

Meath County Council

Planning Report

To:	Gerard Kellett, Senior Executive Planner
From:	Shoaib Khan Executive Planner
File Number:	2660755
Applicant:	Kernaghan Farrelly
Development Address:	Boltown Crossakiel Kells, Co. Meath
Application Type:	Permission
Date of Site Inspection:	31/07/2026
Date of Report:	04/08/2026
Date Decision Due:	11/08/2026
Development Description:	The development will consist of the provision a two-storey house with a proprietary effluent treatment system & percolation area, a vehicular entrance to the site and associated site works.

1.0 Site Location & Description:

The application site is located in the Rural townland of Boltown located 1.4km east of rural village of Crossakiel. The area is identified as a Rural Area under low development pressure, The site is located in the Southwest Kells Lowlands Landscape Area, which is recorded for its moderate landscape value and has moderate sensitivity to new developments. The subject site is located off the nearby local road – cul de sac (L28016). The site comprises a large agricultural plot and is marked with mature vegetation to the front.

There are no distinctive environmental designations affecting the site unless otherwise stated within the application documentation. An archaeological interest zone (rath) is located nearby c.120 meters east of the selected site.



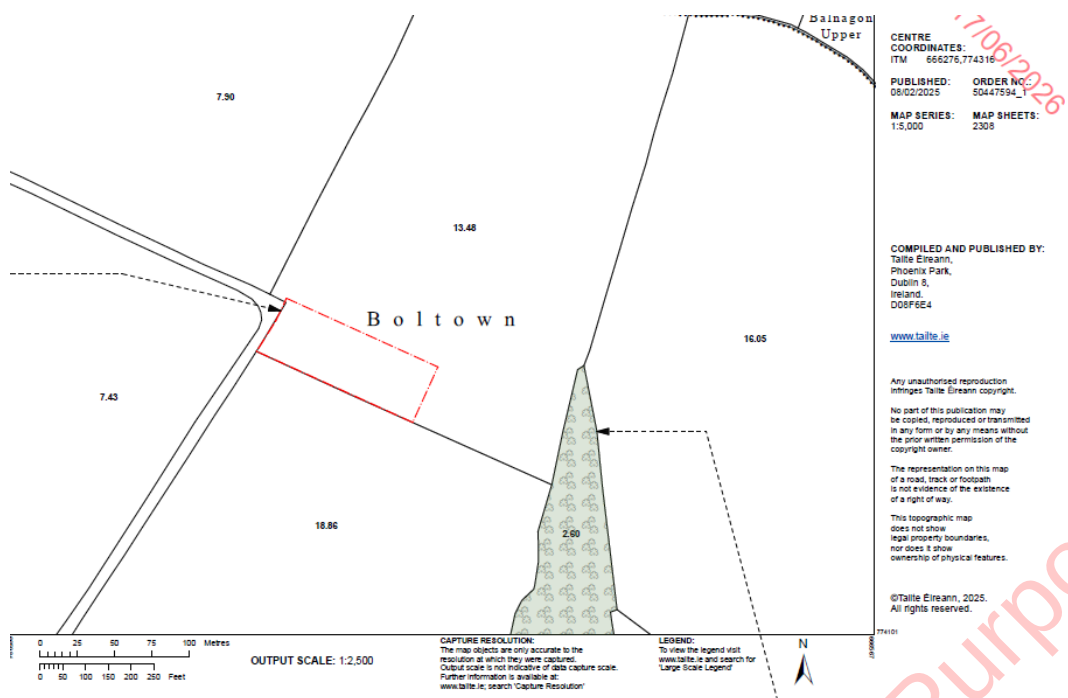


Figure 1 Submitted site location plan

Site Visit Photos 31st July 2026



2.0 Proposed Development

The application seeks permission to construct a house, new domestic entrance, wastewater treatment system and associated works in the Rural Area 3 Low Development Pressure.

3.0 Planning History

PI Ref: 2660043 Patrick Farrelly Withdrawn The development will consist of the provision a two-storey house with a proprietary effluent treatment system & percolation area, a vehicular entrance to the site and associated site works.

PI Ref : 2137 Susan Baugh Permission Refused the construction of a storey and a half style dwelling, detached domestic garage, wastewater disposal system, new site entrance and all associated site works.

Refusal Reasons;

It is recommended that planning permission be **refused** for the following reasons:

1. The application site is located in a rural area outside any designated settlement as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 where development which is not rurally-generated should be more properly located in settlement centres. It is the policy of the County Development Plan to restrict housing in this area to those who are intrinsically part of the rural community or who have an occupation predominantly based in the rural community. It is considered, based on the information submitted, that the applicant has not established a site specific rural generated housing need for the development of a dwelling at this location. The proposed development would be contrary to the policy of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities and the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and would establish a very undesirable future precedent.
2. Having regard to the topography of the application site and the existing pattern of development in the area, the proposed development by virtue of its siting, layout and design, would form a visually obtrusive feature in the landscape and be injurious to the rural character of the area. The development does not integrate with the surrounding landscape, would establish an undesirable precedent for further development of this kind and be seriously injurious to the rural character of the area. The proposed development is therefore at variance with the 'Meath Rural House Design' and would contravene policy objective RD POL 9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 which requires 'all applications for rural houses to comply with the 'Meath Rural House Design Guide'.

PI Ref : 21150 Susan Baugh Permission Refused for the construction of a single storey dwelling, detached domestic garage with carport & stables, wastewater disposal system, new site entrance and all associated site works.

Refusal Reasons;

10.3 In light of the foregoing, **I recommend** that Planning Permission is **REFUSED** for the proposed development for the following reason(s):

1. The site of the proposed development is within 'a Structurally Weaker Area' as identified in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005) and in a 'Low Development Area', which has the weakest urban structure within the county, and where housing is restricted in accordance with the policies set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 (as varied). Strategic policy RUR DEV SP 1 seeks *"To adopt a tailored approach to rural housing within County Meath as a whole, distinguishing between rural generated housing and urban generated housing in rural areas recognising the characteristics of the individual rural area types."* Policy RD POL 13 of the Plan seeks *"To protect agricultural or agri-business uses from unplanned and/or incompatible urban development."*

The proposed development, in the absence of a location specific rural housing need and having specific regard to the applicant's urban generated housing need, would contribute to the encroachment of random rural development in the area and would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and the efficient provision of public services and infrastructure. It is considered that the proposed development, if permitted, would be contrary to the aforementioned Ministerial Guidelines and County Development Plan policy RD POL 13 and would contravene County Development Plan strategic policy RUR DEV SP 2. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2.

The EPA Code of Practice 'Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10)' (March, 2021) replaces the previous Code of Practice issued in 2009 and applies to site assessments and subsequent installations carried out on or after 7th June 2021. The 2009 Code of Practice may only be used for site assessments and subsequent installations commenced before 7th June 2021 or where planning permission has been applied for before that date.

As the application has been made after 7th June 2021 and refers to the 2009 Code of Practice, the proposed development, if permitted, would contravene the aforementioned policy of the County Development Plan and could lead to serious danger to human health or the environment, if a major accident were to occur.

4.0 National and Local Planning Policy

- National Policy

Project Ireland 2040, National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040, National Planning Framework (NPF) recognises that there is a continuing need for housing provision for people to live and work in Ireland's countryside. Careful planning is required to manage demand in the most accessible countryside around cities and towns, focusing on the elements required to support the sustainable growth of rural economies and rural communities.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland (EMRA) for the period 2019-2031 came into force on 28/06/19 and is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the Region to 2031 and beyond. Local Policy.

Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

Chapter 9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the Rural Development Strategy.

Chapter 11 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

Appendix 13 Rural Design Guide.

All other relevant Section 28 Planning Guidelines have been considered in this assessment of this application.

5.0 Submissions

None.

6.0 Representations

None.

7.0 External Referrals

None.

8.0 Internal Referrals

Transport	Report Received 23/07/2026 No Objection
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9.0 Pre-Planning Consultation

None.

10.0 Planning Assessment

In summary, the main planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of Development.
- Rural Housing Need
- Layout & Design.
- Access
- Site Services.
- Flooding
- AA
- EIA

Each item for consideration will be expanded on in further detail below.

10.1 Principle of Development

The site is in an area zoned as rural area where the zoning objective is *“To protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and sustainable rural-related enterprise, community facilities, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage.”*

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 as amended identifies three area types in the county following detailed research and assessment. The three rural area types are identified on Map 9. 1.

The subject site is in Area 3 Low Development Pressure Area.

This area type covers much of the north-western, western and south-western parts of the county. This area is associated with relatively high levels of residential stability above average percentages of family households and high rates of agricultural employment. In addition, it is characterised by the lowest average population densities. This area has the weakest urban structure within the county and the rural housing policy applicable should reflect same.

Because these areas (area 3) are experiencing low growth and risk of decline, planning policy aims to encourage appropriate rural development and housing that helps keep people living and working in the area, while supporting the long-term viability of rural communities.

In terms of a Rural Area, residential development may be facilitated whereby the applicant complies with the following as extracted from the Rural Development Strategy as set out below;

RUR DEV SP 2

To ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria. An assessment of individual rural development proposals including one-off houses shall have regard to other policies and objectives in this Development Plan, and in particular Chapter 8 Section 8.6.1 UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne.

The planning policy framework for housing in rural areas requires a demonstration of a location-specific rural housing need. Sections 9.4 and 9.5 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 outline several means by which this can be done.

Based on the information submitted, it appears that the applicant is seeking permission based on the following criteria:

“Persons who have spent substantial periods of their lives, living in rural areas as members of the established rural community for a period in excess of five years and who do not possess a dwelling or who have not possessed a dwelling in the past in which they have resided or who possess a dwelling in which they do not currently reside;”

The following documents have been submitted in support of local needs

- Local needs form 26/05/2026 (Acceptable)
- Map showing the family and relevant landholding (not submitted)
- Letters of attendance from the local school (acceptable)

Proof of address documents

- Bank statements (missing 2022,2023, Insufficient)
- Electoral Register (acceptable)
additional proof of address such as the missing statements, utility bills and revenue documentation shall be submitted.
- Land registry details, owner details verified.

The applicant proposes to construct a dwelling on lands belonging to family (grandparent) while living in the family home c1.9km west of the subject site along the local road L2801. A map showing the family home and relevant landholdings is not submitted, however electoral registration form submitted shows the Eircode which is used to locate the applicant's current and family address. Land registry details are also checked online and are verified. The applicant also submits proof of attendance in the local school.

The applicant has submitted local needs form, and some supporting documents are submitted as proof of address, but these are insufficient as detailed above. A consistent proof of address covering at least 5 years is required.

Accordingly, it cannot be concluded that the proposal complies with the relevant local needs criteria at this stage.

The applicant will be invited to submit further information in this regard or alternatively a refusal will be recommended should further issues arise within the assessment.

10.2 Siting and Layout

The proposed development comprises a new dwelling house on a site of approximately 0.45 hectares, taken from a family-owned larger landholding. The site is rectangular in shape in an east west orientation, and it has a field entrance directing onto the adjoining laneway (cul de sac) on the western boundary. the plot is screened with a mature hedgerow at the front but is open and exposed with a slight descending slope sufficient to create natural views across the rural countryside for a considerable distance.



A site inspection confirmed that the intended dwelling would stand within an open field lacking existing natural features to provide shelter or screening. While the submitted layout plan includes provisions for boundary fencing with native hedge and tree planting, these measures are currently deemed insufficient for adequate screening.

“While new tree planting for integration purposes will be considered together with existing landscape features, new planting alone will not be sufficient. A building on an unacceptable site cannot be successfully integrated into the countryside by the use of landscaping. New planting will inevitably take a considerable length of time to mature and in the interim will not mitigate the impact of new development. Similarly, a new building that relies on significant earth works, such as mounding or cut and fill for integration will be generally unacceptable.”



Figure 2 proposed site location open and exposed

It is noted and as recorded in the pictures, the site currently benefits from a mature hedgerow along the northwestern boundary of the landholding and is also served by the entrance. It is assessed that the application would benefit from reorientating the site layout in a north south direction and along the existing mature boundary feature to provide some screening and sheltering.



Figure 3 Revised siting to be considered

As a result of the identified issues, it is not considered appropriate to issue a further information request at this time. Instead, a recommendation for refusal will be made due to insufficient details regarding compliance with the relevant assessment criteria, including the layout requirements outlined in the Rural Design Guide.

10.3 Design

Meath County Council has prepared design guidelines for rural houses, and it is the policy of the Council to implement these guidelines through the development management process. The guidelines are included in Appendix 13 of the Development Plan.

It is the policy of the Council:

RD POL 9

To require all applications for rural houses to comply with the 'Meath Rural House Design Guide'.

All planning applications should be accompanied by a detailed design statement outlining the rationale of the proposed design and how it adheres to the Meath Rural House Design Guide.

This application is provided with a design statement which is reviewed along with the submitted plans.

The proposed development consists of the construction of a 1½ story rural dwelling, wastewater treatment system and percolation area, new site entrance, private well, and associated site works. The footprint of the dwelling will provide a total of 292 square meters of floor space over ground plus first floor, the floor plan will accommodate kitchen, living, utility, sitting and dining area on ground floor with provision of 4 no of bedrooms on first floor. The overall dimensions of the footprint are 7.3 meters height, 16.5 meters depth and c.10.5 meters width. The floor plan is unconventional and has an excessive depth.

The proposed house looks more like an agricultural shed or an industrial/commercial building than a family home. The use of grey or green corrugated metal cladding gives the building the appearance of a farm structure, storage shed, office unit, or commercial building rather than a traditional rural dwelling. As a result, the design is considered inappropriate for the site and out of keeping with the character of the surrounding rural area.

The proposed development, by reason of its design, scale, form, external finishes and overall appearance, is inappropriate for this rural location. The proposed dwelling adopts the appearance of an agricultural or industrial-type structure, characterised by extensive use of corrugated metal cladding and a utilitarian building form, resulting in a development that lacks the architectural qualities ordinarily associated with a rural dwelling. The Planning Authority considers that the proposal would appear as a farm shed, storage building, or commercial structure rather than a residential dwelling and would be visually incongruous within the receiving rural landscape.

A refusal in this instance is recommended.

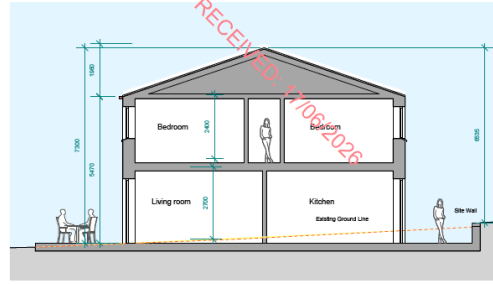
NEW HOUSE - CONTEMPORARY SHED STYLE HOUSE



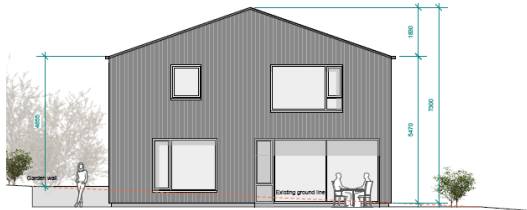
1 Proposed Front Elevation (West)
Scale: 1:100

NEW HOUSE SHED LIKE DESIGN FEATURES

1. Prominent gable ends to front
2. Low pitched roofs
3. Selected Corrugated metal cladding on roof and walls
4. Selected grey-green colour cladding to blend into countryside.
5. Large triple glazed sliding doors
6. Closed to the front gable and more open to the side elevations
7. Wide plan for maximum efficiency of space, thermal reduction and economy of building



3 Proposed Cross Section
Scale: 1:100



2 Proposed Rear Elevation (East)
Scale: 1:100



PICTURE EXAMPLE OF SIMILAR STYLE HOUSE

NEW HOUSE - CONTEMPORARY SHED STYLE HOUSE



1 Contiguous Front Elevation (West)
Scale: 1:100

The proposed house is designed to be imbedded in the gently sloping site to reduce the overall height and keep the out to fit to a minimum. The overall height is equivalent to the gutters set out for a storey and a half house of 7300mm high



EXTERNAL 3D HOUSE IMAGE



EXTERNAL 3D HOUSE IMAGE



Picture 3 Example of Typical modern farm building



Picture 2 Example of Typical modern farm building



Picture 1 Example of Typical modern farm building

TYPICAL AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS DESIGN FEATURES

1. Prominent gable ends to front
2. Low pitched roofs
3. Corrugated metal cladding on roof and sides
4. Large sliding doors
5. Closed to the front gable and more open to the side elevations
6. Wide plan for maximum efficiency of space at economy

10.4 Access

The proposal seeks to construct a new domestic entrance onto the adjacent road. This road appears to only provide access to the wider agricultural lands and to the roadside dwellings towards the front of the laneway. The entrance is located near a bendy section of the road, but an existing agricultural entrance exists at a setback. The transport section accepts the development in principle and concludes with no objection subject to provision of a setback of 12 meters.

10.5 Flooding

The application site is in a Flood Zone C for fluvial flooding i.e. the probability of flooding is less than 0.1% and, therefore at low risk of flooding. In the event of a permission grant, surface water-related conditions may be applied.

10.6 Services

Water Supply

With regard to water supply, Section 20 of the submitted Application Form indicates that water supply is by a private well.

Surface Water Management

Section 20 of the submitted Application Form indicates that surface water drainage is proposed by discharge via soakpit.

Wastewater Treatment

The application requests approval for the installation of an on-site wastewater treatment system appropriate for a 4-bedroom property, accommodating a maximum of 6 residents. A Site Suitability Assessment was prepared by Traynor Environmental Limited, for the proposed dwelling. The assessment comprised a desk study, site inspection, trial hole investigations and percolation testing in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice 2021.

The site characterization report outlines the evaluations carried out on 16th June and 19th June 2026. Percolation test results of 44.47 min/25mm at the surface and 54.86 min/25mm at the sub-surface indicate the suitability of the site for a Secondary Treatment System and associated works.

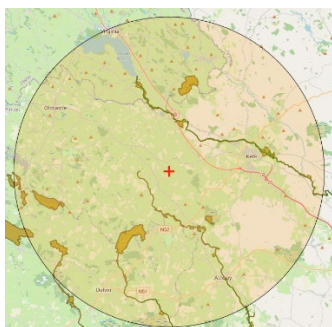
Overall, the Site Suitability Assessment concludes that, subject to the implementation of the recommended wastewater treatment measures, the site is suitable for the proposed residential development and can accommodate the disposal of treated effluent without undue risk to groundwater quality.

The proposed installation of the domestic wastewater treatment system subject to relevant planning conditions is acceptable.

11.0 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) compels competent authorities to undertake an appropriate assessment of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects, Guidance for Planning Authorities' (2009) provide advice to planning authorities on their obligations under the Habitats Directive. The document, "Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities", states that where, from the nature, size and location of the development, it is unclear if the proposal will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), a Natura Impact Statement will be required. The application site is not within any designated Natura 2000 site. However, the nearest sites located within 15km of the subject site are somewhat proximate and are listed as follows:



- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC 002299 and SPA 004232 (2.5km southwest)

The Planning Authority considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development and other plans and projects (where there could be potential for cumulative or in-combination effects), the conservation objectives/ qualifying interests of European Sites within the vicinity of the site and the distance to European Sites, any protected habitats or species, the WFD catchment location, the underlying aquifer type and vulnerability and the excavation works, emissions, transportation requirements and duration of construction and operation and cumulative impacts associated with the proposal.

The Planning Authority's Screening for Appropriate Assessment has considered the potential effects including direct, indirect and in-combination effects of the proposed development, individually or in combination with the permitted developments and cumulatively with other plans or projects on European Sites. The Planning Authority concludes that the proposed development (entire project), by itself or in combination with other plans and developments in the vicinity, would not be likely to have a significant effect on European Site(s). In light of this, it is considered that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement) is not required in this instance.

12.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

The Planning Authority is required to determine if the proposed development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The proposed development is not a development type listed under Part 1 or 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2026, nor is it considered a sub-threshold development for the purposes of Schedule 7 Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2026 and will not on its own or cumulatively with other projects result in significant effects on the environment and as such an EIAR is not required.

13.0 Conclusion

The proposed development is not supported as insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate compliance with the rural housing local need policy. In addition, the proposal lacks compliance with the relevant assessment criteria namely the Rural Design Guide in terms of its layout, design, materials and its integration with the rural environment. Accordingly, the proposal is considered contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

15.0 Recommendation

In light of the foregoing, it is recommended that application be REFUSED for the following reasons.

Reason(s) for Refusal.

1. Policy RUR DEV SP 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 seeks to ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria. The applicant applied for permission based on Section 9.4 Persons who are an Intrinsic Part of the Rural Community under the following definition, *"Persons who have spent substantial periods of their lives, living in rural areas as members of the established rural community for a period in excess of five years and who do not possess a dwelling or who have not possessed a dwelling in the past in which they have resided or who possess a dwelling in which they do not currently reside"*.

It is considered the applicant has failed to provide adequate and verifiable information such as consistent proof of address for at least five years to establish a rural housing need and hence the Planning Authority is not satisfied that that a rural housing need in accordance with the above provisions of the plan has been established. The proposed development would be contrary to the policy of the Ministerial Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities and the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and would establish a very undesirable future precedent.

2. It is the policy (RD POL 9) of the Meath County Development 2021 – 2027, *"To require all applications for rural houses to comply with the 'Meath Rural House Design Guide'"* which seeks to avoid elevated and exposed sites as detailed in section 2.3 of said document.

Having regard to the elevated and exposed nature of the application site with it is considered that the proposed development in particular the two storey nature would result in a strident and obtrusive physical development prominent in the landscape when viewed from the public road. In addition, it would set an undesirable precedent of a disorderly form of physical development currently free of development into the host environment in a manner seriously injurious to visual amenity of the rural landscape.

Accordingly, to permit the proposed development would be contrary to the aforementioned policy provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and therefore contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

REFUSAL

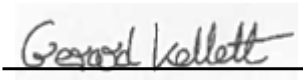


Shoaib Khan
Executive Planner
Date: 05/08/2026

RECOMMENDATION

ACCEPTED

11 August 2026

SIGNED: 

Gerard Kellett
Senior Executive Planner
Date: 11/08/2026