

Shinganagh
Mayo Abbey
Claremorris
County Mayo
F12Y286

An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

25/08/2026

Observation re Proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development Number 324429: 110KV Electric Substation at Cloonbaul, Mayo Abbey, Claremorris, County Mayo proposed by Cunlaghfadda Green Energy Limited AND Appeal of Mayo County Council refusal of Planning Permission for a Seven Turbine Windfarm in the townlands of Knockroe, Cunlaghfadda, Harefield, Cloonbaul and Knockaunakill in the Mayo Abbey area

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Joseph Brett of Shinganagh, Mayo Abbey, Claremorris, Co. Mayo, F12Y286 wish to make a formal observation on the proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development **Number 324429**: Electric Substation by Cunlaghfadda Green Energy Limited in the townland of Cloonbaul, Mayo Abbey, Claremorris, County Mayo and request that planning permission be refused.

This application proposes the construction of a 110KV Electric Substation and grid connection to serve the seven turbine windfarm proposed by Cunlaghfadda Green Energy Limited in the townlands of Knockroe, Cunlaghfadda, Harefield, Cloonbaul and Knockaunakill in the Mayo Abbey area which was the subject of a planning application to Mayo County Council (**File Nu 2660398**) that was rejected on 13/07/2026 and is now the subject of an appeal to An Coimisiún Pleanála, **reference number 501853**.

A third proposal for the construction of a forty-unit Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) adjacent to the Substation was lodged with Mayo County Council on 14/08/2026, **reference number 2660653**, is also part of this project.

Taken in their totality the three proposals represent an **Enormous Industrial Complex** spread across an approx. 300 acre site being imposed on a highly populated, tranquil rural community in a thriving agricultural region of south Mayo with virtually no consultations with the local community. The splitting of the project into three separate disassociated applications to two distinct planning authorities is devious, to say the least and is intent on dodging proper planning scrutiny and on dissipating the local community's ability to assess and respond to the proposals.

This approach amounts to unlawful project splitting, a practice that has been repeatedly struck down by the Irish High Court. A wind farm and its grid connection constitute a single project under EU environmental law and must be assessed together.

I therefore urge An Coimisiún Pleanála:

- **Not treat the 110KV Electric Substation as an application in isolation and immediately reject it**
- **Seek further information to allow a proper assessment of the combined and cumulative effects of the three elements of the development and any other Wind or Solar farm(s) being planned at present that might be connected to the Substation and BESS in the future.**
- **Convene an oral hearing to facilitate the expression of the level of public concern relating to this proposed development – as already demonstrated by the 169 objections lodged with Mayo County Council against the planning application for the Seven Turbine Wind-farm**

Mayo Abbey is not simply a rural village. It is an internationally significant early medieval ecclesiastical landscape whose origins lie in the foundation of Mayo of the Saxons by St. Colmán and the Anglo-Saxon monks of Lindisfarne in the seventh century. Its importance is recognised by historians and archaeologists across Ireland, Britain and Europe. The significance of Mayo Abbey extends far beyond the surviving ruins and encompasses the wider landscape, archaeological setting, routeways, topography and cultural memory of the area.

The applicant's own archaeological assessment records ninety-four archaeological sites or site groups within five kilometers of the proposed development and identifies forty-six previously unrecorded cultural heritage features within two kilometers. The field surveys carried out by the Mayo Abbey FAS Archaeological Survey in 1995/96 identified upwards of 150 monuments throughout the parish, three of which are immediately adjacent the proposed 110KV Substation, one of which is a registered National Monument (MA101-106---- Enclosure.). The Late Neolithic timber circle excavated by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd in 2005 during the installation of the Corrib Gas Line is within 500 meters of the proposed 110KV Substation and has been classified as an immensely important ritual site. This site together with the three other immediately adjacent monuments strongly indicate that the whole area could be an extensive Neolithic landscape of immense importance.

The EIAR fails to adequately assess Mayo Abbey as an integrated cultural landscape. Instead, it treats archaeological sites as isolated receptors and fails to consider the cumulative significance of the broader monastic landscape. The introduction of seven industrial-scale turbines would fundamentally alter the visual setting of Mayo Abbey and permanently damage the character of a landscape that has survived largely intact for many millennia.

This remarkable concentration of heritage assets demonstrates the unique archaeological importance and sensitivity of the receiving environment. All remaining monuments in this area must be left undisturbed and preserved in-situ pending further investigations.

The concerns raised by Dr Christopher Grocock, an internationally respected scholar of Anglo-Saxon history and archaeology (Appendix 2), reinforce the significance of Mayo Abbey and the detrimental visual impact this development would have on the setting of the monastic enclosure and wider historic landscape.

The unique importance of Mayo Abbey as an Early Christian Monastic site has been recognized by Mayo County Council in the Second Schedule, paragraph 2 of its refusal of planning permission for the seven Turbine Wind-farm – see Appendix 7.

The proposal would also have serious consequences for the residents and community facilities of Mayo Abbey village. All seven turbines would be visible from the village and cemetery at a

distance of approximately 2.1 kilometers. The development would dominate views from a community that has invested decades of voluntary effort and public funding in developing schools, sporting facilities, childcare services, social housing, community infrastructure and heritage projects.

Particularly concerning is the applicant's apparent failure to properly assess the impact on Mayo Abbey National School, Mayo Gaels GAA grounds, Abbey Tots Crèche, the Community Resource Centre, the parish church, local businesses and residential areas. These facilities are central to the social and economic life of the parish and deserve meaningful consideration within the planning process.

The ecological sensitivity of the site also raises major concerns. The applicant's own surveys identify probable breeding Curlew within the development area. Curlew is one of Ireland's most endangered breeding bird species and continues to experience severe population decline. The precautionary principle must apply where breeding habitat may be affected.

The EIAR for the Windfarm also identifies Marsh Fritillary larval webs and suitable habitat within the development area. Marsh Fritillary is protected under the Habitats Directive and the presence of active larval webs demonstrates that the site supports an important population of this protected species. Equally concerning is the confirmation of a bat roost within the development site and the presence of several protected bat species including Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Leisler's Bat, Nathusius' Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared Bat. The acknowledged risk of collision mortality and barotrauma highlights the incompatibility of the proposal with the conservation of protected species.

The wider ecological network supports White-clawed Crayfish, European Eel, Lamprey species, Otter, Brown Trout habitat and a range of protected bird species including Hen Harrier, Kestrel, Buzzard, Sparrowhawk and probable breeding Lapwing. These findings demonstrate that the site cannot reasonably be described as a low-sensitivity location.

The inadequate assessment of Lough Fark, Drumady Lough and the wider aquatic environment is a cause of further concern. Lough Fark has played an important role in palaeoenvironmental research and understanding the development of the Mayo Abbey landscape over millennia. The omission of any meaningful assessment of this important receptor represents a serious deficiency within the EIAR.

The applicant's own shadow flicker assessment identifies ninety sensitive properties within the study area, with fifty-seven predicted to experience shadow flicker and forty properties exceeding guideline thresholds. The scale of this impact is significant and demonstrates that residential amenity would be adversely affected across a substantial rural community. This has been recognized by Mayo County Council in the Second Schedule, paragraph 3 of its refusal of planning permission for the seven Turbine Wind-farm – see Appendix 7.

The proposal must also be considered in the context of cumulative impact. There are already five wind farms located within ten kilometers of the site. The addition of a sixth wind farm would contribute to the progressive industrialisation of a historic rural landscape, increased visual saturation, cumulative ecological impacts and further erosion of landscape character.

The Draft Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy acknowledges the importance of avoiding cumulative impacts, protecting peatland habitats, safeguarding biodiversity and preserving cultural heritage. The proposed development appears inconsistent with these objectives.

Further concern is raised by the absence of a detailed site-specific wildfire risk assessment despite the presence of peatland habitats, forestry, scrub vegetation and electrical infrastructure. Recent wildfire incidents throughout Ireland have highlighted the vulnerability of such landscapes and the need for robust risk assessment.

Finally, the EIAR contains significant deficiencies including:

- Failure to adequately assess Mayo Abbey as a cultural landscape.
- Failure to properly assess Lough Fark and the wider aquatic environment.
- Insufficient consideration of cumulative impacts.
- Overreliance on mitigation measures for protected species.
- Inadequate assessment of shadow flicker impacts.
- Absence of a site-specific wildfire risk assessment.
- Failure to satisfactorily address conflicts with the Draft Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy.

For all of these reasons I submit that the proposed developments would result in unacceptable impacts on cultural heritage, biodiversity, landscape character, residential amenity and environmental quality.

The proposals is contrary to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and should therefore be refused.

I respectfully request that this observation be applied to both the proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development Number 324429, the 110KV Electric Substation at Cloonbaul, Mayo Abbey, Claremorris, County Mayo by Cunlaghfadda Green Energy Limited and to the appeal of the refusal of planning permission by Mayo County Council of their seven turbine windfarm in the townlands of Knockroe, Cunlaghfadda, Harefield, Cloonbaul and Knockaunakill, An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number 501853

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Brett', with a stylized, cursive script.

Joseph Brett

1. MAYO ABBEY'S HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

The proposed development lies within the wider historic landscape of Mayo Abbey, one of the most significant early medieval ecclesiastical landscapes in Ireland and Britain.

Mayo Abbey (Mag nEó na Sacsan) was an **internationally important monastic centre** associated with St Colmán, Anglo-Saxon monasticism, Lindisfarne and the wider Christian world of early medieval Europe. Its significance extends far beyond the standing ruins visible today in Mayo Abbey village.

Mayo Abbey is a small rural village situated in central Mayo, ten miles to the southeast of Castlebar and six miles to the northwest of Claremorris. Mayo Abbey village today gives little indication of its proud heritage and its significance as a major center of the Celtic/Anglo-Saxon Christian world in the seventh century and the subsequent millennium.

To understand why a Saxon Monastery was founded in the centre of the Plains of Mayo in the West of Ireland we must go back to the sixth Century and St Columcille (Columba). A native of Gartán in Donegal, Columcille founded several important monasteries in Derry, Kells and Swords. In 563 AD he became embroiled in a dispute over his unauthorised copying of a book of psalms that resulted in him being banished from Ireland. Together with twelve companions, Columcille travelled to western Scotland and founded a monastery on the Island of Iona.

From his base at Iona he converted the Scottish Picts to Christianity and by the time of his death in 597 AD, Columcille's Celtic Church had spread across all of Scotland and a large part of Northumbria. In today's terms, Northumbria's domain stretched from southern Scotland to the southern borders of Yorkshire. During the sixth century it had been over-run by pagan tribes of Saxons and Angles from northern Germany.

In 635 AD, the King of Northumbria requested the monks of Iona to send a missionary to convert his subjects to Christianity. Aidan was dispatched from Iona and he founded a monastery at Lindisfarne, a tidal island to the north east of modern-day Newcastle. Upon his death he was succeeded by Finian and in 661 AD, Colmán was appointed as the third Bishop - Abbot of Lindisfarne.

While Columcille's "Celtic Church" evangelized Scotland and much of Northumbria, Augustin had converted southern England to the more modern "Roman Church". His successors moved northwards into Northumbria to preach the Gospel to the pagan Saxons. There were differences in structures and practices between the two traditions but there was no fundamental difference of Faith. They worked in relative harmony for a time but disputes arose between them over several issues, particularly the method of calculating the date for the celebration of Easter.

The Easter controversy intensified over time and reached a peak when King Oswy of Northumbria married Queen Eanfled, who was an Angle and a follower of the Roman tradition. The consequence of this was that on the same day as the King celebrated Easter, his Queen and his heir were observing the strict fast and abstinence of Palm Sunday. Undoubtedly this situation caused some tensions within the Royal household!

To settle the dispute King Oswy convened a Synod at Whitby in 664 AD; Colmán was tasked with pleading the case for the Celtic tradition while Wilfrid presented the case for Rome.

The Synod decided in favor of the Roman tradition. Colmán was a very conservative and fiery West of Ireland man and he did not accept the decision of the Synod stating, ***"because I have no doubt that they are saints, I will never abandon their way of life, their customs, or their teaching"***.

Colmán resigned as Bishop of Lindisfarne and retreated to Iona, accompanied by thirty Saxon and some Irish monks, reputedly taking the bones of Aidan with them. After some time on Iona Colmán and the Lindisfarne monks set sail for Inishboffin a small and at that time an uninhabited island off the Mayo/Galway coast.

Here Colmán and his companions built a monastery. The Saxon monks were industrious and during the spring and summer, they tilled the land and grew the crops necessary for the survival of the community. Meanwhile, the Irish visited their kinsfolk on the mainland and returning to the island in winter, helping to consume the fruits of the Saxons' labors.

Inevitably, this situation led to tensions within the community so in 667/8 A.D. Colmán came onto the mainland seeking a site to settle the Saxons. He came to an area known in Gaelic as "Mag nEó" meaning The Plain of the Yew Trees, where he was granted a site for a monastic settlement for his Saxon monks. He appointed Gerald, who was the son of a Saxon prince and had been educated at Iona, as Bishop-Abbot of his new foundation. He returned to Inishboffin, where he died in 676 AD.

Under Gerald's direction the monastery at Mayo grew quickly and soon became known as Mag nEó na Sachsán (Mayo of the Saxons). According to the Book of Ballymote, by the year 700 A.D. more than one hundred monks lived and taught there. It was unique in that it was an exclusive Anglo Saxon monastery.

Mayo of the Saxons became a famous seat of learning which attracted many thousands of students from various parts of Britain, including many sons of the nobility. Its history is well recorded by many scholars across the centuries emphasizing its National, International, Ecclesiastical and Secular significance.

The Venerable Bede of Jarrow, known as the father of English History, is the primary source of the history of Mayo Abbey. Writing in the "Ecclesiastical History of the English People" in 671 AD he states *"For this is the place grown large from small beginnings houses a distinguished community of monks drawn from the English provinces"*

Later around 780 AD Alcuin of York, chief advisor to the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne, wrote at least two letters of praise and support to the monks at Mayo of the Saxons addressing them as: *"The beloved Fathers in Christ of the Church of Mayo For a great light of knowledge has spread from you to various parts of our country"*

In the first half of the 9th century the monastery was attacked and plundered on several occasions by Vikings including the much-feared Turgesius.

In 1152 AD, it became the seat of the Diocese of Mayo. It was under the direct control of the Papacy, not subject to the local secular political rulers. Vatican archives describe the Mayo Diocese as *"The Bishopric of Mayo, where there was once a famous university that had seven colleges, two abbeys and other churches besides its cathedral"*.

A Norman town was founded there and an Augustinian Abbey was built around 1400 AD, some ruins of which are still visible today.

In 1578 AD Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy of Ireland, named County Mayo after the town of Mayo during the composition of Connacht.

Towards the latter half of the 16th century, the Abbey was sacked and its substantial lands were confiscated and dispersed by the Crown.

The Diocese was finally merged with Tuam in 1631 AD.

During the Penal period Mass continued to be celebrated in the ruins of the monastery for the people of the area chiefly by Franciscan priests from Galway. Some time after the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Acts in the early nineteenth century the people of the parish of Mayo and Rosslea built a church at the site of the Abbey, reusing much of the stone from the ruin. This was opened in 1845 AD, in the midst of the Great Famine and was dedicated to St. Colmán. It served the community until 1978 when it was replaced with a modern church.

2. MODERN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS IN MAYO ABBEY

During the 1970's the Mayo Abbey Parish community came together to build new church and during the 1980's the local GAA Club, Mayo Gaels, developed a football pitch and clubhouse at Abbey Park - **there was huge community involvement in both developments, in raising funds and in the provision of voluntary labor.**

In the early 1990's EU Community Initiatives such as the LEADER and Social Inclusion programmes and FÁS Social Employment Schemes empowered local communities to develop their areas. Mayo Abbey Parish Community Council was formed, I was the first chairperson. We sponsored a FÁS Community Employment Scheme that is still in place today, more than 30 years later.

In 1991 a Preservation Notice related to the Monastic Enclosure was issued to a number of local landowners in the village encompassing 11.44 Hectares (28.27 Acres), three whole townlands Corlisland, Fahybeg and Knockaunabroona and small sections of Kilbride and Mayo Parks. **(See formal notice in Appendix 1)** As a response the Mayo Abbey Heritage Committee was formed in 1993 with the aim of *Researching, preserving and promoting the Historical and Archaeological Heritage of Mayo Abbey.*

With the support of South Mayo LEADER Company and Mayo County Council transnational links were established with Yorkshire and Iona in Argyll and later on with Gartan in Co. Donegal. In 1994, the Heritage Committee organised a **Mayo of the Saxons Conference** that was attended by Irish academics and researchers and visitors from England and Scotland as well as representatives of local development agencies.

This resulted in a FÁS Community Response Scheme being approved that enabled the recruitment of three supervisors and 10 participants. Over the following 5 years, they carried out field surveys, folklore collection and researched local, national and international archives. They organised several follow up conferences and an exhibition in the Famine Church across two summers.

One of the main outcomes was the publication of the field surveys carried out on upwards of 150 monuments throughout the parish under the supervision of archaeologist Leo Morahan. This survey was published and submitted to the National Monuments Service and is available online at: www.mayo.ie/getmedia/27fff356-ce8e-4492-8651-c6791750f81f/The-Mayo-Abbey-Archaeological-Survey.pdf

In 1996, the Community Response Scheme organized the second Mayo of the Saxons Conference in Claremorris. The lead speaker at this conference was **Professor Dame Rosemary Cramp, Emeritus Professor of Archaeology at Durham University**, a leading expert and voice on Anglo-Saxon and early medieval archaeology. In her presentation she stated the following:

“The site at Mayo Abbey is one of outstanding importance within the history of European monasticism, and it is indeed surprising that there has been to date, so little research by modern scholars.”

See APPENDIX 2 – Letter from Dr Christopher Grocock

This statement inspired the Applied Geophysics, Botany and History Departments in NUI Galway to focus three post-graduate studies on various topics of research into the heritage of Mayo Abbey

In 1997 the 1400th anniversary of the death of Columcille was marked by many transnational commemorations in Ireland and Scotland including in Mayo Abbey Parish. The Belfast Harp Orchestra performed their *Columba Suite*; three members of the orchestra, the Hambly sisters, were from Mayo Abbey Parish. The Scottish Stray Theatre Company performed a play on the *Life of Columba*; both performances were held in the new Parish Church.

We also hosted the building of a replica of the type of currach used by Columcille and his monks to cross from Derry to Iona in the Famine Church by a group of people from Kilmartin House Trust, Argyll. The currach was subsequently sailed from Ballycastle, Co. Antrim to Iona in Argyll and was subsequently featured in a BBC Scotland documentary called *Columba's Crossing*.

The Mayo Abbey - Iona connection also resulted in President Mary Robinson being invited to open a new Iona Interpretative Centre at Fionnphort on the island of Mull, directly across from Iona Abbey. There representatives of the Mayo Abbey community greeted her there and the currach built in the Famine Church and it's crew of sailors! See Appendix 3 – Outline of President Mary Robinson's Visit to Argyll, June 1997

The Mayo Millennium Project

From 1995 to 1997 Mayo Abbey Heritage Committee worked on the development of a plan for conversion the Old Famine Church and adjacent 19th Century Schoolhouse into an Interpretative Centre for the presentation of the unique heritage of the parish. With the support of The Archdiocese of Tuam, Iona Abbey Ltd. and **Mayo County Council, who adopted the project as THE County Millennium Project**, Mayo Abbey Community Council made an application to the then An Bord Fáilte for funding for the project. However during its evaluation, the Irish political landscape changed which resulted in the application not being supported.

Following this the focus of Mayo Abbey Community Council changed to provision of community facilities for the parish. Over following 10 years a Community Resource Centre, Training Centre and Organic Garden, a Community Crèche, a twenty-unit Social Housing Scheme and a new National School were built in village. The Heritage Committee also secured funding to reroof the Famine church that had become dangerous and to renovate the adjacent 19th century School House.

3 MAYO ABBEY'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

A number of archaeological excavations took place in the village and surrounding area during the instillation of various services.

In 2005, the Corrib Gas Line traversed Mayo Abbey parish resulting in an extensive excavation being undertaken in the townland of Kilbride, approx one kilometer to the east of the village, which is adjacent to T7 and the proposed 110KV Substation Complex (not part of this planning application). Archaeologists Eamonn Cotter and Patrick Walsh from Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd conducted this excavation - www.excavations.ie/report/2005/Mayo/0014121/

The conclusion of the report states that:

“The site was interpreted as a Late Neolithic timber circle and it closely resembles six other examples excavated in the country to date. They are believed to have been ritual/ceremonial sites, possibly mortuary structures where bodies were placed to decay”

While this excavation took place in 2005 the Mayo Abbey Heritage Committee and the general public only became aware of it almost 20 years later when the archaeologist who oversaw the excavation was employed by the Heritage Committee to oversee the LiDAR survey on behalf of the Heritage Council.

In 2007 to 2010 a sewerage scheme and new water supply were installed in the village; this resulted in two archaeological digs being carried out within the monastic enclosure and surrounds. Skeletal remains were discovered and carbon dated to c. 7/8th Century.

In 2023 the Heritage Committee received funding from the Heritage Council Community Grants Scheme to carry out a LiDAR Survey of the monastic enclosure and environs and community outreach. Dr Paul Naessens of Western Aerial Surveys then carried out the survey in July 2023

The wider Mayo Abbey landscape contains a remarkable concentration of archaeological and cultural heritage features including ringforts, enclosures, fulachtaí fia, ecclesiastical remains, vernacular structures, burial grounds, routeways and evidence of long-term settlement activity.

The applicant's own archaeological assessment records ninety-four archaeological sites or site groups within five kilometers of the proposed development and identifies forty-six previously unrecorded cultural heritage features within two kilometers. The field surveys carried out by the Mayo Abbey FAS Archaeological Survey in 1995/96 identified upwards of 150 monuments throughout the parish, some of which are beside the proposed 110KV Substation. The Late Neolithic timber circle excavated by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd in 2005 during the installation of the Corrib Gas Line is within 500 meters of the proposed 110KV Substation and has been classified as an immensely important ritual site. (See **Appendix 3** for extracts from the archaeologist's report)

This site together with three other immediately adjacent monuments (including MA101-106---- ENCLOSURE) strongly indicate that the whole area could be an extensive Neolithic landscape of immense importance.

See Appendix 7: Letter from Mr G Walsh, Senior Archaeologist, Mayo County Council, (extract below) and Reports from Mayo Abbey FAS Archaeological Survey 1995/96 on sites Numbers 59, 98 – mentioned in paragraph 5 below, and 99 - MA101-106---- ENCLOSURE mentioned above.

4. The Cultural Heritage (CH) Site No. 10 in the Archaeological Impact Assessment has recently been included in the Recorded Monuments and Places (RMP) for Co. Mayo by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and has been assigned the monument Number MA101-106---- Enclosure. As this site has been so designated the impacts of the proposed development in this area needs to be re-assessed and appropriate mitigation measures approved by the National Monuments Service and the Local Authority.

5. In 1995/96 a previously unrecorded Mound was discovered in/or in the vicinity of Cloonbaul townland by Mr. Leo Morahan, Consultant Archaeologist during a survey of archaeological monuments in the Mayo Abbey area. Any potential impact of the proposed development on this mound must also be assessed and appropriate mitigation measures approved by the National Monuments Service and the Local Authority.

The Developer's archaeological chapter largely focuses on individual monuments and receptors. The EIAR fails to adequately assess Mayo Abbey as an integrated cultural landscape. Instead, it treats archaeological sites as isolated receptors and fails to consider the cumulative significance of

the broader monastic landscape. Their reports seem to be largely based on a desktop study and a two-day visit to the area by an archaeologist, which is a totally inadequate assessment of a more than 300-acre development site with a known rich archaeological profile. The introduction of seven industrial-scale turbines, the KV Substation, the BESS and associated infrastructure would fundamentally alter the visual setting of Mayo Abbey and permanently damage the character of a landscape that has survived largely intact for many millennia.

This remarkable concentration of heritage assets demonstrates the archaeological importance and sensitivity of the receiving environment. All remaining monuments in this area must be left undisturbed and preserved in-situ pending further investigations.

The concerns raised by Dr Christopher Grocock, an internationally respected scholar of Anglo-Saxon history and archaeology (Appendix 2), reinforce the significance of Mayo Abbey and the detrimental visual impact this development would have on the setting of the monastic enclosure and wider historic landscape.

Mayo Abbey and Environs do not constitute an ordinary Rural Landscape! As outlined above it is a historic cultural landscape of regional, national and international significance.

The proposed Cunlaghfadda Wind Farm Development would fundamentally alter the visual setting and character of this landscape and would drastically affect the potential for the development of any future Cultural, Heritage or Tourism Enterprise in what is one of the most important historic sites in County Mayo.

The unique importance of Mayo Abbey as an Early Christian Monastic site has been recognized by Mayo County Council in the Second Schedule, paragraph 2 of its refusal of planning permission for the seven Turbine Wind-farm:

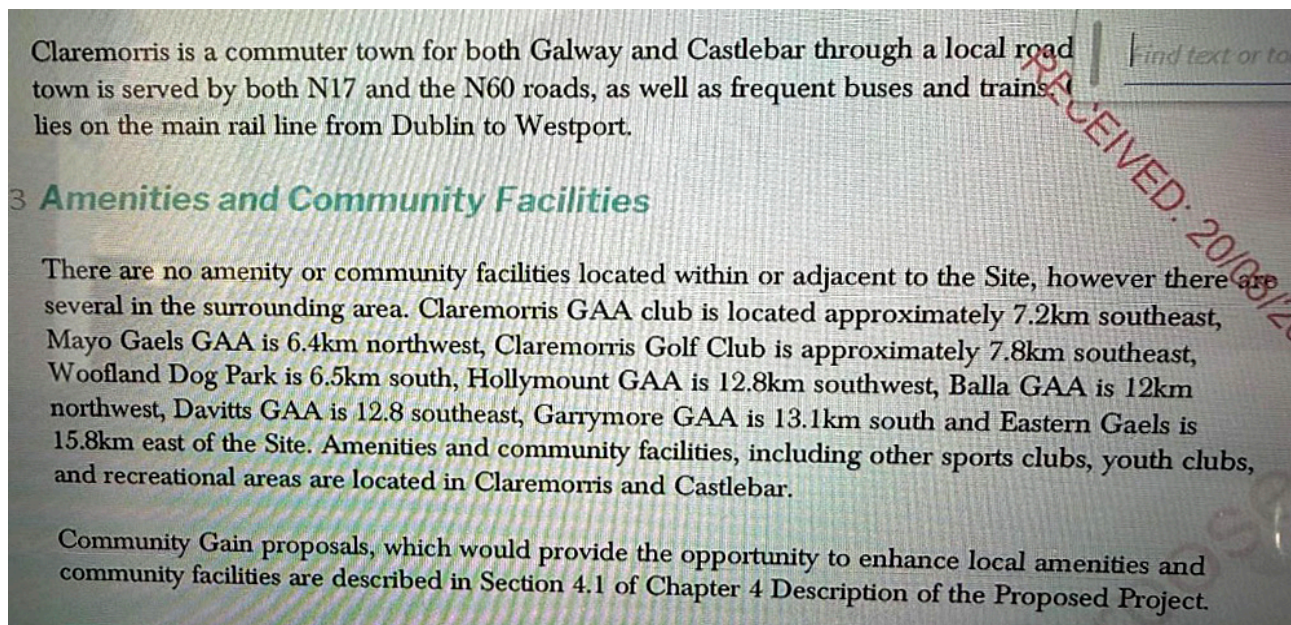
It is considered that the proposed development sited at this location would constitute a highly obtrusive development that would detract from the existing cultural heritage of the area, and would undermine the setting of Mayo Abbey Cemetery and Church ruins, a very important early Christian ecclesiastical site, would erode the local landscape and visual quality of the public open views in the vicinity and would adversely impact on the unique rural character of the immediate local area. The proposed wind turbines would therefore constitute excessively dominant features and a visually obtrusive form of development in this rural landscape and would seriously injure the landscape which it is necessary to preserve and injure the visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

No meaningful assessment has been provided of the impact on this important heritage location by the developer. It is also not apparent from the application whether bodies responsible for the protection of archaeological and cultural heritage — including the National Monuments Service and the Council's own Heritage and Conservation Officers — have been consulted in relation to this impact. Given the significance of Mayo Abbey, this lack of clear assessment and engagement gives rise to serious concern that the full heritage implications of the development have not been properly considered, and weighs against its suitability in this location.

4 PUBLIC AMENITIES IN THE VILLAGE OF MAYO ABBEY

The statement below included in the application for the seven- turbine wind-farm to Mayo County Council, an assesment of the location of public facilities adjacent to the proposed development, totally ignores the many public facilities located in the village of Mayo Abbey

within 2.2 to 2.5km of the proposed development and clearly demonstrates the total lack of engagement with and respect and empathy for the residents of the area and it's tremendously vibrant community spirit!



Byrne's Stores - www.redbook.ie/listings/byrne-malachy/

Grocery, Public House, Undertakers and Farm and Builders Supplies - This local business has provided the above services to the community in the parish and border surrounding hinterland for several centuries; The first liquor license was issued to a premises on this site circa 1619!

Mayo Abbey National School – www.mayoabbeyns.com

Mayo Abbey NS is a rural co-educational school, the new building opened in May 2012. It caters for over 70 pupils from the parish.

Mayo Gaels GAA Club - Abbey Park - www.mayogaels.com

Opened in 1992 Mayo Gaels' Abbey Park facilities include two Pitches, Dressing Rooms, Spectators Stand, Gymnasium and comprehensive grounds and Car Parking facilities. It caters for male and female players of all ages and hosts many Divisional and County inter-club matches throughout the year. The clubhouse was also utilized as a community centre for many years until the Community Resource and Training Centre was built. There are advanced plans for the development of an all-weather facility at Abbey Park that will be shared with Mayo Abbey National School.

Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace and St. Gerald www.catholicdirectory.com/mayo-abbey/church/our-lady-queen-of-peace-st-gerald

The modern church of Our Lady Queen of Peace and St. Gerald opened in 1978 and has seating for 400 people. It serves the Catholic Parish of Mayo and Rosslee.

Mayo Abbey Community Resource & Training Centre - www.mayoabbey.ie/training/

Mayo Abbey Community Centre opened in 2000. It provides a vast array of services to Mayo Abbey Parish and the broader region. Its facilities include, meeting rooms, a function room, a

teaching kitchen, an IT training room, a catering kitchen, an extensive adjacent Organic Garden and hosts many parish and other organizations and individuals on a daily basis.

Abbey Tots Crèche - www.mayoabbey.ie/community-centre/abbeytots

Abbey Tots Crèche opened in 2008 and provides a wide range of services catering for children from 4 months to 12 years old. It is registered to cater for 77 children and provides services to families from Mayo Abbey Parish and the broader South Mayo hinterland.

Cnoc na nÍúr Social Housing Development - www.mayoabbey.ie/community-centre/housing/

Mayo Abbey Housing Association was formed in 2000 under the umbrella of Mayo Abbey Community Council; it built the Cnoc na nÍúr Social Housing Development adjacent to the Community Centre, which consists 17 houses and 4 serviced sites.

In addition to the provision of all the above facilities extensive village enhancement works have been carried out as well as the installation of a sewage system, replacement of local community water schemes with a connection to the Lough Mask Regional Water Supply Scheme and extensive upgrade of roadways and pedestrian footpaths and crossings, lighting etc leading into and through the village.

All of these developments have been financed through extensive local fundraising and financial contributions, the provision of voluntary resources and time and supported by an array of Local Authority, National Development Agencies and Government Departments across a 45-50 year period.

In addition to the above two villages within Mayo Abbey Parish, **Ballyglass and Facefield**, also have developed excellent community facilities – see www.mayoabbeyfacefieldballyglass.com/ for full details

5 LOUGH FARK, DRUMADY LOUGH AND THE WIDER AQUATIC LANDSCAPE

Lough Fark is located less than one kilometer from the proposed development and is central to understanding the environmental history of Mayo Abbey.

Published palaeoenvironmental research based on pollen cores from Lough Fark has been used to reconstruct land use, vegetation change and human activity in the Mayo Abbey area over millennia. **The lake forms part of the scientific evidence base underpinning our understanding of the development of this historic monastic landscape across several millennia.** (*Past Vegetation and Land-Use Dynamics in Mayo Abbey, Central Mayo*, Janice L. Fuller - Archaeology Ireland, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn, 2002), pp. 20-23)

Despite this importance, the planning documentation contains no meaningful assessment of Lough Fark. This omission is particularly significant given the proximity of Drumady Lough to the proposed development. The applicant's own aquatic ecology consultants identified both the north and south basins of Drumady Lough as important aquatic receptors requiring detailed assessment.

The aquatic surveys record that Drumady Lough supports European Eel, Pike and Perch and forms part of a wider hydrological network connected to the development area.

The wider aquatic system supports:

White-clawed Crayfish, Lamprey species, European Eel, Otter, Brown Trout habitat.

The presence of White-clawed Crayfish is particularly significant as it is an Annex II Habitats Directive species. The ecological importance of these aquatic systems cannot be considered in

isolation. Any sediment release, peat disturbance, drainage modification or accidental pollution event has the potential to affect Drumady Lough and connected downstream ecosystems.

The absence of a robust assessment of these aquatic systems undermines confidence in the adequacy of the environmental assessment.

Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC

The proposed development poses a significant risk to the Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC (Site Code: 001774) via a direct, established Source-Pathway-Receptor hydrological link. Surface water runoff, peat siltation and chemical risks during the construction and excavation phases have the potential to degrade water quality in the River Robe catchment, thereby threatening the strict Conservation Objectives and qualifying species of the downstream European site.

A full, independent Appropriate Assessment (AA) must rigorously prove zero adverse impact, failing which planning permission must be refused under the EU Habitats Directive"

6 CUMULATIVE IMPACT - FIVE EXISTING WIND FARMS WITHIN 10KM

The proposed development cannot be assessed in isolation.

There are already five wind farms within ten kilometers of the proposed development area.

The proper planning question is therefore not whether one wind farm can be accommodated within this landscape. The question is whether a further major wind farm can be accommodated without unacceptable cumulative impact. It is clear that a sixth windfarm in an independently sensitive area is not sustainable and is therefore detrimental.

The cumulative impacts include:

- Progressive industrialisation of a historic rural landscape.
- Visual saturation of the skyline.
- Cumulative impacts upon Mayo Abbey Village and Parish.
- Cumulative ecological pressures.
- Additional residential amenity impacts.
- Long-term erosion of landscape character.

The landscape has already absorbed a substantial amount of wind energy infrastructure. In addition the pending draft Mayo RES takes into consideration the need to prevent cumulative impacts.

There comes a point at which cumulative effects become unacceptable. I submit that this threshold has been reached or exceeded and therefore the proposed development must be refused.

The size and capacity of both the 110KV Substation and the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) are far in excess of what would be required to service the proposed seven-turbine wind farm. This begs the questions: **What other developments are planned in the general Mayo Abbey area in the future? More multi-turbine wind-farms? Solar Farms?**

In December 2025 I received a letter from **Harmony Solar** concerning the development of a Solar Farm including parts of our farm at Shinganagh – **See Appendix 8**. This letter seems to imply that plans for a solar farm immediately adjacent to Mayo Abbey village are at an advanced stage!

Taken in their totality the Seven Turbine Wind Farm, the 110KV Substation and the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) plus other probable developments represent an **Enormous Industrial**

Complex spread across an approx. 300 acre site being imposed on a highly populated, tranquil rural community in a thriving agricultural region in south Mayo. The splitting of the project into three separate disassociated applications to two distinct planning authorities is devious, to say the least, and is intent on **dodging proper planning scrutiny and on dissipating the local community's ability to assess and respond to the various proposals, in no small part due to the time, resources and cost of submitting observations/objections on three separate proposals to two distinct planning authorities!**

This approach amounts to unlawful project splitting, a practice that has been repeatedly struck down by the Irish High Court. A wind farm and its grid connection constitute a single project under EU environmental law and must be assessed together.

An Coimisiún Pleanála should:

- 1. Not treat the 110KV Electric Substation as an application in isolation and immediately reject it**
- 2. Seek further information to allow a proper assessment of the combined and cumulative effects of the three elements of the development and any other Wind or Solar farm(s) being planned at present that might be connected to the Substation and BESS in the future.**
- 3. Convene an oral hearing to facilitate the expression of the level of public concern relating to this proposed development – as already demonstrated by the 169 objections lodged with Mayo County Council against the planning application for the Seven Turbine Wind-farm.**

7 THREATS TO THE ECOLOGY OF THE AREA

Curlew – probably breeding within the area: The applicant's own ornithological assessment identifies probable **breeding Curlew** within the development area. Curlew is one of **Ireland's most threatened breeding** bird species and has undergone catastrophic population declines.

The identification of probable breeding activity within the development area represents a major ecological constraint. The precautionary principle must apply.

The potential for disturbance, displacement and habitat degradation cannot simply be assumed to be adequately addressed through mitigation proposals. The presence of probable breeding Curlew strongly suggests that the site retains ecological characteristics of importance at a national level and therefore the proposed development must be refused.

Marsh Fritillary – Larval webs and suitable habitat: The biodiversity documentation includes a **confidential appendix** relating to Marsh Fritillary larval webs and suitable habitat. This is particularly significant because it demonstrates that the issue is not merely one of theoretical habitat suitability. **Evidence of larval webs indicates active utilisation of habitat within** the development area. Marsh Fritillary is an **Annex II Habitats Directive** species and one of Ireland's most important protected invertebrates. The proposed turbines, access roads, drainage works, cable routes, hardstanding areas and associated infrastructure all have the potential to fragment or irreversibly damage habitat.

The existence of a confidential appendix dedicated to Marsh Fritillary habitat itself highlights the ecological sensitivity of the site and therefore the proposed development must be refused.

The Irish Hare: The Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*) is a unique subspecies of mountain hare native only to Ireland. It is one of Ireland's longest-established mammals and can be found across a variety of habitats, ranging from coastal grasslands to high mountain peaks. Sadly, this species has been severely threatened by agricultural intensification over the years and the species is protected under the Irish Wildlife Acts. The area of the proposed development, which comprises mainly of non intensive pastureland, bogland and marshland is an ideal environment for the Irish Hare to thrive and there are many sightings of the animals in the area.

The proposed Cunlaghfadda Wind Farm Development, which will be at industrial level, will have a devastating affect on the habitat of the Irish Hare and will undoubtedly lead to its disappearance in the vicinity of the proposed 7 turbines.

Bats – Confirmed Bat Roost within the Development Site: The applicant's own bat assessment confirms the presence of a **bat roost** within the development area. Emergence surveys recorded three bats emerging from a structure within the site - **this is a highly significant finding!**

All bat species and their roosts receive strict legal protection under Irish and European legislation. The surveys recorded multiple protected bat species including:

- Leisler's Bat
- Nathusius' Pipistrelle
- Common Pipistrelle
- Soprano Pipistrelle
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat

Of particular concern is the presence of Lesser Horseshoe Bat, an Annex II Habitats Directive species whose conservation status remains unfavorable. **The bat report acknowledges that wind farms can cause mortality through collision and barotrauma.**

The need for curtailment measures, blade feathering and post-construction monitoring demonstrates that impacts are anticipated. The presence of a confirmed roost, protected bat species and recognised collision risk weighs heavily against the suitability of the site and therefore the proposed development must be refused.

Other Ecologically Sensitive Species: The site and surrounding area also support or record:

- Hen Harrier activity.
- Confirmed breeding Kestrel.
- Confirmed breeding Buzzard.
- Confirmed breeding Sparrowhawk.
- Probable breeding Lapwing.
- Otter activity within connected aquatic systems.

Taken together with Curlew, Marsh Fritillary and protected bats, these records demonstrate that the site is not a low-sensitivity location. Rather, it is a landscape supporting multiple protected and conservation-sensitive species.

8 SHADOW FLICKER AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The applicant's own assessment identifies **ninety sensitive homes** within the shadow flicker study area. Of these:

- Fifty-seven properties are predicted to experience shadow flicker.

- Forty homes exceed daily guideline thresholds.
- Fifty-one receptors (**IE. Households, Families, Children, Elderly Residents**) are located within one kilometer of the turbines.
- The closest home is only 643 meters from a turbine.

These figures are striking! Shadow flicker is not affecting one or two isolated properties. It is predicted to affect a substantial number of homes across a rural community. The scale of impact identified by the applicant's own modeling is incompatible with the protection of residential amenity. How can this development be justified in the context of clear breaches in current guidelines?

Mayo County Council addresses this factor in the third reason for the refusal of planning:

3. *It is considered that the extent of technology required to attempt to address the potential for the proposed development to impact negatively on the residential amenity of 40 residential properties as a result of the potential for excessive shadow flicker, indicates that the proposed site location is unsuitable for a development of this nature and scale, due to the existing level of residential properties in the immediate area. The proposed development would therefore have the potential to seriously impact on the residential amenity of the area and depreciate the value of property in the area and is therefore contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*

Wildlife Risk and Peatland Concerns

The Major Accidents and Natural Disasters chapter does not provide a meaningful site-specific wildfire assessment. **This omission is significant given:**

- Peatland habitats.
- Cutover bog.
- Forestry.
- Scrub vegetation.
- Electrical infrastructure.
- Increasing wildfire risk associated with climate change.

Recent fire events across Ireland have highlighted the vulnerability of peatland and upland habitats. Furthermore there are several local recollections of significant wildfires at the proposed site going back over a 30-year period. A generic fire and explosion assessment is not equivalent to a site-specific wildfire assessment.

Inconsistency with the draft Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy

The Draft Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy seeks to balance renewable energy development with the protection of environmental, cultural, archaeological and residential assets. The proposal appears **difficult to reconcile** with several key principles of the Strategy.

- Firstly, the Strategy identifies peatlands as environmentally sensitive landscapes that should be protected because of their role in carbon storage, biodiversity and hydrology.
- Secondly, the Strategy confirms that County Mayo has already exceeded renewable energy generation targets established under the County Development Plan. **The question is therefore not whether Mayo should contribute to renewable energy generation, it already has! The question is whether this development is necessary in this sensitive location.**

- Thirdly, the Strategy highlights cumulative impact as a critical planning consideration. The addition of seven further turbines to a landscape already influenced by multiple wind farms appears inconsistent with the Strategy's emphasis on landscape protection.
- Fourthly, the Strategy emphasizes biodiversity protection. The applicant's own surveys identify Curlew, Marsh Fritillary, protected bats, raptors and sensitive aquatic ecosystems.
- Finally, the Strategy recognises the importance of cultural heritage and historic landscapes.

As already outlined above the Mayo Abbey landscape is among the most significant historic landscapes in the county. The proposal is inconsistent with a number of the key principles contained within the Draft Strategy and therefore the proposed development must be refused.

Deficiencies in the EIAR

The EIAR is deficient in several important respects.

It fails to adequately assess Mayo Abbey as a cultural landscape.

- Fails to meaningfully assess Lough Fark.
- Fails to adequately consider Drumady Lough and the wider aquatic ecosystem.
- Relies heavily on mitigation for shadow flicker impacts.
- Does not provide a site-specific wildfire assessment.
- Acknowledges unlicensed archaeological investigations.
- Identifies Marsh Fritillary habitat but treats it as compatible with development.
- Identifies a bat roost and protected bats but relies heavily on mitigation.
- Does not adequately address cumulative impacts.
- Does not satisfactorily address inconsistencies with the Draft Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy.

These are not minor matters! They go directly to the adequacy of the environmental assessment and therefore the proposed development was refused by Mayo County Council – see section 1 below:

Policy REP 1 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 outlines Mayo County Council's commitment to support Ireland's commitment to facilitate the development of renewable energy resources, where; such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities. The site of the proposed development is located within an exposed and open landscape, designated Policy Area 4 in Landscape Sensitivity Matrix, Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 Volume 1, with high to medium potential to create adverse impacts on the existing landscape character. In taking account of the exposed and open landscape of the receiving environment and as illustrated in the photomontages submitted with the application, and by reason of the overall height of the turbines, it is apparent that the proposed development will directly impact both significantly and negatively on this sensitive Policy Area 4 and on designated scenic route with a protected view as set out in Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 Landscape Appraisal. Therefore, to grant the proposed development would interfere with the character of the landscape, which it is necessary to preserve and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Precautionary Principal

The precautionary principle is particularly relevant because the site contains multiple sensitive receptors including:

- Mayo Abbey historic landscape
- Registered, unregistered and as yet unidentified archaeological monuments within in the proposed development site.
- Probable breeding Curlew.
- Marsh Fritillary larval webs.
- A confirmed bat roost.
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat.
- White-clawed Crayfish.
- European Eel.
- Lamprey.
- Protected bird species.
- Drumady Lough.
- Residential properties affected by shadow flicker.
- Peatland and forestry habitats.

Where uncertainty exists regarding impacts on protected species, cultural heritage, hydrology or residential amenity, that uncertainty must lead to the preservation of the current site.

9 CONCLUSION

This proposal represents an unacceptable attempt to industrialise a landscape of exceptional historical, archaeological, and ecological and community value. The Mayo Abbey landscape is unique. It is the birthplace of one of the most significant Anglo-Saxon monastic foundations in Europe, a landscape that has retained its historic integrity for more than thirteen centuries and which continues to serve as the cultural, spiritual and social heart of the local community.

The applicant's own documentation identifies extensive archaeological resources, protected habitats, sensitive aquatic ecosystems, probable breeding Curlew, Marsh Fritillary habitat, a confirmed bat roost, multiple protected species and significant impacts on residential amenity.

Furthermore, the development cannot reasonably be considered in isolation. Five existing wind farms are already located within 10 kilometres, while the proposed 110kV substation and BESS and other potential renewable-energy developments raise serious cumulative-impact concerns. **Taken together, these impacts are overwhelming!**

The proposal would permanently damage the setting of Mayo Abbey, undermine decades of community-led development, erode the character of a nationally important historic landscape and place further pressure on an already heavily burdened area. The deficiencies within the EIAR, the inadequacy of the cumulative impact assessment and the failure to fully address environmental and heritage concerns leave significant uncertainty regarding the true extent of the impacts.

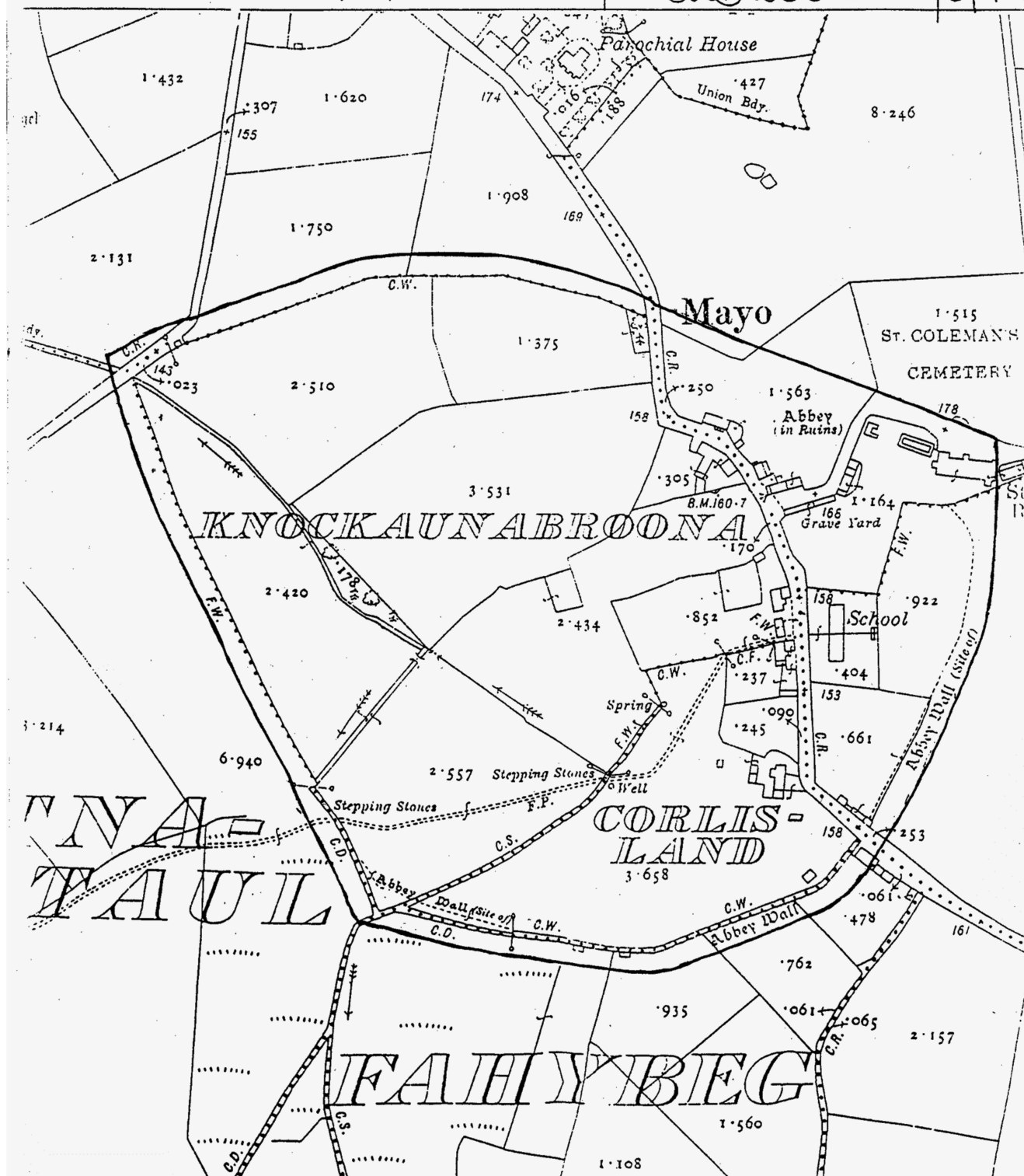
Most importantly, Mayo County Council has already identified significant planning grounds for refusing this seven-turbine development, including unacceptable landscape, cultural heritage and residential amenity impacts.

The combination of these factors leaves no reasonable planning basis for approving this proposal. The precautionary principle must prevail where significant uncertainty and potential irreversible harm remain. I therefore respectfully but firmly request An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse planning permission for this development in its entirety.

Appendix 1

National Monuments Branch - Office of Public Works

name MONASTIC ENCLOSURE & EARTH WORKS	6" 90	25" 16	tr. 6	880 mm E, 35 mm
townland MAYO PARKS, KNOCKAUNABROONA CORLISLAND, KILBRIDE	1/2 11	scale 1/2500	nat. grid 1265 2795	
county MAYO	area 11.44 ha.		status Registration	
note: coordinates give the central location only of the monument. They do not indicate the extent. The red line indicates the boundary of the area defined by this map			signed M. De Búrca	date 11/3/91



Appendix 2

Dr Christopher Grocock
Timberua Glen Road Grayshott Hindhead
Surrey GU26 6NB
Mobile 07494 765274 e-mail cwgrocock@aol.com

9th June 2026

Planning Office
Mayo County Council
Áras an Chontae
The Mall, Castlebar
County Mayo, Ireland

Wind Farm Development at Mayo Abbey

Dear Sir or Madam,

It has been brought to my notice by friends in the Mayo Abbey area that a proposal has been put forward to erect an installation of seven wind turbines in a location some 2km from the Medieval Graveyard and Abbey ruin at Mayo Abbey.

While any development of renewable energy is laudable in principle, I am concerned about the impact that this development will have on the immediate surroundings of Mayo Abbey and the archaeological site there. As you are no doubt aware, Mayo Abbey is the location of probably the best-preserved example of an early medieval monastic *rath* or enclosure. Its earthworks are in a remarkable state of preservation, having escaped any development over the centuries other than continued use as a religious centre, developments which focused on the central area while leaving the extensive 28-acre site largely intact – a unique survival, I think, from such an early period of Irish history and archaeology, and one of crucial importance despite its modest appearance. The site began as the location for an extraordinary Irish location for Anglo-Saxon monks who had preferred to stay loyal to their abbot Colman after the momentous decision taken at the Synod of Whitby in AD 664. After finding a temporary refuge on Inishbofin, the community was granted land to settle on at Mayo Abbey – an area still defined by the earthworks constituting the monastic *Rath*, but possibly extending beyond this as the community grew and prospered in the years after AD 700.

My own connection with Mayo dates back to 1994, when I was made aware of the site as part of my work with the then-Bede's World project in Jarrow, Tyne and Wear. I had the opportunity of visiting the site more than once and was extremely impressed both by its location and the quality of the surviving features there. I had the privilege of taking part in a weekend of lectures alongside Prof. Rosemary Cramp held at Mayo in 1996, and of again visiting the site and giving a second lecture in 1997. At the time I had hoped that we could build a strong connection between Northumbria and Mayo, just as there had been some 1300 years ago, but sadly it was not to be. However, my academic interests in the site continued, and over the subsequent years I have given several lectures about Mayo Abbey to local historical and archaeological societies, most importantly to the Manchester Conference on Anglo-Saxon studies in 2011, as a way of making the site and its vital importance more widely known. Last year I finally had the opportunity of re-establishing contact on a personal level and visiting the site again; it was extraordinary and heartening to see that while the immediate environs of Mayo and Claremorris had changed in a very thriving way, the developments carried out were low-scale, domestic, and not intrusive on the Mayo Abbey site itself. The Mayo Abbey site sits well at present in the landscape; I think that the presence of a wind farm so close to it would be extremely detrimental due to the visual impact on the landscape.

I hope that the proposed development can find a location where there is less visual intrusion. Needless to say, if it does go ahead I trust that there will be a thorough and detail archaeological exploration of the site – being so close to a unique and valuable witness to the past as Mayo Abbey is – before any construction work is undertaken.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chris Grocock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Dr Christopher Grocock

Appendix 3

Irish President Mary Robinson Visit to Isle of Mull and the Iona

On June 8, 1997, Irish President Mary Robinson visited Iona and the Isle of Mull in Argyll, Scotland, to commemorate the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St. Columba.

During this historic trip, President Robinson officially opened the Saint Columba Exhibition and Welcome Centre at Fionnphort on the neighboring Isle of Mull, which serves as the ferry gateway to Iona.

The visit highlighted the profound historical and spiritual ties between Ireland and Gaelic Scotland, retracing St. Columba's original 6th-century journey from Ireland.

The highly symbolic event drew international attention, marking a significant moment of cross-border and cross-community diplomacy.



President Mary Robinson at Iona Abbey, June 8, 1997

Appendix 4

Extracts from the Archaeologists report on the

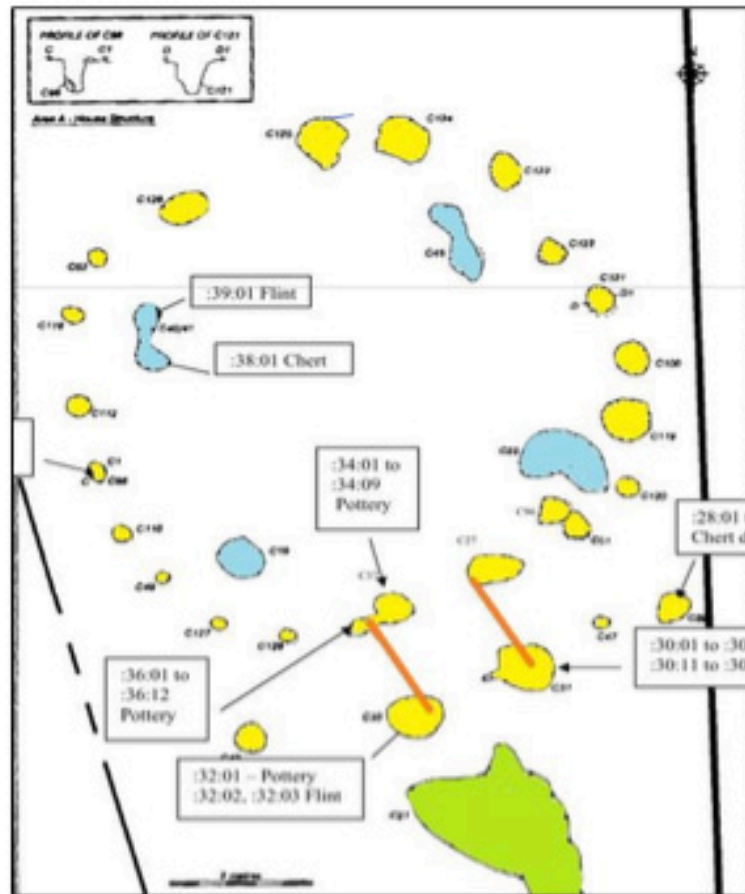


Figure 5: Plan of the site in Kilbride (Cotter 2005).



Figure 6: A posthole looks like this when excavating (Taken by Walsh 2019).

4.3 Finds from Kilbride

A small pit at the site in Kilbride yielded some burnt bone and 47 sherds of pottery (Figure 7). Pottery from the site has been identified as Grooved Ware, and radiocarbon dates span the period 3010-2470 cal BC. On that basis the site is interpreted as a Late Neolithic Timber Circle. There were scrapers made from flint which would have been used skinning hides and hammerstones used to grind down the cereals or indeed cremated bone (Figure 8 and Figure 9). When hammerstones and cremated bone are found together it suggests that the hammerstones could also have been used for funerary purposes.



Figure 7: The grooved ware pottery from the site in Kilbride was similar to this image (Taken from Walsh 2019).



Figure 8: Burnt bone from the site in Kilbride (Taken from Cotter 2005).



Figure 9: Scraper from the site in Kilbride (Taken from Cotter 2005).



Figure 10: Hammerstones (Taken by Walsh 2019).

APPENDIX 5

Decision of Mayo County Council on Seven-Turbine Wind Farm Application Nu 2660398



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



Planning and Development Section
Áras and Chontae, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
www.mayo.ie | 0949064000

FIRST SCHEDULE

Having regard to the location of proposed development in an open, exposed, populated rural area, the significant number of third-party submissions/observations received on file and having regard to the following policy documents;

'Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006'

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

'Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and associated Landscape Appraisal'

'Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo 2011-2020'

permission is hereby refused for the said development, for the reasons set out in the Schedule below.

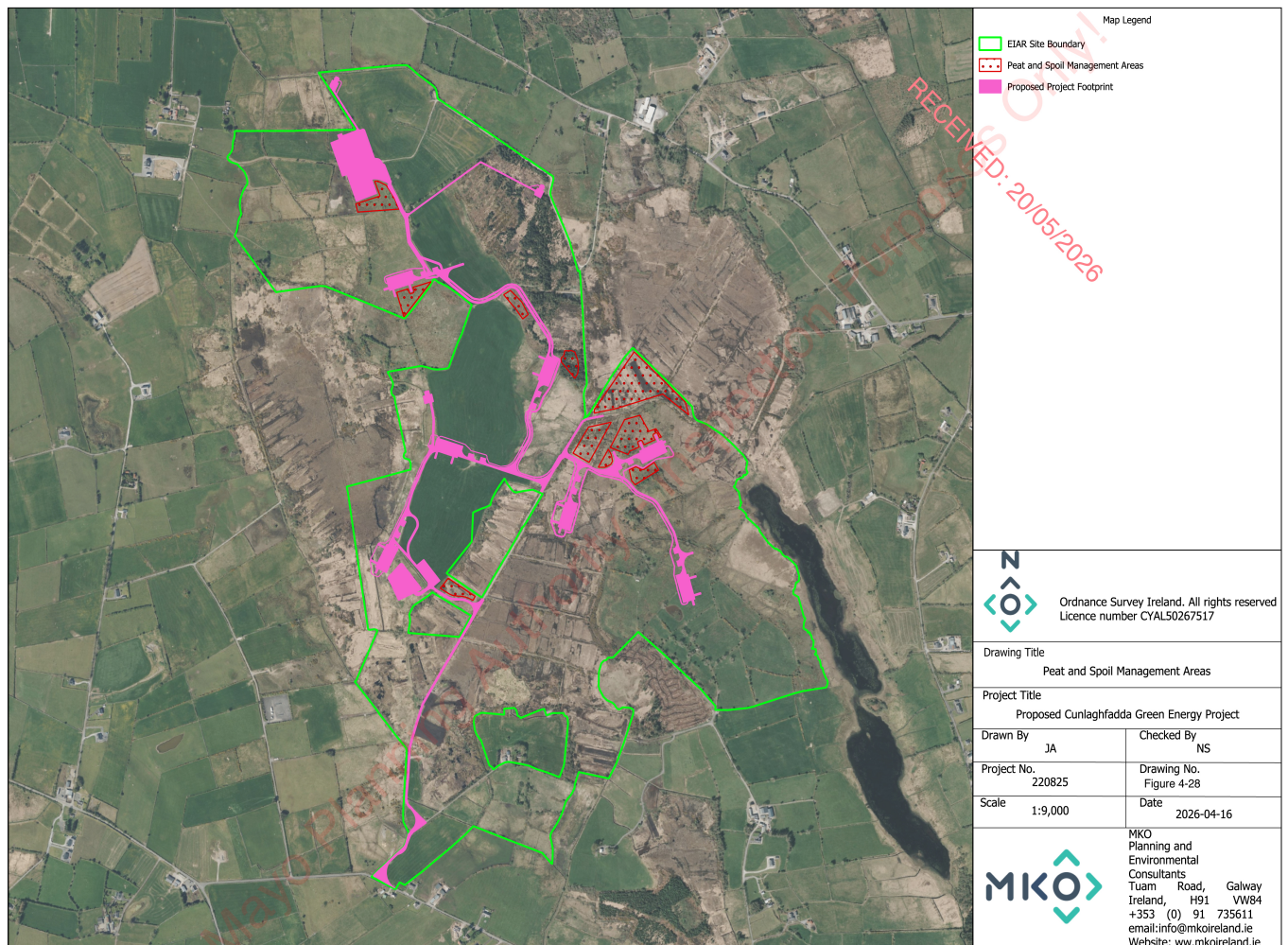
SECOND SCHEDULE – SCHEDULE OF REASONS FOR REFUSAL – P26/60398

1. Policy REP 1 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 outlines Mayo County Council's commitment to support Ireland's commitment to facilitate the development of renewable energy resources, where; *such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities*. The site of the proposed development is located within an exposed and open landscape, designated Policy Area 4 in Landscape Sensitivity Matrix, Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 Volume 1, with high to medium potential to create adverse impacts on the existing landscape character. In taking account of the exposed and open landscape of the receiving environment and as illustrated in the photomontages submitted with the application, and by reason of the overall height of the turbines, it is apparent that the proposed development will directly impact both significantly and negatively on this sensitive Policy Area 4 and on designated scenic route with a protected view as set out in Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 Landscape Appraisal. Therefore, to grant the proposed development would interfere with the character of the landscape, which it is necessary to preserve and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. It is considered that the proposed development sited at this location would constitute a highly obtrusive development that would detract from the existing cultural heritage of the area, and would undermine the setting of Mayo Abbey Cemetery and Church ruins, a very important early Christian ecclesiastical site, would erode the local landscape and visual quality of the public open views in the vicinity and would adversely impact on the unique rural character of the immediate local area. The proposed wind turbines would therefore constitute excessively dominant features and a visually obtrusive form of development in this rural landscape and would seriously injure the landscape which it is necessary to preserve and injure the visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3. It is considered that the extent of technology required to attempt to address the potential for the proposed development to impact negatively on the residential amenity of 40 residential properties as a result of the potential for excessive shadow flicker, indicates that the proposed site location is unsuitable for a development of this nature and scale, due to the existing level of residential properties in the immediate area. The proposed development would therefore have the potential to seriously impact on the residential amenity of the area and depreciate the value of property in the area and is therefore contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

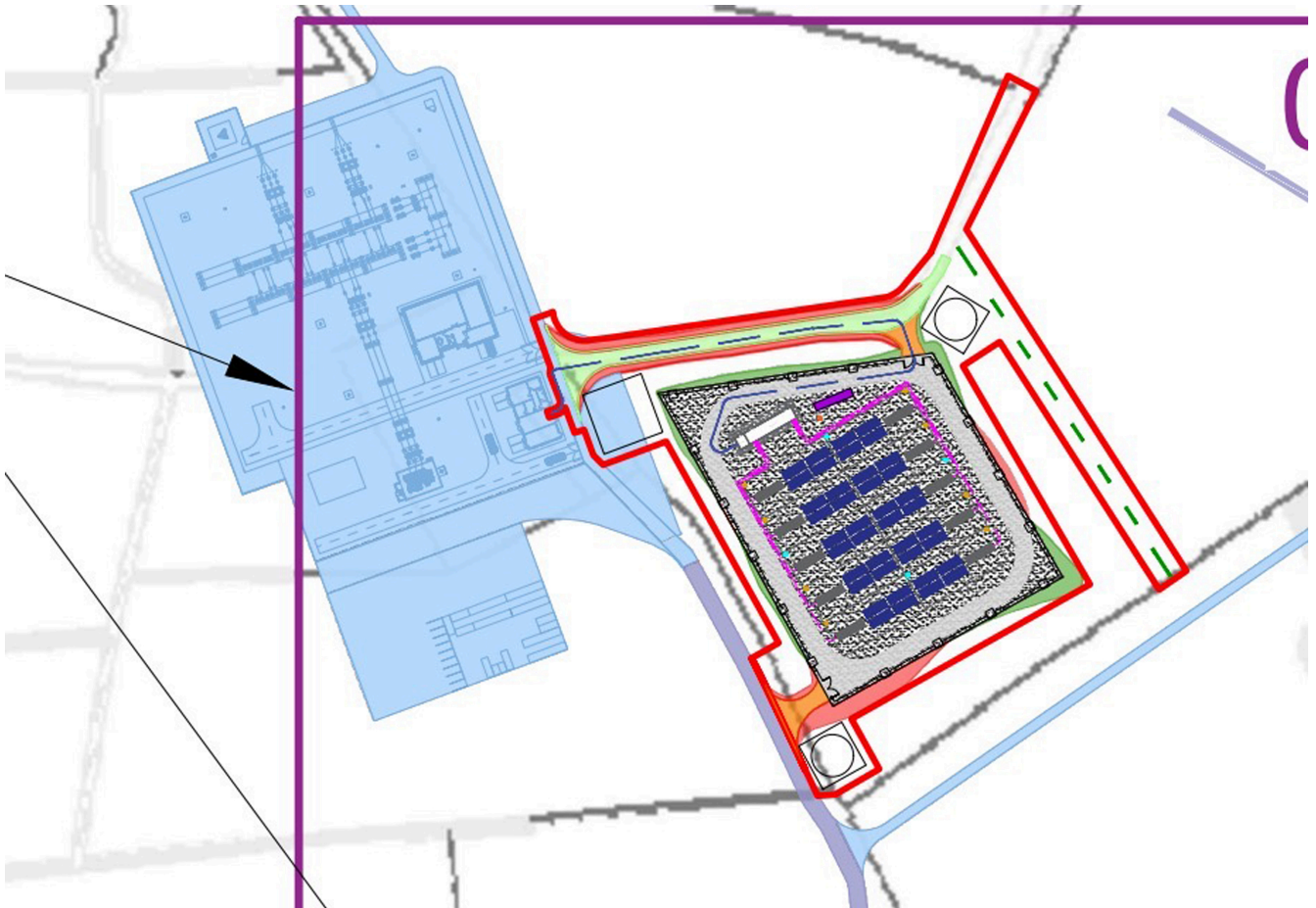
APPENDIX 6

Site Map of proposed Seven Turbine Windfarm in the townlands of Knockroe, Cunlaghfadda, Harefield, Cloonbaul and Knockaunakill in the Mayo Abbey area, the subject of a planning application to Mayo County Council (File Nu 2660398) which was rejected.

**This decision had now been appealed to An Coimisiún Pleanála,
Reference Number 501853**



Site map of 110KV Electric Substation (File Number 324429) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Reference Number MCC 2660653 at Cloonbaul, Mayo Abbey, Claremorris, County Mayo



The enormous scale of the seven-turbine wind-farm plus the proposed 110Kv Substation and BESS developments, their associated access roads and infrastructure involving in excess of 300 acres of an archaeologically unique and ecologically sensitive area of agricultural land, bogland and marsh landscape is totally alien to the tranquil receiving rural landscape.

APPENDIX 7

Letter from Mr G Walsh, Senior Archaeologist, Mayo County Council & Reports from Mayo Abbey FAS Archaeological Survey 1995/96

Memo

To: *Planning.*

cc:

From: Mr. Gerry Walsh, Senior Archaeologist.

Date: 1st July 2026

RE: P26/60398

**Recorded Monument and Place No. (1) RMP No. MA101-106---- Enclosure
(2) Large in Scale**

Recommendation: An Archaeological Impact Assessment Report has been submitted with the above planning application. I have read the report and the following items should be requested and undertaken during the period of 'Further Information'

1. The developer is required to employ a suitably qualified archaeologist to undertake a programme of licensed Archaeological Pre-development Testing across the proposed development site especially in the following areas,

(a) the turbine and meteorological mast foundation areas and associated temporary and permanent hard-standing areas,

(b) all associated underground electrical and communications cabling trenches

(c) all temporary construction compounds

(d) the upgrade and widening of existing internal tracks and new permanent and temporary site access tracks and all associated site drainage trenches

(e) all borrow pits

(f) all peat and spoil management areas

(g) all temporary security cabins and

all areas of related site works and ground disturbance across the proposed development site.

The Testing should be carried out under licence from the National Monuments Section, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

2. Should archaeological material be uncovered during the course of the testing the archaeologist shall have work on the site stopped, pending a decision as to how best to deal with the archaeology. The developer shall be prepared to be advised by the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with regard to any necessary mitigating action (e.g. preservation in situ, or excavation) and should facilitate the archaeologist in recording any material found.
3. The Planning Authority and the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage shall be furnished with a report describing the results of the pre-development testing.
4. The Cultural Heritage (CH) Site No. 10 in the Archaeological Impact Assessment has recently been included in the Recorded Monuments and Places (RMP) for Co. Mayo by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and has been assigned the monument number MA101-106--- Enclosure. As this site has been so designated the impacts of the proposed development in this area needs to be re-assessed and appropriate mitigation measures approved by the National Monuments Service and the Local Authority.
5. In 1995/96 a previously unrecorded Mound was discovered in/or in the vicinity of Cloonbaul townland by Mr. Leo Morahan, Consultant Archaeologist during a survey of archaeological monuments in the Mayo Abbey area. Any potential impact of the proposed development on this mound must also be assessed and appropriate mitigation measures approved by the National Monuments Service and the Local Authority.

Gerry Walsh
Senior Archaeologist
Mayo Co. Co.

Mayo Abbey Archaeological Survey

Townland:	CLOONBAUL	6 inch Sheet:	101:1:2
Parish:	MAYO ABBEY	Site No:	99
Barony:	CLANMORRIS	Altitude:	200-300
Type:	ENCLOSURE + FIELD SYSTEM	Date:	04/03/96
Class:	UNCERTAIN	Co-ords:	144-586
Period:		Status:	
Condition:	FAIR	Owner:	TOM & PADDY KILLEEN, CLOONBAUL

Author's Surname

Title

Year

Pages

Other Sources

Comments

Visited by

LEO MORAHAN, PAT MCLOUGHLIN, MARTIN KEAVENEY, MICHEAL
ROUGHNEEN

Write up the site and description information in a separate word processing document and whatever name you give it insert in box below.

Site and Description Reference

ARCH99A

483

Mayo Abbey Archaeological Survey

Site no. 99 (O.S. 101) - Cloonbaul

SITING

This site lies along the eastern edge of an uneven field of thistle covered grazing. Set on a slightly raised drumlin there is a fair commanding view to the E and W but slightly higher ground to the NNW and S overlooks the site. There is a small mound on the higher ground to NNW which appears to be of some antiquity (Cloonbaul 99, 101). The boreen which runs by the eastern sector of the site has possibly damaged some of its associated banks.

DESCRIPTION

This site appears to consist of a fairly large univallate oval shaped enclosure bordered mainly by a bank of earth with some large limestone blocks evidently used as facing on the outside, at intervals (mainly along SW sector). The enclosing bank is scarped along the southern half where it varies from 1.20 m along W and S and reaches 1.45 m high along E. Overall diameters of the enclosure measure 37 m NNW-SSE by 22 m E-W while across the top it measures 33 m by 18 m E-W. The northern half of this enclosure appears to have been modified to accommodate a ringfort or some such enclosure. The enclosing bank of this has been built on the line of the earlier enclosure, apart from along the S. Crest to crest diameters of this ringfort measure 18 m NNW-SSE by 16 m E-W. Its enclosing bank which is composed of a mixture of earth, gravel and larger stones is best preserved along the S where it averages 2.10 m wide overall, 1 m high externally and 1.4 m high internally; elsewhere this bank is much lower internally reaching only 55 cm high in a few spots (notably NNW, ENE and SW). Some large limestone facing stones are used on this bank along the S sector. The only clear possible entrance lies in the SE sector of the smaller enclosure and measures roughly 6 m wide overall. Either side of this possible entrance feature is lined with a bank of earth and stone. This bank averages 1 m to 1.3 m high; while the bank on the southern side of this "entrance" runs straight, that on the northern side is more kinked. These banks meet up with a more recent boreen 10 m away and they may originally have extended much further. The field across the boreen to the E has been partly cleared recently, yet still some similar type banks survive. A further series of similar banks lie outside the S and W sector of the site and they would appear to have been contemporary with the main site. There are also a number of lazy beds mixed through these ancient field systems. Just outside the northern sector of the site is a small area of quarrying; mainly two quarried trenches. Some stones dug out of these lie scattered on the ground - one upright limestone boulder appears today as a possible standing stone, but this is most unlikely. Anyway, for the record it is 1.5 m high at most, 1.35 m wide and 55 cm thick.

Site interior appears to be generally flat and featureless in the S half; the N half contains a few moss covered clumps of stones, some of which appear to mark internal features or graves. There is evidence for a berm outside the enclosing bank of the fort along the SE and SW sectors; this berm averages 4 m wide and stands 55 cm high at most.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the northern sector the bank of the enclosure has been partly damaged by some fairly recent interference, apparently. Though not marked on any earlier maps, this site would appear to be of immense archaeological significance because of the large area it occupies.

Mayo Abbey Archaeological Survey

Site no. 99 (O.S. 101) - Cloonbaul

DRAWING



Mayo Abbey Archaeological Survey

Townland:	CLOONBAUL	6 inch Sheet:	101:1:2
Parish:	MAYO ABBEY	Site No:	98
Barony:	CLANMORRIS	Altitude:	200-300
Type:	MOUND	Date:	01/03/96
Class:	UNCERTAIN	Co-ords:	140-590
Period:		Status:	
Condition:	GOOD	Owner:	JOHN FRAN MORAN, CLOONBAUL

Author's Surname

Title

Year

Pages

Other Sources

Comments

Visited by

LEO MORAHAN, PAT MCLOUGHLIN, DAMIEN BARRETT

Write up the site and description information in a separate word processing document and whatever name you give it insert in box below.

Site and Description Reference

ARCH98B

479

Mayo Abbey Archaeological Survey

Site no. 98 (O.S. 101) - Cloonbaul

SITING

This site lies on the top of a low yet pronounced drumlin with an excellent commanding view. It is situated in a small walled garden of rough grazing on the western side of an old disused boreen. Between this boreen and the site are a line of mainly sycamore trees and a small orchard. In this adjacent field to the SSE are a series of earthworks, together with an oval and a roughly circular enclosure (Cloonbaul 99, 101).. The ruined house close to its NE edge belonged to a family of Godwins (who lived in Knockaunakill).

DESCRIPTION

This site consists of a small roughly circular low mound of earth and stone of uncertain date and function. The overall diameters measure 6.3 m N-S by 7.6 m E-W while across the top it reads 4.3 m N-S by 5.2 m E-W. It stands on average between 50 cm and 65 cm high. There are tentative traces of a fosse outside the mound and this averages 1.4 m wide but it is extremely shallow. The fosse runs up against the shoulder of the drumlin along S sector. There is no trace of an outer bank.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This site is similar in many ways to a ring-barrow. However the central mound lacks the curvature, normally associated with such a site. It may be however that this central mound was more circular but has been partly straightened through interference.

APPENDIX 8

Letter from Harmony Solar re potential Solar Farm in Shinganagh/Mayo Parks



02 December 2025

Joseph Brett
Shinganagh
Mayo Abbey
Claremorris
Co. Mayo
F12 N2F3

Our Ref: HS / 86 / MY5893
Re: Solar Farm Project

Subject to Contract / Contract Denied

Dear Joseph,

I am currently in talks with a number of landowners in your area regarding the proposed leasing of their land for the development of a solar farm. I also believe that part of your land from folio MY5893 may be suitable for this project, subject to completion of a feasibility study by our consulting engineers.

Our lease term is 35 years and we pay a very competitive index-linked annual rent of €1,200 per acre, paid quarterly. We also offer a substantial energisation payment to each landowner once the project begins exporting electricity to the grid network. As a company, we are committed to advancing our sites through the planning process without delay and have already secured planning permission on a considerable number of projects across Ireland, a significant number of which are already in construction.

We are development partners of ESB Solar and together we have ambitious plans to deliver a significant pipeline of large-scale solar projects for the generation of clean, green, indigenous electricity. Please find enclosed article dated 11th May 2020 in relation to our partnership with ESB. One of the main advantages to solar farms is that the landowner retains the ability to farm the land underneath the panels, the grazing of sheep being one example. This activity enables the landowner to continue to receive entitlements on the land as well as their farming income.

Also enclosed is our brochure which will guide you through the process. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss the proposal in detail. If you are interested in discussing this opportunity further, please call me on 086 4060995, or complete the enclosed form and return it in the stamped addressed envelope provided. Alternatively, you can contact me by email @ info@harmonysolar.ie.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Loughrey".



Tom Loughrey
Head of Land Acquisitions

T + 353 (0)53 917 5000
E info@harmonysolar.ie
W www.harmonysolar.ie

Ballyseskin House | Kilmore | Co. Wexford | Ireland

Harmony Solar Ireland Limited | Company Number: 576136
Registered Office: 12 Crowe Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Directors: John Swan | Lisa Rowe | John McEneaney | Noel Reid