



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-500321-MO-25

Development	Construct a house with connection to effluent treatment system services together with associated site works.
Location	Drumgarve, Kilmeena, Westport, Co. Mayo
Planning Authority	Mayo County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	25375
Applicant(s)	Sophie O'Malley
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant(s)	Sophie O'Malley
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	21 st January 2026
Inspector	Sarah O'Mahony

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Appendix 1 – Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Appendix 2 – Appropriate Assessment Screening

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The 1.32ha site is situated 5km northwest of Westport on the crest of a hill overlooking Roscahil bay to the north and the Moyour river to the south. The N59 is situated 3km east of the site. Access is from the L1802 local road to the south via an existing 350m long agricultural track which passes alongside a ruined historic stone structure with a flat roof, possibly an outbuilding, and then passes alongside a number of fields/paddocks for grazing horses before reaching a plateau at the western side of the summit of the overall hill.
- 1.2. The plateau has been subject to artificial alterations with a large berm constructed on the northern side partially screening views to Roscahil bay however extensive views are still afforded. There is another berm situated to the south which together with the northern one encloses the central flat area. There are a number of older stone walls remaining which may represent historic field patterns.
- 1.3. The entire area is surrounded by mature and mixed species of hedgerows, trees and some scrub. Most of the adjoining land is in agricultural use however there is a linear pattern of residential development at the south adjacent to the public road.
- 1.4. There is a ringfort situated west of the site which is clearly visible on aerial imagery. Its Zone of Notification extends to a point 130m west of the site. It is included on the Sites and Monuments Record and Records of Monuments and Places under the reference number MA076-020---

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for development which comprises the following:
 - Construction of a 327m² single storey dwelling.
 - Installation of an on-site packaged wastewater treatment system discharging to a soil polishing filter. Note, the application form incorrectly refers to a proposed public sewer connection.
 - Connection to group water scheme.

2.2. The following documentation was submitted with the application together with all standard and statutory public notices and drawings etc:

- Photomontages
- Flood Risk Screening Assessment
- Storm Water Management Report
- Site Suitability Assessment
- Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. Mayo County Council issued a notification to refuse permission on 30th October 2025 for the following 3no. reasons:

1. Based on the information submitted, it is considered that the proposed development, if permitted, would contravene Rural Housing Policy **RHO-4** of Volume 1 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 which states that *“Housing applications, within Mayo’s Coastal Areas and Lakeshores and within areas along scenic routes with designated scenic views, will be considered where the applicants can demonstrate a long-standing social link to the area concerned, whilst ensure that it: Does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area, cannot be considered at an alternative location, meets high standards in siting and design, satisfies all other criterial with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety, and environmental considerations and demonstrates enhancement to local landscape character and ecological connectivity.”*

Therefore, the proposed development would constitute haphazard development along a coastal area and would militate against the preservation of the rural environment. The proposed development would therefore interfere with the character of the landscape which it is necessary to preserve and if permitted would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. It is considered that the proposed development, by reason of its location on an elevated coastal landscape would fail to integrate effectively into this highly scenic rural landscape and would seriously injure the amenities of the area. The proposed development by virtue of its prominence and visual impact, if permitted, would constitute an incongruous design feature in this visually sensitive rural landscape, and would adversely impact the visual amenity of the area. Therefore, the proposed development would interfere with the character of the landscape which it is necessary to preserve and if permitted would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3. Mayo County Council has concerns regarding the proposed access arrangement. The access road as existing in terms of width, alignment, excessive length (in excess of 200m) and surface composition are not considered appropriate for a development of this nature. Therefore, based on the details submitted, it has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of Mayo County Council that the required access arrangements can be achieved to accord to the guidance and development management standards as per Section 7.9 set out in Vol 2 of the CDP 2022-2028 in respect of access gradients for single houses. The proposed development would therefore, if permitted, be contrary to Section 7.9 of Volume 2 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard or obstruction of road users and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

- The Case Planner's report recommendation to refuse permission is consistent with the notification of decision which issued.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) issues were screened out.

- It notes that the applicant complies with local need but that the design and layout does not address issues raised in a previous refusal on the site or address matters discussed at a subsequent pre-planning meeting.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Area Engineer: Report received outlining no objection.
- Environment Department – Flood Risk: Report received stating no further flood risk assessment is required.
- Water Services: No response received.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- An Taisce: No response received.
- Development Applications unit: No response received.
- Uisce Éireann: No response received.
- The Heritage Council: No response received.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None.

4.0 Planning History

- P25/188: Planning permission refused to Sophie O'Malley to construct a dwelling house with connection to effluent treatment system services together with associated site services for the same 3no. reasons set out previously.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Planning Framework

- 5.1.1. The National Planning Framework (NPF) was revised in April 2025 and is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country out to the year 2040.

5.1.2. National Policy Objective (NPO) 24 seeks to:

Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid overdevelopment, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.

5.1.3. NPO 28 refers to the development of single dwellings in the rural area as follows:

- Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:
- In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;
- In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

5.2. **Development Plan**

5.2.1. The site is governed by the policies and provisions contained in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 (referred to hereafter as the CDP). Map 3.1 highlights the site's location within a rural area under strong urban influence.

5.2.2. Map 10.1 identifies landscape policy units throughout the county. It outlines how the landscape in which the site is situated is classed as 'Policy Area 2' which refers to the Lowland Coastal Zone. The site is not visible or accessed from a scenic route.

5.2.3. The following policies and objectives are of particular note:

- RHO 1 seeks to facilitate housing in the rural area, however in rural areas under urban influence applicants will be required to demonstrate a social or economic link to the area in which they wish to build and defines an economic need as applicants

having a genuine housing need and whose future or current employment is in close proximity to the primary residence they propose to build. It provides a list of categories of applicants comprising farmers, their relatives, returning immigrants, persons employed in local enterprises and health circumstances.

- RHO 4: Housing applications, within Mayo's Coastal Areas and Lakeshores and within areas along scenic routes with designated scenic views, will be considered where the applicants can demonstrate a long-standing social link to the area concerned, whilst ensuring that it:

- Does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area
- Cannot be considered at an alternative location
- Meets high standards in siting and design
- Satisfies all other criteria with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety, and environmental considerations
- Demonstrates enhancement to local landscape character and ecological connectivity

Note: An occupancy clause will be attached to any grant of planning permission.

- NEO 26: consider applications for development, within Mayo's Coastal Areas and Lakeshores and within areas along scenic routes with designated scenic views, that can demonstrate a long-standing social link to the area concerned, whilst ensuring that it:

- Does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area.
- Cannot be considered at an alternative location.
- Meets high standards in siting and design.
- Contributes to and enhances local landscape character.
- Satisfies all other criteria, with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety and environmental considerations.

Rural housing applications along Coastal Areas and Lakeshores must comply with the requirements set out in Objective RHO 4 (Chapter 3).

5.2.4. Volume 2 of the CDP sets out development management standards and Section 7.9 therein refers to gradients for access points. "*The gradient of the access road shall*

have a constant grade for a certain distance from the public road (called the dwell area) to ensure that vehicles accessing the road can stop or set off safely in all conditions. Minimum gradient requirements are set out in Table 6 and Diagram 3.”

For single houses, table 6 requires a dwell area of 10m (5m minimum), with a gradient at that dwell area of +/- 2.5% (maximum of +/- 4%). The remainder of the access which is referred to as 'direct access' requires a gradient of +/-8% (maximum +/- 10%).

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.3.1. The site is situated 130m from Clew Bay Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA).

5.4. EIA Screening

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

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

Principle

- Applicant has a legitimate local housing need. A narrative is provided in the appeal and all supporting documentation previously submitted with the application is again submitted with the appeal.
- The development complies with objective RHO-4 of the CDP which requires design sensitivity which is demonstrated by the application documents. It is not a prohibition. It also complies with NEP1-6 regarding biodiversity and sustainability.

- The development complies with National Policy Objectives 15 and 18b of the National Planning Framework regarding balanced rural population retention and rural housing for locals respectively. The Case Planner's report does not refer to the 2025 updated NPF.
- The applicant has provided every possible report and supporting document to help aid the Planning Authority in a positive decision.
- No objections were received.
- Inconsistencies in the Case Planner's report undermine the refusal and justify a reversal in the decision.

Site Selection

- The Case Planner's report is contradictory where it states there is an existing line of dwellings with a similar set back. This contradicts statements that the proposed access lane, which is already in existence, would set a precedent.
- Much of the land in the area is either elevated with scenic views or else is low lying and flood prone and therefore there are few sites available which are flat, non-flooding and visually contained. The subject site meets this criteria and as demonstrated in the attached FRA, does not flood.
- There is also no alternative site available to purchase or to obtain from family. The remaining land on the applicant's family farm holds a fort or floods. This situated does not comply with the Case Planner's narrative that the development 'could be located at a more sensitive location on family lands'. There are no alternative sites available on family lands and this site benefits from a confirmed connection to the group water scheme and existing electrical connection.
- All technical, environmental and safety requirements have been met. The refusal is contradicted by internal reports.
- There is no cumulative impact evidence and claims of precedent are unsupported. *'This case is site-specific and locally justified – approval would not set a precedent.'*

Dwelling Design

- The dwelling has been sensitively designed by qualified professionals to respect the scenic setting. It draws inspiration from the traditional cluster of vernacular houses on a neighbouring hill. It harmonises with the nearby Rosshill Castle and another dwelling both within 700m on elevated sites.
- The sensitive design sites below the natural crest of the hill, avoiding skyline intrusion.
- The applicant does not wish to upset the natural beauty of the landscape but integrate it and enhance the landscape with clever design aspects of both house and landscaping. The photomontage demonstrates how other dwellings already breach the skyline however the proposed dwelling would be visually absorbed with topography and vegetation. *'It is extremely clear from the photomontage that the house does not "adversely impact on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area" (stated planners report page4)*. The applicant suggests that the photomontage was not taken into consideration by the Case Planner.
- The muted and natural finishes include stone, lime render and slate together with broken up massing perfectly integrate the dwelling into the landscape.

Access

- The Area Engineer did not outline any objection to the proposed access in this case or the previous refusal.
- It was in place prior to purchasing the site, it is already screened and does not require any new construction.
- The topographical survey shows it has a gradient $\leq 1\text{m}$ rise in 7m.
- Existing dwellings to the south have similar setbacks.

Other

- There was a three week delay in obtaining a pre-planning meeting subsequent to the previous refusal. This delay seriously restricted the applicant's ability to obtain clarification and address concerns in a timely manner. Further, the appeal suggests that the *'planning officer's approach was not constructive nor supportive, and our attempts to understand and discuss the reasons for refusal were met with a*

dismissive attitude. This interaction raises valid concerns regarding the transparency and fairness of the planning process in this case. Other houses nearby have been approved in recent months on far more exposed sites and closer to the sea, indicating inconsistent application of policy.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

No response.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1. The site is situated in a rural area under strong urban pressure. This is also a coastal location and therefore rural housing objectives RHO 1 and RHO 4 of the CDP apply in order to establish the principle of the development. Both objectives seek to facilitate rural dwellings subject to demonstration of a local housing need while RHO 4 has additional siting and design requirements.
- 7.1.2. I also note the appeal states that the development complies with National Planning Objectives 15 and 18b of the National Planning Framework. There is however no NPO 18b in the NPF and the relevance of those two policy objectives to the subject proposal are unclear as NPO 15 of the NPF, first revision 2025, seeks to *'Apply a tailored approach to urban development, linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund'* while NPO 18 refers to strategic employment development in cities. I consider it likely that the reference is a typographical error however I am unclear as to what policy objective was intended.
- 7.1.3. Rural housing is facilitated in the NPF by NPO 28 and in the case of areas under urban influence, as per the subject site, it seeks to *'facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;'*.
- 7.1.4. I note that the Planning Authority considered the applicant to have demonstrated a genuine local housing need and I agree with this conclusion. Therefore, the

remaining principle matter to be assessed lies with '*siting and design criteria*' as discussed later in this report.

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

- Site Selection
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Access
- Other Matters

7.2. Site Selection

7.2.1. Refusal reason no.1 states that the development would contravene RHO 4 which facilitates dwellings in coastal areas in situations where they *cannot be considered at an alternative location*. The appeal makes reference to a lack of alternative sites in the area due to a combination of affordability for third party lands and site suitability on family lands. It states that all other land in the family landholding is unsuitable due to the presence of a fort or flooding. The extent of the family landholding is not outlined in the application documents but a large cluster of dwellings in family ownership is outlined c.3km southwest of the site. No evidence is made of the unsuitability of the lands surrounding those dwellings but nonetheless, the unsuitability of other lands does not detract from the unsuitability of the subject site as detailed later.

7.2.2. The application does not make any reference to the presence of a ruined structure on the southern slope of the site which generally aligns with the established building line in the wider area without setting a precedent such as would be the case in the subject site as discussed later. Siting a dwelling in this location would significantly reduce concerns regarding exposed scenic views by substantially reducing impacts to the landscape due its location on lower slopes and also its infill qualities given its location between existing dwellings. It would also represent a far more sheltered

location providing better thermal qualities than the subject site close to the summit of a hill.

- 7.2.3. I note the appeal sets out criticism of the Case Planner's report and suggests there are contradictions in its assessment of the site selection, particularly with regard to the principle of precedent. Each application and appeal is assessed on its own merits however in this case I consider there is a precedent already established by the pattern of linear dwellings situated further south with a much shorter setback from the local road. I consider siting a new dwelling within this envelope would consolidate the existing building line and pattern of development and would eliminate any concerns about haphazard site selection and setting a new precedent.
- 7.2.4. The appeal suggests that all technical, environmental and safety requirements have been met for the subject site however I do not agree as the issue of landscape impacts as discussed below would fall under the category of environmental matters and I have substantial concerns regarding landscape and visual impacts. I do note however that technical matters such as access and water services were deemed acceptable according to internal reports and I consider that much of this would be applicable to an alternative location on the same site e.g. access requirements, water supply and electricity provision would not change. The matter of access is also discussed later below.

7.3. Landscape and Visual Impact

- 7.3.1. The appeal contends that a site-specific design was produced which is sensitive to the landscape, does not break the skyline and integrates with its surroundings.
- 7.3.2. I note the proposed design which comprises a contemporary take on the vernacular clusters of residential and agricultural structures. It would be situated on a plateau close to the summit of the hill and the existing berms would provide some screening however it would still be highly visible from Roscahil bay to the north as demonstrated in the photomontages submitted with the application and appeal.
- 7.3.3. The dwelling design itself is an appropriate design for a rural area and clearly has had regard to the sensitivity of the landscape as well as the vernacular typologies in the area. The form and finishes respect the setting of the area and are acceptable in principle in my view.

- 7.3.4. The application drawings do not however give a clear indication of the height of the proposed dwelling and in this regard I have concerns regarding its scale and situation in the landscape. The plan and elevation drawings provided on drawing no. GA—01 have no dimensions and the floorplan has no north symbol. A house section drawing and the floor plan drawing on the same sheet state the dwelling would have a finished floor level of 38.50m AOD however the site section drawings (drawing no. GA9-01) state a finished floor level of 37.5m. I therefore have concerns regarding the accuracy of photomontages.
- 7.3.5. I also disagree with statements that the dwelling would not break the skyline. Following a site inspection, I note that the northern berm is clearly visible to the naked eye from Roscahil Bay to the north of the site. From that public viewpoint adjacent the waterline, the northern berm represents the highest point on the site. I note the actual summit of the hill which is situated c.100m east of the site, would be 6m higher than the proposed ridge line of the dwelling. Its location to the east provides no backdrop to the proposal when viewed from the highly scenic Roscahil Bay at the north and from this viewpoint the proposed dwelling would clearly break this skyline. This conclusion is supported by the site section drawings which show the plateau on which the site would be situated, the berms to the north and south, the summit of the adjacent hill and the majority of the dwelling extending beyond the height of the berms.
- 7.3.6. It is clear from the topographical survey and the site inspection that the plateau has already been subject to some ground level alterations including creation of the berms which have artificially altered the highly sensitive landscape. The proposed location of the dwelling would require further manipulation of the landscape as well as removal of stone field boundaries.
- 7.3.7. The lack of dimensioned drawings is unfortunate however noting the scale of the footprint of the 327m² single storey dwelling on the site and the overall width and depth of each elevation, I consider the positive aspects reached by the cluster design and broken up massing, are unfortunately negated by the overall scale of the dwelling and its exposure on the northern slopes of the site.
- 7.3.8. In my opinion the location and scale of the proposed dwelling would further alter the landscape to such a degree as to detract from the visual amenity of the area and the

landscape. I do not agree with the appeal where it contends that the dwelling design does not adversely impact on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area. I consider that it would result in adverse impacts due to its location close to the summit of the hill and protrusion breaking the skyline. The introduction of a new built form in this location could not be sufficiently visually absorbed with topography and vegetation in my opinion.

7.4. Access

- 7.4.1. The existing access comprises an agricultural track finished with hardcore along its full 350m length. The applicant highlights how the access track was in place prior to purchasing the site and the appeal states that no new construction or surface would be required.
- 7.4.2. Sections of it are quite steep however the area adjacent to the public road has a very low gradient as demonstrated by the section drawings and noted in the site inspection. I note the Area Engineer did not outline any objection to the proposed access.
- 7.4.3. Reason for refusal no. 3 was applied as follows:

Mayo County Council has concerns regarding the proposed access arrangement. The access road as existing in terms of width, alignment, excessive length (in excess of 200m) and surface composition are not considered appropriate for a development of this nature. Therefore, based on the details submitted, it has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of Mayo County Council that the required access arrangements can be achieved to accord to the guidance and development management standards as per Section 7.9 set out in Vol 2 of the CDP 2022-2028 in respect of access gradients for single houses. The proposed development would therefore, if permitted, be contrary to Section 7.9 of Volume 2 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard or obstruction of road users and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- 7.4.4. Section 7.9 of the CDP requires a dwell area to be provided adjacent to the public road of 5-10m in length with a gradient of a maximum of 4%. The existing access meets this requirement by relocating the gate further back on the existing track.

Section 7.9 requires the remainder of any domestic access to have a gradient of a maximum of 10%. The existing access route has a slope of 14% (or 1 in 7 as stated in the appeal) and therefore does not meet the requirements of Section 7.9.

- 7.4.5. In my view, matters regarding the width and alignment of the existing track are however acceptable overall as domestic vehicles could easily manoeuvre through the track in my opinion, and ultimately the track does not represent a new access point.
- 7.4.6. I consider any residual concerns regarding an excessive length and the slope of the track are related to the siting of the dwelling as discussed previously as the steeper areas which do not comply with Section 7.9 are situated to the side and rear of the existing ruin. Relocating the proposed development to a location lower down on the site would address these concerns.
- 7.4.7. Nonetheless, and notwithstanding the proposal to essentially change the use of the track from agricultural to domestic use, as the access track is already in place I do not recommend attaching the same reason for refusal relating to the access.

7.5. **Other Matters**

- 7.5.1. I note the appeal suggests wrongdoings in delays to obtaining a pre-planning meeting however this matter is outside the scope of a planning appeal.
- 7.5.2. Similarly, references to the discussions held in that meeting and concerns regarding the comments made by the Planning Authority and subsequent transparency and fairness of the process have no effect on this subject appeal as the assessment is only based on the documentation submitted with the application and on the public record which, from the Planning Authority's perspective only includes the Case Planner's report and internal reports. The Planning Authority did not respond to the appeal or submit any commentary in this regard.
- 7.5.3. Lastly, the appeal suggests there is an inconsistent application of policy as other dwellings nearby have been approved in recent months on far more exposed sites and closer to the sea. As noted earlier in this report, every planning application is assessed on its own merits, subject to its own site-specific context and the policy in place at the time. In this regard I consider this matter to be outside the scope of this appeal.

8.0 **Appropriate Assessment**

8.1. Screening Determination

8.2. Finding of no likely significant effects

8.2.1. In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on Clew Bay Complex SAC in view of the conservation objectives of this site and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

8.2.2. This determination is based on:

- Domestic scale and nature of the site.
- The packaged on-site wastewater treatment system.
- The location of the SAC, its conservation objectives and qualifying interests.

9.0 **Water Framework Directive**

9.1. The site is situated 130m south of Inner Clew Bay coastal waterbody and 30m north of the Mayour river. The actual location of the dwelling is however 350m north of the river. The underlying groundwater body is the Newport aquifer which is described as karstic and a regionally important bedrock system. The aquifer has moderate vulnerability in the location of the site. The site is situated in the Erriff-Clew Bay catchment area and the Carrowtootagh subcatchment.

9.2. The proposed development seeks to construct a detached dwelling, onsite wastewater treatment system, connection to group water scheme and utilizing an existing access.

9.3. I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no

conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.

9.4. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The nature and scale of the works.
- The location of the site removed from any waterbodies and,
- The proposed on-site wastewater treatment system which will treat wastewater prior to discharge to ground in compliance with the EPA Code of Practice.

9.5. I conclude on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

10.0 Recommendation

1. Rural Housing Policy RHO4 and Policy Objective NEO 26 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 facilitate housing in rural coastal areas in circumstances where, inter alia, the development would not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area and also contributes to and enhances the local landscape character. Having regard to the scale, layout and location of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposed development, by reason of its location on an elevated coastal landscape would fail to integrate effectively into this highly scenic rural landscape and would seriously injure the amenities of the area. The proposed development by virtue of its prominence and visual impact, if permitted, would constitute an incongruous design feature in this visually sensitive rural landscape, and would adversely impact the visual amenity of the area and would contravene RHO4 and NEO 26 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. The proposed development would therefore interfere with the character of the landscape which it is necessary to preserve and if permitted would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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

Sarah O'Mahony

11th March 2026

Appendix 1- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-500321-25
Proposed Development Summary	Detached dwelling, on-site wastewater treatment and revised vehicular entrance.
Development Address	Drumgarve, Kilmeena, Westport, Co. Mayo
In all cases check box /or leave blank	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	

<input type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	Class 10 (b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units Threshold = 500 units. Proposed development = 1 no. unit.

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.

<p>Characteristics of proposed development</p> <p>(In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).</p>	<p>The rural site is unserviced and its size is not exceptional in the context of the prevailing plot size in the area for rural dwellings in the area.</p> <p>A short-term construction phase would be required and the development would not require the use of substantial natural resources, or give rise to significant risk of pollution or nuisance due to its scale. The development, by virtue of its type and nature, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, or is vulnerable to climate change. Its operation presents no significant risks to human health.</p> <p>The size and scale of the proposed development is not significantly or exceptionally different to the existing dwellings.</p>
<p>Location of development</p> <p>(The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).</p>	<p>The site is situated in a sensitive landscape and the proposed layout and design of the dwelling is considered likely to negatively impact on the setting and character of the landscape.</p> <p>These matters are addressed in the assessment above and while they are adverse, they are not significant and therefore do not trigger a requirement to carry out a full EIA.</p> <p>It is considered that, having regard to the limited nature and scale of the development, there is no real likelihood of significant effect on other significant environmental sensitivities in the area.</p> <p>It is not likely to have any cumulative impacts or significant cumulative impacts with other existing or permitted projects.</p>
<p>Types and characteristics of potential impacts</p> <p>(Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).</p>	<p>The size of the proposed development is notably below the mandatory thresholds in respect of a Class 10 Infrastructure Projects of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.</p> <p>Localised construction impacts will be temporary. The proposed development would not give rise to waste, pollution or nuisances beyond what would normally be deemed acceptable.</p> <p>Having regard to the nature of the proposed development and works constituting development within a rural area, likely limited magnitude and spatial extent of effects, and absence of in combination effects, there is no potential</p>

	for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Act.
Conclusion	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 - AA Screening Determination Template
Test for likely significant effects

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects				
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics				
Brief description of project		Detached 327m ² single storey dwelling, on-site wastewater treatment system, and connection to group water scheme.		
Brief description of development of site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms		The site is situated on a plateau close to the summit of a hill which slopes steeply down to Clew Bay Complex which is situated 130m downhill from the site. There is a large berm situated along the majority of the northern boundary which would act as a buffer for sediment however there is still a route where sediment or contaminants in surface water may flow downhill to the SAC.		
Screening report		Yes		
Natura Impact Statement		No		
Relevant submissions		No		
Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model				
European Site (code)	Qualifying interests ¹ Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)	Distance from proposed development (km)	Ecological connections ²	Consider further in screening ³ Y/N
Clew Bay Complex 001482	3no. aquatic habitats 3no. dune habitats 4no. terrestrial habitats Otter Seal	130m	Surface water	Yes
¹ Summary description / cross reference to NPWS website is acceptable at this stage in the report ² Based on source-pathway-receptor: Direct/ indirect/ tentative/ none, via surface water/ ground water/ air/ use of habitats by mobile species ³ if no connections: N				
Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone <u>or</u> in combination) on European Sites				

AA Screening matrix		
Site name Qualifying interests	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*	
	Impacts	Effects
<p>Site 1: Clew Bay Complex 001482</p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima) [1330] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Phoca vitulina (Harbour Seal) [1365]</p>	<p>Direct: None</p> <p>Indirect:</p> <p>Indirect: Negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution.</p> <p>Wastewater discharge to ground during operational stage.</p>	<p>No significant effect is likely to occur due to the separation between the site and the European sites. Any sediment released during construction stage would discharge to ground before reaching the waters in question.</p> <p>The separation distance and existing berm would ensure construction and operational stage disturbances would not be likely to occur.</p>
Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): No		
If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? No		
Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* No		
Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site		

I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on Clew Bay Complex SAC. The proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European site(s). No further assessment is required for the project

No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions.

Screening Determination

Finding of no likely significant effects

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on Clew Bay Complex SAC in view of the conservation objectives of this site and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

This determination is based on:

- Domestic scale and nature of the site.
- The packaged on-site wastewater treatment system.
- The location of the SAC, its conservation objectives and qualifying interests.

Inspector: _____

Date: _____