



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-501543-GY-26

Development	For the renovation and extension of an existing dwelling, including demolition and associated site works
Location	Roundstone, County Galway, County Galway, H91 DC0H
Planning Authority	Galway County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2561754
Applicant(s)	Odette & Jim O'Dea
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant(s)	Odette & Jim O'Dea
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	4 th September 2026
Inspector	Emma Gosnell

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located in the rural, coastal village of Roundstone (Cloch Na Rón) in west Connemara, Co. Galway, c. 55km from Galway city. The site fronts the R341 coastal road.
- 1.2. The site is adjoined to the north by a 2-storey narrow plan single bay dwelling and to the south by a 2-storey, 2-bay dwelling and forms part of a continuous terrace of 2-storey residential properties with pitched roofs that front the public road and harbour to the east. The village wharf/ quay and slipway (a Protected Structure (No. 30328005) of Roundstone harbour which is of regional importance) is located on the opposite side of the R341. There is parallel on-street parking located along the front of the terrace.
- 1.3. The site, which has a stated area of 0.014ha, comprises of a mid-terrace 2-storey property with a pitched roof. The ground floor of its front elevation comprises of 2 no. centrally located doors and a pair of windows, with 3 no. equisized windows being located at first floor level. There is a small two storey extension and raised garden to the rear. The property was not accessible on the day of the site inspection, but its interior was observed from the street to be in a poor and semi-derelict condition.
- 1.4. The R341 forms part of the Wild Atlantic Way and is designated as a Maritime Scenic Route. The site is located in a 'Special' Landscape Designation with the Cloch na Rón Viewpoint (no. 10) being located immediately adjoining it to the east. The focus of this view is both Cloch na Rón village and Cloch na Rón Bay.
- 1.5. There are no RPS or NIAH on site and it does not come within an Architectural Conservation Area or zone of archaeological potential.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises of the renovation and extension of an existing dwelling (84sq.m) in order to increase its size to 114sq.m and includes demolition, changes to the front and rear building elevations and all associated site works.
- 2.2. Further information stage changes comprised of minor revisions to the design and scale of the proposed front fenestration at first floor level, with the effect of slightly reducing the scale and horizontal emphasis of same, with the second door at ground

floor level also being replaced with a window and a change being made to the materiality of the remaining door.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Permission refused on 21st May 2026 for 1 no. reason as follows:

“1. Having regard to the proposed front elevation and particularly the proposed fenestration of the proposed development, within a Special Landscape Sensitivity along a Protected Scenic Route, it is considered that the proposed development would be out of character and incongruous with the existing and historical streetscape, would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, does not reflect the vertical proportions reflective of the original streetscape of Roundstone, negatively impacts on the scenic route, and is therefore considered inappropriate. Accordingly, to grant the development as proposed, would materially conflict with Policy Objective AH 6, and Policy Objective PVSR 1, which seeks to contribute to landscape and townscape character in County Galway and contravenes DM Standard 1 and DM Standard 4. Furthermore, to grant the development as proposed would interfere with the character of the streetscape, would set an undesirable precedent for similar future development, would contravene materially policy objectives and development management standards contained in the current County Development Plan, would detract from the visual amenity of the area, would militate against the preservation of the rural environment, and therefore would be contrary to the proposed planning and sustainable development of the area”.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

2 no. planning reports formed the basis of the planning authority’s assessment:

Planner’s Report (dated 27/01/2026) - Initial Application Stage

- **Principle of Development** – proposal for demolition, renovation and extension of existing dwelling is acceptable on basis it is regeneration of a brownfield site.

- **Design and Visual Impact** – proposal is located in a visually sensitive area, and design is out of character with existing vernacular streetscape and will detract from same. **Further Information Recommended** in respect to fenestration design.
- **Access/ Parking/ Drainage/ Water Supply** – acceptable on basis that no change proposed to existing on-street parking or servicing arrangements.
- **AA Screening** – proposal not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site on account of its nature and scale and lack of ecological conduits to same.
- **EIA Screening** – no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising on account of location, nature and scale of the development. Need for EIA can be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.
- **Flood Risk** – site located coastal area which is vulnerable to flooding. **Further Information Recommended.**

A request for further information (FI) issued on 30/01/2026 in relation to 3 no. items.

The applicant's response to the FI request was received on 30/04/2026.

It consisted of a cover letter, revised plans and elevations, a Design Statement, a Visual Impact Assessment, a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

The response was not determined to be significant and did not require readvertising/ revised statutory notices.

Planner's Report (dated 21/05/2026) – Further Information Stage

FI Item 1 – Revised Design

- Fenestration at first floor level has not been revised as requested and concerns raised that design of front elevation disrupts the vertical rhythm of the streetscape.
- Gutter detail is considered inappropriate and out of character with the street.

FI Item 2 – Flood Risk

- SSFRA submitted satisfactorily addresses coastal/ tidal flood risk posed to the site. Ground floor level is above the design flood level and the report sets out additional, acceptable flood risk mitigation measures.

FI Item 3 – Construction Management

- Submitted CEMP satisfactorily addresses the considerable construction works and demolition proposed to be carried out on site re: best practice construction and mitigation measures.

Refusal of permission recommended as detailed in Section 3.1 of this report.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Conservation Officer (verbal discussion 26/01/2026) – sought further information on design of proposal and recommended greater cognisance be taken of the traditional streetscape of Roundstone and that front windows should have vertical emphasis.

Conservation Officer (undated) – FI proposal disrupts the vertical proportions and rhythm of streetscape and gutter detail is out of character with existing streetscape.

The file was referred to the Clifden Area Council Office and the Roads Department. However, no responses/ reports were subsequently received.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (10/12/2025) – recommends regard is had to policy on proposals affecting national roads and the light rail network.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None received.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Appeal Site

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

4.2. Neighbouring Sites

Brownfield site c. 40m to the north in same streetscape

P.A. Ref. 22/310 – application to demolish an existing shed and to construct an infill 2-storey 2-bed dwelling house and ancillary siteworks at Roundstone, granted permission on 09/01/2023 subject to 9 no. conditions. The front elevation granted

under this extant permission included a c. 2m wide rectangular window at ground level, with the 2 no. windows permitted at first floor level having more of a vertical emphasis.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1 National Policy

Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (First Revision, 2025) –

- NPO45 (increase residential density through infill development, increased height and more compact forms of development).

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoHLGH, 2024)

Section 3.4.2 of the Guidelines states that it is necessary to ensure that the quantum and scale of development at all locations can integrate successfully into the receiving environment. New development should respond to the receiving environment in a positive way and should not result in a significant negative impact on character (including historic character), amenity or the natural environment.

Climate Action Plan (2024 & 2025) and National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030

Outcome 2A protection of existing designated areas & protected species.

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

5.2 Regional Policy

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

RPO 3.4 To support the regeneration and renewal of small towns and villages in rural areas.

5.3 Development Plan

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

Zoning

The appeal site is not subject to any land-use zoning under the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Rural Housing

Chapter 4 - Rural Living and Development.

Section 4.6.2 - Structurally Weak Rural Areas (East and West of GCTPS)

Site is located in Rural Housing Zone 3: Structurally Weak Areas and also Zone 4 - Landscape Sensitivity Category 2-4 as per Maps Map 4.1 (Rural Area Types) and 4.2 (Rural Housing Policy).

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

RH 6 - Replacement Dwelling: It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority that the refurbishment of existing habitable dwelling houses would be encouraged, as a more sustainable option than the demolition and construction of a new dwelling house, unless a conclusive case for demolition based on technical evidence is made for the Planning Authority's consideration on a case by case basis. It will be a requirement that any new dwelling house be designed in accordance with Galway County Council's Design Guidelines for Rural Housing in the countryside. Applicants, who require the demolition of an existing family home shall be accommodated without the requirement to establish a Housing Need and will not be subject to an enurement clause.

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

character of the dwelling. Where the total demolition of the existing dwelling is proposed an Enurement Clause for seven years duration will apply.

Landscape

Chapter 8 - Tourism and Landscape.

Section 8.13 – Landscape.

Maps 8.1 (Landscape Character Areas), 8.2 (Landscape Sensitivity), 8.3 (Scenic Routes) and 8.4 (Protected Views) – site forms part of ‘coastal landscape’ of ‘Special’ sensitivity and is on a ‘Maritime Scenic Route’.

LCM 3 - Landscape Sensitivity Ratings: Consideration of landscape sensitivity ratings shall be an important factor in determining development uses in areas of the County. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations.

PVSR 1 – Protected Views and Scenic Routes: Preserve the protected views and scenic routes as detailed in Maps 8.3 and 8.4 from development that in the view of the Planning Authority would negatively impact on said protected views and scenic routes. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan.

Appendix 4: Landscape Character Assessment – Sections 3. Landscape Units, 4: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, 5. Seascapes, 6: Protected Views and 7: Scenic Routes.

Map 01 (Landscape Character Types) – site is part of a coastal landscape.

Map 02 (Coastal and Island Landscape Units) – 1f. Connemara Sea Lough.

Map 06 (Landscape Sensitivity) – site in area of ‘Special Landscape Sensitivity’ which has a high sensitivity to change.

Map 07 (Seascape) – site forms part of a Fully Enclosed Coast which is sensitive to changes in the surrounding land.

Map 08 (View Points) – Protected View point 10 Cloch Na Rón i.e. view from the pier over Connemara Sea Lough. The focus of this view is both Cloch na Rón village and Cloch na Rón Bay.

Map 09 (Scenic Routes) – Roundstone is part of designated Maritime Scenic Route.

Design

Chapter 3 - Placemaking, Regeneration & Urban Living.

CGR 2: Regeneration - To promote the redevelopment and renewal of areas in towns and villages that are in need of regeneration.

CGR 8: Town and Village Centre - To encourage and support a range of appropriate uses in town and village centres that will assist in the regeneration and reuse of vacant and under-utilised buildings and land and will re-energise the town and village centres, subject to a high standard of development being achieved.

PM 8: Character and Identity - Ensure the best quality of design is achieved for all new development and that design respects and enhances the specific characteristics unique features of the towns and villages throughout the County.

PM 10: Design Quality - To require that new buildings are of exceptional architectural quality, and are fit for their intended use or function, durable in terms of design and construction, respectful of setting and the environment and to require that the overall development is of high quality, with a well-considered public realm.

Chapter 12 - Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage.

Section 12.5.4 (Vernacular Architecture): Vernacular architecture refers to the traditional building forms and types built using local materials, skills and building techniques which form a vital component of the landscape. Vernacular buildings, through their siting, orientation and materials, display an intimate connection with their landscape. This includes traditional domestic buildings such as thatched cottages but could also include other traditional structures such as shopfronts, farmsteads, outbuildings, aspects of the industrial past, including lime kilns, mills, forges, and their products, such as gates. These structures reflect the unique local history and character of a place. Viable new uses and careful rehabilitation can contribute to sustainable development and encourage social and economic regeneration.

Policy Objective AH 6: Vernacular Architecture: Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture to the character of a place and ensure the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and reuse of the vernacular built heritage including structures that contribute to landscape and townscape character and resist the demolition of these structures.

DM Standard 1: Qualitative Assessment-Design Quality, Guidelines and Statements.
Chapter 15 - Development Management Standards.

DM Standard 1: Qualitative Assessment-Design Quality, Guidelines and Statements.

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 39: Construction and Demolition Waste.

Servicing/ Flood Risk

Section 15.6 - Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection.

Sections 15.13.2 - Surface Water Drainage and Flooding and 14.6 – Flooding.

6.0 Natural Heritage Designations

The site is not located within or adjoining a European Site.

The following European sites are located within proximity to the site:

European Site	Site Code	Distance
Connemara Islands SPA	004159	Immediately adjacent
Cregduff Lough SAC	001251	c. 500m to south-west
Connemara Bog Complex	002034	c. 900m to the west
Rosroe Bog SAC	000324	c. 2.4km to north-east
Connemara Bog Complex	004181	c. 2.4km to north-west

The following proposed Natural Heritage Area is also located in proximity to site:

- Connemara Bog Complex pNHA (Site Code 002034)
- Cregduff Lough pNHA (Site Code 001251)

7.0 EIA Screening

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

8.0 Water Framework Directive

I have concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment (refer to form in Appendix 3 for details).

9.0 The Appeal

9.1. Grounds of Appeal

The first party appeal (received 16/06/2026) is summarised as follows:

- **Design** - revisions made at FI Stage address PA vertical integration concerns and design is compliant with policy objective AH6 on historic vernacular architecture (proposal is an improvement on existing (non-original) elevation).
- **First floor window design** – required for reasonable morning light penetration to main living space and to maximise views across the coast.
- **Visual Integration** – form, fenestration and external finishes respect character of existing and historical streetscape and townscape of the village and will not adversely impact on its visual amenity.
- **Protected View** – proposal has no potential to adversely impact on the Protected View (No. 10), or on the Scenic Route, and fully complies with PVSR1.

- **Procedural Issue** – appellants clarify that they requested pre-planning with the PA in advance of submitted their proposal but that this was not facilitated.

A Design Statement (dated 29/04/2026) is submitted as part of the grounds of appeal. This sets out the design approach, provides examples of contemporary design relevant to the proposal, copies of the LVIA views and a description of same and, a copy of the proposed plans and elevations.

9.2. **Planning Authority Response**

None received.

9.3. **Observations**

None received.

10.0 **Assessment**

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

- Principle of Development
- Design and Visual Impact – Material Contravention
- Other

10.1. **Principle of Development**

- 10.1.1. The PA were satisfied as to the principle of development and considered the proposal, for the continuation and intensification of the residential use of the property, to be acceptable on the basis that it constitutes the regeneration of a brownfield site.
- 10.1.2. It is argued in the grounds of appeal that both national and development plan policy encourage rural village revitalisation and the of bringing vacant and disused properties back into active use.

- 10.1.3. The site is not subject to a land use zoning under the development plan.
- 10.1.4. It is located in rural housing policy Zone 3 - Structurally Weak Rural Area where the PA seek to facilitate the development of individual houses in the open countryside subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the Development Management Standards outlined in Chapter 15 and other applicable standards, with the exception of those lands contained in Landscape Classifications 2,3 and 4 where policy objective RH4 applies.
- 10.1.5. Whilst the site is located in Zone 4 - Landscape Sensitivity Category 2-4, I note that PO RH4 (Rural Housing Zone 4 (Landscape Classification 2,3 and 4)), which requires the demonstration of demonstrable economic or social rural links or need, applies only to applicants seeking to construct individual houses in the open countryside. The proposal subject of this appeal is described as the renovation and extension of an existing dwelling in Roundstone village in order to bring it back into active use.
- 10.1.6. Having reviewed the submitted plans, I note that what is proposed is the largescale demolition of a substantial portion of the structure (interior, roof, opes and rear wall), with the partial retention of the external walls (side party walls and structure of front elevation). On the basis that the proposal is not for the wholesale demolition and replacement of the structure, I am satisfied that PO RH 6 (Replacement Dwelling) does not apply. Notwithstanding, I do note the policy guidance in RH6 that *"It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority that the refurbishment of existing habitable dwelling houses would be encouraged, as a more sustainable option than the demolition and construction of a new dwelling house"* with this approach being consistent with development plan PO's CGR 2 (Regeneration) and CGR 8 (Town and Village Centre) which encourage renewal and regeneration in such scenarios.
- 10.1.7. PO RH7 (Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling) applies specifically to proposals to renovate, restore or modify existing derelict or semi-derelict dwellings in the County. It states that such proposals are generally dealt with on their merits on a case by case basis, having regard to the relevant policy objectives of this plan, the specific location and the condition of the structure (must be structurally sound and have the capacity to be renovated and extended) and the scale of any works required to upgrade the structure to modern standards.

- 10.1.8. As detailed in Section 1.0 of this report, I observed the structure, an original terraced property in Roundstone village to be in a relatively poor state of repair and in a semi-derelict condition.
- 10.1.9. The scale of works proposed involve the removal of the structures pitched roof, interior walls, existing front and rear glazing, rear extension and rear external wall. The structure's front elevation and side party walls/ chimney breast would remain, and its roof and interior would be reconstructed with a full-width 2-storey rear extension provided – all in order to deliver living accommodation which meets contemporary standards. I am generally satisfied that the information on file illustrates that the property is of sound structural condition, with the majority of its original features in place, with the capacity to be brought back into active habitable use.
- 10.1.10. PO RH7 also requires qualifying proposals not compromise the original character of the dwelling. I deal with this matter separately in Section 10.2 of this report.
- 10.1.11. In light of the foregoing considerations, I am satisfied that the proposal is generally supported by NPO 45, RPO 3.4, and development plan POs RH 7 (Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling), CGR 2 (Regeneration) and CGR 8 (Town and Village Centre).

10.2. Design and Visual Impact – Material Contravention

Background

- 10.2.1. The PA's single refusal reason relates to the design of the proposed front elevation and its negative impact on the character of the existing and historical streetscape - which is located in a visually sensitive area.
- 10.2.2. The PA's reasoning specifically cites material contravention of development plan POs AH6 (Vernacular Architecture), PVSR1 (Protected Views and Scenic Routes), DM Standard 1 (Qualitative Assessment-Design Quality, Guidelines and Statements) and DM Standard 4 (House Extensions (Urban and Rural)).
- 10.2.3. Having reviewed the information on file, it is clear that to me that the aforementioned design concerns relate exclusively to the design of one element of the fenestration on the first floor of the front elevation in addition to the design of the guttering on this same elevation.

- 10.2.4. The submitted proposed street elevation illustrates that what is proposed at this first floor level is 2 no. windows – one large horizontal window (north/right side) extending from the eaves to the base of the first floor and another smaller window with a vertical emphasis (south/ left side) – in addition to a boxy style gutter along the front eaves.
- 10.2.5. The PA's Conservation Officer considered that the first floor glazing and gutter detail disrupt the vertical proportions and rhythm of streetscape, rendering it out of character with same.
- 10.2.6. The appellants consider that the design changes they made at FI stage sufficiently address the PA's visual integration concerns and they make the case that the design of the first floor glazing, as proposed, is required in order to achieve reasonable morning light penetration to their dwelling's main living space and also to maximise views across the coast. I note that no evidence in respect to relative levels of interior light penetration or comparative aspects is submitted in support of this argument.

Assessment

- 10.2.7. The site subject of this appeal is located in a very visually sensitive location along the R341 (which is designated as Special Landscape/ a Maritime Scenic Route) and also due to its close proximity to the Cloch na Rón Viewpoint which takes in Cloch na Rón (Roundstone) village. For this reason, I consider the PA's concerns regarding the potential of the proposal's design to injure the visual amenities of the area to be well founded.
- 10.2.8. However, having considered the nature and scale of the proposal at issue – i.e. the design of a single window and a section of guttering (within a much larger streetscape of existing 2-storey coastal properties which extends over 250m+) - relative to the breadth and scale of the overall Maritime Scenic Route and that of Viewpoint 10 (which takes in the entire village in addition to Roundstone Bay) - I do not agree with the PA's opinion that the proposal would materially conflict with PVSR1 which seeks to preserve protected views and scenic routes from development that would negatively impact on same.
- 10.2.9. The PA, in their refusal, specifically state that proposal will give rise to a material contravention of PO AH6 (Vernacular Architecture). I draw the Commission's attention to Section 12.5.4 of the development plan, in this regard, which defines vernacular architecture as traditional building forms and types built using local materials, skills

and building techniques which form a vital component of the landscape and reflect the unique local history and character of a place.

- 10.2.10. Whilst I acknowledge the traditional design/ building forms and vernacular architectural character of Roundstone village, I do also note that the subject structure, in terms of its existing horizontal emphasis and relatively wide urban grain, already differs from the vernacular design and form of many of the other properties in the wider streetscape which are characterised by a comparatively narrower urban grain and more vertical emphasis.
- 10.2.11. PO AH6 recognises the importance of ensuring the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and reuse of the vernacular built heritage including structures that contribute to landscape and townscape character and resist the demolition of these structures. The proposal seeks to retain the existing structure of the property's front elevation and also the form and pitch of its roof and I am satisfied that it can be reasonably be characterised as the appropriate reuse of a vernacular building which contributes to landscape and townscape character of Roundstone.
- 10.2.12. In light of the foregoing considerations, and having considered the specific, aspirational and high level wording of this policy objective, I am satisfied that the proposal could not reasonably give rise to a material contravention of same. Notwithstanding, I do have other concerns regarding the fenestration design of the proposal and its potential to negatively impact on the character of the existing streetscape. I discuss this matter further in the following paragraphs.
- 10.2.13. The appellants argue that the design of their proposal, on account of its vertical emphasis and use of traditional external materials, respects the existing and historical character of the village, and does not adversely impact on its visual amenities.
- 10.2.14. I do not agree with the appellants' view that the external character of the proposal, in terms of its fenestration and finishes, respects the character of the existing and historical village streetscape at this location and I specifically do not agree with their view that the rhythm of its openings on both floors rhyme with those of its neighbours.
- 10.2.15. Having regard to my site inspection, I note that whilst there is a high degree of design variation evident in the character of the property elevations to the south of the village (nearer the quay/wharf), those on the north side of the village (where the proposal is

located), are more uniform in their presentation and 2-bay fenestration pattern. In saying that, I do acknowledge that the subject property reads as being 3-bay and with an atypical lower roof/ ridge height and I also note the existence of the 4 no. terraced properties to the immediate north of the appeal site which have comparatively narrower plan/ urban grain and crucially, a single large window at first floor level.

10.2.16. Having considered the proposal against the aforementioned context, it is my view that certain elements of the proposed design unnecessarily and inappropriately exacerbate the horizontal emphasis of the property and render it to be visually jarring and therefore out of character with the existing streetscape. These are the proposed 2-tone plastered finish (as illustrated in View B in the submitted Visual Impact Assessment) on the front façade and the boxy design and relative scale of the gutter as proposed (which is rendered more visually prominent on account of it being much larger in scale than that of neighbouring properties and the disparity between the height of the parapet of the subject property compared to its adjoining properties). However, I do not consider that these issues constitute grounds for refusal and, where they are minded to grant permission, I recommend to the Commission that the matters are addressed by amending condition.

10.2.17. Furthermore, whilst I do not have an issue in principle with the placement, contemporary design or horizontal emphasis of the proposed right side feature window at first floor level (on account of it being largely in-keeping with those of the properties to its immediate north), it is my opinion that its full height character (i.e. extending from the gutter to the base of the first floor level) when viewed in the context of the positioning of the first floor windows in the properties on either side within the same terrace unacceptably detracts from the existing, historical proportions and rhythm of streetscape at this location, rendering this element of the proposal to be visually incongruous. For this reason, I recommend to the Commission that where they are minded to grant permission, a condition be attached requiring the redesign of this specific window in order to ensure that it better visually assimilates with its context.

10.2.18. The PA's refusal reason cites material contravention of DM Standard 1 (Qualitative Assessment-Design Quality, Guidelines and Statements) and DM Standard 4 (House Extensions (Urban and Rural)).

10.2.19. I note that the policy guidance under DM Standard 1 extends to over six pages (covering the strategic themes of Placemaking, Masterplanning, Design Statements, Universal Access, Context, Design Quality, Built Form, Permeability) and it is not clear to me from reviewing the PA's reports what the basis for their determination of material contravention of this PO is. The content of the DM Standard 1 relates to the high level parameters for overall design quality and having regard to the specific design detail issue raised by the PA i.e. the design of a single window and a gutter, I am not satisfied that same could give rise to a material contravention of this policy objective.

10.2.20. Similarly, having considered the wording of DM Standard 4, I note that it relates exclusively to house extensions. Whilst the proposal subject of this appeal includes a 2-storey rear extension, the planning authority raised no issues in respect to the principle or design of same and, on this basis, I can find no evidence that would substantiate a finding of material contravention of this policy objective.

10.3. **Other**

10.3.1. The grounds of appeal seek to draw the Commission's attention to the fact that they requested pre-planning with the planning authority in advance of submitting their proposal, but that this was not facilitated. Whilst I acknowledge same, I consider that this is a procedural matter for resolution between the parties and falls outside the remit of the Commission or the scope of this appeal.

10.3.2. There is a submission on file from Transport Infrastructure Ireland dated 10/12/2025. This advises that regard be had to relevant policy on proposals affecting national roads and the light rail network. I draw the Commission's attention to the fact that the proposal is located on a regional road, rather than a national road, and is not proximate to a light rail network.

11.0 **Recommendation**

I recommend a GRANT of permission subject to the following conditions.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the location of the site in Rural Housing Zone 3 (Structurally Weak Area) and to the planning policies, objectives and development standards of the Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028, and specifically to Policy Objectives RH7 (Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling) CGR 2 (Regeneration) and CGR 8 (Town and Village Centre) and to the nature, scale and design of the proposed development relative to adjoining dwellings, and to the existing pattern of development in the wider area, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development is an acceptable form of development at this location, would not seriously injure the amenities of adjoining properties, 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 information received by the planning authority on the 30/04/2026, 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.	(a) External finishes shall be in accordance with the details submitted with the application unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority. (b) Prior to commencement, details are to be submitted for written agreement with the planning authority on: i. the exact detail of the proposed front gutter treatment. ii. the omission of the two-tone textured plastered finish on the front elevation and its replacement with a single tone finish. Reason: In the interest of orderly development and the visual amenities of the area.

3.	The glazing to all bathroom and en-suite windows shall be manufactured opaque or frosted glass and shall be permanently maintained. The application of film to the surface of clear glass is not acceptable. Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.
4.	Drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services. Reason: In the interest of public health and surface water management.
5.	Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall submit to, and agree in writing with the planning authority, a final Construction and Environmental Management Plan, which shall be adhered to during the demolition and construction phases. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including noise and dust management measures and off-site disposal of demolition and construction waste. Reason: In the interest of public and environmental safety.
6.	All service cables associated with the proposed development (such as electrical, telecommunications and communal television) shall be located underground and outside of tree protection zones. Ducting shall be provided by the developer to facilitate the provision of broadband infrastructure within the proposed development. Reason: In the interests of visual and [residential] amenity.
7.	Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0800 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority. Reason: To safeguard the amenity of property in the vicinity.
8.	The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such

	agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme. Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.
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I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Emma Gosnell
Planning Inspector
16th September 2026

Appendix 1

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-501543-GY-26
Proposed Development Summary	For the renovation and extension of an existing dwelling, including demolition and associated site works
Development Address	Roundstone, County Galway, County Galway, H91 DC0H
	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)	Part 2, Class 10(b)(i) Infrastructure – dwelling units – 500 units. Proposal concerns 1 no. dwelling unit and is therefore sub-threshold.

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: _____

Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	PL-501543-GY-26
Proposed Development Summary	For the renovation and extension of an existing dwelling, including demolition and associated site works
Development Address	Roundstone, County Galway, County Galway, H91 DC0H
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.	
Characteristics of proposed development (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	For the renovation and extension of an existing 2-storey terraced dwelling (84sq.m) in order to increase its size to 114sq.m and also demolition of interior, roof and some external walls and associated site works all on a site of 0.014ha. The development is significantly below the class threshold of 500 dwellings. There is relatively low rise terraced and semi-detached housing in the vicinity which is typical for a rural coastal village. The project due to its size and nature would not give rise to significant use of natural resources or production

	of waste during either the construction or operation phases. The proposed development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, and is not vulnerable to climate change – see SSFRA submitted.
Location of development (The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	The site is located in the rural, coastal village of Roundstone (Cloch Na Rón) in west Connemara, Co. Galway, c. 55km from Galway city. The nearest Natura 2000 sites are the Connemara Islands SPA Site Code 004159 (immediately adjacent), the Cregduff Lough SAC Site Code 001251 (c. 500m to south-west) and the Connemara Bog Complex Site Code 002034 (c. 900m to the west), with all other sites being over 2km away. There are no watercourses on or in the immediate vicinity of the site, with the nearest being the LETTERDIFE River c. 880m to the south-west of the site. The site is located in Rural Housing Zone 3: Structurally Weak Areas and also Zone 4 - Landscape Sensitivity Category 2-4 as per Maps Map 4.1 (Rural Area Types) and 4.2 (Rural Housing Policy). The site forms part of 'coastal landscape' of 'Special' sensitivity and is on a 'Maritime Scenic Route'. – Protected View point 10 Cloch Na Rón i.e. view from the pier over Connemara Sea Lough adjoins the site and the focus of this view in both Cloch na Rón village and Cloch na Rón Bay. The site is not within a designated ACA and there are no Protected Structures or other cultural heritage sites on the site. The village wharf/ quay and slipway (a Protected Structure (No. 30328005) of Roundstone harbour, which is of regional importance, is located to the immediate east of the site on the opposite side of the R341. Whilst have raised concerns about the proposed design of the front elevation of the property (Section 10.2 of Inspector's Report), having regard to the above and the nature and limited scale of the proposed development, I am satisfied that impacts on environmental sensitivities can be adequately assessed in this case without the need for EIA.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters,	Due to the relatively small scale of the development, the site enabling and construction stages will not be significant in terms of duration or complexity. The main operational impacts would be limited to traffic safety, visual amenity, surface water and the wastewater

magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	arising from the site. These elements would be subject to standard assessment/ design, I am satisfied that this can be assessed without potential for significant environmental effects that would require EIA. There would be no significant cumulative impacts with other projects.
Conclusion	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector: _____ Date: _____
DP/ADP: _____ Date: _____
(only where Schedule 7A information or EIAR required).

Appendix 2 - Appropriate Assessment Screening

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics Case file: PL-501543-GY-26	
Brief description of project	Normal planning appeal. For the renovation and extension of an existing dwelling, including demolition and associated site works Roundstone, County Galway, County Galway, H91 DC0H – see Section 2.0 of Inspector's Report for further details.
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	The appeal site, an existing terraced residential property which is located in the rural coastal village of Roundstone, Co. Galway, is on the shore of Roundstone Bay on the Connemara coast. Demolition and some site clearance/ enabling works are required in order to facilitate the proposal. The development involves the largescale demolition of a substantial portion of the structure (interior, roof, opes and rear wall), with the partial retention of the external walls (side party walls and structure of front elevation) and its reconstruction and 2-storey extension to the rear. Proposed foul drainage and water supply is as existing (i.e. via the public mains). Surface water will continue to the public drainage network (as per the existing arrangement).

	There are no watercourses or other ecological features of note on the appeal site that would connect it directly to European Sites in the wider area. The LETTERDIFE River is located c. 880m to the south-west of the site, with this watercourse flowing in a south-easterly direction into the coastal waterbody of Bertraghboy Bay which overlaps with Connemara Islands SPA (Site Code 004159) and the Cregduff Lough SAC (Site Code 001251). It is considered that, given the intervening distance and bank of intervening mixed-use village land, rural housing and local & regional roads between the site and this river, there is no potential for it to provide a hydrological connection to the aforementioned European sites. The appeal site is underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body (EPA Code IE_WE_G_0004) which also underlays the nearby Cregduff Lough SAC (Site Code 001251). However, as no changes are proposed to the existing servicing arrangements, it is considered that there is no potential for this relationship to give rise to a potential indirect hydrological link between the appeal site and these European sites. The subject site has been identified by OPW indicative coastal flood mapping as located within a coastal flood vulnerable area. The appeal site is also located immediately adjacent to the Connemara Islands SPA (Site Code 004159). This flood risk factor and this proximity gives rise to a potential hydrological connection via flood risk and also to risk of disturbance to QIs arising from noise, odours etc. There is considered to be no pathway to any other Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of the appeal site due to the nature and relatively small scale of the development, the location of the appeal site relative to other European sites and the substantial separation distances involved which would give rise to significant intervening dilution effects.
Screening report	No
Natura Impact Statement	No
Relevant Submissions	Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment. No nature conservation concerns were raised by the planning authority/ other parties to the application or in the planning appeal.
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 interests ¹ Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)	Distance from proposed development	Ecological Connections ²	Consider further in screening ³
Connemara Islands SPA (Site Code 004159)	Barnacle Goose (Branta leucopsis) [A045] Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194] Sandwich Tern (Thalasseus sandvicensis) [A863] Little Tern (Sternula albifrons) [A885] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Source: NPWS website accessed 16/09/2026.	Immediately adjacent	Yes Potential direct visual/ acoustic/ airborne connections via air, noise/ vibration, dust, lighting and human activity during construction and operational stages. Potential direct hydrological connection via Coastal flood risk.	Yes

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
Connemara Islands SPA (Site Code 004159)	Potential direct pathways to SPA <u>Construction Phase:</u>	<u>Construction and Operational Phases:</u> - Potential water quality impacts - Potential disturbance to mobile species/ habitat degradation It is considered that the scale and contained nature of the site (relatively defined site boundaries etc and location within an existing terrace of properties and

	Flood risk giving rise to Surface water run-off: uncontrolled release of silt, sediment, dust and other construction related pollutants/ compounds incl. hydrocarbons. Increased human disturbance at this site, particularly during the demolition/ site works phases. - noise/ vibration. - machinery/ vehicles. - lighting - air quality. <u>Operational phase:</u> - Increased human activity disturbance (lighting, noise/ vibration, traffic etc.) - Coastal flooding.	across on the opposite side of the R341 and behind the coastal wall) make it highly unlikely that the proposed development could generate disturbance and impacts of a magnitude that could affect habitat quality within the SPA for the QIs listed in the table above at either construction or operation stage. In terms of potential water quality impacts, given the location, nature and relatively small scale of the proposal, even when considering the matter of coastal flood risk, it is considered that any run-off at either project stage, even in the most extreme scenarios, would be completely attenuated by the dilution, dispersal and settlement that would occur within the Roundstone Bay system and there is therefore no prospect that materials arising from the appeal site, could have any significant effect on the QIs of the aforementioned European sites. Conservation Objectives would not be undermined.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): No	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? No	
Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site		
I conclude that the proposed development (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) would not result in likely significant effects on a European Site. No measures specifically intended to avoid or reduce harmful impacts of the proposed development on European sites were taken into account in reaching this conclusion.		

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 the Connemara Islands SPA, the Cregduff Lough SAC and the Connemara Bog Complex in view of those site's Conservation Objectives, and Appropriate Assessment (and submission of a NIS) is not therefore required.

This determination is based on:

- The nature and relatively minor scale of the development.
- The location of the development as part of an existing built-up rural coastal settlement and the nature of the intervening features between it and the Europeans sites.
- Nature of the potential connections/ ecological pathways to the European sites.
- Taking into account screening determination by PA.

Appendix 3

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING

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

An Bord Pleanála ref. no.	PL-501543-GY-26	Townland, address	Roundstone, County Galway, County Galway, H91 DC0H
Description of project		The proposal comprises of the renovation and extension of an existing dwelling, including demolition and associated site works – see Section 2.0 of Inspector's Report for further details.	
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,		The site is located in the rural coastal village of Roundstone, Co. Galway and is on the shore of Roundstone Bay on the Connemara coast. No watercourses on site. The nearest watercourse is the LETTERDIFE river (EPA Code IE_WE_31L250940) which is of Good Status and Under Review. This river is located c. 880m to the south-west of the site. This river flows in a south-easterly direction into the coastal waterbody of Bertraghboy Bay (EPA Code IE_WE_230_0000) which is of High Status and Not At Risk. Roundstone Bay transitional waterbody (EPA Code IE_WE_230_0100) which is of High Status and Not At Risk is located immediately adjacent to the site c. 20m to the east. The appeal site is also underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body (EPA Code IE_WE_G_0004) which is also of Good Status and Not At Risk. The subject site has been identified by OPW indicative coastal flood mapping as located within a coastal flood vulnerable area.	

Proposed surface water details Proposed water supply source & available capacity Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues			The site is served by an existing public water supply and public sewer, with surface water draining to the public drainage network.			
Others?			A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment was submitted at FI stage.			
Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection						
Identified water body	Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
LETTERDIFE River	c. 880m	LETTERDIFE River (EPA Code IE_WE_31L2 50940)	Good	Under Review	Unknown	No direct or indirect pathways.
Roundstone Bay	c. 20m	Roundstone Bay (EPA Code IE_WE_230_0100)	High Status	Not At Risk	n/a	No direct pathways. Indirect - Flood Risk.
Spiddal groundwater body (EPA Code IE_WE_G_0004)	Below site	Spiddal groundwater body (EPA Code IE_WE_G_0004)	Good	Not At Risk	n/a	No direct or indirect pathways.

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

CONSTRUCTION PHASE

No.	Component	Water body receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2.
1.	Surface	IE_WE_31 L250940	No	n/a	n/a	No	Screened Out
2.	Transitional	IE_WE_23 0_0100	Yes	Flood risk – contamination	Best practice construction measures.	No	Screened Out
3.	Ground	EPA Code IE_WE_G_0004	No	n/a	n/a	No	Screened Out

OPERATIONAL PHASE

4.	Surface	IE_WE_31 L250940	No	n/a	n/a	No	Screened Out
5.	Transitional	IE_WE_23 0_0100	Yes	Flood risk – contamination	SSFRA Mitigation Measures	No	Screened Out
	Ground	EPA Code IE_WE_G_ 0004	No	n/a	n/a	No	Screened Out
DECOMMISSIONING PHASE N/A							

