LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

SECTION 179 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (as amended)

PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (as amended)

PROPOSAL TO CARRY OUT A DEVELOPMENT REFERRED TO AS -

PART 8 - NO. 129

PROPOSED RE-DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER OFFICERS BUILDING, ABBEYCARTON, LONGFORD, CO. LONGFORD, TO A MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY FACILITY, A PROTECTED STRUCTURE, SITUATED WITHIN THE GROUNDS OF SEAN CONNOLLY BARRACKS.

REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH

SECTION 179 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED)

AND

PART 8 OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED)

To: The Cathaoirleach and Members of Longford Municipal District.

Being satisfied that the requirements of subsections (1) and (2) of Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, and Articles 79 to 85 inclusive of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) have been fully complied with in relation to the above proposed development, I have prepared the attached report in accordance with the requirements of subsection (3) of Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as

amended and formally submit same to the Cathaoirleach and members of Longford Municipal District for consideration.

- 1. Introduction / Site Location of the proposed development.
- 2. The nature and extent of the proposed development and the principal features thereof are as set out in Section 2 of the Report.
- 3. Section 3 of the Report evaluates the consistency of the development with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development relates, having regard to the provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

I am satisfied that all issues have been fully considered in the evaluation and that the proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development relates, having regard to the provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, for the reasons set out in the report.

- 4. The persons and bodies who made submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development in accordance with the provisions of the above Act and Regulations are listed at Section 4 and the issues raised detailed in Appendix 1.
- 5. Section 5 sets out details in relation to Appropriate Assessment.
- 6. Section 6 sets out the EIA Screening Determination.
- 7. Sets out the recommendation of the Planning Authority in relation to the proposed development regarding the planning considerations and submissions and observations received.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 179(3)(b)(v) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) I recommend that the proposed development should be proceeded with subject to the modifications/amendments listed in Section 7 of the attached report.

Dated this the: 20 March 2025

Samantha Healy, Director of Services.

Note:

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) – Subsection 4 of Section 179.

(4) (a) The members of the local authority shall, as soon as may be, consider the proposed development and the report of the Chief Executive under subsection (3).

- (b) Following consideration of the Chief Executive's Report under paragraph (a), the proposed development may be carried out as recommended in the Chief Executive's Report, unless the local authority, by resolution, decides to vary or modify the development, otherwise than as recommended in the Chief Executive's Report, or decides not to proceed with the development.
- (c) A resolution under paragraph (b) must be passed not later than 6 weeks after receipt of the Chief Executive's Report.



Longford County Council PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PART VIII – NO. 129

Re-development of the former Officers Building, Abbeycarton, Longford, Co. Longford, to a multi-purpose community facility, a Protected Structure, situated within the grounds of Sean Connolly Barracks.

Report in Accordance with

Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000

(as amended)

and

Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001

(as Amended)

March 2025

1. INTRODUCTION/ SITE LOCATION

The subject lands are located within the Townland of Abbeycartron and in the development envelope of Longford Town as identified in the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. The application site is situated at the former Sean Connolly Barracks, Longford, Co. Longford and the associated lands to the south west of the existing building.

The former Sean Connolly Barracks is a Protected Structure.

It is appraised and described by the Buildings of Ireland website as:

Description:

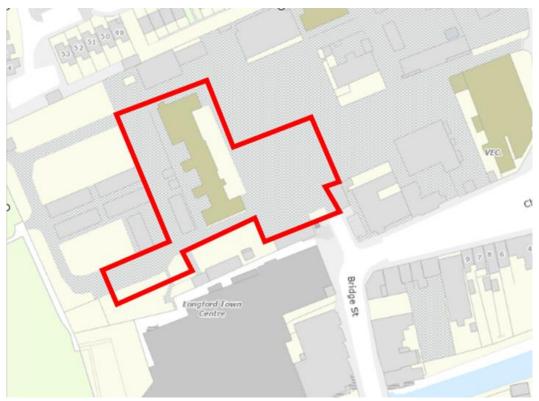
"Detached nineteen-bay barracks on H-shaped plan, built 1815. Originally in use as main military accommodation building and officers' mess. Composed of a central five-bay threestorey block, flanked to either side (north and south) by six-bay two-storey ranges, and with advanced single-bay two-storey gable-fronted end blocks. Two-storey returns and singlestorey extensions to rear (west). Single-storey extension to north elevation. Porch extension to front elevation (east) of south flanking range. Auxiliary buildings to rear (west). Hipped and pitched slate roofs with cast-iron rainwater goods, rendered and dressed coursed limestone chimneystacks. Roughcast rendered walls with rusticated coursed limestone to ground floor to central and advanced end blocks. Dressed limestone plinth and raised dressed limestone quoins. Dressed limestone string courses, sills and sill courses. Squareheaded window openings having timber frame windows with hinged panes. Wyatt windows to front elevation of end blocks at first floor level, now with timber casement windows. Square-headed main entrance opening to centre of main block with replacement glazed timber door, accessed via concrete steps. Situated within the grounds of Sean Connolly Barracks, to the west side of the parade ground and barrack complex, and located to the north of Longford Town centre. Rubble stone boundary wall and complex of single-storey outbuildings to the rear (west)."

Appraisal:

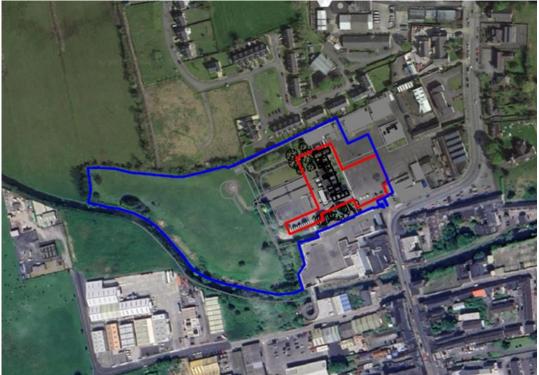
"This monumental, classically-inspired former cavalry barrack building forms the principal element of the Sean Connolly Barrack complex (13008016 – 20). It retains its early character, form, massing and much of its important early fabric. Fine craftsmanship and attention to detailing are evident throughout. It was built to designs by John Behan and was built to provide accommodation for 9 officers and 222 non-commissioned officers and privates. The impressive scale of the building and the repetition of simple, wellproportioned elements create a powerful and striking architectural effect. Its form, with classical proportions, is very typical of the military architecture of the time and similar buildings are to be found at Custume Barracks, Athlone, and at Columb Barracks, Mullingar, dating to the same period. The complex of single-storey outbuildings and the rubble stone boundary wall to the rear complete the setting and add to this fine composition. This building forms the centrepiece of a group of related structures within the Sean Connolly Barracks complex (13008016 - 20) that together represents an important element of the architectural heritage of the area and is of considerable social and historical importance to County Longford. Sean Connolly Barracks is named after Brigadier Sean Connolly, of the Longford Brigade, who was fatally wounded in action in 1921 by British forces during the War of Independence."

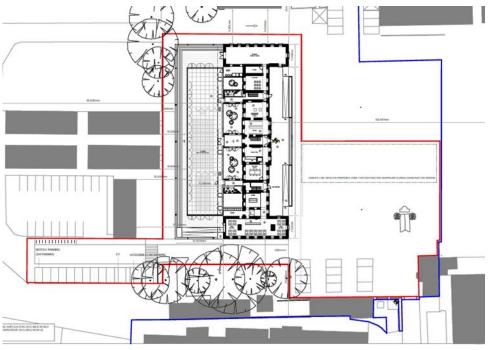


Existing structure former Sean Connolly Barracks



Development site (Above and below)





Proposed Site Layout(above)

2. NATURE AND EXTENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOMENT

The proposed development consists of the following:

 Re-development of the former Officers Building, Abbeycarton, Longford, Co. Longford, to a multi-purpose community facility, a Protected Structure, situated within the grounds of Sean Connolly Barracks.

The proposed development will consist of:

- Refurbishment with internal alterations, external alterations, repairs and upgrades to the Protected Structure (former Officers Building).
- New single storey extension to the rear (west) of the Officers Building.
- Demolition of rear boundary wall and utilitarian buildings to the west of the Officers Building.
- Public realm enhancements comprised of permeable hard landscaping to facilitate universal access.
- Installation of feature lighting to former Officers Building.
- Provision of car parking including accessible parking spaces, EV charging point and bicycle parking.

In addition to the project requirements set out in the Preliminary Project Brief the consultations carried out with the Project Team Partners led to the definition of overall aims and objectives for the development, which can be summarised as follows:

- To repurpose the existing historic building on site, namely the former Officer's Mess for use in support of the creation of multi-use community activities.
- To consider a new-build extension to the existing building to provide for the varying activity needs for the facility as identified through stakeholder consultation.
- To deliver fit-for-purpose spaces to enable the proposed activities.
- To create a new public frontages that gives identity to the new facility as an active and welcoming community-focussed place.
- To enable clear wayfinding for users of the facility and visitors along with universal access to all spaces within the complex.
- To ensure order and appropriate hierarchy to the historic setting so that the retained structures can be appreciated for their quality and historic value.
- To apply conservation principles to the restoration and upgrades of the historic building.
- To de-clutter the site to improve legibility of the historic buildings and setting.
- To develop design strategies and solutions for an energy efficient building to an NZEB standard, using renewables and other low energy strategies.

3. PLANNING CONSIDERATION/ EVALUATION

The site is located within the functional area of Longford County Council and lies within the Designated Development Envelope of Longford town. As such the provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 apply.

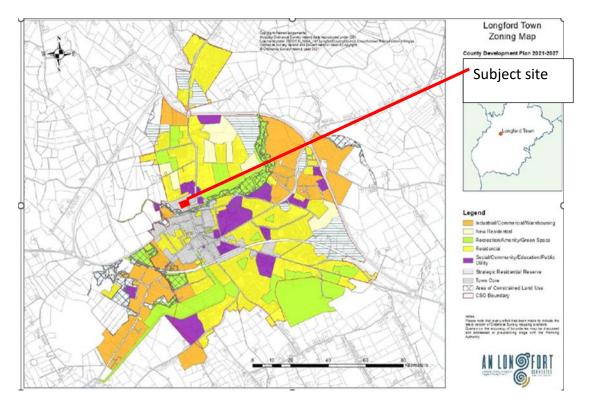


Fig 4 – Longford land zonings

The lands are zoned Town Core -

"To provide for the development and enhancement of town core uses including retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses".

The purpose of this zoning is to protect and enhance the special character of the town centre and to provide for and improve retailing, residential, commercial, cultural and other uses appropriate to the centre of Longford. This zoning provides for the consolidated development and growth of the town centre, allowing for a broad range of compatible and complementary uses which will be encouraged to locate in this area. Development will be expected to contribute to a dynamic, vibrant and pedestrian focused town core with a strong urban design approach. The Council will encourage the appropriate re-use, adaptation and regeneration of buildings, backlands, derelict and obsolete lands including residential development above retail and commercial premises in the town centre.

Development carried out under this zoning should have regard to the mix of uses of the zoning, and, in particular, shall have regard to the retail policy for the County. Developers should be cognisant of the high-profile locations of this zoning and design, wherein siting and materials should be chosen accordingly. All development in this regard will be subject to sequential test.

It is envisioned that much of the proposed retail / commercial development in the town would take place in the existing commercial core, revitalising the centre of Longford and include provision for car parking.

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 Policy Objectives:

<u>Chapter 6 – Regeneration:</u>

CPO.6.15 Support the consolidation of the town centres of Longford, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Ballymahon, Lanesborough and Drumlish and the enhancement and linking of brownfield and outlying sites to the town centres, with a focus on the regeneration of underused buildings and strategic sites.

CPO.6.16 Support the development and regeneration of publicly owned land banks in the 'Key Town' of Longford and the self-sustaining and growth towns of Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Lanesborough and Granard; and Drumlish for residential, employment, education, community, cultural and recreational opportunities, and target the utilisation of available funding where available.

CPO.6.17 Support social inclusion measures including the revitalisation of areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development. In particular attention will be given to deprived areas in the urban areas of Longford Town, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Lanesborough, Ballymahon and Drumlish.

CPO.6.32 Promote the sensitive and adaptive reuse of Protected Structures, historic building stock and industrial structures, where appropriate

CPO 6.71 Connect educational, recreational, employment, civic and town centre economic activity, and in particular improve the relationship between the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall) and the town core.

CPO 6.75 Develop the Camlin Quarter (including Connolly Barracks, Church St. Great Water Street, Little Water Street onto the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall), by enhancing the public realm, investigation of potential land uses, landbank assembly and connectivity improvements.

Chapter 7 – Placemaking:

CPO 7.18 Support investment in town and village centres so that they can become more sustainable places for communities to live, work and enjoy.

CPO 7.26 Work collaboratively with relevant service providers and stakeholders to facilitate the provision of community services and social infrastructure, where appropriate, in order to meet the needs of new and existing communities.

CPO7.29 Encourage shared use and co-location of social and community facilities, in order to align service provision, use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for further inclusion and community participation.

The proposed development is considered to support the Regeneration and Placemaking policy objectives of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the land use zoning objectives of Longford town.

As such it is considered that the proposed development is substantially in keeping with the zoning as outlined in the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

4. PUBLIC/ STATUTORY BODIES CONSULTATION, SUBMISSIONS, REPORTS, ETC.

The proposed works were duly and properly notified as required by Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

The plans and particulars for the proposed re-development of the former Officers Building, Abbeycarton, Longford, Co. Longford, to a multi-purpose community facility, a Protected Structure, situated within the grounds of Sean Connolly Barracks.; were made available for public inspection at the offices of Longford County Council, Áras an Chontae, Great Water Street, Longford and during official public opening hours, excluding weekends and bank holidays, and online from Friday 31st of January 2025 up to and including Monday 03rd of March 2025.

Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the development would be situated, were invited to be made in writing to the Planning Section, Longford County Council, Áras an Chontae, Great Water Street, Longford, Co. Longford to arrive not later than 4pm on Wednesday the 18th of March 2025.

4.1 Submissions:

4 no. submissions were received during the consultation timeframe:

- 1. HSA no objections to forward in relation to the proposed development.
- 2. Uisce Eireann No objection in principle
- HSE Outlining requirements to be incorporated into the proposed development where necessary.
- Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage Outlining conditions to be attached.

4.2 Internal Reports

No reports received.

5. APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The proposed development was the subject of a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening, a report was undertaken by Greentrack Environmental Consultants in which it has identified potential source-pathway-receptor links to the following Natura 2000

sites:

- Lough Forbes Complex SAC
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA

Site Name & Code	Qis/SCIs	Source-Pathway Receptors (SPR) Chain	Consider further Screening
Lough Forbes Complex SAC 001818 4.5km west	 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition type vegetation [3150] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, 	• Potential hydrological link to the SAC through surface water drainage from the site directed to the Camlin River via the public stormwater system, and potential throughflow and shallow groundwater flow from the site to the Camlin River. The approximate hydrological distance	Yes

	Salicion albae) [91E0]	from the site to the SAC is 5.68 km.	
Ballykenny – Fisherstown Bog SPA 004101 4.5km west	Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) [A395]	Outside known core ranges of SCI's Potential hydrological link to the SPA through surface water drainage from the site directed to the Camlin River via the public stormwater system,) and potential throughflow and shallow groundwater flow from the site to the Camlin River. The approximate hydrological distance from the site to the SPA is 5.68 km.	Yes

The AA Report undertook an Impact Assessment of the proposed development on the two identified Natura 2000 sites above. This concluded that "The proposed project as detailed, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have no significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites. The proposed development as described will not alter the structure or function of any Natura 2000 site or negatively impact the conservation of any qualifying interest/ special conservation interest therein. This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Greentrack Consultants with all reasonable care, due diligence, and professional application. Greentrack have also sought to implement the best current scientific knowledge on the potential effects this proposal will have on the Natura 2000 network."

Therefore, on the basis of the detailed report and the assessment undertaken by the Planning Authority and given the nature and extent of the proposed development, as well as its location, it is not considered that the development would result in any significant impacts on the Natura 2000 network.

Having reviewed the qualifying interests (habitats and species related interests) of the Natura 2000 sites closest to the proposed development, it is considered that there are no likely adverse impacts arising from the proposed development on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. Accordingly, it is considered that there is no requirement to progress to a full Appropriate Assessment in this case.

6. EIA SCREENING

It is considered that the proposed development is not a development type listed under Part 1 or 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations (PDR) 2001 (as amended) nor is it considered a sub-threshold development for the purposes of Schedule 7 PDR 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.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Having regard to the above-mentioned planning considerations and to the submissions and observations received, it is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and that the proposals align with the policy objectives and the development management standards of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. It is therefore recommended that the proposed development now be proceeded with, subject to all additional requirements indicated in the HSE and the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage submissions being included in the proposed development.

Any layout alterations as a result of these additional requirements shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for file purposes.

Date : 19/03/2025

Rita Connaughton Senior Planner

AA Screening Form

	STEP 1. Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics:		
(a)	File Reference No:	Part 8 No.129	
(b)	Brief description of the project or plan:	Permission for the Re-development of the former Officers Building, to a multi-purpose community facility,	
(c)	Brief description of site characteristics:	Abbeycartron, Co. Longford	
(d)	Relevant prescribed bodies consulted: e.g. DHLGH (NPWS), EPA, OPW	None	
(e)	Response to consultation:	NA	

STEP 2. Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information on Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives.

European Site (code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest ¹	Distance from proposed development ² (km)	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Lough Forbes Complex (001818)	https://www.npws.ie/protected- sites/sac/(001818)	4.5km	None	Ν
Derragh Ballykenny- Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101)	https://www.npws.ie/protected- sites/sac/(004101)	5km	None	Ν

¹ Short paraphrasing and/or cross reference to NPWS is acceptable – it is not necessary to reproduce the full text on the QI/SCI.

² If the site or part thereof is within the European site or adjacent to the European site, state here.

STEP 3. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects		
(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project under the following headings:		
Impacts:	Possible Significance of Impacts: (duration/magnitude etc.)	
Construction phase e.g. Vegetation clearance 	NA	

 Demolition Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping (including borrow pits) Dust, noise, vibration Lighting disturbance Impact on groundwater/dewatering Storage of excavated/construction materials Access to site Pests 	
 Operational phase e.g. Direct emission to air and water Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment Lighting disturbance Noise/vibration Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction Presence of people, vehicles and activities Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks) Potential for accidents or incidents 	NA
In-combination/Other	NA

(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:		
Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include:	NA	
Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area		
Disturbance to QI species		
Habitat or species fragmentation		
Reduction or fragmentation in species density		
Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water or air quality etc.)		
Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI		
 Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site 		

(c)	Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects
	can be ruled out at screening?

🗌 Yes 🗌 No

No

Step 4. Screening Determination Statement

The assessment of significance of effects:

Describe how the proposed development (alone or in-combination) is/is **not likely** to have **significant** effects on European site(s) in view of its conservation objectives.

Given the nature and scale of the development proposed, and given that there is no direct hydrological link to a Natura 2000 site, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects on the Natura 2000 network arising from the proposed works either alone or in combination with other plans and/or projects by way of a loss fragmentation, disruption, disturbance to habitats, species or habitats of species that are of conservation interest.

Conclusion: Tick as **Recommendation: Appropriate:** (i) It is clear that there is no Х The proposal can be screened out: likelihood of significant effects on Appropriate assessment not required. a European site. (ii) It is uncertain whether the Request further information to complete proposal will have a significant screening effect on a European site. Request NIS Refuse planning permission (iii) Significant effects are likely. Request NIS Refuse planning permission Signature and Date of **Rita Connaughton Senior Planner Recommending Officer:** 19/03/25

EIA Screening Form

Form 1

EIA Pre-Screening Establishing a development is a 'sub-threshold development':			
Planning Reference:	Part 8 No.129	ia development.	
Development Summary:	evelopment Permission for the Re-development of the former Officers Building, to a		
Was a Screening Determination carried out under Section 176A-C?	 □ Yes, no further action required ✓ No, Proceed to Part A 		
A. Schedule 5 Part 1 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 1 , of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)? (Tick as appropriate)			
□ Yes, specify class _		EIA is mandatory	
		No Screening required	
✓ No		Proceed to Part B	
B. Schedule 5 Part 2 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 , of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and does it meet/exceed the thresholds? (Tick as appropriate)			
✓ No, the development is not a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 No Screening required			
□ Yes the project is listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 and meets/exceeds		EIA is mandatory	
the threshold, specify class (including threshold): [specify class & threshold here]		No Screening required	
□ Yes the project is of a type listed but is <i>sub-threshold</i> :		Proceed to Part C	
[insert here]			
C. If Yes, has Schedule 7A information/screening report been submitted?			
Yes, Schedule 7A ir submitted by the ap	formation/screening report has been plicant	Screening Determination required	
No, Schedule 7A inf submitted by the ap	ormation/screening report has not been plicant	Preliminary Examination required	

APPENDIX 2 -Site Photographs





