



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-322150-25

Development	Renovations, extensions and alterations to farmhouse and outbuilding, wastewater treatment system, upgrade site entrance and associates site works
Location	Lahern, Baltimore, Co. Cork
Planning Authority	West Cork County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	24356
Applicant(s)	Barbara S Ward.
Type of Application	Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Barbara S Ward
Observer(s)	None.
Date of Site Inspection	20 th May 2025
Inspector	Jennifer McQuaid

Contents

1.0 Site Location and Description	4
2.0 Proposed Development	4
3.0 Planning Authority Decision	4
3.1. Decision	4
3.2. Planning Authority Reports	5
3.3. Prescribed Bodies	7
3.4. Third Party Observations	7
4.0 Planning History.....	7
5.0 Policy Context.....	7
5.1. Development Plan.....	7
5.2. Natural Heritage Designations	12
5.3. EIA Screening	12
5.4. Water Framework Directive.....	12
6.0 The Appeal	13
6.1. Grounds of Appeal	13
6.2. Applicant Response	15
6.3. Planning Authority Response.....	15
6.4. Observations.....	15
6.5. Further Responses	16
7.0 Assessment.....	17
8.0 AA Screening.....	23
9.0 Recommendation.....	23
10.0 Reasons and Considerations.....	24
Appendix 1 – Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening	

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site consists of a derelict farmhouse and 2 no. outbuildings situated on an elevated area. The site is enclosed by mature trees and vegetation and set back over 30 metres from the public road. The existing dwelling dates back to 1901 and is a traditional style farmhouse with a small, enclosed front and side garden area.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development consists of:

- Renovations, extensions and alterations to existing farmhouse and outbuildings.
- Installation of wastewater treatment system.
- upgrade to site entrance.
- all associated site works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Refused for the following reason:

1. The subject site is located on the eastern outskirts of Baltimore village, within a High Value Landscape area and contains an historic derelict farmhouse and ancillary outbuildings, of vernacular importance. It is considered that the proposed development in terms of its bulk, scale and design fails to preserve or enhance the established character, form, features or setting of the existing vernacular farmhouse and outbuildings on site, it would dominate the setting and significantly alter and detract from the character and scenic amenity of the surrounding area, which would be contrary to the objectives RP5-30, HE16-6, HE16-19 and GI14-9 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

- The proposed works and alterations to the existing traditional farmhouse and detached stone outhouse will significantly alter and detract from the scale and character of the existing buildings and would be contrary to policy objective HE16-19 which seeks to preserve the character and form of vernacular buildings and policy objective RP 5-31 which encourage sensitive refurbishment and conversion of traditional farm buildings. No objection in principle but the works need to be sympathetic which respects the integrity of the main building.
- Further information requested in relation to the design, seek to retain the existing traditional stone outhouse in its current form including its existing unique features including the external staircase and provide a modest single storey extension onto same. The flat roof extension linking the converted outhouse with the main house shall be omitted. Submit a more modest and sympathetic single storey extension with an A-frame roof design. The extension shall be set back behind the front building line of the main house and shall respect traditional scale, form and proportion. All external walls shall be finished in smooth painted render or natural stone. Hanging slate to be omitted.
- Any works to vernacular building should be informed by an assessment of their heritage value by an accredited historic building professional/professionals as required under objective HE 16-19.

Further Information Report

- Planning Authority's Senior Executive Architect (SEA) advised the applicant on the necessary revisions on the 4th December 2024. The applicant submitted revised drawings on the 6th February 2025 with a number of changes.
- The Architect and Conservation Officer have raised concerns in relation to the revised design. The Planning Officer still has serious concerns regarding the bulk, scale and design of the proposed development which fails to preserve or

enhance the established character, form, features or setting of the existing historic farmhouse and outbuildings insitu, would dominate the site and significantly alter and detract from the visual and scenic amenity of the area which would be contrary to policy objectives RP5-30, HE 16-6, HE 16-19 and GI 14-9 of the CDP.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Area Engineer: No objection subject to conditions.
- Environment: No objection subject to conditions.
- Senior Executive Architect (SEA): No initial report was submitted by the SEA, however, following the further information request, informal discussions were held between the agent and SEA. The SEA provided a sketch of the changes that the Planning Authority would encourage the applicant to consider. The revised proposal included retention and re-use of the existing buildings as much as possible, new rear extension recessed behind the existing farm building, it is considered that there is no need for a first-floor extension to the existing outbuilding.

Further information response: From an architectural design perspective, the amended design completely undermines the established character, form and features of what has to be considered as a valued farmstead complex in terms of its contribution to our architectural, historical, social, cultural values and sense of place.

The SEA is not opposed to a contemporary design, however, the SEA considers that the design as proposed fails to give proper consideration to the guidance of the Council's Rural Housing Design Guide where the proposed design has a responsibility to preserve the heritage, traditional built form, shape, scale, detail and materially as well as the need to make a positive contribution in order to uphold the retention and preservation of traditional buildings in our rural countryside. The applicant has failed to take into the best practice advice and guidance offered to the applicant. All efforts have been exhausted to guide the applicant to submit an acceptable design solution, refusal is recommended as a result.

- Architectural Conservation Officer: Policy objectives HE 16-19 and HE 16-06 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 are relevant.

The retention of the existing dwelling and the outbuilding is welcomed but the proposed new addition dominates the setting in terms of its bulk, size and location, which is further highlighted by the use of stone cladding. Any new extension linking the two existing buildings would have to be set back from the existing structures so that it does not dominate the views on approach along the public road. The existing historic elements of any setting should always remain the focus. The use of stone cladding is considered to be in competition with the existing natural stone outbuilding on the site it is suggested a simpler approach to any future application on site, with form and materials that are visually subservient to the setting.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- None

3.4. Third Party Observations

- None

4.0 Planning History

- None

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP)

The site is in a rural and unserviced area within a High Value Landscape. The subject site adjoins a Scenic Route (S87).

Chapter 5 relates to Rural: Tourism and Rural Diversification Area – these areas have higher levels of environmental and landscape sensitivity and a weaker

economic structure with significant opportunities for tourism and rural diversification. Objective RP 5-5 relates to this area type and has set out criteria for a new dwelling in relation to housing need.

Objective RP 5-23 relates to Servicing Single Houses (and ancillary development) in Rural Areas: (a) Ensure that proposals for development incorporating on-site wastewater disposal systems comply with the EPA Code of Practice Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10) and Wastewater Treatment Manual – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business Centres, Leisure Centres and Hotels (1999), or relevant successor approved standards/guidelines (including design, installation and maintenance). The cumulative Impact of such systems will also be considered in the assessment process. (b) Surface water should be disposed of using sustainable drainage systems and in a manner that will not endanger the receiving environment or public health. The use of permeable paving should also be considered to reduce run off.

Section 5.12 relates to Renovation or Replacement of an Uninhabitable or Ruinous Dwellings.

In the case of uninhabitable or Ruinous dwellings, where the existing dwelling structure is substantially in place, the renovation/redevelopment or replacement of same for use as a dwelling will be considered on a case-by-case basis, having regard to an appropriate scale and design of building, normal planning considerations and the requirements of other relevant policies and objectives in this plan. It is not the intention of the settlement policy objectives of this plan generally to prevent such development. A ruinous dwelling still in place is defined as a structure formerly used as a dwelling, with the main walls substantially intact.

Section 5.12.2 In the interests of clarity, the provisions of Objective RP5-2 (i.e. the “Rural Generated Housing Need” requirement) and objective RP5-25 (i.e. Occupancy Clause) will not apply to development that comes within the terms of RP5-30.

RP 5-30 Redevelopment or replacement of an Uninhabitable or Ruinous dwelling.

Encourage proposals for the sensitive renovation, redevelopment, or replacement of existing uninhabitable or ruinous dwellings subject to normal proper planning and

sustainable development considerations as well as the requirements of other objectives in this Plan and provided that it satisfies the following criteria:

- The original walls of the dwelling structure must be substantially intact.
- The structure must have previously been in use as a dwelling.
- The development is of an appropriate scale and design (including materials used), relative to the structure being replaced and the location and character of the site.
- Existing mature landscape features are retained and enhanced, as appropriate.
- No damage shall be caused to sites used by protected wildlife.
- Proposals must be acceptable in terms of public health and traffic safety.

Section 5.13 relates to new uses for disused or derelict farm buildings.

Section 5.13.1 The Planning Authority will encourage proposals for the sensitive refurbishment and conversion of suitable disused or derelict traditional farm buildings, built using traditional methods and materials, for residential purposes, community, or commercial uses (including social enterprise) where appropriate, subject to normal planning considerations, while ensuring that re-use is compatible with environmental and heritage protection.

Policy Objectives RP5-31: New uses for disused or derelict farm buildings.

Encourage the sensitive refurbishment and conversion of suitable disused or derelict traditional farm buildings, built using traditional methods and materials, and other suitable historic buildings such as mills and churches, for residential purposes, community or commercial uses (including social enterprise) where appropriate, subject to normal planning considerations, while ensuring that the re-use is compatible with environmental and heritage protection.

Chapter 14 relates to Green Infrastructure and Recreation. The subject site is in a High Value Landscape.

Objective GI14-9: Landscape

- (a) Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork's built and natural environment.
- (b) Landscape issues will be an important factor in all land-use proposals, ensuring that a pro-active view of development is undertaken while protecting the environment and heritage generally in line with the principle of sustainability.
- (c) Ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.
- (d) Protect skylines and ridgelines from development.
- (e) Discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

Section 14.9 relates to Landscape Views and Prospects

Scenic Routes highlight the quality of the overall environment and landscape experienced within Cork County. It is important to protect the character and quality of those particular stretches of scenic routes that have special views and prospects particularly those associated with High Value Landscapes.

Objective GI 14-12: General Views and Prospects

Preserve the character of all important views and prospects, particularly sea views, river or lake views, views of unspoilt mountains, upland or coastal landscapes, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes) and views of natural beauty as recognised in the Draft Landscape Strategy.

Objective GI 14-13: Scenic Routes

Protect the character of those views and prospects obtainable from scenic routes and in particular stretches of scenic routes that have very special views and prospects identified in this Plan.

Objective GI 14-14: Development on scenic routes

(a) Require those seeking to carry out development in the environs of a scenic route and/or an area with important views and prospects, to demonstrate that there will be no adverse obstruction or degradation of the views towards and from vulnerable landscape features. In such areas, the appropriateness of the design, site layout and landscaping of the proposed development must be demonstrated along with

mitigation measures to prevent significant alterations to the appearance or character of the area.

(b) encourage appropriate landscaping and screen planting of developments along scenic routes.

Chapter 16 Built and Cultural Heritage relates to the protection of vernacular heritage.

Section 16.3.20, 16.3.21, 16.3.22, 16.3.23 relates to Vernacular Buildings

HE 16-6 Industrial and Post Medieval Archaeology

Protect and preserve industrial and post-medieval archaeology and long-term management of heritage features such as mills, limekilns, forges, bridges, piers and harbours, water-related engineering works and buildings, penal chapels, dwellings, walls and boundaries, farm buildings, estate features, military and coastal installations. There is a general presumption for retention of these structures and features. Proposals for appropriate redevelopment including conversion should be subject to an appropriate assessment and record by a suitably qualified specialist/s.

HE 16-19 Vernacular Heritage

(a) Protect, maintain and enhance the established character, forms, features and setting of vernacular buildings, farmyards and settlements and the contribution they make to our architectural, archaeological, historical, social and cultural heritage and to local character and sense of place.

(b) Cork County Council encourages best conservation practice in the renovation and maintenance of vernacular buildings including thatched structures through the use of specialist conservation professionals and craft persons. Development proposals shall be accompanied by appropriate documentation compiled by experienced conservation consultant.

(c) There will generally be a presumption in favour of the retention of vernacular buildings and encouragement of the retention and re-use of vernacular buildings subject to normal planning considerations, while ensuring that the re-use of vernacular buildings subject to normal planning considerations, while ensuring that the re-use is compatible with environmental and heritage protection.

The Cork Rural Design Guide 2007

The guide provides an illustration of an approach to development of rural houses within a diverse landscape type. The guide also provides advice on siting and layout of proposed developments.

Part 3 relates to Appropriate house design.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The subject site is not located within a designated site. The nearest designated sites are as follows:

- Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC & pNHA (site code: 000101) is located approximately 450 metres north of the subject site.
- Sheeps Head to Toe Head SPA (site code: 004156) is located approximately 400 metres south of the subject site.
- Lough Hyne Nature Reserve and Environs SAC & pNHA (site code: 000097) is located approximately 4.4km east of the subject site.
- Castletownshend SAC (site code: 001547) is located approximately 14.5km east of the subject site.

5.3. EIA Screening

- 5.3.1. The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (or Part V of the 1994 Roads Regulations). No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.

5.4. Water Framework Directive

- 5.4.1. The subject site is located in a rural area to the south of Baltimore town, there are no streams or rivers in close proximity to the site, Church Strand Bay and Baltimore Harbour are located approximately 600 metres north of the subject site. The proposed development comprises the renovation of an existing derelict dwelling and a new extension. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal. I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the

objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seeks to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water body in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. 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 surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Nature of works consists of renovation of an existing dwelling and extension to same.
- Distance from nearest water bodies at over 600 metres and lack of hydrological connections to this water body.

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

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The grounds of appeal have been received from the applicant. The concerns raised are:

- Principle of Development: The proposed works will preserve the character, form, features and setting of the existing farmhouse and outbuildings, by virtue of its scale, design and materials. It will assimilate into the existing setting, respect the character and scenic amenity of the surrounding landscape and enhance the sustainable development of the area.

Proposal complies in principle with CDP and paragraphs 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13. The appeal queries the interpretation of the terms like “bulk” and “scale”.

- Refusal unwarranted: Development management guidelines states in section 7.15: “A reason for refusal must, as far as possible, bring out the

reasonableness of applying the provisions of the plan in the particular case. Accordingly, caution should be exercised when refusing permission on the grounds that the proposed development would materially contravene the development plan. Where such a reason is given, it must be clearly shown that specific policies/objectives of the plan would be breached in a significant way”.

- Planning History: 3 houses permitted in the Lahern’s scenic landscape, in one case the proposal included the demolition of a cottage and construction of a new dwelling, the second a new build closer to the road and less screened, and thirdly, a similar sized extension to existing farmhouse.
- Visual Impact: No clear photographic evidence of site visits by Senior Planner, Senior Executive Architect or Conservation Officer demonstrating the adverse visual impacts. The two distant photos from the public road, confirm how well screened the existing buildings are, and the Planner’s Reports both acknowledge the sheltered location of the site and the screening of mature trees.

Rural Design Guide: The proposal complies with the Cork Rural Design Guide 2007, the site makes use of the east to west rocky outcrop for foundations, farmhouse faces south, the overall design which preserves and enhances the established character, form, features and setting of the existing farmhouse and outbuildings in a contemporary way. The design requires 4 double bedrooms and spacious kitchen and living areas. Existing landscape features are retained including dray stone garden walls, mature trees, established hedgerows, and pathways to garden areas. The extension to the north can be retained if the Planning Authority requires so and can be renovated for general utility use. It is proposed to demolish the western extension. The derelict stone cowshed building needs to be converted and linked to the existing farmhouse otherwise it cannot act as viable accommodation. The existing staircase will be rebuilt and function as a means of escape for the first-floor bedroom window. The single storey extension is modest in scale with floor area of 103sqm and is set back behind the building lines to north and east elevations of the main house.

- Finishes: External finishes some stonework on the cowshed has been partially rendered to the west elevation and it is proposed to repeat this treatment on the north and south walls, retaining exposed stonework internally throughout as a wall finish, particularly on the east facing wall
- Sustainable Development: The proposal seeks to retain the local character and distinctiveness of the dwelling and its location, to value and protect the natural diversity of its setting, to limit pollution to levels which natural systems can process without damage and to use resources efficiently, minimising waste.
- Procedural issues: The applicant was requested further information and not a simple clarification it was a complete change of design, and this does not comply with Development Management Planning Guidelines 2007.

The Senior Executive Architect (SEA) provided a proposed design solution, and invited revised drawings, the SEA accepted the fundamental need to link the two structures, but the revised positioning of the link would not meet the applicant's accommodation needs or the site constraints and would be more visible to the public road

- Drawing: Applicant first preference would be the drawing submitted on 2nd July 2024, the second preference is drawings 500 and 501 with rendered finish submitted on 6th February 2025.

6.2. Applicant Response

- As above

6.3. Planning Authority Response

- None

6.4. Observations

- None

6.5. Further Responses

A response was received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The following comments were made:

- The proposed development relates to the vernacular building relevant to the objective HE16-19: Vernacular Heritage.
- It is noted that the Planning Authority is supportive of the principles of the proposed development but refused permission due to concerns about the design in terms of bulk, scale and design and it would dominate the setting and significantly alter and detract from the scenic amenity of the surrounding area, which would be contrary to the objectives HE 16-6 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022.
- NBHS notes the following:
 1. The proposed works to the existing building, namely the raising of the roof, changes of window openings and insertion of modern windows would not protect, maintain and enhance the established character, forms, and features of the vernacular building.
 2. The proposed new design, due to its scale and positioning forward of the front elevation of the existing vernacular building, would diminish the integrity and appreciation of the structure. While there is no objection to a contemporary design approach, the application of numerous design elements, such as pitched and flat roof structures, rectangular and square forms, results in the new build being of an incongruous design when viewed in the context of the vernacular dwelling which has a simple and symmetrical design form and expression. This results in a significant impact on the setting.
 3. The application is not accompanied by appropriate documentation compiled by an experienced conservation consultant as set out in objective HE 16-19(b).

In light of this NBHS concurs with the Planning Authority and the proposed development is not in line with objective HE 16-19 of the CDP

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the report/s 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 as follows:

- Design
- Heritage
- Visual Impact
- Appropriate Assessment

7.2. Design

7.3. There is an existing two storey farm cottage on site with an overall height of 6.1 metres and floor area of 110sqm, the site includes outhouse (floor area of 34sqm) and shed (50sqm) in traditional farm style. The proposal includes renovations and extension to the existing dwelling and outbuildings. The total area of the proposed works will be 134sqm. The Planning Authority refused permission as it considered the historic derelict farmhouse and ancillary outbuildings, are of vernacular importance and the proposed extension is considered to be of a bulk, scale and design that fails to preserve or enhance the established character, form, features or setting of the existing vernacular farmhouse and outbuildings on site, it would dominate the setting and significantly alter and detract from the character and scenic amenity of the surrounding area, which would be contrary to the objectives RP5-30, HE16-6, HE16-19 and GI14-9 of the CDP.

7.4. The grounds of appeal state the proposal is acceptable in principle as it complies with CDP section 5.11, 5.12 & 5.13 for the appropriate re-use and sympathetic extension to vernacular buildings and the proposal complies with The Cork Rural Design Guide 2007, all dimensions, forms and proportions of the proposed development are of an appropriate scale comparable with those of the example of a new rural dwelling. The Guide also supports and includes examples of slate hanging as a suitable and appropriate wall finish. The proposal will retain the local character and distinctiveness of the dwelling and its location, and it is a sensitive restoration

rather than a historic restoration. The existing landscape features will be retained including dry stone garden walls, mature trees, hedgerows and pathways to gardens. Due to the location of the dwelling and surrounding area on rock outcrop, this effectively restricts the use of rock-breaking machinery. The farmshed needs to be connected to the dwelling to function as part of the residential use. This will be done by a single storey extension with a floor area of 103sqm and height of 3 metres, the length is 12 metres, the roof will be flat roof and broke up with a 40degree pitched roof element matching the width and height of the existing farmhouse extension. The suggested changes by the Senior Executive Architect are not acceptable or practical.

- 7.5. The Department have also raised concerns in relation to the proposed renovation and extension to the existing historic farmhouse. The main concerns relate to the raising of the roof, changes of window openings and insertion of modern windows would not protect, maintain and enhance the established character, forms, and features of the vernacular building. It is also highlighted that the proposed new design, due to its scale and positioning forward of the front elevation of the existing vernacular building, would diminish the integrity and appreciation of the structure. The introduction of numerous design elements, such as pitched and flat roof structures, rectangular and square forms, results in the new build being of an incongruous design when viewed in the context of the vernacular dwelling which has a simple and symmetrical design form and expression. This results in a significant impact on the setting. The application is not accompanied by appropriate documentation compiled by an experienced conservation consultant as set out in objective HE 16-19(b).
- 7.6. I have carried out a site visit of the subject site and I note the site contains buildings of vernacular heritage significance, the existing two storey farmhouse is a traditional two storey style with a number of extensions over the years, however, the main farmhouse and traditional style has been retained. The farmhouse and outbuildings are in a good condition and should be retain and brought back into residential use. Therefore, I consider the principle of the development to retain and renovate the subject site is in accordance with RP 5-30 which states to redevelop or replace an uninhabitable or ruinous dwelling in a sensitive manner. This includes providing a renovation and development of an appropriate scale and design (including materials

used), relative to the structure being replaced and the location and character of the site.

- 7.7. I have concerns regarding the scale and design of the proposed extension relative to the existing building. I will assess the most recent drawing submitted as part of the further information response, the applicant is proposing a number of elements, these include; the renovation and increase in ridge height of the existing farmhouse by approximately 0.5metres in height to an overall height of 6.68metres, the windows will be relocated at a higher point on the front elevation in line with the revised roof line. The front door will remain at the same location; the rear single storey extension will remain as is. It is proposed to convert the farmhouse to a bedroom and bathroom on the ground floor and a bedroom at first floor level. The existing side extension to the west contains an external stair to an upper-level storeroom, the renovation will require the removal of these stairs. I consider the cumulative changes proposed to the farmhouse will negatively impact the vernacular integrity of the farmhouse, the combination of the changes proposed will result in the significant loss of the farmhouse fabric and design.
- 7.8. The design involves a new extension connecting the farmhouse to the existing outbuilding located to the west, the extension consists of a flat roof and pitched roof extension with an overall ridge height of 5.2 metres and overall floor area of 103sqm, this is similar to the existing outbuilding ridge height (which is marginally increased from its original height), the finishes include natural stone and zinc capping to the flat roof elements and black/blue natural slate to the roof. The new extension will protrude the front building line of the farmhouse by 6.8 metres; the extension will be line with the outbuildings to the west and behind the rear building line of the farmhouse. The length of the new extension is 12.3 metres. The new extension will consist of the kitchen and living area. The outbuilding will be renovated and converted to 2 bedrooms. The new extension is designed with the front elevation of the dwelling on the northern elevation, while the rear of the farmhouse is also on the northern elevation, the proposed layout will conflict with the existing orientation of the farmhouse. The front of the farmhouse is located on the southern elevation, and it is set back from the new extension by almost 7 metres. I have concerns the proposed extension is overbearing on the farmhouse and takes from the vernacular historic design of the farmhouse. Any new extension should be subservient to the existing

dwelling, not necessarily in terms of floor area but in terms of the location and design of the proposed extension. I consider the proposed extension is taking from the vernacular heritage of the farmhouse and will mask the overall historic setting and design of the farmhouse and outbuildings. Therefore, the proposed extension does not comply with RP 5-30 in terms of appropriate scale and design including materials used), relative to the structure being replaced and the location and character of the site.

7.9. Heritage

- 7.10. The subject site is not a protected structure or a national monument, however, it is noted as historic vernacular heritage in the context of rural Ireland. In this regard policy objectives HE16-6 and HE16-19 shall be considered as part of the planning assessment. The Planning Authority refused permission as the proposal does not comply with HE16-6 and HE16-19, HE 16-6 relates to the protection and preservation of industrial and post medieval archaeology and included in the list is dwellings and proposals for appropriate redevelopment including conversion should be subject to an appropriate assessment and record by a suitably qualified specialist/s. HE16-19 relates to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of the established character, forms, features and setting of vernacular buildings, farmyards and settlements and the contribution they make to our architectural, archaeological, historical, social and cultural heritage and to local character and sense of place.
- 7.11. The grounds of appeal state the proposed development has been developed sympathetically and respects the character and setting of the existing buildings and site.
- 7.12. I note that an Assessment of Heritage Value of the existing farmhouse and outbuildings has been submitted, which state the farmhouse was probably constructed in the early 20th century and consists of a two-storey, rubble stone, three bay dwelling, the finishes include natural slate pitched roof, timber sash windows and rendered walls. The later extensions were probably added in the 1950-60s. The floor area is noted as 60sqm and ceiling heights of 1.95m at ground level and 2.38m at first floor level. The farmhouse is in good condition, which was built directly on level bedrock shelf.

- 7.13. The outbuildings are noted as storey and half cowshed with a floor area of 33sqm and built with double-walled coursed rubble stone, possibly originally roofed in thatch, but currently roofed in corrugated iron sheeting. The external walls are rubble stonework with local sandstone slabs; the southwest wall has been rendered. The external staircase to the north has partially collapsed. It is stated that retaining the external stonework appearance will be difficult to weatherproof and achieve current insulation standards.
- 7.14. I do not consider that the applicant has provided an appropriate assessment or record by a suitably qualified specialist for the subject site, I note the architect has submitted details of his background, qualifications and projects to date, however, I do not consider the architect is a suitably qualified specialist in the area of historic heritage. Therefore, the proposed development does not comply with HE 16-6 of the CDP.
- 7.15. In relation to objective, HE 16-19 Vernacular Heritage, while I acknowledge that the applicant proposes to retain and renovate the existing vernacular farmhouse in accordance with, HE 16-19. I also note that the council will encourage best conservation practices in the renovation and maintenance of vernacular buildings through the use of specialist conservation professionals and development shall be accompanied by appropriate documentation. I do not consider that the applicant has considered the best conservation practices or used a specialised conservation professional for the proposed development as no details have been provided for the proposed conservation works required or in relation to the specialist tradesperson required to carry out the works in order to retain/restored significant heritage features.
- 7.16. In addition, I do not consider that the proposed development complies with part b of objective HE16-19, the proposed works do not protect, maintain or enhance the established character, forms, features and setting of the vernacular farmhouse and outbuildings. As I have outlined in the previous section, the proposed design of the extension is out of scale and character with the existing farmhouse. The farmhouse identity is lost in the new extension and will not be viewed as a traditional vernacular farmhouse dwelling.

7.17. Having regard to objective HE16-6 and HE16-19, I do not consider that the applicant has provided the specialist conservation report or appropriate assessment required to protect and preserve the historic setting and vernacular farmhouse and outbuildings of this site. Therefore, I recommend a refusal as the proposal contravenes objectives HE16-6 and HE16-19.

7.18. Visual Impact

7.19. The subject site is located within a High Value Landscape and along Scenic Route S37 (roads at Baltimore). The planning authority refusal reason raised concerns regarding the location of the subject site within a High Value Landscape area and considered that the proposed development in terms of its bulk, scale and design fails to preserve or enhance the established character, form, features or setting of the existing vernacular farmhouse and outbuildings on site, it would dominate the setting and significantly alter and detract from the character and scenic amenity of the surrounding area, which would be contrary to the objectives GI14-9 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022.

7.20. The grounds of appeal concentrate on the design of the proposal and highlights that due to the topography and natural siting and extensive hedgerows and trees around the site, that it will not be visible from the public road.

7.21. I have carried out a site visit and viewed the site from the public road, scenic route S37. The existing dwelling and outbuildings are well screened from the public road due to the extensive vegetation on site and the location of the dwelling on a plateau above the surrounding landscape. However, given the proposed extension will protrude the existing front building line of the dwelling and will be out of scale with the character of the existing farmhouse, I consider the proposed extension will be visually intrusive on the surrounding area and will negatively impact the scenic views along scenic route S37.

7.22. Having regard to the location of the subject site within an area zoned as High Value Landscape and located along a scenic route, I do not consider that the proposed extension and alterations to the existing farmhouse and outbuildings are in accordance with GI 14-9 of the CDP. The proposed development will dominate the setting and significantly alter and detract from the character and scenic amenity of the surrounding area.

8.0 AA Screening

- 8.1. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The subject site is located to the south of Baltimore town and located along a local road, there is an existing derelict dwelling on site and the proposal includes renovation and an extension to the existing dwelling. The site is not located in a designated area; the nearest protected sites are Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC & pNHA (site code: 000101) is located approximately 450 metres north of the subject site and Sheeps Head to Toe Head SPA (site code: 004156) is located approximately 400 metres south of the subject site. No nature conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site.

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Nature of works which comprise of an extension and renovation of an existing dwelling.
- The distance of over 400 metres to the nearest European site and lack of hydrological connections

I conclude, 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.

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

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1. I recommend that planning permission should be refused for the reason and considerations as set out below.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the objectives RP5-30, HE16-6 and HE16-19 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 for the area which requires that vernacular structures are sensitively renovated and to protect, maintain and enhance the established character, forms, features and setting of vernacular buildings, farmyards and settlements and the contribution they make to our architectural, archaeological, historical, social and cultural heritage and to local character and sense of place. It is considered that, by reason of the layout, design, scale, bulk and extension beyond the front building line of the farmhouse, the proposed development would militate against an attractive historical vernacular structure, would be of insufficient architectural quality on a high value landscape and would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, conflict with the objectives of the development plan and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. The site of the proposed development is located within a High Value Landscape and adjacent a scenic route S38 as set out in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 for the area, and objective GI14-9 which places an emphasis on the importance of designing with the landscape and of siting of development to minimise visual intrusion as set out in the Cork Rural House Design Guidelines, which Guidelines are considered to be reasonable. Having regard to the topography of the site, the elevated positioning of the proposed development, together with design, bulk and scale of the proposed extension in relation to the existing farmhouse, it is considered that the proposed development would form a discordant and obtrusive feature on the landscape at this location, would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, would fail to be adequately absorbed and integrated into the landscape, would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and would set an undesirable precedent for other such prominently located development in the vicinity. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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

Jennifer McQuaid
Planning Inspector

17th June 2025

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ABP-322150-25
Proposed Development Summary	Renovations, extensions and alterations to farmhouse and outbuilding, wastewater treatment system, upgrade site entrance and associates site works
Development Address	Lahern, Baltimore, Co. Cork
	In all cases check box /or leave blank
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.	State the Class here
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8	

<p>of the Roads Regulations, 1994.</p> <p>No Screening required.</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold.</p> <p>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.</p> <p>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</p>	

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ Date: _____