



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report PL-500260-MH-25

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<b>Development</b>	Repositioning, recessing and widening of the existing vehicular entrance to the property along with all site works. Significant further information/ revised plans submitted on this application.
<b>Location</b>	Balgree, Carnaross, Co. Meath A82 FD39
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Meath County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	2560542
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	Lesley Walsh Gel and Selim Gel
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Grant with conditions
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	First Party v. Condition
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	Lesley Walsh Gel and Selim Gel
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	13 January 2026

**Inspector**

**Cáit Ryan**

## 1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site is located at Balgree, Carnaross, Co. Meath, approx. 3.5km from Carnaross and 8km from Kells, both of which are located to south east. The site is located on L-6829 and was lightly trafficked at time of site visit. It is a rural area, characterised by agriculture and some dispersed one-off housing. There is a quarry entrance approx. 260m to west, and a dwelling house approx. 120m to east. The N3 is approx. 0.9km to the east, as the crow flies.
- 1.2. There is an existing single-storey unoccupied dwelling house on site, whereby the northern gable faces the public road. The site is of rectangular shape, and the roadside frontage extends to approx. 23m.
- 1.3. The site is bounded –
  - to the west by a separate property which contains storage shed, and is of commercial/agricultural appearance along its roadside frontage, due to palisade fencing backplanted with evergreen hedge. It is served by a vehicular entrance at its western end. The most northerly part of this adjoining site's eastern boundary also comprises palisade fencing, near the public road.
  - to the east and south (rear) by a field.
- 1.4. The road slopes gradually from east to west along the roadside frontage of the site, such that the ground levels within the site are higher than the adjoining public road, along much of the western extent of road frontage. Save for the difference in ground levels along the roadside frontage, the site is relatively flat.
- 1.5. There is an existing vehicular entrance at the eastern side of the road frontage. This entrance comprises agricultural gates, located close to road edge. There is no splayed entrance nor wing walls at this entrance. The existing roadside boundary comprises a timber post and wire fence. The road is approx. 4.5m wide at this location, as noted on site visit. There are no road markings along this stretch of road.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Permission is sought for repositioning, recessing and widening of the existing

vehicular entrance and all site works.

- 2.2. The plans and particulars on file show that it is proposed to close up the existing vehicular entrance, located at the eastern end of roadside frontage. The proposed vehicular entrance shown on the application originally lodged is directly adjacent to the western site boundary.
- 2.3. The entrance layout comprises of 1.35m high piers at the front (north) of the entrance, with piers and entrance gates of approx. 1.65m height. Finish is shown as stone entrance walls.
- 2.4. Significant FI received includes a slight enlargement of the red line boundary of the subject site. A letter of consent from the adjoining property owner was also submitted, consenting to the applicant providing 90m unobstructed sightlines which will cross a small patch of the north east corner of their site.

The location of the proposed vehicular entrance is shown to be repositioned slightly such that it is further offset from the western site boundary in the SFI response.

## 3.0 Planning Authority Decision

### 3.1. Decision

Following a request for Further Information, the planning authority granted planning permission subject to 2no. conditions. Condition 2 is as follows:

*The applicant shall provide and maintain unobstructed sightlines of 90 metres to the nearside edge of the road from a setback of 2.4 metres, in accordance with TII document DN-GEO-03060, from the entrance. The nearside road edge shall be visible over the entire sight distance.*

*The entrance layout shall comply with the Meath Rural Design Guide - the face of the entrance piers shall be at least 3 metres from the edge of the road and the entrance gate shall be recessed at least 7 metres from the edge of the road.*

*Road drainage shall be provided in compliance with the Department of Transport "Guidelines for Road Drainage - 2nd Edition, 2022". Any drainage pipe installed shall be at least 300mm in diameter and in any case be no less than the nearest*

*downstream pipe diameter.*

*Reason: In the interest of traffic safety and orderly development.*

### **3.2. Planning Authority Reports**

#### **3.2.1. Planning Reports (10 July 2025 and 07 October 2025)**

Basis for planning authority decision –

First Assistant Planner's Report notes content of Transportation Department report and recommends FI.

Second Assistant Planner's Report notes content of Transportation Department report and recommends refusal on grounds of traffic hazard.

Report includes Senior Executive Planner (SEP) recommendation to grant, noting proposal is to improve an existing entrance which serves a habitable house, low traffic volumes on the local road, and that sightlines can be achieved which represent an improvement on the existing access.

#### **3.2.2. Other Technical Reports**

Transportation Department: (27 June 2025 and 07 October 2025)

First Report recommends FI.

Second Report recommends refusal on grounds that it has not been demonstrated that 90m unobstructed sightlines to nearside edge of public road, in accordance with DN-GEO-03060, can be provided, and proposed development would result in traffic hazard.

### **3.3. Prescribed Bodies**

None

### **3.4. Observations to the Planning Authority**

None

## 4.0 Planning History

### Subject site

**P.A. Ref. 01/575:** Permission granted to convert bedroom to shower room, installation of septic tank and percolation area.

### Adjoining site

As shown on the lodged application and as viewed on planning authority's online planning search ([www.meathcoco.ie](http://www.meathcoco.ie)), the adjoining site to the west includes the following planning history,:

**P.A. Ref. KA110837:** Permission granted in 2012 to retain vehicular entrance and permission to construct associated piers and wing walls.

**P.A. Ref. KA140171:** Permission granted in 2014 to retain 2no. domestic sheds and canopy for storage.

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Development Plan

#### Chapter 11 – Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning

##### Objectives

The site is located with RA Rural Area, where it is an objective to protect and promote development of agriculture, forestry and sustainable rural-related enterprise, community facilities, biodiversity, rural landscape, and built and cultural heritage.

The primary objective is to protect and promote the value and future sustainability of rural areas. Agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural related resource enterprises will be employed for the benefit of the local and wider population. A balanced approach involving the protection and promotion of rural biodiversity, promotion of the integrity of the landscape, and enhancement of the built and cultural heritage will be adopted.

Residential (subject to compliance with Rural Settlement Strategy) is a permitted use

#### Chapter 9 – Rural Development Strategy

Policy RD POL 30: Promote viable re-use of vernacular dwellings without losing their character and support applications for sensitive restoration of disused vernacular or traditional dwellings.

Policy RD POL 32: Oppose demolition and replacement of traditional or vernacular rural houses in order to protect varied housing stock in rural areas and preserve rural built heritage

Policy RD POL 41: Avoid removal of existing roadside boundaries where they are more than 3 m from road edge (edge of carriageway), except to the extent that this is needed for a new entrance, and required for traffic safety reasons. (Please refer to policies contained in Section 8.9.7 Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees in this regard).

Policy RD POL 43: Ensure that required standards for sight distances and stopping sight distances are in compliance with current road standards as outlined in NRA document Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) specifically Section TD 41-42/09 when assessing planning applications for individual houses in the countryside

#### Appendix 13 - Meath Rural Design Guide

This document outlines (at Section 2.1 Minimum Criteria) that sight distances and stopping sight distances should be in compliance with current road geometry standards as outlined in the NRA document Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), specifically Sections TD 41/95 and TD 9/07.

It states (at Section 3.3 Entrances and Driveways) to -

- Allow for a comfortable width. 3m approx. should be sufficient.
- Allow safe depth for car to pull in fully and not overhang edge of road, approx. 4.8m-5m
- The width of the opening at road edge to be kept to a minimum allowing for clear sightlines, approx. 8m at fence line.

#### Appendix 9 – National Monuments in State Care & Register of Historic Monuments

There are no entries for Balgree townland in Appendix 9.

#### Development Plan Mapping

- The site is not within any settlement boundary.
- The site is located within a Low Development Pressure Area
- There are no protected structures on or in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- The site is not located within Flood Zone A or B, and as such is within Flood Zone C.

## 5.2. National Monuments Service

The National Monuments Service (NMS) website [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) (accessed on 03/02/2026) does not show any recorded monuments on or in the vicinity of the subject site. The nearest are approx. 500m to south east (ME010-031----: Enclosure: BALGREE) and 650m to south west (ME010-030----: Ringfort - rath: BALGREE).

## 5.3. National Planning Framework

The NPF is a high level strategic plan to shape the future growth and development of the country to 2040. It is focused on delivering 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), which include (3) Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities.

The NPF First Revision (April 2025) includes National Policy Objective (NPO) 42: To target the delivery of housing to accommodate approx. 50,000 additional homes per annum to 2040.

Priorities and Principles for housing sector to 2040 include Building Resilience – Re-use, adaptability and accessibility in housing stock, ensuring integration to deliver vibrant sustainable communities.

## 5.4. Natural Heritage Designations

The site is not located within or adjacent to a European site. The nearest European sites are (approx.) -

- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299): 520m to north
- River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232): 520m to north

- Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC (00006): 2.7km to north east

The site is not located within or adjacent to any Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) or proposed NHAs. The nearest pNHAs are (approx.) -

- Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) pNHA: 2.7km to north east
- Lough Ramor pNHA: 5km to north west

## 5.5. EIA Screening

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

## 6.0 The Appeal

### 6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The first party's grounds of appeal are:

- To appeal part of Condition 2 of the decision outlined bold  
'.....The entrance layout shall comply with the Meath Rural Design Guide – the face of the entrance piers shall be at least 3 metres from the edge of the road and **the entrance gate shall be recessed at least 7 metres from the edge of the road.**
- Applicant purchased a dilapidated house to renovate it, to make it habitable
- Existing vehicular entrance has no sightlines
- Purpose of application is to reposition and widen the entrance to provide safe access to house, and to better utilise the site to improve access from the driveway to the house.
- Notes diagram 3.3 Entrances and Driveways of Meath Rural Design Guide.

Dimension \*\* requests 'a safe depth for the car to pull in fully and not overhang the edge of the road, approx. 4.8m to 5m'.

- The condition that the entrance gate be recessed 7m from the public highway has made the development unviable, as the gates would be set back past the line of the existing house.
- Request the proposed development be permitted to recess the proposed entrance gate 5m from the edge of road due to the position of existing house

## 6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

The planning authority requests An Coimisiún Pleanála to uphold its decision to grant permission subject to any revisions it deems necessary.

## 6.3. **Observations**

None

## 7.0 **Assessment**

### 7.1. **Introduction**

- 7.1.1. The proposed development consists of repositioning, recessing and widening of the existing vehicular entrance and all site works at the site of an unoccupied dwelling house at Balgree, Carnaross, which is currently boarded up. It is proposed to close up the existing vehicular entrance, located at the eastern end of roadside frontage. A new vehicular entrance is proposed near the western site boundary. The location of the proposed entrance was modified slightly in the FI response, whereby it was slightly offset from the western site boundary. The planning authority decision is to grant permission subject to 2no. conditions. Internal reports on file had recommended refusal on grounds of traffic hazard. The planning authority decision to grant is outlined to be based on the proposal is to improve an existing entrance serving a habitable house, the nature of the adjoining local road which likely experiences low traffic volumes and the fact that the applicants can occupy the dwelling and use the existing entrance. It notes sightlines are drawn incorrectly, and that sightlines can be achieved which will represent an improvement of the existing

access, and bringing a vacant dwelling back into occupied use accords with national, regional and local housing and planning policy.

7.1.2. Having inspected the documentation on file and the appeal site, I am of the opinion that 90m sightlines to nearside of the public road would not be achievable from the proposed entrance. Condition 2 requires *inter alia*

- the provision and maintenance of unobstructed 90m sightlines to nearside edge of road from a 2.4m setback in accordance with TII document DN-GEO-03060;
- the entrance to comply with Meath Rural Design Guide, including gate to be recessed at least 7m from road edge.

7.1.3. While the grounds of appeal state that the only part of Condition 2 which is subject of this appeal relate to the 7m entrance gate recess requirement, I am not satisfied having regard to the decision of the planning authority and the nature of other parts of Condition 2 attached to the grant of permission that it would be appropriate for the Commission to confine its assessment to that part of Condition 2 relating to the 7m entrance gate recess only. In particular, I consider that the matter of sightlines as outlined in the first part of Condition 2 would be required to be addressed.

7.1.4. For clarity, I outline below those parts of Condition 2 which I propose to assess:

***The applicant shall provide and maintain unobstructed sightlines of 90 metres to the nearside edge of the road from a setback of 2.4 metres, in accordance with TII document DN-GEO-03060, from the entrance. The nearside road edge shall be visible over the entire sight distance.***

***The entrance layout shall comply with the Meath Rural Design Guide - ..... the entrance gate shall be recessed at least 7 metres from the edge of the road.***

7.1.5. For completeness, having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, I note that the requirements of Condition 2 largely encompass the key planning issues which arise in the proposed development.

7.1.6. Accordingly, I would not consider it appropriate in this instance to use the provisions set out under Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and I therefore recommend that the Commission considers the merits of this current application *de novo*.

7.1.7. I consider that the substantive planning issues arising from the proposed development are: -

- Principle of Development
- Proposed Vehicular Entrance and Condition 2

I consider that these headings cover the points made by the applicant in the appeal submission, the planning authority's response to the appeal submission and also my *de novo* consideration of the current application.

## 7.2. Principle of Development

7.2.1. The proposed development comprises the closing up of an existing vehicular entrance at the eastern end of the site's roadside frontage and the provision of a new entrance at the western end. The existing house on site is located approx. 5m from the roadside boundary at its nearest point. It is an older single-storey dwelling of modest size and of traditional appearance. This house is currently boarded up, and the applicant has outlined in the appeal submission an intention to renovate it. With regard to the proposal to provide for a new vehicular entrance to replace that existing, and having regard to the existing residential unit on site, albeit one that is currently boarded up, I am satisfied that the proposed development would be acceptable in principle in this regard.

7.2.2. In addition, while I note that the nature and scale of the development subject of the appeal does not include any works relating to the existing dwelling house, I consider that the proposed development would not be in conflict with Development Plan Policies RD POL 30 and RD POL 32.

7.2.3. Accordingly, I consider that the proposed development would be acceptable in principle.

## 7.3. Proposed Vehicular Entrance and Condition 2

### Discrepancies on drawings

7.3.1. There appears to be some discrepancies on the lodged drawings.

7.3.2. The width of the adjoining public road is not annotated. SFI drawing titled Proposed Plan (25420-PL(RFI)-2.02; dated July 2025) shows a number of annotated

dimensions. I note that these dimensions measure at the 1:200 scale shown. However, at this scale, the adjoining public road measures approx. 8m wide. On site visit, I noted that this road was substantially less than this, at approx. 4.5m wide.

- 7.3.3. With regard to the exact location of the road edge, the FI Proposed Plan (Drawing No. 25420-PL(RFI)-2.02) shows 'Edge of carriageway; sightlines clear at >2.4m set back from edge of carriageway' to relate to a point at the northern site boundary. In contrast, the 2.4m distance is measured on this drawing from a point approx. 1.2m further north of the northern site boundary. The piers' and vehicular entrance's 3m and 5m distances respectively are shown measured from this more northerly point. While there is some ambiguity as to the exact location of 'edge of road' on this drawing, the assessment of sightlines and other detailing outlined below is noted to be based on the 'outer', more northerly road edge (i.e., that which is approx. 1.2m north of site boundary).
- 7.3.4. The drawings on file do not sufficiently show existing topographical features, in particular the difference in ground levels between the western part of roadside frontage and the adjoining public road are not shown. For example, FI drawing titled Front (North) Elevation/Context Elevation Existing & Proposed (Drawing No. 25420-PL(RFI)-3.01) shows a very limited slope along the roadside frontage of the subject site and adjoining property to the west, such as to suggest the roadside frontage at this location is relatively flat. While the slope on the roadway is gradual at this location, I note however that no changes in level are annotated on this contextual elevation.
- 7.3.5. In this regard I have noted that proposed site plans both lodged with the application and at FI stage both show a level L93.17 to east of the site, on the public road. The most northerly level shown within the site is L94.17. While this 1m difference is useful to a degree to gauge differing levels, it does not show the existing ground level at the public road forward of the proposed vehicular entrance.

#### Proposed vehicular entrance and Condition 2

- 7.3.6. The grounds of appeal outline that the applicant appeals that part of Condition 2 which requires the entrance gate to be recessed at least 7m from the edge of the road. However, I consider that the separate part of Condition 2 requiring that 90m unobstructed sightlines shall be provided to the nearside of the road edge from a

2.4m setback in accordance with TII document DN-GEO-03060, would also be required to be addressed.

*Sightlines:*

- 7.3.7. The subject site is currently served by an existing vehicular entrance, located near the eastern end of roadside frontage. This entrance is shown to be marginally set back from road edge. The existing site plan indicates that sight distances at this entrance are seriously deficient. I consider that the proposal to relocate the existing entrance which serves an existing house plot to be acceptable in principle.
- 7.3.8. The first Transportation Dept. report states the site is inside the 60kph speed limits, sightlines are drawn incorrectly, and recommends FI be sought for 90m unobstructed sightlines to the nearside edge of the road from a 2.4m setback in accordance with TII document DN-GEO-03060, for an entrance layout in accordance with Meath Rural Design Guide, and for entrance gate to be recessed 7m and face of entrance piers 3m from road edge. The second Transportation Dept. report recommends refusal on grounds that unobstructed 90m sightlines to nearside edge of public road have not been demonstrated and proposal would result in traffic hazard.
- 7.3.9. The proposed site plan lodged with the application shows the proposed vehicular entrance directly adjacent to the western site boundary, that the 90m sightline to the west extends to the opposite (northern) side of the road, and the 90m sightline to the east extends to just within the approx. southern side of road. In terms of the plans and particulars lodged at Significant FI stage, I note that the main changes to the vehicular entrance and roadside boundary from that originally proposed may be summarised as –
- The location of the proposed entrance is slightly repositioned eastward.
  - The FI proposed site plan shows the 90m sightlines to the west and east to extend approximately to the centreline of the public road. The red line site boundary is extended to the west, to include part of the adjoining property in order to achieve sightlines.
  - A letter from the adjoining property owner is included, consenting to the applicant providing 90m unobstructed sightlines which will cross a small amount of the north east corner of their site.

- 7.3.10. I note that the FI cover letter outlines that the attached drawings demonstrate unobstructed sightlines of 90 metres to the nearside edge of the road from a setback from 2.4 metres from the new entrance.
- 7.3.11. However, I would agree with the view of the Transportation Department report that 90m sightlines to nearside of public road have not been provided. Based on the FI Proposed Site Plan, I estimate that the unobstructed sightlines to nearside of road would extend at least 50m to both east and west of new entrance.
- 7.3.12. With regard to TII document DN-GEO-03060 cited in Condition 2, I note that this document is titled Geometric Design of Junctions (priority junctions, direct accesses, roundabouts, grade separated and compact grade separated junctions), May 2023, as viewed on the [www.tiipublications.ie](http://www.tiipublications.ie) website (accessed on 04 February 2026). It outlines (at Section 1.2 Scope) that this standard sets out design requirements and methodology when developing junction and access layouts for Motorways and all-purpose national roads, dual carriageways, divided roads and single carriageways, taking into consideration requirements of *inter alia* Active Travel Users. This standard provides guidance on junction and access layouts on regional and local roads which form part of a national road scheme.
- 7.3.13. I note that local road L-6829 does not form part of a national road scheme, and that the N3 is relatively distant from the subject site, at approx. 0.9km to the east, as the crow flies. The information on file does not appear to specify exact criteria in DN-GEO-03060 required to be adhered with regard to creating a new vehicular entrance onto a local road, which does not form part of a national road scheme. Accordingly, in the absence of specific criteria cited in this TII publication, it is recommended that should the Commission be minded to grant, that the reference TII document DN-GEO-03060 be omitted in any condition relating to sightlines.
- 7.3.14. With regard to Development Plan Policy RD POL 43, which requires compliance with NRA document Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) specifically Section TD 41-42/09 when assessing applications for individual houses in the countryside, I note that this NRA manual is not available on [www.tiipublications.ie](http://www.tiipublications.ie) (accessed on 04 February 2026) and 2no. associated publications viewed relating to DMRB on this website are indicated to have been withdrawn. Accordingly, I do not consider that it has been demonstrated based on the plans and particulars on file that the DMRB

publication is the relevant publication against which to assess the proposed development.

- 7.3.15. Given that the site is stated to be within the 60kph speed limit, I consider the 90m sight distance requirement from the new entrance would be reasonable. However, having regard to the detail shown on the lodged drawings, and having visited the site, I do not consider that this 90m distance to the nearside of road would be achievable. As outlined above, I estimate that minimum 50m sightlines to east and west to nearside of road would be achievable based on the drawings.
- 7.3.16. While noting that a 50m sight distance is considerably below a minimum 90m requirement, and also that the drawings appear deficient with regard to the detailing of the overall width of the public road and ground levels at this location, I consider that the provision of a new entrance at the location shown would be a significant improvement in terms of entrance layout and sightlines over that currently existing at the eastern end of the site. Having regard to the lightly trafficked nature of this road as noted at time of site visit, and as the proposed development includes the closing up of the existing vehicular entrance which serves an existing dwelling house, I consider that the proposed vehicular entrance, albeit with sight distances to the nearside of the adjoining road of less than 90m, would be acceptable in the particular circumstances of this case.
- 7.3.17. Should the Commission be minded to grant, it is recommended that Condition 2 is amended to require the submission of revised drawings showing the sightlines from the proposed entrance in the context of the clearly annotated width of the adjoining public road and topographical details.

*Position of new entrance gate:*

- 7.3.18. Condition 2 requires *inter alia* the entrance layout to comply with the Meath Rural Design Guide - the face of the entrance piers shall be at least 3 metres from the edge of the road and the entrance gate shall be recessed at least 7 metres from the edge of the road.
- 7.3.19. The applicant's appeal submission refers to the Meath Rural Design Guide which requests a safe depth of car to pull in fully and not overhang the edge of the road, approx. 4.8m to 5m. The grounds of appeal contend that the 7m required by the planning authority have made the development unviable, as the gates would be set

back past the line of the existing house.

- 7.3.20. A drawing included with the appeal submission shows a 7m distance, measured from a point approx. 1.2m forward of the red line boundary. The 7m distance annotated extends marginally to rear (south) of the house's existing northern (gable) building line. The proposed vehicular entrance and wing walls would be very close to the front elevation of the existing dwelling house. However, I do not consider that this detail in itself would prejudice future re-use or other works to the existing house on site. As such, I do not consider that the requirement to recess the entrance gates 7m from road edge would make the development unviable.
- 7.3.21. I consider the key issue is whether the entrance gates are required to be set back 7m from road edge. Given that the Meath Rural Design Guidelines specify an approx. 4.8m-5m depth to allow for a car to pull in fully, subject to a minimum 5m depth being provided such that it does not overhang the public road, I consider that a 5m depth would be in compliance with this criterion of the Guidelines, and that a 7m depth would not be required.
- 7.3.22. In terms of detailed design, as outlined above, the 5m set back is shown measured (on FI Proposed Plan (Drawing No. 25420-PL(RFI)-2.02)) from 'edge of carriageway' at a point 1.2m forward of the northern site boundary, and not the annotated 'edge of carriageway' at the red line boundary.
- 7.3.23. No indicative vehicle is shown on this drawing nor on the appeal submission drawing. However, given that a 5m distance is shown to be provided from 'edge of carriageway' (as shown from the more northerly point (approx. 1.2m forward of site boundary) to the entrance gate, it would therefore appear that a car would not overhang the public road, although it would not be located entirely within the red line site boundary. I do not consider, based on the lodged drawings, that an increased 2m distance from 5m to 7m to the entrance gates is required. As such, it is recommended that the 7m distance required by Condition 2 is omitted and substituted with a minimum 5m distance.
- 7.3.24. However, given that there appears to be discrepancy in terms of the road width, I consider that should be Commission be minded to amend Condition 2, as outlined above, it is recommended that a revised drawing be submitted for written agreement showing the proposed vehicular entrance layout in the context of the annotated road

width and topographical details.

- 7.3.25. In terms of detail, with regard to the requirement in Condition 2 that the piers shall be set back 3m, I note that Section 3.3 of the Meath Rural Design Guidelines does not specify a minimum setback distance for entrance piers. In the context of the overall entrance layout where sightlines are measured from a 2.4m setback, I consider that piers being set back 3m would be acceptable, as per this detail in the planning authority's Condition 2.

#### **7.4. Miscellaneous**

*Drainage:*

- 7.4.1. With regard to the final part of the planning authority's Condition 2 relating to drainage requirements, I note that no issues have been raised in the application or in the grounds of appeal relating to drainage. No amendments to this part of Condition 2 are recommended.

#### **7.5. Conclusion**

- 7.5.1. As previously outlined above, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle.
- 7.5.2. The detail of the proposed new entrance layout and the closing up of the existing vehicular entrance is considered acceptable, subject to revised drawings being submitted to and agreed in writing by the planning authority which show the proposed vehicular entrance layout and sightlines in the context of the annotated width of the adjoining public road and topographical details. Accordingly, should the Commission be minded to grant permission for the proposed development, it is recommended that Condition 2 of the planning authority's decision is amended as set out at Section 12.0.

### **8.0 Appropriate Assessment Screening**

- 8.1.1. I have considered the proposed development comprising repositioning, recessing and widening of the existing vehicular entrance to the property along with all site works at the subject site at Balgree, Carnaross, Co. Meath, in light of the

requirements of S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

- 8.1.2. The subject site comprises 0.183ha. The site is located in a rural area. There are some storage sheds on the adjoining site to the west, and a dwelling house approx. 120m to the east. There is a single storey dwelling house on site, which is boarded up and is of dilapidated appearance. The site is not located with or adjacent to a European site. The nearest European sites are (approx.):
- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299): 550m to north
  - River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232): 550m to north
  - Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC (00006): 2.7km to north east
- 8.1.3. The proposed development comprises a new vehicular entrance to the existing house plot, and the closing up of the existing vehicular entrance. Works include new roadside boundary treatment and entrance walls.
- 8.1.4. No nature conservation concerns were raised by the planning authority in the assessment of the application nor in its appeal submission to the Commission. Both Planner's Reports on file outline that the planning authority concludes that the proposed development by itself or in combination with other plans and developments in the vicinity, would not be likely to have a significant effect on European sites, and it considers that a Stage 2 AA (NIS) is not required.
- 8.1.5. With regard to proposed water supply source, proposed wastewater management and proposed surface water disposal, the applicant has indicated 'not applicable' in each case. In this regard I note the permission was granted in 2001 to convert bedroom to shower room, installation of septic tank and percolation area; P.A. Ref. 01/575 refers. The applicant's grounds of appeal include that the dilapidated house was purchased with a view to renovating it to make it habitable.
- 8.1.6. The plans and particulars on file do not show any streams within or close to the subject site. Lands on the opposite (northern) side of the road fall gradually to the north, in the direction of Blackwater River further north.
- 8.1.7. It is considered that the proposed project, individually or in combination with another plan or project will not have a significant effect on any European sites.
- 8.1.8. Having regard to 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 very small scale and nature of the proposed development
- The distance of the subject site to the nearest European site and the lack of any hydrological connection
- Taking into account the screening determination of the 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.

## **9.0 Water Framework Directive**

9.1.1. The assessment of proposed development with reference to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is set out at Appendix 2.

9.1.2. 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.

## **10.0 Recommendation**

10.1. Permission with conditions is recommended.

## **11.0 Reasons and Considerations**

Having regard to the extant development on site comprising a dwelling house served by a vehicular entrance, the pattern of development in the vicinity and the nature of the proposed development, it is considered that subject to compliance with the

conditions set out below, the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety, would not seriously injure the amenity of properties in the vicinity and would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## 12.0 Conditions

1.	<p>The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by the planning authority on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of September 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.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of clarity.</p>
2.	<p>(i) Prior to commencement of development, revised drawings at suitable scale shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the planning authority which shall show:</p> <p>(a) All details relating to the proposed vehicular entrance and sight distances outlined below at (b) to (d) inclusive in the context of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the adjoining public road, the width of which shall be clearly annotated; and</li> <li>• topographical details within the proposed recessed entrance and on the adjoining public road</li> </ul> <p>(b) sightlines to east and west from the new vehicular entrance, to nearside of road and measured 2.4m back from road edge;</p> <p>(c) the entrance gates positioned minimum 5m back from road edge; and</p> <p>(d) the outer (northern) face of the more northerly piers minimum 3m</p>

	<p>back from road edge</p> <p>(ii) Road drainage shall be provided in compliance with the Department of Transport “Guidelines for Road Drainage - 2nd Edition, 2022”. Any drainage pipe installed shall be at least 300mm in diameter and in any case be no less than the nearest downstream pipe diameter.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of clarity and in the interests of traffic safety.</p>
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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.

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Cáit Ryan

Senior Planning Inspector

06 February 2026

## Appendix 1 - Form 1

### EIA Pre-Screening

<b>Case Reference</b>	PL-500260-MH-25
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Repositioning, recessing and widening of the existing vehicular entrance to the property along with all site works. Significant further information/revised plans submitted on this application.
<b>Development Address</b>	Balgree, Carnaross, Co. Meath
	<b>In all cases check box /or leave blank</b>
<b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?</b>  (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes,  - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
<b>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in <u>Part 1</u>, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in <b>Part 1</b> .  <b>EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
<b>3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in <u>Part 2</u>, 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?</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed	

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

<b>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)?</b>	
<b>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></b>	<b>Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)</b>
<b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>	<b>Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)</b>

**Inspector:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

### Water Framework Directive

#### Screening the need for Water Framework Directive Assessment Determination

The subject site is located at Balgree, Carnaross, Co. Meath, in a rural area. The site comprises 0.183ha. Save for the northern part of the site being slightly above part of the adjoining public road, the site is relatively flat. There is a single storey dwelling house on site, which is boarded up and is of dilapidated appearance. There are some storage sheds on the adjoining site to the west, and a dwelling house approx. 120m to the east.

With regard to proposed water supply source, proposed wastewater management and proposed surface water disposal, the applicant has indicated 'not applicable' in each case. In this regard I note the permission was granted in 2001 to convert bedroom to shower room, installation of septic tank and percolation area; P.A. Ref. 01/575 refers. The applicant's grounds of appeal include that the dilapidated house was purchased with a view to renovating it to make it habitable.

The plans and particulars on file do not show any watercourses within or in the immediate vicinity of the site. The nearest watercourse to the subject site on [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie) (accessed on 03 February 2026) is approx. 520m to north, namely BLACKWATER (KELLS)\_090; IE\_EA\_07B011100. The EPA name for this waterbody is Blackwater [Kells]. This waterbody flows in an easterly direction at this location.

The proposed development comprises a new vehicular entrance to the existing house plot, and the closing up of the existing vehicular entrance. Works include new roadside boundary treatment and entrance walls. No works or extensions to the existing dwelling house are proposed in the subject application.

No water deterioration concerns were raised by the planning authority in the assessment of the application nor in its appeal submission to the Commission.

I have assessed the proposed development relating to the repositioning of an existing vehicular entrance, and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration.

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The very small scale and nature of the proposed works
- The absence of any streams on or in the vicinity of the subject site and the distance to Blackwater [Kells]; IE\_EA\_07B011100

### **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.