



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-501637-LK-26

Development	New metal garage door to existing building
Location	Paddy Dore Commercials CVRT Test Centre, Dock Road, Limerick
Planning Authority	Limerick City and County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2660493
Applicant(s)	Dore Property Holdings Ltd
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant(s)	Paul Kelly
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	2 nd October 2026
Inspector	Clare Clancy

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is occupied by Paddy Dore Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness Testing (CVRT) facility and is located on the Dock Road, Ballykeeffe, Limerick approx. 2.5 km from Limerick city centre, as the crow flies. The site forms part of an established commercial/industrial area along the Dock Road (R510) and is accessed from the Dock Road via an existing entrance. It is a backland site with a fuel filling station bounding the site to the southeast. There are other commercial buildings and uses adjoining the site to the rear, northeast and to the southwest. The surrounding area is characterised predominantly by industrial, commercial and employment uses. The site comprises a large drive through test building along the northeastern boundary of the and a larger garage along the southwestern boundary of the site which houses a test lane for smaller commercial vehicles.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Proposed new metal doorway to the existing building at the end of the existing LCV testing lane. The following is of note:
- The proposed metal roller shutter door will be 5.0 m high x 6.4 m wide to be mounted on the southwest facing elevation of the existing test building.
 - The appeal site operates as a CVRT test centre for Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCV) and Light Commercial Vehicles (LVC).
 - The proposed door is to enhance safety, improve operational efficiency and maintain compliant traffic patterns for the established CVRT test centre.
 - There is no material increase in traffic volume as the facility is managed by a booking system.

The application is accompanied by the following documents:

- Swept Path Analysis of the site.
- 2.2. Unsolicited information was received by the PA on 2nd July 2023 which provided the following in support of the application:
- Planning Justification Report (Malachi Cullen Consulting Engineering Ltd)

- Traffic & Safety Summary (Malachi Cullen Consulting Engineering Ltd)

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

By Order dated 23rd June 2026, Limerick City and County Council decided to grant permission subject to two conditions.

- Condition 2 – Relates to construction phase.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

One planning report forms the basis of the assessment and recommendation. The following is noted:

- The principle of the proposal was acceptable having regard to the established use of the site and the zoning objective for the site.
- The site is served by an existing access off the Dock Road.
- The development was screened out for AA and EIA.
- The site is within a flood risk area Flood Zone A but given the nature of the proposed development flood risk was not raised as a concern.
- Development contributions did not apply.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Mid West National Road Design Office – No objection.
- Fire Department – No objection.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- TII – To have regard to official policy for development proposals impacting national roads and the existing light rail network.

3.4. Third Party Observations

One third party observation was received by the PA which highlighted safety concerns in relation to vehicles movements into / out of the site and within the site.

4.0 Planning History

Appeal Site

- PA Ref. 071145 Retention permission granted for a DOE testing centre (20/09/2007).

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied)

The relevant policy and objectives of the current development plan include the following:

5.1.1. Chapter 9 Climate Action, Flood Risk and Transition to Low Carbon Economy

Objective CAF O20 Flood Risk Assessments

Requires development proposals in areas at risk of flooding to demonstrate, through an appropriate site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, that potential flood risks have been identified and adequately addressed in accordance with the relevant flood risk management guidelines.

It is an objective of the Council to require a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for all planning applications in Flood Zones A and B and consider all sources of flooding (for example coastal/tidal, fluvial, pluvial or groundwater), where deemed necessary. The detail of these Site-Specific FRAs (or commensurate assessments of flood risk for minor developments) will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. The FRA will be prepared taking into account the requirements laid out in the SFRA, and in particular in the Plan Making Justification Tests as appropriate to the particular development site. A detailed Site-Specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The

assessments shall consider and provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations.

5.1.2. Chapter 12 Land Use Zoning Strategy

Land Use Zoning

The appeal site is zoned 'Industry'

Objective: To provide for specialised and heavy industrial development and associated employment creation.

Purpose: To provide employment locations specifically for heavy and specialised industry associated with environmental emissions including noise, dust and odour (e.g. waste processing, aggregate processing etc.) and with intensive or hazardous processing (e.g. Seveso) which may give rise to land use conflict if located within other land use zones. Marine related industry shall be allowed on Industry zoned lands on the Dock Road.

5.1.3. Chapter 5 Strong Economy

ECON O17 Strategic Employment Locations City and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty

(b) This Identifies the Dock Road as a Strategic Employment Location and supports employment, enterprise and industry on appropriately zoned lands.

5.1.4. Chapter 7 Sustainable Mobility and Transport

Policy TR P11 Road Safety and Carrying Capacity of the Non-national Road Network

Seeks to improve road safety, minimise existing traffic hazards and prevent the creation of new traffic hazards.

Objective TR O37 Land Uses and Access Standards

Ensures that development involving new or intensified accesses are assessed having regard to traffic safety and road capacity.

TR O48 Traffic Management

Seeks to ensure developments generating significant additional traffic adequately address their impact on the surrounding road network.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

- SAC: 002165 - Lower River Shannon SAC – 150 m to east.
- SPA: 004077 - River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA – 158 m to east.
- pNHA: 000435 - Inner Shannon Estuary - South Shore – Within designated site.

6.0 EIA Screening

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

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

One third party appeal has been received from Paul Kelly. The grounds of appeal may be summarised as follows:

Driver and Pedestrian Safety Concerns

- Concerns regarding safety and near misses related to conflicting traffic movements of vehicles entering the site, parking within the site and other vehicles attempting to enter the HCV test lane.
- HCV vehicles have to reverse onto the access road before being able to enter the HCV test lane which poses safety issues to cyclists and pedestrians.
- If a vehicle exiting the site needs to stop it blocks the main Dock Road until the exiting vehicle has come out.
- If coming from the east, vehicles will be blocked from exiting the access road on the east.
- Large articulate trucks turning left do not have enough room to make the manoeuvre while another vehicle is parked in centre turn lane.
- There are no footpaths for pedestrians along the access to the site to enter and exit the site.

Inaccuracy of Auto Track Report

- The auto track is not sufficient as most of the major movement on site are omitted.
- The access to the site is too narrow for two trucks to pass safely which is not shown on the auto track survey. In most cases, an LCV and HCV cannot pass as the clearance space is insufficient.
- Pedestrians enter and exit the site from the same entry point.

Parking

- Typically c. 20 HVC's park around the site. The proposed LCV drive through has resulted in the loss of HCV parking spaces providing for only 6 spaces. The space nearest the fence results in a very difficult manoeuvre in order to park.

Other Matters

- The planning history of the site indicates an application for retention for the testing centre which includes an auto track report, but no detail was provided in terms of the traffic entering and existing the site safely.
- The planning section could not find any evidence of an application or a retention application for the LCV test lane in order to determine had any planning conditions been put in place around site access therefore on what basis can permission be granted for an access door serving a use that does not appear to have the necessary planning consent.

7.2. Applicant Response

The applicant has provided a response to the grounds of appeal which may be summarised as follows:

- The appellant has submitted false claims on alleged personal experience but is not a regular user of the CVRT facility and last used the site in 2009. (attendance and testing records Appendix A). Such claims are not factually correct.
- The appellant's claims that he brings vehicles to the test centre for his employer are incorrect. The vehicles referred to are not in ownership by the appellant's

employer. They are owned by two separate companies which the CVRT test centre carries out contracted work for.

- The CVRT test centre operate and collection and drop off service for these vehicles and the appellant has no involvement in transporting, presenting or collecting vehicles at the site.
- The incidents described in the grounds of appeal are unfounded as the appellant has not used the test centre in over 17 years. Drivers bring vehicles to the site are not permitted to drive into the lanes, are not permitted to remain in vehicle while vehicles is being tested. The CRVT tester is solely responsible for the driving of vehicles for tests purposes through the lane.
- Drone footage is provided to demonstrate safe and unobstructed manoeuvres from the Dock road into the test centre site during business hours showing vehicles entering and existing the site without reversing onto the Dock road or needing to. It further shows adequate space for HCV and LCV movements, proper use of HCV testing bay facility, safe circulation routes, no congestion or conflict. It demonstrates compliance with RSA drive through requirements.
- The nature of the proposed development is misrepresented as the planning application relates to a new metal door and does not alter existing HCV lane, changes to the yard layout, modify parking arrangements or create a new entrance.
- The appellant's claims regarding the planning status of the site are incorrect and does not provide evidence to substantiate the claim. The site has planning permission for a CVRT test centre (evidence appended in Attachment E). Planning for the HCV lane was granted with conditions under P.A. Ref. 07/1445 and is compliant.
- The appellant's technical claims are unsupported and incorrect in terms of vehicle widths, entrance dimensions, auto track accuracy, manoeuvring requirements and alleged reversing movements and there is an absence of evidence from entities such as Gardaí, RSH, independent engineering analysis, photographic evidence.

- The auto track report was prepared by an engineer and is appropriate to the scope of the development and demonstrates turning movements with a 16.5 m articulated truck and trailer (Attachment G).
- The booking system runs 6 weeks in advance and facilitates traffic management in and out of the yard.
- The CVRT centre operates a risk management system, there are annual audits.
- The statutory requirements for a CVRT test facility require 3 LCV parking spaces and 2 HCV parking spaces. The site facilitates 10 LCV parking spaces, 7 semi trailer parking spaces, 2 rigid unit spaces and 7 articulated tractor unit parking spaces, available once the proposed exit door for the LCV lane is installed. The parking spaces maintain free space within the yard for parking and testing manoeuvres.
- There are 7 staff designated parking spaces and a clear pedestrian walkway with signage that directs pedestrians away from HGV and LCP parking areas (Attachment H).
- A pre-planning meeting was held in advance of application submission in which traffic management and safety measures were discussed.

Note to Commission:

The response is supported by several attachments including drone footage of vehicles movements and photos taken from within the site.

7.3. Planning Authority Response

None.

7.4. Observations

None.

8.0 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, 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
- Traffic Safety
- Other Matters

8.1. Principle of Development

- 8.1.1. The appeals site is zoned 'Industry' under the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied). The stated objective for land zoned industry is "to provide for specialised and heavy industrial development and associated employment creation" with the purpose of providing employment locations for specialised and heavy industrial activities, including uses which would be associated with environmental emissions such as noise, dust and colour odour.
- 8.1.2. The existing use of the site as a CVRT facility is the established use on the site. The proposed development comprises the installation of a metal door to the existing LCV testing lane located within the existing garage along the southwestern boundary of the site. It therefore relates to the established use on the site. I consider that the proposed development is ancillary to and facilitates the continued operation of the existing CVRT facility. It does not introduce a new use or represent a material change in the established use of the site. Having regard to the existing use of the premises and its location within an area zoned for industrial development, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle having regard to the zoning objective for the site and is consistent with the established character of this site also.

8.2. Traffic Safety

- 8.2.1. The substantive issues raised in the grounds of appeal relate to driver and pedestrian safety associated with vehicle movements arriving at and leaving the CVRT facility, and also within the site itself. In particular, concerns are raised in regard to the existing site access, which it is stated as too narrow to adequately accommodate the turning

movements of large HCVs from the Dock Road, resulting in instances where vehicles are required to reverse.

- 8.2.2. I note from the details on file that the basis for the proposed development relates to improving the existing LCV testing by providing a drive-through system. This is required to meet the Road Safety Authority's health and safety and traffic management guidelines standards for such operations. In addition, other operational improvements within the site include upgrades to signage, road markings and safety infrastructure, together with improvements to the yard layout and traffic management.
- 8.2.3. I note the status of the Dock Road in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied) under Objective ECON O17 which identifies the Dock Road (R510) as a Strategic Employment Location, supporting employment, enterprise, industry and marine related activities on appropriately zoned lands. In Volume 2a (Limerick City and Suburbs), I note that the strategic objectives of the plan further envisages the Dock Road as an important sustainable transport corridor, with primary bus route and cycle lanes proposed under the road strategy.
- 8.2.4. The concerns raised by the appellant in relation to road traffic safety are acknowledged. As the site has an established vehicle access onto the Dock Road and is an established CVRT facility, I do not consider that the nature of the proposed development would result in an expansion of the site, alteration to the existing vehicle access arrangements, or changes in the established use of the premises. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal will not materially alter or intensify the use of the site or generate a material increase in traffic movements at the existing site access. I note also from the applicant's response to the grounds of appeal that the testing facility operates under a pre-booking system which manages vehicle testing appointments arriving at the site.
- 8.2.5. In relation to traffic management within the site and pedestrian safety, I noted during my site inspection that there are designated pedestrian routes defined on the ground, together with designated car parking. The Proposed Site Layout indicates car parking for staff along the rear/northwestern boundary, and LCV and HCV parking along the southern and southwestern corner of the site. It also depicts the path of large articulated trucks with trailers on the access road leading into and out of the site. In

response to the grounds of appeal, the applicant provided an additional Proposed Site Layout which illustrates turning movements into the site from the northeast.

8.2.6. During my site inspection, I observed the existing access serving the site adjoining the heavily trafficked Dock Road. It is immediately bounded to the east by the access and entrance road serving this commercial premises, and to the west by the egress point serving the adjoining filling station. I would agree that the access road into the site is tight, and although the auto track shows the route of two large vehicles on the access road, in my opinion this would be difficult to achieve should they pass simultaneously, and the drone footage submitted in response to the grounds of appeal would confirm this. Notwithstanding this, the submitted auto track analysis and the drone footage demonstrate that the turning movements of large articulated vehicles can be satisfactorily accommodated within the site, including their ingress and egress from the site via the existing access onto the public road. It therefore demonstrate that the existing access and internal circulation arrangements are capable of accommodating the relevant vehicle movements without undue conflict or obstruction. On the basis of the foregoing, it is my view that the installation of the new door would not change the way in which vehicles already operate within the site. As the proposal involves the installation of a door on the existing LCV test building to enable vehicles to drive through rather than reverse back out onto the yard, this in my view enhances safety within the site.

8.2.7. The appellant has also raised concerns that there is no provision for pedestrian footpaths within the site, resulting in a hazardous situation for pedestrian safety. The concerns raised regarding the absence of a formal pedestrian footpath within the curtilage of the site are acknowledged. It is also relevant to note that, other than the installation of the proposed new door, no changes are proposed to the operation of the existing commercial activity on site. It would appear to me that the site is an established and authorised commercial CVRT facility having regard to PA Ref. 07/1145, and the established and associated arrangements for pedestrian movement would have been considered under that permission. In response to the grounds of appeal, the applicant has shown that provision is made for pedestrian movement within the site. Designated pedestrian walkways are provided through painted pedestrian markings and directional signage, facilitating the movement of pedestrians between vehicles and the relevant testing locations which I observed at time of site

inspection. While these markings do not constitute a formal footpath, they do provide for the identification and management of pedestrian movements within the established CVRT facility.

- 8.2.8. Having regard to the limited nature of the proposed development, the proposed new door will facilitate access to the existing test building as part of an already established operation. On that basis, and having regard to the information submitted, I am satisfied that it would not introduce a new pedestrian generating use or activity to the site. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not give rise to a material pedestrian safety concern in this case.
- 8.2.9. I note that Mid West Road Design Office raised no concerns in relation to the proposed development. Therefore, having regard to the foregoing and to the nature and scope of the proposed works, it is my consideration that the development will not give rise to a significant additional road safety traffic concern at this location or materially impact on pedestrian safety within the curtilage of the site. The proposed new door neither creates nor changes the sites access, traffic arrangements or established testing use, nor does it alter or intensify the existing vehicle access arrangements serving the site. Therefore I consider the proposal to be acceptable.

8.3. **Other Matters**

Flood Risk

- 8.3.1. The appeal site is located in Flood Zone A. I note the provisions of Objective CAF O20 (Flood Risk Assessment) which requires the submission of a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment 'where deemed necessary'. Given the minor nature of the works proposed to be carried out to an existing building within an established commercial development on the site, I do not consider that a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment is necessary in this case. I note that the PA did not raise this as a concern given the nature of the development involved and I would concur with the PA in this regard and I am satisfied that the proposed development would not be contrary to the provisions of Objective CAF O20 in this case.

Alleged Unauthorised Development

- 8.3.2. In relation to the matters raised by the appellant regarding alleged unauthorised development, I note that the application before the Commission relates specifically to

the provision of a new door to the existing CVRT test building, within an established commercial development. I note from the planning history that the wider development and established use of the site has the benefit of planning permission having regard to PA Ref. 071145. The Commission's assessment in this case is therefore confined to the development described in the public notices and the planning considerations arising from that development. Therefore matters relating to alleged unauthorised development or compliance with previous permissions are, in the first instance, matters for the PA in the exercise of its enforcement functions. Accordingly, I do not consider this to be a matter for determination in the assessment of the development currently before Commission.

9.0 AA Screening

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

I have considered case PL-501637-LK-26 in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The appeal site is located on the Dock Road, Ballykeeffe, Limerick.

The closest European site relative to the appeal site are the following:

- SAC: 002165 - Lower River Shannon SAC – 150 m to east.
- SPA: 004077 - River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA – 158 m to east.

The appeal site comprises of an established commercial use which operates as a CVRT facility. All buildings on site are existing. It is located on lands zoned 'Industry'. The proposed development relates to the mounting of a new roller shutter door onto the south western elevation of the existing building which tests LCVs.

No nature conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

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

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The limited nature of the proposed works,
- The confined nature of the works within the curtilage of an established commercial premises,
- The distance from European sites and lack of direct connections,
- Taking into account the screening determination of the PA.

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

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

10.0 Water Framework Directive

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, 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.

11.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission is granted subject to the following conditions and reasons set out below.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the zoning objective of the site, to the permitted and established use of the overall site as a vehicle testing centre, to the nature and modest scale of the proposal to meet revised Road Safety Authority compliance standards for vehicle testing without a material intensification of throughput or activity on site, and having regard to the planning history of the site and the pattern of development in the area, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would be in accordance with the zoning objective for the site, acceptable in terms of road traffic safe, 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 received by the planning authority on the 01st day of May 2026, as amended by the further plans and particulars submitted on 02nd day of June 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. Site development and building works shall be carried out between the hours of 07:00 am to 7:00 pm Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 08:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times shall only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written agreement has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of property in the vicinity.

3. Prior to commencement of works, the developer shall submit to, and agree in writing with the planning authority, a Construction Management Plan, which shall be adhered to during construction. This plan shall provide details of

intended construction practice for the development, including hours of working, noise and dust management measures and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste.

Reason: In the interest of public safety and amenity.

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

Clare Clancy
Planning Inspector

06th October 2026

Appendix 1 – Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-501637-LK-26
Proposed Development Summary	New metal garage door to existing building on existing building within existing CRVT test centre
Development Address	Paddy Dore Commercials CVRT Test Centre, Dock Road, Limerick
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a ‘Project’ for the purposes of EIA?	☐ Yes, it is a ‘Project’. Proceed to Q.2.
	☒ No, No further action required.
(For the purposes of the Directive, “Project” means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	
☐ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	

3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
☐ No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes ☐	

No ☐	
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Inspector: _____ Date: _____