



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ACP-323139-25

Development	Permission to 1) realign 3 tennis courts and construct 1 additional court 2) construct 1 padel tennis court 3) construct children's play area 4) construct a clubhouse 5) construct an elevated viewing area and all associated site works.
Location	Trim Tennis Club, Newhaggard Road, Trim, Co. Meath.
Planning Authority	Meath County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2461070
Applicant(s)	Trim Tennis Club
Type of Application	Planning Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant permission
Type of Appeal	Third Party v Decision
Appellant(s)	Roger Wheeler for Residents Group Objection
Observer(s)	None.
Date of Site Inspection	13 th January 2026
Inspector	Dan Aspell

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1.1. The site is located at Trim Tennis Club, Newhaggard Road, Trim. The application area comprises the majority of the tennis club and an area of Newhaggard Road (R161). The site area is stated as 0.411ha.
- 1.1.2. The tennis club is on the southern side of Newhaggard Road It comprises an area of car parking to the front (34 no. spaces). The clubhouse is located generally within the car park adjacent the eastern boundary of the site; it comprises a single-storey pitch-roof structure. There are 2 no. vehicular access points to the club from Newhaggard Road (operating as a one-way system). There are 3 no. tennis courts in the southern part of the site. There are 4 no. floodlights around the courts.
- 1.1.3. There is a terrace of 2-storey dwellings to the north of Newhaggard Rd (Nos. 11-16). There is a graveyard to the west of the site. There is an area of open land to the south. There is an open-air storage yard to the east and a vacant commercial structure to the north-east. 'Aura Trim' Leisure Centre and St. Loman's Park GAA are 60m and 130m respectively to the west.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1.1. The proposed development comprises the following:
 - realign/reorientate 3 existing tennis courts and develop;
 - 1 additional tennis court with full ITF (International Tennis Federation) Class 1 Professional court sports lighting (12 no. 12m high poles);
 - 1 Padel Tennis court with 4 no. 6m high court sports lighting;
 - young children's play area;
 - new 2-storey clubhouse with single-storey equipment and service sheds;
 - central elevated viewing area/canopy between courts;
 - new tennis court fencing and site perimeter fencing;
 - landscaping including paved areas;
 - adjust and update car parking facilities and provide bicycle parking;
 - all associated works.

- 2.1.2. The proposed layout generally comprises two vehicular accesses (one-way system); parking to the front of the site; clubhouse along the eastern boundary; and 4 no. tennis courts to the rear of the site. A padel court is proposed in the north-eastern corner of the site adjacent the road. The development as revised in response to further information would include 18 no. 6m floodlights for the tennis courts; 4 no. 6m lights for the padel court; 4 no. 6m lights in the carpark; and pedestrian bollard lights.
- 2.1.3. The application included a lighting report showing lux levels (prepared by 'Signify'); 3D images; and related plan, section and elevational drawings. The response to further information included a report on the proposed floodlight installation (prepared by Kevin Cleary & Associates); updated lighting report showing lux levels (prepared by 'Signify'); 3D images; and computer-generated images.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1 Decision

- 3.1.1. Meath County Council issued a notification to grant permission subject to 8 no. Conditions. I note the following in particular:
- Condition 3: Conditions on floodlight hours of operation; direction of lighting and requirement for cowling; requirement to amend the operation of lighting if requested by the Local Authority should it cause a safety issue for road users or neighbouring dwellings;
 - Condition 4: Requirements to complete the proposed landscaping;
 - Condition 5: Requirement to agree revised surface water layout and surface water outfall, with any existing or proposed surface water connection to the foul network to be removed;
 - Conditions 6 & 7: Construction management;
 - Condition 8: Detailed design of parking area.

3.2 Planning Authority Reports

- 3.2.1. Planning reports: I note the following points:

- Location: Site is in town centre, is an established tennis club, and is zoned 'C1 Mixed Use';
- Design & Layout: Proposed layout is a significant enhancement for the site. Existing clubhouse is modest. Proposed clubhouse incorporates a balcony at first floor. Proposed design and materials are acceptable. The storage shed is acceptable. All boundary treatments should be agreed by condition;
- Padel court: Whilst the design including steel framework is acceptable, placement of the padel court with the tall lighting fixtures visible to residents may not be optimal. Without adequate justification it may be more suitable further within the site, with the new clubhouse closer to the front of the site. Further information sought in this regard. Proposal not revised in response to further information. Applicant states the padel court location is appropriate within the context. 3D plans are provided. Proposal is acceptable;
- Central viewing structure: Revised proposals submitted in response to further information. Central viewing area at first floor between the courts is omitted. A canopy is provided in lieu. This is a notable enhancement and is satisfactory;
- Lighting: A lighting report was provided in response to further information. The response was forwarded to the Public Lighting Department. Internal report received indicates the further information response is acceptable;
- Transport: Minor changes to parking and access proposed. Transportation Section stated no objection and conditions are recommended;
- Surface water: Report noted the revised layout indicated generally that all surfaces are permeable and designed to avoid surface water runoff. Report noted the Planning Authority internal report received recommended pre-commencement conditions. Report stated the flood risk level is less than zero;
- Operational waste: Report noted revised drawings show bin locations, and that the applicant guarantees sufficient provision of bins & refuse to meet standards;
- Operating hours: Report noted club will operate with current opening hours (07:00-23:30), with most activity between 09:00-22:00. Report noted no extra hours of operation are suggested;

- Third-party submissions: Report noted applicant made no comment in relation to observation from Rodger Wheeler. In relation to the acoustic paper by Clarke Saunders, the report noted the applicant stated the report was not prepared in relation to the subject application site. Report also noted applicant fully supports the observation received from Kate Lynch;
- AA: The development would not likely have significant effect on European Sites.

Other Technical Reports:

- 3.2.2. Public Lighting: Report stated the lighting design submitted in response to further information is satisfactory. No objection.
- 3.2.3. Transportation Department: Report noted the existing entrance is to be modified, with the existing exit/entrance points to be switched. Report noted 13 no. car parking spaces are proposed including 2 no. accessible spaces. Report considered this acceptable. Report also noted adequate cycle storage/shelter is proposed. Report stated no objection subject to conditions relating to a road opening licence; tactile paving at crossing in accordance with the Traffic Management Guidelines; detailed design of disabled parking spaces; and electric vehicle requirements.
- 3.2.4. Environment Flooding-Surface Water Section: Report stated the development as proposed does not meet the requirements of the Section with respect to orderly collection, treatment and disposal of surface water. Report stated that should planning be granted the following issues shall be addressed to the satisfaction of the Section prior to commencement: that the revised surface water design be SUDS compliant; that discharge of surface water to the existing foul network is not acceptable; that any existing surface water connections to the foul network shall be removed; applicant shall agree a surface water outfall prior to commencement; and the surface water design shall comply with Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study.
- 3.2.5. Environment Waste Section: No objection subject to conditions.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- 3.3.1. Health Services Executive (Environmental Health Officer, EHO): Submission in response to further information had regard to the applicant lighting reports from 'Signify' and Kevin Cleary & Associates. Report considered light spill on adjoining

properties, and stated that evidence is provided that the fronts of the nearest houses the horizontal light spill at ground level is to be between 1-2 lux, and that it is demonstrated that all of the vertical spill light values are predicted to be well below the recommended 10lux limit. Report noted the submitted assessment concluded that the predicted light spill levels, both horizontal & vertical, are significantly lower than what would be expected from the existing street lighting, and that the additional effect of the proposed floodlighting is considered to be not significant. Submission stated that the EHO had no further observations.

3.4. Third Party Observations

- 3.4.1. During the application stage 2 no. observers made submissions to the Planning Authority (Roger Wheeler and Loretta Byrne). The main issues raised were:

Roger Wheeler

- 3.4.2. Observer is a local residents living a short distance to the east of the site. I note that no substantive comments from the observers were recorded in the submission on the Commission or Local Authority files. The submission included a report entitled 'Differences in Sound Characteristics of Padel & Tennis Clarke Saunders Acoustic White Paper'. A list of names of submission contributors was included. I address the observer's appeal separately below.

Loretta Byrne

- 3.4.3. Observer is a club Trustee and has been involved with the Club most of their life;
- Parking: A maximum of 4 no. persons can use a court at one time, giving a maximum of 20 no. players at any one time. The average number using the site at a time would be 16. If there is an event a traffic management plan would be in place and parking in another location used. The site is in a town centre location;
 - Light pollution: The club already has court lighting. It will be upgraded to a professionally designed system that will reduce glare & light-spill to neighbours;
 - Noise pollution: Tennis has been played at the club for years and there has never been a noise issue. Traffic is a far more significant noise source. Padel tennis has a similar low noise profile so there will be no change in noise on-site. Submission included a diagram comparing padel and tennis sound levels.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Subject site

- 4.1.1. Reg. Ref. TA181498: Planning permission granted by the Planning Authority in 2018 for demolition of existing derelict structure along front boundary, construct new entrance for exiting traffic and retain existing entrance for entry traffic. Development also included a new 1.8m high paladin fence along front boundary with signage, re-arranged parking spaces and with all associated site works.

4.2. Nearby sites:

- 4.2.1. None.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National guidelines and strategies

Nature Based Management of Urban Rainwater and Urban Surface Water Discharges, A National Strategy (Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, 2024)

National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023, including its Objectives and Targets

Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas, Water Sensitive Urban Design, Best Practice Interim Guidance Document (Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, 2022)

Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (DMURS) 2019

Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009

Development Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2007

Traffic Management Guidelines 2003

5.2. Development Plan

Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied

Volume 1:

The site is zoned 'C1 – Mixed Use' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. 'Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities' uses are 'Open for Consideration Uses' in this zone in the Development Plan. I note the following Development Plan provisions in particular:

Section 6.20 Noise Pollution (noting reference to the 2018 Noise Action Plan 2018)

Section 6.21 Light Pollution

INF OBJ 74: *"To require that outdoor lighting proposals minimise the harmful effects of light pollution and to ensure that new street lighting is appropriate to a particular location and that environmentally sensitive areas are protected from inappropriate forms of illumination"*;

Section 7.7 'Social Infrastructure', including: *"Community infrastructure is an essential part of all communities"* and *"The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines (2024) emphasise the need to integrate housing with the provision of supporting community and social infrastructure"*;

Section 7.7.5 'Healthy Communities' including *"Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well being"*;

Section 7.7.6 'Existing Sport and Leisure Infrastructure' including *"Sport is an important contributor to the life of the citizens of Meath"*;

SOC POL 32: *"To encourage and support local sports, community groups and other groups in the provision and development of outdoor and indoor sporting and community facilities"*;

SOC POL 34: *"To cater for the sporting and recreational needs of all sectors and ages of the community and promote the integration of those with special needs into the sporting and recreational environment"*;

SOC POL 36: *"To ensure that new leisure facilities, where possible, are located in proximity to public transportation routes and where they can best meet the needs of the community that the facilities are intended to serve"*;

DM OBJ 73: *"Dual function of sports facilities/halls etc, outside of school hours will be encouraged where the use of such facilities will be of a benefit to the wider*

community, however, any outside hours usage of the school should not be to the detriment of adjoining residential amenities”;

‘Section 9 – Parking Standards’, including Section 11.9.1 ‘Parking Standards’;

Section 11.14.4 ‘Open for Consideration Uses’

Volume 2:

‘Trim’ Section 13.0 ‘Social Infrastructure’.

County Meath Noise Action Plan 2024-2028

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.3.1. River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA and River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC are approx. 0.54km to the north.

6.0 Environmental Impact Assessment screening

- 6.1.1. The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for environment impact assessment (See Form 1 & 2 Appendix 1 of this report). Having regard to the characteristics and location of the development and the types and characteristics of potential impacts, I consider that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. The development, therefore, does not trigger requirement for EIA screening and an EIAR is not required.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Third-Party Appeal

- 7.1.1. A third-party appeal was received, stated as being a residents group objection care of Roger Wheeler. Appendix 1 of the appeal includes a list of 15 no. Trim residents. I summarise the main points of the appeal as follows:

- Reduced parking: Previous permission (Ref. TA181498) allowed for additional entrance and parking. There is no justification for the decrease to 13 no. spaces or how the club will deal with parking. The road is heavily trafficked with a limited number of pay & display spaces. This will possibly lead to parking in

neighbouring residential areas. The area is not served by bus/public transport. The addition of a spectator area will lead to additional visitors and parking;

- Proposed lighting: Proposal will increase the number of 12m high floodlights to professional court sports lighting at the corners of each court. Four 6m sports lights are proposed for the padel court. The current lighting caused residents to use 'black-out' blinds; it operates to 11:00pm on some occasions. Proposal would lead to further light pollution. Appeal refers to photographs submitted. Appeal states there was a lack of interaction by the club with residents;
- Noise: Noise from the padel court has not been considered in the application. Appeal sets out what it states are considerations regarding the location of a padel court by a certified padel court installer; these include sufficient distance from noise-sensitive areas; orientation; positioning; noise protection dams; access & parking areas to affect residents as little as possible; and informing residents. The application has not addressed those points. Appeal refers to a document from Clarke Saunders Acoustics which the appeal states differentiates between padel and tennis. It outlines the noise generated by a padel court and how measures/considerations should be made in the court location and construction. Appeal states there has been no consideration of the report points. As no noise report was submitted with the application, anything above 10 decibels is a significant noise impact. Noise generated by the padel court (70-90 decibels) will adversely impact elderly neighbouring residents and devalue properties;
- Overlooking: The proposal and existing development, by reason of their height, scale and proximity to adjoining properties would result in overlooking and would seriously injure the amenities of property in the vicinity;
- Scale, design & visual impact: Proposal is intrusive and impacts negatively on the nature and character of the adjoining properties and would seriously injure the amenities of properties in the vicinity;
- Standards: There are no legislative or development standards that support the granting of permission on what is an already over-developed site;
- Precedent: Proposal is incongruous and injurious to dwellings in the locality. Approving the proposal will set an undesirable precedent.

7.1.2. The appeal includes photographs of the site including lighting after dark.

7.2. First-Party Response to Third-Party Appeal

7.2.1. A first-party response to the appeal was received which I summarise as follows:

- Parking: 13 no spaces including 2 no. disabled spaces are proposed which accords with Development Plan Chapter 11 Section 9. Cycle bays are proposed. If additional parking is required patrons will be directed to Emmet St. and Finnegans Way car parks which are approx. 8 mins away;
- Lighting: The existing courts are lit by 4 no. masts, with 2 no. directed toward and 2 no. away from Newhaggard Road The proposed lighting uses 6m columns with the courts lit individually; this allows for less intense lanterns. The lighting report predicts a vertical light spill maximum on facades of affected houses of 3.6 lux which is well below the recommended 10 lux. Horizontal spill at the houses will be 1-2 lux which is less than the houses currently experience from adjacent street lighting. It is unreasonable to claim that because there may be light spill from the existing 3-court installation that lighting from the 4-court and 2-padel courts will be worse as technology and lighting have improved. The difference is that proposed lantern mounting height has been reduced to 6m from the 12m masts originally proposed. Conditions restrict use of floodlights between sunrise and 10pm. The light levels proposed are the minimum needed for club competition. The level has been kept to a minimum and is well within limits recommended by the 'ILP'. Site has historic and established flood-lit tennis courts. Proposal will not create a negative impact on residential amenity;
- Noise: The 'acoustic white paper' provides information but does not refer to the application. It concludes that differences in the sports in terms of neighbour disturbance cannot be determined. The road is between the club and residents. Traffic noise must be considered in assessing noise impacts on residents from the padel courts, and whether such noise would be muffled by traffic. There is historic and existing sport use on the site and there has never been issues. Noise from tennis and padel is very similar and is far less than normal urban background noise from traffic, deliveries, lawnmowers, leaf blowers, and other

activities. The conditions on lighting means courts will not be used outside those hours which will control noise. Other noise sources like traffic are 24hr.

7.2.2. The response includes a number of documents related to the application.

7.3. **Planning Authority Response**

7.3.1. The Planning Authority response states the Authority is satisfied all matters outlined in the third-party submission were considered in its assessment and requests the Commission uphold its decision.

8.0 **Assessment**

8.1.1. Having regard to the foregoing; having examined the application, appeal, Planning Authority reports, and all other documentation on the case file including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal; and having inspected the area within and around the site; and having regard to relevant local, regional and national policies, objectives and guidance, I consider the main issues in this appeal are:

- Principle of development
- Parking;
- Lighting;
- Noise;
- Related matters raised in the course of the appeal.

8.2. **Principle of Development**

8.2.1. 'Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities' uses are 'Open for Consideration Uses' in this land use zone ('C1 – Mixed Use'). The existing tennis club is well established and in longstanding use at the site (which I estimate to be since the 1960s).

Development Plan Section 11.14.4 'Open for Consideration Uses' states that an "open for consideration use" is one which may be permitted where the Council is satisfied the proposed development would be compatible with the overall policies and objectives for the zone, would not have undesirable effects on any permitted uses, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable

development of the area. I am satisfied the proposed use generally complies with the land use zoning objective at the site, and is acceptable in principle on the site, subject to the considerations below.

8.3. Parking

- 8.3.1. The existing tennis club currently comprises 3 no. tennis courts and 34 no. carpark spaces. The proposal is for 4 no. tennis courts, 1 no. padel court, and 13 no. car spaces. I note the appellants' concerns in this regard, including in relation to the potential for additional parking demand arising from the proposed viewing area.
- 8.3.2. The applicant addresses this matter and sets out how car and cycle parking provision meets Development Plan requirement (2 spaces per court, 5 per 100sqm). The applicant also states that during a tennis event a traffic management plan would be in place, with patrons directed to the Emmet Street and Finnegans Way car parks. Both of those public car parks are approx. 400m walk away.
- 8.3.3. The Planning Authority reports, including Transportation Department report, considered the proposal acceptable in these regards, subject to detailed design conditions for tactile paving and electrical vehicle provision (Condition 8).
- 8.3.4. I have had regard to the requirements of the Development Plan, including Table 11.2 'Car Parking' ('Sports Clubs'). I am satisfied the parking proposed generally meets Development Plan requirements for the proposed 5 no. courts and buildings of approx. 242sqm.
- 8.3.5. Overall, whilst I acknowledge the increased number of courts, viewing area, and reduction in parking spaces, I consider the proposal meets Development Plan parking requirements. The site is within the town, connected by footpaths, and is a short walk to the identified public car parks. The closest bus services are approx. 430m walk away. Cycle parking is proposed. Whilst the applicant does not set out details of the referenced traffic management plan for periods of higher demand, the appeal response does provide the broad parameters in relation to nearby public car parks. The club is longstanding at this location, and whilst I note on-street parking is not controlled outside the site, overall I am satisfied the application site and wider area is reasonably well equipped to cater for the likely scale of increased demand, subject to conditions for detailed design.

8.3.6. Regarding access, I note the changes to the proposed access arrangements, and minor works to the public road. I note the existing one-way system, and proposals for a comparable system. The Transportation Department report was generally satisfied with the proposed layout and sightlines, subject to conditions for detailed design (Condition 8). I am satisfied with the proposal in this regard, subject to condition.

8.4. Lighting

8.4.1. I note the points made in the appeal and submission on file, including photographs of the site taken after daylight hours by local residents. I also note points made by the applicant and in the Local Authority internal reports, including the attachment of Condition 3. I have also had due regard to the technical reports in this regard submitted by the applicant (Kevin Cleary & Associates and 'Signify') and related submissions from the HSE Environmental Health Officer.

8.4.2. Regarding the existing lighting environment, the existing site is served by a floodlight system on 4 no. posts. The height of the poles is not clearly stated. Two of these installations are orientated away from the dwellings to the north along Newhaggard Road and two are orientated generally toward those dwellings at a distance of approx. 95m at closest. These 4 no. posts illuminate all 3 no. existing courts. There are 2 no. streetlights along the northern side of Newhaggard Road adjacent the dwellings to the north. There are no dwellings adjacent to the east, west or south.

8.4.3. Regarding the proposed lighting as revised at further information, it comprises 18 no. 6m high floodlights to serve the 4 no. tennis courts. In addition, 4 no. 6m integrated lights are proposed for the padel court plus 5 no. 6m high pedestrian flood lights in the car park. Two 1m high bollard lights are also proposed within the site.

8.4.4. Regarding the technical information submitted, the 'Report on Proposed Tennis and Padel Court Floodlighting Installation for Trim Lawn Tennis Club' (Kevin Cleary & Associates) submitted as further information sets out details of the proposed lighting lux levels. The report states the primary existing lighting impacting the dwellings to the north comes from the existing club floodlights and street lighting. The report states that street lighting such as that outside the houses produces horizontal light intensity at ground level of 5-10 lux. The report states that at the terrace of houses (No. 11-16 Newhaggard Rd) the expected horizontal light spill intensity in the front

gardens would be about 5 lux. Regarding standards, the report utilises levels from British Standards and the document 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP).

- 8.4.5. The report sets out details of all lighting proposed for the site. It states that the horizontal light spill from the proposed installation at ground level at the adjacent dwellings is predicted to be 1-2 lux, and less above ground level. It states that vertical light spill on the building facades is more significant. The report utilises recommended maximum lux levels from the above ILP guidance note of 10 lux during the operation of the proposed lights. The report indicates the maximum vertical light spill would be 3.6 lux. The report concludes that the predicted horizontal and vertical light spill levels would be significantly below the existing street lighting. I note that the report states that light levels are cumulative / additive, but that the additional effect of the proposed floodlighting is considered not to be significant.
- 8.4.6. I have cross-referenced this assessment with the submitted 'Signify' report, including submitted light contours. I am broadly satisfied that the reports align.
- 8.4.7. I have reviewed the provisions of the Development Plan in this regard, including Section 6.21 'Light Pollution'. Objective INFOBJ74 requires outdoor lighting proposals to minimise the harmful effects of light pollution. The Development Plan does require specific lighting levels to be achieved and no such levels are clearly set out in national guidance.
- 8.4.8. The Planning Authority internal reports, including the Lighting Section report on file, stated that the lighting proposals in response to further information were satisfactory. I also note the comments made by the EHO regarding the proposed lux levels and guidelines used, and that the additional effect of the proposed floodlighting was considered to be not significant, and that the EHO had no further observations.

Assessment

- 8.4.9. Noting the foregoing, I am broadly satisfied the applicant has demonstrated that the light spill from the proposed development would be relatively low in terms of impact on the dwellings to the north of the site along Newhaggard Road.
- 8.4.10. The application documentation sets out details of the lighting proposed, and identifies measures to ameliorate light spill (Section 5 of the Kevin Cleary & Associates report). It states that the masts, lighting columns, and lanterns are to be

positioned and directed to achieve satisfactory lighting performance, while minimising light spill on adjacent properties. It also states that the use of columns of 6m height permits optimisation of lantern tilt angles, with less glare and spill, while achieving acceptable uniformities. The submitted lighting drawings and 'Signify' report indicate the angle and direction of proposed lighting. Overall I am satisfied with the proposed development in this regard.

- 8.4.11. Condition 3 attached by the Planning Authority required agreement of lighting detailed design. Details of floodlight operation are provided by the applicant, and given the lighting levels predicted and the hours of operation proposed, I am generally satisfied with the proposal in this regard. However I note that no cowling is proposed for the lights. I am satisfied that Condition 3 parts (a) and (b) are warranted. I note however the Condition 3 part (c) required amendment of the lighting operation if requested by the Local Authority; I have a concern that this may be contrary to Development Management Guidelines Section 7.1 by being insufficiently precise and unambiguous. I am also not satisfied this condition is warranted given the information submitted and the provisions of part (b) of the condition.
- 8.4.12. Given the urban context of the site within the town; the existing light levels from the club; the close proximity of street lighting to the hoses; and the reports on file from the applicant and EHO, I am satisfied with the lighting levels proposed, and that they would not give rise to unacceptable detrimental impacts in the area, including on neighbouring dwellings. I am also satisfied the proposed development is broadly compatible with the overall policies and objectives for the zone, would not have undesirable effects on any permitted uses, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in this regard.
- 8.4.13. Regarding the Manorlands estate to the south-west, it is located approx. 48m from the site. The dwellings are generally orientated away from the site. The submitted reports indicate minimal light spill from the proposed development impacting those dwelling. No. observations from residents in that estate were received.
- 8.4.14. Overall I am satisfied the proposal is acceptable in these regards subject to condition.

8.5. Noise

- 8.5.1. I note the information on the file regarding noise, including differences between tennis and padel submitted by the applicant, appellant (including their application submission), and Loretta Byrne in their Planning Authority submission. Whilst I acknowledge the differences in sound referenced, I see minimal evidence regarding likely changes in noise levels arising from the proposed development. In this regard no noise report relating to the subject site is submitted by the applicant or appellants.
- 8.5.2. I note that an increase in the number of courts is proposed on the site, and increased proximity to the dwellings to the north. In this regard the number of tennis courts is to increase from 3 no. to 4 no. A padel court is also to be introduced on the site, at the northern edge of the site across the road from Nos. 11-16 Newhaggard Road. Conversely, the car park size is to be reduced. I note the increase in size of the clubhouse, but its greater distance to the dwellings to the north.
- 8.5.3. I further note that the club is longstanding at the site. The public road (R161) runs between the site and the neighbouring dwellings, which are in close proximity to it. No increase in the hours of operation of the site are proposed. The site is within the town boundary and in close proximity to the centre of the town.
- 8.5.4. No issues in this regard were identified by the EHO report or Planning Authority internal reports, including the Environment Section. No noise-specific conditions were attached by the Planning Authority, however a condition relating to hours of usage was attached.
- 8.5.5. I have reviewed publicly available TII and EPA noise mapping. No results for the area were available from either. I have reviewed the Meath Noise Action Plan 2024-2028, including Section 2.4.2.4 'Development Management Standards' and related mapping.

Assessment

- 8.5.6. I note the appellants' concerns. The proposal is for one additional tennis court, in addition to the existing 3 no. courts, and the introduction of 1 no. padel court. The club is longstanding on the site and has operated alongside neighbouring dwellings for many years. I note again the likely increase in patrons, the increased proximity to the dwellings to the north, the introduction of the padel court, and its location.

8.5.7. However, given the existing club facilities; the location of the site within the town; and the intervening public road between the site and neighbouring dwellings, on balance I see no reason to refuse permission on grounds of noise. In this regard, noting the provisions of Section 6.20 'Noise Pollution' of the County Development Plan, there are no specific requirements in relation to noise within the Development Plan, and I am satisfied the proposed development is broadly compatible with the overall policies and objectives for the zone. I am also satisfied the proposed would not have undesirable effects on any permitted uses, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in this regard. Accordingly I consider the proposal is acceptable in this regard, subject to conditions relating to landscaping (Condition 4 of Planning Authority decision), should the condition be minded to grant permission.

8.6. **Related matters raised in the course of the appeal**

Surface Water

- 8.6.1. The Planner Report stated the Authority internal reports recommended pre-commencement conditions. I note Condition 5 of the Decision. However the Council Surface Water Section stated the development as proposed did not meet the requirements of the Section with respect to the collection, treatment and disposal of surface water. The report stated that should planning be granted, agreement was required for a revised surface water design which is SUDS compliant; that the proposed surface water discharge to the foul network was not acceptable; that any existing surface water connection to the foul network is to be removed; and that the applicant agree a surface water outfall prior to commencement.
- 8.6.2. The submitted drawings indicate that surface water will, in the main, drain to ground. The applicant further information response confirmed same stating that in general all surfaces are permeable and are designed to avoid surface water runoff. The drawings also indicate that surface water collection from the proposed viewing area and proposed buildings will drain to a soakaway under the padel court. I note however that some surface water from the site is indicated as draining to the public surface water mains and foul system proposed within the site.

- 8.6.3. I note the existing site comprises a small, grassed area along the western boundary; a clubhouse and tarmac carpark in the north of the site, and synthetic tennis courts to the south. The majority of the existing site is indicated as draining to the public surface water mains. The proposed tarmac car park is considerably smaller than the existing. Permeable pavers are proposed for all pedestrian areas. The proposed building and play areas are more extensive but are proposed to drain to a soakaway underneath the proposed padel court. The proposed tennis court areas are more extensive but are to comprise a clay surface.
- 8.6.4. I am satisfied that public mains drainage is available; that the proposed development would significantly reduce surface water runoff to the public mains; and that design details including closure of existing surface water connections and separation of foul and surface water within the site can be achieved by condition. Given the foregoing, including the extent of permeable surface areas and SuDS proposed, I am satisfied the development provides for appropriate surface water drainage arrangements within the site, and that outstanding details as stated by the Planning Authority Surface Water Section can be addressed by revised conditions in this regard should the Commission be minded to grant permission.
- 8.6.5. Regarding flood risk, the Planner Report stated that flood risk at the site is less than zero. The site is within Flood Zone C. Noting the surface water proposals discussed above, I am satisfied that flood risk at the site is acceptably low.

Scale, design & visual impact

- 8.6.6. The proposal includes demolition of the existing single-storey pitched-roof clubhouse, and construction of a 2-storey clubhouse with ancillary single storey buildings. The clubhouse would be of contemporary design, strongly modulated, with the roof comprising contrasting flat and pitched elements. The proposed buildings would be set back further from the road along the eastern boundary adjacent the neighbouring storage yard. External refuse storage areas are indicated. Materials and finishes would mainly comprise rendered walls painted white, with some accent colours at ground floor, and aluminium and timber elements. Overall, I am satisfied the scale and positioning of the proposed buildings are acceptable and would not have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of the area.

- 8.6.7. Regarding the proposed padel court to the front of the site, I note the Planner Report concerns regarding the court's placement. The Planner report considered the padel court design, including frame, was acceptable. The applicant makes the point that the shape of the site creates an inability to locate the court elsewhere in the site. I also note that whilst the appeal stated the overall proposal was intrusive and impacted negatively on the nature and character of the adjoining properties and would seriously injure the amenities of properties in the vicinity, none of the submissions raised specific issue with the appearance of the padel court.
- 8.6.8. In relation to the proposed court design, I have considered the prominence and visual impact of the frame around the court and its position adjacent the road. I note the northernmost corner of the frame steps toward the road ahead of the neighbouring building to the east, however, would be broadly in line with the buildings further east. Some screening would be available from the mature tree to the east, and the proposed tree planting to the east and west of the court. The frame would be single storey and coloured green. On balance I am satisfied that proposal is acceptable in this regard, subject to a standard landscaping condition should the Commission be minded to grant permission for the proposed development.

Overlooking

- 8.6.9. The proposed clubhouse is set back further from the dwellings to the north. The proposed windows are orientated north and west only. Whilst the clubhouse would be 2-storey, it would be significantly further from the nearest dwellings (over 45m away). I am satisfied that no significant overlooking would arise.
- 8.6.10. In the interests of completeness I note the originally proposed first-floor viewing platform between the proposed tennis courts was omitted in the course of the application in favour of the now proposed covered surface-level viewing area.

Property devaluation

- 8.6.11. I note the concerns raised in the appeal in respect of potential devaluation of neighbouring properties. Having regard to the assessment above, including the longstanding presence of the tennis club on the site, I am satisfied the proposed development would not have a material adverse impact on the amenities of the area so as to significantly affect the value of properties in the vicinity.

Conditions

8.6.12. In addition to the foregoing regarding conditions, I consider the following:

- Condition 2 of Planning Authority decision: Given the scale, nature and layout of development I do not consider that this condition in relation to the use and operation of the proposed development is warranted;
- Construction management: Given the nature and location of the development, I am satisfied that conditions relating to construction management are warranted. Given the absence of issues relating to environmental impact, I do not consider that conditions relating to construction environment are warranted.
- Contributions: Standard conditions.

9.0 **Appropriate Assessment screening**

9.1.1. In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on any European Sites including River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA and River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required. This determination is based on the nature of the proposed works and the location and distance from nearest European site and lack of connections.

10.0 **Water Framework Directive**

10.1.1. The subject site is located approx. 0.54km from the River Boyne. The proposed development comprises realignment of tennis courts, construction of additional courts, and construction of a clubhouse and play area. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal. I have assessed the project 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 prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied 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 or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives. The reason for this conclusion is the small scale and nature of the development, and the location-distance from nearest Water bodies and/or lack of hydrological connections. I conclude that on the basis of objective information, 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.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1.1. I recommend permission be **Granted**, for the reasons and consideration below.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

12.1.1. Having regard to the nature and extent of the proposed development for realignment & construction of tennis & padel tennis courts, and construction of a children's play area, clubhouse, parking, and related works; to the nature of the site; to the existing and permitted pattern of development in the area, including neighbouring dwellings; it is considered the proposed development generally accords with the Policies and Objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, including having regard to the 'C1 – Mixed Use' land use zoning objective for the area, and the provisions of the Development Plan including Policies SOCPOL32, SOCPOL34, SOCPOL34 in relation to light pollution, and Objective INFOBJ74 in relation to noise pollution, and would not impact unduly on the amenities of the area, or on the safety and efficiency of the road network, and would not set an undesirable precedent. It is considered therefore that the proposed development generally accords the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, subject to the conditions below.

13.0 Conditions

1.	<p>The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by the Planning Authority on the 15th day of May 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.</p> <p>Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the Planning Authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of clarity.</p>
2.	<p>The following shall be complied with:</p> <p>a) The floodlights shall not be used or otherwise be left switched on between the hours of 10.00pm and 07.00am daily, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.</p> <p>b) All floodlights shall be cowled to divert light away from the public road and from residential properties in the vicinity. The floodlighting shall be directed/cowled onto the playing surface so as to minimise any light overspill upwards, sideways or in the direction of neighbouring dwellings and so as not to cause glare to public road users.</p> <p>Reason: To protect residential amenities, in the interest of traffic safety and proper planning and sustainable development</p>
3.	<p>The landscaping shown on drawing number A.03.01.5, as submitted to the planning authority on the 15th day of May 2025 shall be carried out within the first planting season following substantial completion of external construction works.</p> <p>All planting shall be adequately protected from damage until established. Any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the authority.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of residential and visual amenity.</p>

4.	<p>The following shall be complied with:</p> <p>a) Surface water discharge to the foul network shall not be permitted. Any existing surface water connections to the foul network shall be removed.</p> <p>b) Prior to the commencement of development, the applicant shall agree a surface water outfall connection with the Area Engineer and incorporate it into a revised surface water layout which shall be SUDs compliant and shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority.</p> <p>c) All surface water design/work shall comply fully with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS) Regional Drainage Policies Volume 2, for New Developments.</p> <p>d) All surface water design/work shall comply fully with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works Volume 6.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure orderly disposal of surface water and in the interests of road safety and environmental protection.</p>
5.	<p>The following shall be complied with:</p> <p>a) Tactile paving shall be used at pedestrian crossing points, in accordance with the “Traffic Management Guidelines”.</p> <p>b) Disabled car parking spaces should comply with Part M of the Building Regulations. In that regard there shall be a 1.2 metre wide marked access zone to the rear and sides of designated parking spaces clear of the driving aisle.</p> <p>c) The applicant shall include the provision of necessary infrastructure to be capable of accommodating future Electric Vehicle charging points, at a rate of 20% of total space numbers.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of orderly development</p>
6.	<p>Prior to commencement of works, the developer shall submit to, and agree in writing with the planning authority, a Construction Management Plan, which shall be adhered to during construction. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including hours of working, noise, traffic management, and dust management measures and off-site disposal of</p>

	<p>construction/demolition waste.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of public safety and amenity.</p>
7.	<p>The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.</p> <p>Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.</p>

-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.-

Dan Aspell
Inspector
13th February 2026

APPENDIX 1

Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ABP-323139-25
Proposed Development Summary	Permission to 1) realign 3 tennis courts and construct 1 additional court 2) construct 1 padel tennis court 3) construct children's play area 4) construct a clubhouse 5) construct an elevated viewing area and all associated site works.
Development Address	Trim Tennis Club, Newhaggard Road, Trim, Co. Meath
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?	
	<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. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	
<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 development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required.	
<input checked="" 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)	Class 10(b)(iv) Urban development.
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:** __ 09th February 2025__

Form 2: EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	ABP-323139-25
Proposed Development Summary	Permission to 1) realign 3 tennis courts and construct 1 additional court 2) construct 1 padel tennis court 3) construct children's play area 4) construct a clubhouse 5) construct an elevated viewing area and all associated site works.
Development Address	Trim Tennis Club, Newhaggard Road, Trim, Co. Meath
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	Proposed development comprises works to redevelopment and intensify a tennis and padel club in a town. The proposed development has a modest footprint, comes forward as a standalone project, requires minimal demolition works, does not require the use of substantial natural resources, or give rise to production of significant waste, significant risk of pollution or nuisance. The development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, human health or is vulnerable to climate change.
Location of development	The development is located in a town on developed urban land. The receiving location is not particularly environmentally sensitive and is removed from sensitive natural habitats, designated sites and identified landscapes of significance in the County Development Plan. The site is not of historic or cultural significance. Given the scale and nature of development and mitigation proposed there will be no significant environmental effects arising.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts	Having regard to the characteristics and modest nature of the proposed development, the sensitivity of its location removed from sensitive habitats/features, likely limited magnitude and spatial extent of effects, and absence of in combination effects, there is no potential for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Act.
Conclusion	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector: _____ **Date:** 09th February 2025 _____
DP/ADP: _____ **Date:** _____