

Application Ref: 25/60825

Applicant: Thomas O'Rourke

Development: Construct 3 no. residential units etc

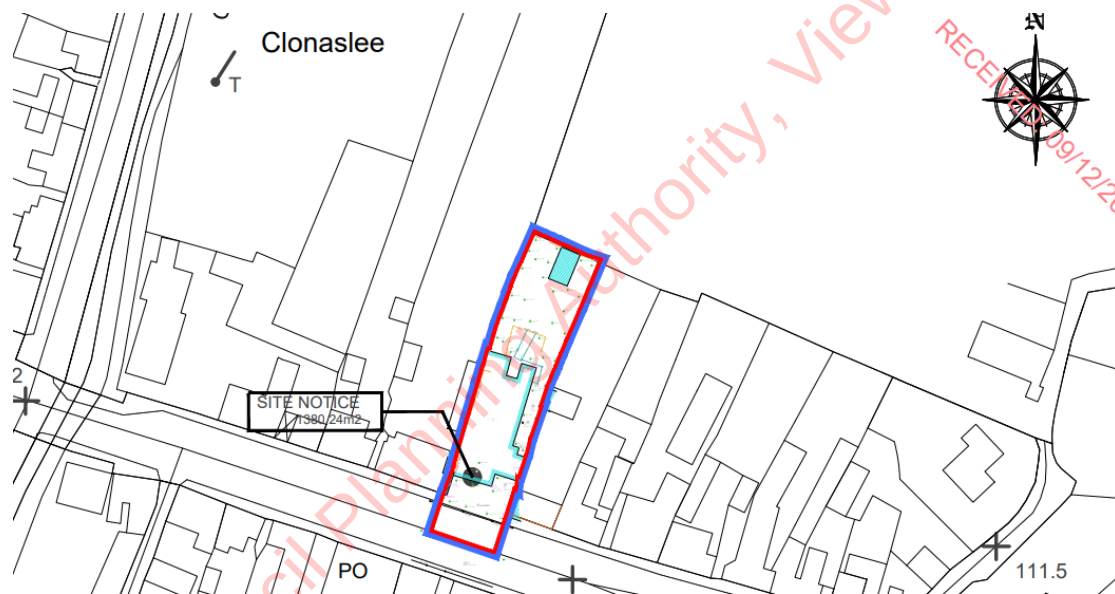
Location: Clonaslee Inn, Main Street, Clonaslee, County Laois

Due Date: 11/02/26

Recommendation: *further information request*

Site Location and Development Description

This is an application for permission for redevelopment of a commercial and residential property on the main street in Clonaslee town centre.



There are two main aspects to the proposed development which is located on a 0.131 hectares elongated brownfield site.

Firstly, it is proposed to demolish the in-situ terraced, two-storey public house "Clonaslee Inn" and associated residential accommodation and out-buildings. These are currently vacant.

Secondly, it is proposed to construct 3 no. dwelling houses in their place.

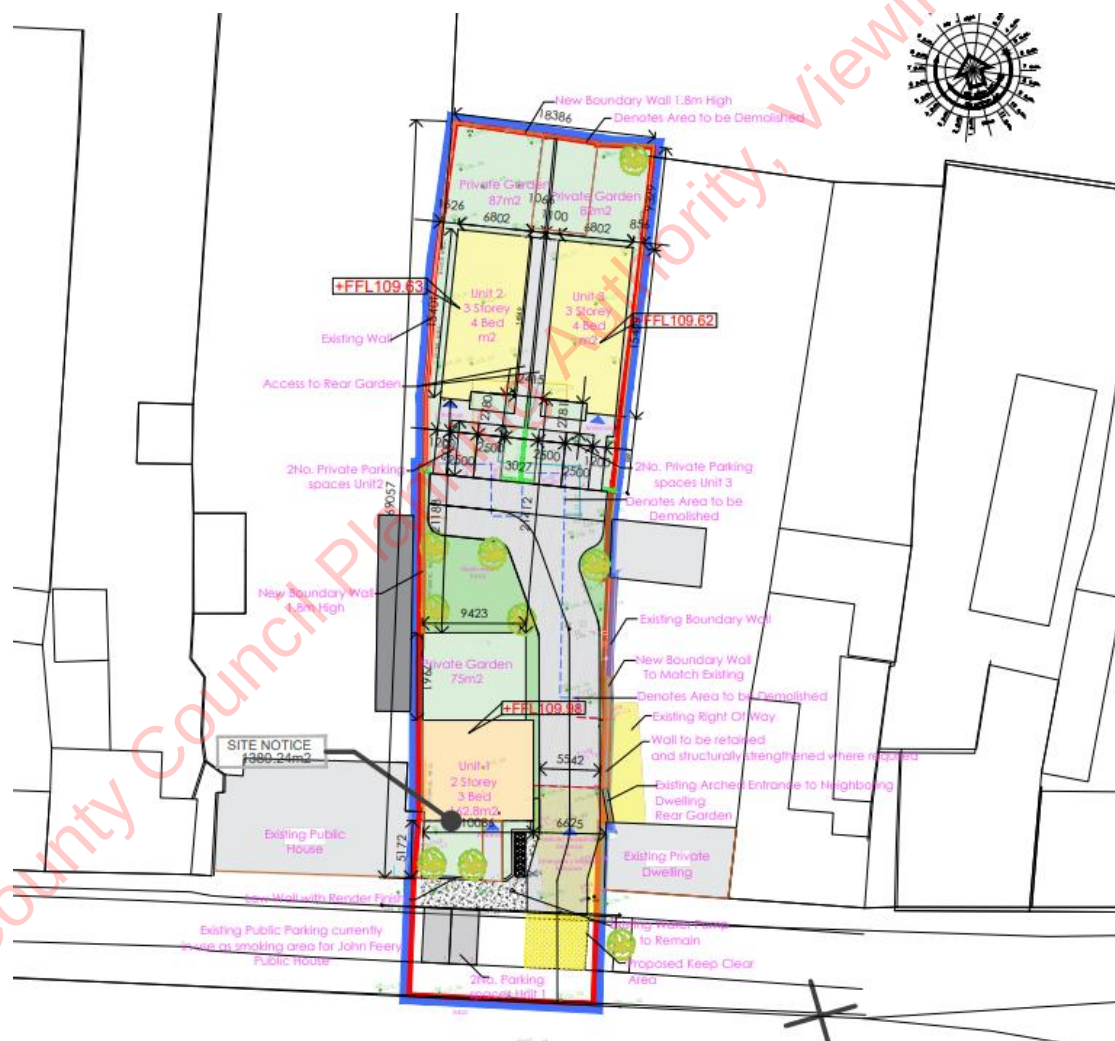
Ancillary works including provision of internal access to the rear curtilage, private and private open space, foul and surface water drainage infrastructure, off-street parking and boundary treatment are also proposed.

While the in-situ buildings earmarked for demolition are not protected structures in themselves, the overall site is within the confines of the Clonaslee Architectural Conservation Area as outlined in Appendix 6 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

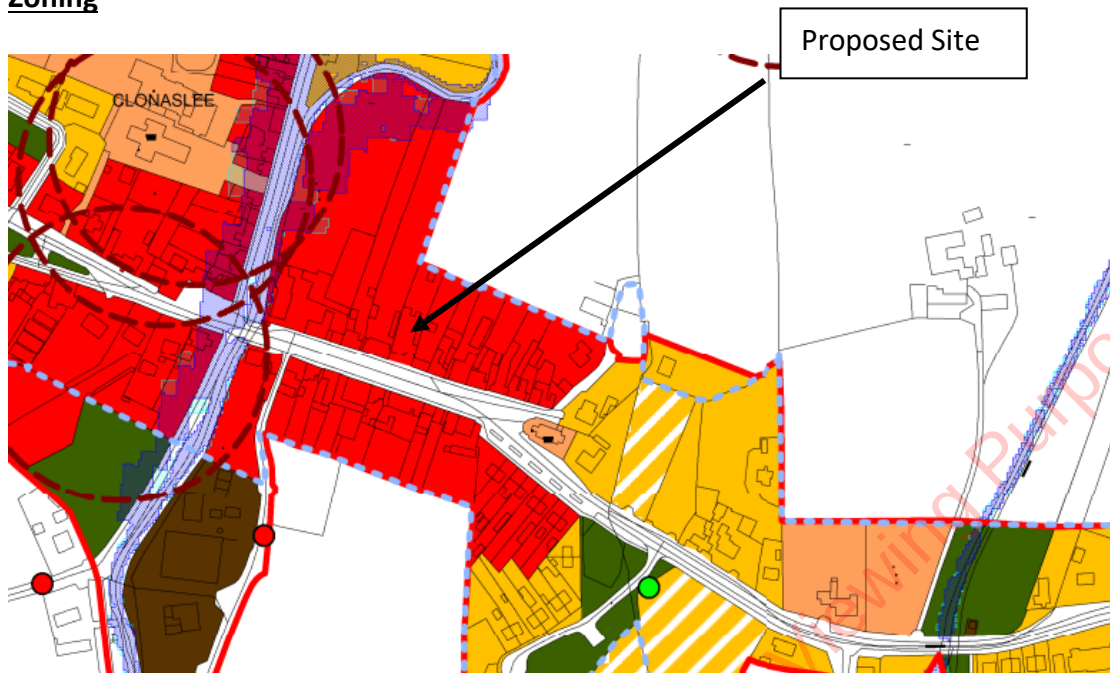
As expected for a town centre location, there is a wide range of adjoining land-uses including commercial and residential. A number of these properties are also vacant. Agricultural lands adjoin to the rear [north].

A public footpath and public lighting front the site on its southern side.

I was unable to gain access to the site on the day I called to inspect it.



Zoning



The development site is zoned “Town Centre” in the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

- *Objective*

To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of the existing town centre and to provide for and improve retailing and commercial activities.

- *Purpose*

The purpose of this zoning is to enhance the vitality and viability of town and village centres through the development of under-utilised land and brownfield sites and by encouraging a mix of uses to make the town and village centres an attractive place to visit, shop and live in. The character of the town and village centres shall be protected and enhanced. The Council will encourage the full use of buildings and backlands; in particular, the full use of upper floors in buildings, preferably for residential use.

In the land-use matrix of the Plan, dwellings are deemed to be *open for consideration acceptable* in such a zoning designation.

Land uses that are listed as ‘open for consideration’ may be acceptable to the Planning Authority subject to detailed assessment against the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, and the relevant policies, objectives and

standards set out in this Plan. Such uses may only be permitted where they do not materially conflict with other aspects of the County Development Plan.

Flood Risk

The development site is outside the confines of the critical Flood Zones A and B as indicated in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Natura 2000 Sites

The development site is not in or immediately adjacent to any Natura 2000 site.

The nearest such site is the Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA [site code 4160] which is c. 750 metres due south-west.

Having regard to the distance factor, the topography, the availability of foul drainage infrastructure, and the absence of a directly connecting water course, no materially negative impacts on the SPA arising from the proposed development are anticipated.

EIAR

The proposed development is not of a scale to warrant EIA.

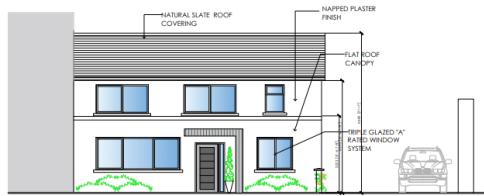
Building Type

3 no. dwellings are proposed, presented in a variety of different house types as follows:

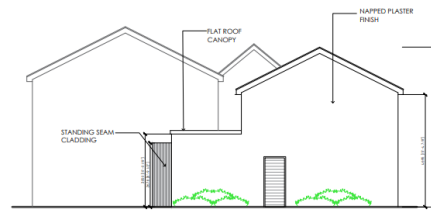
- **house type 1** of which 1 no. is proposed is a 3-bed semi-detached two-storey unit with a floor area of 142 square metres,
- **house type 2** of which 1 no. is proposed is a 4-bed detached three-storey unit with a floor area of 185 square metres,
- **house type 3** of which 1 no. is proposed is a 4-bed detached three-storey unit with a floor area of 185 square metres,

Building heights range from 6.6 metres for unit no. 1 to 9.5 metres for units nos. 2 & 3, roof pitches are 30 degrees and external facades are finished in render with minor cladding.

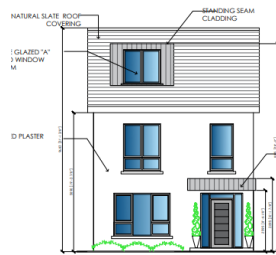
The buildings to be demolished are considerably recessed from the street line. Proposed house no.1 will have a similar recess with nos. 2 & 3 in the rear curtilage.



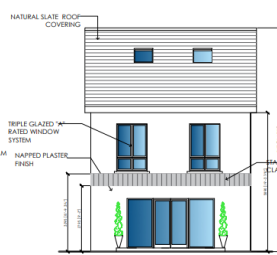
PROPOSED UNIT 1-FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED UNIT 1-SIDE ELEVATION



PROPOSED UNIT 3-FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED UNIT 3-REAR ELEVATION



PROPOSED UNIT 3-SIDE ELEVATION

Examples of house types



Premises to be demolished

Part V

The proposed development comprising 3 no. replacement dwellings is exempt from this provision.

Density

The density of the proposed development is 23 units per hectare. This is the gross density figure; the net density would be higher.

In the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoHLGH, 2024*, in relation to recommended density for Rural Towns or Villages [such as Clonaslee] with a population size of < 1,500, it is stated in Table 3.7 as follows.

Rural Town or Village

Rural Towns and Villages are small in scale with limited infrastructure and services provision. It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that development in rural towns and villages is tailored to the scale, form and character of the settlement and the capacity of services and infrastructure (including public transport and water services infrastructure). Lands zoned for housing at the edge of rural towns and villages at locations that can be integrated into the settlement and are connected to existing walking and cycling networks can offer an effective alternative, including serviced sites, to the provision of single houses in the countryside. The density of development at such locations should respond in a positive way to the established context.

Open Space

Public Open Space

According to DM HS 6 “Development Management Standards for Residential Development” of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023, *a 3-4 bed unit [house] shall have a minimum provision of 75 square metres of private open space.*

This is met in all cases.

DMO6 also advises that *in general, a minimum distance of 22m should be achieved between opposing first floor windows at the rear of dwellings. The Council will only consider exceptions to the standards in exceptional circumstances where an otherwise high quality design solution is proposed, which has full regard to the characteristics and context of the site. Discretion of this standard will be dependent on-site layout characteristics and flexibility may be employed where performance-based criteria can be adequately demonstrated. (For example, where a side garden of equal or greater dimensions can be substituted for rear garden space and where a situation of overlooking is demonstrably avoided).*

However, **SPPR 1** of the Guidelines recommends a separation distance of at least 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses, duplex units and apartment units, above ground floor level shall be maintained.

Public Open Space

According to the site layout plan, 91 square metres or 7% of the curtilage of the development site is devoted to public open space. This is below the minimum Plan standard of 10% of the site area.

Undoubtedly It would be preferable to have a larger public open space area. On the other hand however, this is a minor residential scheme and the subject site is within easy access of local amenities.

Drainage

1. Foul drainage will be discharged to the public network.
2. Surface water will be discharged to the public network following on-site attenuation.
3. Potable water will be sourced from the public network.

There is no evidence of applicant having made a Pre-Connection Enquiry to Uisce Eireann.

Access & Parking

Site access is onto the Strategic Regional Route R422 within the town speed limits.

A short internal access road is proposed to access the two rear properties. Each property will have 2 no. off-street parking spaces.

Reports

Received from:

Internal

- Municipal District: no objection.
- Road Design Section: seeks further information in relation to surface water drainage, turning facilities, safety audit, layout, electric vehicle charging points.
- Environment Section: seeks further information in relation to presence or absence of asbestos.

External

- None received.

Planning History

PI Ref 13/15: application for permission to convert ground floor of the licensed premises to a retail outlet.

Permission was granted by Laois County Council to applicant Jack Wallace.

Objections

A third party objection to the proposed development have been made to the Planning Authority. Issues raised by the third parties include in relation to privacy and residential amenity.

Pre-planning

According to Q. 19 of the application form, a pre-planning meeting was held on 25th April 2024. It was attended by agent and acting Senior Executive Planner.

Assessment

The principle of the proposed development is fully acceptable to the Planning Authority.

Nonetheless, a number of issues have arisen in the course of my assessment including in relation to the potential impact on the ACA, the content of the Road Design report, engagement if any with Uisce Eireann and the third party concerns.

These need to be addressed through a further information request.

Recommendation

I recommend that *further information* be requested as follows:

Clonaslee Architectural Conservation Area

1. While the in-situ buildings earmarked for demolition are not protected structures in themselves, the overall site is within the confines of the Clonaslee Architectural Conservation Area as outlined in Appendix 2 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

In this regard, applicant is requested to submit a detailed Architectural Impact Assessment of the proposed development which involves substantial demolition works and the creation of a backland residential element. The assessment shall be prepared by a suitably qualified person.

Plans

2. [a] Submit a contiguous elevation to an appropriate scale of the existing development and the streetscape to the east and west.

[b] Submit a contiguous elevation to an appropriate scale of the proposed development and the streetscape to the east and west.

[c] Submit a contiguous elevation to an appropriate scale extending north-south of the proposed development comprising the 3 no. proposed units and the nearest adjoining structures to the east and west.

[d] Is the front building line of proposed unit no.1 the same as that of the existing premises to be demolished. Submit relevant details.

Road Safety Audit

3. The applicant shall prepare and submit a road safety audit stage 1&2 for the proposed development.

Any recommendation made in the Road Safety Audit report [to be carried out by a suitably qualified person] shall be included in updated/revised plans and particulars that are returned in the Further Information response.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

4. The applicant has not submitted any information regarding EV points; therefore, the developer is requested to submit the following:

The developer shall submit a revised site layout plan clearly indicating 10% of all car parking spaces with functioning electric vehicle charging stations/ points, the applicant shall also clearly indicate ducting for all remaining car parking spaces facilitating the installation of electric vehicle charging point/ stations.

Road Safety

5. The site access is onto the R-422, a Strategic Regional Road at the site frontage.

Sight distance requirements for this status of road are 2.4 x 50 metres at the location of the site entrance. In this regard you are requested to:

[a] submit a revised 1:500 site layout plan, annotated photographic and topographic survey clearly showing sight distances of 50 metres achievable given the front boundary is stepped back from the metalled edge of the road. The layout plan and survey shall be in strict accordance with Laois County Council document Roads and Traffic Standards, section 2.1. The existing road carriageway, the existing front boundary at the subject site and at the adjoining lands to the east and west shall be clearly indicated. The sight distances shall be measured from a point 2.4 metres in

from the metalled edge of the road to the edge of the carriageway at the outer point of the sight distances. The sight distance should be taken to the nearside edge of the road.

[b] You are advised that at the proposed entrance the driver joining the road or turning right into the entrance shall be able to have full unobstructed vision along the required sight line distance. The line of vision must, without exception, lie within the curtilage of the site and the public road. The driver must be able to have full vision along the required sight line distance of 50 metres from a driver's eye height of 1.05m to an object height of 1.15m.

[c] In the event of works to achieve the required sight distances involving works to property not in your ownership or under your control, the written consents of the relevant third parties are required to be submitted.

Autotrack

6. The applicant shall carry out and submit a swept path analysis for a fire truck accessing the development showing that it can safely manoeuvre the site without having to make long reversing movements.

Surface water disposal

7. Within the hydraulic calculations no allowance for urban creep has been made.

The applicant shall revise calculations to include a 10% uplift for urban creep. Should any amendments be required to soakpits/bioretention areas, they shall be submitted within the revised design.

Road Safety Audit

8. The applicant shall carry out and submit a road safety audit stage 1&2 for the proposed development. Any recommendation made in the Road Safety Audit report shall be included in updated/revised plans (drawings) and particulars that are returned in the Further Information response.

Third Party

9. A third-party objection to the proposed development have made to the Planning Authority.

Issues raised by the third parties include in relation to privacy and residential amenity.

Submit your comments and proposals in respect of the issues raised by the third parties.

Waste

10. The applicant shall advise if there is any asbestos roofing or piping on any of the buildings that are proposed to be demolished and also submit details of any other hazardous waste that may be on the site.

Uisce Eireann

11. Has applicant made a Pre-Connection Enquiry in respect of the proposed development to Uisce Eireann.

Submit relevant details.

Site Inspection

12. A site inspection was not possible as the site was inaccessible on the day an officer of the Planning Authority called. Therefore, it was not possible to fully assess the potential impacts of the proposed development.

Accordingly, please advise the Planning Authority in writing of a time and date at which the site will be accessible.

Following on from the inspection, the Planning Authority may revisit certain aspects of the proposed development not specifically raised above.

Application deferred etc.

Dónal Kiely

Senior Executive Planner, 11/02/2026

Agreed
DJ O'Hara
Senior Planner

11/02/26

APPENDIX A:

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND LOCAL SITE

Proposed Development

This is an application for permission for redevelopment of a vacant commercial and residential property in Clonaslee town centre.

Site Location

The site is in an urban location at Main Street in Clonaslee town centre.

Site Size

The site area is 0.131 hectares.

Floor area of proposed development

512 square metres.

Identification of nearby Natura 2000 site(s)

There are no Natura 2000 sites at or in close proximity to the development site.

The nearest such site is the Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA [site code 4160] which is c. 750 metres due south-west.

Having regard to the distance factor, the topography, the availability of foul drainage infrastructure, and the absence of a directly connecting water course, no materially negative impacts on the SPA arising from the proposed development are anticipated.

The characteristics of existing, proposed or other approved projects which may cause interactive/cumulative impacts with the project being assessed and which may affect the Natura 2000 site

None.

Is the application accompanied by a NIS?

No.

B. IDENTIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITE(S)

The reasons for the designation of the Natura 2000 site

A site synopsis is attached to this report (sourced on www.npws.ie).

The conservation objectives/qualifying interests of the site and the factors that contributes to the conservation value of the site

A site synopsis is attached to this report (sourced on www.npws.ie).

C. NPWS ADVICE

Summary of advice received from NPWS in written form

None received.

D. ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

(Purpose of this is to identify if the effect(s) identified could be significant – if uncertain assume the effect(s) are significant).

If answer yes to any of the questions, below then the effect is significant.

Would there be any impact on an Annex 1 habitat? (Annex 1 habitats are listed in Appendix 1 of AA Guidance)

No. The development is not located within or close to a Natura 2000 site.

Would there be a reduction in habitat area on a Natura 2000 site?

No. The development is not located within or close to a Natura 2000 site.

Would there be direct/indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality and supply, soil compaction) in the Natura 2000 site?

No. There is a very low level of potential for connectivity of the development site with sites designated for environmental protection.

Would there be serious/ongoing disturbance to species/habitats for which the Natura 2000 site is selected (e.g. because of increased noise, illumination and human activity)?

No. There is a very low level of potential for connectivity of the development site with sites designated for environmental protection.

Would there be direct/indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the Natura 2000 site?

No. The development is not located within or close to a Natura 2000 site and there is a very low level of potential for connectivity of the development site with sites designated for environmental protection.

Would the project interfere with mitigation measures put in place for other plans/projects. (Look at in-combination effects with completed, approved but not completed, and proposed plans/projects. Look at projects/plans within and adjacent to Natura 2000 sites and identify them).

No.

E. SCREENING CONCLUSION

Taking account of the following:

[i] the distance between the development site and the nearest Natura 2000 sites,

[ii] the nature and extent of the proposed development and of the site curtilage including the very low level of potential for connectivity of the development site with water bodies or with sites designated for environmental protection,

[iii] the characteristics of the conservation objectives involved,

[iv] the availability of drainage infrastructure and

[v] best scientific knowledge,

it can be concluded with reasonable certainty that the development in itself, or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 sites network and therefore an appropriate assessment is not required.

Donal Kiely, SEP, 11th February 2026

Laois County Council Planning Authority, Viewing Purposes Only