

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL

DECLARATION UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000, AS AMENDED

REFERENCE: DEC 23/27

NAME OF APPLICANT: Una Marie Egan & Brian Moore  
ADDRESS: Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.  
ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.

NATURE OF APPLICATION: Request for Declaration under Section 5 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended as to Whether the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is or is not development and if so, are they exempted development.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT: Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly

WHEREAS a question has arisen as to whether the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is or is not development and if so, are they exempted development at Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.

AS INDICATED on the particulars received by the Planning Authority on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023,

AND WHEREAS Offaly County Council, in considering this declaration request, had regard particularly to:

- (a) Section 2, 3(1) and 4(1)(h) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended.

AND WHEREAS Offaly County Council has concluded that –

The the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is development and is exempted development.

NOW THEREFORE Offaly County Council, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 5(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), hereby decides that:

- The proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is **development and is exempted development** at Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.

MATTERS CONSIDERED In making its decision, the Planning Authority had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

  
Administrative Officer

Date 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023

Note: Any person issued with a Declaration may on payment to An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street Dublin 2 of such fees as may be described refer a declaration for review by the board within four weeks of the issuing of the Declaration.



## Planning Report

### Section 5 Declaration

<b>File Reference:</b>	<i>Dec. 23/27</i>
<b>Question:</b>	<i>Whether the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is or is not development and if so, are they exempted development?</i>
<b>Applicant:</b>	<i>Una Marie Egan &amp; Brian Moore</i>
<b>Correspondence Address:</b>	<i>Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.</i>
<b>Location:</b>	<i>Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.</i>

#### 1. Introduction

The question has arisen as to whether the proposed works (as detailed) to an existing dwelling is or is not development and if so, are they exempted development.

#### 2. Background

The existing detached dwelling is located within the open countryside, approximately 900m north west of Fivealley Sráid.



*Photo 1: Subject Site.*

#### 3. Site History

*On Site* – No recent planning history associated with the subject site.

*Enforcement* – No recent history associated with the subject site.

*Adjoining Lands* - No recent planning history associated with the adjoining lands.

#### 4. Legislative Context

In order to assess whether or not the proposed works constitute exempted development, regard must be had to the following items of legislation:

##### Statutory Provisions

**Section 2 (1) Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, states as follows:**

*“house” means a building or part of a building which is being or has been occupied as a dwelling or was provided for use as a dwelling but has not been occupied, and where appropriate, includes a building which was designed for use as 2 or more dwellings or a flat, an apartment or other dwelling within such a building;*

*“works” includes any act or operation of construction, excavation, demolition, extension, alteration, repair or renewal and, in relation to a protected structure or proposed protected structure, includes any act or operation involving the application or removal of plaster, paint, wallpaper, tiles or other material to or from the surfaces of the interior or exterior of a structure.*

**Section 3 (1) Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, defines development.**

*“development” means, except where the context otherwise requires, the carrying out of any works on, in, over or under land or the making of any material change in the use of any structures or other land.*

**Section 4 - Exempted Development**

Section 4 (1) (a) – (l) sets out what is exempted development for the purposes of this Act including:

- (h) development consisting of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any structure, being works which affect only the interior of the structure and which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or neighbouring structures.*

**5. Proposal by Applicants**

The Applicants have advised that they intend to refurbish an existing vacant property (folio 9406F) which will include the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney.

The Area Planner has confirmed that the folio provided as part of their application corresponds with the information submitted and the dwelling shown in Photo 1 above.

It is understood that this application has been submitted as part of an application for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.

**6. Evaluation**

**Question: *Whether the proposed works (as listed) to the existing dwelling are development and if so, are they exempted development?***

In considering the proposed works against the definitions of ‘development’ and ‘works’ as provided in the Act, it is the view of the Planning Authority that the proposed works are deemed as development as it includes alterations and repairs to the existing dwelling.

**Question: Is this proposal considered as Exempted Development?**

With regard to the proposed works which are described in the submitted documents, the Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposed works would not result in a material alteration to the dwelling appearance. While it is acknowledged that the additional windows will be installed and the chimney will be removed, it is their opinion that these works will not significantly alter the external appearance of the dwelling.

An appropriate assessment screening has been carried out see attached.

**7. Conclusion**

It is recommended that the Applicant be advised that the proposed development is **development and is exempted development.**

**Declaration on Development and Exempted Development**

**Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)**

**WHEREAS** a question has arisen as to whether the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is or is not development and if so, are they exempted development at Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.

**AS INDICATED** on the particulars received by the Planning Authority on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023,

**AND WHEREAS** Una Marie Egan & Brian Moore requested a declaration on the said question from Offaly County Council;

**AND WHEREAS** Offaly County Council, in considering this declaration request, had regard particularly to:

(a) Section 2, 3(1) and 4(1)(h) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended.

**AND WHEREAS** Offaly County Council has concluded that the the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is development and is exempted development.

**NOW THEREFORE** Offaly County Council, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 5(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), hereby decides that:

- The proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is **development** and is **exempted development** at Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.

*Please note that any person issued with a declaration under subsection 2(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) may on payment to the Board of the prescribed fee, refer a declaration to An Bord Pleanála within 4 weeks of the issuing of the decision.*



Una McCafferkey  
Executive Planner

27<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Date



Ed Kelly  
(A/Senior Executive Planner)

Date 27/10/2023

## APPENDIX A

### APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS



Screening is used to determine if an AA is necessary by examining:

- If the plan / project is directly connected with / necessary to the management of the European site.
- If the effects will be significant on a European site in view of its conservation objectives, either alone / in combination with other plans / projects.

**Planning Authority: OCC**

**Planning Application Ref. No: DEC 23/27**

(A) DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND LOCAL SITE:			
Proposed development:	Whether the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant property (folio 9406F) including the conversion of attic space to bedroom, installation of 3 Velux windows, one gable end window and removal of chimney is or is not development and if so, are they exempted development?		
Site location:	Whigsborough, Five Alley, Birr, Co. Offaly.		
Site size:	Not provided	Floor Area of Proposed Development:	Not provided
Identification of nearby European Site(s):	Dovegrove Callows SPA – 6.4km Ridge Road, SW of Rapemills SAC – 7.04km River Little Brosna Callows SPA – 8.74km		
Distance to European Site(s):	As above – all as crow flies		
The characteristics of existing, proposed or other approved plans / projects which may cause interactive / cumulative impacts with the project being assessed and which may affect the European site:	None		
Is the application accompanied by an EIA?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
(B) IDENTIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITE(S):			
The reasons for the designation of the European site(s):	<p><b>Dovegrove Callows SPA - Features of interest include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) [A395]</li> </ul> <p><b>River Little Brosna Callows SPA- Features of interest include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]</li> <li>• Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050]</li> <li>• Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]</li> <li>• Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054]</li> <li>• Shoveler (Anas clypeata) [A056]</li> <li>• Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]</li> <li>• Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]</li> <li>• Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) [A395]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <p><b>Ridge Road, SW of Rapemills SAC – Features of interest include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> </ul>		

The conservation objectives / qualifying interests of the site and the factors that contributes to the conservation value of the site: (which are taken from the European site synopses and, if applicable, a Conservation Management Plan; all available on <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a> ) (ATTACH INFO.)	
Site Name: Dovegrove Callows SPA, Site Code: 004137 <a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY004137.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY004137.pdf</a>	
Site Name: River Little Brosna Callows SPA, Site Code: 004086 <a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY004086.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY004086.pdf</a>	
Site Name: Ridge Road, SW of Rapemills SAC, Site Code: 000919 <a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY000919.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY000919.pdf</a>	
<b>(C) NPWS ADVICE:</b>	
Advice received from NPWS over phone:	None Received
Summary of advice received from NPWS in written form (ATTACH SAME):	None Received
<b>(D) ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS:</b>	
<i>(The purpose of this is to identify if the effect(s) identified could be significant – if uncertain assume the effect(s) are significant).</i>	
If the answer is 'yes' to any of the questions below, then the effect is significant. (Please justify your answer. 'Yes' / 'No' alone is insufficient)	
<b>Would there be...</b>	
... any impact on an Annex 1 habitat? (Annex 1 habitats are listed in Appendix 1 of AA Guidance).	Not likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site.
... a reduction in habitat area on a European site?	There will be no reduction in the habitat area. The site is sufficient distance from the European site.
... direct / indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality and supply, soil compaction) in the European site?	Not likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site.
... serious / ongoing disturbance to species / habitats for which the European site is selected (e.g. because of increased noise, illumination and human activity)?	Not likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site.
... direct / indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the European site?	None likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site.
Would the project interfere with mitigation measures put in place for other plans / projects. [Look at <i>in-combination effects</i> with completed, approved but not completed, and proposed plans / projects. Look at projects / plans within and adjacent to European sites and identify them]. Simply stating that there are no cumulative impacts' is insufficient.	No other plans known of in the vicinity of the site. The site is sufficient distance from the European site.
<b>(E) SCREENING CONCLUSION:</b>	
<b>Screening can result in:</b>	
1.	AA is not required because the project is directly connected with / necessary to the nature conservation management of the site.
2.	No potential for significant effects / AA is not required.
3.	Significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain. (In this situation seek a Natura Impact Statement from the applicant, or reject the project. Reject if too potentially damaging / inappropriate.
Therefore, does the project fall into category 1, 2 or 3 above?	Category 2



Justify why it falls into relevant category above:	There would be no likely significant impact on the European site from the proposed development due to the scale of the proposed development and the separation distance between the subject site and European Site.		
Name:	Úna McCafferkey <i>Úna McCafferkey</i>		
Position:	Executive Planner	Date:	27 <sup>th</sup> October 2023

