



<b>Development</b>	To renovate and extend existing private dwelling house, install wastewater treatment system and construct private garage/store to include all associated site works
<b>Location</b>	Abbeypark, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Galway County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	25289
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	Muriel Sharpe
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Refuse
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	First Party
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	Muriel Sharpe
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>Inspector</b>	Emma Gosnell

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Appendix 1 – Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

Appendix 2 - AA Screening Determination (Forms 1 & 2)

Appendix 2 – Screening for Water Framework Directive Assessment Determination

## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The appeal site is located in the rural townland of Abbeypark, Clontuskert c. 4km to the south of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway. It is accessed on its south-east side via an existing vehicular access leading off the R-355 regional road which has an 80kmph speed limit. There is also a further existing field entrance on the south-west side of the site.
- 1.2. The site is adjoined on its north, west and east sides by undeveloped, agricultural lands and reads as a cut out from 2 no. larger fields that extend to its rear. The wider area is rural in character, relatively flat and features a mix of agricultural buildings and farmland, commercial forestry and one-off housing which presents in a variety of sizes and designs.
- 1.3. The site, which is square in form and has a stated area of 0.395ha, accommodates an existing derelict single storey dwelling with hipped roof. This structure is sited on the south-east side of the lands fronting the main road. The site is enclosed by stake and wire fencing along its roadside boundary – with a grass verge separating the site from the carriageway – and by mature trees and hedging on all other boundaries.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1. The proposed development is described as the renovation of, and single storey rear extension of, an existing private dwelling house (to provide 3 no. bedrooms with a total floor area of c. 107.5 sq.m in an L-shaped arrangement) with a max. ridge height of c. 4.07m, the installation of a new wastewater treatment system, the construction of a private garage/ store to the north-east of the house, the provision of additional boundary landscaping and all associated site works. The site is proposed to be accessed via the existing vehicular entrance on its south-east side. No proposal is put forward in relation to the site's other access point from the R355.

## **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

### **3.1. Decision**

Permission refused on 15/12/2025 for 1 no. reason as follows:

*“1. Based on the information submitted and the plans and particulars received whilst having regard to the 80kph speed limit, in conjunction with the horizontal and vertical alignment of the Restricted Regional Road R355 within the immediate vicinity of proposed development, whereby the proposed site entrance is considered unauthorised and deemed unsatisfactory owing to the restricted forward and stopping sight distances that includes restricted tangential intervisibility splays in both western and eastern directions. It is further considered the remedial works required to provide the aforementioned visibility sightlines from the entrance of the site is not achievable, which further lie outside the control of applicant, and would constitute significant intervention on a Restricted Regional route – a Class II Controlled Road, in conjunction with the absence of satisfactorily demonstrated sightlines in accordance to DM Standard 28, DM Standard 33a whilst being at variance to Policy Objective NNR1 in safeguarding the capacity and safety of Restricted Regional Roads of the Galway county Development Plan 2022-2028. Accordingly, if permitted as proposed, the development as proposed would interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic on the public road and would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard, obstruction of road users, or otherwise, and therefore would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area”.*

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

#### **3.2.1. Planning Reports**

1 no. planning report (15/12/2025) formed the basis of the planning authority’s (PA) assessment. Key points of note raised in the report are as follows:

- *Principle of Development* – submitted structural report outlines that existing dwelling is structurally sound but requires work to bring it up to a comfortable living standard. Proposal is acceptable in principle on basis of its compliance with PO RH 7 (Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling) and DM Standard 4 (House Extensions (Urban and Rural)).
- *Design & Visual Impact* – proposed extension and garage in-keeping with character of existing dwelling and with design guidance for single rural houses. No potential for negative visual impact on character of area.

- *Access* – Existing site entrance from 80km/hr road is considered unauthorised. Site has restricted sightlines and forward stopping distances on account of the horizontal and vertical alignment of the adjoining R355 which is non-compliant with DM Standards 28 (Sight Distances Required for Access onto National, Regional, Local and Private Roads) and 33a (Traffic Impact Assessment, Traffic & Transport Assessment, Road Safety Audit & Noise Assessment). PA consider remedial works to address same are not achievable on account of land ownership issues and would constitute significant intervention on a Restricted Regional Route – a Class II Controlled Road - interference which would not be compliant with PO NNR1 which seeks to safeguard the capacity and safety of such roads. **Refusal Recommended** on basis of creation of traffic hazard.
- *Wastewater* – proposal for new WWTS which complies with EPA CoP is acceptable subject to standard conditions.
- *Surface Water* – proposed management via soakpits is acceptable.
- *Water Supply* – proposal to utilise Clontuskert Group Water Scheme had not been satisfactorily evidenced by details on nature of connection (i.e. new or existing) or scheme confirmation of feasibility correspondence.
- *Flood Risk* – site not at risk of fluvial, pluvial or groundwater flooding with FRA not required.
- *EIA* – proposal is subthreshold. No screening determination required.
- *AA Screening* – no potential for likely significant effects. AA not required.

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

*Roads Department (12/12/2025)* – recommends refusal on basis of substandard entrance and inadequate sightlines and fact matter cannot be satisfactorily addressed due to restricted status of R355 and thereby gives rise to traffic hazard.

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

*Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) (18/11/2025)* - directs PA to TII policy on proposals impacting national roads and to the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities and related publications.

### 3.4. **Third Party Observations**

No submissions on file.

## 4.0 **Planning History**

### 4.1. **Appeal Site**

*P.A. Ref. 23/61015* – application by Muriel Sharpe for the demolition of existing house, construction of a new dwellinghouse with carport, wastewater treatment system/percolation area, plus all ancillary works, refused permission on 23/10/2023 for 3 no. reasons relating to: 1. Traffic safety, 2. Absence of structural report & non-compliance with PO RH7, 3. No consent/ evidence for potable water supply [decision was not appealed].

*P.A. Ref. 03/7288* – application by Muriel Sharpe to demolish existing dwellinghouse and to build a fully serviced dwellinghouse (gross floor area 197.3 sq.m), granted permission on 05/04/2004 subject to 12 no. conditions.

*P.A. Ref. 02/704* – application by Muriel Sharpe for outline permission for the demolition of existing dwelling and to build a fully serviced dwellinghouse, granted permission on 19/08/2002 subject to 9 no. conditions.

### 4.2. **Neighbouring Sites**

#### Site c. 180m to Northwest

*P.A. Ref. 24/222* – application to (a) Demolish single storey annex to rear of existing dwelling and construct an extension to the rear of the existing single storey dwelling. (b) Decommission existing septic tank and install a new waste water treatment system with percolation area. (c) Demolish an existing domestic store and construct a new domestic garage. (d) and all associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 162.92 sqm. Gross floor space of any demolition: 55.38 sqm (annex) 51.60 sqm (shed) [utilising an existing property access onto the R355 which comprises of a residential driveway setback from

the carriageway. No traffic safety/ access issues raised in respect to proposal], granted permission on 28/10/2024 subject to 13 no. conditions.

#### Site c. 90m to Northwest

*P.A. Ref. 22/61201* – application to construct a new dwelling house, domestic garage, septic tank/treatment unit with percolation area and all associated site works (gross floor space of proposed works 226.50sqm) incl. new vehicular access between 2 no. adjoining dwellings, refused permission on 03/02/2023 for 2 no. reasons: 1. Traffic hazard due to inadequate sightlines and 2. Layout giving rise to a haphazard and disorderly development.

*P.A. Ref. 21/1516* – application to construct a new dwelling house, domestic garage, septic tank/treatment unit with percolation area and all associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works: House: 226.5 sqm, Garage: 60.4 sqm., refused permission on 12/10/2021 for 2 no. reasons: both relating to traffic safety.

## **5.0 Policy Context**

### **5.1. National Policy**

Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (2025) – NPO90: Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, environmental, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through investment and conservation.

Climate Action Plan (2024 & 2025) and National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030 – Outcome 2A protection of existing designated areas & protected species.

Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.

Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) – Section 1.6 (Regional and Local Roads) seeks to protect the safety and capacity of regional roads.

Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes and Sustaining Communities (DoHLGH, 2007).

Development Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2007) – Section 7.3.3 (Conditions should be enforceable and capable of being complied with). Conditions should be capable of being complied with. It is doubtful that a condition requiring the maintenance of sightlines by the removal or trimming of hedges or trees on a neighbour’s property is within the applicant’s power to fulfil: even where the neighbour has given consent that consent may subsequently be withdrawn.

Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoHLGH, 2005).

## 5.2. **Regional Policy**

Northern & Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 – RPO 3.3: Deliver at least 20% new housing in rural areas on brownfield sites and RPO 3.8: Support the design of new/ replacement/ refurbished dwellings to high energy efficiency standards.

## 5.3. **Development Plan**

The Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 (GCDP) applies.

### Zoning/ Landscape

The site is located in a Structurally Weak Area and in Zone 4 – Landscape Sensitivity Category 2 – 4, with a Class 3 - ‘Special’ landscape sensitivity rating (as per Map 8.2).

Sections 8.13.2 and 15.7.2 Landscape Sensitivity and Policy Objectives (POs) LCM 1 - Preservation of Landscape Character, LCM 2 - Landscape Sensitivity Classification and LCM 3 – Landscape Sensitivity Ratings.

### Rural Settlement Strategy

Sections 4.6 (Rural Housing Strategy in the Open Countryside) and 4.6.2 (Structurally Weak Rural Areas (East and West of GCTPS)).

PO RH3 - Rural Housing Zone 3 (Structurally Weak Areas): It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to facilitate the development of individual houses in the open countryside in "Structurally Weak Areas" subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the Development Management Standards outlined in Chapter 15 and other applicable standards with the

exception of those lands contained in Landscape Classifications 2, 3 and 4 where policy objective RH4 applies.

PO RH4 - Rural Housing Zone 4 (Landscape Classification 2, 3 and 4): Those applicants seeking to construct individual houses in the open countryside in areas located in Landscape Classification 2, 3 and 4 are required to demonstrate their demonstrable economic or social Rural Links or Need\* as per RH 2.

PO RH 7 – Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling: It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority that proposals to renovate, restore or modify existing derelict or semi-derelict dwellings in the County are generally dealt with on their merits on a case by case basis, having regard to the relevant policy objectives of this plan, the specific location and the condition of the structure and the scale of any works required to upgrade the structure to modern standards. The derelict/ semi derelict dwelling must be structurally sound and have the capacity to be renovated or extended and have the majority of its original features in place. A structural report will be required to illustrate that the structure can be brought back into habitable use, without compromising the original character of the dwelling. Where the total demolition of the existing dwelling is proposed an Enurement Clause for seven years duration will apply.

#### Rural Dwelling Design

Section 15.2.2 - Applicable to All Development, PO DM Standard 1: Qualitative Assessment-Design Quality, Guidelines and Statements.

Section 15.3.1 Rural Housing and Appendix 5: Galway Design Guidelines for the Single Rural Houses.

Section 15.2.4 - Other Residential Development (Rural and Urban).

PO DM Standard 4 - House Extensions (Urban and Rural): Proposed extensions shall:

- In general, be subordinate to the existing dwelling in its size, unless in exceptional cases, a larger extension compliments the existing dwelling in its design and massing;

- reflect the window proportions, detailing and finishes, texture, materials and colour unless a high quality contemporary and innovatively designed extension is proposed;
- not have an adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining properties through undue overlooking, undue overshadowing and/or an over dominant visual impact; and
- carefully consider site coverage to avoid unacceptable loss of private open space.

PO RH 9 – Design Guidelines: It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to have regard to Galway County Council’s Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House with specific reference to the following: a) It is the policy objective to encourage new dwelling house design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape; b) It is the policy objective to promote sustainable approaches to dwelling house design and encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in their design and layout; c) It is the policy objective to require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominately indigenous/local species and groupings.

Appendix V: Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House.

PO AH 5 (Maintenance and Re-use of existing Building Stock).

#### Water Servicing

PO WS 7 – Water Quality: Require that new development proposals would ensure that there would not be an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands.

PO RH 11 – Waste Water Treatment Provision: Where a connection to the public wastewater network is not available, provide for sustainable rural housing in the county in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009).

PO WS 8 – Proliferation of Septic Tanks: Encourage the use of high standard treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.

PO DM Standard 38: Effluent Treatment Plants – single houses & certification.

PO WW 6 – Private Wastewater Treatment Plants: Ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment System 2021 (Population Equivalent  $\leq 10$ ).

POs WW 7 – Sustainable Drainage Systems & 8 – Storm Water Infrastructure.

DM Standard 9 - Site Sizes for Single Houses Using Individual On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems: min. site size of 2000sq.m.

#### Access/ Traffic Safety

PO DM Standard 28 - Sight Distances Required for Access onto National, Regional, Local and Private Roads and Table 15.3 – 160m for a design speed of 85km/hr.

Section 6.5.3.2 (Non-National Roads): In order to maintain the efficiency and functionality of the regional road network it is important that the number of new accesses and the intensification of existing accesses are restricted. These restrictions minimise risks to road safety as new entrances can result in additional stopping and turning movements, which give rise to the potential for additional traffic accidents. Where a National Road is declassified to Regional Road status during the lifetime of the plan it shall become a Restricted Regional Road.

PO NNR1 - Restricted Regional Roads: To safeguard the capacity and safety of Restricted Regional Roads listed in Table 6.3, against development where a maximum speed limit applies in order to protect the carrying capacity and safety of such roads.

Table 6.3 (Restricted Regional Roads) – 7. Ballinasloe – Portumna (R355).

DM Standard 33 - Traffic Impact Assessment, Traffic & Transport Assessment, Road Safety Audit & Noise Assessment: All new road layouts should be designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the associated TII publications. Development proposals should also include provision for a sustainable modal split, with pedestrian and cycling facilities recognised as an important aspect of new design proposals. All significant

development proposals, or those that the Planning Authority consider would pose a safety risk or traffic impact shall be accompanied by road safety audits, road safety impact assessments and transport and traffic assessments. These shall include a consideration of the cumulative impact of development on the road network. This shall be guided by the following:

(a) Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), Road Safety Audit (RSA) & Road Safety Impact Assessments (RSIA):

- Require all planning applications for significant development proposals to be accompanied by a TTA, RSA and RSIA to be carried out by a suitably competent consultant, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network.

- Guidelines in relation to the TTA are provided in the Traffic Management Guidelines as published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government (DoEHLG) Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) and the Department of Transport (DoT). Guidance as provided in the TII publication – ‘Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (PE-PDV-02045)’ (and any updated/superseding documents).

- In relation to a Road Safety Audit guidance is provided in the TII’s - ‘Road Safety Audit (GE-STY-01024)’. The Guidelines also include recommendations on the requirement for sub-threshold traffic and transport assessments. (Refer to the Transport Infrastructure Ireland website [www.tii.ie](http://www.tii.ie)).

- Road Safety Impact Assessment is described in the EU Directive on Road Infrastructure Safety Management (EU RISM) 2008/96/EC as a strategic comparative analysis of the impact of a new road, or of substantial modifications to an existing road, on the safety performance of the road network. Guidance is provided on RSIA’s in TII publication – ‘Road Safety Impact Assessment (TII PE PMG-02001)’.

#### 5.4. **Technical Standards**

TII DN-GEO-03060 (Geometric Design of Junctions) (2023) – Sections 5.6.2.2 (Direct Access), 5.6.2.3 (Visibility Standards with a Curved Major Road) and Tables 5.4 (‘x’ Distances) and 5.5 (‘y’ distances).

EPA Code of Practice: Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (2021).

## 6.0 Natural Heritage Designations

The appeal site is not located within or adjoining any designated site.

The nearest European Sites in close proximity to the appeal site are as follows:

- c. 3km from River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097).
- c. 2.5km from Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site Code 002213).
- c. 11km from River Shannon Callows SAC (Site Code 000216).
- c. 11km from Middle Shannon Callows SPA (Site Code 004096).

The nearest Natural Heritage Area in close proximity to the appeal site is as follows:

- c. 1.6km from Cloonascragh Fen And Black Wood pNHA (Site Code 001247).
- c. 3km from Suck River Callows NHA (Site Code 000222).

## 7.0 EIA Screening

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

## 8.0 Water Framework Directive Screening

I have concluded, 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 (refer to form in Appendix 3 for details).

## 9.0 The Appeal

### 9.1. Grounds of Appeal

A first party appeal submission was received on 12/01/2026 from Muriel Sharpe. The grounds of appeal (GOA) are as follows:

- *Access* –
  - existing access serving historic dwelling is long established and has been in continuous use (site history evidenced by supporting documentation incl. legal deeds, historic valuation and engineering reports and mortgage documentation).
  - It is established/ pre-1963 but is not unauthorised and should not be treated as a new entrance.
  - Council purchased land from appellant in late 1990s in order to widen road/ improve driver visibility.
- *Planning History* – permission for residential development using the same access on the site was granted previously in 2002 and 2004.
- *Procedure* – site photographs in PA report are misleading/ don't show context. Recent photos of dwelling and site access provided for comparison.

The grounds of appeal are accompanied by a copy of the PA's report and decision document; a copy of the TII submission; undated photographs of the site and its access taken from the R355; a site context map from 1997; copies of the PA reports, decision documents and maps in respect of P.A. Refs. 02/704 and 03/7288; copies of parish records relating to the site; a copy of a condition report on the property from 2000; a copy of land registry documentation in respect of the property; an extract from a book on Clontuskert Parish which relates to the site; and, a copy of a housing loan agreement in respect of the property from ACC Bank dating from the year 2000.

### 9.2. Planning Authority Response

No response received.

### 9.3. **Observations**

None received.

## 10.0 **Assessment**

Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the reports of the local authority, 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:

- Principle of Development
- Access
- Other Matters

### 10.1. **Principle of Development**

10.1.1. The site is located in Rural Housing Zone 3: Structurally Weak Areas where housing proposals are governed by Section 4.6.2 (Structurally Weak Rural Areas (East and West of GCTPS)) which seeks to accommodate residential development proposals as they arise subject to satisfactory site suitability and technical considerations and compliance with DM standards and the protection of areas located in Landscape Categories 2, 3 and 4. The site is located in 'Zone 4 – Landscape Sensitivity Category 2 – 4' on the basis that it falls within a Class 3 - 'Special' landscape sensitivity rating as per GCDP Map 8.2. Whilst I note the completed Rural Housing Need Application Form submitted, I draw the Commission's attention to the fact that the PA granted permission for the proposal without reliance on a demonstrated rural housing need under POs RH3 (Rural Housing Zone 3 (Structurally Weak Areas)) or RH4 (Rural Housing Zone 4 (Landscape Classification 2, 3 and 4)).

10.1.2. This appeal concerns the renovation and extension of an existing structure, to bring it back into active use as a dwelling, and not the construction of a new rural dwelling which would be subject to compliance with the aforementioned rural

housing strategy for the open countryside. On this basis, I consider the proposal, which is generally supported by NPO 90, RPOs 3.3 and 3.8, and GCDP PO AH 5 (Maintenance and Re-use of existing Building Stock), to be acceptable in principle, subject to its compliance with PO RH 7 (Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling) in the first instance and also DM Standard 4 (House Extensions (Urban and Rural)).

#### Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling

- 10.1.3. I acknowledge that the structure is currently unoccupied and, in a derelict, uninhabitable condition. However, the fact that the structure was previously in use as a dwellinghouse is not in dispute and, as such, for this reason, I am satisfied that the proposal to refurbish and extend it is compliant with PO RH 7 which seeks to support “*proposals to renovate, restore or modify existing derelict or semi-derelict dwellings in the County*”.
- 10.1.4. PO RH 7 also requires that qualifying proposals be assessed having regard to relevant factors such as “*the condition of the structure and the scale of any works required to upgrade the structure to modern standards*”, with a specific policy requirement that eligible structures be “*structurally sound and have the capacity to be renovated or extended and have the majority of its original features in place*” and that “*A structural report will be required to illustrate that the structure can be brought back into habitable use, without compromising the original character of the dwelling*”. A structural report prepared by the appellant’s agent was submitted at application stage and satisfactorily demonstrates that the existing dwelling is structurally sound and requires improvement work to bring it up to a comfortable living standard. Having undertaken an inspection of the property, considered the current condition and character and having reviewed the information on file, I am of the opinion that the subject structure is capable of being refurbished, restored and brought back into habitable use in way that satisfies the requirements of PO RH7.

#### Rural House Extension

- 10.1.5. DM Standard 4 (House Extensions (Urban and Rural)) generally requires proposed extensions to be subordinate to existing dwellings in terms of their size and to reflect their ope details and finishes etc. It also provides for exceptional

cases where a large extension to the existing dwelling may be acceptable where it complements its design and massing.

- 10.1.6. I note that the PA did not raise any concerns with regard to the proposal's compliance with DM Standard 4 and, in terms of its design and visual impact, concluded that they were satisfied with its visual character and that it accorded with the design guidelines for a single rural house.
- 10.1.7. Having inspected the site and its surrounds and having considered the information on file, including the proposed plans and elevations, I am satisfied that the design and layout of the proposed single storey extension (which would project c. 13.5m from the rear of the house on its west side), whilst large in its footprint and volume relative to the very small scale of the existing house, is well-considered relative to the form and character of the original dwelling i.e. in terms of its architecture, roof profile, materiality etc., and would not therefore give rise to overbearance on same.
- 10.1.8. In noting the aforementioned landscape character and rural context of the site, I am also satisfied that the single storey height and siting of the proposed extension (and the proposed garage) to the rear of the original dwelling will ensure that they will not be unduly visually dominant or highly visible from the R355. I also consider that the existing natural enclosure of the site together with the nature of its mature north, west and eastern boundaries will assist with the integration and visual assimilation of the proposal into the landscape at this location. However, I do acknowledge that the siting of the existing dwelling on the south-east side of the site will render the rear extension visible as one approaches the site from the west. Notwithstanding, whilst the proposal would give rise to a change in the character of this view, on the basis of the foregoing siting and design considerations in addition to the proposals to provide for the planting of 2m high native hedge to the immediate west of the extended dwelling and additional native tree planting along the southern site boundary, I do not consider that the proposal would necessarily give rise to a negative or unacceptable visual impact.
- 10.1.9. Given the scale of the site (0.395ha), the single storey nature of the proposal and its separation from neighbouring residential properties, the nearest of which are

located on the opposite side of the R355 and c. 180m further to the northwest, I consider that there is no potential for the proposal to negatively impact the amenities of adjoining properties through undue overlooking, undue overshadowing and/ or an over dominant visual impact; and I am also satisfied as to the quantum of private open space that would remain to serve the dwelling.

## 10.2. Access

- 10.2.1. The site is served by 2 no. existing accesses onto the R355, both secured by agricultural gates fronting a grass verge which adjoins the carriageway, which lead directly into the existing field. The appellant proposes to utilise the existing access on the south-east side of the site (nearest the house) as the entrance that will serve their proposed development. The site layout drawing indicates the provision of a new driveway leading from this access. No further details such as an existing or proposed elevation drawing of this entrance are provided as part of the application or appeal.
- 10.2.2. I draw the Commission's attention to the fact that the R355 is classified under GCDP Table 6.3 as a 'Restricted Regional Road', with Section 6.5.3.2 (Non-National Roads) seeking to restrict the intensification of existing accesses along this road in order to maintain its efficiency and functionality. This objective is consistent with Section 1.6 of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) which states that *"investment has improved the alignment, surface and safety of major stretches of regional roads, which carry significant volumes of traffic, especially those outside the 50-60 kmh speed limits for cities, towns and villages. For the future, the protection of such capacity and preservation of enhanced safety standards will be important in ensuring that such regional roads can continue to perform important local and regional transportation functions"*. I note that whilst the TII submission made no specific comments on the proposal, it directed the PA to relevant TII and related national policy guidance – including this 2012 guidance.
- 10.2.3. The PA refused permission on the basis of traffic hazard arising from inadequate sightlines at the existing (unauthorised) entrance to the site – an issue which they determined could not be addressed by the applicant undertaking remedial works on account of relevant lands not being in their legal ownership.

- 10.2.4. The PA's refusal reason also refers to the proposal's conflict with DM Standard 33a (Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), Road Safety Audit (RSA) & Road Safety Impact Assessments (RSIA)). This requires all planning applications for significant development proposals to be accompanied by a TTA, RSA and RSIA and to be assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network. Given the nature and small scale of the proposal, I am satisfied that this specific policy objective does not apply. Notwithstanding, I do note that the preceding DM Standard 33 (Traffic Impact Assessment, Traffic & Transport Assessment, Road Safety Audit & Noise Assessment) states that development proposals that the PA consider would pose a safety risk or traffic impact shall be accompanied by an RSA, RSIA and TTA. I note that no such assessments were provided or requested by way of further information.
- 10.2.5. The appellant argues that their submitted documentation illustrates that the existing access is long established and that it has been in continuous use. It is also their view that the PA have not demonstrated consistency in their decision making on the matter of traffic safety, on the basis that permission was previously granted for residential development of the site using the same access under P.A. Refs. 03/7288 and 02/704.
- 10.2.6. In respect to the matter of the site's relevant planning history, I note that the two historic permissions referred to relate to proposals for permission that were assessed under previous development plans and not to the policy and objectives in force under the current Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. In this regard, the appellant was recently refused planning permission under the current plan for the demolition of the existing house and the construction of a new dwellinghouse under P.A. Ref. 23/61015 for 3 no. reasons – one being the issue of traffic safety. The access proposal under this application was largely identical to the one subject to this appeal before the Commission.
- 10.2.7. There is a dispute between the parties as to the planning status of the existing site access which is proposed to serve the dwelling i.e. unauthorised versus established. Whilst I am not satisfied that the maps and other information submitted with the GOA demonstrate that the subject access itself is longstanding or was in place prior to 1963, I consider that its planning status is

not material to the issue of its compliance with DM Standard 28 (Sight Distances Required for Access onto National, Regional, Local and Private Roads). I have reached this view on the basis that this policy requires that *“Vehicular entrances and exit points must be designed by the developer as part of a planning application with adequate provision for visibility so that drivers emerging from the access can enjoy good visibility of oncoming vehicles [et al]”*. It goes on to state that *“Road junction visibility requirements shall comply with Geometric Design of Junctions (priority junctions, direct accesses, roundabouts, grade separated and compact grade separated junctions) (DN-GEO-03060) for rural roads”* and that *“where substantial works are required in order to facilitate the provision of adequate sight distances lands within the sight distance triangles shall be within the control of the applicant and shall be subject of a formal agreement with the adjacent landowner which ensures certainty that the applicant is in a position to comply with the relevant condition and or standard”*.

10.2.8. Table 15.3 (Sight Distances required for Access onto National, Regional and Local Roads) of the GCDP provides for a 160m sightline requirement in respect of roads with a design speed of 85kmph (the R355 is an 80km/hr road) which is consistent with the road/ access requirements from minor roads set out under TII’s DN-GEO-03060. The drawings submitted illustrate that a sightline of c. 200m is achieved to the east of the site. Having visited the site and considered driver visibility looking left (eastwards along the R355) from the entrance, I note that the achievement of the required sightline relies on adjoining land in third party ownership. A c. 145m sightline is shown to the west of the site entrance. This also relies on lands that are not in the ownership of the appellant and is demonstrably below the 160m driver visibility requirement and is therefore contrary to DM Standard 28. The restricted visibility provided for raises legitimate traffic safety concerns given the direction of the traffic flow adjoining the site (which I observed to travel at or close to the design speed of the road), together with the horizontal curvature in the road at this location.

10.2.9. The PA considered that ‘remedial works’ to address the aforementioned traffic safety issue were not achievable on account of land ownership issues and the fact that such works would constitute significant intervention on a Restricted Regional Route. Having regard to the reliance that would be placed on third party

lands to achieve required sightlines, and to the guidance set out under Section 7.3.3 of the Development Management Guidelines on what constitutes an enforceable, effective condition with regard to the maintenance of sightlines, I am not satisfied that this matter could be addressed by condition. Furthermore, notwithstanding the lack of proposals on the file regarding visibility improvement works, having observed the context of the site, it is not apparent to me how the western sightline could be improved without requiring major works, such as the partial realignment of the road, which would not be reasonable or proportionate to the development proposed.

- 10.2.10. I consider that the drawings submitted with the application and appeal are lacking in detail in respect to the measured sightlines. Notwithstanding, based on my inspection of the site, I am also not satisfied that the width of the grass verge separating the access from the R355 carriageway meets the visibility setback requirements of 2.4m specified under DM Standard 28 (thereby giving rise to a material contravention of same) or indeed the reduced standard of 2m set out under Table 5.4 (Distances on the minor road for visibility measurements) of DN-GEO-03060. In light of same, I am of the view that the design and layout of the entrance have the potential to give rise to a significant traffic safety risk which has not be addressed by the appellant.
- 10.2.11. Whilst the appellant argues that the subject access has been in continuous use, I did not observe any evidence of same during my inspection and, on the basis of the condition of the property, I consider that it is reasonable to assume that any recent access and egress has been relatively infrequent. In this context, I consider that the proposal to refurbish the existing dwelling and to extend it in order to increase its size and occupancy level would give rise to a relative intensification in the frequency of use of the access.
- 10.2.12. Therefore, in conclusion, notwithstanding the historic (residential) use of the site, having regard to the current status, design speed and traffic conditions of the adjoining regional road and to the proposal for substandard sightlines which do not comply with DM Standard 28 (and which are not capable of being addressed by condition), I am of the view that the proposal would give rise to an unacceptable traffic hazard which would not be complaint with PO NNR1 which

seeks to safeguard the capacity and safety of Restricted Regional Routes including the R355.

### 10.3. **Other Matters**

#### *Water Supply (New Issue)*

10.3.1. The applicant is proposing to source their potable water via a new connection to the Clontuskert Group Water Scheme. Whilst a letter dated 21/12/2023 from the group Secretary, stating that Muriel Sharpe is a full member of the scheme & has paid for a water connection to same, was provided as part of the application, no information is provided as to the current (2026) capacity status of this scheme, with this oversight being raised as an issue by the PA. This matter was not addressed by the appellant as part of their GOA.

10.3.2. It is noted that permission was previously refused on the same site under P.A. Ref. 23/61015 on the basis that the applicant did not provide sufficient evidence regarding consent for/ status of their proposed potable water supply.

10.3.3. Whilst I consider that the proposal, on account of its nature, size and proposed occupancy levels, would not give rise to significant additional demand for potable water, I am not satisfied based on the information before me in respect to the proposed water supply that it is capable of being adequately serviced. Having regard to the substantive reason for refusal, I do not recommend that this new issue form the basis for a refusal of permission in this instance.

#### *Foul Water*

10.3.4. The appellant proposes to provide a new septic tank with polishing filter and percolation area that will discharge to groundwater.

10.3.5. A Site Characterization Form (SCF) supported by geological maps, photographic evidence of the trial and percolation test holes, information on the selected wastewater treatment system including manufacturing, technical details and construction specifications for the proposed effluent disposal have been submitted with the planning application.

10.3.6. In considering the proposal, GCDP POs WS 7 (Water Quality), WS 8 (Proliferation of Septic Tanks), DM Standard 38 (Effluent Treatment Plants), WW 6 (Private Wastewater Treatment Plants), RH 11 (Waste Water Treatment

Provision) and DM Standard 9 (which requires a min. site size of 2000sq.m where use of an individual on-site wastewater treatment system is proposed) are relevant as they seek to protect water quality and to ensure that that private wastewater treatment systems for individual rural houses comply with the EPA's Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (PE <10) (EPA 2021).

- 10.3.7. I have reviewed the submitted Site Suitability Assessment Report, which indicates the aquifer category as being Locally Important (LI) and having a 'Low' groundwater vulnerability classification. The Groundwater Protection Response Category is identified as 'R2<sub>1</sub>', with the PA noting the protection response as being 'R1' in their report. However, I note that Table E1 (Response Matrix for DWWTSs) of the EPA Code of Practice (CoP) states that the appropriate response to the aforementioned aquifer characteristics is 'R1' - "*Acceptable subject to normal good practice (i.e. system selection, construction, operation and maintenance in accordance with this CoP)*". Having considered the GSI mapping information appended to the submitted Site Characterisation Form, I note that the correct protection response should be 'R1' and I consider it likely that reference to 'R2<sub>1</sub>' is likely a typographical error in the submitted form.
- 10.3.8. I note from the cross section submitted that a minimum unsaturated subsoil depth of 1.2m will be provided for as required by the CoP's Table 6.3: Minimum unsaturated soil and/or subsoil depth requirements. The average P-test subsurface value of 20.97 is also in the DWWTS range of 3-50 for 'Septic tank and percolation area' provided for in the CoP's Table 6.4: Percolation Values.
- 10.3.9. In light of the foregoing considerations, I am of the view that there is adequate information before me to demonstrate the proposal's design compliance with the EPA Code of Practice: Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (2021) and I am satisfied that the proposed DWWTS is suitable for this site and would not give rise to a public health risk. I am therefore satisfied that the delivery of the proposed infrastructure to the required standard can be ensured by condition where the Commission are minded to grant permission.

#### *Surface Water*

- 10.3.10. The applicant proposes to manage and dispose of their surface water run-off via on site soakpits. In considering the proposal, POs WW 7 (Sustainable Drainage Systems), WW 8 (Storm Water Infrastructure) and WS 7 (Water Quality) are relevant.
- 10.3.11. Whilst the submitted Site Layout Map states that “*all uncontaminated surface water to be piped to soakpits on site*”, it is not clear from the information provided where the soakpits are proposed to be located on the site and, as such, it cannot be determined whether or not the proposal is sited in such a way that meets the minimum recommended site feature separation distances. Notwithstanding, I note that the PA did not raise any issue in respect to the proposal’s surface water management or disposal strategy and the fact that the site has demonstrably good soil percolation properties as noted during my observation of the ground conditions during the inspection. I also consider that the scale of the appeal site (0.395ha) and layout of the proposed development would allow for the achievement of the required separation distances.
- 10.3.12. Accordingly, in light of the foregoing considerations, I am satisfied that the delivery of the proposed infrastructure to the required standard can be ensured by condition where the Commission are minded to grant permission.

*Procedural Issue*

- 10.3.13. Whilst I acknowledge the concerns raised in the GOA regarding the accuracy of the PA’s site visit photographs, it does not appear that the appellant was prejudiced by the nature or extent of the site visit photographs contained in the PA’s report. Furthermore, having inspected the site and reviewed the documentation on file, I am satisfied that I have sufficient information before me to continue to assess the development subject of this appeal.

## 11.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission be REFUSED for the reasons and considerations set out below.

## 12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The location of the entrance to the proposed development is directly onto the R355, a Restricted Regional Road, at a location where a speed limit of 80 km/h applies. It is considered that the proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard because of the additional traffic turning movements the development would generate on a regional road at a point where sightlines are restricted and would therefore be contrary to DM Standard 28 (Sight Distances Required for Access onto National, Regional, Local and Private Roads) and Table 15.3 (Sight Distances required for Access onto National, Regional and Local Roads). The likely increase in traffic and additional turning movements created by the development would also interfere with the unobstructed, safe and free flow of traffic on the adjoining regional route and therefore would not be compliant with Section 6.5.3.2 (Non-National Roads) and Policy Objective NNR1 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 which seek to safeguard the capacity and safety of such roads (as listed in Table 6.3), by restricting the intensification of existing accesses, in order to protect their safety and carrying capacity. The proposed development would therefore 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.

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Emma Gosnell  
Planning Inspector  
17<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## Appendix 1: Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

<b>Case Reference</b>	PL-500602-GY-26
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	To renovate and extend existing private dwelling house, install wastewater treatment system and construct private garage/store to include all associated site works.
<b>Development Address</b>	Abbeypark, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe.
	<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 Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.  <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 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?</b>	
<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.  <b>No Screening required.</b>	

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. <b>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. <b>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</b> <b>OR</b> <b>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</b>	Part 2, Class 10(b)(i) Infrastructure – dwelling units – 500 units. Proposal is for 1 no. dwelling unit and is therefore sub-threshold.

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

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

## Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

<b>Case Reference</b>	PL-500602-GY-26
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	To renovate and extend existing private dwelling house, install wastewater treatment system and construct private garage/store to include all associated site works.
<b>Development Address</b>	Abbeypark, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe.
<b>This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.</b>	
<b>Characteristics of proposed development</b> (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>The proposal is for the refurbishment, reuse and extension of an existing, vacant dwelling house and related works on a site of c. 0.365ha. The development is significantly below the class threshold of 500 dwellings.</p> <p>The project due to its size and nature would not give rise to significant use of resources or production of waste during both the construction and operation phases.</p> <p>Further clarification of the proposed water supply might be appropriate; however, significant levels of demand are not anticipated.</p> <p>There is a material issue in terms of road safety arising from the proposed access arrangements.</p> <p>The proposed development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, and is not vulnerable to climate change.</p>
<b>Location of development</b> (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>The site is located in a rural area to the south of Ballinasloe. There is similar low-density rural housing in the wider area.</p> <p>The nearest Natura 2000 sites are the River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097), Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site Code 002213), the River Shannon Callows SAC (Site Code 000216) and the Middle Shannon Callows SPA (Site Code 004096).</p> <p>The site is located in a structurally weak rural area and in Zone 4 – Landscape Sensitivity Category 2 – 4, with a Class 3 - 'Special' landscape sensitivity rating (Map 8.2). There is no other nationally designated site on or in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site.</p> <p>The site is not within a designated ACA and there are no Protected Structures or other Cultural Heritage sites on or immediately adjoining the site.</p> <p>Having regard to the above and the nature and limited scale of the proposed development, I am satisfied that impacts on environmental sensitivities can be adequately assessed in this case without the need for EIA.</p>
<b>Types and characteristics of potential impacts</b> (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters,	Due to the relatively small scale of the development, the site enabling/ demolition and construction stages will not be significant in terms of duration or complexity.

<p>magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).</p>	<p>The main operational impacts would be limited to traffic safety, visual amenity, surface water and the wastewater arising from the site. These elements would be subject to standard assessment/design and while I have outlined concerns with regard to same, I am satisfied that this can be assessed without potential for significant environmental effects that would require EIA. There would be no significant cumulative impacts with other projects.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>	
<b>Likelihood of Significant Effects</b>	<b>Conclusion in respect of EIA</b>
<p><b>There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.</b></p>	<p>EIA is not required.</p>

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

**DP/ADP:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(only where Schedule 7A information or EIAR required).

## Appendix 2 - Appropriate Assessment Screening

<b>Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects</b>	
<b>Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics</b>	
Case file: PL-500602-GY-26	
<b>Brief description of project</b>	Normal planning appeal. To renovate and extend existing private dwelling house, install wastewater treatment system and construct private garage/store to include all associated site works at Abbeypark, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe – see Section 2.0 of Inspector’s Report for further details.
<b>Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms</b>	<p>The appeal site, which is located in the rural townland of Clontuskert in the rural hinterland of Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, comprises of a derelict dwelling set within a large, enclosed site fronting the R355 to the south.</p> <p>Some demolition or site clearance/ enabling works are required in order to facilitate the proposal.</p> <p>The development involves the renovation, refurbishment and extension of an existing derelict dwelling together with ancillary infrastructure – servicing etc. Proposed water supply is via group water scheme. The appellant proposes to dispose of their surface water run-off via a soakpit that will discharge to groundwater. Foul drainage will be dealt with via a new septic tank and polishing filter which will discharge to groundwater – full details in Section 10 of Inspector’s Report.</p> <p>There are no watercourses or other ecological features of note on the appeal site that would connect it directly to European Sites in the wider area. A tributary of the Ballinure River is located c. 500m to the south of the appeal site, this flows north/ northeast and connects into the River Suck c. 2km from the appeal site. It is considered that, given the intervening distance between the site and this watercourse, it provides no potential hydrological connection to any European sites.</p> <p>The appeal site is underlain by the Aughrim groundwater body which also underlays the nearby River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097), Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site Code 002213), the River Shannon Callows SAC (Site Code 000216) and the Middle Shannon Callows SPA (Site Code 004096) and thereby provides a potential indirect hydrological link between the appeal site and these 4 no. European sites.</p> <p>There is considered to be no pathway to any other Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of the appeal site due to the nature and relatively small scale of the development, the location of the appeal site relative to other European sites and the substantial separation distances involved which would give rise to significant intervening dilution effects.</p>
<b>Screening report</b>	No
<b>Natura Impact Statement</b>	No

<b>Relevant Submissions</b>	The PA referred to the application to the relevant prescribed Bodies. A response from TII was received as detailed in Section 3.3 of this report.			
<b>Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model</b>				
Having regard to the source-pathway receptor-model, I consider that there are 4 no. European sites which have the potential to be affected by the proposal. I have excluded all other European sites on the basis of their substantial physical separation from the appeal site and due to the absence of realistic pathways connecting the appeal site to same.				
<b>European Site (code)</b>	<b>Qualifying interests<sup>1</sup> Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)</b>	<b>Distance from proposed development</b>	<b>Ecological Connections<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Consider further in screening<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097)</b>	Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) [A395] Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] Source: NPWS website accessed 02/04/2026.	c. 3km	<b>Yes</b> Potential indirect hydrological connection via groundwater	Yes
<b>Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site Code 002213)</b>	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Source: NPWS website accessed 02/04/2026.	c. 2.5km	<b>Yes</b> Potential indirect hydrological connection via groundwater	Yes
<b>River Shannon Callows SAC (Site Code 000216)</b>	Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) [6510] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Source: NPWS website accessed 02/04/2026.	c. 11km	<b>Yes</b> Potential weak indirect hydrological connection via groundwater	Yes

<b>Middle Shannon Callows SPA (Site Code 004096)</b>	Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] Corncrake (Crex crex) [A122] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] Source: NPWS website accessed 02/04/2026.	c. 11km	<b>Yes</b> Potential weak indirect hydrological connection via groundwater	<b>Yes</b>
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**Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites**

**AA Screening matrix**

Having regard to the comparable impacts and effects arising, I deal with the 4 no. aforementioned SPAs and SACs together below.

Site Name	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*	
	Impacts	Effects
<b>River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097)</b>  <b>Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site Code 002213)</b>  <b>River Shannon Callows SAC (Site Code 000216)</b>  <b>Middle Shannon Callows SPA (Site Code 004096)</b>	Direct: none  Indirect: potential indirect hydrological connections via surface water and foul water to groundwater and/ or via Ballinure River.	The contained nature of the site (relatively defined site boundaries, no direct ecological connections or pathways) and distance from receiving features connected to the SPAs and SACs make it highly unlikely that the proposed development could generate impacts of a magnitude that could affect habitat quality within the SPAs and SACs for the QIs listed in the table above at either construction or operation stage.  In terms of emissions to water, the nearest watercourse is the Ballinure River which is located c. 500m away at its nearest point. With such an intervening distance, it is considered that there is no physical or functional connection between the appeal site and this watercourse and therefore no potential for this watercourse to act as a hydrological pathway to any European sites. The site is also underlain by the Aughrim groundwater body which also underlays the 4 no. aforementioned European sites which are located c. 2.5km – 11km from the appeal site. Notwithstanding the proposed surface water and foul water arrangements, with such a distances, any silts or other potential pollutants entering groundwater via unattenuated run-off at construction stage or via the proposed surface water system or the proposed WWTS during the operational stage, even in the most extreme scenarios, would be completely attenuated by the dilution, dispersal and settlement that would occur within the groundwater system. There is therefore no prospect that materials carried in surface water drainage or foul

		water from the proposed development site, could have any significant effect on the QIs of the aforementioned European sites.  Conservation Objectives would not be undermined.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): <b>No</b>	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? <b>No</b>	
<p><b>Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site</b></p> <p>I conclude that the proposed development (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) would not result in likely significant effects on a European Site. No measures specifically intended to avoid or reduce harmful impacts of the proposed development on European sites were taken into account in reaching this conclusion.</p>		
<p><b>Screening Determination</b>  <b>Finding of no likely significant effects</b></p> <p>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 European Sites, namely the River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097), Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site Code 002213), the River Shannon Callows SAC (Site Code 000216) and the Middle Shannon Callows SPA (Site Code 004096) in view of these sites' Conservation Objectives, and Appropriate Assessment (and submission of a NIS) is not therefore required.</p> <p>This determination is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature and relatively minor scale of the development.</li> <li>• Distance from and weak indirect connections/ ecological pathways to the European sites.</li> </ul>		

## Appendix 3

### WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING

#### Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality

<b>An Coimisiún Pleanála ref. no.</b>	PL-500602-GY-26	<b>Townland, address</b>	Abbeypark, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe
<b>Description of project</b>	To renovate and extend existing private dwelling house, install wastewater treatment system and construct private garage/store to include all associated site works – see Section 2.0 of Inspector’s Report for further details.		
<b>Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,</b>	The site is located in the rural townland of Clontuskert c. 4km to the south of Ballinasloe town centre in Co. Galway. The site itself (c. 0.365ha) is relatively flat and features a disused dwellinghouse. There are no existing watercourses on or immediately adjoining the site. The Ballinure River (EPA Code: IE_SH_26B010400, which has a Poor WFD Status and is At Risk) is located c. 500m to the south of the appeal site. The site is underlain by the Aughrim groundwater body (EPA Code: IE_SH_G_019) which has a Good WFD Status and is Not At Risk.		
<b>Proposed surface water details</b>	The proposed surface water outfall is to groundwater via a soakpits – see Section 10 of this report for further details.		
<b>Proposed water supply source &amp; available capacity</b>	The proposed water supply is via a new connection to a local group water scheme – see Section 10 of this report for further details.		
<b>Proposed wastewater treatment system &amp; available capacity, other issues</b>	The proposed foul water drainage is via a new on-site septic tank system with soil polishing filter and percolation area – see Section 10 of this report for further details.		

Others?	<p>According to OPW mapping (<a href="http://www.floodinfo.ie">www.floodinfo.ie</a> accessed on 02/04/2026), there are no past or predicted flooding events associated with the site.</p> <p>The site is also not located within Fluvial Flood Zone A or Flood Zone B of the GCDP.</p> <p>The closest Natura 2000 sites are as detailed above in Appendices 1 and 2.</p>
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**Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection**

Identified water body	Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
Ballinure River (surface)	c. 500m	Ballinure River (EPA Code: IE_SH_26B010400)	Poor	At Risk	Domestic Wastewater, Agriculture, etc.	No pathway.
Aughrim (groundwater)	Below site	Aughrim groundwater body (EPA Code: IE_SH_G_019)	Good	Not At Risk	n/a	Wastewater & Surface water run-off to groundwater.

**Step 4: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.**

**CONSTRUCTION PHASE**

No.	Component	Water body receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2.
1.	Surface	Ballinure River (EPA Code: IE_SH_26B010 400)	None.	None.	n/a	No.	Screened Out.
2.	Ground	Aughrim groundwater body (EPA Code: IE_SH_G_019)	Surface water run-off.	Water quality degradation.	Best practice construction management measures.	No. Having regard to the limited scale of the works and the application of standard construction practice, I am satisfied that there would be no significant risk.	Screened Out.
<b>OPERATIONAL PHASE</b>							

1.	Surface	Ballinure River (EPA Code: IE_SH_26B010 400)	None.	None.	n/a	No.	Screened Out.
2.	Ground	Aughrim groundwater body (EPA Code: IE_SH_G_019)	Surface water run-off from the site. Foul water.	Water quality degradation.	Surface water collection, treatment and disposal via SuDS (soakpits)  Foul water treatment and disposal via on- site WWTS which is compliant with 2021 EPA CoP.	No. Having regard to the limited scale of the works and the application of mitigation measures, I am satisfied that there would be no significant risk.	Screened Out.
<b>DECOMMISSIONING PHASE</b>							
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A