



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Addendum Report

ABP-318716-23

Development	Construction of seven no. dwelling houses, comprising five no. two storey houses and two single storey houses, drainage works together with associated site works
Location	Dromdihy, Killeagh, Co. Cork
Planning Authority	Cork County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	226511
Applicant(s)	Eoin O'Mahony
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Eoin O'Mahony
Observer(s)	Paul Fitzgerald
Date of Site Inspection	16 August 2024
Inspector	Claire McVeigh

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This report is an addendum report to the Inspector's report in respect of ABP-318716-23 (dated 7th October 2024).
- 1.2. On the 12th November 2024 the Board decided to defer consideration of this case to issue a section 137 notice in respect to two items as follows:
 1. The Board noted the proposed widening of the avenue to serve the proposed development, in order to facilitate a 5.5m wide road and 2m wide footpath.
You are invited to comment on any tree and woodland removal necessary to facilitate these works, having regard to Development Boundary Objective DB-02 in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 which seeks to protect the biodiversity and landscape assets of Killeagh, and any other development plan matters considered relevant.
 2. Having regard to item 1) above, you are invited to comment on the level of screening of the proposed development from Dromdihy House (RPS 00408), in the context of Objectives HE 16-14 and HE 16-20 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 and any other development plan matters considered relevant.
- 1.3. This report considers the submission made on foot of the request for further information. I note that the submission received from the applicant in response to the section 137 notice to both the planning authority and observer.

2.0 Applicant's Response to the Board's Direction to request further information/comments

- 2.1. James Bourke Architects, on behalf of the applicant made the following points in their submission to the Board (received by the Board on the 5th December 2024), in summary:

Item 1: Development Boundary Objective DB-02 Cork County Council Development Plan 2022-2028.

- The areas affected by the proposed widening of the access avenue are in many cases of minor value in terms of mature trees or established hedgerows

and some contain grass verges, low value biars, self-seeded sycamores and laurels.

- The proposal does not require the complete removal of the established tree belt and associated planting, which is between 10m and 15 m in depth in places, but rather a limited thinning of this on the avenue side to permit the wider access.
- On the northern verge of the avenue closest to the road junction an established hedge approximately one metre back from the avenue as well as some mixed hedge planting and a low dry-stone wall (constructed as an agreed temporary arrangement by an adjoining owner with the landowners consent though on the applicant's land). This hedge and wall will need to be removed however the mature trees to the north of this will remain.
- The area between the first two entrance drives to the north boundary has a wide low verge of grass, ivy and briars of little landscape value. It is not anticipated that any mature trees in this area will be affected.
- Further west along the avenue a wide grass verge and ditch to the northern boundary and some self-seeded multi bole trees includes sycamore. Two of these trees are likely to be removed but are not of significant value.
- At the western end of the avenue at the junction with the proposed development site there is a tree group. The tall mature tree to the north lies outside the line of the road widening proposal. The younger smaller trees in this group will be affected but area of low value.
- In the context of the development plan no important trees or groups of tree or mature hedgerows are considered at risk or warrant protection as having important amenity or historic value.

Item 2: Record of Protected Structures: HE 16-14 and HE 16-20 Cork County Council Development Plan 2022-2028

- The limited removal of existing trees and planting to permit the widening of Dromdiah Avenue will in our view have no impact on the level of screening of the proposed development from Dromdihy Houser, the Protected Structure (RPS 00408).

- The proposed development is located entirely to the north of the existing avenue and trees referred to in Item 1, no work in this area will have any bearing on the visual impact of the proposed houses on Dromdihy House.
- The visual impact of the proposed houses on views from Dromdihy House was addressed in the Further Information submission and in particular on the site sections included (refer drawing 200902-RFI-003).
- The proposal has been assessed in accordance with the criteria contained in the Guidance Notes for the Appraisal of Historic Gardens, Demesnes, Estates and their settings stage 3 assessing development proposals reference in HE 16-20: Historic Landscapes and it is considered that the proposal will have minimal impact on the heritage of the designed landscape.
- The entrance is no longer in use by the house and a new entrance driveway has been formed further north close to the walled garden. The former wooded area at the driveway entrance has been developed in the 20th century as an extension to the settlement of the village. It is the former green area adjoining this to the north that is the subject of this proposal.

3.0 Planning Authority response

- 3.1. The Planning Authority is of the opinion that all the relevant issues have been covered in the technical reports already forwarded to the Bord as part of the appeal documentation and has no further comment to make in this matter.

4.0 Assessment

Tree and woodland removal (Item 1) and impact on screening of the proposed development from Dromdihy House (RPS 00408) (Item 2).

- 4.1. I shall address both items 1 and 2 in my assessment as the items directly interrelate. I highlight to the Board that the submitted proposed landscape plan (Drawing no. RFI-005) and the Road Widening (Drawing no. 100 Rev. E) do not clearly identify all the mature trees and hedgerow along the existing laneway, as stated in my report at section 7.3.7. The application has not been supported with a landscape (including trees and hedgerows) survey drawing.

4.2. Having regard to the submission received I note the qualitative evaluation of the existing trees and woodland planting provided by the project architect and photographic record of the areas being described (as summarised in section 2.0 of this report). The project architect, on behalf of the applicant, accepts that there will be thinning of the tree/hedgerow belt and removal of groupings of trees. They state that no important trees or groups of trees or mature hedgerows are considered at risk or warrant protection as having important amenity of historic value.

4.3. Notwithstanding, in the absence of a landscape survey prepared by a landscape architect with the proposed road widening and pedestrian footpath proposals overlaid, I am of the opinion that it is difficult to have certainty on the road widening (Drawing number 100 Revision E) impact on the character of the sensitive historic landscape, taking into account:

(a) the nature of the works required which include the provision of a separate footpath, foul sewerage, storm water infrastructure and lighting infrastructure in proximity to the crown spread of the mature trees, and

(b) by diminishing the screening potential for the new development.

I am not satisfied that sufficient supporting information has been submitted to address the concerns regarding the impact of the development on the natural heritage importance of the established green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape assets of the subject site, as set out in section 7.3 of my report and in the Board Direction dated 12 November 2024. As such, I consider that my assessment of same remains unchanged by the submission by the applicant.

4.4. For a point of clarity, the architect states that the proposed development is located entirely to the north of the existing avenue, this is not correct as condition no. 1 to omit proposed dwelling 6 relates to the dwelling located west of the avenue. I do not, therefore, agree with the statement that it is the former green area adjoining the developed areas that is the subject of this proposal.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1. Having regard to the above it is recommended that permission is refused for the reasons and considerations as contained in my report dated 7 October 2024, as restated below:

I recommend that permission is refused for the following reasons and considerations set out below:

Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the sensitive elevated location the proposed development by reason of its scale, uncharacteristic design distinct from the local architectural language of Killeagh, and the associated access road requirements would materially and adversely affect the character and setting of Dromdihy House, and stables (a protected structure RPS I.D. 00408) and the sensitive historic landscape associated with its curtilage and attendant grounds. It is therefore considered that the proposed development, if permitted, would seriously injure the amenities of the area, contravene policies HE 16-14 of Cork County Development Plan, HE 16-20 of the Cork County Development Plan and, therefore, be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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

Claire McVeigh
Planning Inspector

12 February 2025