



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-501144-MO-26

Development

Conversion of attic space into an office and gym area, installation of gable window, velux windows, first floor external door and external stairwell all of which is to service the proposed conversion and all ancillary site works.

Location

No. 2 Haws Lane, Doogort, Achill,
County Mayo, F28 X952.

Planning Authority

Mayo County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

2660035

Applicant(s)

Ruiadhri Ua Fearghail

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Grant Permission + Conditions

Type of Appeal

First Party Normal Planning Appeal

Appellant(s)

Ruiadhri Ua Fearghail

Observer(s)

None

Date of Site Inspection

1st June 2026

Inspector

Kathy Tuck

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site which has a stated area of c. 0.037ha and is located within the townland of Doogort, Achill. Access to the appeal site is provided from the L-1406-51.
- 1.2. The appeal site comprises of a single storey dwelling which is located in a crescent-shaped cul-de-sac alongside three other detached dwellings.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. This is an application for permission for the conversion of the existing attic space of an existing single storey type dwelling house into an office and gym area, installation of gable window, roof light, first floor external door and external stairwell all of which is to service the proposed conversion and all ancillary site works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

The Planning Authority, following a request for further information, issued a decision to grant planning permission on the 18th March 2026 subject to 8 no. conditions. Conditions of note are as follows:

Condition no. 2

The proposed dwelling house shall be amended as follows:

- a) The external stairwell shall be omitted. The door on the first-floor rear elevation shall be omitted and replaced with a window.
- b) Revised drawings showing compliance with these requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity and character of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The report of the Planning Officer provides details of the site description, proposed services, planning policy, planning history of the site, details of internal and external consultee reports, provides a summary of submissions received and provides for an AA and EIA Screening determination.

The assessment noted concerns regarding the proposed external stairwell as shown on the plans and elevations received, that if permitted would alter a single dwelling house into two separate apartments and as such would have a negative impact on the character, and visual amenity of the area. As such the Planning Officer issued the following request for further information on the 10th February 2026:

Item 1

The applicant shall submit revised drawings showing how it is proposed to access the proposed attic conversion internally, as this would be a necessary requirement of any such propose.

The applicant issued a response to the Planning Authority on the 6th March 2026 which included revised plans to show access to the proposed attic conversion via the ground floor of the dwelling.

The planning officer was satisfied with the internal access and stated that the external stairwell shall be omitted by condition.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Area Engineer – noted no objection.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

None received.

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

The Planning Authority received 1 no. submission which can be summarised as follows:

- concern was raised regarding the protection of the neighbouring property and land.
- concern was raised also that this extension would be for commercial reasons.
- concern regarding overlooking on to the neighbouring property.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. None relevant to this case.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028

The appeal site is situated within the settlement area of Dugort which is identified as a Tier 5 Rural Village Consolidation Zone.

Relevant Objections: Volume 1 Written Statement.

Objective RHO 10 – To require that any proposal to extend/refurbish an existing rural dwelling house, occupied or otherwise, takes account of the siting and size of the existing building and endeavours to ensure that the design, scale and materials used in the refurbishment and/or extension are in keeping and sympathetic with the existing structure and that mature landscape features are retained and enhanced, as appropriate.

Relevant Section – Volume 2: Development Management Standards .

Section 2.7: Rural Housing Extensions

Rural Housing 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 of the existing dwelling, 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.
- Carefully consider site coverage to avoid unacceptable loss of private open space.

Where an extension increases the potential occupancy of the dwelling, the adequacy of the on-site sewage treatment (in unsewered areas) should be demonstrated by the applicant.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The appeal is situated c.270m to the east and c.312m to the south of the Croaghaun/Slievemore SAC (Site Code 001955) and the Croaghaun/Livermore pNHA (site code 001955). The site is also situated c.2.1km to the north of the Keel Machair/Menaun Cliffs SAC (Site code 001513). The Doogort East Bog pNHA (site code 002381) is situated c.479m to the east.

6.0 EIA Screening

- 6.1. The proposed development does not come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA, that is, it does not comprise construction works, demolition or intervention in the natural surroundings. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

A first party appeal was lodged against condition no. 2 of PA Ref 26/60036 (which relates to a omitted part of the development proposed. The grounds of the appeal as follows:

The inclusion of the external stairwell will increase residenail amenity of the residents:

- Location of internal stairwell imposes sever discomfort of occupant of bedroom where it is located:
 - Limited in size and causes traffic through the bedroom.
- Bedroom occupied by owners of the dwelling who are elderly and the only access to the extended area will cause them discomfort.
- Position of internal stairwell was included following a request for further information – was a mistake given the lack of space as it was originally intended to place a stira at this location as a suitable emergency exit.

- Character of area will not be negative impacted as stairwell will not be visible from any adjoining dwelling – located to the rear of the house.
- No issued of overlooking.
- There is an external stairwell situated 200m from appeal site – visible to passers-by. There is also more examples within the vicinity images attached in Appendix B.
- Family-owned dwelling – no intention to sublet.
- Request condition no. 2 is removed.

7.2. **Planning Authority Response**

None received.

7.3. **Observations**

None received.

8.0 **Assessment**

8.1. **Introduction**

- 8.1.1. A first party appeal against Condition no. 2 of Planning Authority Reference 26/60506 was made under the provisions of Section 48(10)(b) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, and therefore the Commission is restricted to consideration of Condition No. 2 only. My assessment is confined to issues raised with regards to condition no. 2.

8.2. **Condition no. 2**

- 8.2.1. Condition no. 2 requires the omission of the proposed external stairwell and the replacement of such with a window ope. The Planning Officer in their assessment noted concern that the stairwell would give rise to a negative impact on the character, and visual amenity of the area. It was further considered that the inclusion of the external stairwell would alter a single dwelling house into two separate apartments.

- 8.2.2. The existing dwelling is situated within a cul-de-sac which comprises of 3 additional bungalow dwellings. The rear (western) elevation of the dwelling addresses an area of overgrown mature trees and hedging and is not readily visible from the streetscape of the cul-de-sac area. From undertaking a site visit I note that the dwelling has been positioned on site that when one is in the rear private amenity space serving the dwelling that there is no opportunity to overlook into the private amenity serving any adjoining dwelling due to their positioning on their individual sites.
- 8.2.3. Therefore, I do not accept the concern raised by the Planning Officer as the structure will not be readily visible and will not impact negatively on the residential amenities of the adjoining properties in terms of overlooking. In addition, plans submitted in response to the request for further information provide for an internal access to the attic level.
- 8.2.4. Furthermore, the statutory notice associated with the subject application is seeking permission for the conversion of the attic area to serve as an office and gym area and not living space. Condition no. 1 of the grant of permission requires the *“development shall be carried out in accordance with the site layout plan, plans, elevations and documentation submitted to Mayo County Council on 5th January 2026 and revised floor plans received on 6th March 2026 in response to Further information request ...”*. Therefore if the applicant was to provide for habitable accommodation at 1st floor level the development would not be in compliance with permission granted and it would therefore be an issue to be dealt with by enforcement.
- 8.2.5. In conclusion, I recommend that the Planning Authority be instructed to omit condition no. 2 of the grant of permission issued.

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1. I recommend that the Planning Authority be directed to omit condition no. 2 of Planning Authority Ref 26/60035 for the reasons and considerations set out below.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the proposed location of the external stairwell which is situated to the rear of the existing dwelling, it is considered that the feature which is not readily visible

from the streetscape would not give rise to any issues of negative impact upon the visual or residential amenity current enjoyed in the vicinity of the appeal site. Therefore, the proposed development would be in keeping with 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.”

Kathy Tuck

Planning Inspector

26th June 2026

Appendix 1

Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-501144-MO-26
Proposed Development Summary	Conversion of attic space into an office and gym area, installation of gable window, velux windows, first floor external door and external stairwell all of which is to service the proposed conversion and all ancillary site works.
Development Address	No. 2 Haws Lane, Doogort, Achill, Co. Mayo
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA?	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q.2.
	☐ No, No further action required.
(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)	
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	

☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
☒ 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?	
☒ No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR	State the Class and state the relevant threshold

If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes ☐	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2

AA Screening Determination

Screening the need for Appropriate Assessment: Screening Determination (Stage 1, Article 6(3) of Habitats Directive)

I have considered the permission seeking retention permission in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The subject site is located at No. 2 Haws Lane, Doogort, Achill, Co. Mayo and situated c.270m to the east and c.312m to the south of the Croaghaun/Slievemore SAC (Site Code 001955). The site is also situated c.2.1km to the north of the Keel Machair/Menaun Cliffs SAC (Site code 001513).

Permission is being sought for the conversion of the existing attic space of an existing dwelling.

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site.

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Nature of works;
- distance from nearest European site;
- Taking into account screening report/determination by the Planning Authority.

I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.