



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-501396-GY-26

Development

Construct single storey extension to side of existing dwelling and construct larger garage and car port to incorporate garage foundation constructed under Pl. ref. 14/1296 and ancillary works and services

Location

Caherhugh, Belclare, Tuam, Co.
Galway

Planning Authority

Galway County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

25/61257

Applicant(s)

Hughie Keating.

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Conditional grant

Type of Appeal

Third Party

Appellant

Denis Collins.

Observer(s)

None

Date of Site Inspection

15/07/26.

Inspector

Ann Bogan

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The long narrow site is located in a rural area approximately 5km from Tuam, Co Galway on a narrow local road. There is an existing two-storey dwelling on the 0.239ha site, as well as foundations for a garage. Site is bounded by dry stone wall and vegetation to the rear, native hedging and trees to the side, and part of the front, and a c1.2m wall set back from the road along most of the front boundary. Two drainage gullies are located in the setback roadside area.
- 1.2. There are four dwellings on individual sites on the opposite side of the road, in the vicinity of the subject site and many other dwellings in the wider area, including a mix of single storey and two storey dwellings of varying ages and designs.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Development consists of:

- 29.90sq.m flat roofed side extension (consisting of bathroom and dressing room serving existing ground floor bedroom), linked to existing dwelling by a short, glazed corridor. Total area of extended dwelling c.215sq.m. Extension is 3.35m in height while the existing dwelling is c7m in height
- Pitched roof 2 level garage, 52sq.m in area with ridge height of 5.89m, to be built mainly on foundations laid for garage and carport permitted under original permission
- Flat roofed, open ended, car port positioned between garage and extension

- 2.2. Revised site layout and drawings submitted under further information propose amendments including bringing extension in line with front of dwelling, to provide 2m distance from extension to rear boundary; stone facing on proposed extension to match existing dwelling; reduction in height of garage by 600mm and screen planting along part of front wall of site.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. Grant permission subject to eight mainly standard conditions.

Condition 5: Extension restricted to residential use associated with existing dwelling and it shall not be divided from the main house

Condition 7: Domestic garage shall not be used for habitable or commercial purposes or any other purpose, other than those incidental to enjoyment of dwelling house

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

Report of 22/10/2025

- Planning Authority satisfied site area is sufficient to ensure wastewater treatment system can accommodate proposed development in accordance with DM9 of County Development Plan
- Design of extension does not represent cohesive design with existing dwelling and does not achieve minimum 2m distance from boundaries of site, considered over development
- Garage of 52sq.m with two levels and ridge height of 5.89 considered excessive in scale
- FI requested; applicant asked to redesign extension and reduce scale of garage, to take account of Development Management Standards 4 and 6 and to provide contiguous elevations demonstrating that extension and garage are subservient to dwelling and can be absorbed into context of site.
- Planners report 27/04/2026: Amendments submitted under further information considered satisfactory and grant of permission recommended subject to conditions
- Flood risk assessment: Site not within a flood risk area and flood risk assessment not required

- Appropriate Assessment determination concluded proposed development by itself or in combination with other development in the vicinity would not likely have significant effect on European sites.

3.2.1. Other Technical Reports

- None on file

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- None

3.4. Third Party Observations

Two submissions were received from residents of dwelling opposite subject site, raising concerns re design of proposed structures, confined nature of site, overdevelopment, flood risk, privacy, potential impact on water quality and wildlife, surrounding environmental and rural amenity.

4.0 Planning History

- 4.1. Pl. Ref. 14/1296 Hugh Thomas Keating granted permission on 28/01/2015 for the construction of a dwellinghouse, flat roofed domestic garage with adjoining carport and a proprietary treatment system (gross floor space of house 182.50sqm; and garage 22.5sqms)

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

Landscape Sensitivity designation

Landscape Sensitivity as outlined in the Galway County Development Plan 2022- 2028:

Subject site is located in area of area designated as Landscape Sensitivity 1, where Class1 is least sensitive and Class 5 is the most sensitive).

Chapter 15 Development Management Standards

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.

DM Standard 6 Domestic Garages (Urban and Rural)

- The design, form and materials should be ancillary to, and consistent with the main dwelling on site;
- Structures may be detached or connected to the dwelling but should be visually subservient in terms of size, scale and bulk;
- Storage facilities should be used solely for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling and not for any commercial, manufacturing, industrial use or habitable space in the absence of prior planning consent for such use

DM Standard 9 Site sizes for Single Houses using Individual On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems

- A minimum site size of 2000m² is generally required for a single house so as to provide for adequate effluent treatment, parking, landscaping, open space and maintenance of rural amenity.

- For house sizes, with a Floor Footprint greater than 200m². The site size shall be increased by 10m² for each 1 m² of house footprint area above 200m².
- Special consideration will be given to existing houses and to proposed developments who can demonstrate Rural Housing Need and comply with EPA guidelines where the minimum size is not totally achievable. For house sizes, with a site size less than 2000m². The house footprint shall be decreased by 1 m² of house area for each 10m² below 2000m².

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

Distance from site:

2.2km: site code 000297, Lough Corrib SAC

12.7km: site code 000525, Shrute Turlough SAC

14.61km: site code 000295, Levally Lough SAC

10.18km site code 004042 Lough Corrib SPA

6.0 EIA Screening

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

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

- Proposed design not in keeping with others houses in area
- Minimum distance of 2m to boundaries not achieved; proposed extension 1.2m from boundary
- Scale of garage excessive on confined rural site

- Scale of proposed development makes overall building out of proportion to site and surroundings, creates overbearing impact when viewed from my home
- Current development already creates overshadowing, increasing length of building will create unreasonable overshadowing and loss of light to my house and garden
- Proposed development will injure my residential amenity through overlooking as do not consider proposed development a garage
- Concern that level of increased surface water run-off will exacerbate existing flood risk (appeal accompanied by photos of flooding in appellants front garden)

7.2. Applicant Response in the case of a 3rd Party Appeal

- Changes were made to design under further information which were acceptable to Planning Authority; extension is 2.1m from rear boundary and garage respects footprint of original approved location in ref 14/1296
- Design, scale and height are modest, respect established building line and are in keeping with context and DM8 of County Development Plan
- Does not accept there is overshadowing, as development is to north of appellants property, is c.55m away and is single storey
- There are no recorded instances of flooding in area. Applicant installed road drainage as per PI ref 14/1296
- Photo of flooding in appellants garden pre-dates parent permission. Image shows garden lower than driveway and is holding water
- Proposal is for simple single storey extension, permission is sought as extension is to side of dwelling, as site is constrained to rear, and 40sq.m exemption cannot be utilised.

7.3. Planning Authority Response

- None

7.4. Observations

- None

8.0 **Assessment**

8.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including the submissions received in relation to the appeal and having regard to the relevant local policies and guidance, I consider the substantive issues to be considered is as follows:

- Design and visual impact
- Residential amenity
- Flood risk

8.2. **Design and Visual Impact**

- 8.2.1. The site is long and narrow with an 85m frontage and is 20m in depth. The existing dwelling is laid out in a linear fashion, reflecting the shape of the site, and is of a contemporary design. The principle of the dwelling on the subject site has already been established under permission granted (Pl. Ref. 14/1296) and the assessment of the appeal is confined to the proposed extension and garage which are the subject of the current application.
- 8.2.2. The appellants consider the design of the development to be out of character with other houses in the area. I note, in that context, however, that there is a wide variety of house types and designs in the area, with no one type predominating.
- 8.2.3. Due to the shape of the subject site, there is no space to the rear of the dwelling for an extension or garage and they are proposed to be positioned in a linear fashion parallel to the road. The proposed flat roofed, single storey, 3.35m high, 29sq.m side extension is relatively modest in scale vis a vis the existing 7m high two storey dwelling. The introduction of stone to the front elevation in revised drawings submitted under further information, to match that used in the front porch, helps to integrate the extension with the existing dwelling. The revised proposals also bring the extension forward in line with the existing dwelling and increase the distance from the site boundaries to 2m. I am satisfied that the proposed extension is subordinate to the main dwelling and is in keeping with its character and the proposal is therefore in line with DM Standard 4 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

- 8.2.4. The proposed pitched roof garage is 52sq.m in area, and is adjoined by a flat roofed car port, which is open to front and back and abuts the proposed house extension on the other (south-eastern) side. The pitched garage roof was reduced in height by 600mm in revised drawings submitted under further information. The previously permitted flat roofed garage was 22.4sqm in area with an adjoining structure enclosed on three sides with an opening to the front, described as a car port, resulting in an overall external area of approximately 50sq.m. It appears the existing foundation on site was intended for the garage plus carport structure.
- 8.2.5. The proposed garage is a more substantial structure than originally permitted, particularly in terms of height, however the scale is reduced somewhat by the reduction in roof height of 600mm in the revised drawings submitted. From a visual impact perspective, in my opinion, the garage, although large, reads as a subservient and separate structure to the dwelling, particularly as the flat roofed car port is shown as an open lightweight link between the garage and extension/house and acts as a visual break between the higher, bulkier garage and dwelling structures. I recommend a condition requiring the carport to remain as an open lightweight structure as indicated on drawings submitted, in the interests of visual amenity.
- 8.2.6. I note that existing roadside vegetation on the subject site and nearby properties helps to partially screen the proposed garage from view. Planting is also proposed along the road frontage to further screen the proposed garage.
- 8.2.7. In conclusion, I am satisfied that the proposed garage will comply with the requirements of DM Standard 6 of the Development Plan and will not have a negative impact on the visual amenity of the area.
- 8.2.8. The appellant's concern re the intended use of the structure can be adequately addressed by the inclusion of a condition restricting it to uses ancillary to the dwelling, similar to Planning Authority Condition No 7.

8.3. Impact on Residential Amenity

- 8.3.1. There are two single storey dwellings on the opposite side of the road from the subject site, one to the west of the proposed garage and the second, the appellant's, located more directly opposite and south west of the existing dwelling. The appellant's dwelling is circa 59.3m from the proposed garage and circa 56.9m from the proposed

extension. The dwelling to the west is circa 34.3m and 25.6m from the extension and garage, respectively and existing roadside trees and hedging screen the garage and extension from this dwelling.

- 8.3.2. The appellant expressed concerns that the proposed development would result in overshadowing, loss of light, would be overbearing, would result in overlooking and impact on his residential amenity. The proposed extension and garage are located to the north east of the appellants dwelling and any potential for overshadowing would therefore be extremely limited (to the period around sunrise in summer when the sun rises in the north east). The distance from the existing dwellings to the proposed development is such that I am satisfied that there is little or no risk of overshadowing and no likelihood of an impact on daylight available to the existing dwellings.
- 8.3.3. Similarly, I do not consider the design or height of the proposed extension and garage is such as to appear overbearing from the existing dwellings. The distance between the proposed garage and extension, and the neighbouring dwellings, together with existing vegetation, is such that there would be little if any increase in impact on privacy and any limited impact would be to the front gardens of the dwellings, rather than private rear gardens.
- 8.3.4. In conclusion, I believe that the proposed development would “not have an adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining properties through undue overlooking, undue overshadowing and/or an over dominant visual impact” as required under Development Standard 4 of the Galway County Development Plan.;

8.4. Flood Risk

- 8.4.1. The appellant raises concerns that the proposed development may increase flood risk to his property. I note the site is not within a flood risk area and a flood risk assessment is therefore not required. There are no records of past flood events on flood map databases (www.floodinfo.ie).
- 8.4.2. A condition attached to the original permission for the existing dwelling required surface water to be disposed of within the site and not to discharge onto the road. In the current application a soakpit is indicated to dispose of surface water run-off from the garage and it is assumed surface water from the proposed extension will discharge to the soakpit serving the existing dwelling, which is indicated on drawings

submitted. I am satisfied that these arrangements will ensure that surface water run-off generated on-site can be adequately addressed within the site.

- 8.4.3. In any case, as the site is slightly lower than the level of the adjoining road, surface water is unlikely to flow from the site onto the road or to the adjoining properties on the opposite side of the road. In that context, I note the road slopes down from south to north and roadside drainage has been installed in the set-back area in front of the site to collect surface water from the road, and presumably reduce risk of flooding of property.

9.0 AA Screening

- 9.1. I have considered the development in the light of the requirements of S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is 2.2km: from Lough Corrib SAC, 12.7km: from Shrute Turlough SAC, 14.61km from Levally Lough SAC and 10.18km from Lough Corrib SPA. The development comprises extension to a dwelling and construction of garage and carport.
- 9.2. No nature conservation issues were raised in the planning appeal.
- 9.3. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it would not have any effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- Nature of the works i.e. small scale and nature of the development
 - Location and distance from nearest European Site and lack of connections
- 9.4. I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on a 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.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

- 10.1. The subject site is located at Caherhugh, Belclare, Co Galway and the nearest waterbody is the River Clare. The development comprises extension of an existing dwelling and construction of a garage and carport. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 10.2. I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface and groundwater water bodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.
- 10.3. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- The small scale of the development
 - The distance from nearest water bodies and lack of hydrological connections
- 10.4. I conclude on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment

11.0 Recommendation

- 11.1. I recommend that permission be granted for the proposed development.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the development, and the provisions of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, it is considered that, subject to compliance with conditions set out below, the proposed development would not

seriously injure the amenities of the area or property in the vicinity and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

13.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by the planning authority on the 1st day of April 2026, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity

2. All surface water generated within the site boundaries shall be collected and disposed of within the curtilage of the site. No surface water from roofs, paved areas or otherwise shall discharge onto the public road or adjoining properties.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety and to prevent flooding or pollution.

3. The domestic garage shall not be used for habitable or commercial purposes or any other purposes other than, those incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house.

Reason: In the interest of orderly development

4. The carport shall be a light weight structure, fully open to front and rear, as indicated on drawings submitted. Full details of the design and materials of the carport shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

5. The use of the extension shall be used for residential purposes associated with use of the existing dwelling and shall not be divided from the existing house by way of sale, letting or otherwise.

Reason: In the interest of orderly development

6. The external finishes of the garage shall harmonise in colour and texture with the plaster finish of the dwelling house.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity

7. Sight distance triangles shall be maintained and kept free from vegetation or other obstructions that would reduce the minimum visibility required.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety

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.

Ann Bogan
Planning Inspector

21 July 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-501396-GY-26
Proposed Development Summary	Single storey extension to dwelling and construction of garage and car ort
Development Address	Caherhugh, Belclare, Tuam, Co Galway
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	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	
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 ☐	
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: Ann Bogan

Date: 21/07/2026