



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-500036-WX

Development	Permission for development to protected structure (WCC0897) to consist of the proposed removal of the thatching and replacing it with vernacular corrugated sheeting in the traditional manner
Location	Ballymitty, Ballymitty, Co. Wexford
Planning Authority	Wexford County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	20250914W
Applicant	Declan Cosgrove
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	To refuse permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant	Declan Cosgrove
Observer	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Date of Site Inspection	22 nd January 2026
Inspector	Trevor Rue

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The application site is in open countryside about 18 kilometres to the west of Wexford, about 21 kilometres to the south east of New Ross and about 3.7 kilometres to the north east of Wellingtonbridge.
- 1.2. The site has a stated area of 0.9 hectares and comprises the curtilage of a 1½-storey thatched dwelling known as Hilltown Cottage. The cottage is of rubble stone and clay construction with leaning and bowed walls which have rounded corners. It has a projecting slated windbreak entrance, timber sash windows and a steep half-hipped roof, with eaves rising at the gables to accommodate high-level attic windows. The ground floor is occupied by a sitting room and a bedroom. Much of the roof space is void but there is a reading room at the eastern end.
- 1.3. The cottage faces southwards to the local road L-7033-4 over a stoned courtyard, which is fronted by a low wall with round piers and a farm gate. There are outbuildings to the east and west of the courtyard. The outbuildings to the west have pitched and lean-to corrugated iron sheeted roofs, rubble stone walls and timber plank doors. To the east, a stone barn, which sits at right angles to the cottage with its gable extending to the roadside, is used as a kitchen/dining space. It is a single-storey structure with a pitched roof and natural slates.
- 1.4. Also to the east of the cottage but set further back there is a modern two-storey extension with a bedroom and bathroom downstairs and a study upstairs. The outbuildings to the east are connected to the cottage and to each other via a single-storey glazed link. A single-storey extension is under construction at the rear of the cottage. There is a pond behind the new extension. In the eastern part of the site there is a garage served by a vehicular access from the road.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. It is proposed to remove the half-hipped thatched roof and replace it with a pitched roof covered in vernacular corrugated sheeting.

2.2. According to the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) submitted with the application, the original split-bough frame would be left in place and repaired and preserved as and if required. A new conventional truss purlin frame would be provided on a separate wall plate for the replacement corrugated sheeting, complete with an eaves purlin and traditional oak anchors inserted approximately 750 millimetres into the clay wall at approximately 2-metre centres. A cold-roof thermal insulation system would be used to ensure appropriate ventilation.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. On 12th September 2025, Wexford County Council decided to refuse permission for the following reason:

The proposed removal of the existing thatch and to replace with metal sheeting would be contrary to Council policy to protect the architectural heritage of County Wexford, as such the proposed development would be contrary to Objectives BH06 & BH08 of the Volume 1 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. A **planner's report** dated 8th September 2025 provided the reasoning for the authority's decision. The planner considered that, notwithstanding the conclusion of the AHIA, the proposal would be contrary to Objectives BH06 and BH08 of the Development Plan and, taking into account Objective BH11, she recommended that the application be refused. The Senior Executive Planning agreed, stating that examples of good quality thatched cottages are becoming rare in the county, and every effort should be made to retain what is left.

3.2.2. The Council's **Roads Department** recommended a grant of permission with conditions. It stated that the sightlines at the entrance are partially restricted due to overgrowth of hedging. A maintenance plan should be put in place to ensure sightlines are maintained at all times and available in perpetuity.

3.2.3. The Council's **Heritage Officer** noted that the property is a historic thatched cottage and a Protected Structure. The Council's policy is to retain historic thatched roofs wherever possible.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

3.3.1. The planning authority referred the application to the Heritage Council, An Taisce and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage but received no response.

4.0 **Planning History**

4.1. **20100497:** On 25th June 2010, permission was granted to Áine Douglas and Peter Declan Cosgrove for refurbishment of the thatched dwelling; conversion of a slated outbuilding to form part of the dwelling with a new roof light; demolition of a lean-to shed; provision of a new three-bedroom dormer extension with a single-storey connection to existing dwelling and outbuilding through new openings; and upgrading the existing vehicular entrance gate to the adjoining paddock.

4.2. **20130738:** On 6th December 2013, permission was granted to the present appellant for renovation of the thatched dwelling and construction of a single-storey extension to connect the existing dwelling to the converted outbuilding.

4.3. **20140244:** On 30th May 2014, permission was granted to the present appellant for construction of a single-storey garage to connect to the existing extension.

4.4. **20140569:** On 5th September 2014, permission was granted to the present appellant for redesign of the existing garage layout and extension of a habitable room above the garage.

4.5. **20180455:** On 30th May 2018, permission was granted to the present appellant for alterations to existing modern extension, change of use of garage to a bedroom and toilet and construction of a domestic garage.

4.6. **20240537:** On 3rd July 2024, permission was granted to the present appellant for construction of new single-storey extension and alterations to existing rear elevation of the Protected Structure. The extension is to accommodate a utility room, kitchen and snug.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

- 5.1.1. The building to which this application relates appears in the record of Protected Structures in Volume 5 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 against the reference number WCC0897. Its name is recorded as The Old Thatch. There is a web link to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage where the following information is given:

Rating: *Regional*

Categories of Special Interest: *Architectural, Social*

Date: *1700-1840*

Date Recorded: *13/10/2007*

Description:

Detached four-bay single-storey lobby entry thatched farmhouse with dormer attic, extant 1840, on a rectangular plan off-centred on single-bay single-storey lean-to windbreak. Renovated, 1999. For sale, 2009. Chicken wire-covered replacement hipped oat thatch roof on collared split bough construction with blind stretchers to ridge having blind scallops, limewashed rendered red brick Running bond off-central chimney stack having corbelled stepped capping supporting iron pot, and blind stretchers to eaves having blind scallops...

Appraisal:

A farmhouse identified as an important component of the vernacular heritage of south County Wexford by such attributes as the rectilinear lobby entry plan form off-centred on a characteristic windbreak; the construction in unrefined local materials displaying a battered silhouette; the somewhat disproportionate bias of solid to void in the massing; and the high pitched roof showing a replenished oat thatch finish...

- 5.1.2. Section 7.2 of the County Development Plan states that the effect of Protected Structure status is to seek to retain the special character, setting and features that make these structures significant. The planning authority will consider proposals for development or alterations to a Protected Structure based on the conservation principles set out in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011). For all works to a Protected Structure, it will seek to ensure that alterations and interventions do not detract from the significance or value of the

structure, that original features of architectural and historic interest are retained and that new features are not presented as original or older features and are legible.

- 5.1.3. Section 13.4.8 of the Plan says County Wexford has a wealth of vernacular buildings, including thatched cottages, which are characteristic of our local communities and contribute to their authenticity, and to their cultural, traditional, architectural, archaeological, historical and social interest and diversity. Vernacular buildings, through their siting, orientation and materials, display an intimate connection with their landscape. The Council will facilitate appropriate, high-quality design solutions for adaptations of vernacular buildings that carefully consider their vernacular qualities.
- 5.1.4. Objective BH06 of the Plan is to protect the curtilage of Protected Structures or proposed Protected Structures from any works which would cause loss of, or damage to, the special character of the structure and loss of or damage to, any structures of heritage value within the curtilage or attendant grounds of the structure.
- 5.1.5. Objective BH08 is to promote the retention of any original or early building fabric including for example timber sash windows, stonework, brickwork, joinery, ironmongery, traditional mortars, render and decorative or weather finishes and slate and vernacular architectural details (whether relating to a Protected Structure or not). Likewise, the Council will encourage the re-instatement of historically correct traditional features and retention of original ridge heights as appropriate.
- 5.1.6. Objective BH11 is to ensure that all applications for Protected Structures are assessed by taking into consideration the advice contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) and any subsequent guidelines.

5.2. Ministerial Guidelines on Architectural Heritage Protection (2011)

- 5.2.1. Chapter 9 of the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines considers roofs. Section 9.1.1 states that in many buildings, the roof is a major element that gives the building its distinctive profile. The aspects of a roof which may contribute to the special interest of a Protected Structure include the profile and structure of the roof and the cladding materials used. Section 9.2.5 advises that roofs of structural interest should generally not be altered. Section 9.2.6 states that proposals to alter the shape of the roof of a Protected Structure will have a potential impact on the character of the structure and its surroundings and should not be permitted without careful consideration of the

circumstances. Section 9.2.7 reiterates that roofs of Protected Structures should retain their original form and profile and not be radically altered.

- 5.2.2. Section 9.3.1 of the Guidelines states that the type and nature of the cladding materials used on a roof have a significant impact on the appearance and special interest of a building. Section 9.3.2 says that the retention of traditional roofing materials and the development of new sources of these materials should be encouraged. Section 9.3.3 advises that any proposals that involve the removal, partial removal or alteration of the roof cladding materials of a Protected Structure will require careful scrutiny.
- 5.2.3. Section 9.3.10 states that thatch was a pervasive feature of the Irish landscape, as it provided a plentiful locally available roofing material. The traditional thatched roof has become symbolic of the vernacular heritage and is considered to be the indigenous roofing material. Section 9.3.12 states that in the vernacular tradition, thatched roofs are detailed functionally to withstand the elements and to make efficient use of scarce resources. In midland, eastern and southern areas, hipped- or half-hipped roofs replaced the gables to avoid excessive wind pressure.
- 5.2.4. Section 9.3.14 states that thatch has a relatively short life, requiring to be renewed on a ten- to thirty-year cycle. It tends to be found on modest buildings whose accommodation may be inadequate for modern expectations. Hence there are economic barriers to the conservation of this roofing material. Planning authorities should bear this in mind and give consideration to any assistance that it may be possible to offer. Nevertheless, Section 9.3.15 advocates that permission should not normally be granted for replacement of thatch with other materials. Complete stripping is rarely required and defective thatch should only be removed to a sound base.

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.3.1. The application site is not within any Natura 2000 European site of nature conservation importance. Table 3 and Figures 1 and 2 in Volume 13 of the Development Plan indicate that the nearest Natura 2000 sites to the site are:
- Bannow Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC), at its nearest point about 2.4 kilometres to the north west, designated for estuaries, mudflats and sandflats, annual vegetation of drift lines, perennial vegetation of stony banks, annuals

colonising mud and sand, salt meadows, halophilous scrubs and shifting and fixed dunes;

- Ballyteige Burrow SAC, about 7 kilometres to the south, designated for estuaries, mudflats and sandflats, coastal lagoons, annual vegetation of drift lines, perennial vegetation of stony banks, annuals colonising mud and sand, salt meadows, halophilous scrubs, shifting, fixed dunes and humid dune slacks;
- Hook Head SAC, about 10.5 kilometres to the south, designated for large shallow inlets and bays, reefs, vegetated sea cliffs, common bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise;
- Bannow Bay Special Protection Area for birds (SPA), about 3.8 kilometres to the west; and
- Keeragh Islands SPA, about 9.3 kilometres to the south.

5.3.2. The application site is not in any Natural Heritage Area (NHA). According to Table 13.2 of the Development Plan, there are 20 proposed NHAs in Co. Wexford. The closest of these areas to the application site overlap with Natura 2000 sites.

6.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

6.1. 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.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

7.1.1. The appeal was accompanied by a letter from a consultant at University Hospital Waterford who outlined the appellant's medical condition. (The details provided in the letter are not repeated here.) The letter stated that the straw thatch in the appellant's home presents a source of mould, dust and potential allergens. The consultant

recommended changing the thatch roof to avoid exposure to these allergens, which can trigger an infection and cause serious complications.

7.1.2. The appeal statement may be summarised as follows:

- The owner of a Protected Structure holds a duty of care for its preservation, which must be carefully balanced with the fundamental human right to a safe dwelling. Proper planning must include comprehensive consideration of public health and the occupant's immediate, critical needs.
- The deteriorated thatched roof is now failing, with active water ingress, visible damp and signs of mould contamination, creating a progressively hazardous environment. (Photographs were submitted showing mould growth on the appellant's sofa and water ingress at the front door.) The roof presents a demonstrable life-threatening health hazard to the occupant. The proposed works are not for aesthetic reasons, convenience or economic gain but a direct response to a medical requirement as directed by a medical professional. The alternative, according to medical advice, is an unacceptable risk to life.
- The proposed works, while involving a change to the historic fabric, are essential to achieve the higher-order conservation objective of retaining the Protected Structure in viable long-term residential use. The planning authority's refusal would force the owner out, thereby threatening the structure's essential maintenance and continuous occupancy. An Coimisiún Pleanála has the power and discretion to permit the removal of elements which contribute to the Protected Structure's special interest in exceptional circumstances. The necessity to remove the source of infectious spores (damp straw) constitutes an exceptional circumstance.
- The use of vernacular corrugated sheeting, applied in the traditional manner, represents the least invasive solution to ensure the long-term safety of the dwelling and its occupant. It respects the structure's overall character and is the least visually or damaging non-thatch alternative when compared to more permanent or intrusive modern materials like slate or tiles. The selection of corrugated sheeting is not an arbitrary choice but aligns with the established vernacular tradition of County Wexford. It is already used within the curtilage of the Protected Structure. The proposed intervention would be fully reversible.

7.1.3. The appellant submitted a Cultural Hub Impact Statement, in which he made the following comments:

- Hilltown Cottage is a home and a creative hub. It has been carefully restored as a space for recording, teaching and community building and has supported a global music education platform, DecPlay. DecPlay has improved wellbeing for thousands of older adults and supported recovery from illness and trauma. It has been featured by RTÉ, BBC, the Irish Times and South East Radio.
- The thatched cottage is used for acoustic fireside music sessions. The modern studio (the two-storey extension approved in 2015) is used for filming and production. The grand piano room (the glazed link between the cottage and the outbuildings to the east) has high-quality natural light and acoustics. The barn, pond and courtyard are used for music videos and interviews. (The various buildings and their uses are illustrated on the site layout plan.)
- The loss of this location would dismantle a 16-year cultural legacy and cut off access to a network of over 50 collaborating creative and thousands of learners. Granting the appeal would protect the appellant's health and a valuable cultural and educational resource.

7.1.4. The appellant's AHIA included the following additional points:

- The thatch is in need of maintenance involving patch-combed thatching and is currently leaking with a high spore risk. As the owner has been diagnosed with an incurable cancer and now has a suppressed immune system, he must avoid environments with risk factors for respiratory issues and chest infections, as they can quickly become severe if not fatal. Damp, mould and pests including rodents are ever present and represent high-risk hazards that are difficult to manage and highly dangerous to the appellant. The mental strain of living under such conditions is further impacting an already depleted immune system. Although the appellant had originally intended to repair the thatch, he now understands that it must be removed.

- To carry out the proposed development, it is the intention of the owner to retain the contractor presently working on Mayglass, an early 18th Century two-storey clay-walled thatched house which is being restored by the County Council.
- In the event of a forced sale, the relatively low market value of a thatched cottage – especially one with insurance challenges – would be unlikely to cover the cost of past refurbishments and essential installations. Relocating the creative hub would be severely limited by the prohibitively high costs involved and it would be nearly impossible to recreate the unique visual and acoustic qualities of the current filming and recording spaces within a single building.
- Finding another suitably isolated property with scenic views adds another major challenge. The disruption of continuity, the loss of creative momentum, and the potential erosion of the studio’s unique identity and emotional resonance would be deeply destabilising – especially for an artist living with a terminal illness. The emotional and practical toll of starting over again under such conditions could make the prospect unfeasible.

7.2. Planning Authority Response

7.2.1. None

7.3. Observations

7.3.1. Pursuant to Article 28(1)(c)(i) and (ii) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, the Commission requested the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Fáilte Ireland to make submissions or observations. An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Fáilte Ireland did not respond.

7.3.2. DHLGH provided the following observations:

- When the house was surveyed by the Office of Public Works in 1990, the roof was oat straw with a blind scallop and in good condition. When the house was surveyed by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2007, some roof details differed, suggesting work was done in the interim. At that time and in a Streetview image of 2009 (when it was for sale), there was some localised deterioration in a panel below the chimneystack and above the porch but the

front pitch was otherwise in reasonable condition. The roof structure is described as of collared split-bough frames with blind stretchers to the ridge. The roof is built off rubble stone and clay walls, described in the appellant's AHIA as leaning and bowed with rounded corners. Several photographs in the AHIA show a ceiling to the interior beneath the thatch.

- The appeal letter illustrates water ingress, showing the effects of damp on walls and soft furnishings from mould spores. Several images suggest an issue with management of damp within the building, a distinct problem not related to thatch. Likely reasons for inhibited natural ventilation processes could include the application of impermeable paints, drylining or sheet insulation fitted to clay walls, blocked airflow or moisture-producing appliances. Views of the exterior in the AHIA suggest there is a painted cement render to about 1 metre above ground level with softer lime render above. If this was an attempt to minimise rising damp using an impermeable coat it will generally seal damp within the wall and can cause earth mortar and walling to disintegrate.
- Two photographs in the AHIA show a timber ceiling and plaster coving to the underside of the thatch and another suggests a soft covering material at one end. The planning drawings and assessment do not refer to the interior of the roof. Thatch that is not exposed to the interior is not directly releasing spores, dust and potential allergens into the room. The photographs from 2007 and 2009 as well as the current application suggest a vulnerable area below the chimney where thatch deteriorates and that requires analysis and remediation.
- It is noted in the AHIA that the house also serves as a cultural centre and hosts gatherings that may give rise to increased humidity and condensation unless ventilated appropriately.
- There is a modern pond to the rear of the house. The proximity of this pond might contribute to environmental issues by causing dampness, stagnant water or rodent infestation in the environs.
- Vermin in thatch can be dealt with through the application of wire mesh, especially at the eaves and by ensuring that new thatch is well threshed to avoid encouraging rodents and birds.

- The thatched roof is a key part of the building and the removal of the thatch would represent a very significant negative impact on the cultural value and architectural integrity of the house. Experience has shown that once thatch is removed it is rarely, if ever, reinstated.
- The general arrangement drawing (proposed elevation and roof plan) shows a typical corrugated sheet roof with general details similar to those found throughout Wexford on houses previously thatched. The tin is shown as resting on the slated windbreak porch roof.
- The planning application documents do not include detailed technical drawings, a specification of the works or a method statement, or a description of the proposed cold-roof thermal insulation system, to inform careful construction of a new wall plate, anchors and new trusses while retaining (and repairing as needed) the existing collared boughs *in situ* without causing damage to the timber or walls. The humid internal environmental conditions require to be tackled to ameliorate damp and its effects on humans and furnishings, whether or not the appeal is successful.
- Should the Commission be minded to grant permission, it is recommended that the following points be included either as conditions or as a request for further information:
 - (i) Annotated technical drawings showing the existing roof structure and proposed new roof trusses and wall plate and oak anchors to be inserted into the clay wall, details of in corrugated metal sheet profile and junctions and thermal insulation system (including any external vents). The new eaves level should be set sufficiently above the slated windbreak porch to shed water effectively and prevent a micro-climate between the slate and thatch eave.
 - (ii) A conservation method statement setting out the approach to removal of the thatch, roof truss repair and associated works (for example to consolidate the wallhead or repair/flash the chimney and make good any damage to other elements such as ceilings) and fitting of the proposed supporting trusses. It should describe how the cold-roof thermal insulation system would be fitted.
- Any requested material should be prepared by a building professional demonstrably experienced in the conservation of vernacular buildings. The

same or an equivalent competent person should be required by condition to be retained for the duration of permitted works to certify on completion that they have been undertaken in accordance with good conservation practice. The Commission could also consider specifying a time limitation to the duration of a grant of permission.

8.0 Assessment

- 8.1. Having inspected the site and considered in detail the documentation on file for this first-party appeal, it seems to me that the main planning issue is whether the proposed alterations to the roof of the Protected Structure are a necessary response to the appellant's medical circumstances.
- 8.2. The most notable and important feature of the cottage referred to in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as The Old Thatch at Ballymitty is its thatched, half-hipped roof. The application seeks permission not only to replace the thatching with corrugated sheeting but also to simplify the shape of the roof to a double pitch.
- 8.3. Thatched cottages, once a common sight in rural Ireland, are now comparatively rare. Of the 1,529 Protected Structures listed in Volume 5 of the Wexford County Development Plan, only 63 are recorded as being thatched. It seems to me that the removal of principal original features of architectural and historic interest would seriously detract from the significance and value of the Protected Structure.
- 8.4. Corrugated sheeting, while a vernacular material in widespread use in the countryside, especially on non-domestic buildings, would be a poor substitute for historically significant thatching. The proposed development would severely damage the special character of the structure contrary to Objective BH06 of the Plan and Section 9.3.15 of the Ministerial Guidelines on Architectural Heritage Protection. In my opinion it should be permitted only in the most compelling circumstances and as a last resort.
- 8.5. The consultant's letter must be studied with care. He noted that thatch presents a source of mould, dust and potential allergens and recommended "changing" the thatch roof to avoid exposure to these allergens. It is unclear whether he was advocating replacing the thatch with other materials as the only solution to the appellant's medical needs or whether in his opinion repairing and renewing the thatch might be sufficient. It seems to me that the appeal statement reads too much into the medical advice when

it asserts that the works proposed in the application have been directed by a medical professional to avoid an unacceptable risk to life.

- 8.6. When I visited the site I saw that about one third of the thatched roof was covered by a tarpaulin. Significant deterioration was evident elsewhere on the roof, with broken wire meshing, loose strands of thatch and patched areas. There were signs of damp on the front wall of the cottage. Internally the cottage seemed to be drying out. The mould growth on the sofa and water ingress at the front door shown on photographs in the appeal statement were not in evidence. Despite the presence of modern fittings, parts of the wall and ceiling coverings in the bedroom and attic were missing. The cottage did not appear to be being lived in but adjoining buildings were in use as living accommodation and for musical purposes. A further substantial extension at the rear of the cottage was nearing completion.
- 8.7. The appellant's AHIA is predicated on the need to remove the thatch entirely and does not consider important matters, including:
- whether the cottage has a damp problem unrelated to the existing roof materials, and if so what steps are required to overcome that problem;
 - whether the cottage is properly ventilated, and if not what remedial actions are necessary;
 - whether the existing thatched roof is capable of being repaired and restored to make it fully waterproof, or whether the thatch needs to be entirely replaced;
 - whether it would be possible to implement, using best-practice techniques, a programme of works to the fabric of the building and to the roof thatch which would eliminate the current concerns about damp, mould and allergens; and
 - the financial implications of carrying out such a programme of works, taking into account the availability of grants and the resultant uplift to the value of the property.
- 8.8. The appellant's medical circumstances are a highly material consideration in the determination of this application. However, it seems to me that in the absence of information on the matters I have set out, the appellant has not demonstrated that the replacement of the thatching with other roofing materials is the only course of action open to him.

8.9. I appreciate that the thatched cottage is the centrepiece of a cultural hub, which is a valuable resource. The planning history indicates that over the past decade and a half the appellant has invested heavily in the application site and added a suite of new buildings. It seems to me that it would be possible to keep the creative activities going using other buildings in the complex while works are being done to the cottage. On the available evidence, I have not been persuaded that refusal of this planning application would inevitably lead to a forced sale of the application site and the relocation of the hub.

9.0 Appropriate Assessment Screening

9.1. Having considered the nature, location and small scale of the proposed development, the absence of emissions therefrom and the distance from the nearest European site, I am content on the basis of objective information that the development is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. I therefore conclude that the carrying out of an appropriate assessment under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 is not required.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

10.1. The application site is located about 1 kilometre from the River Corlock. The proposed development comprises the removal of thatching from the roof of a cottage and its replacement by corrugated sheeting. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

10.2. I have assessed the development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface and 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.

- 10.3. The reasons for this conclusion are the nature and small scale of the works, the absence of emissions therefrom and the distance from the nearest water bodies.
- 10.4. I conclude 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.

11.0 Recommendation

- 11.1. I recommend to the Commission that planning permission be refused.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 12.1. Having regard to the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 and in particular Objective BH06, and to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, it is considered that the removal of the thatched, half-hipped roof would cause serious damage to the special character of this Protected Structure. It has not been demonstrated that the proposed development is a necessary response to the appellant's medical circumstances. It is therefore concluded that the development would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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



TREVOR A RUE

Planning Inspector

3rd February 2026

Appendix A: Form 1 – EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	<i>PL-500036-WX</i>
Proposed Development Summary	<i>Removal of thatching from the roof of a cottage and its replacement by corrugated sheeting</i>
Development Address	<i>Ballymitty, Co. Wexford</i>
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"/> <i>Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.</i>
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3.</i>	
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"/> <i>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.</i>	No screening required.
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3).

Inspector: *Trevor A Rue*

Date: 3rd February 2026

TREVOR A RUE