



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ACP-323187-25

Development	Renovation of dilapidated dwelling, demolition of storage shed, construction of extension, waste water treatment system and associated site works.
Location	Hill Farm, Ballycotton, Co. Cork
Planning Authority	Cork County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	254876
Applicant(s)	Lorna Dunne & Fergus Hayes
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Lorna Dunne & Fergus Hayes
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	13 October 2025
Inspector	Natalie de Róiste

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site, measuring c. 0.22 hectares, is a disused ruinous farmyard, surrounded by agricultural lands, c. 700 metres as the crow flies from Ballycotton village. It is accessed via a farm track, c. 380 metres in length, with the entrance gate giving onto a car parking area, close to the start of the Ballycotton Cliff Walk, which runs c. 150 metres to the south.
- 1.2. The farmyard contains a dwelling house and a number of small outbuildings, set within an irregularly-shaped site with hedgerow boundaries. The single-storey five-bay former dwelling house is located to the east, with a pitched slate roof, rendered rubble stone walls, and square-headed openings is largely roofless, with three-quarters of the roof covering and over half of the roof structures missing. The chimneystacks, gables, and external walls are standing, with some whitewashed render remaining. It has lean-to sheds with corrugated iron roofs attached to the north gable, and small extensions to the east (front) and west (rear) elevations. The openings have been filled with concrete blocks.
- 1.3. There is the roofless remains of a gabled single-storey rubble stone outbuilding to the west range, with a lean-to extension to the north gable. A free-standing small outbuilding (also ruinous) is located to the north, between the east and west ranges, attached to the east range by a rubble stone boundary wall (possibly the remains of another small outbuilding).
- 1.4. A mass concrete wall to the north-west corner of the site is the remaining wall of an outbuilding. The other boundaries are made up of hedgerow. There are a number of small self-seeded trees growing in the shelter of the buildings.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The development as originally proposed was to:
 - restore the existing ruinous house (c. 75 sqm), while demolishing the lean-tos and extensions,
 - retain part of the walls of the ruinous gabled west range to create a single-storey flat-roofed bedroom block of 55 sqm, with a roof terrace over, accessed by an external spiral staircase,

- construct a two-storey 330 sqm northern block connected to both the above structures with a hipped roof, south-facing arcade with roof terrace over, pedimented doorcase to north elevation with lunette window over, and a bowed east end, with a ridge height of 7.7 metres
- install a new wastewater treatment system and infiltration area to the north of the site.

- 2.1.1. The proposed dwelling has five bedrooms, four bathrooms, three living rooms, 2 offices, kitchen, dining room, playroom, and utility room. Access is via an existing private road across farmland.
- 2.1.2. The plans as submitted with the appeal provide identical accommodation, with a revised architectural treatment, omitting the neo-classical treatments and the outdoor staircase, providing square-headed openings throughout rather than arched windows.
- 2.1.3. Proposed floor-to-ceiling heights are reduced, and the finished floor level also reduced, to drop the ridge level by a total of some 900 mm. Burnt larch timber fins are proposed to the ground floor. A landscape plan is submitted, as well as verified photomontages.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

- 3.1.1. The Local Authority refused permission (by order dated 03/07/2025) for one reason as follows:

The proposed development is to alter and extend an existing derelict dwelling. The proposed development by way of its scale, mass and bulk has an overbearing impact on the existing dwelling. Furthermore, the design of the extension is out of character with its rural setting and with the existing vernacular dwelling. The proposal has failed to demonstrate adherence to county Development Plan policy objective HE 16-21: Design and Landscaping of New Buildings, which seeks to encourage new buildings that respect the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms

and that fit appropriately into the landscape. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of this area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

Two reports, that of case officer dated 30/06/2025, that of Senior Executive Planner signed 02/07/2025.

- The case officer's report noted the sensitive location, the planning history, the policy context, and the technical reports. No local needs assessment was deemed necessary, given the extant building on the site. The development was considered acceptable in principle, but out of character with the setting, and of an inappropriate design. Access and parking was considered acceptable, as was wastewater treatment. Further information would be required on landscaping and water supply, but a refusal was recommended.
- The report dated 02/07/2025 concurred with the case officer's comments, and recommended a refusal.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Conservation Officer report dated 27/06/2025 – design statement submitted appropriately assesses heritage significance of house, and its retention is welcomed. Insufficient information submitted on heritage value of outbuildings to be demolished, significant concerns about design of extension to house, further information with revised designs requested.
- Area Engineer's report dated 11/06/2025 – site is a long distance from mains water, connection agreement from Uisce Eireann required. Other issues (sightlines, surface water, sewage disposal) are satisfactorily addressed.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

No reports on file.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None on file.

4.0 Planning History

No history files were provided.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Cork County Development Plan 2022-28

- 5.1.1. *Volume 4 South Cork* of the Plan sets out the Vision and Development Objectives for Ballycotton. The site is not zoned, and is located outside the development boundary of Ballycotton. There are specific development objectives to develop and maintain amenity walks in and around the village. One of these (U-01) runs north-south from Pairc na Gleann as far as, and through, the subject site.

Chapter 5 Rural

Section 5.4 Identifying Rural Area Types

Figure 5.1 Rural Housing Policy Area Types shows the site is located in a '*Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence*'.

Objective RP 5-4: Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence and Town

Greenbelts (GB 1-1) This objective sets out that in these areas, applicants for housing must demonstrate that their proposal constitutes a genuine rural generated housing need in a specific category.

Section 5.6 Environmental and Site Suitability Requirements

Objective RP 5-22: Design and Landscaping of New Dwelling Houses and Replacement Dwellings in Rural Areas

- a. Encourage new dwelling house design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape.

- b. Promote sustainable approaches to dwelling design by encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in their design, layout and siting, finishes, heating, cooling, and energy systems having regard to the need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions.
- c. Foster an innovative approach to design that acknowledges the diversity of suitable design solutions in most cases, safeguards the potential for exceptional innovative design in appropriate locations and promotes the added economic, amenity and environmental value of good design.
- d. Require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by retention of existing on-site trees hedgerows, historic boundaries, and natural features using predominantly indigenous/local trees and plant species and groupings.

Objective RP 5-23: Servicing Single Houses (and ancillary development) in Rural Areas

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

Section 5.12 Renovation or Replacement of an Uninhabitable or Ruinous Dwellings

This section sets out that the renovation/development or replacement of such buildings will be considered on a case-by-case basis, defining a ruinous dwelling as a structure formerly used as a dwelling which has the main walls substantially intact. It clarifies that the Development Plan provisions regarding rural housing need and

occupancy will not apply to development that comes within the terms of Objective RP 5-30 below.

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

Encourage proposals for the sensitive renovation, redevelopment, or replacement of existing uninhabitable or ruinous dwellings subject to normal proper planning and sustainable development considerations as well as the requirements of other objectives in this Plan and provided that it satisfies the following criteria:

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

Objective RP 5- 31: New uses for disused or derelict farm buildings.

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

Chapter 14 Green Infrastructure and Recreation

Section 14.8 refers to the Draft Landscape Character Assessment in Appendix F, and sets out that a landscape that has high or very high landscape value and high or very high landscape sensitivity and are of county or national importance are considered to be the most valuable landscapes, and are therefore designated as High Value Landscapes.

Chapter 16 Built and Cultural Heritage

Section 16.3 Architectural Heritage is a long section which includes a number of Objectives, and supporting text including on Vernacular Buildings, noting that *“the vernacular architecture of County Cork largely consists of rectangular buildings, one room deep and 3-5 bays long with the door off-set from the centre”* and that *“vernacular buildings are perhaps the most vulnerable part of our built heritage”*.

There is a presumption against the demolition of vernacular buildings which appear on historic maps.

Objectives HE 16-19: Vernacular Heritage

- a) Protect, maintain and enhance the established character, forms, features and setting of vernacular buildings, farmyards and settlements and the contribution they make to our architectural, archaeological, historical, social and cultural heritage and to local character and sense of place.
- b) Cork County Council encourages best conservation practice in the renovation and maintenance of vernacular buildings including thatched structures through the use of specialist conservation professionals and craft persons. Development proposals shall be accompanied by appropriate documentation compiled by experienced conservation consultant.
- c) There will generally be a presumption in favour of the retention of vernacular buildings and encouragement of the retention and re-use of vernacular buildings subject to normal planning considerations, while ensuring that the re-use is compatible with environmental and heritage protection.

Section 16.3.28 notes that the policy for how new buildings are to be set into our townscapes and landscapes is included in this chapter because, in effect, they will make up a significant proportion of our built heritage in years to come. Section 16.3.33 notes that the Cork Rural Design Guide gives guidance on design, site selection and landscaping for individual houses in rural areas.

Objectives HE 16-21: Design and Landscaping of New Buildings

- a) Encourage new buildings that respect the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape.

- b) Promote sustainable approaches to housing development by encouraging new building projects to be energy efficient in their design and layout.
- c) Foster an innovative approach to design that acknowledges the diversity of suitable design solutions in most cases, safeguards the potential for exceptional innovative design in appropriate locations and promotes the added economic, amenity and environmental value of good design.
- d) Require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominantly indigenous/local species and groupings and protecting existing hedgerows and historic boundaries in rural areas. Protection of historical/commemorative trees will also be provided for.

Appendix F Landscape Character Assessment of County Cork

The site lies within the Landscape Character type 2, Broad Bay Coast, which has a Very High Landscape Value, Very High Landscape Sensitivity, and a County Landscape Importance.

5.2. Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005

These guidelines differentiate between Urban Generated Housing and Rural Generated Housing and directs urban generated housing to towns and cities and lands zoned for such development. Urban generated housing has been identified as development which is haphazard and piecemeal and gives rise to much greater public infrastructure costs. Rural generated housing includes sons and daughters of families living in rural areas seeking to build their first home near the family home, returning emigrants from the area, or people with rural employment.

5.3. Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2011

- 5.3.1. These Guidelines were issued to provide a practical guide on compliance with Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (ie, planning and development involving Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas). Nonetheless, they contain useful guidance on the principles of architectural heritage protection, which can be helpful in cases such as this. *Chapter 14 Non-habitable protected structures* has a section on Ruinous Buildings. This notes that there are three likely

types of proposals; demolition, consolidation, and restoration. There is a presumption against demolition of protected structures. Consolidation (making safe a ruin) is suitable for long-ruined protected structures which could not be brought back into use without compromising its special interest or character. Restoration of ruinous structures should not involve an unacceptable amount of alteration or loss of important historic fabric. It notes that *'works involved in rebuilding or restoring a ruin have the potential to alter materially the character of a structure but are always preferable to demolition.'*

5.4. Natural Heritage Designations

Ballycotton Bay SPA 004022 – c. 600 metres to north.

Ballycotton Islands pNHA 001978 – c. 560 metres to west.

Ballycotton, Ballynamona and Shanagarry 000076 pNHA – c. 900 metres to north.

5.5. EIA Screening

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

5.6. Water Framework Directive Screening

- 5.6.1. The subject site is located outside the town of Ballycotton, c 230 metres north of the coast (the Western Celtic Sea (EI-SW-010_0000) and on top of the Whitegate Grownd Waterbody (IE-SW-G-079).
- 5.6.2. The proposed development comprises the renovation and extension of a derelict farmhouse and yard, wastewater treatment system, and associated site works.
- 5.6.3. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 5.6.4. I have assessed the development 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.

5.6.5. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The small scale and nature of the development
- The distance from the nearest water bodies and the 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.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

One appeal was received, from the first party against the refusal. This appeal included a number of images of precedent cases as an appendix; revised drawings; verified CGIs; and revised landscape proposals.

Issues raised are summarised as follows:

- The Planning Authority did not properly assess the file, or take proper account of policy or precedents, anticipating impacts that will not occur, and ignoring the Conservation Officer's recommendation that further information be sought. The refusal followed a very positive pre-application meeting.
- The design is not out of character with the rural setting, seeking to reinstate the historic U-plan footprint, and including a two-storey range to the north where larger sheds and stables previously stood. The forms relate fully to vernacular building approaches, and the new architecture will be distinct from

the simple cottage architecture without overpowering it (see precedents as appendix).

- The proposal is a careful site-specific design, nestled in a mature sylvan landscape. The length of the extension is not excessive, but reflects the original northern range of the farmyard. The external staircase and external arcade are not essential features, and could be removed. Aesthetic issues could have been addressed at pre-application stage, or by a Further Information request. The design complies with the Cork Rural Design Guidelines, which does not prohibit classical detailing, and with policy objective HE16-21. Nonetheless, an alternative design is proposed (see revised drawings) with a contemporary approach for the attention of the Board. Verified CGIs demonstrate that visual impacts are acceptable.
- It is natural that a cottage reads as diminutive adjacent to stables and larger farm structures; the Planning Authority's characterisation of the extension as overbearing ignores this relationship.
- It is not proposed to demolish outbuildings: it is proposed to restore the ruined western range of building.
- Revised landscape proposals have been submitted, showing the landscaping provides adequate screening.
- There is an established water supply on the site (account details with Uisce Éireann supplied).
- Regarding the Conservation Officer's report, it is unfortunate that the Conservation Officer did not seek a site visit, to allow for an in-person assessment. The cottage is in a ruinous state, and is not proposed for retention, but restoration. The outbuildings are also ruinous, and restoration is proposed, rather than demolition. The commentary from the Conservation Officer on the influence from country house architecture is accepted, and would have been welcome at an earlier juncture; revised proposals (submitted to the Board) should address these concerns. On the whole, the proposal (which involves no demolition of structures) has been misunderstood by the Conservation Officer.

- Regarding policy, the scheme takes cognisance of *Objective RP 5-21 Greenbelts around Main Towns*, being located in an existing sheltered farmyard setting; it complies with *Objective RP 5-22 Design and Landscaping of New Dwelling Houses and Replacement Dwellings in Rural Areas* and *Objective HE 16-21 Design and Landscaping of New Buildings* in its design and landscaping; it complies with *Objective GI 14-9 Landscape and Prospects* regarding visual impacts and protection of scenic landscapes; it complies with *Objective HE 16-19 Vernacular Heritage* in its design and screen planting;
- The revised drawings retain the internal layout, omit the external spiral staircase and arcade, reduce the balcony overlooking the garden enclosure, simplify the entrance portico, revise fenestration, and reduce floor-to-ceiling heights and lower the finished floor level.
- The CGIs demonstrate that visual impacts will be acceptable, with the buildings being imperceptible from most viewpoints. Local visual impacts are slight to moderate, positive, and long term.
- The proposal will restore residential use to a nineteenth-century cottage, rescuing ruined fabric and reinstating the historic arrangement of ranges to the yard. The Board is requested to overturn the refusal.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- 6.2.1. The planning authority response dated 25/08/2025 had no further comment to make on the matter, noting all relevant issues were covered in the technical reports.

6.3. Observations

None received.

6.4. Further Responses

None received.

7.0 Assessment

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

- Principle of development
- Impact on architectural heritage
- Design, scale, and impact on existing structures

7.2. Principle of development

7.2.1. I note the council had no issue with the principle of development, and a number of policies support the appropriate re-use of derelict and ruinous dwellings and other buildings, particularly vernacular ones.

As noted above, the site is not zoned, is outside the development boundary of Ballycotton, and is located in a *Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence*. Applicants for housing in such an area must demonstrate that their proposal constitutes a genuine rural generated housing need in a specific category. However, an exception is made for developments that come within the terms of *Objective RP 5-30 Redevelopment or replacement of an Uninhabitable or Ruinous dwelling*.

The applicant referred to this objective in their application, and also submitted a *Supplementary Planning Application Form SF1* for individual houses in rural areas 'to further support the application.' The council assessment did not consider the issue of rural housing need, and the issue has not been raised in the appeal. In any case, the development can be assessed in light of Objective RP 5-30.

7.3. Design, scale, and impact on existing structures

7.3.1. At the outset, I note a small discrepancy between the drawings submitted and the buildings as observed on the site visit. The drawings of the existing buildings show an extension to the east elevation of the outbuilding to the west, with the label 'non-

original ancillary additions'. This structure is freestanding, and is not an extension to the west outbuilding. No evidence has been presented to indicate this small outbuilding is a later building than the others; it is of similar appearance (ruinous, roofless, rubble stone walls) to the other mapped buildings.

- 7.3.2. An additional outbuilding is seen due north of the west range on late twentieth-century aerial photographs; this corresponds to the vestigial remains of the mass concrete walls which now form a boundary to the site.
- 7.3.3. Both the submitted design statement and the Conservation Officer report concur that this is a vernacular house, albeit with influences from the Congested Districts Board pattern book. Having undertaken a site visit, and having regard to the material submitted, I consider this a reasonable conclusion. Having regard to Objective HE 16-19, I consider the proposal to restore the house a welcome one in principle, and the palette of materials (roughcast lime render, Blue Bangor roof slates or similar, timber window and door fittings) appropriate.
- 7.3.4. Having regard to the demolition of the lean-to extensions and the smaller outbuilding to the north, I note the Conservation Officer's concerns. Having visited the site and observed their ruinous condition, I do not have concerns per se regarding the demolition of these modest structures, as part of an appropriate proposal to safeguard the house, notwithstanding the presumption in favour of retention in Objective HE 16-19. Recording could be carried out by condition.
- 7.3.5. However, the development as proposed is for a two-storey 330 sqm house extension, attached by a short link corridor to the existing 75 sqm vernacular house, and with an additional flat-roofed wing of 55 sqm formed from the walls of the outbuildings to the west. This, in my view, is not of an appropriate scale or design relative to the existing house, or the character of the site as a vernacular farmyard. The two-storey block would be large for a standalone house, and as an extension to a house, particularly a modest single-storey vernacular house, is remarkably large.
- 7.3.6. I do not concur with the argument that the proposal reinstates the historic layout of the farmyard with a north range, or recreates the relationship of the cottage to larger farm buildings or barns. There is no documentary evidence presented, or physical evidence found on site, that any building of this scale was located on the site, or that any building other than the existing small outbuildings were located on this spot. The

later outbuilding to the north-west of the site is seen on aerial photographs with a similar footprint to the single-storey narrow plan outbuilding forming the west range, and the remains of its wall is no taller than the wall of that single-storey building. I note the precedent images submitted by the appellant. I do not consider these persuasive. The proposed extension, notwithstanding the proposed omission of a number of features, does not reflect the simple forms of vernacular structures.

7.3.7. A number of objectives in the Plan address design – Objective HE 16-21 refers to new buildings in general, while Objective RP 5-22 is specific to houses in rural areas. However, both use near-identical wording and encourage design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape. As noted above, in my view, the design does not respect the character of the site, or the pattern and tradition of the existing place, given its scale, form, and design. The proposal to remove a number of features, amend the fenestration, and reduce the height does not address the issue of scale.

7.3.8. I note in the interests of completeness that Objective RP 5-30 has a number of criteria as follows:

- The original walls of the dwelling structure must be substantially intact.

The original walls are substantially intact, although loss of render, the near total loss of the roof, and considerable plant growth have left them vulnerable to water ingress and deterioration.

- The structure must have previously been in use as a dwelling.

Photographs (p. 7 of the Report on the Design of Restoration and Extension of Hill Farmhouse, Ballycotton) show the house intact. The form of the building, its location with outbuildings, the chimneystacks and the quoins all indicate its former residential use.

- The development is of an appropriate scale and design (including materials used), relative to the structure being replaced and the location and character of the site.

As noted above, I do not consider this to be of an appropriate scale and design.

- Existing mature landscape features are retained and enhanced, as appropriate.

The landscape plan submitted with the appeal is appropriate.

- No damage shall be caused to sites used by protected wildlife.

There is no indication that the site is used by protected wildlife.

- Proposals must be acceptable in terms of public health and traffic safety.

No new vehicular entrances are proposed. The Area Engineer had no concerns with the use of the existing entrance, or the proposed waste water treatment proposal.

- 7.3.9. In my view, the development does not satisfy the criteria set out in Objective RP 5-30. This objective is not specifically enumerated in the council planners' reports, or the refusal of permission. It is alluded to in the second planner's report, as the planner notes the 'existing ruinous dwelling at the site with its original walls substantially intact'. As such, I do not consider it to be a new issue.

7.4. Other Issues

- 7.4.1. As noted above, for residential developments that do not comply with the terms of Objective RP 5-30 in rural areas under strong urban influence, applicants must demonstrate that they have a genuine rural generated housing need. The Commission may wish to seek the Council's views on this issue. In my view, the applicants have not submitted evidence of a genuine rural generated housing need, indicating on form SF1 that they own two houses in east Cork, one within 7 km of the site. However, having regard to the substantive reasons for refusal set out below, it may not be considered necessary to pursue the matter.

8.0 AA Screening

- 8.1. Having regard to the nature and small scale of the proposed development and the distance from the nearest European site, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise, and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect, individually, or in combination with other plans or projects, on any European site.

9.0 Recommendation

I recommend a refusal.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

10.1.1. The proposed development is to restore an existing ruinous dwelling house of c. 75 sqm, reuse part of the walls of an existing outbuilding to create another c. 55 sqm of habitable space, and build a two-storey house extension of c. 330 sqm connecting the two. The proposed development by way of its scale, mass and bulk has an overbearing impact on the existing dwelling, is not of an appropriate scale and design relative to the existing structures on the site, and does not comply with *Objective RP 5-30 Redevelopment or replacement of an Uninhabitable or Ruinous dwelling* of the Development Plan. Notwithstanding the proposed revisions to the architectural treatment submitted with the appeal, the design of the extension is out of character with its rural setting and with the existing vernacular dwelling, and does not comply with *Objective HE 16-21 Design and Landscaping of New Buildings*, or *Objective RP 5-22 Design and Landscaping of New Dwelling Houses and Replacement Dwellings in Rural Areas* both of which encourage new buildings that respect the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape. Furthermore, notwithstanding the proposed restoration of the vernacular farmhouse, the provision of such a large overbearing extension of this design would not accord with *Objective HE 16-19 Vernacular Heritage*, due to the impacts on the setting of the house. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of this 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.

Natalie de Róiste
Planning Inspector

12 November 2025

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ACP-323187-25
Proposed Development Summary	Extend and refurbish house, wastewater treatment system
Development Address	Hill Farm, Ballycotton, Co. Cork.
In all cases check box /or leave blank	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road	

<p>development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.</p> <p>No Screening required.</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold.</p> <p>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</p>	<p>State the Class and state the relevant threshold</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.</p> <p>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</p>	<p>State the Class and state the relevant threshold</p>

<p>4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?</p>	
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3) <i>[Delete if not relevant]</i></p>
<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3) <i>[Delete if not relevant]</i></p>

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING

Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality

An Bord Pleanála ref. no.	ACP-323187-25	Townland, address	Hill Farm, Ballycotton, Co. Cork
Description of project		Extend and refurbish house and farmyard, wastewater treatment system	
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,		The site is a rural one, albeit with a mains water connection. It is located c. 250 metres north of the coast, on top of a locally important aquifer (Whitegate) with an extreme vulnerability. It is not in an area of known floodrisk.	
Proposed surface water details		Soakpits	
Proposed water supply source & available capacity		Existing mains connection	
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues		Packaged waste water treatment system and polishing filter	
Others?		n/a	

Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection

Identified water body		Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
Groundwater body		underground	Whitegate IE_SW_G_079	Good	Not at risk	No pressures	Drainage to ground
Coastal		250	Western Celtic Sea (HAs 18;19;20) IE_SW_010_0000	High	Not at risk	No pressures	No identified pathway
Step 3: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.							
CONSTRUCTION PHASE							
No.	Component	Water body receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if ‘screened’ in or ‘uncertain’ proceed to Stage 2.
1.	Groundwater body	Whitegate IE_SW_G_079	underground	spillages	Standard good construction practices	no	Screened out

2.	Coastal	Western Celtic Sea (HAs 18;19;20) IE_SW_010_0000	Run off	Pollution and sedimentation	Standard good construction practices	No	Screened out
OPERATIONAL PHASE							
3.	Groundwater body	Whitegate IE_SW_G_079	Underground	Pollution	WWTS to EPA CoP standards, soakpit, SuDS features	No	Screened out
4.	Coastal	Western Celtic Sea (HAs 18;19;20) IE_SW_010_0000	Run off	Pollution and sedimentation	WWTS to EPA CoP standards, soakpit, SuDS features	No	Screened out
DECOMMISSIONING PHASE							
5.	n/a						