

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-500169-OY

Development	Construction of two storey dwelling and all associated site works.
Location	Castlefield, Cadamstown, Co. Offaly.
Planning Authority	Offaly County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2460534
Applicant(s)	Ciaran Byrne
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Ciaran Byrne
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	5 th May 2026
Inspector	Emer Doyle

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site has a stated area of 1.45 hectares and is located in the rural townland of Castlefield, Cadamstown, Co. Offaly. It is located just outside the development boundary of the Cadamstown 'Sráid' as indicated in the Settlement Maps of the Development Plan. It is located c. 5km northeast of Kinnity.
- 1.2. The site is long and narrow and is situated on a local road (L6034) which has significant mature hedgerow. The topography of the site rises from north to south with the contours of the site ranging from c. 116m to the north to c. 135m to the south.
- 1.3. The existing site has two agricultural entrances - one at the north and one to the south of the site. The local road is part of the walking and cycling route of the Offaly Way and there is a local loop walk adjacent to the Silver River (known as the Silver River Nature Trail) which is accessed from what appears to be a new pedestrian access adjacent to the southern agricultural access. A small part of the site to the south has a section fenced off for this route. There is a dolmen towards the south of the site with a newly created picnic area adjacent to this.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Permission is sought for a two storey dwelling (176.8m²) and garage (34.3m²), septic tank with percolation area, entrance, and all associated works. It is proposed to connect to the Cadamstown group water scheme.
- 2.2. Further Information was submitted on the Planning Authority on the 20th of August 2025 including the following:
 - Letter from applicant stating that there are no family owned alternative sites available to him outside the Area of High Amenity in the Slieve Bloom Mountains.
 - Revisions to dwelling and site to reduce the visual impact.
 - Revisions to materials to exclude the metal cladding on the external walls and provide for a nap plaster finish.

- Relocation of entrance. There is no requirement to remove or set back hedgerows to provide visibility at the revised location.
- Additional planting of native trees proposed as indicated on landscaping plan.
- Revised site layout showing existing site levels and sightlines from revised site entrance location.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. Permission refused for 3 no. reasons, as follows:

1. The proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard due to the substandard sight visibility available at the proposed entrance to the site. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and development of the area.
2. Having regard to;
 - (a) The rural and sensitive character of the area and the sites location within an area designated an Area of High Amenity (Slieve Bloom Mountains) and Objective BLO-22 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 stating that new development in such areas will not be permitted if it introduces incongruous landscape elements;
 - (b) Objective BLO-25 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2025 which states that "It is an objective of the Council to protect skylines and ridgelines from development where such developments will create significant visual intrusion";
 - (c) DMS-48 'Design and Siting' of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021 2025 which states that all planning applications for single houses in the countryside should demonstrate a high standard of siting and design and the provisions of the Offaly County Council's booklet 'Designing Houses, Creating Homes – A Guide for Applicants on the siting and design of new houses in the Offaly countryside' which advises that dwellings should 'not break the horizon or skyline or build on the highest part of the site' and 'reduce where possible,

cutting and filling into hills which can leave the landscape scarred', it is considered, given the positioning of the proposed development near the top of a ridge line, that the proposed development would therefore contravene materially these provisions of the County Development Plan and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. It is an objective of the Council under BLO-26 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2025 to "protect Key Scenic Views and Key Prospects contained in Table 4.21, and Key Amenity Routes as listed in Table 4.22 from inappropriate development." The proposed development is located close to the apex of a ridge line within an area denoted as protected view: Ref. V02 (view from road no. L 08003 in the Slieve Bloom Mountains towards the Slieve Bloom Mountains, River Shannon northwards over lowlands) and listed in table 4.21 in the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2025. It is considered that the proposed development would therefore contravene materially objective BLO-26 and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report (First Report)

- Site is located within in an Area of Special Control, namely an Area of High Amenity (Slieve Bloom Mountains) and a Protected View.
- Proposed development would be visually obtrusive.

Planning Report (Second Report):

- It was considered that the revised design submitted has not addressed the previous reason for refusal under PA Reg. Ref. 23/389. In addition, it was considered that there was substandard visibility at the entrance and this would impact on traffic safety. Refusal of permission was recommended.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- **Environment, Climate Action and Rural Water:** No objection subject to conditions.

- **Area Engineer:** First report required Further Information in relation to traffic safety and sightlines. Second report required Clarification of Further Information.
- **Water Services:** No objection subject to conditions.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

- 3.3.1. **An Taisce:** Notes that the site contains a significant area of mature hedgerow. Recommend that applicant's intention with regard to hedgerow is clarified as a preliminary matter.

3.4. **Third Party Observations/ Representations**

Representations were made to the Planning Authority on behalf of the applicant by Cllr. John Clendennen.

3.5. **Planning History**

- 3.5.1. Relevant planning history for the site:

PA Reg. 23/389

Current applicant refused permission for dwelling on this site.

PA Reg. Ref. 99/952

Permission sought by Tom Daly for dormer dwelling on this site. Further Information not responded to.

4.0 Policy Context

4.1. National Policy

- Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (2025) – NPO28: siting and design criteria for rural housing.
- Climate Action Plans (2024 & 2025) and Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030
- Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DoHLGH, 2019)
- EPA Code of Practice: Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (2021)
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes and Sustaining Communities (DoHLGH, 2007)
- Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoHLGH, 2005).

4.2. Regional Policy

- Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031 – Rural Areas: RPO 4.81 siting and design criteria for rural housing.

4.3. Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

The site is located in open countryside as set out in the Core Strategy. It is located just outside the development boundary of the Cadamstown ‘Sráid’ – See map of same included with photographs attached to this report.

SPP-27 relates to the Rural Housing Policy. The site is located within An Area of High Amenity as identified on Figure 2.6- Open Countryside Housing Policy Map.

SSP-27 Having regard to the need to protect County Offaly's natural resources, environment, landscape and infrastructure, it is Council policy to consider a single dwelling for the permanent occupation of an applicant in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas and Areas of Special Control where all of the following (1-4) can be demonstrated:

- (i) **Economic requirements** will normally encompass persons referred to in the revision to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 and, if applicable, circulars. Pending the making of the revised Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines by the Minister, a Functional Economic Requirement in County Offaly shall be taken as including persons who by the nature of their work have a functional economic need to reside in the local rural area close to their place of work. It includes persons involved in full-time farming, horticulture or forestry as well as similar rural-based part-time occupations where it can be demonstrated that it is the predominant occupation. The 'local rural area' is defined as the area generally within 8km radius (5km radius particular to Areas of Special Control) of the place of work.

Or

- (ii) **Social requirements** will normally encompass persons referred to in the revision to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 and, if applicable, circulars. Pending the making of the revised Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines by the Minister, a Functional Social Requirement in County Offaly shall be taken as including (a) or (b) below: (a) The applicant was born within the local rural area, or is living or has lived in the local rural area for a minimum of 5 years (15 years particular to Areas of Special Control) at any stage prior to making the planning application. It includes returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area. The 'Local Rural Area' for the purpose of this policy is defined as the area generally within an 8km radius (5km radius particular to Areas of Special Control) of where the applicant was born, living or has lived. For the purpose of this policy, the rural area is taken to include 'Villages' listed in the Settlement Hierarchy, but excludes Tullamore, Birr, Edenderry, Portarlington, Banagher, Clara, Daingean, Ferbane and Kilcormac (i.e. the

Key Town, Self-Sustaining Growth Town, Self-Sustaining Towns, Towns and Smaller Towns listed in the Settlement Hierarchy.

Or (b) Special consideration shall be given in cases of exceptional health circumstances - supported by relevant documentation from a registered medical practitioner and a disability organisation proving that a person requires to live in a particular environment or close to family support, or requires a close family member to live in close proximity to that person.

2. The applicant does not already own or has not owned a house in the open countryside.

3. If the site is located within an Area of Special Control, there is no alternative site outside of Areas of Special Control.

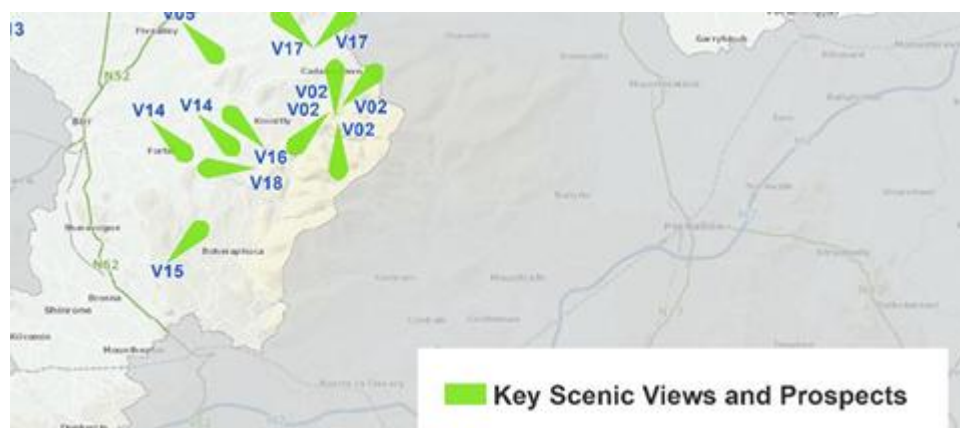
4. High quality siting and design.

Figure 4.22 Landscape Classification Map identifies that the site is located in a High Sensitivity Landscape.

Table 4.20 D) Slieve Bloom Mountain Upland Area requires that housing should be very low impact in design, scale, mass and site selection. Robust, well screened sites should be chosen over unscreened elevated sites in order to restrict the visual impact to as small an area as possible.

Table 4.21 sets out key scenic views and prospects in Offaly. V02 is of relevance. This is from Road No. L-08003 in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, townlands of Clough, Ballykelly, Coolcreen, Glenletter, Glenregan, Castletown, Forelacka and Glinsk to the Slieve Bloom Mountains, River Shannon northwards over lowlands.

Figure 4.2 identifies Key Scenic Views and Prospects including V02.



Relevant Policies and Objectives include the following:

BLP-36 It is Council policy, to ensure that issues of scale, siting, design and overall compatibility (including particular regard to environmental sensitivities) with a site's location within an Area of High Amenity are of paramount importance when assessing any application for planning permission. The merits of each proposal will be examined on a case-by case basis.

BLP-41 It is Council policy to require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals, located within or adjacent to sensitive landscapes. This assessment will provide details of proposed mitigation measures to address likely negative impacts.

BLP-43 It is Council policy to require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals that are likely to significantly affect Key Scenic Views and Prospects as listed in Table 4.21 and Key Amenity Routes as listed in Table 4.22.

BLO-18 It is an objective of the Council to encourage the retention, wherever possible, of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment in the county. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, provision of the same type of boundary will be required of similar length and set back within the site in advance of the commencement of construction works on the site (unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority).

BLO-22 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that new development, whether individually or cumulatively, does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of or the scenic value of the Areas of High Amenity listed in Table 4.17. New development in Areas of High Amenity shall not be permitted if it;

- Causes unacceptable visual harm;
- Introduces incongruous landscape elements; and
- Causes the disturbance or loss of (i) landscape elements that contribute to local distinctiveness; (ii) historic elements that contribute significantly to landscape character and quality such as field or road patterns; (iii) vegetation which is a characteristic of that landscape type and (iv) the visual condition of landscape elements.

BLO-24 It is an objective of the Council to have regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Areas in Tables 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20 in the consideration of planning applications.

BLO-25 It is an objective of the Council to protect skylines and ridgelines from development where such developments will create significant visual intrusion.

BLO-26 It is an objective of the Council to protect Key Scenic Views and Key Prospects contained in Table 4.21, and Key Amenity Routes as listed in Table 4.22 from inappropriate development.

BLO-27 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that proposed developments take into consideration their effects on views from Key Scenic Views and Prospects and Key Amenity Routes and are designed and located to minimise their impact on this views and prospects.

DMS-48 Design and Siting All planning applications for single houses in the countryside shall demonstrate a high standard of siting and design in accordance with Offaly County Councils booklet 'Designing Houses, Creating Homes – A Guide for Applicants on the siting and design of new houses in the Offaly countryside'.

DMS-50 Landscaping and Boundary Treatment Boundary treatment and landscaping proposals for residential development in the countryside shall be in accordance with Section 6 of the Offaly County document 'Designing houses, creating homes – A guide for applicants on the siting and design of new houses in the Offaly Countryside'; Hedgerows should be retained and reinforced and only removed where absolutely necessary for the achievement of sightlines ensuring safe entry and exit to a site. Where limited removal is required in order to meet with achievement of sightlines, new hedgerows consisting of species native to the area as listed in Table 4.16 in Chapter 4 of Volume 1 of this Plan shall be planted inside the line of visibility. The design of entrances to houses in the countryside shall be in keeping with its rural setting. Brick walls and ornamental features will be discouraged. Planning applications should be accompanied by details of the proposed entrance including details of gates, piers, wing walls etc. as well as of front boundary treatment.

DMS-97 Safe Sight Distances required for access onto National, Regional and Local Roads-

The following safe sight distances, shall be provided from vehicular entrances on the road network;

- Local Tertiary Roads: 60 metres

Volume 2 Settlement Plans including Cadamstown Sraid Plan.

4.4. Natural Heritage Designations

4.4.1. No natural heritage designations apply to the subject site.

- The closest European Sites are the Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA (and the Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC, c. 0.44km, and 2.9km south of the site.

4.5. EIA Screening

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

5.0 The Appeal

5.1. Grounds of Appeal

5.1.1. A First-Party appeal has been lodged in this instance. The grounds of the appeal can be summarised as follows:

- The entrance has been relocated and the revised entrance uses an existing agricultural entrance and does not represent a traffic hazard.
- In relation to the second reason for refusal, the Council's reference to incongruous landscape elements appears to derive from an earlier reference to planting species that were not strictly native. This has now been corrected in full.

- The revised proposal has undergone significant changes since the previous refusal. The house reads as a modest vernacular form set within a slope, not upon it.
- The proposal demonstrates the precise level of design quality and siting sensitivity sought under DMS-48 and Offaly County Council's Designing Homes, Creating Homes guidance.
- The site lies near but does not intrude upon Protected View V02 (Table 4.21, Offaly County Development Plan. The view describes long-distance vistas from the upland road L8003, not from the lower L-6034 road where the site is located. The proposed development is not visible from the L8003, being screened by topography and hedgerows and is set below the ridge crest. Proposed native planting will further integrate the house and maintain the scenic quality of the area.

5.2. Planning Authority Response

5.2.1. The Planning Authority's response to the grounds of appeal can be summarised as follows:

- The Planning Authority considers the design of the dwelling is inappropriate and that the proposed use of the existing agricultural entrance with limited visibility would represent a traffic hazard.

5.3. Observations

5.3.1. None.

6.0 Assessment

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

- Rural Housing Need
- Rural Housing Density
- Traffic Safety

6.2. Rural Housing Need

- 6.2.1. The site is located within an area of High Amenity as identified by Figure 2.6 of the Development Plan – Open Countryside Housing Policy Map. This is the Slieve Bloom Area of High Amenity and is identified as An Area of Special Control. Policy SSP-27 is the relevant Policy for this area.
- 6.2.2. On the basis of the information submitted, it was considered by the Planning Authority that the Applicant has demonstrated compliance with SSP-27.
- 6.2.3. I have reviewed the supporting documentation submitted by the applicant to identify how he complies with the rural housing policy. Documentation submitted to the Planning Authority included the following:
- Letters from local primary and secondary schools
 - Letter from two local GAA clubs and Kinnity Players (Drama Group)
 - Letter from Parish Church stating that he is local to the area and details in relation to the death of his father.
 - Map of his family home within 0.33km of the site. It is stated that he has lived at this location for c. 14 years.
 - Details of land ownership in area and confirmation that this is the only site available to him.
 - Confirmation that he does not and has never owned a house in the rural countryside.
 - I note that the supplementary application form in relation to rural housing states that a letter is attached regarding exceptional health circumstances. This letter is not on the file.
- 6.2.4. In terms of the information presented in the application, I am satisfied that the application complies with the requirements set out in the Development Plan for Areas of Special Control and as such, I concur with the Planning Authority assessment of same. Areas of Special Control require that applicant has lived in the area for a minimum of 15 years- I am satisfied that the whilst the applicant has stated in the information submitted that he has lived in the area for 14 years, having regard

to the timeframe since this information was originally submitted to the Planning Authority, the 15 year requirement set out in the policy for Areas of Special Control has now been exceeded. Should the Commission be minded to grant permission for the proposed development, I recommend that an occupancy condition is attached.

- 6.2.5. Notwithstanding the fact that the appellant meets the rural housing need criteria for Areas of Special Control, the application must identify how the development does not prejudice the environment and rural character of the area. This is examined in further detail in the following sections of this report.

6.3. Design and Visual Amenity

- 6.3.1. The second and third reasons for refusal relate to design and visual amenity.
- 6.3.2. There was a previous refusal on this site for similar reasons under PA Reg. 23/389. In order to address the reasons for refusal, a revised design was submitted under the current application. The finished floor level of the previous dwelling was c. 129m OD.
- 6.3.3. The revised design submitted in the current application is contemporary and I consider it to be of high architectural merit. I am satisfied that the elevations have been appropriately articulated and are of a high standard. The overall floor area of the proposed dwelling is stated to be 176.8m². The finished floor level is 125.5m OD, with a ridge height of 8.1m.
- 6.3.4. In response to the concerns raised by the Planning Authority in the Further Information Request, the applicant submitted the following alterations in the drawings and documentation submitted on the 20th day of August 2025:
- Reduction in FFL from 125.5 to 124m
 - Reduced ridge height of 7.6m.
 - Increase in roof pitch from 30 degrees to 40 degree to present as a more vernacular form and reduce perceived massing. On the north elevation the dwelling reads as a two storey (5m eaves height), while on the south elevation, it presents as a single storey with dormer style hall.

- Revisions to materials to include nap plaster finish to external walls in lieu of metal cladding.
- Reduction in floor area to 164m².
- Additional planting proposed of native hedgerow and trees.

- 6.3.5. I note that the site is located within an Area of Special Control, specifically the Area of High Amenity in the Slieve Bloom Mountains. Figure 4.22 of the Development Plan – Landscape Classification Map identifies that the site is located in High Sensitive Landscape. Relevant policies for this area include BLO-22, BLO-24, BLO-25, BLO-26 and BLO-27. These objectives are outlined in the policy section above and in sum recognise the high sensitivity of the area and require a high standard of siting and design and the protection of scenic views and the visual amenity of the area. DMS-48 is also relevant and requires development to be in accordance with the Offaly County Council booklet- ‘Designing Houses, Creating Homes – A Guide for Applicants on the siting and design of new houses in the Offaly countryside’.
- 6.3.6. The Planning Authority considered that the proposed development interfered with a view of the Slieve Bloom mountains and that the design introduces incongruous landscape elements, is located near the top of a ridge and is not in accordance with Designing Houses, Creating Homes – A Guide for Applicants on the siting and design of new houses in the Offaly countryside’.
- 6.3.7. The proposed dwelling has a ridge height of 7.6m which is lower than many of the dwellings in the vicinity. I have examined the content of Designing Houses, Creating Homes- A guide for applicants on the siting and design of new houses in the Offaly Countryside. I am satisfied that the application as submitted in the revised details provides for a design and layout that takes account of site topography and significantly reduces the visual impact of the proposed development. The main alterations provide for a reduction in finished floor level from 129.5m OD in the previous refusal to 124m OD in the revised details submitted at Further Information Stage. The ridgeline sits at 131.66m. The previous refusal provided for a ridgeline of c. 138.2m. I note that the highest part of the site is towards the south adjacent to the eco walk trail with a contour level of c. 135m. The proposed dwelling is located towards the lowest part of the site. The floor area of the proposed dwelling has been

reduced from 205m² in the previous refusal to 164m² as revised by the Further Information Response.

- 6.3.8. I consider that the form, massing, scale and design of the dwelling is in line with the Design Guidelines. Furthermore, I consider that it will fit well into the landscape at this location and will not detract from the highly sensitive landscape of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. I concur with the appeal response that states that the use of modest materials, restrained detailing and low visual impact construction aligns directly with the Council's guidance for development in Areas of High Amenity. It is an objective of the Development Plan to encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment in the County. The site benefits from mature trees and hedgerows on all sides and this largely screens the site from public views. The elevation presented to the public road to the west is narrow and low in profile and I consider that whilst there will be some visual impact, this will be very limited due to existing screening and the proposal to retain and augment same as indicated in the landscaping plan Drawing No. 2405.1004, and the topography of the site which rises significantly to the south of the site.
- 6.3.9. In relation to the third reason for refusal by the Planning Authority, I note that Table 4.21 sets out key scenic views and prospects in Offaly. V-02 is of relevance and is referenced in Reason No. 3 of the refusal. This is from Road No. L-08003 in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, townlands of Clough, Ballykelly, Coolcreen, Glenletter, Glenregan, Castletown, Forelacka and Glinsk to the Slieve Bloom Mountains, River Shannon northwards over lowlands. The L-8003 is an upland local road within the Slieve Bloom Mountain Range. The designated views are towards the Slieve Bloom Mountains in a northwards and southwards direction as indicated both by the text above and by the Key Scenic Views and Prospects Map. The site is located in an eastwards direction from this view and as such, I do not consider that the visual impact will be significant or obtrusive on this protected view.
- 6.3.10. Taken together with the significant changes to the previous refusal on the site and the revisions to the design and finished floor level outlined in the Further Information Response in addition to the existing mature screening on the site and the additional clusters of native trees proposed in the landscaping scheme, I am satisfied that the design and siting is appropriate for this location and will not unduly detract from the sensitive landscape at this location or on scenic views in the area including V-02.

Further, I consider that the proposed development would be in accordance with the Development Plan objectives outlined above and the design proposed is of a modest scale and is in accordance with the Guidelines Designing Houses, Creating Homes – A Guide for Applicants on the siting and design of new houses in the Offaly countryside’.

6.4. Traffic Safety

- 6.4.1. The first reason for refusal by the Planning Authority considered that the proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard due to the substandard sight visibility available at the proposed entrance to the site.
- 6.4.2. The proposed development provides for the use of an existing agricultural entrance. This existing entrance is located c. 32m from the junction of the L6034 and the R421. I would agree with the appeal response which states that traffic speeds at this location are inherently low due to the proximity to this junction. Vehicles approaching the R421 from the L6034 must prepare to stop at this junction. The nature of the road is such that it is likely that traffic would be travelling at a low speed and I note that the speed limit on this road is 50km/hr in the vicinity of the site. There is warning signage that the route is used by walkers and cyclists as it is part of the Offaly Way. Traffic levels on the road are very low and no vehicles passed me during the time of the site inspection. There is a pedestrian turnstile gate adjacent to the existing agricultural access which provides access to the Silver River Nature Trail loop walk. There is no parking adjacent to the site, but I note that there is a car park for walkers in Cadamstown Village at the start of the loop walk.
- 6.4.3. I note that the site access was altered in response to the Further Information Request. The original access proposed was located to the north of the site and would have required the removal of significant amounts of hedgerow contrary to a number of Development Plan objectives. This issue was raised by the PA in the Further Information Request and a revised site access was provided at the southern end of the site using an existing agricultural access.
- 6.4.4. The Area Engineer considered that the relocated access was inadequate and required clarification of Further Information in relation to the build out required to delineate the entrance together with clarification in relation to the amount of

boundary ditch that would be removed and the extent of verge that would be lowered in order to achieve good visibility. I am of the view that it would be possible to improve sightlines to the north at this location by lowering the existing hedgerow at this location. It is noted that the road geometry and junction causes traffic to slow down when approaching the site from the north.

- 6.4.5. Having regard to the nature of the road, the 50km/h speed limit, the low traffic volumes in the area, and the road geometry in the vicinity of the site where cars would be required to reduce speed limits due to the proximity of a junction, I consider that the proposed entrance would provide adequate sightline visibility. Consequently, I do not consider that the proposed development poses any significant traffic safety concern.

7.0 AA Screening

- 7.1. I have considered the proposed dwelling and secondary sewage treatment system in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The proposed development comprises a dwelling, garage, together with a septic tank and percolation area, entrance and associated site works.

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

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The small scale and domestic nature of the development.
- Taking into account the determination by Planning Authority.

I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

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

8.0 Water Framework Directive

- 8.1. An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken with regard to the objectives set out in Article 4 of the European Union Water Framework Directive, together with relevant guidelines published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including applicable codes of practice for the protection of water quality. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, it is concluded that the proposal will not result in any risk of deterioration in the status of any water body, including surface waters (rivers and lakes), groundwater, transitional waters, or coastal waters. This applies to both qualitative and quantitative status, and in respect of temporary and permanent effects.
- 8.2. The proposed development has been designed in accordance with EPA codes of practice and best practice guidance, ensuring that appropriate measures are incorporated to prevent pollution, control runoff, and protect both surface water and groundwater receptors. Furthermore, the development will not adversely affect the achievement of established environmental objectives, including the maintenance or attainment of good ecological status/potential and good chemical status, as required under the Directive. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the requirements of Article 4.

9.0 Recommendation

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

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 10.1. Having regard to the provisions of the Offaly County Council Development Plan 2021-2027, the satisfactory demonstration of housing need in accordance with SSP-27 and the sensitive design and siting and modest scale of the proposed development, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the development would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, would not be prejudicial to public health, and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience. The proposed

development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

11.0 Conditions

1.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 20th August 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. 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.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2.(a)The proposed dwelling, when completed, shall be first occupied as a place of permanent residence by the applicant, members of the applicant's immediate family or their heirs, and shall remain so occupied for a period of at least seven years thereafter unless consent is granted by the planning authority for its occupation by other persons who belong to the same category of housing need as the applicant. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall enter into a written agreement with the planning authority under section 47 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to this effect.

(b) Within two months of the occupation of the proposed dwelling, the applicant shall submit to the planning authority a written statement of confirmation of the first occupation of the dwelling in accordance with paragraph (a) and the date of such occupation.

This condition shall not affect the sale of the dwelling by a mortgagee in possession or the occupation of the dwelling by any person deriving title from such a sale.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed house is used to meet the applicant's stated housing needs and that development in this rural area is appropriately restricted in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. Water supply and drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the detailed requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

4. Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes of the proposed development shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

5. All surface water generated within the site boundaries shall be collected and disposed of within the curtilage of the site. No surface water from roofs, paved areas or otherwise shall discharge onto the public road or adjoining properties.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety and to prevent pollution.

6. All service cables associated with the proposed development (such as electrical, telecommunications and communal television) shall be located underground.

Reason: In the interest of visual and residential amenity.

7.(a) The treatment system shall be located, constructed and maintained in accordance with the details submitted to the planning authority, and in accordance with the requirements of the document "Wastewater Treatment Manual: Treatment Systems for Single Houses (P.E. < 10)", issued by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2021. No system other than the type proposed in the submissions shall be installed unless agreed in writing with the planning authority.

(b) Within three months of the first occupation of the dwelling, the developer shall submit a report from a suitably qualified person with professional indemnity insurance certifying that the Tertiary Treatment System Infiltration/treatment area is constructed in accordance with the standards set out in the EPA document.

Reason: In the interest of public health.

8. The site shall be landscaped, using only indigenous deciduous trees and hedging in accordance with the Landscaping Plan (Drawing No. 2405.1004) submitted to the planning authority on the 20th August 2025. A timescale for implementation of the scheme shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In order to screen the development and assimilate it into the surrounding rural landscape in the interest of visual amenity.

9. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefitting 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 the 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.

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.

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

Emer Doyle

Planning Inspector

19th June 2026

Appendix 1 Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ACP-500169-OY
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of two storey dwelling, single storey garage, wastewater treatment system, percolation area, new entrance, driveway and all associated site development works.
Development Address	Castlefield, Cadamstown, Co. Offaly.
	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)	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2. ☐ 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)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.	

EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	
☒ 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?	
☐ 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.	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.	The class is 10(b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units. The development is for the construction of 1 no. dwelling and therefore is sub-threshold.

Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	
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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 ☐	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 2 Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	ACP-500169-OY
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of two storey dwelling, single storey garage, wastewater treatment system, percolation area, new entrance, driveway and all associated site development works.
Development Address	Castlefield, Cadamstown, Co. Offaly.
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.	
Characteristics of proposed development (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	The proposal comprises permission for the construction of 1 no. house in a rural area. The project due to its size and nature will not give rise to significant production of waste during both the construction and operation phases or give rise to significant risk of pollution and nuisance. The construction of the proposed development does not have potential to cause significant effects on the environment due to water pollution. The project characteristics pose no significant risks to human health. The proposed development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, or is vulnerable to climate change.
Location of development (The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to	The site is not located in or immediately adjacent to any European site. There are no significant environmental sensitivities in the vicinity – potential impacts on Natura 2000

be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	sites is addressed under Appropriate Assessment (Screening).
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	Localised construction impacts will be temporary. The proposed development would not give rise to waste, pollution or nuisances beyond what would normally be deemed acceptable.
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.

There is significant and realistic doubt regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	
There is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

DP/ADP: _____ Date: _____

(only where Schedule 7A information or EIAR required)