



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-321121-24.

Development

Request to enter into pre-application consultation pursuant to Section 177E(1A) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. Retain refurbishment works to an existing cottage, upgrade wastewater treatment system, landscaping, pedestrian bridge over stream and steel transport container.

Location

Ardagh Cottage, Ardagh, Clifden, County Galway.

Planning Authority

Galway County Council.

Prospective Applicants

James O'Driscoll and Geraldine McGuinness.

Date of Consultation Meeting

29 January 2025.

Date of Site Inspection

12 December 2024.

Inspector

Stephen Rhys Thomas.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The Board received a request on the 21st of October 2024 from Andrew Hersey Planning Consultant on behalf of James O'Driscoll and Geraldine McGuinness, to enter into pre-application consultations under section 177E(1A) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. The Board decided to grant this request from the prospective applicants by Direction dated 14th of November 2024.
- 1.2. One pre-application consultation meeting was held on the 16th of January 2025. The purpose of this report is to inform the Commission of the nature of the pre-application consultations undertaken, pursuant to Section 177E(1A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

2.0 Site Location

- 2.1. The site is located in the townland of Ardagh, 3.5 kilometres south of Clifden in county Galway. The lands are located along a minor country road (L1105) and comprise an existing cottage set amidst its garden and the woodland grounds that surround it. A watercourse (Beaghcauneen Stream) runs through the site, with the majority of the applicant's lands located on the opposite bank to the dwelling house. The wider area is characterised by one off rural housing on large garden plots, traditional older dwellings, areas of woodland and large expanses of bog. The site comprises a cottage that has been renovated and is currently occupied. The long edge of the cottage aligns the public road with a porch that opens to a small pedestrian gate. A low wall bounds the site along the public road and a vehicular gateway allows access via a driveway to a parking area to the side and rear of the dwelling. The site falls downwards away from the public road to the stream that bisects the overall lands, a simple timber bridge allows access to the majority of the lands to the south. The lands to the south of the stream are made up of mature woodland with small clearings, the woodland area extends up to the dwelling in places. A transport container and above ground wastewater treatment system are located to the eastern end of the site between the road and the stream, and within

the Connemara Bog Complex SAC. The entire site is within the Proposed Natural Heritage Areas: Connemara Bog Complex.

3.0 Description of Proposal

3.1.1. Permission to retain works to an existing cottage on 0.248 Hectares, detail as follows:

- Front porch,
- Elevation changes,
- First floor loft extension,
- Wastewater treatment system upgrade – Klaro 1 with filter unit, percolation area and tertiary treatment filter,
- Upgrade existing vehicular entrance and some landscaping works,
- A replacement wooden plank domestic pedestrian bridge (8 metres by 1.6 metres) over an existing stream, set on drystone piers,
- A steel transport container (6.1 metres by 2.4 metres) used for storage purposes.
- The works that have been carried out increase the overall floorspace of the cottage by 19.96 sqm to a total of 101.56 sqm. Other works were completed to improve the energy performance of the dwelling.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. The Site – Planning Applications

- 4.1.1. Planning reference 073252 – Permission to renovate and extend cottage and install wastewater treatment system.
- 4.1.2. Planning reference 12156 – Permission to extend duration of 073252.
- 4.1.3. Planning reference 21720 – returned invalid.
- 4.1.4. Planning reference 2460141 – returned invalid.

4.2. The Site – Enforcement

- 4.2.1. Planning reference EN20/213 – cease works and take steps as directed by a) to f) as set out in the notice.

5.0 Legislation

- 5.1. Any subsequent application for Substitute Consent will be lodged under the provisions of section 177E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended and Part 19 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

6.0 Prospective Applicant's Case

- 6.1. The prospective applicant has included the details of the planning application made in the first instance to Galway County Council. It is stated that the planning authority could not accept the application and stipulated the need for an NIS. The applicant sets out the rationale for carrying out the works to the cottage that they originally understood to be exempted development and did not require planning consent. The details of the county development plan policy background are set out and references that the site is located in a Class 5 landscape, the cottage is not a protected structure and finally that part of the site is located in the Connemara Bog Complex SAC. The applicant includes the material prepared for the planning application including; Wastewater Treatment System Inspection Report, AA Screening Report and the relevant drawings and layout plans. The applicant details the separation distances between the wastewater treatment unit, the dwelling and stream and explains the reasons for its position and specific design features of the sealed system. It is explained that a vehicular entrance has always been in position and the improvements have been made to assist construction and the occupation of the dwelling.
- 6.2. The applicant explains that to deal with the planning authority's conclusion that because part of the site is located within an SAC and that there are direct hydrological connections with other designated sites, a remedial Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (rNIS) will be prepared.

7.0 Pre-Application Consultation Meeting

7.1. A Pre-Application Consultation meeting took place via Microsoft Teams on the 29th of January 2025, commencing at 11am. Representatives of the prospective applicant and An Bord Pleanála were in attendance. An agenda was issued by An Bord Pleanála prior to the meeting. The prospective applicant was advised in advance of the meeting that the consultation would relate solely to the administrative procedures around the lodgement of an application, and any associated requirements.

7.2. This report should be read in conjunction with the written record of the pre-application consultation meeting held with the prospective applicant on file. No additional comments were forthcoming from the prospective applicant in relation to the written record. It is not proposed to repeat the contents of those records in detail here. The main topics raised for discussion at the meeting were as follows:

- Introductions
- Description of development and relevant background, clarity with regard to the planning history of the site and clarity regarding the scope of any application.
- Procedural Advice / Queries arising with regard to any subsequent application for Substitute Consent, documentation necessary to accompany such an application, and legislative requirements relating thereto. The fee structure was also explained.

8.0 Conclusion

The meeting concluded with An Bord Pleanála representatives stating that they did not foresee the need for a further meeting but if requested by the prospective applicant, the request would be examined. I therefore recommend that the pre-application consultation process should be closed.

Stephen Rhys Thomas
Senior Planning Inspector

01 December 2025