be substantially intact and the structure, when last used, must have been used as a dwelling. In assessing the condition of such structures, the Planning Authority will disregard any recent structural works carried out as an attempt to comply with the above requirements.

P-DHOU-1 Encourage the renovation and reuse of derelict houses and consider proposals for replacement houses on their merits. The structures proposed for renovation or replacement should be generally intact and exhibit the main characteristics of a dwelling. The location, siting and design of any such replacement house shall reflect those of the existing derelict dwelling. Where vernacular non-residential buildings are located on the same site, consideration should be given to their retention or incorporation into any proposed development.

P-DHOU-2 Generally require the retention and restoration of vernacular dwellings of local architectural, cultural or social significance. Demolition and replacement of vernacular houses will be considered only where it is clearly demonstrated, by way of

a suitably qualified engineer's or architect's report, that the building cannot be made structurally sound through reasonable measures.

Chapter 33 (Development Management Standards)

33.2.16 Extensions to dwellings. In the case of a vernacular dwelling, extensions should be sympathetic to the scale of the existing building and should enhance its character.

33.4 Housing in Rural Areas. This section provides a non-exhaustive list of planning considerations used in assessing applications for houses in rural areas.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The site is not located within or adjacent to any designated sites. The Aughris Head SPA (Site Code: 004133) is c. 1.9km to the northwest and The Aughris Head pNHA (Site Code: 000620) is located c. 540m to the north.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

A first-party appeal was received against the decision of Sligo County Council to refuse permission. The grounds of the appeal can be summarised as follows:

- In respect of the first reason for refusal:
 - Census records show the presence of a dwelling on the site.
 - Part of the cottage remains intact with original internal and external features.
 - Structural damage to part of the cottage caused by recent storms, presenting safety concerns.
 - Restoration of the cottage is both practical and viable.
 - Similar cottage restoration project granted under ABP-317004-23.
 - Examples of other cottage restoration projects included.

- No objection from the local authority's engineering or environment sections.
- Restored cottage is needed for family member.
- In respect of the second reason for refusal:
 - While the site is exposed, the restoration of the cottage, an historic structure, would enhance the visual amenity of the area.
 - Intention is to maintain the building's vernacular nature, to use traditional, local materials, and to use all the original stone from the cottage to restore the building.
 - Local support for the project.
 - Support through national policy on the restoration of vernacular buildings, noting a 2021 DoHLGH publication titled *A Living Tradition A Strategy to Enhance the Understanding, Minding and Handing on of Our Built Vernacular Heritage*

6.2. Planning Authority Response

A response, received on the 16th October 2024, refers the Commission to the planner's report and other reports prepared in connection with the assessment of the application. The planning authority also acknowledges the statement and additional information including reference to rural housing need but considered that the applicant's submission to the Commission does not include additional supporting information which would alter the assessment as made within the Planners Report and decision of the Planning Authority to refuse permission, noting that it remains the case that the proposed development is considered to be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

6.3. Observations

None

7.0 Assessment

Having examined the appeal details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal, and inspected the site, and having regard to relevant policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Visual Impact
- Other Matters

The issues of EIA, Appropriate Assessment and Water Framework Directive screening also need to be addressed.

7.1. Principle of Development

- 7.1.1. The planning authority assessed the application against the provisions of the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023. The planning authority's decision was dated 5th September 2024. The current Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 came into effect on the 11th November 2024. For the purposes of clarity, my assessment is based on the relevant policies and objectives of the current County Development Plan, 2024-2030.
- 7.1.2. Albeit based on the policy of the previous CDP, the Planning Authority's first reason for refusal related to the physical condition of the dwelling and considered that it was not demonstrated that the existing structure on the site is a dwelling.
- 7.1.3. Section 26.5.3 of the current CDP (2024-2030) together with associated policy P-DHOU-1, encourages and supports the renovation and re-use of derelict houses, while Policy P-DHOU-2 and Policy P-VH-1 place emphasis on the retention and sensitive restoration of vernacular houses and historic buildings, respectively. A prerequisite to Policy P-DHOU-1 is that a structure proposed for renovation or replacement should be generally intact (i.e. external walls, roof, and openings) and exhibit the main characteristics of a dwelling and that when assessing the condition of such structures, the Planning Authority will disregard any recent structural works carried out as an attempt to comply with the above requirements. Furthermore, by association to the

wording of the policy, and as referred to under Section 26.5.3 of the CDP, the structure, when last used, must have been used as a dwelling.

- 7.1.4. The historic use of the structure as a dwelling appears to be accepted by the planning authority. However, with reference to the first reason for refusal and the associated commentary in the planner's report, the planning authority considered that the structure is not clearly recognisable as a dwelling and is not substantially intact, together with no evidence of an entrance track from the road, no boundaries to the dwelling site, and absence of an Eircode, factors indicating that the use of the structure as a dwelling has not occurred for a substantial period.
- 7.2. The building on the site, which has the attributes of a vernacular cottage, comprises two distinct parts. The southern part is somewhat intact with a window and door opening on the front elevation, a loft level glazed door ope on the northern elevation, albeit no intact loft, a galvanised roof and gables capped with concrete barges. This element of the structure has an external front elevation length of c. 6.2m and a depth of c. 5.7m. The northern part of the structure is in ruin with partially and fully collapsed external walls and no roof. Based on the renovation proposal, this element of the structure has an external front elevation width of c. 6.9m and, as per southern half, a depth of c. 5.7m. As such, submitted documentation would suggest that just over half of the original structure is in ruin.
 - 7.2.1. The submitted first party appeal outlines that the applicant seeks to maintain the building's vernacular nature, to use traditional, local materials, and to use all the original stone from the cottage to restore the building. In my view, this does not imply a sensitive renovation rather a rebuild in which the remnants of the former structure would be used. Furthermore, the application does not include a structural survey of the building or technical details, including method statement, to demonstrate how the building would be sensitively renovated including details of how the existing rubble stone walls, roof and foundations are adaptable to current building regulations.
 - 7.2.2. On the basis of the above, in my view, insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the existing structure is physically capable of being renovated, sensitively or otherwise, without the need for demolition of the structure, inconsistent with both Policy P-DHOU-2 with respect to vernacular houses and Policy P-VH-1 in respect of historic buildings.

- 7.2.3. Having regard to the existing condition of the structure, the majority of which is in ruin, together with the absence of any defined driveway, boundary treatments or septic tank, I consider that the dwelling is not substantially intact and does not exhibit the main characteristics of a dwelling, and therefore not consistent with Policy P-DHOU-1 of the current CDP.
- 7.2.4. On the basis of the above, in my view, the proposal comprises the construction of a new dwelling, or, with reference to the intentions of the applicant, the reconstruction of a former dwelling, the implications of which are discussed below.

New dwelling in the Rural Area

- 7.2.5. CDP policy for new houses in the rural area varies depending on designations that apply to a specific area.
- 7.2.6. CDP Policy SP-S-9 seeks to strengthen existing rural communities and makes a distinction between areas under urban influence and rural areas elsewhere, the latter referred to as Remote Rural Areas. The designation of 'Rural Areas Under Urban Influence' generally applies to the wider vicinity of Sligo town while Remote Rural Areas applies to all other rural areas.
- 7.2.7. Additionally, the CDP Land Characterisation Map identifies 'Sensitive Areas' (Scenic Routes, Sensitive Rural Landscapes and Visually Vulnerable Areas) across the county whilst the zoning map for settlements includes a green belt designation in the immediate environs of the development limit of towns.
- 7.2.8. Under the CDP, a 'housing need' based policy applies to Rural Areas Under Urban Influence, Sensitive Areas and Green Belts. Where a site is located within a Remote Rural Area and not within a sensitive area or green belt, housing need policy does not apply, rather applications are assessed against normal planning criteria such as siting and design.
- 7.2.9. In terms of differentiating between 'Rural Areas Under Urban Influence' and 'Remote Rural Areas', Chapter 5 refers to the Core Strategy Map in Fig. 3.A under Chapter 3 of the CDP. While the map in Fig. 3.A does not provide a clear delineation between 'Rural Areas Under Urban Influence' and 'Remote Rural Areas', in my view the map shows that the appeal site is located within 'Remote Rural Areas'. Furthermore, the site is not located within a green belt and with reference to the CDP Landscape

Characterisation Map (further outlined below), the site is located in a Normal Rural Landscape and thus not within a Sensitive Area (Scenic Routes, Sensitive Rural Landscapes or Visually Vulnerable Areas).

- 7.2.10. On the basis of the foregoing, the provisions of the CDP relating to local need do not apply in this case rather the pertinent issue, in my view, relates to siting and design of the dwelling in the context of visual impact.

7.3. Visual Impact

- 7.3.1. Albeit assessed under the previous CDP, the planning authority's second reason for refusal related to visual impact.

- 7.3.2. Under the current CDP, Policy SP-S-11 seeks to accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in Remote Rural Areas subject to normal planning considerations and compliance with the guidance set out in Section 33.4 Housing in rural areas (development management standards).

- 7.3.1. In terms of visual impact, the relevant criteria under Section 33.4 of the CDP are as follows:

- *Whether the site is in a sensitive area, e.g. adjoining a scenic route, located in a sensitive rural landscape, in a visually vulnerable area, in a coastal zone or in a known flood risk zone;*
- *Whether the site is in an exposed location where the proposed development would be visually obtrusive;*
- *Whether the siting, design and scale of the proposed development are appropriate to the surrounding natural and built environment.*

- 7.3.2. Policy P-LCP-1 of the CDP seeks to protect the physical landscape, visual and scenic character of County Sligo and seek to preserve the County's landscape character. As outlined above, and with reference to the CDP Landscape Characterisation Map, the site is located in a Normal Rural Landscape on account of not being located within a Sensitive Area (Scenic Routes, Sensitive Rural Landscapes or Visually Vulnerable Areas).

- 7.3.3. In terms of Normal Rural Landscape, Section 23.2.2 of the CDP outlines that, in general, such landscapes have the capacity to absorb a wide range of new

development forms however that certain areas located within normal rural landscapes may have superior visual qualities, including due to their specific topography or vegetation pattern, and that these areas may have limited capacity for development or may be able to absorb new development only if it is designed to integrate seamlessly with the existing environment. In this case, the existing structure is located on an elevated site within an open landscape, and in this context, it is my view that this particular site has superior visual qualities due to its specific topography, and thus the location has limited capacity for new development.

- 7.3.4. Furthermore, Section 33.4.2 of the CDP relates to site selection for rural housing, outlining that the placing of a house in the landscape is one of the most important aspects of building in the countryside. Guidance in this regard includes that site selection should avoid elevated or exposed locations such as hill slopes, ridge lines or vast open landscapes where the new building would appear intrusive or break the skyline or the shoreline; that a house should 'nestle' into the site and not dominate the landscape or diminish the quality of scenic views of the surrounding countryside; and that sites should be sheltered, where possible, by topography and by established natural boundaries.
- 7.3.5. The proposed dwelling would have a floor area of c. 88sq.m, which comprises the reconstruction of a former dwelling on much the same footprint (c. 58sq.m) and a single storey lean-to style extension (c. 30sq.m) to the rear / western elevation. Whilst the design of the dwelling is, in my view, sympathetic to the rural area, the new dwelling would sit on the most elevated and exposed part of the field and, with reference to the submitted site location map, the most elevated and exposed part of the land in the applicant's ownership. The site is exposed with no defined boundary or existing vegetation to offer natural screening and the application does not include a landscape plan to demonstrate how proposed boundary treatment or other planting might screen the dwelling. In my view, the proposal fails to meet the site selection criteria of the CDP, and as such, in my view, would have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the rural area, contrary to CDP policies SP-S-11 and Policy P-LCP-1.
- 7.3.6. I note that Section 33.4 of the CDP also makes reference to the 'Coastal Zone'. There are various references across the CDP to a 'Coastal Zone', particularly with relation to coastal erosion and flood risk, however there is no definition of same provided. The

appeal site is located c. 500m from the coast, a distance which, in my view, would not indicate vulnerability with regards coastal erosion or flooding.

7.4. Other Matters

Bats

- 7.4.1. On the basis of the above with respect to the condition of the existing structure, the proposal comprises the construction of a dwelling / reconstruction of a former dwelling. As outlined earlier in my report, the applicant has not submitted any method statements, including if and how the existing external walls and roof would be salvaged as part of the new dwelling and whether works would involve the replacement of these elements entirely and reuse of existing materials. The part of the existing structure which comprises intact walls and a roof has the potential for bat roosting and as such, with the uncertainty with regards the extent of works required to the structure, there is uncertainty with regards the impact on bat roosting if such activity is present. This is a new issue, and the Commission may wish to seek the views of relevant parties however having regard to the substantive reason for refusal set out below, it may not be considered necessary to pursue the matter.

Wastewater Treatment

- 7.4.2. It is proposed to install a new on-site septic tank and percolation area, with design capacity of PE4. I have reviewed the content of the Site Characterisation Form submitted with the application against the requirements of the EPA's Code of Practice for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems, 2021. I consider the proposed wastewater treatment system would be acceptable. The Council's Environmental Services Section considered that the proposals submitted comply with the requirements of the 2021 EPA Code of Practice (2021). If the Commission is minded to grant permission, I recommend that a suitable condition is included.

Development Contributions

- 7.4.3. Table 2 of the Sligo Development Contributions Scheme 2018-2024 outlines that a development contribution of €18 per square metre is applicable for new houses where the area of the house is less than 150sq.m. If the Commission is minded to grant permission, I recommend that a suitable condition is included to require the payment

of a Section 48 development contribution in line with the local authority's current scheme.

8.0 EIA Screening

The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for environmental impact assessment (refer to Form 1 and Form 2 in Appendix 1 of 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.

9.0 Appropriate Assessment

Refer to Appendix 2. Having regard to nature, scale and location of the proposed development and proximity to the nearest European site, it is concluded that no Appropriate Assessment issues arise as 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.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

Refer to Appendix 3. I conclude that 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.

11.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission for the development be refused for the following reasons and considerations.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. Policy P-DHOU-1 of the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 encourages the renovation and reuse of derelict houses and allows consideration of proposals for replacement houses on their merits. The same policy requires that the structures proposed for renovation or replacement should be generally intact and exhibit the main characteristics of a dwelling. Having regard to the existing condition of the structure, the majority of which is in ruin, together with the absence of any defined driveway, internal boundary treatments or septic tank, the Commission considers that the dwelling is not substantially intact and does not exhibit the main characteristics of a dwelling, and therefore the proposal is not consistent with Policy P-DHOU-1 of the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030.
2. By association with the above, Policy SP-S-11 of the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 seeks to accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in Remote Rural Areas, subject to normal planning considerations and compliance with the guidance, specifically site selection criteria, set out in Section 33.4 of the Plan, whilst Policy P-LCP-1 of the Plan seeks to protect the physical landscape, visual and scenic character of County Sligo and to preserve the County's landscape character. It is considered that by reason of the elevated and exposed nature of the site, the proposal would result in an overly dominant feature within the landscape, adversely impacting on the visual and scenic character of the area, contrary to Policies SP-S-11 and P-LCP-1 of the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 and therefore 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.

Jim Egan
Planning Inspector

7th November 2025

Appendix 1 – EIA Pre-Screening (Form 1)

Case Reference	ABP-320965-24
Proposed Development Summary	Renovation and extension of existing cottage, and new septic tank.
Development Address	Corkagh Beg, Skreen, Co. Sligo
	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? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
	☐ No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	
☒ 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?	
☐ No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under	

Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	10(b)(i): Construction of more than 500 dwelling units. On the basis that I consider that the structure on the site is not generally intact therefore, in its current condition, constitutes a 'structure' rather than a 'dwelling'. As such, the proposal constitutes the construction of a new dwelling.

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1 – EIA Preliminary Examination (Form 2)

Case Reference	ABP-320965-24
Proposed Development Summary	Renovation and extension of existing cottage, and new septic tank.
Development Address	Corkagh Beg, Skreen, Co. Sligo
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 (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	The proposed development comprises the renovation and extension of an existing structure for the use as a dwelling, and installation of a new septic tank. The development comes forward as a standalone project, does not require 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 (The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	The site is not located within or immediately adjacent to any designated site. The proposed development would be connected to a public water supply. The proposal would include installation of a new septic tank and percolation area. Stormwater would be directed to a soakaway. It is considered 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.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters,	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

magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	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.
There is significant and realistic doubt regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	
There is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 – AA Screening

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics	
ACP Ref: ABP-320965-24	
Brief description of project	Renovation and extension of existing cottage, and installation of a new septic tank. See Section 2.0 of Inspector's Report.
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	The proposed development comprises the renovation and extension of an existing structure for the use as a dwelling, and installation of a new septic tank. The site is not located within or immediately adjacent to any designated site. The proposed development would be connected to a public water supply. The proposal would include installation of a new septic tank and percolation area. Stormwater would be directed to an on-site soakaway. There are no watercourses or other ecological features of note on or adjacent to the site that would connect it directly to European Sites in the wider area.
Screening report	No. The planning authority concluded that given the nature and scale of the development, and the distance from the EU designated sites in the Natura 2000 network it is considered that the proposed development on its own or in combination with other projects will not have any impact on such sites and accordingly, Appropriate Assessment is not required.
Natura Impact Statement	No
Relevant submissions	No

Step 2: Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model				
European Site (code)	Qualifying interests Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, 14 th October 2025)	Distance from proposed development (km)	Ecological connections	Consider further in screening Y/N
Aughris Head SPA (Site Code: 004133)	Kittiwake (small gull). Conservation Objectives NPWS, 2025	c. 1.9km	No direct connection. Proximity	Y
Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone <u>or</u> in combination) on European Sites				
AA Screening matrix				
Site name Qualifying interests	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*			
	Impacts		Effects	
Aughris Head SPA (Site Code: 004133) Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188]	Referring to the Site Synopsis, the Aughris Head SPA comprises a rocky headland on the north-facing coastline, with a cliff face of 30m, with the SPA extending into the marine area for a distance of 500m from the base of the cliff. Direct: No direct impacts and no risk of habitat loss, fragmentation or any other direct impact. Indirect: <u>Construction:</u> Low risk of surface water runoff from construction reaching sensitive receptors. Intervening land provides a buffer which would dilute any minor emissions. By reason of distance, there is a low risk of noise impacts.		The nature of the proposal and nature of the site in terms of no direct ecological connections or pathways, and intervening land, make it highly unlikely that the proposed development could generate impacts of a magnitude that could affect the qualifying interests of the SPA. Conservation objectives would not be undermined.	

	Operational: New septic tank addresses the risk of foul water entering ground or surface water.	
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): No	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? No	
Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site		
I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on the Aughris Head SPA (Site Code: 004133), or any other European site. The proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European sites. No further assessment is required for the project. No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions.		

Screening Determination

Finding of no likely significant effects

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on Aughris Head SPA (Site Code: 004133) or any other European site, in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

This determination is based on:

- Nature of the proposed development
- Distances to the nearest European sites and the hydrological pathway considerations
- Intervening land uses.

Appendix 3 – WFD Stage 1: Screening

WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING

Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality

Case Ref.	ABP-320965-24	Townland, address	Corkagh Beg, Skreen, Co. Sligo
Description of project	Planning permission is sought for the renovation and extension of an existing cottage and installation of a new septic tank with percolation area. Surface water run-off would be discharged to an on-site soak-pit and potable water would be supplied via public mains. The plans also show a new driveway to be constructed between the cottage and the existing entrance.		
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,	• The site is located in a rural area. • No watercourse within the boundary of the site. • The closest waterbody is a stream c. 230m to the west (EPA Name: DOONFLIN_010, EPA Code: IE_NE_35D100600). Referring to the EPA mapping tool, the stream is part of a larger stream network in the area, generally flowing in a north direction and discharging into Sligo Bay c. 700m to the northwest of the site. EPA mapping also indicates the presence of field drains west of the site, also discharging to the local stream network. • The proposed development site is located within the Sligo Bay Catchment and the Dunmorán_SC_010 sub-catchment. • The site is located in the Collooney ground waterbody, in an area of moderate groundwater vulnerability. • GSI Mapping shows that the site is underlain by deep well drained mineral soil.		

Proposed surface water details	Stormwater run-off from the roof is to be discharged to an on-site soakpit.
Proposed water supply source & available capacity	The application states that mains water is available.
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues	Proposal to install a new septic tank and percolation area.
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)
Unnamed Stream	c. 230m to the west of the site	DOONFLIN_010, EPA Code: IE_NE_35D100600	The River Waterbody WFD 2019-2024 awarded the stream a status of 'Moderate'	At Risk	Agriculture	Surface water Groundwater
Sligo Bay	c. 730m to the northwest of the site	IE_WE_450_0000	The Coastal Waterbody WFD 2019-2024 awarded Sligo Bay a status of 'Good'	At Risk	Unknown	Surface water Groundwater

Collooney groundwater body, in an area of moderate groundwater vulnerability	N/A	IE_WE_G_0048	The Ground Waterbody WFD 2019-2024 awarded Collooney groundwater body a status of 'Good'	Not at Risk	-	Surface water Groundwater
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Step 3: 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.	Construction related contaminants entering ground water and surface water drains.	Unnamed Stream Sligo Bay Collooney groundwater body	Existing	Water quality degradation. Site is underlaid by well-drained soil therefore indicative of relatively fast percolation of water / pollutants.	Standard construction practices.	No	N/A

OPERATIONAL PHASE							
2.	Untreated foul water entering groundwater and surface water drain.	Unnamed Stream Sligo Bay Collooney groundwater body	New	Water quality degradation. Site is underlaid by well-drained soil therefore indicative of relatively fast percolation of water / pollutants	Installation of an EPA compliant septic tank.	No	N/A