



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-500228-GY-25

Development	Permission for the construction of three warehouse/storage units with access onto the R458, pedestrian access through development to the R458, connection to the public water services, bicycle parking, footpaths, public lighting, surface water drainage, revised boundary treatments and all associated site works and services.
Location	Ennis Road, Gort, Co. Galway.
Planning Authority	Galway County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	25/61146
Applicant(s)	RHOC Gort Ltd.
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse planning permission
Appellant(s)	RHOC Gort Ltd
Observer(s)	One received-P Grealish and L Quinn
Date of Site Inspection	30th day of January 2026
Inspector	Fergal Ó Bric.

1.0 **Site Location and Description**

- 1.1 The appeal site is located to the south of the settlement of Gort, with access from the R458 regional route which links the towns of Gort with Ennis in County Clare. The appeal site is a greenfield one where ground levels rise to the rear (east and north) of the site. There are two existing warehouse units and a number of approved warehouse units (not yet constructed) located to the north, north-east and north-west of the appeal site. To the west of the appeal site is a residential development that is presently under construction, comprising a mix of terraced and semi-detached two storey residential units. To the south of the appeal site are the established residential units within the Punchbowl residential development, comprising a mix of detached and semi-detached two storey residential units. Lands to the east of the subject site are greenfield and are also zoned for industrial use but remain undeveloped to date.
- 1.2 The proposed access point for the warehouse development would be from a permitted access off the Ennis Road, within the 50 kilometre per hour speed control zone.
- 1.3 The site has a stated area of 1.668 hectares. Site boundaries to the south adjoining the Punchbowl development comprise a mix of trellis fencing, post and panel timber and concrete panel fencing, to the west is a 1.8-metre-tall green metal mesh fencing, the north the site is open to what is currently a site compound and to the east is a dry ditch with shrubbery and planting.

2.0 **Proposed Development**

- 2.1 Permission is sought to construct:
- Three warehouse/storage units with access onto the R458 through a permitted entrance and access road and development approved under planning reference 23/61429.
 - Provision for pedestrian access through development onto the R458 (Ennis Road),
 - Connection to the public mains water infrastructure, including connection to existing foul drainage network to serve the development,

- Provision of bicycle parking, footpaths, public lighting, on-site surface water drainage, revised boundary treatments and all associated site works and services.

2.2 The applicants state that they own the majority of the appeal site. A small portion of the subject site to the north-west is in third party ownership and a letter of consent has been submitted from the property owner consenting to the making of the planning application/appeal on his lands.

2.3 The Coimisiún referred the appeal to the Department of Environment, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and no response was received from them in relation to the proposals.

3.0 **Planning Authority Decision**

3.1 Decision

The Planning Authority issued a notification to refuse planning permission for two reasons as follows:

- 1 The Planning Authority have concerns regarding the restricted nature and the oversized scale of the unspecified development within the site layout in the context of vehicular manoeuvrability and the suitability of the external and internal traffic circulation regime whereby increased vehicular (HGV) turning movements will be generated by the development, and in the absence of satisfactory demonstration of auto tracking swept path analysis pertaining to such HGV movements including the provision of suitable on-site vehicular turning facilities. Accordingly, due to the restricted vehicle manoeuvrability within and adjoining the site, the potential exists for conflicting turning movements to potentially occur within the internal layout and the public road network, thus increasing road safety hazards particularly for vulnerable road users. It is therefore, considered with regard to Policy Objectives NNR2 and DM Standards 28 and 33A of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, that if permitted as proposed, the development would endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard, or obstruction of road users or otherwise.
- 2 Having regard to the overall mass, scale and proximity of the proposed development particularly Blocks B and C to nearby residential properties, in conjunction with the ambiguity regarding the future occupiers/nature of use,

the Planning Authority is not satisfied that the proposed development will not negatively impact upon the residential amenity of adjoining property.

Therefore, if permitted as proposed, the development would be contrary to policy objective PM 1 and DM Standard 19 of the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and policy objective GSST 18 of the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031, would establish an undesirable precedent for future similar developments in the area, would constitute overdevelopment of the site and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2 Local Authority Reports

3.2.1 Planning Report

Planning report (10th day of October 2025)

This report sets out that the proposals would be unacceptable on traffic and access grounds in terms of internal and external HGV turning movements, the absence of swept path autotrack analysis and increasing road safety hazards particularly for vulnerable road users and thus would be contrary to policy objective NNR2 and DM Standards 28 and 33A in the current Galway County Development Plan (GCDP) 2022-2028 and that if permitted would endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard and obstruction of road users. The other pertinent issue raised related to the ambiguity regarding future occupiers of the proposed warehouse units and that this would adversely impact the residential amenity of neighbouring residential properties and that the proposals would be contrary to Policy Objective PM1 and Development Management Standard 19 of the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Policy Objective GSST18 within the current Gort Local area Plan (LAP) 2025-2031, would establish an undesirable precedent and contribute to overdevelopment of the site.

3.2.2 Other Technical Reports

Roads Section: Refusal of planning permission recommended on the basis of the issues raised within Paragraph 3.2.1 above.

3.3 Prescribed Bodies

Transport Infrastructure Ireland; No objections set out.

3.4 Third Party Observations

Two third party observations were received. The issues raised within the observations relate to the following:

- The proposals would represent an overdevelopment of the site.
- There is no control over the types of uses that would be carried on within the proposed warehouse units. There is an absence of information regarding the end users to allow an assessment to be conducted regarding their suitability at this location.
- Traffic volumes cannot be quantified due to the absence of information on intended end users of the warehouse units.
- There are no details of noise or odours that may be generated within the warehouse units.
- There is potential for adverse health and safety impacts upon neighbouring residents.
- The scale, height and design of the building in proximity to existing residential development would adversely impact their residential amenity and result in a depreciation of their property values.
- The boundary treatment proposals are not acceptable.

4.0 Planning History

The following is considered to be the relevant planning history pertaining to the apparel site.

Subject Site:

None noted.

Adjacent site to the north-west

Planning Authority reference 23/61429-RHOC. In 2023, Galway County Council granted planning permission to RHOC Gort Ltd for the construction of two warehouse units with entrance onto the R458, provision of pedestrian connection to existing footpath on the R458, connection to public piped water services, communal public open space areas, bicycle parking, footpaths, public lighting, revised boundary treatment and all associated site works. Gross floor area of proposed works 1.258 square metres.

Adjacent site to the north

Planning Authority reference 25/60594-In 2025, Galway County Council granted planning permission to Riverside Foods Ltd for the construction of two warehouse/storage units with entrance and access road onto the R458 as permitted under planning reference 23/61429, provision of pedestrian access through permitted development to the R458, connection to public piped water services, communal public open space areas, bicycle parking, footpaths, public lighting, bin storage, surface water drainage, revised boundary treatment and all associated site works. Gross floor area of proposed works 7,603 square metres.

Adjacent site to the west

Planning Authority reference 23/61138-In 2023, Galway County Council granted planning permission to RHOC Gort Ltd for the construction of sixteen residential units at Rindfin, Ennis Road, comprising a mix of terraced and semi-detached two and three bed houses and a one bedroom apartment , entrance onto the R458, pedestrian connection to existing footpath along the R458, , connection to public piped water services, communal public open space areas, playground, private open space, bicycle parking, footpaths, public lighting, soft and hard landscaping, revised boundary treatment and all associated site works.

5.0 **Policy Context**

5.1 **Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031**

The appeal site has the benefit of an I- (Industrial) land use zoning objective as do the adjoining lands to the north-west, the north and east of the site.

The policy objective for industrial zoned lands is 'To promote the sustainable development of industrial and industrial-related uses, including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and distribution, on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road network and public transport facilities. Adequate edge treatments and/or screening will be required to ensure high quality interfaces with public spaces and any adjoining residential areas or other sensitive land uses, as appropriate.

The vision for industrial zoned lands is 'To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing employment areas and to facilitate opportunities for developing new high-quality industrial developments in a good-quality physical environment.

The zoning matrix sets out that both warehouse and storage uses are permissible on Industrial zoned lands.

The following specific policies and objectives are considered relevant to the current proposals:

Section 2.3 -Economic Development:

Lands have been appropriately zoned to support economic and employment development within the town over the plan period.....it is the intention of this plan to support the advancement of employment developments in tandem with residential development to 2031. It is anticipated that this approach will facilitate sustainable living whereby employment is accessible to residential areas by sustainable modes of transport, reducing sole reliance on private vehicles.

GSST 18-Industrial

Promote the sustainable development of industrial and industrial related uses, including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and

distribution on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road networks and public transport facilities. Adequate boundary treatments and/or screening will be required to ensure high quality interfaces with public spaces and any adjoining residential areas or other sensitive land uses, as appropriate.

The appeal site is located within Flood Zone C as per the flood mapping (Map 3) within the current Gort LAP.

5.2 Galway County Development Plan, 2022-2028

The Development Plan was adopted by the elected members on the 9th day of May and came into effect on the 20th day of June 2022.

Section 2 of the Plan (Core, Settlement and Housing Strategy) places Gort within Tier 4 of the Settlement Strategy-Self-sustaining towns.

Section 3: Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban living

Policy Objective PM 1: Placemaking- To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of a high-quality built environment where there is a distinctive sense of place in attractive streets, spaces, and neighbourhoods that are accessible and safe places for all members of the community to meet and socialise.

Section 5: Economic Development, Enterprise and Retail Development

Table 5.4 sets out the economic role for the larger settlements within the county. Gort as a self-sustaining town is envisaged as providing ‘a moderate level of jobs and services’.

The following specific policies and objectives are considered relevant to the current proposals:

EL1-Key employment locations: It is an objective of the plan to continue to deliver and enhance key employment locations and supporting infrastructure within the county. Economic development will be promoted within locations listed in Table 5.4 in order to secure the county’s continued economic development.

SCO1-Continued Investment: Support the continued provision of employment investment across County Galway in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

SCO7: New Enterprise: Support exploratory research, pioneering projects, new start-up businesses/industries and retraining programmes in conjunction with the development agencies and educational/research institutions.

Section 6: Transport and Movement

Policy Objective NNR2: Safeguard Regional and Local Roads

To safeguard the carrying capacity and safety of the County's regional and local road network

DM Standard 19: Industrial Development.

DM Standard 28: Sight Distances Required for Access onto National, Regional, Local and Private Roads

DM Standard 33A: Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), Road Safety Audit (RSA) & Road Safety Impact Assessments (RSIA)

5.3 National Guidance

Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines

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

- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (DMURS 2013)
- 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management' (including the associated 'Technical Appendices') (DoEH&LG 2009)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEH&LG 2009)

5.4 **Natural Heritage Designations**

The closest Natura 2000 sites to the appeal site are the Coole Garryland SPA (Site Code 004107) and the Coole Garryland SAC (Site Code 000252) which at their closest points are located approximately 2.1 kilometres north-west of the appeal site. The Lough Cutra SPA (Site Code 004056) and the Lough Cutra SAC (Site Code 000299), which at their closest points are located approximately 2.2 kilometres south-east of the appeal site.

The closest Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is the Coole Garryland pNHA (Site Code 000252) is located approximately 2.1 kilometres north-west of the appeal site. Lough Cutra pNHA, (site code 000299), which at its closest point is located approximately 2.2 kilometres south-east of the appeal site boundary.

5.5 **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening**

(See Appendix 1 at the end of this report). Having regard to the nature and scale of development on a site within the Gort settlement boundary on industrially zoned and fully serviced lands and the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity of the site, as well as the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

5.6 **WFD Screening**

The appeal site is located approximately 570 metres west of the nearest watercourse, that being the Cannahowna River, a tributary of the Gort River.

The proposed development relates to the development of three warehouse units, use of a permitted entrance and access road, connection to the public water services and provision of parking, on-site surface water drainage and landscaping and all

associated site works. The detailed development description is set out within Section 2.0 of my report above.

Potential for impact upon water quality was not raised by the Planning Authority nor by any of the observers. The appeal site is an urban greenfield one which is fully serviced in that there is access to the public watermains and foul sewer network. The appeal site is located within Flood Zone C as per the Flood Risk Assessment mapping (Map 3) as set out within the current Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 where a low risk of flooding is identified.

I have assessed the planning documentation and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seeks to protect and, where necessary, restore surface and ground water bodies 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, in relation to surface water management, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment, as the applicant has demonstrated that there is no conceivable risk to Galway Bay in terms of its water quality.

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The location of the subject site, removed from the nearest boundary of Cannahowna watercourse.
- The absence of hydrological connections to the Cannahowna watercourse or any other waterbodies.

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:

A first-party appeal was received from a Planning Consultants on behalf of RHOC Gort Ltd, (the applicants) which address the reasons for refusal as set out by the Planning Authority on a topic related basis as follows.

Principle of Development:

- The development would help sustain jobs and improve the resident to work ratio in Gort which is 0.84 at present and contribute towards the achievement of a more sustainable jobs to resident workers ratio.
- The development would contribute towards the achievement of a number of Regional Policy Objectives as set out within the RSES for the Northern and Midlands regions including RPO 3.6.2; the supporting the upscaling of businesses and RPO 6.46 in terms of generating economic growth in key industry sectors aligned with Enterprise 2025 objectives and National Development Plan Investments.
- The proposed warehousing use is directly consistent with Gort's designation as a self-sustaining town and to continue to support the expansion of its employment base.
- Policy Objective SS4 within the County Development Plan seeks to 'improve local employment services and sustainable transport options in order to become more self-sustaining settlements'.
- The appeal site is zoned for industrial use within the current Gort Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025-2031.
- The Policy objective for industrial land as set out within Section 1.7 of the Gort LAP is 'To promote the sustainable development of industrial and industrial related uses including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and distribution on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities'.

- The proposed warehousing development has good access onto the Regional Road, R458 (Ennis Road) and is consistent with the zoning objective for the site.
- Warehousing and storage uses are permitted in principle within the land use zoning matrix within the Gort LAP.
- The PM1 Placemaking policy objective is not considered a relevant consideration for the assessment of warehouse proposals on industrial zoned lands.
- Compliance with DM Standard 19 in relation to Industrial development has been demonstrated.
- The proposals are consistent with policy objective GSST18 within the Gort LAP 2025 in terms of promoting the sustainable development of warehousing and distribution uses on suitable lands, with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to major road networks, adequate boundary treatment and/or screening to ensure high quality interfaces with any adjoining residential areas.

Access, Connectivity & Traffic:

- The first reason for refusal as set out within the Planning authority decision was issued on the basis that an auto track swept path assessment for HGV movements was not submitted as part of the planning documentation. This matter could have been addressed by the Planning Authority by means of a further information request.
- As part of their appeal submission, the applicants have submitted an autotrack swept path analysis prepared by their Consultant Engineers.
- This autotrack analysis observed that a number of the internal green verges in the parking areas between Building A and Buildings B and C were infringing on HGV turning movements within the subject site.
- A revised drawing entitled 'Site Layout and Sections'-Drawing number 24211-3002 Rev A shows that the kerblines along the green verges at the end of the

car parking rows are now proposed to be rounded off to address the issue of HGV manoeuvrability.

- The revised Site layout plan should be read in conjunction with the Autotrack analysis which demonstrates the necessary turning movements and manoeuvrability for HGV vehicles would be achieved within the subject site and the internal road network.
- The concerns of The Roads Department in the Local Authority in relation to conflicting turning movements have, therefore, been overcome.
- The Roads Department in the Local Authority also raised concerns regarding the potential for conflicting turning movements with the adjoining public road network along the R458. The junction with the public road network, which is to serve the entirety of the Industrial zoned lands at Rindfin was permitted under planning reference number 23/61429. This junction and western section of the internal access road was also permitted more recently under planning reference 25/60594.
- The swept path analysis-Drawing number 125396-001-PL1 sheet 1 of 2 prepared by their Consultant Engineers demonstrates that the junction layout with the R458 is compliant with road safety standards and can accommodate HGV turning movements and not adversely impact the safety and freeflow of traffic on the R458.
- In relation to compliance with Policy Objective NNR2, the access onto the R458 is located within the 50 kilometre per hour speed control zone.
- As part of the Council's zoning of the subject lands to 'industrial' within the current Gort Local Area Plan, no access constraints were raised as part of the Council's 'infrastructure Assessment'.
- The applicants have submitted a project specific Traffic and Transport Assessment as part of the appeal documentation in compliance with DM Standard 33A. The analysis within the TTA demonstrates that the junction with the R458 is predicted to operate well below the recommended capacity of

85% both with and without the proposed development up to the year 2043 within both of the morning (am) and evening (pm) peak hour periods.

Design and Layout:

- No concerns in relation to mass and scale of the warehouse buildings were raised during the pre-planning consultation.
- The scale of the proposed development comprises 7,032 square metres (sq. m.) on a site area of 16,680 sq. m. resulting in a plot ratio of 0.42, considerably below the figure of 1.2 as provided for under DM Standard 19.
- The scale and mass of buildings B and C, nearest the Punchbowl residential development is consistent with the warehouse developments permitted under planning reference numbers 23/61429 and 25/60594 on adjoining sites.
- The mass of buildings B and C as proposed is modest when compared to unit 1 permitted under planning reference 25/60594 with a height of 14.1 metres and a floor area of 4,600 square metres.
- Landscaping proposals for the southern and western site boundaries adjoining existing residential developments would comprise semi-mature native trees along the site perimeter (whitebeam, birch, beech) to optimise screening.
- The landscaping proposals are consistent with Policy Objective GSST18 as per the Gort LAP 2025-31 which seeks that 'adequate boundary treatment and/or boundary screening will be required to ensure high quality interfaces with public spaces and adjoining residential areas'.
- The proposed separation distance between the rear building line of Warehouse Building B and the rear building line of dwellings to the south (Punchbowl) averages at 22.5 metres and between the rear building line of Warehouse Building C at the rear building line of dwellings within the Punchbowl averages at 19.95 metres. These separation distances are considered more than sufficient, having regard to the industrial zoning pertaining to the subject lands.
- There are no stated minimum separation distance requirements between a warehouse building and a residential dwelling. In comparison SPPR1 (as per the Compact Settlement Guidelines) sets out that 'a separation distance of at

least 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms' in residential properties. Recommended separation distances are prescribed to prevent overlooking and protect residential amenities. However, in this instance no windows are proposed within the southern elevations of warehouse Blocks B and C and, therefore, the separation distances as proposed are considered sufficient to protect neighbouring amenities.

- The applicants have submitted revised proposals as part of their appeal submission whereby the rear building line of Warehouse Building C would be moved 4 metres further away from the southern site boundary and, therefore, further away from the rear building line of dwellings within the neighbouring Punchbowl residential development.
- It is also proposed to reduce the parapet height of warehouse buildings B and C by 1.3 metres in order to reduce the height and scale of the warehouse buildings when viewed from the rear of the dwellings within the neighbouring Punchbowl residential development.
- The applicants are willing to accept a planning condition from the Coimisiún whereby the alterations to the rear building line of Block C and parapet height alterations to Blocks B and C would be accepted and that final details could be agreed in writing with the PA prior to the commencement of development.

Future Occupies/Nature of uses

- The nature of the proposed warehouse/storage units is adequately described in the public notices.
- The reference within the planning decision to 'future occupiers' as part of the refusal reason is inconsistent with the assessments carried out for warehouse proposals under planning reference numbers 23/61429 and 25/60594.
- Condition number 2 of planning reference 25/60594 sets out that the following 'the development hereby permitted is limited to that proposed in the public notices of the planning application'.
- The exact future warehouse/storage unit tenants cannot be identified at this stage. However, to refuse planning permission on this basis is unreasonable and onerous. The applicants would be willing to accept a planning condition

from the Coimisiún regarding the use for each of the units be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the units.

Residential Amenity:

- The proposed design is acceptable and has had regard to the proximity of the neighbouring residential developments.
- The subject lands have been zoned industrial for over twenty years and were always likely to be developed for these purposes.
- The mass and height of the current proposals are below those permitted for the adjoining unit 1, permitted under planning reference 25/60594.
- Semi-mature native landscaping is proposed along the southern and western site boundaries; these are adjoining existing residential developments.
- The landscaping proposals are consistent with the provisions of policy objective GSST18 as per the Gort LAP 2025.
- The average intervening distance between the rear building line of Building B and the rear building line of the neighbouring houses to the south (punchbowl) is 22.5 metres and the average intervening distance between the rear building line of Building C and the rear building line of the neighbouring houses to the south (Punchbowl) is 19.95 metres is considered sufficient.
- There is no stated minimum separation distance stipulated between residential and industrial developments within the Galway Development Plan.

6.2 Planning Authority Response

None received.

6.3 Third party comments in relation to the first party appeal submission

- The observers acknowledge the revised site layout proposals in terms of the relocation of warehouse Building C and the reduction in parapet height for warehouse Building B and C proposals as set out by the applicants within their appeal submission to the Coimisiún.
- However, these revised proposals do not alleviate the concerns of the observers in terms of the proximity of the warehouse buildings to the

neighbouring residential properties from a visual or residential amenity perspective.

- Proximity to residential areas often creates conflict in terms of amenity and general nuisance.
- Adequate separation distances between industrial and residential developments are essential to ensure harmonious co-existence thus, preventing on-going conflicts.
- Separation should not simply be defined by hard boundaries of a site but by adequate and suitable separation of the activities concerned.
- In order to adequately protect residential amenity, there must be a well-defined separation between the designated industrial areas and residential areas.
- An example provided by the observers references low frequency noise generated by a chilling unit motor would result in greater noise disturbance at nighttime for those residents in proximity to the source of noise.
- The Gort river is the receiving water from outfall from the Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). It is important that the capacity of the WWTP and downstream ecosystems are considered as part of any assessment.
- This has become more critical having regard to the requirements as set out within Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and the EC Birds and habitats Regulations 2011. This requires that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) be

carried out where a plan or project is likely to have a significant impact on any European site.

- Given the current loading within the Gort WWTP, an AA assessment is the only way to determine if proposals would likely adversely impact water quality and downstream habitats and species.
- A connection of feasibility from Uisce Eireann is not appropriate in terms of adjudicating on the potential significance of impacts on downstream receptors.
- Seeking that the decision to refuse planning permission by Galway County Council is upheld.

7.0 **Assessment**

The key issues are those raised within the grounds of appeal and the third-party observation and the reasons for refusal as set out within the Planning Authority decision, and I am satisfied that no other substantive issues arise. The issue of Appropriate Assessment will also be addressed. The issues can be dealt with under the following headings:

- Principle of Development
- Access and traffic.
- Design and Layout
- Residential Amenity
- Services and Flood Risk.
- Appropriate Assessment

7.1 **Principle of Development**

- 7.1.1 The appeal site is located within the settlement boundary of Gort as set out within the Gort Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025-2031. The policies, objectives and land use

zoning objectives as set out within the 2025 LAP are applicable for the purposes of this assessment.

7.1.2 The appeal site is located on lands zoned I-industrial as per the Gort LAP 2025-2031. The stated zoning objective is 'To promote the sustainable development of industrial and industrial-related uses, including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and distribution on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road network and public transport facilities'. The description of development anticipated on such lands as envisaged within the LAP is 'To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing employment areas and to facilitate opportunities for developing new high-quality industrial developments in a good-quality physical environment.

7.1.3 As per the zoning matrix within the Gort LAP, Table 3 within Section 1.7.1 of the LAP warehousing (including wholesale) and storage depot uses are both 'permissible in principle' within Industrially zoned lands. I note that as per the planning history pertaining to the neighbouring sites (Section 4 of this report above), further north and north-west of the subject site, the Planning Authority have permitted warehouse/storage units and an internal access road to serve the warehousing units and a junction onto the R458 further north-west of the subject site. The principle of warehousing/storage units has been permitted within these industrial zoned lands in the recent past and, therefore, the current proposals should similarly be considered acceptable in principle. However, the warehouse proposals should also be subject to the usual development management criteria, and specifically DM standard 19-Industrial development as set out within the current Galway County Development Plan in terms of being acceptable in terms of design, mass and scale, the uses proposed, that a safe means of access can be provided, that landscaping and signage matters are addressed, that residential amenities of the neighbouring residential properties are not adversely impacted upon and that adequate piped water services are available to service the development proposals. These are all matters that will be assessed in detail within the assessment below. Therefore, the current proposals will be considered on their individual planning merits.

- 7.1.4 There are also a number of specific policy objectives relevant to the current proposals. Among these are GSST18 in the current Gort LAP in relation 'to promoting the sustainable development of industrial and related uses including warehousing and distribution on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road networks'. I consider that the current proposals would contribute towards the achievement of this policy objective as the proposed development would be located on suitably zoned and serviced lands where an access has already been permitted to serve the adjoining warehouse development and access is available onto a regional road, the R458 linking Gort with the primary settlement within County Clare and the access would be within the 50 km/h speed control zone of the town. The proposal would also accord with a number of policy objectives within the current Galway County Development Plan, specifically within Section 5 of the Plan in relation to Economic and Enterprise Development. These specific employment and enterprise policy objectives including EL1 in terms of delivering and enhancing key employment locations, one of which is identified as Gort, SCO1 in terms of the provision of employment investment and SCO7 in relation supporting new start-up businesses/industries. I consider that the applicants have adequately demonstrated that their proposals would assist in the realisation of the policy objectives as set out within local planning policy documents.
- 7.1.5 Gort is identified as a self-sustaining town where the growth strategy is 'To consolidate their designation as self -sustaining towns and continue to support expansion of their employment base'. Based on the extent of the supporting documentation and/or information submitted by the applicant. I consider that the warehousing/storage proposals would assist in the expansion of the local employment base and developing new high-quality industrial developments in a good-quality physical environment, as envisaged for industrial zoned lands within the current Gort Local Area Plan.
- 7.1.6 In Conclusion, I consider that the proposed warehouse/storage facilities on industrially zoned lands, adjacent to the town centre would represent an efficient and sustainable use of zoned and serviced lands. I note that the proposals are specifically permitted in principle within the zoning matrix of the current Gort Local Area Plan. I consider the proposals to be acceptable in principle and would accord

with the provisions of the current Gort Local Area Plan and the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-28 and accord with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area subject to the issues in relation to design and layout, traffic and access, residential amenity and piped water services being adequately and appropriately addressed within the assessment below

7.2 Access and Traffic

- 7.2.1 The first reason for refusal as set out by the Planning Authority specifically related to, the potential for conflicting Heavy Goods vehicle (HGV) turning movements within the internal layout and on the adjoining public road network and increasing road safety hazards for vulnerable road users in the absence of an autotrack swept path analysis assessment. The PA considered the proposals would endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard and obstruction of road users and be contrary to Policy objectives NNR2 and DM standards 28 and 33A in the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.
- 7.2.2 Access to the appeal site is from the Ennis Road (R458), a regional route linking the town of Gort in south Galway with Ennis in County Clare. The site access is located within the 50 kilometre per hour speed control zone. I note that the access from the R458 has been used in two recent proposals for warehouse developments, both permitted by the Planning Authority under planning reference numbers 23/60429 and 25/60594. These permitted developments are both located on industrially zoned lands and located immediately north-west and north of the subject lands. The width of the Ennis Road carriageway is approximately six metres at the location of the junction of the R458 with the proposed internal service road site and there are two metre footpaths and streetlighting on both sides of the R458 connecting the subject site directly to the town centre, approximately one kilometre north of the subject site.
- 7.2.3 I acknowledge the comments expressed by the Planning Authority in its first refusal reason given the limited nature of information that was presented to them as part of the planning documentation and the absence of an auto track swept path analysis and/or a Traffic and Transport Assessment. However, I note that the applicants have submitted both of these technical documents as part of their appeal submission and it is in this context that I will conduct my assessment in terms of HGV

manoeuvrability within the site and at the junction with the R458 and the potential for generating conflicting traffic movements which would potentially obstruct or conflict with vulnerable road users.

- 7.2.4 An Autotrack swept path analysis submitted by the applicants as part of their appeal submission to the Coimisiún was prepared by their Consultant Engineers. The recommendations emanating from this analysis have been incorporated within a 'Site Layout and Sections'-Drawing number 125396-002 Rev PL1 submitted as part of the applicants appeal submission. This drawing differs from the Site layout and Sections drawing as submitted to the Planning Authority for its consideration. The differences are that the kerblines along the green verges at the end of the car parking rows are now proposed to be rounded off rather than squared and the applicants state that these changes would provide for the required manoeuvrability for HGV's internally within the site and overcome the issue of multiple turning manoeuvres by HGV's within the site. I would concur with the applicants that these revisions to the internal kerlines along the green verges, albeit subtle, would result in HGV's being able to manoeuvre appropriately within the site and on the internal access roads. The swept path analysis submitted as part of the appeal documentation demonstrates that the HGV manoeuvres within the site would be possible with the alterations to the green verges as proposed. These are matters that can be specifically conditioned in the event that grant of planning permission is being recommended.
- 7.2.5 The manoeuvrability of HGV's at the junction of the internal access road serving the subject site with the R458 was also raised as an issue within the first refusal reason by the Planning Authority. The swept path analysis submitted as part of the appeal documentation, Drawing number 125396-001 Rev PL1 sets out that the HGV manoeuvres at this junction are possible without adversely impacting the safety or freeflow on the adjoining public road, the R458. The junction of the internal service road serving the permitted and proposed warehouse units is located within the 50 kilometre per hour speed control zone.
- 7.2.6 The applicants also submitted a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) report prepared by their Consultant Engineers as part of their appeal submission to the Coimisiún. The TTA provided details of trip generation, traffic forecasting, construction traffic modal split, trip assessment, road safety, details of parking, access to alternative transport modes and mitigation.

7.2.7 The applicants conducted a manual traffic turning count survey at the junction of the Burren View residential development (a development on the opposite side of the R458 from the subject site) with the permitted access service road which would serve the subject site and the permitted warehouse development, permitted by the PA immediately adjoining and north-west and north of the subject site. The TTA sets out that the majority of the service and delivery trips to the subject site would be arrive/depart outside of peak traffic times, deemed to be between 8.30 and 9.30 for the morning (am) peak and 5.00 to 6pm for the evening (pm) peak. The peak time am and pm arrivals and departures anticipated to be generated by the permitted warehouse developments as calculated using the TRICS methodology (permitted under planning reference number 23/61429) to the north-west of the subject site and planning reference number 25/60594 to the north of the subject site were also detailed. Analysis of the junction of Burren View both with and without the proposed warehouse development was conducted. The analysis concluded that the junction is predicted to operate well below the identified junction capacity of 85% in either scenario, without or with the proposed warehouse development. The TTA sets out that with the warehouse development in place, which is anticipated to commence operations in 2028, it is anticipated that after fifteen years of operation, that is by the year 2043, that the R458/Burren View junction would operate at 22% capacity during the am peak morning hour and at 14% capacity during the evening (pm) peak hour period, and therefore, well within the 85% capacity for the junction.

7.2.8 The TTA sets out that no changes are required to be carried out at the permitted junction of the internal warehouse access road with the Ennis Road and the TTA sets out that 'the design team will ensure that adequate sightlines are achieved, and that pedestrian and vulnerable road users are adequately catered for'. The internal access road to serve the warehouse development is a cul-de-sac and only has one exit onto the R458 public road. Pedestrian connectivity is provided for internally and connects into the existing public footpath on the R458. 74 car parking and 74 bicycle parking spaces are to be provided in accordance with car and bicycle parking standards within the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, There are a number of bus services available within the town of Gort, located approximately 1.1 kilometres north-west of the subject site which can be reached on by public footpath. Bus connectivity is available from the town of Gort to the cities of Galway, Limerick and Cork and local settlements of Loughrea, Scariff and Kilcolgan. I am satisfied on the basis of the TTA

survey results and observations that the proposed warehouse development would not, therefore, adversely impact the safety and free flow of traffic or vulnerable road users on the internal of the adjoining public road network. I consider that the location of the development with to the site from a permitted warehouse development entrance within the 50 kilometre per hour speed control zone and the relatively modest levels of light and heavy vehicle traffic anticipated to be generated by the proposed warehouse development in addition to the warehouse developments already permitted adjoining the proposed development, that the proposed development would not endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard or obstruction of vulnerable road users and therefore, would not be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7.2.9 Based on the information submitted and my own assessment, I am satisfied that the junction of the internal access road and the R458 has adequate capacity to cater for the level and type of traffic that would be generated by the proposed warehouse/storage development. I also note that this junction was deemed adequate by the Local Authority when a number of recent warehouse proposals were being assessed under planning reference numbers 23/61429 and 25/60594 and that no issues in relation to capacity were raised as part of the review of the Gort LAP 2025 where such matters could have been raised, if deemed necessary.

7.2.10 The first reason for refusal as set out by the Planning Authority also referenced Development Management Standard 19 Industrial development which sets out a number of items that should be submitted to the Planning Authority when submitting proposals for industrial type development. There are elements of DM standards 19 which would not be specifically applicable to the current proposals as they relate to more conventional industrial type developments and where the end users are clearly known and identified and industrial processes and noise. The requirements for warehousing proposals, as proposed in this instance (and as set out within the public notices) as per the provisions of DM Standard 19 requires that proposals set out details of plot ratio, waste storage, signage, and landscaping, which I am satisfied the applicants have addressed as part of their planning documentation.

7.2.11 The second part of the first refusal reason references increasing road safety hazards for vulnerable road users. I note that there are internal footpaths proposed to be developed within the subject site and that these would connect into the extent of the internal service road previously permitted by the Planning Authority when permitted

the adjoining warehouse developments. There is continuous footpath connectivity along both sides of the R458 towards Gort town centre and also in a southerly direction as far as the Punchbowl residential development. I acknowledge that vulnerable road users' safety is of paramount importance. However, I consider that given the swept path analysis have provided for adequate manoeuvrability for HGV movements within the internal road network and at the junction with the R458 and that internal footpath connectivity is provided to link into the existing public footpath network at the R458 junction that vulnerable road users safety is optimised within the revised proposals and is considered acceptable.

7.2.12 In relation to being contrary to Policy Objective NNR2, where the policy seeks to safeguard the carrying capacity of the regional and local road network. I consider that the proposals would use an existing permitted access to serve neighbouring permitted warehouse developments and the location of the access within the 50 kilometre per hour speed control zone and having regard to the results presented within the Swept path analysis and the Traffic and Transport assessment submitted, that the proposals will not adversely impact the carrying capacity of the R458 in this instance. DM standard 28 references sight distance standards. The access point is located within the 50-kilometre speed control zone and where warehouse development proposals have been permitted by the PA in recent years. The applicants submitted a TTA in accordance with the requirements of DM Standard 33a.

7.2.13 In Conclusion, based on the supporting planning documentation as submitted by the applicants as part of their appeal submission to the Coimisiún, specifically the autotrack swept path analysis drawings and the traffic and transport assessment report where specific details in relation to traffic movements to and from the site on a daily/weekly basis and the manoeuvrability of HGV;s internally within the site and at the junction of the internal access road with the R458, I consider that the warehouse/storage development would not interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic, would not endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard or obstruction of vulnerable road users and would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area..

7.3 Design and Layout

7.3.1 As per the planning documentation submitted to the Planning Authority the three proposed warehouse units have a combined floor area of 6,786 square metres (sq.

m). Building A is the largest and has a stated floor area of 2,789 sq. m, and a stated parapet height of 12.3 metres, Building B has a stated floor area of 1,714 sq. m and a stated parapet height of 12.3 metres and Building C has a stated floor area of 2,283 sq. m and a stated parapet height of 12.3 metres.

7.3.2 The applicants submitted an amended Site layout Plan as part of their appeal submission seeking to address some of the issues raised by the third-party observers. The rear building line of Building C would be moved 4 metres in a northerly direction within the subject site to increase the average separation distance between the rear building line of Building C from the rear building line of residential properties within the Punchbowl to approximately 23.95 metres. The applicants are also proposing to reduce the parapet height of warehouse buildings B and C from 12.3 metres to 11 metres, a reduction of 1.3 metre from that originally proposed.

7.3.3 I note the design, layout, mass and scale of the warehouse development proposals permitted immediately adjoining the subject site to the north-west and north of the subject site. I consider that the design, mass, scale and height of the current proposals to be acceptable in this instance, especially noting the plot ratio proposed which is well within the standards permissible within the current Galway Development Plan and having regard to the scale, height and massing of the permitted adjoining warehouse developments which were considered acceptable by the Planning Authority. Therefore, in the interest of consistency of approach, I consider that the design and layout as presented (particularly within the revised proposals) submitted as part of the applicants appeal submission whereby the amended layout and design has been reconsidered in the light of observations made by the observers and having regard to the content of the second refusal reason as set out within the PA decision. However, the design and layout will have also to be considered in terms of potential to impact the residential amenities of existing and future residential properties located west and south of the subject site. These matters will be specifically addressed in the Section 7.4 of this assessment below.

7.3.4 in the Planning Authority in the final part of the second refusal reason reference that the proposals would establish an undesirable precedent and constitute overdevelopment of the site. The site area is stated as being 1.668 hectares and the stated floor area of the three warehouse units is stated to comprise 7.032 sq. metres, which results in a plot ratio of 0.42. This is considerably below the maximum plot

ration for industrial buildings as set out within DM 19 within the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-28 which provides for a plot ratio of up to 1.2 for industrial proposals. Therefore, I do not consider that the current proposals on industrial zine lands would establish an undesirable precedent or represent an overdevelopment of suitably zoned and serviced lands.

7.4 Residential amenity

7.4.1 The second reason for refusal as set out within the Planning Authority decision references the potential of Warehouse Blocks B and C to adversely impact the residential amenities of neighbouring residents adjoining the subject site. The observers have also raised the issue of residential amenity with regard to the original proposals as submitted to the Planning authority and also in relation to the amended layout as submitted to the Coimisiún as part of their appeal submission.

7.4.2 There are a number of issues at stake here when considering residential amenity. The applicants correctly stated that the subject lands are zoned for industrial purposes and, therefore, the principle of the warehouse development would be acceptable. However, that is subject to a suitable design and layout being proposed, that adequate boundary treatment and landscaping proposals are presented and that adequate separation distances are proposed in terms of the specific uses proposed within the industrial zoned lands.

7.4.3 The applicants have included within their Site layout Plan as submitted to the Coimisiún on the 5th day of November 2025 that they would plant semi-mature native trees including a mixture of Whitebeam, Beech and Birch along the western and southern site boundaries. These boundaries adjoin the existing adjoining residential developments. I consider that in the event that planning permission is being recommended, that a condition should be included providing that a detailed landscaping plan for the site should be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

7.4.4 In terms of separation distances the original proposals as submitted by the applicants to the PA set out that separation distances between the rear building line of Block C and the average location of the rear building line of dwellings within the Punchbowl residential development would be 19.95 metres and an average separation distance of 22.5 metres from the rear building line of warehouse building

B. The applicants submitted an amended Site layout Plan as part of their appeal submission seeking to address some of the issues raised by the third-party observers. The revised layout would illustrate the rear building line of Building C being moved 4 metres in a northerly direction within the subject site to increase the average separation distance between the rear building line of Building C from the rear building line of residential properties within the Punchbowl to approximately 23.95 metres. The applicants are also proposing to reduce the parapet height of warehouse buildings B and C from 12.3 metres to 11 metres, a reduction of 1.3 metres from that originally proposed. I consider that the revised proposals are acceptable and note that they would provide greater separation distances between the proposed development and the observers' residential property. I consider that the revised separation distances for Building C, the reduced parapet heights for Buildings B and C in addition to the semi-mature landscaping proposals proposed along the southern and western site boundaries will adequately protect the residential amenities of the neighbouring residents.

7.4.5 Site levels within the subject site are elevated by between 2.5 and 5.5 metres above the levels of the R458 and the finished floor levels would be approximately 1.4 metres above those of the adjoining Punchbowl residential development and between 1.5 and 3.5 metres above the finished floor levels of the residential development currently under construction, immediately west of the subject site. Notwithstanding the differential in finished floor levels, between the proposed warehouse buildings and the existing adjoining residential developments, I am satisfied that given the separation distances proposed between the buildings and with the introduction of the semi-mature landscaping proposals, that the and the relatively low level of the proposed buildings (as proposed within the drawings submitted as part of the appeal submission received from the applicants) that the proposals would not adversely impact the visual or residential amenity of neighbouring residents.

7.4.6 The applicants submitted a shadow analysis report as part of their planning documentation. The analysis illustrates two shadow scenarios, the first relates to the shadows that are presently cast by/within the greenfield site, and the second scenario relates to the shadows that would be cast by the proposed warehouse development when, and if constructed. The shadows generated on site at present

are those generated by the boundary treatments, particularly along the southern and eastern site boundaries. I note that the shadow analysis illustrates that post construction of the warehouse development, the shadows that would be generated by the development to properties adjoining the site to the south and west are largely the same as those generated by the site in its current greenfield status. Given the east-west axis of the site, the majority of the shadows would be contained within the subject site and would not impact adversely upon adjacent residential properties. Therefore, I am satisfied that overshadowing from the proposed warehouse units would not adversely impact neighbouring residential amenities to such an extent that a refusal of planning permission should be recommended.

7.4.7 I note the comments of the observers in relation to potential future industrial end users. However, as per the public notices submitted, the current proposal relates to warehouse/storage proposals and not industrial uses where processes could potentially adversely impact neighbouring amenities. I, therefore, consider that this matter can be addressed by means of an appropriate planning condition, in the event that a grant of planning permission is being recommended.

7.4.8 In conclusion, on balance I acknowledge the issues raised by the neighbouring residents within their observation, however I consider that the applicants have taken into consideration the issues raised and modified their proposals accordingly, whereby increased separation distances between rear building lines are proposed, reduced parapet heights are also proposed in addition to the landscaping proposal along the southern and western site boundaries, those nearest the existing residential properties, that I am satisfied that the proposed warehouse/storage uses would not adversely impact the neighbouring residential amenities to such an extent as to recommend a refusal of planning permission.

7.5 Services and Flood Risk

7.5.1 The applicants are proposing to construct three warehousing units within the subject site. The applicants within their planning application form state that the development would benefit from connections to the public watermains, the public foul sewer and that surface water on site would be managed through soakpits. The observers raised the issue of the adequacy of the capacity within the Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and the capacity of the Gort river to treat the outfall from the WWTP. I

note that a letter of confirmation feasibility from Uisce Eireann (UE) (dated 19th day of May 2025) has been submitted by the applicants as part of their planning documentation and this confirms that watermain and wastewater connections are both feasible without infrastructure upgrades being required to be carried out. UE are the competent authority in this regard and therefore, I consider that the applicants have demonstrated that the proposed development can be catered for within the existing public piped water services.

7.5.2 As per the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-31, the appeal site is located within Flood Zone C, where a low probability of flooding exists. I refer to the Office of Public Works (OPW) website floodinfo.ie, where the appeal site is not identified as being within an area of flood risk and neither is there a history of flood events on site nor within the vicinity of the appeal site.

7.5.3 Therefore, I am of the opinion that with the implementation of SuDs measures including the use of soakpits on site, I consider that the development would not increase the risk of flooding on site or on adjacent lands or properties. The development proposals are, therefore, considered suitable in this instance.

8.0 **Appropriate Assessment**

Background to Application

8.1 I have considered the development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is located approximately 2.1 kilometres south-east of the Coole Garryland SAC (Site Code 000252) and the Coole Garryland SPA (Site Code 004107) and 2.2 kilometres north-west of the Lough Cutra SPA (Site Code 004056) and the Lough Cutra SAC (Site Code 000299). The development description was set out within Section 2 of the report above. The observer referenced the potential for adverse impacts arising from wastewater outfall from the Gort WWTP. I refer to the correspondence from UE as referenced in Section 7.5 of this report above. The applicants submitted an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report as part of their planning documentation and it concluded that 'no significant effects are expected on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the surrounding Natura 2000 sites,

as a result of the proposed development in question., alone or in-combination with other plans or projects in the area, and , therefore, a Natura Impact Statement is not required in this case’.

- 8.2 The Planning Authority conducted an AA screening exercise and identified the nearest European sites to the appeal site as being the Lough Cutra SAC and SPA and the Coole Garryland SAC and SPA all being within a 2.5-kilometre radius of the subject site. The Consultant Ecologist stated that the appeal site is not hydrologically connected to any of these or any other European sites. There are no drainage ditches located within the subject site or along its boundaries. The nearest watercourse is the River Cannahowna, located approximately 570 metres west of the appeal site, however, I am not aware of any surface hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this watercourse.
- 8.3 Six European sites were identified within a 4.5-kilometre radius of the appeal site. Five of these sites can be screened out due to the absence of hydrological or ecological pathways from the appeal site to these European sites and the separation distance to these particular European sites. However, one site was considered in greater detail within the screening report, namely The Coole Garryland SAC would also not be considered to be either directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed development, given the absence of hydrological connectivity between the two. The Leeser Horseshoe Bat (LHB) is identified as a qualifying interest species associated with the Coole Garryland SAC. The foraging range of the LHB from this SAC is approximately 1.9 kilometres and the appeal site falls outside of this foraging range. Therefore, no predicted impact upon the LHB species is predicted. The applicants conducted a separate bat survey and no records of the LHB passing through the site were recorded within the survey. There is a built-up environment between the Coole Garryland SAC and the appeal site which would render the appeal site unattractive to the LHB species. Therefore, no impacts upon the LHB species during the construction or operational phase of the warehouse development are predicted.
- 8.4 The Coole Garryland SAC is located approximately 2 kilometres removed and north-west of the appeal site. I am satisfied that once the warehouse facility operates in accordance with its waste management requirements and that dust and noise are

maintained in accordance with best practice standards and given that the site is connected to the public piped water services that no adverse impacts on water quality, or the qualifying interests or conservation objective of this particular European site or any other European site would arise.

8.5 I am satisfied that with the implementation of the standard control construction measures including those of surface water management, referenced within Section 7.5 of my report above will not result in the warehousing development adversely impacting surface water quality in the Cannahowna watercourse or groundwater beneath the subject site. This Cannahowna river is hydrologically connected to the Gort River further upstream of the subject site, albeit approximately half a kilometre downstream of the Cannahowna watercourse. I consider that even in the unlikely event that the standard control measures should fail, this indirect hydrological link represents a weak ecological connection, given the separation distance to the nearest European sites, in terms of the Coole Garryland and Lough Cutra Natura 2000 sites. As such any pollutants from the site that should enter groundwater during the construction stage, via spillages onto the overlying soils, or via spillages into the surrounding drains, will be subject to dilution and dispersion within the groundwater body, rendering any significant impacts on water quality within the nearest Natura 2000 sites unlikely. This conclusion is supported within the Planning Authority's AA screening Report, which set out the following 'that the proposed development, by itself or in-combination with other development in the vicinity would not have a likely significant effect on European sites, their qualifying interests or conservation objectives (directly, indirectly or in-combination). Therefore, no further assessment is required.'

8.6 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 these or any other European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The modest scale of the development, which relates to warehouse development on zoned, serviced lands,
- The separation distance from the nearest European sites and the absence of hydrological or ecological connectivity to any Natura 2000 site.

- The AA screening exercise conducted by the Planning Authority which concluded that 'that the proposed development, by itself or in-combination with other development in the vicinity would not have a likely significant effect on European sites, their qualifying interests or conservation objectives (directly, indirectly or in-combination). Therefore, no further assessment is required'.
- The AA screening exercise conducted by the applicants which concluded that ' no significant effects are expected on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the surrounding Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed development in question ,alone or in-combination with other plans and projects in the area and, therefore, a Natura Impact statement is not required in this case'..

8.7 I conclude, that on the basis of objective information, the proposed development would not have a 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 (Stage 2) under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) is not required. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was also submitted as part of the planning documentation and concluded that no significant effects are likely to arise as a result of the proposed development. I have also conducted my own Appropriate Assessment screening exercise and completed an examination and identification of any potential significant effects of the development, alone, or in combination with other plans or projects on European sites. The screening is supported by a review of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) datasets, Ordnance survey mapping and aerial photography.

9.0 Recommendation

I recommend that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the location of the site on industrially zoned lands within a serviced urban area and the demonstrated compliance with the economic policies and objectives of the current Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 specifically GSST18 which seeks to promote the sustainable development of industrial use, including

warehousing and distribution uses, and policies and objectives within the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, specifically EL1 in relation to key employment locations and SCO7 in relation to supporting new start up businesses, to the scale, layout and design of the proposals, and to the pattern of permitted warehouse development in the area, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not result in the creation of a traffic hazard by reason of inadequate manoeuvrability for Heavy goods vehicles, would not impact upon vulnerable road users nor the road junction of the R458 with the internal access road nor adversely impact the residential amenities of neighbouring residential properties in the vicinity of the subject site. The development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

11.0 Conditions

- 1 The development shall be constructed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application on the 19th day of August 2025 as submitted to the Planning Authority and as per the amended details and drawings submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 5th day of November 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 The Site Layout and elevation plans including drawing numbers 24211-3002,3007, 3008 and 3009 as submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 5th day of November shall be permitted on foot of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of visual and residential amenity.

- 3 (a) All surface water generated within the site boundaries shall be collected and disposed of within the curtilage of the site. No surface water from roof, paved areas or otherwise shall discharge onto the public road or adjoining properties.
- (b) Water supply and drainage arrangements, including attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

Reason: In the interest of proper planning and sustainable development.

- 4 Details of external signage shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason; In the interest of architectural heritage.

- 5 The development hereby permitted shall be limited to warehouse and storage uses as stated within the public notices submitted as part of the planning documentation. of the planning application'. Details of the final end user(s) of the proposed warehouse/storage units shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to any use commencing with the warehouse/storage buildings.

Reason; In the interest of proper planning and sustainable development.

- 6 During the operational phase of the development, the noise level shall not exceed (a) 55 dB (A) rated sound level between the hours of 0700 and 2300 and (b) 45 dB(A) 15 min and 60 dB LAfmax 15 min at all other times. Procedures for the purpose of determining compliance with tis limit shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of property in the vicinity of the site.

- 7 A plan containing details for the management of waste (and, in particular, recyclable materials) within the development, including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of the waste and, in particular, recyclable materials shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing

with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Thereafter, the agreed waste facilities shall be maintained, and waste shall be managed in accordance with the agreed plan.

Reason: To provide for the appropriate management of waste and, in particular recyclable materials, in the interest of protecting the environment and the amenities of properties

8 The site shall be landscaped in accordance with a comprehensive scheme of landscaping, details of which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Semi-mature native trees shall be planted along the southern and western site boundaries. This scheme shall include the following:

- (a) A plan to scale of not less than 1:500 showing –
 - (i) Existing trees, hedgerows and walls, specifying which are proposed for retention as features of the site landscaping
 - (ii) The measures to be put in place for the protection of these landscape features during the construction period
 - (iii) The species, variety, number, size and locations of all proposed trees and shrubs which shall comprise predominantly native species such as mountain ash, birch, willow, sycamore, pine, oak, hawthorn, holly, hazel, beech or alder] [which shall not include prunus species.
 - (iv) Details of screen planting which shall not include cupressocyparis x leylandii
 - (v) Details of roadside/street planting which shall not include prunus species
 - (vi) Hard landscaping works, specifying surfacing materials, furniture play equipment and finished levels.
- (b) Specifications for mounding, levelling, cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment
- (c) The landscaping works shall be carried out within the first planting season following substantial completion of external construction works.

All planting shall be adequately protected from damage until established. Any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the development or until the development is taken in charge by the local authority, whichever is the sooner, shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of residential and visual amenity.

- 9 Final details of the setbacks including details of surfacing, and construction of footpaths and set back of the roadside boundary and street lighting along the internal industrial estate road, access and traffic arrangements as submitted to the Coimisiún on the 5th day of November 2025 shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of public safety and sustainable transportation.

- 10 Prior to the commencement of development details of the following shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority:
- Precise details of the materials to be used within the bicycle parking shelters, including provision of adequate illumination.

Reason: In the interest of public safety and sustainable transportation.

- 11 The site access shall be as set out within Drawing number 24211-3002, as submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 5th day of November shall be permitted on foot of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of traffic and pedestrian safety.

12 A minimum of 25% of the proposed car parking spaces shall be provided with electrical connection points, to allow for functional electric vehicle charging. The remaining car parking spaces shall be fitted with ducting for electric connection points to allow for future fitout of charging points. Details of how it is proposed to comply with these requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable transportation.

13 Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0700 and 1900 from Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0800 and 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

14 The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Waste Management Plan and a Construction and Environmental Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, final details of which shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, management of construction waste and materials on site, environmental control measures, including noise, dust and vibration management measures, working hours, construction traffic and parking, measures for managing construction sediment run-off and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste.

Reason: In the interests of public safety and residential amenity.

15 The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development

Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer, or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord 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.

Fergal Ó Bric

Planning Inspectorate

27th day of February 2026

Appendix 1 - Form 1
EIA Pre-Screening

An Bord Pleanála Case Reference	PL-500228-GY-25		
Proposed Development Summary	Permission for the construction of three warehouse/storage units, use of a permitted entrance and access road, connection to the public piped wate services, parking, landscaping and on-site surface water management proposals and associated site works.		
Development Address	Ennis Road, Gort, Co. Galway		
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)	Yes	x	
	No		
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?			
Yes	Tick/or leave blank		
No	Tick or leave blank	Warehouse development of this scale does not fall within a class of development as per the Planning and Development Regulations.	x
3. Does the proposed development equal or exceed any relevant THRESHOLD set out in the relevant Class?			
Yes	Tick/or leave blank		

No	Tick/or leave blank		X
4. Is the proposed development below the relevant threshold for the Class of development [sub-threshold development]?			
Yes	Tick/or leave blank	Proposals relate to the development of three warehouse/storage units a single residential unit, domestic garage and installation of a wastewater treatment system	X

5. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?			
No	Tick/or leave blank		X
Yes			

Inspector: _____

Date: _____