



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-501451-GY-26

Development

To erect a 21 metre high lattice telecommunications support structure together with antennas, dishes, and associated telecommunications equipment, all enclosed in security fencing

Location

Blackacre, Tuam, Co Galway

Planning Authority

Galway County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

2660396

Applicant(s)

Eircom Ltd (t/a eir)

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Refuse Permission

Type of Appeal

First Party

Appellant(s)

Eircom Ltd (t/a eir)

Observer(s)

Declan Connolly
Philip Noone
Martina McDonagh & Elaine Tierney
Ann Greaney
The Meadows Residents Committee

Noel Igoe
Noeleen Walsh

Date of Site Inspection

3rd September 2026

Inspector

Emma Gosnell

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Appendix 1 – Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

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

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located in the townland of Blackacre in the northern environs of Tuam town in Co. Galway. The site forms part of a larger telecommunications depot and yard which is in the ownership of the applicant (Eircom Ltd.).
- 1.2. The site (which is referred to as GY_4379) is adjoined to the north by a customer car park serving the Ard Na Ri hotel (building located to the east) and to the north-west by a site which appears to be in use for the storage of building materials. The appeal site is separated from same by palisade fencing. It is enclosed on all other sides by the wider Eir depot which features a fenced-off yard area with existing storage structures and telecoms equipment including a c. 20m lighting pole. The Meadow Court housing estate is located c. 60m to the west of the site, with further housing to its south and east along the R939 and Meadow Avenue. Bright Sparks Montessori is located c. 90m to the south-east of the site at No. 8 Meadow Grove, with Jelly Tots childcare being located c. 100m to its south-east at No. 4 Meadow Grove.
- 1.3. The small, square site, which has a stated area of 0.05ha, comprises of brownfield lands situated along the north boundary of the enclosed Eircom depot and it is accessed from the existing depot access to the south-east off Meadow Avenue.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises of the following:
 - The erection of a 21-metre-high lattice telecommunications support structure.
 - 3 no. Eir mobile antennas and RRU modules on a concrete base compound (c. 7m x 7m) with capacity for a further 3 no. future operator antennas below same.
 - A new 2.4m high palisade security fence with an access gate.
 - Proposed utility support cabinets and gantry poles.
 - All associated site works.
- 2.2. The following documentation was also submitted:
 - A Cover Letter/ Planning Statement & Technical Justification Report.
 - Letter detailing Eir coverage requirements.

- Radio Emissions Statement.
- Photomontages.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Permission refused on 5th May 2026 for 2 no. reasons as follows:

“1. The Planning Authority are not satisfied that the applicant fully demonstrated compliance with Policy Objective ICT 4 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, as the applicant has not satisfactorily addressed matters with respect to feasible upgrade works and co-location options associated with the existing operating masts in the subject site vicinity. It is considered that the proposed development by reason of its proposed siting within 1km of an existing Eir operating ESB mast, would unnecessarily intensify telecommunications structures in this urban area and would therefore constitute haphazard and disorderly development. Due to the lack of satisfactory supporting evidence and detailed technical justification for the works proposed, the proposed development would negatively impact the existing character of the area, would set an undesirable precedent for similar future development in this area, and therefore would be contrary to the proposed planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. Having regard to the location of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposed development is located in close proximity to existing residential properties and tourism facilities, and would be contrary to Policy Objectives ICT4, ICT5 and DM Standard 42(b) as set out in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 which discourages the location of masts close to residential areas. It is considered that the proposed development should be located away from existing residences and tourism facilities and that the proposed development would seriously injure the amenities of the area and the value of property in the vicinity. The proposed development would, therefore, contravene policy objectives and a development management standard contained in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, would seriously injure the amenities of residential property in the vicinity and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area”.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

1 no. PA report (01/05//2026) formed the basis of the decision to grant permission.

Points of note arising from the report are as follows:

- **Principle of Development** – proposal constitutes a utility/public service installation which is open for consideration under site's 'C2 – Commercial/ Mixed Use' land use zoning and is supported in principle by Objective ICT 1.
- **Residential/ Tourist Amenity** – concerns regarding negative impact arising from proximity to existing residential dwellings & Ard Na Ri House Hotel. Proposal's compliance with DM Standard 42 is an issue. Refusal Recommended.
- **Co-Location** – proposal has not demonstrated compliance with PO ICT 4 on basis of insufficient technical justification for need for/ siting of proposal on basis of existing local telecoms infrastructure. Precedent concern. Refusal Recommended.
- **Design/ Visual Impact** – serious concerns raised regarding visual impact of proposal on account of its proximity to neighbouring house and a hotel. Refusal Recommended.
- **Access** – no issues raised regarding proposed use of existing site entrance.
- **AA Screening** – proposal not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site on account of its nature and scale.
- **EIA Screening** – no EIA or screening determination required on account of location, nature and scale of the development.
- **Flood Risk** – site located in Flood Zone C. No risk arises.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

None on file - the application was referred to the Tuam Area Office however no response/ report was subsequently received.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

No referrals on file.

3.4. Third Party Observations

21 no. third party submissions were received from neighbouring residents: Deirdre Haughey (23/03/2026), Philip Noone (23/03/2026), Justyna Sobanska (24/03/2026), Ann Greaney (30/03/2026), Louise Tighe (02/04/2026), Louisa Croke (06/04/2026), Fionnuala Walsh (07/04/2026), Valerie McGrath (09/04/2026), Eric Gleeson (09/04/2026), Declan Connolly (10/04/2026), Aoife O'Neill (10/04/2026), Alice Cooney (11/04/2026), Noeleen Walsh (12/04/2026), Conor O'Toole (13/04/2026), Donall Casserly (15/04/2026), James Higgins (16/04/2026), Noel Igoe (16/04/2026), Martha Shaughnessy (16/04/2026) on behalf of The Meadows Residents Committee, Anne Marie Creaven (16/04/2026), Tom and Frances Creaven (16/04/2026) and Gizem Akdogan Kokosis (16/04/2026).

These raised the following issues:

- Negative visual/ landscape impact.
- Impact on residential and tourist amenity.
- Design and height.
- Unacceptable siting.
- Overbearance/ visual intrusion.
- Impact on property values.
- Health and wellbeing/ child welfare impacts.
- Alternative sites available.
- Unacceptable cumulative impacts.
- Policy non-compliance – incl. development plan and LAP.
- Impact on access road not taken in charge.
- Legal ownership issues re: access road to depot.
- Validity/ currency of application documentation.
- Procedural issues (re: disclosure of planning history).
- Insufficient public consultation/ community engagement.
- Unacceptable precedent.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Appeal Site

There is no known planning history on the appeal site specifically.

4.2. Telecom Depot

P.A. Ref. 00/22146 – application by Eircom PLC for the construction of a new entrance and associated works granted unconditional permission on 21/08/2000.

4.3. Adjoining Sites [hotel lands to immediate north-east of the appeal site].

P.A. Ref. 23/176 – application by Ard Ri House Hotel for to construct 2 No. additional bedrooms, one on ground floor and one on first floor, extend existing function room at first floor level, provide additional car parking spaces to rear of hotel incl. all ancillary site development works, granted on 07/08/2023 subject to 10 no. conditions.

P.A. Ref. 22/1087 – application by Ard Ri House Hotel for additional carpark spaces on a site with revised boundaries from that previously granted under planning ref. no 01/728. To retain minor alteration to parking layout to front of hotel from that previously granted under planning ref. no 01/728. To provide additional car parking spaces to side of existing hotel. To provide 4 no electric car charging points. To incl. all ancillary site development works. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 3185 sqm of carparking spaces, granted permission on 22/05/2023 subject to 8 no. conditions

4.4. Other Recently Permitted Telecoms Infrastructure in Tuam

P.A. Ref. 25/61863 – application by ESB Telecoms Ltd for permission for a 4-metre extension to the existing 18-metre-high telecommunications structure (raising overall height to 22-metres), carrying antennae and dishes, along with ancillary finial and all ancillary works, including a telecoms cabinet at the SB Tuam Depot, Ballygaddy Road, granted permission on 12/05/2026 subject to 6 no. conditions, including: “3. *The applicant/owner/operator shall provide and make available on reasonable terms other licensed mobile telecommunications operators to co-locate their antennae onto the existing structure hereby permitted to be extended. REASON: In the interest of avoiding a multiplicity of masts, in the interest of visual amenity and in the interest of proper planning and development of the area*” [extant].

P.A. Ref. 26/60083 (PL07.501160) – application by Phoenix Tower Ireland III Limited for permission to install a 21m monopole type telecommunications support structure, carrying antenna and dishes enclosed within a 2.4-metre-high fenced compound together with associated ground equipment cabinets and associated site works, including an access track within Tuam Celtic AFC, Cloontooa Tuam [c. 1200m north of the appeal site], granted on appeal on 13/08/2026 subject to 6 no. reasons including: “4. The developer shall provide and make available at reasonable terms the proposed support structure for the provision of mobile telecommunications antenna of third-party licenced telecommunications operators. Reason: To facilitate the colocation of telecommunications infrastructure in accordance with local, regional and national policy” [extant].

5.0 Policy Context

5.1 National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040 (first revision 2025)

- *NPO 31:* Support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan.
- *NPO 62:* Support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan, and Section 2.2 – improving local connectivity to principal communications networks.

Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2025

Section 15 of the Climate and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 as amended (the Climate Act), obliges the Commission to make all decisions in a manner that is consistent with the current CAP.

CAP 2025 to be read in conjunction with CAP 2024, relevant part being Section 11.2.4.

Section 10.1.8: Digital Transformation - the CAP supports the national digital transformation framework and recognises the importance of this transformation to achieve Ireland’s climate targets. The transition towards green and digital societies is highlighted throughout the CAP 2025, as an overarching aim to achieve decarbonisation and net zero commitments.

National Planning Framework ‘Project Ireland 2040’ First Revision (April 2025)

National Policy Objective 31 - Support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation, and skills development for those who live and work in rural areas.

National Policy Objective 62: In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, develop a stable, innovative and secure digital communications and services infrastructure on an all-island basis.

Harnessing Digital: The Digital Ireland Framework (2022)

Section 2.1 - Enable the physical telecommunication infrastructure and services delivering digital connectivity in line with the National Broadband Plan.

National Development Plan 2021-2030

The government recognises that access to quality high speed broadband is essential for today's economy and society.

National Broadband Plan 2020

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) is the Government's initiative to improve digital connectivity by delivering high speed broadband services to all premises in Ireland, through investment by commercial enterprises coupled with intervention by the State in those parts of the country where private companies have no plans to invest.

Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (1996) and DoECLG Circular Letter PL07/12

These guidelines were published in 1996 and provide general guidance on planning issues so that the environmental impact is minimised, and a consistent approach is adopted by the various planning authorities.

Section 4.2 provides guidance in relation to design and siting. It states that location will be substantially influenced by radio engineering factors.

Section 4.3 refers to the visual impact of such structures. The Guidelines acknowledge that the applicant will only have limited flexibility as regards selecting a location given the constraints arising from technical radio and engineering parameters. It states that visual impact will, by definition, vary with the general context of the proposed development and that some masts will remain quite noticeable in spite of best precautions.

In city or large town locations the Guidelines state they should be in industrial estates/zoned areas in the first instance and also use tall buildings or structures to attach on. If these areas, or alternatives provided, are not available it states that only as a last resort, and if the alternatives are either unavailable or unsuitable, should

free standing masts be located in a residential area or beside schools. If such a location should become necessary, sites already developed for utilities should be considered, and masts and antennae should be designed and adapted for the specific location. The proposed structure should be kept to the minimum height consistent with effective operation and should be monopole (or poles) rather than a latticed tripod or square structure.

Section 4.6 states that “As part of their planning application operators should be required to furnish a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines (Health Physics, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan) 1988) or the equivalent European Pre-standard 50166-2 which has been conditioned by the licensing arrangements with the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications and to furnish evidence that an installation of the type applied for complies with the above guidelines.”

Circular Letter PL07/12

Circular Letter PL 07/12, dated 19th October 2012, sets out to revise Sections 2.2. to 2.7 of the Telecommunications Guidelines. The Circular was issued in the context of the rollout of the next generation of broadband (4G). It sets out elements of the 1996 Guidelines that required being revised. Broadly these are:

- Cease attaching time limiting conditions to telecommunications masts, except in exceptional circumstances;
- Avoid inclusion in development plans of minimum separation distances between masts and schools and houses;
- Omit conditions on planning permission requiring security in the form of a bond/cash deposit;
- Register or database of approved structures;
- Reiterates advice not to include monitoring arrangements on health and safety or to determine planning applications on health grounds.

The circular also states that future development contribution schemes should include waivers for broadband infrastructure provision.

Circular Letter PL 03/2018

This circular provides a revision to Chapter 2 of the Development Contribution, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2013 and specifically states that the waiver provided in the

Development Contribution, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2013 should apply not only to the provision of broadband services but also to mobile services.

5.1. Regional Policy

Northern & Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032:

Section 3.5: Telecommunication infrastructure is essential for accessing employment, education and healthcare lifelines.

The weakness/ absence of high-quality telecommunications connectivity and infrastructure is also identified as being an important issue for the region (see pages 42 and 262 of RSES).

5.2. Development Plan

The Galway County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (GCDP) applies.

Tuam

Tuam is identified as a Key Town under the plan's Core Strategy.

Telecoms/ Communication Infrastructure

Chapter 7 refers to Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection and Section 7.8.2 therein refers specifically to Telecommunications. The following Policy Objectives are particularly relevant:

Policy Objective (PO) ICT 1 (Infrastructure): Support the delivery of high-capacity Information Communications Technology Infrastructure, broadband connectivity and digital broadcasting, throughout the County.

PO ICT 2 (National Broadband Plan): Support and facilitate delivery of National Broadband Plan.

PO ICT 3 (Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures): To ensure that orderly development of telecommunications throughout the County in accordance with the requirements of the telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG, 1996, except where they conflict with Circular Letter PI 07/12 which shall take precedence, and any subsequent revisions or expanded guidelines in this area.

PO ICT 4 (Co-location of Antennae): To require co-location of antennae, support structures and sites where feasible. Operators shall be required to submit documentary evidence as to the non-feasibility of this option in proposals for new structures.

PO ICT 5 (Siting and Design of Telecommunications Infrastructure): To require best practice in both siting and design in relation to the erection of communication antennae and support infrastructure, in the interests of visual amenity and the protection of sensitive landscapes.

PO ICT 6 (Visual Impact and Antennae Support Structures): To operate a presumption against the location of antennae support structures where they would have a serious negative impact on the visual amenity of sensitive sites and locations.

Chapter 15 of the CDP sets out relevant Development Management Standards:

DM Standard 42 (Telecommunications Masts): In order to facilitate the evaluation of development proposals for the erection of antennae and support structure with regard to the DoEHLG, Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures (1996 including any updated/superseding document) and DECLG Circular PI 07/12 regarding the 1996 Planning Guidelines. While the current state of technology requires the construction of masts and antennae in the countryside the following standards will apply:

a) Landscape Sensitivity: In instances where telecommunications masts are essentially required in landscape sensitivity Class 3 (Special) or Class 5 (Iconic), a Visual Impact Assessment shall be required with all planning applications for these locations.

b) Amenity Impacts: Masts and associated base station facilities should be located away from existing residences and schools.

c) Landscape Impacts: Masts should be designed and located so as to cause minimum impact on the landscape. If possible, sites should be located within forest plantations. Access roads shall be permitted only where essential. Where provided, they should not scar the landscape on which they are located. Roads should follow the natural contours of the site in order to minimise their visual intrusion, and should be bordered with shrubs after construction. Masts should be sited to avoid the location of such structures in sensitive landscapes, in nature conservation areas, in highly sensitive landscapes and where views are to be preserved.

d) Co-Location: Licensees shall be required to co-locate their services by sharing a single mast or, if necessary, locating additional masts in cluster form. Co-location agreements to be provided where possible. Where new facilities are proposed applications will be required to satisfy the Council that they have made a reasonable effort to share facilities or to locate facilities in clusters.

e) Security: Mast compounds should have security fencing and anti-climbing devices designed to local aesthetic and safety requirements.

f) Redundancy: In the event of the discontinuance of any mast installation the mast and its equipment shall be removed from the site and the land shall be reinstated.

All planning applications shall be required to furnish a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines or the equivalent European Pre-Standard 50166-2 in the interest of health and safety.

Landscape Character

Maps 8.1 (Landscape Character Areas) and 8.2 (Landscape Sensitivity) shows Tuam as being an 'Urban Environs Landscape' which is located in an area of 'Low Landscape Sensitivity'.

5.3. Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029

Section 1.6 (Land Use Zones) & Land Use Zoning Map

The Eircom depot (incl. appeal site) is zoned 'C2 – Commercial/ Mixed-Use, with a policy objective *"To provide for the development of commercial and complementary mixed uses on suitable lands that can provide focal points for the provision of services to surrounding neighbourhoods/areas and opportunities for commercial enterprises, retail developments and employment creation and which do not undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre"*.

'Utilities & Public Service Installations' are Open for Consideration on C2 zoned land.

The lands adjoining the depot to the north and east are zoned 'T-Tourism', with the Meadow Court estate being zoned 'R-Residential Existing' with pockets of 'OS – Open Space/ Recreation Amenity'.

PO TKT 21 (Public Utilities): Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential public utility infrastructure, together with the necessary ancillary facilities and uses, as appropriate. Development proposals in the vicinity of public utilities infrastructure will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

PO TKT 59 (Broadband & Telecommunications): Facilitate the sustainable delivery of a high capacity and high-quality ICT infrastructure within the plan area, including telephony and broadband services, to the requirements of the relevant service providers and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

6.0 Natural Heritage Designations

The site is not located within or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site. The nearest European sites are Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297) located c. 1.2km to the west, Levally Lough SAC (Site Code 000295) located c. 8.5km to the east, Lough Corrib SPA (Site Code 004042) which is located c. 23km to the west and Lough Mask SPA (Site Code 004062) located c. 29km to the north-west. The Knockavanny Turlough pNHA (Site Code 000289) is located c. 3.7km to the north-east of the site.

7.0 EIA Screening

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. No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.

8.0 Water Framework Directive Screening

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.

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.

In addition, the proposed development will not adversely affect the achievement of established environmental objectives, including the protection, maintenance, and improvement of water body status, as required under the Directive.

Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the requirements of Article 4.

9.0 The Appeal

9.1. Grounds of Appeal

The first party appeal (received 02/06/2026) is summarised as follows:

General

- The location and condition of the site is set out.
- The proposal is reiterated.
- National and development plan policy support for proposal is outlined.

Principle of Development

- Appeal site is a long-established utility installation.
- Telecoms masts are open for consideration under C2 zoning.
- The locality is mixed use in its nature.
- The hotel and neighbouring houses are setback c. 60-70m from site.
- Existing masts in Tuam cannot be used on account of topographical barrier issues.
- PA acknowledged proposal consistent with C2 zoning and is supported by PO ICT1.
- No EIA screening or AA is required, and no water deterioration concerns arise.

Technical Justification

- Eir's existing masts in Tuam at ESB Offices on Balgaddy (GY_4003) and on Towercom mast at Eir Exchange building at Temple Jarlath Court (GY_4004) are already operating at maximum capacity (i.e. no room for additional equipment or further expansion at either site) and cannot be further optimised.

- GY_4003 (Eir's principal site in Tuam) is consistently one of the busiest sites on Eir's national mobile network.
- The proposed mast at Blackacre will relieve congestion at GY_4003 and GY_4004 and also provide additional capacity, thereby maintaining and also improving service quality for Eir customers in Tuam.
- North Tuam presently experiences 'inadequate deep indoor mobile coverage'.

Siting

- Telecommunication guidelines state location will be substantially influenced by radio engineering factors.
- Submitted radio engineering analysis confirms that no alternative sites exist within the 'technical search ring' relevant to north Tuam.
- Whilst there is no sequential policy requirement that industrial zone options should be first exhausted, it is noted that industrial estates on the periphery of Tuam do not fall within the technical search ring and due to their location & distance cannot serve the Blackacre coverage objective.
- Precedent concerns are unfounded, each application must be assessed on merit.

Design

- Lattice structure is preferable to a monopole on basis it can accommodate more antennae positions and therefore co-location in line with PO ICT4.
- Due to topographical constraints, 21m is the minimum height necessary for effective service delivery.

Access

- Access to the Eir compound is as existing and P.A. Ref. 00/2146 confirmed same.
- Construction access can be addressed via Construction Management Plan condition.
- Taking in charge status of a road comes under another statutory code and is not a ground of refusal under the planning acts.

Visual Impact

- Telecommunication guidelines acknowledge some masts will remain visible despite best precautions and the test which applies is whether or not they are visually obtrusive.
- No evidence that the proposal would have an adverse visual impact on the Kilcloghans Walking Route.

Policy Compliance

- Submitted ICNIRP compliance certificate confirms full compliance with relevant non-ionising radiation standards as required by ComReg.
- LAP and TKT 59 expressly requires the facilitation of telecoms infrastructure.
- The validity and currency of the submitted ICNIRP certificate is clarified.
- PO ICT 5 and DM Standard 42(b) express a planning preference and should not be read as locational prohibitions in an urban context – reasonable/ pragmatic interpretation should prevail.
- Refusal reason conflicts with Circular Letter PL07/12 which seeks to discourage the prescription of minimum separation distances between masts and schools/ houses.
- Non-planning issues raised by third parties (re: health, structural safety and property values) fall outside the competence of the planning system.

Response to Refusal Reason No. 1 – Co-Location and Technical Justification (ICT4)

- Tuam has significant unmet telecommunications needs as Eir currently only operates two mobile service sites in the town (i.e. GY_4003 and GY_4004).
- The proposal is the only technically viable solution to a demonstrable coverage and capacity deficit in north Tuam.
- GY_4004 cannot accommodate Eir transmission to Blackacre for the following reasons:
 - Eir is already transmitting from GY_4004 and deep indoor coverage deficit persists in north Tuam on account of the existence of a topographical barrier between this mast & Blackacre.
 - The 4m height extension to the existing 18m high mast at GY_4004 recently granted under P.A. Ref. 25/61863 explicitly allocates this additional height capacity/ additional set of communications antenna provided for to another telecoms operator (Three

Ireland) and there is no further available capacity on the mast for additional or upgraded Eir equipment.

- No co-location opportunity therefore exists on existing mast infrastructure in Tuam.
- Even where a co-location opportunity existed on the 22m mast, the intervening topography would likely block the signal from reaching Blackacre/ north Tuam.
- Radio engineering response submitted with the GOA confirms that there are no other mobile phone operators in the search ring and therefore no other third-party telecoms mast on which co-location could be explored.
- It is confirmed that the existing mast at Temple Jarlath Court and the permitted mast at Tuam Celtic FC are outside the effective coverage search ring or are unavailable for use by Eir.
- PO ICT4 and telecommunication guidelines only require applicants assess co-location feasibility and to demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made in respect to sharing of facilities.
- No factual basis for the PA's characterisation of proposal as haphazard and disorderly as siting is within a long established Eir utility compound.
- No technical or policy basis exists for PA's argument that proposal would unnecessarily intensify telecoms structures by reason of its location within 1km of GY_4004.
- Proposal is designed to facilitate co-location by a second operator.

Response to Refusal Reason No. 2 – Residential Proximity, Visual Impact and Amenity

- Potential impact on property values is not a material planning consideration.
- The Commission do not support claims of property devaluation arising from the presence of telecommunication towers (as per determinations of 2021 and 2023 appeals cited).
- ICT5 and DM Standard 42(b) express a preference of siting of telecoms infrastructure away from residential properties, but do not represent an absolute prohibition.
- PA's residential proximity approach is at odds with advice of Circular PL07/12 which advises against PA's specifying minimum separation distance between houses & masts and would have the effect of permanently prohibiting service improvement in north Tuam.
- The threshold of serious injury to amenity is not met by the proposal.

- Neighbouring houses would be separated from the mast by 60-70m with intermediate compound perimeter, security fencing and hardstanding.
- Site location already has a utility/ industrial character and is not residential zoned land.
- Site has a low landscape sensitivity classification, and many houses face away from site.
- Whilst proposed lattice structure will be visible from neighbouring housing estate, it will not be visually dominant or unduly obtrusive (views show visual impact is limited).
- Lattice design is more transparent than a traditional monopole.
- Proposed 21m height is below average for this type of infrastructure.
- Ard Na Ri hotel will not be adversely affected on basis that its principal elevations face away from site.
- Guests will benefit as mobile coverage is significantly improved in & around the hotel.

The grounds of appeal are accompanied by an updated Radio Response/ Updated Technical Justification (dated May 2026) from Eir's engineering team. This states the following:

- GY_4003 is at maximum capacity, regularly congested and cannot be further optimised.
- GY_4004 is also at maximum capacity and cannot be further optimised.
- Eir has a disproportionately low number of mobile sites (i.e. 2) in Tuam relative to its size.
- Both additional capacity (i.e. relieving traffic and offloading congestion at GY_4003 and GY_4004 in order to maintain and improve existing voice (call) and data services at those sites) and deep indoor coverage required in north Tuam (incl. IDA Business Park, hotel, national and local roads, homes and businesses) in order to meet existing and future demand.
- Terrain and topography of proposed site will maximise mast performance.

9.2. Planning Authority Response

No response received.

9.3. Observations

Third party submissions were received from the following neighbouring residents and business owners: Declan Connolly (10/06/2026), Martin McDonagh and Elaine Tierney (27/06/2026), Philip Noone (27/06/2026), Ann Greaney (28/06/2026), Noeleen Walsh (29/06/2026), Noel Igoe (29/06/2026) and the Meadows Residents Committee (29/06/2026).

These raised the following issues, which were also largely raised at application stage:

- Support in principle for provision of modern telecommunications infrastructure.
- Operational need does not equate to planning acceptability.
- Proposal would introduce a substantial new telecommunications structure and would not constitute the replacement or upgrading of existing utilities infrastructure.
- Design, scale and height of proposal not in-keeping with existing built environment.
- Visibility/ visual obtrusion and negative visual impact on character of area.
- Inappropriate siting proximate to homes, hotel and childcare facilities and public views.
- Unacceptable impact on residential and tourist amenity.
- Conflict with residential zoning.
- Child safety, health and wellbeing issues.
- Public concerns regarding impacts of long term electromagnetic exposure.
- Lack of engagement with local community/ local input into proposal.
- Inadequate evidence demonstrating that co-location elsewhere is not feasible.
- Site selection bias and inadequate consideration of alternative, less sensitive locations.
- Unacceptable and haphazard clustering of industrial utilities.
- Evidence of existing network deficits has not been provided.
- Setting of an undesirable planning precedent.
- Commercial impacts on operation of existing childcare facilities.
- Property value impacts.

- Proposal should be assessed on its own merits and not relative to other towns which may have a different planning and development context.
- Conflict with local and national policy.

10.0 **Assessment**

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

- Principle of Development
- Technical Justification/ Appropriateness of Site Location
- Design/ Visual Impact
- Other Matters
 - Health/ Wellbeing Impacts
 - Precedent
 - Procedural Issues
 - Property Values/ Commercial Impacts
 - Consultation/ Engagement
 - Access

10.1. **Principle of Development**

10.1.1. The proposal subject of this appeal is located within the grounds of an existing Eir/ Eircom utilities compound at Blackacre in the northern environs of Tuam town and is sited on lands with a 'C2 – Commercial/ Mixed Use' land use zoning where utilities (such as telecommunications infrastructure and wireless communications services) are open for consideration, with their development stated to be facilitated under the policy objective for this zoning.

- 10.1.2. The proposal is located proximate to a residential estate (to the west) and a hotel (to the north and east) with the immediate area having a predominantly residential land use profile.
- 10.1.3. I note the strategic, high level policy support for improving local data coverage and telecommunications connectivity in the interest of enhancing economic and social development. This is in line with the NPO 31 of Project Ireland 2040, Section 3.5 of the RSES, the telecommunications policy set out under Section 7.8.2 of the development plan and PO TKT59 of Tuam LAP, and I consider that the proposal to improve coverage/ the quality of service is acceptable in principle having regard to same.
- 10.1.4. The matter of whether not additional telecoms service coverage and capacity would benefit Tuam is not in dispute by the parties to the appeal, however, concerns have been raised regarding the adequacy of the technical justification provided for the principle and siting of the proposal, with this issue giving rise to the planning authority's refusal reason No. 1. I consider this matter further in the subsequent sections of this report.

10.2. Technical Justification/ Appropriateness of Site Location

- 10.2.1. Tuam town is classified as a 'Key Town' under the development plan Core Strategy and settlement hierarchy and therefore the appeal site can be understood as being in the vicinity of a large town for the purposes of the 1996 Telecommunications Guidelines.
- 10.2.2. The 1996 guidelines require a robust assessment of alternative locations in order to demonstrate that the proposed location is the optimal one. Section 4.2 (Design and Siting) of the guidelines provides guidance in relation to design and siting and states that "*location will be substantially influenced by radio engineering factors*" with Section 4.3 (Visual Impact) recognising that the applicant will only have limited flexibility as regards selecting a location, given the constraints arising from technical radio and engineering parameters.
- 10.2.3. Development plan policy objectives ICT 4 (Co-location of Antennae) – which is cited in refusal reason No. 1 - and ICT 5 (Siting and Design of Telecommunications Infrastructure) require best practice in the design and siting of communication antennae and support infrastructure and specifically the co-location of antennae, support structures and sites where feasible (with non-feasibility required to be evidenced) – with these requirements being reiterated by DM Standard 42 (Telecommunications Masts). The 1996 Guidelines also place the onus on the applicant to demonstrate that they have made a reasonable effort to share masts with other telecommunications providers.

10.2.4. The observers to the appeal consider that the siting of the proposal is not justified in policy terms on the basis that the appellant has not adequately considered alternative (commercial or industrial) sites elsewhere in Tuam and also due to the fact that the non-feasibility of co-location on existing telecoms infrastructure in the town has not been adequately evidenced.

Alternative Site(s)

10.2.5. The grounds of appeal state that there is no alternative suitable site available in the technical search area, with Section 6.2 of the cover letter providing that “*Considering the technical requirements to secure the necessary coverage and quality of coverage including the fact that this site provides existing utilities, combined with planning considerations, the site in question is the only realistic site available*”. As such, I note that there is nothing on file to demonstrate that alternative sites (i.e. not potential co-location sites) were evaluated and discounted (i.e. on account of their technical unsuitability or commercial unavailability), a process required in accordance with Section 4.3 of the 1996 Guidelines and in compliance PO ICT4.

10.2.6. Section 1.2 (Operator Requirement) of the submitted cover letter that “*this application immediately addresses eir’s requirement to significantly improve services to the north of Tuam which includes Tuam IDA business Park, Ard Ri House Hotel, homes and businesses in the area. This site will also improve coverage on the N83, the Tuam Bypass (N17) and the local roads*”. Whilst I acknowledge that there is a requirement to improve service quality/ coverage in north Tuam and also that the proposed site is located within the ‘affected area’, having regard to the Tuam LAP Land Use Zoning Map which provides for Commercial/ Mixed Use, Industrial and Business and Technology zoned lands (i.e. including the IDA Business Park and Airglooney Business Park) in the vicinity of north Tuam, it is my view that there would appear to be other opportunities for the siting of the proposed infrastructure in less sensitive areas in the northern environs of the town.

10.2.7. Section 4.2 (Design and Siting) of the 1996 guidelines states that “*location will be substantially influenced by radio engineering factors*”. The coverage information submitted as part of the application refers to a ‘search ring area’ of 500m around the subject site with the GOA arguing that as the industrial estates on the periphery of Tuam do not fall within the technical search ring and due to their location and distance cannot serve what is referred to as the ‘Blackacre coverage objective’. However, it is clear from the appellant’s

submission that the placement of the mast at the Eir depot in Blackacre would give rise to a significantly improved service and coverage in areas up to c.1km away (i.e. the IDA business park). On this basis, conversely, I consider that it is reasonable to assume that it must also be the case that siting the mast in one of the aforementioned business parks, for example, would also delivering an equivalent improvement.

- 10.2.8. Therefore, in light of the foregoing considerations, I am not satisfied that alternative, less sensitive location options have been adequately considered by the appellant in compliance with national guidance and development plan policy and that the subject site is the only technically viable solution to the demonstrable coverage and capacity deficit in north Tuam.

Co-Location

- 10.2.9. National and development plan policy encourages co-location and the use of existing infrastructure where possible.
- 10.2.10. Development plan PO ICT 4 (Co-location of Antennae) requires co-location of antennae, support structures and sites where feasible, with operators being required to submit documentary evidence as to the non-feasibility of this option in proposals for new structures.
- 10.2.11. The PA's refusal reason raised the issue of the applicant not satisfactorily addressing matters with respect to feasible upgrade works and co-location options associated with the existing operating masts in the subject site vicinity.
- 10.2.12. With regard to potential for co-location, the appellant argues that Eir already operates from 2 no. existing mobile service masts (GY_4003 and GY_4004) in Tuam which cannot be further optimised for co-location on account of existing service capacity issues and the fact of intervening topographical barrier between these sites and Blackacre/ north Tuam area (I refer the Commission to Section 9.1 of this report for supporting details in this regard).
- 10.2.13. Whilst I accept the appellant's technical arguments in respect to co-locating at GY_4003 and GY_4004 (the 2 no. existing masts in Tuam operated by Eir) not being a viable option, I am not satisfied that co-location on third party masts which already exist in Tuam has been adequately considered.

10.2.14. The radio engineering response submitted with the GOA states that there are no other mobile phone operators in the search ring and therefore no other third-party telecoms mast on which co-location could be explored. However, as detailed in paragraph 10.2.9, the basis for the determination of the effective coverage search ring is not clear and I note from a review of Comreg's site viewer (accessed 07/09/2026) that there are a number of other existing masts in Tuam run by other telecoms operators (i.e. Vodafone, Three and Imagine Communications Ireland Ltd.), including one within the IDA Business Park, I am not satisfied that the co-location (and upgrade) potential of these has been adequately considered by the appellant.

Conclusion

10.2.15. Having regard to the totality of the information on file, whilst I acknowledge that information has been provided in respect to the technical engineering assessment and consideration of radio engineering factors (i.e. such as coverage requirements and physical obstructions) undertaken, I am not satisfied that it has been reasonably evidenced that the site subject of this appeal has been selected following a comprehensive and robust consideration of alternative sites in Tuam, as required in compliance with Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the 1996 Telecommunications Guidelines as supported by PO ICT 3 of the development plan.

10.2.16. Furthermore, in respect to the feasibility of pursuing a co-location/ clustering strategy in preference to a new free-standing structure, I am also not satisfied that of adequate documentary evidence as to the matters of technical unfeasibility and unsuitability of existing mobile masts operated by third parties has been provided in compliance with the requirements of PO ICT 4 and DM Standard 42 (b) and (d) and the 'last resort' test outlined in Section 4.3 of the 1996 Guidelines and – which I note allows for the location of free standing masts in a residential area in such circumstances.

10.2.17. Therefore, in light of the foregoing, it is my view that best practice in terms of siting has not been followed and, as such, that the proposal has not demonstrated compliance with Ministerial Guidelines and with development plan policy guidance.

10.3. Design/ Visual Impact

10.3.1. Refusal reason no. 2 refers to policy guidance which discourages the location of masts close to residential areas and states that the proposed development would seriously injure the amenities of the area and the value of property in the vicinity.

- 10.3.2. Development plan policy objectives PO ICT 5 and 6 provide guidance in respect to the siting, design and visual impact of telecommunications infrastructure and requires the protection of visual amenity and sensitive landscapes with a presumption against the location of antennae support structures where they would have a serious negative impact on the visual amenity of sensitive sites and locations.
- 10.3.3. The appellant argues that the PA's characterisation of the proposal site as haphazard, disorderly and an unacceptable intensification is unfounded on the basis of siting is within a long established Eir utility compound.
- 10.3.4. The proposal is situated within a landscape in which the site is situated is relatively low lying and classified as low sensitivity in the GCDP and there are no sensitive views, scenic routes, architectural conservation areas or protected structures in close proximity.
- 10.3.5. PO ICT 6 seeks that antennae support structures not be located where they could have a serious negative impact on the visual amenity of sensitive sites and locations.
- 10.3.6. The proposal would be sited within an existing Eir utility compound and c. 60m from the nearest residential properties in Meadow Court and c. 70m from the Ard Na Ri hotel building at its closest point. In this respect, I note that Circular PL07/2012 is explicit in stating that there is no prescribed separation distance requirement between a telecommunications structure and houses with flexibility allowed on a case-by-case basis to facilitate the roll out of a viable and effective telecommunications network.
- 10.3.7. A lattice structure is proposed. In terms of its design, the appellant argues that a lattice structure is preferable to a monopole on basis it can accommodate more antennae positions, and therefore co-location, and also that 21m is the minimum height necessary for effective service delivery.
- 10.3.8. I do not have an issue with the proposed height of the structure, having regard to the average heights of equivalent structures recently permitted by both the PA and Commission under P.A. Ref. 25/61863 (22m) and PL07.501160 (21m) and also having regard to the existence of a c. 20m tall lighting monopole (with a large lighting array at its top) in the centre of the Eir depot, with further public lighting poles along its northern boundary (illuminating the hotel car park) and along the public road in very close proximity to the appeal site. I also do not consider that, in principle, the proposal would give rise to an unacceptable intensification of utility infrastructure at this location on account of its siting within an existing compound which appears to be underutilised.

10.3.9. Whilst it may also be the case that a lattice design can accommodate a greater degree of operator co-location, it is also the case that (more slimline) monopoles can accommodate adequate levels of co-location as per the appellant's own commentary regarding the operation of their 22m monopole at Balgaddy Road and their proposal to accommodate 3 no. future operator antennas on their proposed mast, the co-location conditions attached to recent permissions for monopoles in Tuam, and also DM Standard 42 (d) (Telecommunications Masts – Co-Location) which states that licensees shall be required to co-locate their services by sharing a single mast or, if necessary, locating additional masts in cluster form.

10.3.10. I note that the 1996 Telecommunications Guidelines discourage lattice type towers and encourage mono-pole structures. Whilst the appellant argues that a *“lattice design is more transparent than a traditional monopole”*, I note from the submitted elevation and site layout drawings that the circumference of a lattice mast is comparatively much greater than that of a monopole, with this width giving rise to a greater visual impact. Having considered the 4 no. submitted photomontages, it is clear that the proposed mast would be a highly visible and visually prominent and incongruous feature in the locality and I consider that, specifically on account of its lattice design, it would not be capable of being visually assimilated into its context and would therefore give rise to unacceptable visual intrusion on surrounding properties, particularly Meadow Court (notwithstanding the siting of the structure 35m from the shared boundary and the existence of an intervening turning head, bank of linear open space, existing blockwork boundary wall and natural screening) and also to a lesser extent Meadow Grove and the Ard Na Ri Hotel, and to an unacceptable, adverse visual impact on the character of the area. For these reasons, I am not satisfied that the proposal is compliant with PO ICT 5, PO ICT 6 or DM Standard 42 of the development plan.

10.4. **Other Matters**

Health/ Wellbeing Impacts

10.4.1. The impact of the proposal on public health and wellbeing is raised by third parties.

10.4.2. The GOA argue that health matters fall outside the competence of the planning system.

10.4.3. I note that Section 4.6 of the 1996 Telecommunications Guidelines and DM Standard 42 of the GCDP states that “All planning applications shall be required to furnish a statement

of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines or the equivalent European Pre-Standard 50166-2 in the interest of health and safety”.

10.4.4. The cover letter submitted with the application states that “eir has stringent Health and Safety policies and codes for its maintenance crews and for the public, both for physical safety and for standards set by the International Non-Ionising Radiation Committee” and that “It is noted that the Development Plan requires an ICNIRP compliance confirmation and in this respect, one is attached to Appendix 3”. Appendix 3 constitutes a Radio Emissions Statement compliance confirmation dated 20/07/2017. Whilst third parties raise concerns regarding the currency of the compliance statement, I note that the validity and currency of the submitted ICNIRP certificate is clarified as part of the GOA and therefore I am satisfied that a statement of compliance with ICNIRP guidelines has been submitted to demonstrate compliance with DM Standard 42.

Precedent

10.4.5. Third parties raise the matter of the proposal giving rise to an undesirable planning precedent. LAP policy objective TKT 21 (Public Utilities) specifically provides that applications for the provision of public utility infrastructure be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

10.4.6. In this regard I would note that, as per the analysis of the subject proposal detailed above and the conclusions reached with regard to same, all appeal cases are assessed and determined on their own merits having regard to the sensitivity of the receiving environment and the specifics of the proposed development.

Procedural Issues

10.4.7. Concerns in respect to the accuracy of submitted documentation is raised by third parties. Whilst I acknowledge the concerns raised, having inspected the site and reviewed the information on file, I am satisfied that I have sufficient information before me to continue to assess the development subject of this appeal. It also does not appear that any party was prejudiced by any potential drawing discrepancies.

Property Values/ Commercial Impacts

10.4.8. I note the concerns raised in the observations in respect of the devaluation of neighbouring property and also with regard to the commercial impact on nearby tourism and childcare facilities. Whilst I am satisfied that there is no evidence presented to

suggest that the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area to such an extent that would adversely affect the value of property or the viability of businesses operating in its vicinity, having regard to the assessment and conclusions set out in Sections 10.2 – 10.3 of this report, I am recommending a refusal of permission on siting and design grounds.

Consultation/ Engagement

10.4.9. Whilst I note the concerns raised regarding the lack of consultation and engagement with neighbouring residents etc., there is no statutory obligation on a project proposer to undertake same prior to the lodgement of their application and no issues were raised regarding the publication of the statutory notices. I consider that the application and appeals process provided a formal opportunity for third party observations to be made on the proposal.

Access

10.4.10. The legal ownership status of the existing access to the Eir compound, which would also constitute the access to the proposal, is raised as an issue by the appeal observers who seek to highlight that it is not taken in charge by the planning authority.

10.4.11. Access was not raised as an issue by the planning authority in their reports and that no response to the appeal was received from them.

10.4.12. I note that no taking in charge information in respect of the subject roadway (Meadow Avenue) is available on the Galway County Council website (accessed 07/09/2026) and that there is no information on file which provides clarity in respect to its legal ownership. Notwithstanding, this access is an existing access to a utility depot, that is utilised by Eir on an ongoing basis, and which has the benefit of planning permission under P.A. Ref. 00/2146.

11.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission be REFUSED for the following reason:

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the guidelines relating to telecommunications antennae and support structures which were issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government to planning authorities in July, 1996 (as updated by Circular Letter PL07/12), to policy objectives ICT3, ICT 4, ICT 5 and ICT 6 and DM Standard 42 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, and to the design, scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposed development would be an incongruous structure, would have an unacceptable visual impact and would seriously injure the amenities of the area and of property in the vicinity. It is also considered that a sufficient examination of alternative sites and justification for the current 'last resort' site in accordance with the guidelines has not been presented. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines, to the aforementioned policy and objectives of the development plan and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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

Emma Gosnell

Planning Inspector

7th September 2026

Appendix 1

Form 1 - EIA pre-screening

Case Reference	PL-501451-GY-26
Proposed Development Summary	To erect a 21-metre-high lattice telecommunications support structure together with antennas, dishes, and associated telecommunications equipment, all enclosed in security fencing.
Development Address	Blackacre, 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? (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)	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2. ☐ 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)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	
☒ 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 ☐	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 for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects				
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics Case file: PL-501451-GY-26				
Brief description of project	Normal planning appeal. Proposal to erect a 21-metre-high lattice telecommunications support structure together with antennas, dishes, and associated telecommunications equipment, all enclosed in security fencing. Blackacre, Tuam, Co Galway – see Section 2.0 of Inspector's Report for further details.			
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	The subject site has a stated area of 0.050ha and is located within the grounds of an existing Eircom depot. Ard Rí House Hotel is located to its east and the Meadow Court housing estate is located to its west. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of utility, tourist, commercial/ childcare and residential uses as detailed in Section 1.0 of the Inspector's report. There are no European sites on the appeal site or in its immediate vicinity. There are also no watercourses or other ecological features of note on or in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site that would connect it directly to European Sites in the wider area. The nearest watercourse is the NANNY (TUAM)_030 river which is located c. 1.3km to the south of the appeal site and separated from same by the northern environs of Tuam town. The nearest European sites are Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297) located c. 1.2km to the west and Levally Lough SAC (Site Code 000295) located c. 8.5km to the east.			
Screening report	No			
Natura Impact Statement	No			
Relevant Submissions	No			
Planning Authority	No objections raised on AA grounds – determined that Stage 2 assessment not required.			
Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model				
Having regard to the source-pathway receptor-model, I consider that there is 1 no. European site which has the potential to be affected by the proposal. I have excluded all other European sites on the basis of their substantial physical separation from the appeal site and due to the absence of realistic pathways connecting the appeal site to same.				
European Site (code)	Qualifying interests¹ Link to conservation	Distance from proposed development	Ecological Connections²	Consider further

	objectives (NPWS, date)			in screening ³
Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297)	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoetes-Nanojuncetea [3130] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210]	c. 1.2km to the west.	No From a review of relevant EPA mapping, there appears to be no surface water or other connection between the site and Lough Corrib SAC.	No

	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] Bog woodland [91D0] Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Najas flexilis (Slender Naiad) [1833] Hamatocaulis vernicosus (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216] Source: NPWS website accessed 02/09/2026.			
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Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites

AA Screening matrix

Site Name	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*	
	Impacts	Effects
Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297)	<u>Direct:</u> None <u>Indirect:</u> None	None
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): No	

	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? No
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* Not likely.
Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297). The proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European site(s). No further assessment is required for the project. No measures specifically intended to avoid or reduce harmful impacts of the proposed development on European sites were taken into account in reaching this conclusion.	
Screening Determination Finding of no likely significant effects In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on European Sites, namely Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297), in view of this site's Conservation Objectives and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment (and submission of a NIS) is not therefore required. This determination is based on: • The small scale and nature of works, • The c. 1.2km downstream separation distance from Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297), and, • The lack of connections to other European Sites.	

