



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-322763-25

Development	Demolition of the existing dwelling, sheds, walls & associated structures on site. Construction of 9 residential units and all associated site works.
Location	Belladonna Farm, Sea Road, Kilcoole, Co.Wicklow.
Planning Authority	Wicklow County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2560232
Applicant(s)	SANDD Development Ltd.
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	SANDD Development Ltd.
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	25 th August 2025
Inspector	Emer Doyle

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site, which has a stated area of 0.24 hectares, is located to the south of the Sea Road in Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow. Kilcoole train station is located c. 700m east of the site whilst the centre of the village of Kilcoole is located c. 800m west of the site.
- 1.2. Existing development on the site comprises of a single storey cottage with the gable end facing directly onto Sea Road which forms an 'L' shape with a two storey stone outbuilding. These 2 buildings are of vernacular architecture and form a very attractive setting with a large gravelled area to the front. A large barn is located on lands to the rear with a further roofed outbuilding behind the shed. This building is not enclosed to the front.
- 1.3. There is a right of way to the east of the site which currently provides access to two modern dormer dwellings. There are c. 5 No. traditional cottages, all of which have been extended over the years, to the east of the site. Lands to the west and south are occupied by a large modern dormer dwelling on a substantial site.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises the construction of 9 No. dwellings comprising of 6 No. semi-detached dwellings and 3 No. detached dwellings. A mix of units is proposed comprising of 1 No. 4 bedroom detached dwelling (Type B), 2 No. detached 3 bedroom units (Type A), 4 No. 3 bedroom semi-detached units (Types C and C1) and 2 No. 2 bedroom semi-detached units (Type D).
- 2.2. Vehicular access to the 3 detached units is proposed directly off Sea Road, whilst vehicular access to the semi-detached units is proposed from an existing access road to the east of the site. The private open space areas for each dwelling ranges from 40m² to 71.6m² and the public open space has an area of 395m².
- 2.3. An Urban Design Statement which includes a Housing Quality Assessment has been submitted with the application documentation.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. Permission refused for 2 No. reasons as follows:

1. The proposed development would result in the loss of outbuildings and a dwelling house which represent vernacular buildings of historic interest. To allow this development would result in a significant loss of historic fabric of County Wicklow, and would be contrary to objectives CPO 8.18 and CPO 8.20 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 which seeks conserve/retain such vernacular building to protect the County's architectural heritage. The development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. Having regard to:

- i) The demolition of vernacular buildings of heritage value;
- ii) The layout and design of the development;
- iii) The lack of details regarding sightline information for the junction with the public road and the junction within the proposed development;
- iv) The insufficient width of the access lane for the scale of development proposed;
- v) The lack of details regarding the appropriate treatment of surface water drainage;
- vi) The layout of the open space;

It is considered the development would detrimentally impact on the residential and visual amenities of the area and be contrary to the objectives of the County Development Plan 2022 - 2028. The development would therefore be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports (15/05/25)

- Considers that the proposal is located on an infill site in a serviced zoned area and that the proposal would align with compact growth and the density proposed was acceptable.
- Notes that the demolition of vernacular buildings is discouraged and it is considered that the rubble masonry built structures are good examples of Irish traditional buildings and have heritage merit.
- Considers that the proposed detached dwellings would generally be consistent with the established building line set back but visually inconsistent with the pattern of development in the immediate area. There are no contiguous drawings and no visualisations included with the application which would be required to fully assess the potential impact on the visual amenities of the area.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Heritage Officer (15/05/25) The comments of the Heritage Officer are included in the planning report. Given the heritage merit of the vernacular buildings and the corrugated iron shed, it is considered that the proposed demolition is contrary to the objectives of the Development Plan (CPO 8.18, 8.19 and 8.20) and should be refused.
- Housing (08/05/25): Considers that proposals submitted are acceptable.
- Area Engineer (23/04/25): Required further information in relation to roads, surface water drainage and the size of the foul drainage pipe.
- Roads (23/04/2025): Required further information.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

3.3.1. No reports submitted.

3.4. Third Party Observations

- 3.4.1. A total of 4 No. submissions were made to the Planning Authority. The concerns raised relate to density of development, impact on character of the area with the proposed removal of vernacular buildings, impact on residential amenities, impact on drainage, impact on biodiversity, and traffic safety concerns.

4.0 Planning History

On site

PA Reg. Ref. 01/4922

Permission granted for 4 new bungalows, new sewer line and demolition of existing dwelling and ancillary works.

Adjacent Site to the East

PA Reg. Ref. 21/1202

Permission granted for subdivision of existing site and construction of 2 No. 2 storey detached modern bungalows, with access via existing lane and new vehicular entrance. Together with all ancillary site development works, landscaping, connection to existing services and amendments to front boundary of existing dwelling/ laneway entrance to cater for proposed development.

Enforcement

UD399 - case closed- storage of oiltankers and coalyard.

UD3554 - case closed- operation of garage.

UD1290 - case closed- unauthorised truck depot.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework – First Revision – April 2025

Chapter 6: People, Homes and Communities

- 5.1.1. National Policy Objective 7 seeks to “deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.”
- 5.1.2. National Policy Objective 8 seeks to “deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted in the five Cities and suburbs of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, within their existing built-up footprints and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.”
- 5.1.3. National Policy Objective 43 seeks “to prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.”
- 5.1.4. National Policy Objective 45 seeks to “increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration, increased building height and more compact forms of development.”

Chapter 9: Climate Transition and Our Environment

- 5.1.5. National Policy Objective 89 seeks to ‘protect, conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural, cultural and built heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their cultural and environmental significance.’
- 5.1.6. National Policy Objective 90 seeks to ‘enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, environmental, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets, including streetscapes, vernacular dwellings and other historic buildings and monuments, through appropriate and sensitive investment and conservation.’

5.2. A Living Tradition: A Strategy to Enhance the Understanding, Minding and Handing on of Our Built Vernacular Heritage, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021.

5.3. **Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines**

5.3.1. The following is a list of section 28 Ministerial Guidelines considered of relevance to the proposed development. Specific policies and objectives are referenced within the assessment where appropriate.

- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities: Design Guidelines (2007)
- ‘Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets’ (DMURS) (2019)
- ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management’ (2009)
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)

5.4. **Climate Action plan 2025**

5.4.1. The Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25) is the third annual update to Ireland’s Climate Action Plan. It should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024.

5.4.2. The purpose of the Climate Action Plan is to lay out a roadmap of actions which will ultimately lead us to meeting our national climate objective of pursuing and achieving, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. It aligns with the legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings that were agreed by Government in July 2022.

5.5. **Development Plan**

Greystones/ Delgany and Kilcloole Local Area Plan 2013-2019

Zoning: RE: Existing Residential- To protect, provide for and improve residential amenities of adjoining properties and areas while allowing for infill residential development that reflects the established character of the area in which it is located.

Draft Greystones/ Delgany and Kilcloole Planning Framework/ Proposed Variation No. 4 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028

Zoning: RE: Existing Residential- To protect, provide for and improve residential amenities of adjoining properties and areas while allowing for infill residential development that reflects the established character of the area in which it is located.

Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028

- 5.5.1. Kilcloole is identified as a Level 4 settlement, 'Self sustaining town' in the county hierarchy. Towns in Level 4 are generally targeted for growth rates around 20%-25%.
- 5.5.2. **Zoning Principle 1** (Compact Growth): In accordance with National Policy Objective 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement.
- 5.5.3. For levels 1-5 of the settlement hierarchy, and in cognisance that the potential of town centre regeneration / infill / brownfield sites is difficult to predict, there shall be no quantitative restriction inferred from the Core Strategy and associated tables, on the number of units that may be delivered on town centre regeneration / infill / brownfield sites.
- 5.5.4. **Zoning Principle 2** (Delivery of Population and Housing Targets): Town centre regeneration / infill / brownfield developments normally located within the existing built-up part of the settlement, generally on lands zoned 'town centre', 'village centre', 'primary area', 'existing residential' and other similarly zoned, already developed lands will be prioritised and promoted in the first instance for new housing development.
- 5.5.5. **Zoning Principle 3** (Higher Densities): It is an objective of the Council to encourage higher residential densities at suitable locations, particularly in existing town / village centres and close to existing or proposed major public transport corridors and nodes.
- 5.5.6. **Zoning Principle 4** (Sequential Approach): A sequential approach for new residential development will be taken, with priority location 1 relating to the

densification of the existing built-up area, re-use of derelict or brownfield sites, infill and backland development.

5.5.7. **Objective CPO 4.2:** To secure compact growth through the delivery of at least 30% of all new homes within the built-up footprint of existing settlements by prioritising development on infill, brownfield and regeneration sites and redeveloping underutilised land in preference to greenfield sites.

5.5.8. **Objective CPO 4.3:** Increase the density in existing settlements through a range of measures including bringing vacant properties back into use, reusing existing buildings, infill development schemes, brownfield regeneration, increased building height where appropriate, encouraging living over the shop and securing higher densities for new development.

5.6. Housing

5.6.1. **Table 6.1 Density Standards:** For small towns and villages including Kilcoole, the following density standards are noted:

- Centrally located sites: 30 – 40+ units per hectare for mainly residential schemes may be appropriate or for more mixed use schemes.
- Edge of Centre Sites: 20-35 dwellings per hectare.
- Edge of small town / village: Densities of less than 15 – 20 dwellings per hectare (as an alternative to one-off housing) as long as such development does not represent more than 20% of the total new planned housing stock of the small town or village.

5.6.2. **Objective CPO 6.3:** New housing development shall enhance and improve the residential amenity of any location, shall provide for the highest possible standard of living of occupants and in particular, shall not reduce to an unacceptable degree the level of amenity enjoyed by existing residents in the area.

5.6.3. **Objective CPO 6.4:** All new housing developments (including single and rural houses) shall achieve the highest quality of layout and design, in accordance with the standards set out in the Development and Design Standards (Appendix 1) and the Wicklow Single Rural House Design Guide (Appendix 2)".

5.6.4. **Objective CPO 6.5:** To require that new development be of the highest quality design and layout and contributes to the development of a coherent urban form and attractive built environment in accordance with the following key principles of urban design:

- Strengthening the character and urban fabric of the area;
- Reinforcing local identity and sense of place;
- Optimise the opportunities afforded by the historical and natural assets of a site / area;
- Providing a coherent, legible and permeable urban structure;
- Promoting an efficient use of land;
- Improving and enhancing the public realm;
- Conserving and respecting local heritage;
- Providing ease of movement and resolving conflict between pedestrians/cyclists and traffic;
- Promoting accessibility for all; and
- Cognisance of the impact on climate change and the reduction targets for carbon emissions set out by the Government.

5.6.5. **Objective CPO 6.16:** To encourage and facilitate high quality well-designed infill and brownfield development that is sensitive to context, enables consolidation of the built environment and enhances the streetscape.

5.6.6. Appendix 1 of Volume 3 sets out relevant design standards. The following is relevant:

Section 2.1.4 notes that the design of new local roads and new means of access onto local roads shall generally comply with the guidance set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, Traffic Management Guidelines and Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas as necessary.

Section 3.1.3 (Privacy) notes that a separation of 22m will normally be required between opposing windows serving private areas and the degree of ‘overlooking’

afforded by different window types shall be considered e.g., an angled roof light will not have the same impact as a traditional window on the same elevation. Section 3.1.4 (Open space) notes that public open space will normally be required at a rate of 15% of the site area. Minimum private open space for 1-2 bed houses is 50sq.m and 60-75sq.m for 3+ bed houses.

Section 3.1.5 (Car parking) notes that 2 no. off-street spaces shall normally be required for all dwelling units over 2-bed in size. For every 5 no. units provided with only 1 space, 1 visitor space shall be provided (6m by 2.5m for parallel bays).

Section 3.1.6 (Infill development etc.) notes that house design should complement the area, but more flexibility can be applied where an area is a 'mixed-bag' of styles

5.7. Other Structures & Vernacular Architecture Objectives

Objective CPO 8.18: To seek (through the development management process) the retention, conservation, appropriate repair and reuse of vernacular buildings and features such as traditional dwellings and outbuildings, historic shopfronts, thatched roofs and historic features such as stonewalls and milestones. The demolition of vernacular buildings will be discouraged.

Objective CPO 8.19: Development proposals affecting vernacular buildings and structures will be required to submit a detailed, true measured survey, photographic records and written analysis as part of the planning application process.

Objective CPO 8.20: Where an item or a structure (or any feature of a structure) is considered to be of heritage merit (where not identified in the RPS3), the Planning Authority reserves the right to refuse permission to remove or alter that structure / item, in the interests of the protection of the County's architectural heritage.

5.8. Natural Heritage Designations

5.8.1. No natural designations apply to the subject site. The following Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of the appeal site include:

- The Murrough Wetlands Special Area of Conservation (Site Code:002249), approximately 600m east of the site.

- The Murrough Special Protection Area (Site Code:004186), approximately 760m east of the site.

Further natural heritage designations include:

- The Murrough Proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Code: 000730), approximately 600m east of the site.

5.9. EIA Screening

- 5.9.1. The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for environmental impact assessment (refer to Form 1 and Form 2, in Appendices of this report). Having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development and the types and characteristics of potential impacts, it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. The proposed development, therefore, does not trigger a requirement for environmental impact assessment screening and an EIAR is not required.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

- 6.1.1. The grounds of the First Party Appeal can be summarised as follows:
- There are numerous policies within the Development Plan which support the principle of development at this location.
 - National Policy also supports development at this location.
 - The Guidelines referred to by the County Heritage Officer- A Living Tradition- A Strategy for Vernacular Built Heritage are not issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended).
 - A review of the detail of the Urban Design Statement and layout and landscaping plans indicate that the proposed development will not unduly impact on the visual amenities of the area.

- The concerns expressed in the Area Engineer report in relation to sightlines, access road, surface water and public open space would normally be subject to the request of Further Information.
- These issues have now been addressed in an Engineering Report submitted with the appeal. The access lane is widened, the turning area omitted (alternatively could be moved west to the end of the space and finished in material in keeping with the open space) and sightlines addressed.
- It is considered that the need or desire for the retention/ re-use/ renovation of vernacular buildings is heavily influenced by the nature of the location in which they are now found. In historical maps, the existing buildings were isolated and surrounded by agricultural lands. This is no longer the case.
- The Board is asked to consider the architectural and vernacular heritage issue to be of much lesser importance than the provision of housing at this location pursuant with national and local policies.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- None.

6.3. Observations

- None.

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, and inspected the site, and having regard to relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues are as follows:

- Policy Context and Density
- Architectural Heritage
- Design and Layout

- Other Matters

7.2. Policy Context and Density

- 7.2.1. The appeal relates to the development of 9 No. detached and semi-detached dwellings on a site of 0.24 hectares on a site at the edge of Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow. The site is zoned RE: Existing Residential 'To protect, provide for and improve residential amenities of adjoining properties and areas while allowing for infill residential development that reflects the established character of the area in which it is located.'
- 7.2.2. In relation to the national policy context, a residential infill development in the suburb of Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow would generally be in accordance with the following National Policy Objectives of the National Planning Framework- First Revision (2025). NPO 7 seeks the delivery of 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth. NPO 43 seeks to prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.
- 7.2.3. The proposed scheme of 9 No. dwellings on a 0.24 hectare site equates to a density of c. 37 units per hectare. Kilcoole is defined as a self-sustaining town noted as Level 4 in the Settlement Hierarchy. The CDP targets growth rates of 20%-25% for Level 4 towns. The site is zoned as 'Existing Residential' in both the adopted Local Area Plan and the Draft Greystones- Delgany and Kilcoole Local Planning Framework. Table 6.1 of the Wicklow County Council Development Plan outlines that for Small Towns and Villages including Kilcoole, 20 – 35 units per hectare may be appropriate for edge of centre sites. The Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines identify that in metropolitan towns with populations greater than 1,500, densities in the range of 35dph- 50dph shall generally be applied at the edge of suburban metropolitan towns.
- 7.2.4. The Planning Authority is of the opinion that the proposal can be considered in principle. Having regard to the location of the site at the edge of Kilcoole, within zoned lands I consider that a density of c. 37 units per hectare is appropriate.

7.3. Architectural Heritage

- 7.3.1. The Planning Authority's first reason for refusing permission is in relation to the proposed loss of outbuildings and a dwelling house which represent vernacular buildings of historic interest and would result in a significant loss of historic fabric of County Wicklow, contrary to objectives CPO 8.18 and CPO 8.20 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028.
- 7.3.2. The planner's report notes that the vernacular residential dwelling and sheds appear to have been included on the historic six inch maps. The demolition of vernacular buildings is discouraged as per the objective CPO 8.18 and it is considered that these rubble masonry built structures are good examples of Irish traditional buildings and have heritage merit. The planner's report notes comments from the Heritage Officer as follows:
- 'The outbuildings and dwelling house proposed for demolition appear to represent vernacular buildings of historic interest. It is noted that no heritage impact assessment has been submitted. In my view this proposal would result in significant and unnecessary loss of historic fabric and would be contrary to Council policies (CDP CPO 8.18, 8.19 and 8.20), and the national policy as set out in A Living Tradition- a strategy for vernacular built heritage 2001 Given the heritage merit of the vernacular buildings and the corrugated iron shed, it is considered the proposed demolition is contrary to the objectives of the CDP and should be refused.'*
- 7.3.3. The response to the appeal states that the Guidelines referred to by the County Heritage Officer- A Living Tradition- A Strategy for Vernacular Built Heritage are not issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended). It is considered that the need or desire for the retention/ re-use/ renovation of vernacular buildings is heavily influenced by the nature of the location in which they are now found. In historical maps, the existing buildings were isolated and surrounded by agricultural lands. This is no longer the case. The Board is asked to consider the architectural and vernacular heritage issue to be of much lesser importance than the provision of housing at this location pursuant with national and local policies.
- 7.3.4. The existing site layout plan submitted with the application indicates an existing dwelling and existing shed in an 'L shape' at the front of the site and two existing sheds at the rear of the site. A demolition layout and photos labels these buildings as

5 No. buildings as the outbuilding towards the front of the site is labelled as buildings 2 and 3. I refer the Commission to the photographs of the buildings submitted with the application together with the photographs taken on the site inspection.

7.3.5. At the outset, I have no concerns in relation to the large barn structure and open shed to the rear of the site (buildings 4 and 5). These are very common structures typical of farm buildings and there are many of these buildings throughout the County Wicklow countryside.

7.3.6. The existing dwelling is a farm style cottage with a corrugated iron roof and timber sash windows. It is currently in everyday use and occupied by a family. It is a conspicuous landmark for the local area owing to its visual prominence with the gable of the house facing the road and the L shape with the adjoining vernacular style stone outbuildings. Both buildings appear to have been well maintained over the years but show some signs of being physically altered over the years. The buildings are not protected structures and are not listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Vernacular buildings such as these are not commonly seen in villages in County Wicklow. I consider that the demolition of these two buildings would detract from the sense of place and not contribute to good placemaking at this location.

7.3.7. I accept that where once they were isolated buildings within an agricultural setting, they are now surrounded by housing at the edge of Kilcoole. The absence of a heritage impact assessment and the response to the appeal as set out above appears to downplay the significance of these buildings. There is a requirement in the Development Plan under CPO 8.19 for development proposals affecting vernacular buildings and structures to submit a detailed, true measured survey, photographic records and written analysis as part of the planning application process. The appeal response doesn't address this in any way.

7.3.8. I note that the National Planning Framework First Revision recognises that the qualities and character of our national built heritage in rural areas, including towns and villages, can add distinctiveness to place-making and over time can acquire special interest through its intrinsic quality. This 'sense of place' is also becoming an important factor in attracting foreign direct investment and individual talent to Ireland. I note the objectives in the National Planning Framework which aim to protect,

conserve and enhance the rich qualities of the built heritage of Ireland as per NPO 89 and to enhance and protect the special physical, environmental and cultural value of built heritage assets, including streetscapes, vernacular dwellings and other historic buildings and monuments, through appropriate and sensitive investment and conservation as per NPO90. I note the Objectives in the Development Plan as set out above. I also note the 2021 publication 'A Living Tradition' published by the DoHLGH which recognises that vernacular heritage is a significant part of our cultural heritage. The strategy is in favour of preserving and rehabilitating derelict vernacular buildings. The document also acknowledges that the reuse of existing buildings and materials over new construction is energy efficient and can reduce carbon footprint.

- 7.3.9. In conclusion, I am not satisfied that the applicant's response addresses any of the concerns of the Heritage Officer or the Planner's reports. The applicant has not provided a satisfactory case to demolish the existing buildings on the site. The absence of detailed survey and written analysis of the buildings as part of the planning application process is contrary to Objective CPO 8.19. In the absence of specialist conservation appraisal and advice, it is considered that the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence to show that the conservation of vernacular buildings is not technically feasible. I consider that the proposal would not be in accordance with NPO 89 and NPO 90 to protect built heritage or Objectives 8.18 and 8.20 of the Development Plan to promote the retention, conservation, repair and reuse of vernacular architecture.

7.4. Design and Layout

- 7.4.1. The second reason for refusal relates primarily to the loss of architectural heritage and to the layout and design of the proposed development.
- 7.4.2. In terms of the loss of architectural heritage, I consider that this issue has been addressed in the section above. The planner's report considers that the proposed detached dwellings would generally be consistent with the established building line set back but visually inconsistent with the pattern of development in the immediate area. There are no contiguous drawings and no visualisations included with the

application which would be required to fully assess the potential impact on the visual amenities of the area.

7.4.3. I concur with this view. Specifically, in relation to design elements of the proposal, I consider that the design proposed of the two storey dwellings to the front of the site, would be overly dominant and would not tie in with existing development of the five single storey cottages to the east of the site. I note that the backlands site of the adjacent cottage to the east has recently been developed with 2 modern dormer bungalows, but these are a significant distance from the public road and are not unduly dominant at this location. The site is located at the edge of the town c. midway between the town centre and Kilcoole train station and on route to the beach. The proposed dwellings in my view would be out of character with the pattern of development in the area and do not constitute an appropriate or sympathetic infill response or have due regard to the architectural form of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site. I consider that the loss of the vernacular buildings and their replacement with modern two storey detached dwellings would diminish the rural character of the area at the edge of this settlement site. Objective CPO 6.5 requires new development to be of the highest quality design and layout and contribute to the development of a coherence form and attractive built environment in accordance with a number of key principles of urban design including the following:

- Strengthening the character and urban fabric of the area;
- Reinforcing local identity and sense of place
- Optimising the opportunities afforded by the historical and natural assets of a site/area.

7.4.4. I consider that the proposed layout and proposed loss of vernacular architecture will diminish the character and visual amenities of the area and would result in the loss of opportunities to retain and reuse vernacular architecture. Further the setting is somewhat unusual and contributes to the local identity and sense of place. As such, I consider that the proposed development would contravene this objective.

7.4.5. In respect of the amenity of future residents, I am satisfied that the proposal will provide a satisfactory level of residential amenity, providing quality accommodation

for future residents. The submitted plans provide adequate separation distance between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at first floor level (SPPR1) and exceed the minimum private open space for all house types (SPPR2) in accordance with the Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2025. In accordance with SPPR 3 of the above guidelines, the applicant has also proposed 2 No. parking spaces for each dwelling in accordance with the maximum rate allowed for peripheral areas. Having considered the Quality Housing Assessment submitted with the Design Statement, I am satisfied that the floor areas exceed the standards set out in Table 5.1 of the Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities: Design Guidelines.

- 7.4.6. The second reason for refusal also raised concerns about the layout of public open space. It was considered that the quantum of public open space at 13.9% was below the Development Plan requirement of 15% and it was unlikely that the space would be suitable for active play as there is a turning area intersecting the widest part.
- 7.4.7. I note that the Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines state that a range within 10 to 15% should be applied. I note that the drawings submitted in response to the appeal omit the turning area from this location. Having regard to the above, I consider that the quantum of open space is sufficient in this instance and that the concerns regarding the layout and use of open space have been addressed.
- 7.4.8. In conclusion, I am satisfied that concerns regarding open space have been addressed. The design proposed would be contrary to Objective CPO 6.5 in that it would negatively impact on the visual amenities of the area and fail to reinforce local identity and sense of place and optimise the opportunities afforded by the retention of the traditional vernacular buildings on the site.

7.5. Other Issues

- 7.5.1. The second reason for refusal related to a number of issues including sightlines at the junction the access road with the public road, the insufficient width of the access road, and details in relation to surface water drainage.
- 7.5.2. The response to the appeal shows that sightlines of 45m are available in both directions at this location. It is noted that this is similar to what was previously

approved under PA Reg. Ref. 21/1202. Having regard to the small scale of development proposed and the limited amount of traffic on this road, I am satisfied that this is acceptable.

7.5.3. I note that the access road has been widened to 5.5m with a 2m footpath on the western side in the drawings submitted with the appeal response. Having regard to the small scale of the housing development proposed, I consider that this is acceptable.

7.5.4. In terms of surface water drainage, I note that it is proposed that the surface water in front of houses 1-6 will be allowed to drain naturally, at a fall of 1:40, across the footpaths, parking area and access road to a basin/ swale in the public open space. There is also provision for a reinforced concrete water attenuation tank within the public open space to allow for any overflow from the basin/ swale during any possible flood exceedance events. I am satisfied that this is acceptable and addresses the concerns raised.

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 land is not within or adjacent to any European site. The closest such site to the appeal site is the Murrough Wetlands Special Area of Conservation (Site Code:002249), approximately 600m east of the site. The Murrough Special Protection Area (Site Code:004186), approximately 760m east of the site.

Having considered the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any appreciable effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Nature of works
- Distance from nearest European Site and lack of connections
- Appropriate Assessment Screening of the Planning Authority

I consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect individually, or in-combination with other plans and projects, on a European Site and appropriate assessment is therefore not required.

9.0 Water Framework Directive

9.1. Please refer to Appendix 2. The subject site is located at Sea Road, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow. The nearest water body is Kilcoole Stream IE_EA_10K010580, c. 190m to the south of the site (Poor water body status – WFD Risk: At Risk) and the groundwater body is Wicklow IE_EA_G_076 (Overall groundwater status- good- WFD Risk- At risk). The proposed development is detailed in section 2.0 of my report. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal. I have assessed the proposed development of 9 No. residential units and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies 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.

9.2. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Nature of works e.g. small scale and nature of the development
- Location-distance from nearest water bodies and/or lack of hydrological connections

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

10.0 Recommendation

10.1. I recommend that permission is refused as follows:

11.0 Reasons and Considerations

11.1. It is considered that, by reason of its scale, height, design and the loss of outbuildings and a dwelling which represent vernacular buildings of historic interest and heritage value, the proposed development would be contrary to Objectives CPO 8.18 and CPO 8.20 and CPO 6.5 of the Wicklow County Council Development Plan 2022-2028, which seek to promote the retention, conservation, appropriate repair and reuse of vernacular buildings and features such as traditional dwellings and outbuildings and require new development to be of the highest quality design which strengthens the character and urban fabric of an area. Furthermore, the absence of detailed survey and written analysis of the vernacular buildings as part of the planning application process would be contrary to Objective CPO 8.19 of the Development Plan. To permit the development as proposed, would result in a design that fails to fully integrate with the existing environment and would negatively impact on the visual amenities of the area and fail to reinforce local identity and a sense of place and optimise the opportunities afforded by the retention of the traditional vernacular buildings on the site. 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.

Emer Doyle
Planning Inspector

24th September 2025

Appendix 1- Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	322763-25
Proposed Development Summary	Permission for demolition of buildings and construction of 9 No. dwelling units.
Development Address	Sea Road, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow.
	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. <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>
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. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>
<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 type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>

development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	Class 10. Infrastructure projects (b) (i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	

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"/>	
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 1- Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	322763-25
Proposed Development Summary	Permission for demolition of buildings and construction of 9 No. dwelling units.
Development Address	Sea Road, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow.
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.	
Characteristics of proposed development (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	<p>The proposed development is for the demolition of a dwelling and a number of outbuildings and the construction of 9 No. residential units.</p> <p>The project due to its size and nature will not give rise to significant production of waste during both the construction and operation phases or give rise to significant risk of pollution and nuisance.</p> <p>The construction of the proposed development does not have potential to cause significant effects on the environment due to water pollution. The project characteristics pose no significant risks to human health.</p> <p>The proposed development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, or is vulnerable to climate change.</p>
Location of development	The subject site is a brownfield site located within Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow. The subject site is not located

<p>(The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).</p>	<p>in or immediately adjacent to ecologically sensitive sites.</p> <p>It is considered that, having regard to the limited nature and scale of the development, there is no real likelihood of significant effect on other significant environmental sensitivities in the area.</p>
<p>Types and characteristics of potential impacts</p> <p>(Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).</p>	<p>The size of the proposed development is notably below the mandatory thresholds in respect of a Class 10 Infrastructure Projects of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.</p> <p>There is no real likelihood of significant cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted projects in the adjoining area.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	
<p>Likelihood of Significant Effects</p>	<p>Conclusion in respect of EIA</p>

There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.
There is significant and realistic doubt regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	N/A
There is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	N/A

Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____

DP/ADP: _____ **Date:** _____

(only where Schedule 7A information or EIAR required)

Appendix 2

Screening the need for Water Framework Directive Assessment Determination

The subject site is located at Sea Road, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow. The nearest water body is Kilcoole Stream IE_EA_10K010580, c. 190m to the south of the site (Poor water body status – WFD Risk: At Risk) and the groundwater body is Wicklow IE_EA_G_076 (Overall groundwater status- good- WFD Risk- At risk). The proposed development is detailed in section 2.0 of my report. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

I have assessed the development proposed of the demolition of a dwelling and outbuildings and the construction of 9 No. houses and I have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies 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 e.g. small scale and nature of the development
- Location-distance from nearest water bodies and/or lack of hydrological connections

Conclusion

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.