



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-321974-25

Development	Construction of a 2-bedroom dwelling, revised existing vehicle entrance, connection to mains sewer and water services and all associated site works and landscaping.
Location	Gortalocha, Barrymore, Athlone, Co. Roscommon
Planning Authority	Roscommon County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	PD/24/60563
Applicant(s)	Patrick & Anne O'Meara
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Patrick & Anne O'Meara
Observer(s)	None received.

Date of Site Inspection

3rd April 2025

Inspector

Paul Christy

Contents

1.0 Site Location and Description	5
2.0 Proposed Development	5
3.0 Planning Authority Decision	8
3.1 Decision:	8
3.2. Planning Authority Reports	8
3.3. Prescribed Bodies	10
3.4. Third Party Observations	10
4.0 Planning History.....	10
5.0 Policy Context.....	10
5.1. National Policy	10
5.2. County Roscommon Development Plan, 2022-2028, Volume 1	11
5.3. County Roscommon Development Plan, 2022-2028 Vol. 2, Section 4.1 'Hodson Bay/Barrymore Area Plan	12
5.4. Natural Heritage Designations	13
5.5. EIA Screening	13
6.0 The Appeal	14
6.1. Grounds of Appeal	14
6.2. Planning Authority Response	17
6.3. Observations	17
7.0 Assessment	17
7.1. Overview	17
7.2. The Principle of Development	17

7.3. Pattern of Development	21
7.4. Design Approach.....	22
7.5. Amenities of Host Dwelling To North.....	22
7.6. Amenities of Dwelling To West.....	23
7.7. Amenities of Dwelling To South	23
7.8. Flood Risk	24
8.0 AA Screening.....	25
9.0 Other Matters.....	26
9.1. Lough Ree Propose Natural Heritage Area (pNHA).....	26
9.2. Structure in South-West Corner of Proposed Plot.....	26
9.3. Dual Use of Private Driveway.....	26
9.4. Junction of Private Lane and Public Road: Vision Lines	27
10.0 Recommendation	27

Appendix 1 – Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

Appendix 1 – Form 2: EIA Preliminary Screening

Appendix 2 – Form 2: AA Screening

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site is located in the residential area of Barrymore, situated between the N61 to the west, and Lough Ree immediately to the east. The Roscommon County Development Plan, 2022-2028 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Development Plan') includes an Area Plan for Hodson Bay/Barrymore and the site is within the Plan boundary. Lough Ree is designated as: a Special Conservation Area (Site Code 000440); a Special Protection Area (site code 004064) and a Proposed Natural Heritage Area (site code 00040).
- 1.2. The subject site is located on the eastern edge of the residential area of Barrymore and immediately adjacent to the Lough shore. It is within a small headland developed in the form of individual plots of varying sizes and shapes. Within this headland, there is a coherent and identifiable sub-area of twelve houses generally located either side of a private laneway. Six of the houses are accessed off the private laneway. The remaining six houses are accessed off a public road to the south. It is proposed to sub-divide one of the plots accessed off the private laneway, the easternmost plot overlooking the Lough shore, to enable development of the proposed dwelling.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. **Overview:** Construction of a 2-bedroom dwelling, revised existing vehicle entrance, connection to mains sewer and water services and all associated site works and landscaping. The development is proposed to be facilitated by the sub-division of an existing dwelling plot.
- 2.2. **Siting:** The existing overall plot measures 0.71 acres and has generous gardens to the west and east, and a tennis court plus additional gardens to the south. The proposed dwelling is to be developed on the area of the existing tennis court and part of the gardens to the south of the existing dwelling (hereinafter referred to as 'the host dwelling') in a plot measuring 0.18 acres. The remaining 0.53 acres is to be retained as the curtilage of the host dwelling. The tennis court is defined by: tall,

`densely planted coniferous trees on its western side; wire fencing, shrubbery and a traditional stone wall on its northern side; wire fencing on its eastern side; and wire fencing and shrubbery on its southern side. As well as the host dwelling, there are additional dwellings in close proximity to the site on its western and southern sides. The host dwelling and the dwelling immediately to the south are orientated broadly north-west to south-east and broadly parallel with the Lough Shore. The proposed development is orientated broadly west-east and therefore at right angles to the existing houses and the Lough Shore.

- 2.3. **Detailed Design:** The proposed dwelling is contemporary in style. Of note is the minimal fenestration proposed on either side elevation. A core, central module is predominantly rectangular in shape and provides ‘upside down’ accommodation at ground and first floor level. Two bedrooms and a utility space are proposed at ground floor level, together with a car-port on the south-western (landward) side. A living room, kitchen/diner and snug/office are proposed at first floor level. A first floor projection containing a balcony area over a ground floor terrace area is also proposed on the north-eastern (Lough shore) side. For approximately two-thirds of the main module, a single pitch roof formed of dark brown/black coloured vertical slatted timber/ timber effect cladding system is proposed. This finish is also proposed for the upper floor of the north-western elevation. A PV solar panel system is incorporated into the single pitch roof. Otherwise, an off-white napped render finish is proposed for most of the elevations, whilst another dominant feature is the proposed natural stone cut cladding finish for a two-storey projection on the north-western side of the dwelling. There are several additional design features including: standing seam metal roof and parapet finish and coping; and reconstituted stone coping.
- 2.4. **Universal Design:** In the conclusions of their appeal statement, the Agents note that the dwelling meets age-friendly criteria contained in Section 3 of the Development Plan. In the Design Statement that accompanied the application to the Local Authority, the Agents advised that the development would provide a: *‘step-down’ retirement dwelling, which will be a smaller contemporary home of a very high design quality, with a higher level of accessibility and Universal Design as standard.*

- 2.5. **Renewable Energy:** The proposed development incorporates: *‘high performance in terms of having an efficient building envelope and high specification insulation, with proposed features including heat recovery ventilation and solar energy collection via Photovoltaic panels on the south facing mono-pitch roof, in addition to other renewable energy technologies.’*¹
- 2.6. **Screening:** The following items are identified on the site layout plan:
- North-western (host dwelling side) boundary: Mixed native hedgerow infill and reinforcement planting; and existing stone wall to be retained and preserved;
 - Eastern (lakeside) boundary; existing trees and extensive scrub and hedgerow to boundary edge to be retained;
 - South-eastern boundary (party boundary to south): Mixed native hedgerow infill and reinforcement planting.²
- 2.7. **Access:** The host dwelling is one of six dwellings served by the private laneway. The laneway is 300m or thereby in length and joins the public road at a junction at its southern end. The host plot is located at the end of that laneway. Within the plot, a further 41m of private driveway serves the host dwelling. Various minor works are proposed at the junction of the private laneway and private driveway, and along the private driveway.
- 2.8. **Foul Effluent:** It is proposed to connect to an Uisce Eireann mains sewer located in, or very close to, the public road slightly to the south-east of the subject plot and site boundary.
- 2.9. **Drinking Water:** It is proposed to connect to an existing water main on the communal private laneway.
- 2.10. **Surface Water:** It is proposed to dispose of surface water via a ‘soakaway’ in the north-east corner of the proposed plot.

¹ Section 2, ‘Design Principles and Approach, Design Statement, Graphite Design Ltd (submitted with application made to Local Authority).

² The site layout does not identify any screening proposals for the western boundary. This boundary is currently formed of tall, densely planted evergreen trees as referenced at para. 2.2.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1 Decision:

3.1.1. Refuse for four reasons:

- Reason 1 was concerned with the overall design concept (including siting, sub-division and access), and asserted that the development would: be out of character with the existing pattern of development in the area (low density residential development predominantly located on individual plots); set an undesirable precedent; and be injurious to residential amenities and depreciate the value of property in the vicinity. It was also concluded that the development would be contrary to the Policy Objective HB 3 of the Area Plan, which policy is to encourage developments that are *'quality driven and of high architectural merit, will enhance their surroundings and respect this visually and environmentally sensitive area.'*
- Reason 2 was similar to Reason 1, but with a particular conclusion that the development *'would adversely affect the residential amenity of residences in the vicinity of the site, including potential issues in relation to overlooking.'*
- Reason 3 addressed potential adverse affects on the integrity of the adjacent Natura 2000 sites.
- Reason 4 addressed potential flood risk and concluded that, in the absence of a Flood Risk Assessment³, it had not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not cause flooding elsewhere.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

- 3.2.1. Planning Report: One report on file dated 4th February 2025 signed by an Executive Planner and countersigned by a Senior Executive Planner and Senior Planner respectively. The report addresses, inter alia, the following key issues:

³ In accordance with the provisions of the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG, 2009)

- The Natura 2000 issues, as captured in Refusal Reason 3, noting that in order for the Planning Authority to carry out a Stage 2 Assessment, the applicants would be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement and that this had not been submitted with the application.
- In a section headed 'Strategic Assessment (Policy Issues)', noted the location of the site within the Area Plan and that the Area Plan reflected the Council's recognition of *'the potential of the area for consolidation opportunities for low density residential development in a pattern consistent with the character of the area ...'*.
- Referred to the setting of the site and concluded that the proposed development would result in an uncoordinated and haphazard approach to development. Similarly, it was concluded that the relationship of the proposed dwellings with those to the north, west and south was not typical of the established pattern of development in the area, and would impact negatively on the amenities of residential properties in the vicinity, particularly to the west and south. Specific reference was made to the first floor balcony and its proximity to the property to the south and west and the potential to create *'undue overlooking'*.
- Noted the proposed access arrangements and observed that no documentary evidence had been submitted to verify the applicants' legal entitlement to use the private lane. Also observed that the private driveway serving another dwelling was *'not considered an appropriate siting and design response'* but that this would not be included as a refusal reason as *'the access appears to be in the ownership of the applicants'*.
- Noted concerns in relation to flood risk, referring to both the OPW's identification of the site as having a high probability of fluvial flooding ie. 1 in 10 year flood event, and to the development appearing to constitute 'highly vulnerable' development as defined in the Flood Risk Guidelines. Noted that a flood risk assessment had not been submitted with the application *'in lands which have been identified to have flooded in the past'* and that it had not

been demonstrated that the proposed development would not flood or cause flooding elsewhere.

3.2.2. [Other Technical Reports] None.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

3.3.1. None.

3.4. Third Party Observations

3.5. None.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. **Subject Site:** P.A. Ref. PD/06/266: Extensions to host dwelling. 2006 Grant.

4.2. **Wider Barrymore Area:** P.A. Ref. PD17/237, ABP Ref. 248962: One-off dwelling on lands zoned 'Transitional Agriculture' in the Hodson Bay/Barrymore Area Plan. 2018 Refusal on grounds of applicant not meeting the criteria for rural generated housing in the 'Transitional Agriculture' zoned area.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Policy

5.1.1. Compact Growth; Brownfield/Infill Development: As noted in the appeal submission, there is strong support for compact growth, and brownfield/infill development at the national level. In the National Planning Framework (hereinafter referred to as 'the NPF'), this includes: National Strategic Outcome 1: 'Compact Growth'.

5.1.2. Meeting the needs of an ageing population: NPF National Policy Objective 30 requires policy development to have: '*a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population*'....

5.1.3. Flood Risk: The 'Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment – Guidelines for

Planning Authorities [DEHLG, 2009] (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Flood Risk Guidelines’) and the NPF (eg. refer NPO 57) identify flood risk as a key planning consideration.

5.2. County Roscommon Development Plan, 2022-2028, Volume 1

- 5.2.1. Chapter 2, ‘Core Strategy’: In Table 2.3: ‘Settlement Hierarchy’, ‘Hodson Bay’ is included in the list of ‘Serviced Villages’. In the Table, these settlements are described as being *‘serviced by public sewerage and have a capacity to facilitate a degree of residential demand.’*⁴
- 5.2.2. Policy Objective CS 2.2: *‘Implement all land use planning policy and objectives consistent with the Core Strategy, in order to accelerate a transition to a greener, low carbon and climate resilient county, with a focus on reduced travel demand through the promotion of sustainable settlement patterns.’*
- 5.2.3. Policy Objective CS 2.3: *‘Direct growth towards designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services as far as practicable.’*
- 5.2.4. Chapter 7: ‘Infrastructure, Transport and Communications’: Policy Objectives ITC 7.51 and ITC 7.52 (and Policy Objective HB 10 in the Area Plan) address flood risk in the context of having regard to the EU Flood Risk Directive, the Flood Risk Regulations (S.I. 122/2010), and the Flood Risk Guidelines. The policies refer to the sequential approach and application of the Justification Tests in Development Management, the need to ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for development proposals impacting on flood risk areas, and the need to ensure the protection of lands liable to flooding.
- 5.2.5. Chapter 8: ‘Climate Action, Energy and Environment’: Policy Objective CAEE 8.14: ‘Promote the integration of energy efficient systems in all new development proposals, as well as the retrofitting of existing development, in order to increase

⁴ It is assumed that the reference to ‘Hodson Bay’ is intended to mean Barrymore and Hodson Bay on the basis that the accompanying Map 2.2 identifies ‘Hodson Bay/Barrymore’ as a ‘Serviced Village’ and the Area Plan in Vol. II is for ‘Hodson Bay/Barrymore’.

energy efficiency throughout the built environment in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

- 5.2.6. Chapter 10: 'Natural Heritage': Policy Objective NH 10.1: 'Ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity of the County.'
- 5.2.7. Policy Objectives NH 10.7, NH 10.8 and NH 10.9 (and Policy Objective HB 7 in the Area Plan) address Natura 2000 sites and have generally similar themes around the obligation on the country to protect these sites in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive.
- 5.2.8. Policy Objective NH 10.10 and Policy Objective HB 7 in the Area Plan have similar themes around actively promoting the conservation and protection of NHAs and pNHAs.
- 5.2.9. Chapter 12: 'Development Management Standards': 'Section 12.13: 'Storm Water Disposal': Includes note that: 'Surface water may be disposed of to soak pits ...'

5.3. **County Roscommon Development Plan, 2022-2028 Vol. 2, Section 4.1 'Hodson Bay/Barrymore Area Plan**

- 5.3.1. Overview: The Area Plan area boundary encompasses both a largely residential area (the southern one-third of the area, approximately) and an area with a stronger focus on leisure and tourism (the middle and northern thirds, approximately). The subject site is located within the largely residential area. The Area Plan identifies a narrow strip of 'Green Belt' in the vicinity of the front (lake side) boundary of the site and extending to the lake shore.
- 5.3.2. In a section of narrative in the Area Plan headed 'Settlement Context', which section presumably refers to the southern residential area, it is noted that this area: *'is generally characterised by single dwellings on individual sites, and low density multi-unit residential development within the Plan boundary. Although not a traditional village, the area nonetheless has a strong resident community. There is continued residential demand in the area, owing to its scenic and amenity value on the shores of Lough Ree, along with its logistically advantageous location in proximity to Athlone*

and also within short driving distance of Roscommon town.'

- 5.3.3. Section headed 'Introduction': In this section of narrative, the Authority: *'recognises the potential of this area to further develop its leisure/tourism economy and consolidate opportunities for low density residential development in a pattern consistent with the character of the area, and as an attractive alternative to single dwellings in the wider rural area.'*
- 5.3.4. Policy Objective HB 3: *'Encourage developments which are quality driven and of high architectural merit, which will enhance their surroundings and respect this visually and environmentally sensitive area.'*⁵
- 5.3.5. Section headed: 'Residential Development': There are no policies/objectives in the Area Plan specifically relating to residential development. This section of narrative includes the following statement: *It is acknowledged that in some instances infrastructural improvements, including footpaths, lighting and other accommodation works may need to be provided to accommodate residential proposals.'*
- 5.3.6. Section headed 'Green Belt Areas': Policy Objective HB 8 and HB 9 have similar themes on maintaining and protecting greenbelt lands.

5.4. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.4.1. The site is located: (a.) immediately adjacent to the Lough Ree Special Conservation Area (Site Code 000440); (b.) in close proximity (c.37m) to the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (site code 004064); and (c) immediately adjacent to Lough Ree Proposed Natural Heritage Area (site code 00040).

5.5. EIA Screening

- 5.5.1. In a Pre-screening Report prepared as part of this Inspector's Report (refer Appendix 1, Form 1), it is concluded that the proposed development falls within Class 10(b), Part 2 (dwelling units) of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations

⁵ The wording of this policy was included in the Local Authority's Refusal Reason 1 although the 'HB 3' label was not referenced.

2001 (As Amended). The Report concludes, therefore, that it is necessary for the Board to undertake a preliminary examination of at least the nature, size and location of the development in accordance with Article 109(2)(a) of the Regulations. This preliminary examination is contained in Appendix 1, Form 2 wherein it is concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. One first party appeal was received from agents on behalf of the applicants. The appellants group their grounds of appeal in relation to (a.) Reasons 1 and 2; and (b.) Reasons 3 and 4. The summary below follows this format.

6.1.2. Reasons 1 and 2:

- Refusal reasons referenced ‘unidentified’ provisions of the Development Plan. As a practicing architectural designer, confident in the architectural quality of the dwelling;
- Random nature of development in Barrymore is what gives it its ‘distinct and appealing character’ and the proposed development respects the architecture of adjoining dwellings.
- Residential amenity of existing dwellings will not be impinged. Applicants consulted neighbours ‘who voiced no objections’. There were no submissions to the Council; attach a letter from the owner of the dwelling to the south ‘attesting support’ for the development.
- Re property value depreciation, submits that if this were to be the case, one would have expected ‘some level of submission’. Consulted a professional estate agent on property values. Attach a letter from that Agent ‘indicating that the proposed development would, if anything, have a positive effect on similar properties in the area and no negative impacts.’ Note that the Council did not

adduce any evidence as to why they consider that property value would decrease.

- Refers to Design Statement (submitted with the application to the Local Authority) and the examination in detail therein of issues of overlooking and design features utilised to minimise overlooking. Observes that: 'Generally, the first floor windows in the existing and proposed dwellings are not in habitable rooms...'
- Very little visibility of the proposed dwelling from the public areas – effectively none from Lough Ree and virtually none from the public road.

6.1.3. Reasons 3 and 4:

- The only parameter in the AA Screening Report prepared by the Council *'appears to be distance'*. *'There are a number of gross errors in the document.'*
- All the impacts referred to in the Screening Report are based on the premise that the site intersects the SAC. Has examined detailed maps prepared by NPWS (maps attached with appeal submission) and superimposed the site map on the said detailed NPWS maps. This clearly shows that the site, whilst close to the SAC, is clearly to the west of, and not in it. This also applies to all the other dwellings and their attendant grounds in the area. The SPA boundary is further to the east (than the SAC boundary) and therefore there is no intersection between the site and that designation.
- The Council did not include any 'readable' maps with their Screening Report which would justify their contention of intersection with the designated sites.
- Requests that the Board would request an NIS (to allow a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment) should it find that significant impacts cannot be ruled out.
- Re flooding, the Council does not include any maps to justify their contention that there is a risk of flooding.

- The reason no formal flood risk assessment was carried out is that it is clear that the site is adequately separated (height wise) from the water levels in Lough Ree encroaching on their property. Lands in the locality are generally around 4m above the typical water levels in Lough Ree. Applicants have lived in the adjoining site for over 30 years, during which time ‘the lands have never flooded, its neighbours’ lands have never flooded and the prospect of water levels in Lough Ree rising by over 4m is so catastrophic that its effects cannot be fully contemplated.
- The OPW has not determined that this is an area for further assessment.
- Flood defences have recently been constructed in Athlone and the barriers are c. 1.2m high.
- On the OPW flood maps, the site is not identified as being at risk of flooding.
- Refers to the ‘low road’ to the east of the site and that it could on occasion flood. Refers to an event in 2009 and, on basis of a survey undertaken, compares the flood level (the highest level Lough Ree has reached in the last 30 years) with the proposed dwelling finished floor level (ffl). Concludes that the highest flood level is still 2.3m below the proposed ffl.
- Since there is no work proposed in the flood plain, there is no possibility that the proposed dwelling could cause flooding elsewhere.

6.1.4. The submission concludes by noting extensive policy support at national and regional level and references: compact development; re-use and brownfield development; optimal use of site capacity and use of infill sites; demographic and household change will demand more 1 and 2 bedroom units which are well designed and integrated.

6.1.5. The conclusion also references support in the Development Plan and cites: relevant parts in Section 3 supporting age friendly housing; Section 3.9 specialised housing; Section 4.10 infill sites; and Section 12.6 residential development including the preparation of a design statement.

- 6.1.6. Finally, the conclusion also references the 'Barrymore Area Plan' and notes that that Plan promotes: the preservation of residential amenities, the use of existing infrastructure and high quality architectural design.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- 6.2.1. None received.

6.3. Observations

- 6.3.1. None received.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Overview

- 7.1.1. Having examined the application details, and all other documentation on file including the submission received in relation to the appeal, the report of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal to be assessed are as follows:

- The principle of development;
- The pattern of development;
- The design Approach;
- The amenities of the dwellings to the north, west and south;
- Flood risk; and
- Appropriate Assessment

7.2. The Principle of Development

- 7.2.1. In general terms, support for the principle of development is provided in both Volumes of the Development Plan. In Table 2.3 of the Core Strategy in Volume I,

Serviced Villages are described as being *‘serviced by public sewerage and (having) a capacity to facilitate a degree of residential demand’*. In the ‘Introduction’ to the Area Plan in Volume II of the Development Plan, the Authority: *‘recognises the potential of this area to ... consolidate opportunities for low density residential development...’*

7.2.2. Notwithstanding the aforementioned provisions, key Core Strategy Policy Objectives CS 2.2 and CS 2.3 raise further matters to be considered by the Board. Policy Objective CS 2.2: seeks to: *‘Implement all land use planning policy and objectives consistent with the Core Strategy, in order to accelerate a transition to a greener, low carbon and climate resilient county, with a focus on reduced travel demand through the promotion of sustainable settlement patterns*⁶’; while Policy Objective CS 2.3 seeks to: *‘Direct growth towards designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services as far as practicable*⁷’.

7.2.3. At my site inspection, I observed that there were no conventional services or amenities for the residents of Barrymore that would be typical of a sustainable settlement (excluding the leisure and tourism facilities in Hodson Bay to the north). Referring again to the Area Plan, it is acknowledged therein that: *‘Community facilities in Hodson Bay/Barrymore are principally related to leisure and amenity provision. The resident community generally gravitate towards Athlone for retail, commercial and social related facilities. The area is served by a church and national school a short distance to the north west of the Plan area off the N61 at Ballybay, and with St. Brigid’s Gaelic Football Club further to the north’* (refer p.165). At site inspection I also observed that Barrymore is also very poorly served in terms of footpaths and street lighting. The main ‘spine road’ from the National Road junction to the Lough shore measures c.1.5km. Footpath and public lighting is provided for only 250m along the ‘spine road’ from the National Road junction. In the Area Plan, it is again acknowledged that: *‘in some instances infrastructure improvements, including footpaths, lighting and other accommodation works may need to be provided to accommodate residential proposals.’*

⁶ My emphasis

⁷ My emphasis

7.2.4. I would now consider whether the proposed development would be consistent with the imperative national policy drive towards compact growth, for example as contained in National Strategic Outcome 1: 'Compact Growth' of the NPF. In doing so, it is important to consider the rationale behind this strategic approach. Section 2.6: 'Securing Compact and Sustainable Growth' is instructive in this regard. In this Section, it is stated that: *'Presently, the fastest growing areas are at the edges of and outside our cities and towns...'* A number of negative consequences of this situation are then identified. These include:

- *'A constant process of infrastructure and services catch-up in building new roads, new schools, services and amenities and a struggle to bring jobs and homes together, meaning that there are remarkably high levels of car dependence and that it is difficult to provide good public transport;*
- *A gradual process of run-down of city and town centre and established suburban areas as jobs, retail and housing move out, leaving behind declining school enrolments, empty buildings and a lack of sufficient people to create strong and vibrant places, both day and night;*
- *A significantly higher carbon footprint than the EU average, in part due to higher transport and energy demand, mostly based on fossil fuels, that has worked against achieving agreed climate action targets.'*

7.2.5. Positive consequences that would arise from an increase in the proportion of more compact forms of growth in the developments of settlement of all sizes, from the largest city to the smallest village are also identified in Section 2.6. These include:

- *(bringing) 'new life and footfall, contribute to the viability of services, shops and public transport, increase housing supply and enable more people to be closer to employment and recreational opportunities, as well as to walk or cycle more and use the car less.*
- *Along with transport demand, higher densities and shorter travel distances will also reduce energy demand and use...'*

7.2.6. The preceding paragraphs set out a planning policy paradox pertaining to this

appeal. On the one hand, county-level policy in the County Development Plan, in the form of the Area Plan contained therein and, to some extent the County Development Plan Core Strategy, support the principle of development, (although of note is that whilst the narrative of the Area Plan contains commentary in support of small-scale residential development, none of the 10 policy objectives includes any reference to supporting residential development). On the other hand, it is clear that at the national policy level and at County level in the Core Strategy, there are fundamental concerns around accommodating further development in growth areas on the edge of and outside of towns where there are inadequate services and amenities to support such development. The '*remarkably high levels of car dependence*' and the '*significantly higher carbon footprint than the EU average, in part due to higher transport (and energy) demand*' are common themes. In the case of Barrymore, and as noted above, there are no services or amenities, and very limited footpath and public lighting serving the village. This can only exacerbate the levels of car dependence arising from the area's proximity (c.3.5km) to Athlone. In the Area Plan, it is noted that: '*There is continued residential demand in the area, owing to its scenic and amenity value on the shores of Lough Ree, along with its logisitically advantageous location in proximity to the Athlone, and also within short driving distance of Roscommon town.*' (refer p.164)

- 7.2.7. On balance, notwithstanding the adoption of an Area Plan for Barrymore, and the location of the site within the boundary of the Plan, it is my opinion that the proposed development is precisely the type of development for which the 'compact growth' approach as enshrined in NPF NPO 1, and as reflected in Core Strategy Policy Objectives CS 2.2 and CS 2.3, was designed to prevent. For these reasons, I am unable to support the principle of development, notwithstanding the Area Plan for Barrymore and the site's location within the Plan boundary. I note the comments contained in the appeal submission where the appellants refer to a 'school, garden centre, shop, filling station, garage and caravan park being 'just outside' the Area Plan boundary. However, the school and church, for example are in Ballybay located some 1.5km away along the N61 National Secondary Road. In my opinion, this relationship only serves to illustrate the concerns as noted above.

7.3. Pattern of Development

- 7.3.1. In the Area Plan, Barrymore is described as being '*generally characterised by single dwellings on individual sites, and low density multi-unit residential development...*'

The description of the area as contained in the Design Statement submitted with the application to the Local Authority is more nuanced stating that Barrymore contains: '*a wide variety and mix of dwelling typologies on irregular sized plots with no established or regular pattern of development*' (para 1, p.5). The wider environs of the subject site, comprised of the individual dwellings served by both the private laneway and the public road to the south (hereinafter referred to as 'the Zone of Influence'), are consistent with this latter description.

- 7.3.2. From a more detailed analysis of the Zone of Influence, I have identified the following general characteristics: varying plot ratios, and shapes and sizes of plots; varying separation distances between dwellings; varying distances from the front elevation to the 'road' edge; and varying dwelling designs. Even if the westernmost eight dwellings served off the private laneway (four to the north and four to the south) are considered to have a regular pattern of development (and at the start of this para. I have set out reasons to question this analysis), the development pattern of the remainder of the Zone of Influence comprised of the four dwellings on its eastern flank (ie. the dwelling to the north of the host dwelling; the host dwelling; and the two dwellings to the south of the host dwelling) has a distinctive character of its own. I make this distinction on the basis that: these dwellings are largely obscured from view from the rest of the cul-de-sac; the two dwellings to the south and the host dwelling are orientated towards the lake; the two dwellings to the south are accessed not from the private laneway but the public road to the south; the plot ratios and lateral separation distances of the two dwellings to the south are significantly smaller than those for the other dwellings in the wider Zone of Influence. In this context, I note that: the proposed width of the subject site is similar to that of the dwelling to the immediate south; and the proposed separation distances between the subject dwelling and the party boundary (on the one hand), and the neighbouring dwelling and the party boundary (on the other) are broadly similar. The proposed

arrangements for the host dwelling would also leave the curtilage of that dwelling broadly similar to those of the neighbouring plots both to the north, north-west and south.

- 7.3.3. On the basis of the analysis set out at paras. 7.3.1 and 7.3.2, it is my opinion that a suitably designed dwelling could be accommodated in the subject site in a manner that would not be out of character with the existing pattern of development. I would finally advise the Board on this particular issue that in the Executive Planner's report on a similar application permitted by the Local Authority in 2017 close to the subject proposal, it was noted that Barrymore had: *'a broad mix of and typology of house types. Plot sizes are not generic, with no established pattern. Sites in the immediate vicinity have previously been formulated through sub-division.'*

7.4. Design Approach

- 7.4.1. Having regard to the previously noted wide variety and mix of dwelling typology in the area, the proposed contemporary design approach is appropriate, in my opinion.

7.5. Amenities of Host Dwelling To North

- 7.5.1. As previously noted, the proposed dwelling is orientated broadly west to east, and therefore broadly at right angles to the host dwelling to the north. The site layout plan shows the proposed dwelling set back 7.2m from the proposed boundary with the 'host' dwelling, at its furthest, and 6.5m at its closest. A distance of 11.2m between the nearest part of the host dwelling and proposed dwelling is proposed. The finished floor level of the proposed dwelling is given as 38.80 AOD relative to the 39.30 AOD finished floor level of the host dwelling. On the proposed northern elevation, only one small window serving a circulation area is proposed, together with rotating vertical fin louvres to the side of the balcony. Having regard to the separating distances both to the proposed boundary and to the host dwelling, to the proposed retention of existing foliage along what would become the party boundary, to the minimisation of any overlooking opportunities, and to the fact that the owners of the host dwelling are the applicants, I have no concerns regarding any detrimental impacts on the amenities of

this dwelling.

7.6. Amenities of Dwelling To West

- 7.6.1. The set back distance of the main two-storey module of the proposed dwelling (ie. excluding the proposed ground floor car shelter) to the party boundary with the dwelling to the west is shown on the submitted plans as 12.17m. This is longer than the distance between the third party dwelling and the party boundary. The distance between the main module of the proposed dwelling and the third party dwelling is 19.39m at its closest. Having regard to the aforementioned and to the proposed retention of the existing tall evergreen trees along the party boundary, I have no concerns regarding any detrimental impacts on the amenities of this dwelling.

7.7. Amenities of Dwelling To South

- 7.7.1. The finished floor level of the proposed dwelling is noted as being 38.80 AOD and the third party dwelling to the south at 38.51 AOD. The front elevation of the proposed dwelling is shown as being broadly in line with the centre of the gable of the third party dwelling. A distance of 9.4m is proposed between the two dwellings at these two points and this is the greatest distance proposed between the two. This separating distance narrows to c.8m at its closest. The plans identify a set-back between the proposed dwelling and the party boundary of 5.6m, at its furthest, and 3m at its closest. The third party dwelling is set back c.3.75m from the party boundary.
- 7.7.2. The plans also show that the proposed dwelling extends into the proposed plot for a distance of 9.45m beyond the rear elevation of the dwelling to the south. For this distance, the proposed dwelling would have an eave height of 5.7m set back 3m from the party boundary at its closest, and 4m at its furthest. I am satisfied that there would be minimal overlooking due to the incorporation of minimal fenestration on the southern elevation. However, in my opinion the scale, height and massing of the proposed development in such close proximity to the property to the south would be overbearing and over-dominant as viewed from the said property. I note the

submitted letter of support from the affected third party submitted with the appeal but, in this instance, would conclude that to permit the proposed development would not be in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development due to the significance of the impact arising, notwithstanding the referenced third party letter.

7.8. Flood Risk

- 7.8.1. Policy Objectives ITC 7.51 and ITC 7.52 (and Policy Objective HB 10 in the Area Plan) address flood risk in the context of having regard to the Flood Risk Guidelines and associated Regulations. The policies refer to the sequential approach and application of the Justification Tests in Development Management, the need to ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for development proposals impacting on flood risk areas, and the need to ensure the protection of lands liable to flooding.
- 7.8.2. I have consulted the Settlement Flood Zone map available in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that accompanies the County Development Plan ('Hodson Bay Indicative Flood Zones') and the detailed data available on Roscommon County Council's Open Data Portal. These datasets identify 'Flood Zone A' and 'Flood Zone B' and it is assumed that these correspond with the equivalent zones identified in the Flood Risk Guidelines⁸. The latter dataset clearly shows that Flood Zone extends into and across approximately 25-30% of the tennis court on its eastern side. Comparing this data with the submitted site layout plans, the front elevation of the proposed dwelling is positioned slightly to the east of the tennis court. Therefore, it is clear that part of the dwelling is within the identified Flood Zone B. By undertaking a similar comparison, I have also identified that part of the site curtilage to the front and east of the proposed dwelling falls within Flood Zone A. In the Flood Risk Guidelines, a 'Matrix of vulnerability versus flood zone to illustrate appropriate development and that required to meet the Justification Test' is set out in Table 3.2. The table requires that where highly vulnerable development (such as

⁸ The 'Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment – Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DEHLG, 2009]

dwelling houses⁹) is proposed in Flood Zone B and Flood Zone B areas, a Justification Test is required. Such a Justification Test was not included with the application submitted to the Local Authority or with the appeal under consideration.

- 7.8.3. I note the commentary made by the agent in the appeal submission wherein she observes that: *'At a macro level the lands are located on a headland that extends into Lough Ree, the lands in the locality are generally around 4m above the typical water levels in Lough Ree.'* At my site inspection, I did note this elevation of the subject site above the water level and level of the immediate shoreline. Notwithstanding these observations, the Board is obliged to have regard to the Flood Risk Guidelines. In the absence of a Justification Test, I cannot be satisfied that the proposed development would not give rise to a flooding hazard.

8.0 AA Screening

- 8.1. Overview: I have considered the proposed construction of a 2-bedroom dwelling, revised existing vehicle entrance, connection to mains sewer and water services and all associated site works and landscaping at Gortalocha, Barrymore, Athlone, Co. Roscommon in light of the requirements of S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in the AA screening attached in Appendix 2 of this report, I conclude that the proposed development individually would be likely to give rise to significant effects on the Lough Ree Special Conservation Area (Site Code 000440) and the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (site code 004064) in view of the conservation objectives of these sites. Appropriate Assessment is required. The reasons for this determination are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 8.2. SAC Connections: Potential surface water run-off from site to the lake given the difference in levels; works to achieve connection to the public mains sewer located

⁹ Refer Table 3.1: Classification of vulnerability of different types of development', The 'Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment – Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DEHLG, 2009]

within the SAC; and the need for mitigation measures associated with construction works to avoid impacts on otters.

- 8.3. SPA Connections: Potential water quality impacts, and potential disturbance to the use of the shoreline adjacent to the development site by the avian qualifying interests.

9.0 Other Matters

9.1. Lough Ree Propose Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)

- 9.1.1. On the small scale mapping available on the NPWS Protected Sites Mapviewer, it appears that the site encroaches slightly into the designated area of the Lough Ree pNHA. I have reviewed the NPWS 'pNHA Site Synopsis Archive'. The site code for the Lough Ree pNHA is 000440. This code does not appear in the aforementioned archive and therefore I have been unable to source any formal detailed information on this designation. I have proceeded on the basis that the most important nature contribution attributes of the area will be fully taken into account in the appropriate assessment process as set out at Section 8 of this report.

9.2. Structure in South-West Corner of Proposed Plot

- 9.2.1. The submitted site layout plan identifies a structure in the south-west corner of the site in close proximity to the proposed car port. I could find no details of this structure in either the plans submitted to the Local Authority or with the appeal.

9.3. Dual Use of Private Driveway

- 9.3.1. In the Local Authority Planner's report, concern was expressed that the interdependent nature of the proposal sharing a private driveway was not '*an appropriate design response*'. Given that the proposal is for one extra dwelling only, and given that improvement works are proposed both along the driveway and at the junction of the driveway and the private lane, I have no objections to this element of the application.

9.4. Junction of Private Lane and Public Road: Vision Lines

- 9.4.1. Having regard to the minimal traffic volumes in this part of the village, to the narrow width of the carriageway, to the 50kph speed restriction in place, and to the vision lines that are in place as largely delineated by the low traditional stone walls in situ on either side of the junction, the proposed arrangements are acceptable, in my opinion.

10.0 Recommendation

- 10.1. I recommend that permission for the development be refused for the reasons and considerations as set out below.

1. Having regard to the absence of any services or amenities within the residential area of Barrymore area, and to the deficiencies in the public footpath and lighting networks in the area, it is considered that the proposed development would accord with neither Policy Objective CS 2.2 of the Roscommon County Development Plan, 2022-2028 that seeks to: accelerate a transition to a greener, low carbon and climate resilient county, with a focus on reduced travel demand through the promotion of sustainable settlement patterns, nor with Policy Objective CS 2.3 that seeks to : direct growth towards designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services as far as practicable. The proposed development would result in additional development in a settlement devoid of amenities and services and lacking in footpaths and street lighting. It is further considered that, for the same reasons, the development would be contrary to the National Strategic Outcome 1: 'Compact Growth' of the National Planning Framework. Accordingly, to permit the proposed development would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. Having regard to the extent to which the proposed dwelling projects beyond the rear elevation of the existing dwelling to the south (9.45m), and to the proposed eave height (5.7m) and set back distance from the party boundary (3m at its closest, and 4m at its furthest), it is considered that the scale, height and massing of the proposed development in such close proximity to the property to the south

would be overbearing and over-dominant as viewed from the said property. To permit the proposed development, therefore, would have an unacceptably detrimental impact on the amenities of the said third party property and would thereby be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. Policy Objectives ITC 7.51 and ITC 7.52 of the Roscommon County Development Plan, 2022-2028, and Policy Objective HB 10 in the Area Plan require adherence to the provisions of the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment – Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DEHLG, 2009]. In the said Guidelines, it is provided that a Justification Test shall be required where 'Highly Vulnerable' development lies within an area identified as either Flood Zone A or Flood Zone B. In Table 3.1 of the said Guidelines, proposed dwelling houses are included in the 'Highly Vulnerable' class. In the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that accompanies the County Development Plan, part of the proposed residential development falls within Flood Zone B, and a small part within Flood Zone A. A Justification test was not submitted with the appeal. In the absence of such a Justification Test, the Board is not satisfied that the proposed development would not give rise to flooding. Accordingly, to permit the proposed development would be contrary to the aforementioned Policy Objectives ITC 7.51 and 7.52 of the County Development Plan and would thereby be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
4. On the basis of the information provided with the application and appeal, and in the absence of a Natura Impact Statement, the Board is not satisfied that the proposed development individually would not be likely to have a significant effect on Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000440) and Lough Ree Special Protection Area (Site Code 004060) in view of the Sites' Conservation Objectives. In such circumstances, the Board is precluded from granting permission.

- 10.2. The issues raised in the above-noted recommendation reasons 1 and 2 are new issues not raised by the Local Authority in its decision, and the Board may wish to offer the appellants the opportunity to make submissions on these matters.

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.



Paul Christy
Planning Inspector

8th May 2025

Appendix 1 - Form 1

EIA Pre-Screening

An Bord Pleanála Case Reference	ABP-321974-25		
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of a two-bedroom dwelling, revised vehicle entrance, connection to mains sewer and water services and all associated site works and landscaping.		
Development Address	Gortalocha, Barrymore, Athlone, Co. Roscommon		
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)		Yes	✓
		No	
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?			
Yes	✓	<u>Class 10(b), Part 2:</u> Construction of dwelling units. Threshold = more than 500 dwelling units.	
No			
3. Does the proposed development equal or exceed any relevant THRESHOLD set out in the relevant Class?			
Yes			
No	✓		
4. Is the proposed development below the relevant threshold for the Class of development [sub-threshold development]?			
Yes	✓	<u>Class 10(b), Part 2:</u> Construction of dwelling units. Threshold = more than 500 dwelling units. [Proposed development is for, inter alia, 1 dwelling unit.]	Preliminary examination required.
5. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?			
No	✓	Conclusion remains as above (Q1 to	

		Q4)
Yes		Screening Determination required.

Inspector: Paul Christy Date: 8th May 2025

Appendix 1 - Form 2

EIA Preliminary Examination

An Bord Pleanála Case Reference Number	ABP-321974-25
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of a two-bedroom dwelling, revised existing vehicle entrance, connections to mains sewer and water and all associated site works and landscaping.
Development Address	Gortalocha, Barrymore, Athlone, Co. Roscommon
<p>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.</p> <p>This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.</p>	
<p>Characteristics of proposed development</p> <p>The development has a modest footprint and is to be facilitated by the sub-division of an existing dwelling plot. It comes forward as a standalone project. It does not require demolition works, 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.</p>	
<p>Location of development</p> <p>The subject site is located on the eastern edge of the residential area of Barrymore and immediately adjacent to the shores of Lough Ree. It is set within a small headland developed in the form of individual plots of varying sizes and shapes. The development is situated in a residential area. The development is immediately adjacent to the Lough Ree SAC, in close proximity (c.37m) to the Lough Ree SPA and partly within the Lough Ree pNHA.</p>	
<p>Types and characteristics of potential impacts</p> <p><u>Lough Ree SAC:</u> During construction, there is potential for run-off from the site to the lake, given the difference in levels. Similarly, construction of the sewer connection will require works within the SAC / adjacent to the lake and there is the potential for</p>	

impacts on the Otter qualifying interest. However, having regard to the relatively small scale of the project, it is considered that any significant effects could be avoided with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.

Lough Ree SPA: During construction there is potential for impacts on the water quality of Lough Ree SPA and potential disturbance to the use of the shoreline adjacent to the development site by the avian qualifying interests of the SPA. However, having regard to the relatively small scale of the project, it is considered that any significant effects could be avoided with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.

Conclusion		
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA	Yes or No
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.	Yes
There is significant and realistic doubt regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	Schedule 7A Information required to enable a Screening Determination to be carried out.	No
There is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIAR required.	No

Inspector: Paul Christy Date: 8th May 2025

Appendix 2 - Form 1

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for Likely Significant Effects	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics	
Brief description of project	Construction of a 2-bedroom dwelling, revised existing vehicle entrance, connection to mains sewer and water services and all associated site works and landscaping (please refer to Section 2: 'Proposed Development' of the Inspector's Report for a more detailed description.)
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	<p>It is proposed to sub-divide an existing dwelling plot, with construction taking place on an existing hard surface tennis court and gardens to the side of the existing dwelling. The plot to be created measures 0.18 acres. The proposed site curtilage immediately adjoins the Lough Ree SAC. The nearest part of the dwelling structure to the SAC boundary will be 9.47m although it is assumed that that there will be landscaping/gardening works etc. between the structure and the SAC boundary. The distance from the site curtilage to the Lough Ree SPA is estimated to be of the order of 37m.</p> <p>Foul effluent is to be via connection to the mains sewer via a pipe that runs from, and outside of the site in a south-westerly direction (ie. within the SAC boundary), towards the mains sewer in the public road to the south-east of the site and within the designated boundary of the SAC.</p> <p>Surface water drainage is to be to a proposed soakaway located in the north-east of corner of the site ie. immediately adjacent to the SAC.</p> <p>Water supply is to be taken from the public water mains to the west of the dwelling (ie. in the opposite direction from the SAC and SPA) and a connection is proposed via a 23m pipe to be laid in the existing private driveway in the opposite direction from the SAC and SPA.</p> <p>It is estimated that the duration of works would be of the order of 12-15 months.</p>
Screening report	Not provided with appeal. The Local Authority

	undertook a Screening Report as part of its assessment of the application. That Report concluded that: <i>‘it cannot rule out the potential for adverse significant impacts on European sites as a result of the proposed development either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.’</i>		
Natura Impact Statement	No.		
Relevant submissions	None		
Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model			
Lough Ree SAC (code 000440) (all information derived from NPWS Conservation Objectives Series: Lough Ree SAC [April 2016], unless otherwise stated)			
Qualifying Interests/ Conservation objectives	Distance from proposed dev'tment (km)	Ecological connections	Consider further in screening Y/N
Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]. Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.	Immediately adjacent	N	Y
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.	3.4	N	N
Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Bog woodland [91D0] Conservation objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition of degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration.	17.86	N	N
Alkaline fens [7230]	11.3Km		N

Conservation objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition.	Full extent currently unknown. Main area is considered to occur in the vicinity of St. John's Wood, on the western side of the lake. The Wood is some 11.3Km from the site. No identifiable ecological connections.		
Limestone pavements [8240] Conservation objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition.	15.42	N	N
Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, <i>Alnus incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] Conservation objective: none available on NPWS website	11.3Km The NPWS's 'Survey of Annex I Alluvial Woodland in Lough Ree cSAC (Blackthorn Ecology, 2019) identified that this resource was confined to small pockets of St. John's Wood. The Wood is some 11.3Km from the site. No identifiable ecological connections.		N
Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Conservation objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition.	Mapping of a 'commuting 250m buffer' shows extensive commuting routes around and across the lake, including around almost the entire lake perimeter. The perimeter route is shown in very close proximity to the subject site.		Y
Lough Ree SPA (code 004060) (all information derived from NPWS Conservation Objectives Series: Lough Ree SPA, April 2025 unless otherwise stated)			
Qualifying Interests/ Conservation objectives	Distance from proposed dev'tment (km)	Ecological connections ²	Consider further in screening Y/N
Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Conservation Objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition.	There is a distance of c.37m between the site boundary and the SPA boundary. There are no direct ecological connections between the site and the designated area.		Y

Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.		Y
Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.		Y
Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.		Y
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.		Y
Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Conservation Objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition.		Y
Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Conservation Objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition.		Y
Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.		Y
Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.		Y
Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Conservation Objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition.		Y

Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.			Y
Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.			Y
Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Conservation Objective: To restore the favourable conservation condition.			Y
Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] Conservation Objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition.			Y

Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites

Site name	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*	
	Impacts	Effects
	Nb. It is considered that 7 of the 9 qualifying interests will not be impacted in any way due to the respective distances between the respective locations of these interests and the site as set out at Step 2 above. The comments below refer to the remaining interests ie. the eutrophic lake; and the <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) only.	
Site 1: Lough Ree SAC (Code 000440)	<u>Construction Period</u> Potential surface water run-off from site to the lake. Works to achieve connection to public mains sewer located within SAC. Site clearance. Dust, noise, vibration. <u>Operational Period</u> Lighting disturbance. Noise. Presence of people, vehicles and activities.	During construction, there is potential for run-off from the site to the lake, given the difference in levels. Similarly, construction of the sewer connection will require works within the SAC / adjacent to the lake. All such works would require certain measures to ensure that no impact on water quality arises, which would constitute mitigation measures. Similarly, with regard to the

		otter, construction activities would be required to adhere to certain requirements to avoid impacts on otter. This would constitute mitigation.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Y	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site: Y	
	Impacts	Effects
Site 2: Lough Ree SPA (code)	<u>Construction Period</u> Potential surface water run-off from site to the lake. Works to achieve connection to public mains sewer located adjacent to Lake. Site clearance. Dust, noise, vibration. <u>Operational Period</u> Lighting disturbance. Noise. Presence of people, vehicles and activities.	Potential water quality impacts arise and would require mitigation. In addition, disturbance effects have the potential to impact on the Qualifying Interests of the SPA as there is no evidence to conclude that these species do not utilise the shoreline adjacent to the works area.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Y	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site: Y	
<u>Further Commentary</u>		
Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site		
SAC:		

I conclude that the proposed development would have a likely significant effect alone on the *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] and Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150] qualifying interests of the Lough Ree SAC. This would arise from: potential surface water run-off from site to the lake; works to achieve connection to the public mains sewer located within the SAC; and the need for mitigation measures associated with construction works to avoid impacts on otters, all associated with the construction of a 2-bedroom dwelling, revised existing vehicle entrance, connection to mains sewer and water services and all associated site works and landscaping at Gortalocha, Barrymore, Athlone, Co. Roscommon. An Appropriate Assessment is required on the basis of the effects of the project 'alone'. Further assessment in-combination with other plans and projects is not required at this time.

SPA:

I conclude that the proposed development would have a likely significant effect alone on the following qualifying interests of the Lough Ree SPA: Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004], Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) [A038], Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050], Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052], Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) [A053], Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [A056], Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061], Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A065], Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) [A067], Coot (*Fulica atra*) [A125], Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140], Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142], Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] and Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]. This would arise from potential water quality impacts and potential disturbance to the use of the shoreline adjacent to the development site by the avian qualifying interests associated with the construction of a 2-bedroom dwelling, revised existing vehicle entrance, connection to mains sewer and water services and all associated site works and landscaping at Gortalocha, Barrymore, Athlone, Co. Roscommon. An Appropriate Assessment is required on the basis of the effects of the project 'alone'. Further assessment in-combination with other plans and projects is not required at this time.

Inspector: Paul Christy Date: 8th May 2025

