



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-500840-LH-26

Development	Dwelling house with garage and all site works
Location	Brittas, Grangebellew, County Louth
Planning Authority	Louth County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2560787
Applicant(s)	Sean Philips & Leanne Geoghegan
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refusal
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Sean Philips & Leanne Geoghegan
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	28/04/2026
Inspector	Shane McGlynn

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Appendix 1 – Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

Appendix 2 – Form 2: EIA Preliminary Examination

Appendix 3 – WFD Impact Assessment

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located in the rural townland of Brittas c. 1.7km south of the Grangebellew rural node. The site is approximately 4.7km southeast of Dunleer and 6.7km north of Drogheda in County Louth. The site has a stated area of 0.71 ha and forms part of a larger farm holding within the ownership of the family of one of the applicants (Seán Philips). The site fronts onto and is accessed from the L2275 road to the east. The site is bounded to the south and west by agricultural lands which are part of the overall farmholding within which the site is situated, and to the north by agricultural lands within a separate farmholding and separate ownership.
- 1.2. The site generally slopes downwards in a northwesterly direction, with a maximum overall spot level difference of between 7m and 8m noted. The site is below the level of the adjacent road.
- 1.3. Existing site access is in the form of a metal farm gate set back from the carriageway. The gate provides access to a gravelled track serving the wider farm holding. Hedgerows define the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the site, while the gravelled track along the southern site boundary is lined by a wire fence on both sides.
- 1.4. A number of existing houses on individual plots are noted in the townland of Brittas. Many are accessed directly from the L2275, while others are located within a cluster off the main road with access directly opposite the site. L2275 is a local rural road which connects Drogheda and Grangebellew.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises construction of a detached 4-bedroom dwelling with integrated garage (c. 266 sq.m GFA) and associated works including waste water treatment system and percolation area, on-site soakaway, repurposing of existing access.
- 2.2. The application was accompanied by the following documentation along with standard drawings, statutory requirements etc:
 - Soil Characterisation and Site Suitability Assessment.

- Declarations and drawings detailing legal ownership of site and associated farm holding.
- Personal information provided by the applicant to demonstrate rural housing need.
- Site Landscaping Plan.
- Group Water Scheme Capacity Confirmation.
- Traffic Report on proposed site access.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

On 28th January 2026, Louth County Council issued a decision to refuse permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed dwelling and integrated garage, by reason of its siting and the site's location in an area which has an excessive density and inappropriate suburban pattern of development, would result in the creation of ribbon development. As such, the proposed development would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and would set an undesirable precedent for other similar inappropriate development in the vicinity. Accordingly, the development is considered to be contrary to Sections 13.9.4 (Site Selection) 13.9.5 (Ribbon Development) and Policy Objective HOU 49 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, and would, if permitted, be contrary to the property planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. The proposed development includes the use of the existing agricultural entrance off the public road (L-2275-0). The proposed access would, in combination with the existing entrance opposite the site, create a road safety hazard, including the potential for vehicles to directly cross the public road. Table 13.13 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, sets out the requirements for minimum visibility sightlines to be achieved for new entrances, which in this case is 4.5m x 75m over a height of 0.6-1.05m, above road level to the near side of the road, in both directions. Furthermore,

there is a vertical crest on the road, looking to the north of the site, which raises concerns in relation to the required stopping sight distances being achieved.

On the basis of the details provided, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the required minimum sightline visibility and stopping sight distances can be achieved and accordingly, the development in its current form contravenes Sections 13.9.14, 13.16,17 and Table 13.13 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, and would, if permitted, endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard and the obstruction of other road users.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

- The report of the Planning Authority dated 26th January 2026 includes a general description of the site (including site photographs), planning policy overview, description of the development, internal referrals, EIA and AA screening assessments.
- In their assessment, the planner notes that the supporting details provided by the applicant sufficiently demonstrates their social requirement to reside in the local area and rural housing need in accordance with qualifying criteria 4 of Rural Policy Zone 2 of the County Development Plan.
- With regard to layout in the context of sections 3.17.7 'Capacity of Areas to Absorb Further Development', 13.9.4 'Site Selection' and 13.9.5 'Ribbon Development' of the County Development Plan, the planner highlights the existing proliferation of one-off houses in the area and considers that further such development may erode the rural character of the area. The planner considers that the proposal would create a 'ribbon' of development with reference to the definition provided in the County Development Plan and Appendix 4 of Sustainable Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005).
- Having regard to the ridge height of the dwelling relative to the road level, the planner is satisfied that the design complies with sections 13.9.8 'House

Design – New Build’ and 13.9.9 ‘Design, Detailing and Material Finishes’ of the County Development Plan.

- The planner is satisfied with the private open space provided.
- Having regard to separation distances from neighbouring dwellings and to the design and scale of the proposal, the planner is satisfied that no residential amenity impacts are likely to arise.
- The planner notes insufficient details of the internal farm access route have been provided to allow for full assessment of access. Notes concerns raised in Placemaking & Physical Development Section internal report regarding access and considers that these would need to be fully addressed prior to grant of permission. Considers however that request for further information on these matters would be unreasonable given the fundamental issues identified in respect of ribbon development.
- Considers parking proposals acceptable.
- Notes no site vulnerability to flood risk.
- Water supply connection proposal satisfactory given confirmation of capacity of group water scheme.
- No concerns in relation to proposed Wastewater Treatment System having regard to Environmental Compliance Section internal report.
- Considers proposed soakaway design acceptable given that no concerns raised in Placemaking & Physical Development Section internal report.
- With regard to policy ENV 39 of the County Development Plan, the planner notes that re-location of the vehicular entrance would be required in response to access concerns above and, given this would impact the existing hedgerow boundary, a condition requiring its replacement would be necessary.
- The planner concludes that permission should be refused due to the resultant creation of ribbon development and erosion of rural character, in addition to the unacceptable nature of the proposed access arrangement in respect of infrastructure policy considerations.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- **Environmental Compliance Section:** Report dated 14th January 2026 raised no objection subject to conditions.
- **Placemaking & Physical Development Section:** Report dated 19th January 2026 can be summarised as follows:
 - Preference for vehicular entrance to be relocated north of its current location to create a staggered junction with private lane opposite.
 - Notes minimum sightline requirement of 4.5m x 75m over a height of 0.0-1.05m above road level in both directions per Table 13.13 of the County Development Plan.
 - Concern at vertical crest of with regard to available stopping sight distance (SSD). Revised design demonstrating adequate SSD in accordance with TII publication DN-GEO-03031 'Rural Road Link Design' is required, for 80km/h road with a design speed of 85km/h.
 - Requests entrances gates to be set back at least 5.5m from road edge, entrance splays at 45 degree angle, inward opening gates and gradient not exceeding 2% for first 5 metres.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

None noted.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None noted.

4.0 Planning History

The Planner's Report notes that there is no previous planning history relative to the subject site.

Other Relevant Sites:

I note the following application within the townland of Brittas in proximity to the appeal site, which is of relevance to the assessment of the site context:

PL-500840-LH-26

P.A Ref. 24/60609 Permission GRANTED on 2nd December 2024 at Brittas, Grangebellew, Drogheda, County Louth (consequent on Grant of Outline Permission Ref. No. 21/6) for a dwelling house, waste water treatment system and percolation area, access to site via existing laneway and all associated site works.¹

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

The relevant Development Plan is the Louth County Development Plan, 2021-2027 (as varied) (hereafter, the ‘County Development Plan’).

The appeal site is not subject to any specific land-use zoning. The appeal site is located within Policy Area 2 (Area Under Strong Urban Influence) of Map 3.2, Chapter 3 of the County Development Plan.

The provisions of the County Development Plan relevant to this assessment are as follows:

5.1.1. Chapter 3 (Housing)

Section 3.17.4 Rural Generated Housing Need

Table 3.5 ‘Qualifying Criteria Rural Policy Zone 2 – Area Under Strong Urban Influence’ includes the 8no. possible criteria under which applicants may qualify for rural housing need:

- “4. *A person who is seeking to build their first house in the area and has a demonstrable economic or social requirement to live in that area. Social requirements will be someone who has resided in the rural area of Louth for at least 18 years prior to any application for planning permission. Any applicant under this category must demonstrate a rural housing need and shall not own or have sold a residential property in the County prior to making an application.*”

¹ This site is located within the cul-de-sac of houses opposite to the appeal site, on the eastern side of the L2275.

Policy Objective HOU 43: *To manage the development of rural housing in the open countryside by requiring applicants to demonstrate compliance with the Local Needs Qualifying Criteria relative to the Rural Policy Zone set out in Tables 3.4 and 3.5.*

Policy Objective HOU 44: *To manage the development of rural housing in the open countryside by requiring that any new or replacement dwelling is appropriately designed and located so it integrates into the local landscape and does not negatively impact or erode the rural character of the area in which it would be located.*

Policy Objective HOU 49: *To require applications for one off rural housing to comply with the standards and criteria set out in Section 13.9 of Chapter 13 Development Management Guidelines ‘Housing in the Open Countryside’...*

5.1.2. Chapter 11 (Environment, Natural Resources & The Coast)

Policy Objective ENV 39: *Protect and preserve existing hedgerows in new developments, particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, and where their removal is necessary during the course of road works or other works seek their replacement with new hedgerows of native species indigenous to the area.*

5.1.3. Chapter 13 (Development Management Guidelines)

Section 13.9.4 Site Selection

“When choosing a site careful consideration should be given as to how a dwelling in the chosen location would integrate into the surrounding landscape.”

“If there is an existing proliferation of one-off houses in the area, the local landscape may be at a point where any further development would completely erode the rural character of the area.”

“Areas of the County where the character of the countryside is under severe pressure or being extensively eroded will generally not be suitable for any further development of one-off housing.”

Section 13.9.5 Ribbon Development

“The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines define ribbon development as five or more houses on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage. Ribbon development does not necessarily have to be served by individual accesses nor have a continuous or uniform building line.

Buildings sited back, staggered, or at angles and with gaps between them can still represent ribbon development, if they have a common frontage or they are visually linked.

In cases where a development would create or extend ribbon development, the proposal will not be considered favourably.”

Section 13.9.14 Access

“Applications must demonstrate that a safe access and egress to and from the site on to the public road can be achieved.”

“Sites shall preferably be accessed off existing laneways where possible or by a shared entrance rather than providing a new access/creating a proliferation of accesses directly onto the public road.

The entrance shall be carefully considered to achieve the required sight lines with limited removal of existing hedgerow. Sites where a safe access can only be accommodated by removing a large stretch of roadside hedgerow/ditch/stone should be avoided.”

Section 13.9.17 Wastewater Treatment and Water Supply

“Applicants must satisfy the Planning Authority that the method of disposing of wastewater is fully in compliance with the guidelines and requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ‘Code of Practice; Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤10) or other subsequent standards...”

Section 13.16.17 Entrances and Sightlines

“All new entrances and junctions will require clear and unobstructed sight lines to be provided. These sight lines shall be selected using the applicable road design manual TII Design Manual for Roads and Bridges’ or if the development is in towns and villages or where the speed limit is within the 60km/h zone the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. Any development shall take the following criteria into consideration:

- *The designation of the road, its function in the road hierarchy, and existing/projected volumes of traffic;*
- *The typical speed (not speed limit) of the road;*
- *The vertical and horizontal alignment of the road; and*
- *Any other factors that may be relevant to the location or included in the road design manual.”*

“The following Design Manuals are relevant in the design of new entrances and junctions:

- *Streets and Roads with a speed limit of 60km/h or less – (The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets)...”*

Table 13.13 ‘Minimum visibility standards for new entrances’ sets the following standards for single dwellings on local roads where the speed limit exceeds 60km/h:

- 75m sight distance (Y)
- 0.6-1.05m visibility requirement over ground
- 3.0m distance of sight line from edge of carriageway (X)

5.2. National Planning Framework – First Revision 2025

The NPF is the long-term strategy for planning and sustainable development of urban and rural areas, with the core objectives of securing balanced regional development and a sustainable ‘compact growth’ approach.

National Policy Objective 28: 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.

5.3. Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005

The guidelines state that development plans should facilitate the housing need of the rural community while directing urban generated housing to settlements. They require a distinction to be made between ‘Urban Generated’ and ‘Rural Generated’ housing need. A number of rural area typologies are identified including rural areas under strong urban influence which are defined as those with proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of large cities and towns. Examples are given of the types of circumstances for which ‘Rural Generated Housing Need’ might apply. These include ‘persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community’ and ‘persons working full time or part time in rural areas’.

Appendix 4 of the Guidelines provides guidance for the assessment of ribbon development. The creation of ribbon development is recommended against for reasons relating to “*road safety, future demands for the provision of public infrastructure as well as visual impacts.*” Typical locations for areas characterised by ribbon development are set out and include “*...for example where 5 or more houses existing on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage.*”

Expanding on this, it is stated that an assessment as to whether a proposal would exacerbate ribbon development “*will depend on:*”

- *The type of rural area and circumstances of the applicant,*
- *The degree to which the proposal might be considered infill development, and*
- *The degree to which existing ribbon development would be extended or whether distinct areas of ribbon development would coalesce as a result of the development.”*

Planning Authorities are directed to arrive at a “*balanced and reasonable view*” having regard to the above.

5.4. Other relevant Guidance

5.4.1. Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019, as amended)

Section 4.4.5 Visibility Splays provides that a maximum X distance of 2.4m should be used in order to discourage increased speeds through junctions and the Y distance should correspond to the SSD for the design speed of the major arm.

5.4.2. TII publications DN-GEO-03031 ‘Rural Road Link Design’ (2017, as amended)

Section 1.3 Design Speed Related Parameters sets out desirable minimum values and values at set steps below the desirable minimum for Stopping Sight Distance (SSD) within different design speed bands. The desirable minimum SSD is 160m for the 85km/h design speed band.

5.5. TII Publication DN-GEO-03060 ‘Geometric Design of Junctions (priority junctions, direct accesses, roundabouts, grade separated and compact grade separated junctions)’ (2017, as amended)

Section 5.6.2.2 Visibility – Minor Road/Direct Access: “*The designer shall ensure drivers approaching the junction from the minor road or direct access shall have unobstructed visibility of the junction from a distance corresponding to the desirable minimum SSD for the design speed of the minor road, as described in DN-GEO-03031.*” Table 5.4 sets the required ‘x’ distance on the minor road for visibility measurements, while Table 5.5 sets the required ‘y’ distance.

5.6. Natural Heritage Designations

The appeal site is not located within or immediately adjacent to a designed area, is not in proximity to any European site and does not have any identified potential links to a any European site. With regard to proposed Natural Heritage Areas, the appeal site is located approximately:

- 2.7km south of Barmeath Woods pNHA (site code 001801).
- 3.3km northwest of Blackhall Woods pNHA (site code 001293).
- 5.2km northwest of Castlecoo Hill pNHA (site code 001458).

6.0 EIA Screening

6.1. 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.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

A First Party Appeal was received from the applicants, Seán Phillips and Leanne Geoghegan, against the decision made by the Planning Authority to refuse permission for the proposed development.

The following is a summary of the grounds of appeal:

7.1.1. Ribbon Development (Refusal Reason No. 1):

- Appeal notes that the measured distance between the proposed dwelling and the northernmost house of the 4no. existing houses located along the common road frontage to the L2275 to the north of the site would be 286m.
- Appellant contends that this therefore exceeds the threshold for ribbon development of “*five or more houses on any side of a given 250 metres of road frontage*”, as set out in the County Development Plan and Rural Housing Guidelines and referred to in the planner’s report. A plan drawing seeking to demonstrate this is included.
- Appellant notes dwelling is set back within site and does not form part of continuous frontage. Notes there is no uniform building line.

- Appellant notes the dwelling and adjacent dwellings would not be easily visible from road in front of site due to hedgerow boundary and topography. Photos of site from road have been included to demonstrate this. Therefore, there would be no impression of ribbon development nor urbanising effect on rural character of area.
- Appellant highlights proposed landscaping regime, which would further integrate development into its surroundings and minimise visual impact.
- Appellant offers to amend nature and extent of landscaping and boundary treatments if required.
- Proposal would read as an individual dwelling and thereby remain consistent with the established pattern of development in the locality.
- Proposal would not close a significant visual or spatial gap between dwellings and would not intensify or extend ribbon development.
- Notes other existing dwellings along the road are set back and sited such that no uniform building line exists.

7.1.2. Rural Character (Refusal Reason No. 1):

- Given site topography and existing / proposed landscape screening, no erosion of open or agricultural character of area as dwelling would be visually contained.
- Low-density rural character of area would be maintained.
- Highlights assessment of planner's report which concluded that style and integration into receiving environment was in line with policy.

7.1.3. Local Infrastructure Capacity:

- States that area is well-served by established road, water, electrical and telecommunications infrastructure.
- States there would be no increase in traffic volumes as applicant's already reside in local area.

- Notes that Ballymakenny Group Water Scheme have confirmed connection feasibility and sufficient network capacity, therefore no strain placed on existing water infrastructure.
- Notes existing electricity and telecommunications infrastructure adjacent to the site which can be connected to.
- Notes Environmental Compliance Section recommended grant of permission, thereby confirming wastewater can be satisfactorily managed on site.

7.1.4. Vehicular Entrance Design / Location (Refusal Reason No. 2):

- Considers preference of Planning Authority to relocate vehicular entrance to create a staggered arrangement is not necessary or justified.
- States that the existing vehicular access is long established in continuous use as agricultural entrance without incident.
- Notes there is no record of traffic collisions, safety or operational issues with the entrance.
- Notes entrance has existing continuously since the at least the 1800s, therefore pre-dates Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963.
- Considers existing location at crest of hill allows for optimal sightlines.
- Notes private lane opposite entrance generates very low traffic volumes. Notes staggered junction typically recommended only where volumes exceed 250no. vehicles per day.
- Notes that DMURS does not require staggered entrances for roads with 60km/h speed limit.
- States that notwithstanding, entrance can be designed with gates set back 5.5m from carriageway, inward opening gates, wing walls / fencing splayed at 45 degrees, access gradient not exceeding 2% within first 5m.
- Appellant would accept 4.5m setback and implement necessary works if so determined by Commission.

7.1.5. Visibility and Sightlines (Refusal Reason No. 2):

- Considers the assessment of the Placemaking & Physical Development Section was incorrect. Notes that an 80km/h speed limit is referenced in their report, whereas the speed limit on the adjacent section of the L2275 was reduced to 60km/h in February 2025.
- States that the applicable SSD requirement is therefore 120m as opposed to 160m. States that this can easily be achieved due to available Forward SSD of 160-170m on northern approach.
- Notes guidance of Section 13.16.17 of County Development Plan, which provides that DMURS guidance applies where the speed limit is 60km/h or less. Notes on this basis that the minimum required setback distance is 2.4m.
- Drawing submitted illustrating 75m sight distance achieved for 3m and 4.5m setbacks.
- Notes that 3m setback complies with recommended minimum standard of Table 5.4 of TII Publication DN-GEO-03060.
- Notes 3m setback would preserve hedgerow and rural character, thereby avoid ecological disturbance.
- Concludes that existing sightlines at entrance meet standards set out in national guidance.

7.1.6. Economic and Social Requirement:

- Letter from solicitor provided advising that family landholding and vehicular entrance are long-established and pre-date enactment of Planning Acts.
- Drawing provided to illustrate various family connections and landholdings within 1km of appeal site. Notes appeal site is owned and farmholding actively managed by applicants.
- Further personal details provided regarding direct family ties and provision of care / support by both applicants to family in the local area.
- States relocation outside of locality is not feasible for financial and practical reasons, including those referred to above.
- Applicants consider their circumstances demonstrate rural housing need.

7.1.7. Other Matters:

- States that proposal is site-specific and would not create an undesirable precedent.
- Confirms willingness to comply with reasonable planning conditions that Commission may consider appropriate.

7.2. **Planning Authority Response**

The response from the Planning Authority notes the content of the first-party appeal. The Commission's attention is brought to the planner's reports on file and it is requested that the Commission support the Planning Authority's decision in this instance.

7.3. **Observations**

None.

8.0 **Assessment**

8.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including the contents of the appeal, having inspected the site, and having regard to relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are the reasons for refusal and are therefore as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Siting and Visual Impact
- Access

8.2. **Principle of Development**

8.2.1. Within the grounds of appeal, the applicants provide details of their social and economic ties to area as a means of demonstrating local rural housing need. They expand on the detail provided with the planning application in this regard including providing a map (drawing no. 25_002_06.1 'Social and Economic Ties to the Area') which identifies dwellings and landholdings (both current and historical) in ownership of the applicants and their family within 1km of the appeal site. I note the Planning

Authority accepted the principle of development in their assessment of the application, subject to compliance with other relevant policy requirements.

- 8.2.2. The appeal site is identified on Maps 3.1 and 3.2 of the County Development Plan as being within Rural Policy Zone 2, defined as an 'Area Under Strong Urban Influence'. Accordingly, applicants for rural housing are required to demonstrate compliance with Table 3.5 of the County Development Plan. The applicants have indicated that they wish to qualify under criteria 4 of Table 3.5 and I deem this to be the pertinent criteria having regard to the information they have provided with the application and appeal.
- 8.2.3. For ease of reference, criteria 4 provides that: *"A person who is seeking to build their first house in the area and has a demonstrable economic or social requirement to live in that area. Social requirements will be someone who has resided in the rural area of Louth for at least 18 years prior to any application for planning permission. Any applicant under this category must demonstrate a rural housing need and shall not own or have sold a residential property in the County prior to making an application."*
- 8.2.4. One of the applicants has provided official documentation including a Birth Certificate, records of employment and educational records to demonstrate that they have been resident in the area for at least 18 years prior to the lodgement of the subject application. I also note that the indicated location of the applicant's family home is within 1km of the appeal site. A signed declaration from both applicants has been submitted which states that they have not at any time owned or jointly owned any house or dwelling in County Louth. A folio and accompanying letter submitted with the application confirm that the appeal site and wider farmholding have been in the applicant's family ownership for in excess of 15 years.
- 8.2.5. In addition, I note the further details provided in the grounds of appeal in respect of the social requirement. I note the personal details and information provided regarding the applicant's family ties to the area, as well as their statement that they are actively managing the farmholding.
- 8.2.6. I accept that the applicants' have demonstrated a social requirement to reside in the local area and I consider that the information provided by the applicants with the

application and appeal satisfactorily demonstrates compliance with the social requirement under criteria 4 of Table 3.5 of the County Development Plan.

8.3. **Siting**

- 8.3.1. The Planning Authority's first reason for refusal refers to non-compliance of the proposed development with Sections 13.9.4 (Site Selection), 13.9.5 (Ribbon Development) and Policy Objective HOU 49 of the County Development Plan, noting that the appeal site is located in an area which has an excessive density and inappropriate suburban pattern of development. The Planning Authority consider that the development would thereby result in the creation of ribbon development.

Rural Character Impact

- 8.3.2. In respect of rural character impact, the planner's report noted the existing proliferation of one-off houses in the area and considered that further such development may erode the rural character of the area. Responding to this, the applicants contend in the grounds of appeal that the low-density character of the rural area would be maintained. This argument is not extrapolated on further in the grounds of appeal.
- 8.3.3. Section 13.9.4 of the County Development Plan provides guidance on selecting sites for rural housing. It provides that where there is existing proliferation of one-off houses in an area, the local landscape may be at a point where any further development would completely erode the rural character of the area. Areas where the rural character is under severe pressure or being extensively eroded will generally not be suitable for any further development of one-off housing.
- 8.3.4. With regard to landscape character impact, I note that the site is not located within any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Area of High Scenic Quality, nor located on any Scenic Routes, as identified on Maps 8.15 and 8.20 of the County Development Plan, and neither is the site located within any Views and Prospects identified in Section 8.12.3 (Views and Prospects of Special Amenity Value) of the County Development Plan. I therefore consider that relevant landscape character impacts in this case relate to short views of the site within its local rural context and in from the local road onto which the site fronts.

- 8.3.5. I note that there is a concentration of existing rural dwellings in the vicinity of the site, accessed either directly from the L2275 or on rural clusters / spur roads off the L2275. The rural area in which the site is located is not a designated rural node and is physically separate from the Grangebellew rural node (as delineated on Map 3.2 of the County Development Plan). Both sides of the L2275 in the vicinity of the site are characterised by linear housing development patterns. A cluster of approximately 7no. houses is also located off the L2275 directly opposite the site. I note also that there is extant permission for development of an eighth house within this cluster (see Planning History above).
- 8.3.6. I would define this context for the appeal site as an existing concentration of housing within the open countryside, which presents as a suburban and linear pattern of development. I therefore concur with the Planning Authority that there is an existing proliferation of rural housing in the area and I consider that the character of the rural area within which the appeal site is located has already been significantly eroded.
- 8.3.7. In terms of the site selection for the proposal within this site context, I note that the appeal site does not constitute a gap site. It is located south of a row of 4no. consecutive dwellings each with separate site access off the L2275. I would again highlight that the site and surrounding dwellings do not constitute a designated rural node and are located within the open countryside, which bounds the appeal site to the south and west. I also note that the proposal would appear to result in the creation of a gap site immediately to the north, on a plot bounded by the adjacent dwelling and polytunnels.
- 8.3.8. Having regard to the guidance of Section 13.9.4 of the County Development Plan, having assessed the context and settlement pattern of the existing rural townland in which the site is located, and given the specific location of the site relative to the rural environment, I conclude that the proposed additional dwelling would extend the unsuitable suburban and linear settlement pattern into the open countryside, would exacerbate an existing proliferation of rural housing, and would in this way further erode the rural character of the rural townland of Brittas in County Louth.
- 8.3.9. Having regard to the foregoing assessment, I consider that the proposal would conflict with the guidance of Section 13.9.4 of the County Development Plan by

exacerbating existing proliferation of one-off housing in an area in which the rural character of the open countryside has already been significantly eroded.

Ribbon Development

- 8.3.10. The Planning Officer's report considered that the proposed development would create a ribbon of development and refers in this regard to the 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines' (2005) definition of "*5 or more houses existing on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage*". The report also states that the proposal would exacerbate the existing settlement pattern in this regard.
- 8.3.11. The applicants contend in the grounds of appeal that the proposal does not fit the definition of ribbon development as set out in the County Development Plan and Rural Housing Guidelines, highlighting that the proposed dwelling and 4no. adjacent dwellings to the north along the L2275 are not encompassed within a distance of 250m. The appellant highlights that the proposal would not result in continuous building frontage along this section of road and that the retained hedgerow, site topography, setback distance and re-purposing of the existing vehicular entrance ensure visibility of the proposed dwelling from the roadside is minimised.
- 8.3.12. Section 13.9.5 of the County Development Plan defines ribbon development as 5 or more houses on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage, with reference to the definition of a typical example of ribbon development contained in the Rural Housing Guidelines (2005). The appellants make the case that the dwellings themselves exceed the 250m threshold and they have provided a drawing (Appendix A of the appeal) which illustrates a straight-line distance of c. 286m distance between the north façade of the proposed dwelling and the southern façade of the northernmost of the 4no. dwellings located along the western side of the L2275. I note that this drawing demonstrates that proposal would not create a ribbon development in accordance with the definition provided in Section 13.9.5 of the County Development Plan.
- 8.3.13. Separately, I also note the appellants highlight the lack of continuous building frontage, repurposing of the existing vehicular access and setting back of the dwelling within the site as additional mitigating factors in respect of ribbon development, however I note the County Development Plan states that these factors do not necessarily preclude a proposal from being considered ribbon development.

8.3.14. Notwithstanding that the proposal does not meet the definition for ribbon development provided in Section 13.9.5 of the County Development Plan, I consider that it would conflict with Section 13.9.4 of the County Development Plan by extending an unsuitable suburban and linear settlement pattern and exacerbating existing proliferation of one-off housing in an area in which the rural character of the open countryside has already been significantly eroded, as I have set out in my assessment above.

Summary

8.3.15. Having considered all the information provided in the application and appeal and having assessed the context of the appeal site, I consider that the proposed development is contrary to Section 13.9.4 of the County Development Plan for the reasons set out above.

8.3.16. I accept the applicants have satisfactorily demonstrated a genuine housing need within the local rural area, acknowledging in particular their strong personal and familial connections and I recognise the importance of facilitating rural housing need where appropriate. However, any assessment of rural housing must have regard to the wider planning and environmental context, including the protection of rural character and the development of sustainable settlement patterns. In this instance, the proposal would extend an existing linear pattern of development further into the open countryside and would contribute to the continued proliferation of sporadic rural housing in an area where the rural character has already experienced significant erosion. I therefore do not consider that the siting of the dwelling is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

8.3.17. Notwithstanding that a legitimate housing need has been established, the demonstration of such need does not inherently overcome the significant concerns which arise from the location and siting of the proposed dwelling. On balance, I consider that the adverse impact on the rural character of the area warrants a refusal of permission in this case. I recommend that permission be refused on this basis.

8.4. Access / Traffic Safety

8.4.1. The Planning Authority considered that the proposed vehicular access arrangement would give rise to traffic hazard and refused permission on this basis, citing a

number of specific concerns and noting non-compliance with sections 13.9.14, 13.16.17 and Table 13.13 of the County Development Plan.

- 8.4.2. Section 13.9.14 requires safe access to and egress from the public road is demonstrated in respect of new entrances. Access via a shared entrances is preferred and I note the proposed development fulfils this preference by repurposing the existing agricultural entrance to serve both the farmholding and the proposed dwelling. It is also stated that the removal of a large stretch of hedgerow to accommodate an entrance and associated visibility should be avoided, and I note that is dependent in this case on the degree of setback from the carriageway required to achieve adequate visibility, as discussed below.
- 8.4.3. I wish to highlight to the Commission at the outset that the report of the Planning Authority's Placemaking & Physical Development Section refers to the road as "*an 80km/h road with a design speed of 85km/h*". The grounds of appeal state that the section of the L2275 onto which the appeal site fronts is subject to a 60km/h speed limit, which was implemented in February 2025, in accordance with the provisions of the Road Traffic Act (2024), under which default speed limits on rural local roads were reduced from 80km/h to 60km/h. I note from my site inspection that a 60km/h speed limit is in place along the section of the L2275 onto which the appeal site fronts. My assessment of access / traffic safety proceeds on the basis of this current speed limit of 60km/h.

Visibility

- 8.4.4. The Planning Authority's assessment and recommended decision to refuse permission refers to non-compliance with the visibility standards set out in Table 13.13 of the County Development Plan, however I note that the preamble text for this Table clarifies that these standards only apply where the speed limit exceeds 60km/h. I have therefore undertaken my assessment on the basis that the standards of Table 13.13 are not applicable in this case.
- 8.4.5. Section 13.16.17 of the County Development Plan provides guidance for determining the appropriate sight lines that need to be demonstrated for new entrances, and I note that it is explicitly set out that sightlines are to be selected using DMURS for roads with a speed limit of 60km/h.

- 8.4.6. In relation to visibility, I note that DMURS standards, allow for the 'X' distance (i.e setback from the carriageway) to be determined on the basis of the speed limit, however the standards provide that the 'Y' distance (i.e the visibility along the arm of the major road) should be determined on the basis of design speed. Therefore, in the case of a rural local road with a 60km/h speed limit, the design speed of the road is also essential for determining visibility requirements, in accordance with DMURS and by extension Section 13.16.17 of the County Development Plan.
- 8.4.7. DMURS prescribes a maximum 'X' distance of 2.4m in this case and I note that this maximum 'X' distance can be achieved at the proposed vehicular entrance, as demonstrated by the sightline drawings provided in Appendix B of the appeal.
- 8.4.8. DMURS states that the 'Y' distance should correspond to the SSD for the design speed of the major arm. In relation to the 'Y' distance, I note again that a design speed of 85km/h for the road is stated in the Placemaking & Physical Development Section's report. While the Planning Authority's technical assessment refers to a now superceded speed limit, there is no information on file within the application or appeal which specifically refutes the stated design speed and I have accordingly assessed the required SSD on the basis of an 85km/h design speed for the section of roadway adjacent to the appeal site.
- 8.4.9. I note that Table 4.2 of DMURS sets SSD standards for different road design speeds, however it does not provide standards for design speeds above 60km/h. Given that the adjacent section of the L2275 is a rural road with a 60km/h speed limit with an identified design speed of 85km/h, in the absence of clear guidance in the County Development Plan regarding the applicable SSD and sightline standards in this case as set out above, I consider that TII publications DN-GEO-03031 and DN-GEO-03060 are the relevant policy documents providing guidance on SSD. These documents establish that the desirable minimum SSD is 160m in both directions for junctions and vehicular entrances onto roads with a design speed of 85km/h.
- 8.4.10. The applicants state in the grounds of appeal that a Forward SSD of 160-170m is available on the northern approach to the proposed entrance, however no drawing has been provided with the application or appeal to demonstrate this (only a 75m sightline is demonstrated) and no details or drawing has been provided in relation to SSD along the carriageway to the south of the proposed vehicular entrance. From

my site inspection, I observed that the vertical alignment of the carriageway appeared to restrict visibility and sightlines at the vehicular entrance, in both directions.

8.4.11. In the absence of clear illustration that adequate SSD is achieved in both directions from the proposed vehicular entrance, including a lack of technical details of the alignment and physical geometry of the road, and having regard to the potentially restricted visibility along the road at the vehicular entrance which I observed during my site inspection, I concur with the Planning Authority's assessment that adequate sightlines and SSD have not been demonstrated in this case. I consider on this basis that the applicants have not sufficiently demonstrated that safe access and egress to and from the site on to the public road can be achieved.

8.4.12. I consider that safe vehicular access and egress to the proposed dwelling from the public road has not been adequately demonstrated by the applicants in the application or grounds of appeal, in particular because adequate visibility and SSD have not been demonstrated in accordance with TII publications DN-GEO-03031 (2017, as amended) and DN-GEO-03060 (2017, as amended), which I determine to be the relevant standards in this case having regard to the requirements of Section 13.16.17 of the County Development Plan. The proposal therefore contravenes Sections 13.9.14 (Access) and 13.16.17 (Entrances and Sightlines) of the County Development Plan and I consider on this basis that the proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard.

Staggered Junction

8.4.13. The Planning Authority's second reason for refusal states that the proposed entrance would give rise to a road safety issue due to the resulting 4-arm junction it would create with the L2275 and cul-de-sac road opposite, given that traffic could directly cross the L2275 road. The Placemaking & Physical Development Section's report notes the Planning Authority's preference that the existing agricultural entrance be extinguished and a re-located entrance provided to the north within the site boundary in order to create a staggered junction.

8.4.14. The appellants have argued in the grounds of appeal that the preferred re-location of the entrance and creation of a staggered junction is not necessary or justified. They note that the existing agricultural entrance is located at the crest of a hill allowing for

optimal sightlines, note again that the entrance is long-established and has never given rise to traffic safety issues and note that the cul-de-sac generates very low traffic volumes.

- 8.4.15. I wish to highlight to the Commission that no proposed alternative or optional alternative access location has been presented by the applicants in grounds of appeal in response to the Planning Authority's concerns.
- 8.4.16. Regarding the long-established nature of the existing entrance, I consider that the proposal will alter the nature and intensity of vehicular use of the existing entrance and therefore an assessment of safe access is appropriate in this case in accordance with the guidance of Section 13.9.14 of the County Development Plan, which requires that safe access and egress from the public road is demonstrated in respect of entrances for rural dwellings.
- 8.4.17. The County Development Plan does not provide specific policy or design guidance for junction layouts on rural roads. I note that the applicants do not have control over the junction which adjoins the proposed site entrance and I consider that a requirement to alter the design or layout of the junction to improve safe access through it would be beyond the scope of the subject application and beyond the scope of the guidance of Section 13.9.14 of the County Development Plan.
- 8.4.18. I can confirm from my site inspection that the proposed site entrance location is at the crest of the hill as stated in the grounds of appeal. I consider that a requirement to relocate the entrance northwards within the front site boundary, as per the Planning Authority's stated preference in this case, would likely have a negative impact on visibility that could be achieved for vehicles exiting the site, in particular the vertical alignment along the southern approach to the site.
- 8.4.19. Having regard to the foregoing, I do not consider that the concerns raised by the Planning Authority in their reasons for refusal regarding road safety issues arising at the existing junction as a result of the proposed site entrance constitute a sufficient reason for refusal in this instance. Given that the proposal is for a single dwelling and would not significantly impact local traffic as I have set out below, and having regard to the moderate traffic volumes and traffic patterns which I observed during my site inspection, I consider that the proposed vehicular entrance would not present a significant road safety issue solely by reason of the existing junction arrangement

adjacent to it. However, I would again highlight the road safety issues in relation to visibility along the major arm at the proposed vehicular entrance, which I have separately identified above in this report.

Traffic Volumes

8.4.20. The appellants state in the grounds of appeal that the proposal would not generate any meaningful increase in traffic volumes. No traffic data for the existing road network has been provided in the application or appeal. I note from observations during my site inspection that traffic volumes on the L2275 appeared to be more frequent than would be expected for a low-order rural road, which suggests to me that the road may accommodate a significant amount of through traffic rather than simply providing local access to dwellings and agricultural lands. However, in the absence of traffic data, I cannot make a definitive assessment of traffic volumes or prevailing traffic speeds on the road. I consider that traffic movements associated with a single dwelling would not give rise to such an increase in movement as to have a significant impact on local traffic volumes or have a detrimental impact on the carrying capacity of the road at this point.

8.5. **Other Issues**

Water Supply

8.6. The appellants propose to connect to the Ballymakenny Group Water Scheme. Confirmation of sufficient capacity and connection feasibility have been included with application. I note that Planning Officer's report considered the water supply connection proposal to be satisfactory given the confirmation of capacity provided for the group water scheme. I have assessed the proposals with regard to the objectives set out in Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive (see Section 10.0 of this report below) and consider them to be compliant with the relevant requirements.

Wastewater Treatment

8.6.1. The appellants state within the grounds of appeal that wastewater can be adequately managed on site without risk to public health or the environment and note that the Planning Authority's Environmental Compliance Section report recommended a grant of permission subject to standard conditions. I note the Site Characterisation and Site Suitability Assessment Report (SAR) submitted with the application

concludes that the type of treatment system proposed is appropriate for the site and complies with the guidance of the EPA Code of Practice (2021).

- 8.6.2. The submitted SAR identifies the soil as Gleys (80%) and Grey Brown Podzolics (20%) with the subsoil being sandstone and shale till and bedrock being Silurian Metasediments and Volcanics. Depth to groundwater in the trial hole was encountered at 2.20m BGL, while winter groundwater was encountered at a depth of 1.20m. No bedrock was encountered.
- 8.6.3. The percolation tests yielded subsurface values of 43.22min/25mm and I am satisfied that the T-test results were carried out and calculated properly, that the percolation testing was carried out in compliance with the CoP and that the results are consistent with the ground conditions I observed during my site visit. Based on the percolation values returned, having regard to the separation distances (e.g. to nearest waterbodies, road, site boundary, trees, soakaway, drainage ditches), and having considered possible impacts to waterbodies in accordance with the objectives of the WFD (see section 10.0 and Appendix 2 of my report below), I agree that the conclusion of the report is supported by the guidance of the EPA CoP.

Hedgerows

- 8.6.4. I note from the plans submitted with the appeal that a degree of hedgerow removal would be required to facilitate sightlines in circumstances where a setback of more than 3m from the carriageway is required in respect of the proposed vehicular entrance. I note also that hedgerow removal would be required in circumstances where the vehicular entrance is re-located within the front site boundary, as per the stated preference of the Planning Authority.
- 8.6.5. If the Commission are minded grant permission for a vehicular entrance design which results in the removal of existing hedgerows, I recommend that a condition is attached which takes account of the requirements of Policy Objective ENV 39, which accordingly requires the replacement of such hedgerows with new hedgerows of native species indigenous to the area.
- 8.6.6. I wish to again highlight to the Commission at this juncture my assessment above in respect of access / traffic safety, in particular my conclusions that an alternative entrance location within the front site boundary would not be suitable in this case and that a 2.4m setback distance of the vehicular entrance from the carriageway would

be sufficient in accordance with the applicable standards of DMURS and the County Development Plan.

9.0 AA Screening

- 9.1. I have considered the development seeking permission in light of the requirements of S177U the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is not located within or adjacent to any European Site. The appeal site is located within 7km of Dundalk Bay SPA, within 9km of Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC, within 9km of Boyne Estuary SPA and within 9km of River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC, the nearest European Sites.
- 9.2. The development for which permission is sought consists of the construction of a new single storey dwelling house with integrated garage and associated works including wastewater treatment system and percolation area, on-site soakaway, repurposing of existing access.
- 9.3. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any appreciable effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- The works are limited in scale.
 - Due to the distance of the site and intervening land uses from any SAC and SPA, no impacts/ effects are predicted in this regard.
 - There are no identifiable hydrological/ecological connector pathways between the application and the SAC or SPA.
- 9.4. I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (stage 2) (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended) is not required.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

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

11.0 Recommendation

- 11.1. I recommend that permission be refused for the following reasons.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The proposed dwelling and integrated garage, by reason of its siting and the site's location adjacent to an unsuitable suburban and linear settlement pattern within a rural townland of Brittas in County Louth, would result in the extension of this settlement pattern into the open countryside, which would exacerbate an existing proliferation of rural housing and further erode the rural

character of the townland. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to Section 13.9.4 and Policy Objective HOU 49 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. On the basis of the information submitted and available, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed vehicular access would not result in the creation of a traffic hazard due to inadequate visibility and stopping sight distance having regard to the geometry and design speed of the public road. The proposal would thereby endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard, result in the obstruction of other road users, would be contrary to Section 13.9.14 and Section 13.16.17 of the Louth County Development Plan, 2021-2027 (as varied) and 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 me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.”

Shane McGlynn
Planning Inspector
15th June 2026

Appendix 1 - Form 1

EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-500840-LH-26
Proposed Development Summary	Dwelling house with garage and all site works
Development Address	Brittas, Grangebellew, County Louth
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.	
<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.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold.	

<p>✓ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.</p> <p>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</p>	<p>10 (b)(i): Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.</p> <p>10 (b)(iv): Urban Development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.</p> <p>15: Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development, but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.</p>
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<p>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)?</p>	
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)</p>

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 - Form 1
EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	PL-500840-LH-26
Proposed Development Summary	Dwelling house with garage and all site works
Development Address	Brittas, Grangebellew, County Louth
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.	
Characteristics of proposed development (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	The proposed development consists of planning permission for 1 no. dwelling and all associated site works. The development consists of typical construction and related activities and site works. The proposed works do not result in the production of significant waste, emissions or pollutants. Surface water will be discharged to an on-site soakaway. Wastewater will be discharged to on-site wastewater treatment system. Confirmation of connection feasibility to group water scheme with adequate capacity.
Location of development (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, absorptions capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	The appeal site is located in the rural townland of Brittas, Co. Louth. There are no significant sensitivities in the immediate area. The subject site is not located within a designated site and is not in proximity to a designated site. My appropriate assessment screening concludes that the proposed development would not likely have a significant effect on any European site. The subject site is not located within a flood risk area.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	The size of the site and development is not exceptional in the context of an urban environment. The proposed development is a relatively small development in a rural context. There is no real likelihood of significant cumulative effects within the existing and permitted projects in the area.
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 3 – WFD Impact Assessment

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING TABLE			
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality			
An Coimisiún Pleanála ref. no.	PL-500840-LH-26	Townland, address	Brittas, Grangebellew, County Louth
Description of project		Dwelling house with garage and all site works	
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,		The site is in agricultural use and is located within a rural area and situated adjacent to a cluster of single rural dwellings. The Louth groundwater body (IEGBNI_NB_G_019) underlies the site and the site is located c. 250m southeast of the Slieveboy River (IE_NB_06S160790). The subsoil type on site is identified as sandstone and shale till.	
Proposed surface water details		Surface water run off to soakpit.	
Proposed water supply source & available capacity		Ballymakenny Group Water Scheme. Confirmation of sufficient capacity and connection feasibility included with application.	
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues		On-site wastewater treatment system (O'Reilly Oakstown Treatment System).	

Others?	No.
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Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection

Identified water body	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) (Consider all phases)	Mitigation Measures proposed	Is mitigation sufficient? Will there be any residual impacts?
Groundwater Waterbody	Louth (IEGBNI_NB_G_019)	Good	Not at risk		Drainage to ground	Standard Construction practice, and condition requiring the submission of a Construction Management Plan. Domestic wastewater treatment system which complies with EPA Code of Practice (2021). The development will implement	No residual impacts anticipated.

						standard, best practice SUDS measures to control the quality and quantity of surface water run-off measures in compliance with LCDP sustainable drainage policies.	
River waterbody	SLIEVEBOY_010 (IE_NB_06S160790)	Moderate	Review		No direct pathways identified. Indirect hydrological pathways via surface water run-off and groundwater.	Standard Construction practice, and condition requiring the submission of a Construction Management Plan. Domestic wastewater treatment system which complies with EPA Code of Practice (2021). The development will implement standard, best practice SUDS measures to control the quality and quantity of surface water run-off measures in compliance with	No residual impacts anticipated.

						LCDP sustainable drainage policies.	
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