



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP-321918-25

<b>Development</b>	Demolition of existing derelict farm buildings and the construction of a light industrial park, together with all associated site works. Significant further information/revised plans submitted on this application.
<b>Location</b>	Platin Road (R152), Lagavooreen, Drogheda, Co. Meath
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Meath County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	2460511
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	Manley Developments Ltd
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Grant Permissoin
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	Third Party
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	Cormac McLoughlin
<b>Observer(s)</b>	Boyne Valley Group David & Joanne Deasy
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> of May 2025

**Inspector**

Darragh Ryan

## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The proposed site is located in the townland of Lagavooreen, 1.75km south of Drogheda and 3.7km east of Donore village. The site is in a transitional area at the edge of the the town boundary between residential and industrial development.
- 1.2. The site is accessed off the Plantin Road R152 and sits east of the Knightswood housing estate. Immediately north of the site are greenfield agricultural lands. To the west of the site is a single rural dwelling and a large manufacturing and transportation hub for Boyne Valley Foods.
- 1.3. The site itself is relatively flat and has mature trees and hedgerows therein, with a mature hedgerow dividing the site in two. There is some mature hedging and trees between the site and Knighstwood estate to the west. There are three derelict structures located to the southwest corner of the site. The stated site area of 2ha.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1.1. The following is proposed for the site:

- Demolition of existing structures on site
- Construction of a light industrial park featuring 3 no warehouse/office units. Unit 1 use for manufacturing of timber products.
- New Boundary Treatments to include roadside footpath, cycle lane, grass verge and public lighting.
- New gated site entrance
- Onsite parking facilities
- Totem and Building signage
- Site and civil works including hard and soft landscaping.

Gross floor area of proposed works 5,8115sqm.

### **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

#### **3.1. The planning authority issued a Decision to grant permission subject to conditions. The conditions of note include the following:**

- C2 The development hereby permitted shall constitute 3 no. units to be used for Class 4 (light industrial building) or Class 5 (wholesale warehouse or as a repository) purposes only, as so defined in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2024, and for no purpose, unless authorised by a further grant of permission
- C4 – Details of all signage to be provided to Meath County Council for their written agreement prior to commencement of development
- C6 (a) The mitigation measures contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment lodged with the Planning Authority on 08/12/2024 shall be carried out in full, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, prior to commencement of development.  
  
(b) Prior to the commencement of development, the Applicant shall submit to the Planning Authority, for its written agreement, a bat roost and activity survey prepared by a suitably qualified professional. This report shall include any appropriate mitigation measures, which shall be implemented on the site.
- C9 – Sets out a number of environmental control measures to be employed during the construction of the development
- C11 – A condition seeking final detail to be provided in relation to surface water management including use of SUDS measures.
- C17 – Development Contribution levied of €14,715.00 – social infrastructure
- C18- Development Contribution levied of €47,345.00 – public roads and public transport Infrastructure.
- C19 – Development Contribution levied of €1,919.00 – surface water drainage

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

- 3.2.1. There are two Planning Reports on file. The following is a brief summary of Planning Authority assessment:

- Principle of development was considered acceptable owing to site zoning if “General Enterprise and Employment and Warehousing and Distribution. Site zoned E2/E3 – the proposal is in accordance with zoning for the area.

The Planning Authority had concerns regarding the relationship of the proposed development with the neighbouring residential development, transportation issues, environmental issues (surface water), proposed boundary treatment and the ecological impacts of the proposed development. Further to the above, a number of Third-Party submissions were also received in respect of the proposed development and the Applicant was invited to address same. A detailed further information request was sought for the above.

3.2.2. Upon receipt of further information request – the planning authority considered the following:

- The revised separation distances as provided by the applicant for the proposed unit 1 and Knightswood estate considered acceptable in light of 17.3m separation distance and additional screen planting.
- Revised site sections have been provided and a minimum distance between unit and nearest dwelling is now 26.4m – which is considered a significant increase on what was initially proposed.
- A revised public lighting design has been provided to the satisfaction of the planning authority.
- The applicant supplied a revised site layout plan and road layout plan for the proposed site which includes new footpaths, cycle lane and extended grass verge to the front of the site. Details supplied were noted and considered acceptable.
- The revised surface water design was sent to the Environment Department for comment, there is no objection on grounds of flood risk, the surface water design is acceptable subject to conditions.
- The revised landscaping scheme for the proposed site are considered acceptable.

- The mitigation measures outlined within the Ecological Assessment Report were considered to minimise, compensate and reduce any impacts foreseen as a result of any hedgerow removal on site.
- The applicant submitted a response to the submissions on file and submitted the revised detail as significant further information with revised notices. The details supplied are considered acceptable.

Having regard to the above the planning authority considered the proposed development in accordance with Meath County Development Plan and would not affect the amenities of the area.

### 3.2.3. Other Technical Reports

- Environment Department reviewed information with regard to flood risk and surface water management to the site. No objection in principle subject to conditions relating to surface water management.
- Transportation Department – no objection to public lighting proposal as provided within further information.
- Transportation Department – sought further information be sought on a number of points in relation to roadside boundary treatment, provision of footpath and cycle lanes and accessible car parking spaces. Upon receipt of further information, no objection to the proposed development.

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland – no objection

### 3.4. Third Party Observations

There are three valid submissions on file, the issues raised are also raised as part of the appeal. The submissions can be summarised as follows:

- Detrimental effects on residential amenity and character of the area,
- Negative visual impacts
- Negative impacts on wildlife,

- Increased traffic and associated safety risks,
- Inadequate local infrastructure,
- Pollution – noise/ air/ light/ waste storage,
- Negative impact on value of property,
- Landscape and boundary management.

## 4.0 Planning History

There is no recent planning history for the Site

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Meath County Development Plan 2021 to 2027.

#### 5.1.1. Section 4.7 Economic & employment Strategy – Drogheda is identified as a Regional Growth Centre

The designation of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre in the NPF is a recognition of the strategic location of the settlement along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and its potential to attract jobs and investment. Its connectivity with Dublin and Belfast in addition to Dundalk and Newry highlights the opportunities there are to develop synergies and economic links along this corridor.

The RSES also acknowledges the potential of lands in the Southern Environs of Drogheda to accommodate economic investment in section 4.5 of the Strategy where it states that support is given to “the sustainable development of existing zoned lands in the Northern and Southern Environs of the town with particular emphasis on the promotion of the IDA Business Park as a location for economic investment.”<sup>9</sup>

In addition, there is a large parcel of employment lands at Bryanstown that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the economic development of the area. The Council is committed to the development of a Joint Urban Plan for this area with Louth County Council and to develop the area in partnership in a coordinated and complimentary manner. The economic potential of these lands is evident in the

growth of employment rates in this area during the inter-census period in which persons employed grew by 44%.

ED OBJ 16 - To continue to support and promote the inherent economic potential of the M1 corridor, building upon existing strengths. There will be a focus on developing the corridor as a distinct spatial area with international visibility.

ED OBJ 19 - To promote the Southern Environs of Drogheda as an employment base and encourage the location of start-up businesses in the area.

ED OBJ21 - To encourage the further development of high value added employment and financial services in the Drogheda Environs

#### 5.1.2. Chapter 11 Development Management Standards

DM OBJ 61 - Any planning application for industrial, office, warehousing and Business Park Development shall address the following development assessment criteria:

- To require innovative contemporary designs for new industrial, office, warehousing and business park developments.
- External finishes shall be suitable for the local/natural landscape
- That indicative site coverage for industrial/commercial development on greenfield sites is 50% coverage unless the design characteristics of the scheme, proposed uses and mobility management plan indicate support for higher site coverage.
- In town center locations, in order to encourage and facilitate the development of a compact town center, and to achieve desirable massing and heights of buildings, plot ratio and site coverage of 1.5 and 70% respectively will generally be the norm.
- To require that **full details of the proposed use(s), including industrial processes involved are provided.**
- To require that full details of the hours of operation be provided.
- To require that details of suitable access arrangements, internal roads layout including details of footpaths, turning areas, loading bays be provided.



- Boundaries which are visible from the public road should be of a high architectural quality. Palisade fencing to the front of any building line shall not be permitted.
- The use of retention ponds as an urban design feature within business parks will be encouraged to enhance the setting, subject to compliance with all relevant safety requirements.
- To require that proposals for and location of onsite areas for storage and disposal (if applicable) of waste be provided as part of any planning application. All external storage including bin storage, oil tanks, etc, shall be visually screened from public areas.
- To require that waste and recycling areas be covered, screened and enclosed from public view and wind, compliant with the Council's Waste Management Strategy.
- All overground oil, chemical storage tanks should be adequately bunded to protect against spillage.
- To require that a survey of any existing vegetation onsite and a suitable landscaping scheme prepared by an appropriately qualified professional, taking account of same, be submitted as part of any planning application to enhance the development.
- Open space shall be provided in suitable locations as part of the development in order to enhance the development and provide amenity and passive recreation for future employees.
- To require that all significant Industrial, Office, Warehousing and Business Park Development incorporate works of public art in the form of outdoor sculptures, special architectural and landscape features or other appropriate art work in the development.
- To require that all planning applications for Industrial, Office, Warehousing and Business Park Development on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares are accompanied by a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- To require that all new developments with over 100 employees shall have a Mobility Management Plan.

- To encourage the provision of supporting facilities for employees including childcare facilities, leisure uses and coffee shops in business parks.
- To encourage research and development activities as an ancillary part of all new and existing business parks in the County in conjunction with 3rd level Institutions.

## 5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA - 1.55km from the site

River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC – 1.55km from the site

## 6.0 EIA Screening

See completed form 2 on file. Having regard to the nature and scale of development and the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity of the site as well as the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning & Development Regulations there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

## 7.0 The Appeal

**7.1. This is a third-party appeal against the decision of Meath County Council to grant permission for a light industrial park and all associated works. The appeal is from a resident of Knightswood residential estate immediately west of the site. The issues can be summarised as follows:**

- Impact on residential amenity –

The proposed structures at 14.7m high are excessive in height and will have a detrimental impact on enjoyment of their homes. The proposal will result in loss of light.

The proposal is wholly unsuitable in a substantially residential neighbourhood. Modular Timber Frame manufacturing not suitable.

The use of the buildings for industrial use is not acceptable, in a location that is predominately residential.

The proposal will result in a significant increase in noise and air pollution.

The proposal will result in an increase in traffic congestion

- Nature of Use –

The proposed use is not acceptable use in a residential area. No details of the level of manufacturing have been provided.

- Ecological Impact

The proposal will result in loss of hedgerows and result in a loss of biodiversity on site.

## **7.2. Applicant Response**

- None

## **7.3. Planning Authority Response**

A letter from Meath County Council Planning Department was received on 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2025 – The planning authority are satisfied that the subject proposal was appropriately considered throughout the course of the assessment of the planning application as detailed in the respective Planning Officers report dated 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2024 and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025.

## **7.4. Observations**

There is a two observations on file. The issues raised overlap with the grounds of appeal. The observation can be summarised as follows:

- Privacy – The observers family home “Eagle Lodge” is in close proximity to the proposed development site. The proposed use of the site for the manufacturing of timber modular buildings is not suitable for this location.
- Development Type – Modular timber frame manufacture is not considered light industrial and therefore not compliant with zoning of E1 as set out in the County Development Plan.

- Protected Structure – The proposed development will have a direct impact on adjacent protected structure – Eagle Lodge. The proposal will be only 20 meters from the existing protected structure.
- Environmental Impact –  
Surface Water run-off – no details of cumulative water run-off from parking, run off from materials that will most likely be stored outdoors, waste areas etc.  
Industrial Waste – the proposed development does not consider on site waste segregation, airborne fines, dust etc that form waste streams from a manufacturing facility such as the one proposed.  
Fire – The suppression of fire for the development has not been considered within the application.
- Traffic Impact – There has been no traffic surveys undertaken to determine the additional levels of traffic that may occur as a result of the proposed development. The applicant should be mandated to carry out same. The additional traffic on the R512 is not capable of being accommodated.  

There are significant concerns with regard to traffic safety and access off the R512.

## 7.5. Further Responses

- None

## 8.0 Assessment

8.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the reports of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local/ regional/ national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal to be considered are as follows:

- Principle of Development – nature of use
- Impact on residential amenity
- Ecology/ Impact on Wildlife

- Other Issues
- Appropriate Assessment

## 8.2. Proposed Development

The proposal consists of the construction of 3 warehouse/industrial type buildings on greenfield site between existing Industrial buildings (Boyne Valley Group) to the east and existing residential development (Knights Wood) to the west. Unit number 1 as proposed is to be the primary manufacturing unit for the site and to be used in the manufacture of timber modular units. There is some storage and office use associated with this building. At its closest point this building will be 26.4m from nearest residential dwelling. Units 2 & 3 are divided by a proposed internal road, their proposed use is indicated as storage and office use.

A proposed new access is proposed off the R152 and construction of internal road network including footpaths is proposed in the centre of the site to facilitate the development. A significant level of car parking is proposed together with turning areas (concrete yards) for HGV's.

The proposed units will extend to a height of 14.7m. A detailed landscaping plan has been submitted with the application to provide a buffer of landscaping between the proposed site and residential development in particular.

## 8.3. Principle of Development – Nature of use

- 8.3.1. The site is zoned E2/E3 – "General Enterprise and Employment" and "Warehousing and Distribution". In this context, the principle of providing a manufacturing facility is considered acceptable. However, the appellant argues that the proposed use—namely, a modular timber building manufacturing facility—is not appropriate within a predominantly residential area. Emphasis is placed on the residential character of the surrounding neighbourhood and the anticipated significant negative impact on the amenity of adjacent properties.
- 8.3.2. The planning authority has imposed Condition 2, restricting the development to uses falling under Class 4 (light industrial building) or Class 5 (wholesale warehouse or

repository), as defined in the Planning and Development Regulations. According to these regulations, a "light industrial building" is one in which the processes or machinery used are such that they could be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area due to noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust, or grit. An observation on file contends that the proposed use—modular timber frame manufacturing—does not constitute light industry and, therefore, does not comply with the zoning objective.

- 8.3.3. The site is zoned E2/E3 – "General Enterprise and Employment" and "Warehousing and Distribution". The purpose of this zoning is to provide for the creation and production of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment. I note Industry – General and Industry Light are both permitted uses under this zoning. In accordance with Development Management Standard DM OBJ -61, the applicant is required to provide a breakdown of all industrial processes to be undertaken on site to enable a robust assessment of the proposed use. The application lacks any considerable details on key aspects of the proposal, such as the scale of manufacturing activity, the nature and location of any incineration processes, or the presence of filtration and noise mitigation systems. The only process-related information provided refers to operations at an alternative site and appears in the applicant's response to third-party submissions, rather than within the core application documentation. Units number 2 & 3 are indicated to be used for warehousing and office use only, therefore my concerns in terms of nature of use are confined to the manufacturing element associated with unit no 1 only.
- 8.3.4. While the planning authority has imposed a condition mandating strict environmental control measures during the construction phase—and while considerable mitigation detail has been provided in that context—there remains a notable deficiency in the information submitted regarding the operational phase of the development. In my view, this absence of clarity around on-site manufacturing processes renders it impossible to determine whether the proposed use constitutes light industry as defined in the planning and development regulations. Although the principle of light industrial use is acceptable on this zoned land, it is not evident from the submission whether the proposed activities fall within the scope of that use class.

8.3.5. In light of the concerns raised by the appellant and other observers regarding residential amenity, the Board may wish to seek further detail from the applicant on the specific nature and scope of on-site manufacturing processes. Policy Objective DM OBJ 61: requires the applicant to provide full details of proposed uses including industrial processes involved. While the provision of a light industrial building may be acceptable in principle at this location, the lack of adequate information around the operational aspects of the proposal means the applicant has not sufficiently demonstrated that the proposed development aligns with the definition of light industry under the Planning and Development Regulations. I therefore, do not consider the proposed development (unit 1) is acceptable in the absence of aforementioned information. Units number 2 & 3 as proposed are for warehouse and office use, which do not have a manufacturing component indicated. The principle of their use is considered acceptable.

#### 8.4. Impact on Residential Amenity

8.4.1. Both the appellant and observers on file have made a number of assertions stating that the proposed development will have a detrimental impact on residential amenity from a number of perspectives, including overbearing design and loss of light as result of the proposed structures, loss of view, noise and light pollution in addition to air pollution from on site manufacturing. In the interest of clarity, each aspect will be considered under separate headings.

#### 8.4.2. Design/ Proximity to neighbouring residential properties

8.4.3. Concerns were raised by the planning authority regarding the proximity of the proposed warehouse units to neighbouring residential properties, particularly in terms of potential overshadowing and associated loss of daylight. In response to a request for further information, the applicant submitted a revised site layout for Unit No. 1 (manufacturing facility), which indicates a separation distance of 26.4 meters from the adjoining residential development. I note that Development Management Standard 11.5.7 of the Meath County Development Plan sets out a recommended minimum separation distance of 16 meters between opposing rear first-floor windows in residential developments. While this standard is not directly applicable to light

industrial development, it serves as a useful reference point in assessing potential residential impacts. The proposed separation distance exceeds this standard.

8.4.4. The proposed building height of Unit No. 1 is 14.7 meters. A mature tree line and hedgerow currently exist along the eastern boundary of the site, and the applicant proposes to reinforce this boundary with additional screen planting. While I acknowledge the concerns raised by the appellant and observers in relation to overshadowing, I do not consider the degree of overshadowing likely to be persistent throughout the day. The units are located to the east of the adjoining residential properties, with a setback from property boundaries. Moreover, the existing tree line is likely to contribute to intermittent overshadowing in any event. Given the site's zoning and substantial existing vegetation, I consider the degree of overshadowing to be within acceptable parameters for a transitional location.

8.4.5. The proposed units are industrial in nature, and a contemporary design approach has been adopted, with clean, modern elevation treatments and stone features proposed at the building entrances. The wider eastern area of the site is predominantly industrial in character, with the Boyne Valley Group operating an extensive site in the vicinity, including visible industrial infrastructure. The proposal is supported by a comprehensive landscaping plan, which should aid in assimilating the development into the local environment. In addition, detailed architectural treatment is proposed for the site entrance, incorporating contemporary signage and gated infrastructure. The boundary treatment includes 2.4-metre-high smooth-rendered piers with 2-metre-high round bar railings. A 2-metre-wide public footpath, 1.2-metre cycle lane, and 0.7-metre grass verge are proposed outside the boundary, designed to match existing roadside finishes.

While it is acknowledged that development on a largely greenfield site will inevitably result in a degree of visual change, I do not consider the proposed design or visual impact to be excessive or detrimental to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. In my view the design detail as submitted are acceptable and not a substantive issue with which to warrant a refusal in this instance.

8.4.6. Light Pollution

8.4.7. The appellant raises concerns regarding the level of light pollution associated with the proposed public lighting scheme and its potential impact on residential amenity.



A comprehensive lighting report has been submitted with the application, which outlines the position and layout of proposed lighting columns. The report includes full technical details on the type, number, and distribution of lighting standards, as well as lux levels and any potential overspill onto adjacent residential properties.

8.4.8. At the closest point to the Knightswood estate, specifically to the rear of property No. 144, lux levels of 19 lux are recorded. The highest recorded lux level along this boundary is 71 lux, though this occurs within the car park and internal access roadway, set back from the site boundary. A reality contour plan has also been provided, indicating the level of lux overspill into the rear boundaries of the dwellings in Knightswood directly adjoining the site, lux overspill is limited to between 1 and 2 lux. This is considered a negligible level of light intrusion.

8.4.9. Furthermore, I note that there is an existing mature tree line along the site boundary which is to be further supplemented by additional screen planting, offering further attenuation. In my opinion, the applicant has adequately demonstrated that the proposed lighting scheme will not result in a significant or unacceptable impact on residential amenity in terms of light pollution.

8.4.10. Noise Pollution

8.4.11. Concerns have also been raised by the appellant and observers regarding the potential for noise disturbance arising from on-site operations and associated traffic movements. I note that limited detail has been provided regarding the nature of the manufacturing operations proposed within Unit No. 1. In their response to a request for further information, the applicant refers to an existing comparable operation at another location, which has not generated residential complaints. However, no site-specific operational noise assessment/ noise model has been provided for the proposed development. The planning authority has recommended the inclusion of a standard noise condition to address potential construction-related impacts. In the absence of more detailed information concerning the operational processes proposed, I am not in a position to fully assess the likely noise impact associated with the manufacturing facility.

8.4.12. The Meath County Development Plan does not prescribe specific decibel thresholds for industrial noise emissions. Nonetheless, in the event that the Board is minded to grant permission, I recommend the inclusion of a condition controlling operational

hours and limiting permitted operational noise levels, particularly along the western boundary adjoining the Knightswood estate, to ensure that residential amenity is protected.

#### 8.5. Ecology/ Impact on Wildlife

The appellant and observers on file make reference to potential impact on wildlife as a result of the proposed development. The applicant states the requirement to carry out a bat survey prior to commencement of development sets out issues in relation to the assessment of bat populations in the local area. Issues regarding the removal of internal hedgerow has also been cited as a primary concern. As part of the application the applicant has submitted an Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Thorne Ecology. The assessment carried out in December 2024, identifies all potential flora and fauna, relationship of the site to Protected Habitats, full details of hydrology and hydrogeology and sets out an assessment of construction stage effects and operational stage effects. The proposal also includes mitigation measures particularly during the construction phase to manage any potential impacts.

- 8.5.1. I consider the report as submitted offers a detailed overview of the site and the potential impacts are clearly outlined. Noting the appellants concerns in relation to loss of wildlife, I note the site is on zoned land and the proposal includes a number of mitigation measures to retain as much biodiversity as is feasible.
- 8.5.2. No sightings or signs of protected species were observed during the site visit. Narrow mammal tracks around the edges of the fields indicate fox may use the area for hunting. The grassland, scrub and hedgerow are likely to support small mammals such as mice, shrew and hedgehog. The drainage ditches, if water accumulates, may provide habitat for frog. The only NBDC records within the 1km square where the site is located are for New Zealand flatworm (2012), 3 ladybird species (2014), and hedgehog (roadkill, 2012).
- 8.5.3. Birds seen or heard using the site were; rook, hooded crow, jackdaw, magpie, great tit, dunnock, chaffinch, long-tailed tit, robin, wren and song thrush. A disused swallow nest was noted in the old farm house building (Figure 4, Photo 6). Otherwise, broad-scale bird atlas records (2011) indicate that a range of common and protected

species are present in the wider area. Protected wetland bird records (at 10km scale) are likely to be associated with the estuary habitats and Boyne Estuary SPA. Also of note are the numerous records of swift within Drogheda town centre.

- 8.5.4. The disused farm buildings were built with a mix of materials, but include an old stone shed, some older brickwork, and wooden floors/flushing/rafters, and are accessible through open/broken doors and windows. As such they have the potential to support bat roosts. Three bat species have been recorded in the wider area - pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (2017) ca. 1.4km southeast, soprano pipistrelle ca. 1km north near Boyne Bridge in Drogheda (2010), and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* (2011) ca. 0.5km southwest. Owing to the time of year a bat survey was not undertaken, however the mitigation measures outlined takes a conservative approach assuming the presence of bats on site. This shall be assessed further under section 8.5.7 below.
- 8.5.5. The grassland habitats, scrub habitats, and buildings are of low local ecological value, but nonetheless supporting some flowering plants providing foraging for insect species, as well as providing resting and hunting areas for fox and small mammals. The hedgerow/treelines are of high local value. They include flowering shrubs, are important for ecological connectivity in the landscape, and provide foraging, nesting and commuting habitats for invertebrates, birds and mammals, including bats. Of the fauna present, or likely to be present, within the zone of influence of the proposed development, bats potentially using the buildings on-site are of high local value, given their protection under Annex IV of the habitats directive. The breeding bird population includes birds protected under the wildlife acts, and birds of conservation concern, and as such, breeding birds are considered to be of high local value. Based on desktop and field data, other terrestrial mammal fauna is likely to be limited to small mammals and fox, which are of lower local value.
- 8.5.6. The mitigation chapter of the Ecological Impact Assessment provides clear mitigation strategies for the protection and preservation and reinstatement of all ecology during the construction and operation phase of the development. The mitigation includes, measures for Habitat Protection and reinstatement measures to avoid and reduce water borne pollutants entering the environment, measures to avoid and reduce dust emissions, measures to protect birds and other fauna, measures to prevent spread of invasive species and measures to protect bat populations (if present)

Based on the level of detail supplied within the assessment, I am confident that all realistic measures have been taken to protect the local habitat and in some places reinstate habitat.

8.5.7. Regarding concerns in relation to the local bat populations and the incomplete nature of the assessment as referenced by the appellant and observers on file, I consider the Ecological Impact Assessment has taken a conservative approach and has provided mitigation measures based on an assumption that bat roost are present on site. These mitigation measures include the following:

- Site-lighting for the construction and operational phases of the development must be directed away from boundary hedgerow vegetation, be limited to work-specific areas and be shielded to minimise spill to avoid impacts to foraging/commuting bats. Following completion of bat survey, the lighting design shall be amended accordingly. In all aspects lighting design shall follow best practice and following guidelines, Bats and Lighting – Guidance Notes for Planners, Engineers, Architects, and Developers (Bat Conservation Ireland, 2010). Bats and Lighting in the UK – Bats and the Built Environment Series (Institute of Lighting Professionals, September 2018). Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01 (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2011). Guidelines for consideration of bats in lighting projects – Eurobats.
- A bat survey will be required in advance of demolition and vegetation-removal works proceeding. An initial bat roost assessment shall be carried out by a bat ecologists, followed by activity surveys of any potential roost sites. This shall follow Collins (2023) and would need to be undertaken between the May and September period inclusive.
- If bat roosts are confirmed in any tree or structure which must be removed, a bat mitigation strategy will need to be developed by a bat specialist and a derogation licence under Regulation 54 of the Birds and Habitats Regulations sought from NPWS.
- Trees should only be felled or lopped where strictly necessary. Even if the bat survey does not confirm roosts, where mature or ivy-clad trees are to be felled they will need to be checked for the presence of roosting bats by a licenced bat worker on the day of felling or the preceding day. In the event that any

bats are found, they should be allowed to remain in-situ and work should temporarily cease in that area until a bat mitigation strategy can be prepared and agreed with NPWS, and a derogation licence sought.

- Removal of any mature or ivy-clad trees shall be carried out in between September and mid-November, to avoid maternity and hibernation seasons when bats are most vulnerable to disturbance (and also avoid the bird breeding season). Tree removal will not take place on days where daytime temperatures fall below 10°C (when bats are likely to enter torpor).
- Deadwood from mature felled trees, including branches, trunks and brash, shall be retained in a designated area of the site and left to decay naturally to enhance insect availability on the site. For trees with low bat roost potential (i.e. other than those specified as Potential Bat Roosts), then work may proceed with care with soft-felling i.e. tree limbs are cut and left grounded over night to allow any bats to make their way out.
- 3 no. tree-mounted bat boxes, such as Schwegler 2F's14, are to be installed within the site on buildings at least 3m above ground. They must be placed in a dark area. Placement of boxes shall be determined by the bat ecologist undertaking the roost and activity survey.

8.5.8. I am satisfied the mitigation measures as proposed can offer adequate protection during the construction and operational phase, so that any potential bat roosts and bat feeding grounds on site are adequately protected and disturbance minimised. The site is on zoned lands with an anticipation of development. The correct measures in relation to bat mitigation as detailed in the Ecological impact Assessment provides clear and unambiguous detail in relation to the protection of bat species. In this regard, I am satisfied that the potential of impact on local ecology including local bat population has been well considered and the applicant has adequately addressed this issue.

## 8.6. Other Matters

### 8.6.1. Protected Structures

An observer on file expresses concerns about the proximity of the proposed development to Eagle Lodge, a protected structure located approximately 50 meters

to the south of Unit No. 1, on the opposite side of the public road. The key issues raised relate to potential impacts on daylight availability and general setting. Having regard to the location of the proposed buildings relative to the protected structure, I am satisfied that the development will not result in significant overshadowing, as the units are located to the north and are physically separated by the public road and landscaping. The issue of loss of views has also been raised; however, I note that the site is zoned for 'Enterprise and Employment / Warehousing and Distribution' in the Meath County Development Plan. As such, the principle of this form of development has already been established. There is no entitlement to a protected or uninterrupted view under planning legislation where such views are not designated in the Development Plan. In this regard, I do not consider that the proposed development will have a material adverse impact on the character or setting of the protected structure and do not consider this issue to be of such significance as to warrant a refusal of permission.

#### 8.7. Surface Water Management

- 8.7.1. Concerns by the appellant on file in relation to the level of SUDS measures proposed are not sufficient to retain the greenfield run-off from the site. It is stated that no consideration has been given in relation to storm water runoff running adjacent to the north of the proposed development, there is no additional treatment to run off from parking etc have been considered. Objective INF OBJ 15 of the Meath County Development Plan requires the use of SuDS in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions).
- 8.7.2. The applicant is proposing a program of SUDS measures to accommodate the proposal. There is an existing drain to the north of the site which was dry on the day of the site inspection. The applicant has provided a full SUDS layout plan indicating level of infiltration on site achieving 100% infiltration
- 8.7.3. The proposed site coverage is at 40% with a large portion of green area provided around the perimeter of the site. It is proposed to install high level filtration tree pits to attenuate the surface water runoff from the road surfaces, with permeable paving parking areas and two large infiltration swales in accordance with SUDS methodology. The attenuation swales is proposed to cater for excess of 1:100yr

storage and only allow discharge at 4l/sec (2l/s/ha). Construction work will involve the excavation of foundation ca. 1.2m deep for the industrial units and ca. 1.0m deep for the attenuation swales.

Having regard to the level of detail provided, I am satisfied that surface water is not a substantial issue with which to warrant a refusal reason in this instance.

## 8.8. Traffic

- 8.8.1. Concerns regarding increased traffic levels resulting from the proposed development have been raised by both the appellant and observers. In response, the planning authority, as part of its request for further information, sought a revised site layout, including recommended amendments to the internal road and footpath network, provision of cycle parking, and compliance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). A revised front boundary treatment, including a set-back, was also requested. The applicant subsequently submitted a revised layout addressing these matters. The planning authority, including its Roads and Transportation Department, raised no objection to the proposal on traffic-related grounds following the submission of the revised plans.
- 8.8.2. No Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) was submitted with the application. While no breakdown of anticipated employee numbers or site visitation figures was provided, I note that the Meath County Development Plan provides guidance rather than a strict requirement for the submission of a TTA. The thresholds outlined include industrial developments exceeding 5,000 sq.m and warehousing/distribution uses exceeding 10,000 sq.m. The total proposed floor area of 5,815 sq.m, is for both the manufacturing and warehousing/distribution centre is below the required threshold for TTA. The proposal does not, in my view, necessitate the submission of a formal TTA given the scale, context, and zoning of the site.
- 8.8.3. The proposed development includes provision for 90 car parking spaces, of which 20% are to be electric vehicle (EV) ready. The development is to be fully DMURS compliant, incorporating a 0.7m cycle lane and sheltered bicycle parking. The site is to benefit from a new access set back off the regional road. As part of the application the applicant has demonstrated adequate sightlines, auto track analysis and stopping sight distances for access into the site. Access for pedestrians and cyclists has also been considered in the design of the new entrance. The adequacy of the

road network to accommodate the additional development has, in my view, been considered through the development plan process, underpinning the site's zoning. I consider it appropriate that a condition be attached to any grant of permission requiring the addition of a mobility management plan to the site.

- 8.8.4. Having regard to the zoning of the site, the scale of the proposed development, the revisions made to the internal layout, and the absence of objection from the Roads and Transportation Department, I am satisfied that traffic impacts do not constitute a substantive ground for refusal in this instance.

## **9.0 AA Screening**

- 9.1.1. I have considered the proposed development at Platin Road (R152), Lagavooreen, Drogheda, Co. Meath in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

The subject site is located c 1.55km south of River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA and River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC . There are no drainage ditches or watercourses in the vicinity of the development site that provide direct connectivity to European sites. The drainage ditch to the north of the site was dry on the day of the site inspection, there is no evidenced connection between this drainage ditch and any European Site. Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were taken into account in the decision process.

- 9.1.2. The proposed development comprises the construction of 3 warehouse units on predominately greenfield site, on zoned lands on the outskirts of Drogheda.
- 9.1.3. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows;

- The nature and small scale of the development,



- The location of the development site and distance from nearest European site(s), and the weakness of connectivity between the development site and European sites.
- Taking account of the screening report/determination by the Planning Authority.

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

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

## 10.0 Recommendation

I recommend a split decision as follows:

10.1. I recommend that a split decision should be made, as follows:

A grant of permission is recommended for the construction of two warehouse/office units, new site entrance, internal roads, footpaths and all associated site works.

- (1) Grant permission for units no 2 & 3 to be used as warehouse/ office accommodation associated with the use of the proposed site as a Light Industrial Park . construction of new site entrance, internal roads, footpaths and all associated site works.

A refusal is recommended for the construction of unit no 1.

- (2) Refuse permission for the construction of unit no 1 – manufacturing unit for the construction of modular timber farm manufacture

## 10.2. **Reasons and Considerations (1)**

It is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed construction of a light industrial park and construction of units 2 & 3 for the purposes of Light Industrial Use (warehouse & office use), would be consistent with the zoning for the site, would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity or on the local environment. It is considered that the proposed new entrance and

layout would not be detrimental to traffic impact in the local area and the proposal can proceed without undue impact on traffic safety. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### 10.3. **Reasons and Considerations (2)**

In the absence of sufficient information that demonstrates a breakdown of the industrial process on site in accordance with Standard DM OBJ -61 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027, the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposed development (unit 1) can be classed as “light Industrial Development” as required by the site zoning and planning and Development Regulations 2020 (as amended). The Board cannot be satisfied that the manufacturing processes on site would not have a detrimental impact on amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of noise and air pollution, therefore, the granting of permission for unit 1 in this instance would be contrary to DM Standard OBJ – 61 of the Meath County Development 2021 – 2027 and contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## 11.0 **Conditions**

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application as amended by the further plans and particulars received by the Planning Authority on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December 2024 and the 19<sup>th</sup> day of December 2024, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The development hereby permitted (units 2 & 3) shall be used for Class 4 (light industrial building) or Class 5 (wholesale warehouse or as a repository)

purposes only, as so defined in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2024 (as amended), and for no purpose, unless authorised by a further grant of permission.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

3. (a) Drainage arrangements including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the relevant Section of the Council for such works and services.

(b) All surface water generated within the site boundaries shall be collected and disposed of within the curtilage of the site. No surface water from roofs, paved areas or otherwise shall discharge onto the public road or adjoining properties. All outfalls and their locations will be agreed in advance with the relevant section of the Council for such works and services.

(c) All surface water shall be managed in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems design as submitted with the application. Prior to the commencement of development the developer shall submit to the Planning Authority for written agreement a Stage 2 - Detailed Design Stage Storm Water Audit. Upon completion of the development a Stage 3 Completion Stormwater Audit to demonstrate Sustainable Urban Drainage System measures have been installed, and are working as designed and that there has been no misconnections or damage to storm water drainage infrastructure during construction, shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement.

Reason: In the interest of public health and surface water management.

4. (a) No advertisement or advertisement structure (other than those shown on the drawings submitted with the application) shall be erected or displayed on the building (or within the curtilage of the site) in such a manner as to be visible from outside the building, unless authorised by a further grant of planning permission.

(b) Prior to commencement of development the applicant shall submit for the written agreement of the planning authority final design detail of all signage to be erected on site.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

5. (a) The mitigation measures contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment lodged with the application shall be carried out in full.

(b) Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall submit to the Planning Authority, for its written agreement, a bat roost and activity survey prepared by a suitably qualified professional. This report shall include any further mitigation measures, which shall be implemented on the site.

(c ) All public lighting on site shall be designed and fitted in accordance with Lighting Design report as submitted with the application. Site-lighting for the construction and operational phases of the development must be directed away from boundary hedgerow vegetation, be limited to work-specific areas and be shielded to minimise spill in order to avoid impacts to foraging/commuting bats.

Reason: In the interest of protection of key ecological receptors and local flora and fauna.

6. The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including hours of working, noise management measures and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste.

Reason: In the interest of public safety and residential amenity.

7. During the operational phase of the proposed development the noise level shall not exceed (a) 55 dB(A) rated sound level between the hours of 0700 to 2000, and (b) 45 dB(A) 15min and 60 dB LAfmax, 15min at all other times , as measured at any point along the western boundary of the site.

Procedures for the purpose of determining compliance with this limit shall be

submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: To protect the [residential] amenities of property in the vicinity of the site

8. A plan containing details for the management of waste (and, in particular, recyclable materials) within the development, including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of the waste and, in particular, recyclable materials, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Thereafter, the waste shall be managed in accordance with the agreed plan.

Reason: To provide for the appropriate management of waste and, in particular recyclable materials, in the interest of protecting the environment.

9. No additional floorspace shall be provided in any unit, either by way of subdivision of any unit, or the provision of mezzanine floorspace, or otherwise, without a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: In order to clarify the development hereby permitted, (and to comply with the zoning provisions of the development plan for the area).

10. All goods, including packaging, crates etc. shall be stored or displayed only within the enclosed area of the buildings.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

11. Prior to the opening of the development, a Mobility Management Plan (MMP) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority. This shall provide for incentives to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking by residents/occupants/staff employed in the development. The mobility strategy shall be prepared and implemented by the management company for all units within the light industrial park

Reason: In the interest of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

12. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by

or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.

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

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Darragh Ryan  
Planning Inspector

14<sup>th</sup> of May 2025

# Form 1

## EIA Pre-Screening

<b>An Bord Pleanála</b> <b>Case Reference</b>	321918-25		
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Demolition of existing derelict farm buildings and the construction of a light industrial park, together with all associated site works		
<b>Development Address</b>	Platin Road (R152), Lagavooreen, Drogheda, Co. Meath		
<b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?</b> (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)		<b>Yes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part 2 Class 10 Infrastructure Projects Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.	Proceed to Q3.
<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>3. Does the proposed development equal or exceed any relevant THRESHOLD set out in the relevant Class?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>No</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Less than 10 hectares – built up area	Proceed to Q4

4. Is the proposed development below the relevant threshold for the Class of development [sub-threshold development]?			
Yes	✓	Part 2 Class 10 Infrastructure Projects Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere. Stated site area is 2 ha.	Preliminary examination required (Form 2)

5. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?		
No	✓	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q4)
Yes		

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

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



## Form 2

### EIA Preliminary Examination

<b>An Bord Pleanála Case Reference</b>	<b>ABP-321918-25</b>
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Demolition of existing derelict farm buildings and the construction of a light industrial park, together with all associated site works
<b>Development Address</b>	Platin Road (R152), Lagavooreen, Drogheda, Co. Meath
<p><b>The Board carried out a preliminary examination [ref. Art. 109(2)(a), Planning and Development regulations 2001, as amended] of at least the nature, size or location of the proposed development, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Regulations.</b></p> <p><b>This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.</b></p>	
<p><b>Characteristics of proposed development</b> (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).</p>	<p>Demolition of existing structures on site – old farm buildings to very south of the site. Not of architectural merit</p> <p>Construction of a light industrial park featuring 3 no warehouse/office units on zoned lands within the town boundary of Drogheda. New Boundary Treatments to include roadside footpath, cycle lane, grass verge and public lighting. New gated site entrance . Onsite parking facilities. Totem and Building signage Site and civil works including hard and soft landscaping. Gross floor area of proposed works 5,8115sqm.</p>

	<p>The site is on zoned land with a proposed light industrial use, the proposal is not exceptional in the context of permitted adjacent land uses.</p>
<p><b>Location of development</b></p> <p>(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).</p>	<p>The site is a greenfield site situated with existing derelict buildings thereon. The site is situated between industrial and residential development and therefore the proposal is not exceptional for the area. The area can be classed as a transitional area.</p> <p>There is a small level of demolition proposed, subject to standard measures the control and management of waste can be managed through standard best practice methodology.</p> <p>An Ecological Impact assessment carried out, precautionary approach taken with mitigation measures, their implementation are recommended as conditions.</p>
<p><b>Types and characteristics of potential impacts</b></p> <p>(Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).</p>	<p>There are no identifiable hydrological/ecological connector pathways between the application site and any SAC or SPA. This combined with the distance and built up intervening environment between the application site and the SAC/SPA removes any potential connector/receptor pathways. Therefore no impacts/effects are predicted.</p> <p>There are no other locally sensitive environmental</p>

		sensitivities in the vicinity of relevance.
<b>Conclusion</b>		
<b>Likelihood of Significant Effects</b>	<b>Conclusion in respect of EIA</b>	<b>Yes or No</b>
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.	<b>No</b>

**Inspector:**

**Date:**

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

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

(only where Schedule 7A information or EIAR required)