
Planning Report

Change of Use Application

Mattie
Windmillhill
Rathcoole
Co. Dublin
D24 T267

January 2022



1.0 Introduction

This planning report has been prepared for Paula and Barry Egan to accompany a planning application to South Dublin County Council for development at Mattie, Windmillhill, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin. The proposed application, as per the description contained within the statutory planning notices, provides for:

- a. *change of use of existing unused horse stables (151.34 sq.m) to a two-bedroom, single-storey, detached private annex dwelling to the main house on the same site. The new dwelling will be used by members of the same family and be served by existing access and car parking at the main house. No changes to the footprint of the existing building are proposed.*
- b. *Permission is also sought for associated landscaping, foul and surface water drainage and all associated works necessary to facilitate development.*

This planning report sets out the standard of the proposal in reference to the requirements laid out in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022 and other policy documents and relevant standards of the planning authority. It aims to show evidence that the proposal is in accordance with appropriate guidelines and therefore demonstrating planning permission should be granted accordingly.

2.0 Site Description

The proposed development is located within the curtilage of land at Mattie, Windmillhill, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, D24 T267. The entire site comprises approximately 26,264 sq.m. (2.6264 hectares) of land containing the main house, a garage, and grassland used for small scale vegetable farming and cow grazing. Vehicular access is provided by a recessed gateway on Windmillhill and a driveway leading to a garage and a tarmacked outdoor square

The planning application is for the change of use of an existing structure to the south-east of the site. The structure was previously used as a six-stall horse stable and tack room (151.34 sq. m), but is currently unused and vacant. The proposal is to retain the existing structure and develop the underutilised building into a two-bedroom dwelling. The property owners, Paula and Barry Egan, have resided on the site for over 10 years and live in the main house on the property with their sons. Paula Egan owns a local business and contributes to the local economy by providing employment to over 20 people in the area through her accounting company, Comprehensive Business Services Ltd. trading as Finance Services. The impetus to convert the stable building into a dwelling is to provide an independent home for the property owner's child and his partner, who will be supporting them in maintaining the land as they grow older.



Figure 1.0 Aerial photo showing the full site (outlined in red) and the existing horse stables to be developed (outlined in blue)



Figure 2.0 Wider context aerial photo showing site (outlined in red) and connections to the main roads and nearby built up areas.

The site is located in a rural area just off the N7 road (Naas Road) on the Kildare border. It is primarily accessible by car with the N7 providing quick access to the city centre or to Naas. Rathcoole is approximately 3km away from the site and Saggart is approximately 6km through Windmillhill. Public transport can be accessed via

Dublin bus at Rathcoole, or the Saggart Luas stop. The site and surrounding lands are typical of rural developments near a village.



Figure 3.0 View from Windmillhill approaching from N7 junction with the site on the right.



Figure 4.0 View over the boundary wall on Windmillhill showing the view towards the main house and existing stables building. The stable building is not visible from this road.



Figure 5.0 Gates at the entrance to the site stepped back from Windmillhill.



Figure 6.0 View towards the main house and existing stables building from the main gates at the site. The stable building is not visible from the entrance gate.



Figure 7.0 The front of the existing stables structure (right) and adjacent barn structure (left) viewed from the North.



Figure 8.0 The rear of the existing stables structure, viewed from the South-West.

3.0 Proposed Development

The planning application seeks permission for a change of use of a currently unused six-stable structure (151.34 sq. m) and tack room into a detached private annex dwelling. No change to the footprint of the building is proposed. The existing structure has been used as a storage space since the property was acquired although originally built as horse stables. Some internal dividing walls will be demolished and new window openings, doors, and skylights are proposed on the exterior of the building in order to provide adequate daylighting. These changes are specified in the drawings accompanying this report. The tin roof and steel sliding doors will be maintained and refurbished in order to maintain a rural aesthetic. The facade of the building will be repaired and replastered as necessary. New gutters will be provided in order to formalise roof run off to the soakaway. This is further outlined in the engineers report accompanying this planning application.

As seen in Figure 14.0 and associated planning drawings, the interior plan involves minimal changes and alterations to the current layout of the stables. The dwelling will be internally insulated. The dwelling consists of an open hallway, kitchen, dining and living area (71.7 sq.m), study (14 sq.m), main bedroom (14 sq.m) with ensuite (5.6 sq.m), a bathroom (8.6 sq.m), guest bedroom (14 sq.m), and pantry/boot room (8.9 sq.m). These plans meet the targets and standards set out in the Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Guidelines, DEHLC (2007) including the Minimum Space Standards for Houses.

The applicants are environmentally conscious and minimal impact on the surrounding biodiversity is a high priority. The application will not need to alter surrounding trees and arboriculture around the border of the building or its immediate vicinity. There is a significant volume of trees, shrubs and other flora and they will not be affected or removed.

Access to the dwelling will be provided by the existing driveway leading to the main house on the site. There are car parking spaces in the garage adjacent to the main house for 4 cars, and outdoor parking on the tarmacked square for a further 6 cars. There are 4 more car parking spaces at the roundabout in front of the main house. This is more than sufficient car parking spaces to service both the main house and proposed dwelling. As the family member intending to move into the proposed development, is currently living in the main house, we can be assured new traffic and transport concerns will not arise. There will be no impact to the main road as the planning application does not make any changes to the current entrance and driveway. The structure cannot be viewed from the main road as seen in Figure 4.0.

This application is seeking permission for associated landscaping, foul and surface water drainage and all associated works necessary to facilitate development. The drainage and percolation is currently in place and in full working order as outlined by Mr. Gordon White, Civil Engineer in the engineer's report submitted as part of

the planning application. The existing septic tank is in operation and performing well. The proposed development will include a new connection to the existing septic tank. The converted stable will serve as a private annex to the existing house, and the overall property will remain in single ownership. The new accommodation will be used by members of the same family as the main house so it is considered reasonable that both buildings be served by the same septic tank.

The property has an independent well which supplies the main house and stables, the well has recently been upgraded and there is an existing running water supply from the well to the stables.

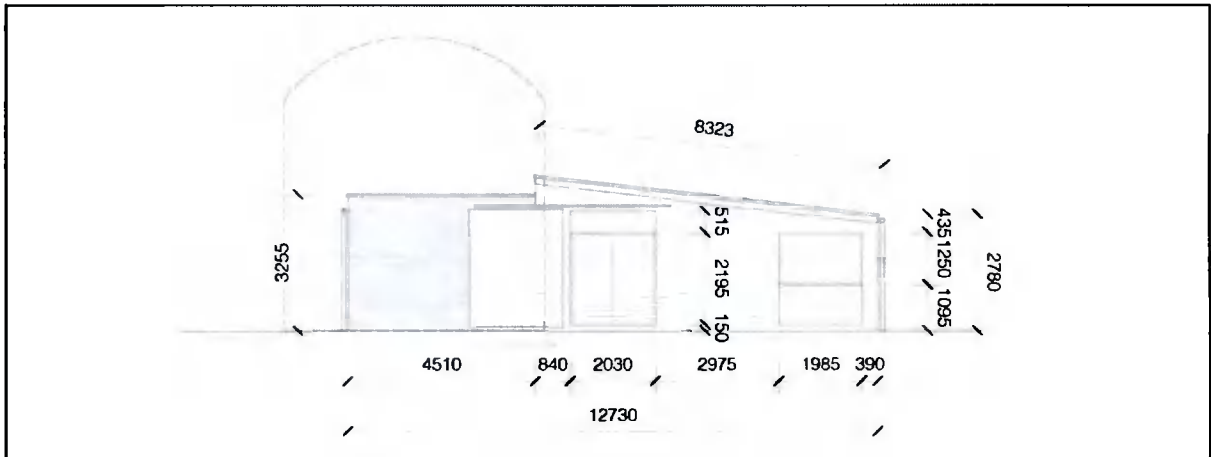


Figure 9.0 North-East elevation of proposed development.

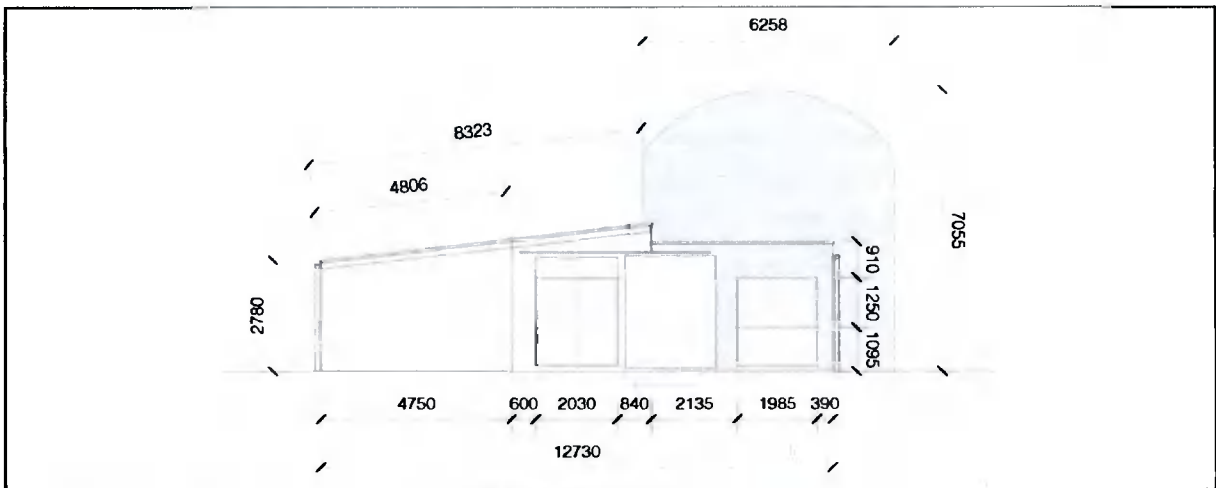


Figure 10.0 South-East elevation of proposed development.

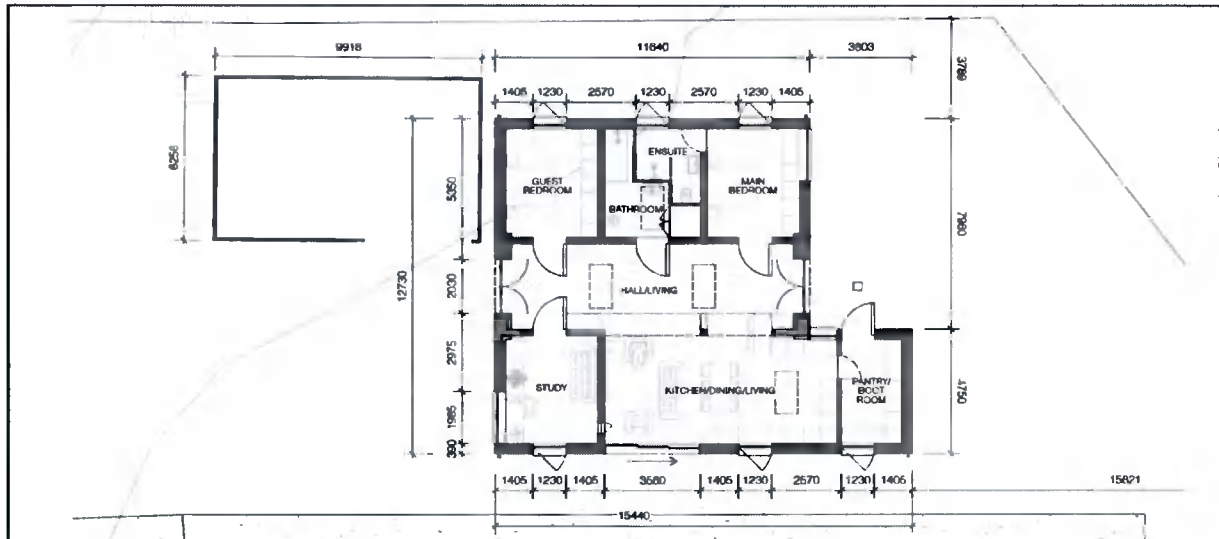


Figure 14.0 Ground floor plan of proposed development.

3.1 Proposed Materials

The existing facade materials of the building are to be retained and refurbished where possible. The sections of facade in brick are to be cleaned as there is no significant damage. The plaster render on the rest of the building will be redone to bring it to a high quality finish. The existing tin roof will be similarly retained and repaired where necessary. The windows, doors and skylights will be of high quality to ensure minimal heat loss and benefit from a low U-value. The steel sliding doors at either end of the building will also be maintained. The proposed works are to retain the existing aesthetics while improving the quality of finish in line with standards for residential buildings.

4.0 Planning History

4.1 Subject Site Planning History

A review of the South Dublin County planning register revealed no planning history for the subject site.

4.2 Relevant Local Planning Precedents

A review of the South Dublin County planning register revealed the following planning applications readily available that relate to sites within the surrounding area, including proposals involving a similar type of development:

Example 1: Tay Lane, Greenogue, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin

Reg. Ref. SD20A/0279 Permission granted by South Dublin County Council on 09th February 2021 for the construction of a single storey, three bedroom dwelling house, and access road including the demolition of an existing stables.

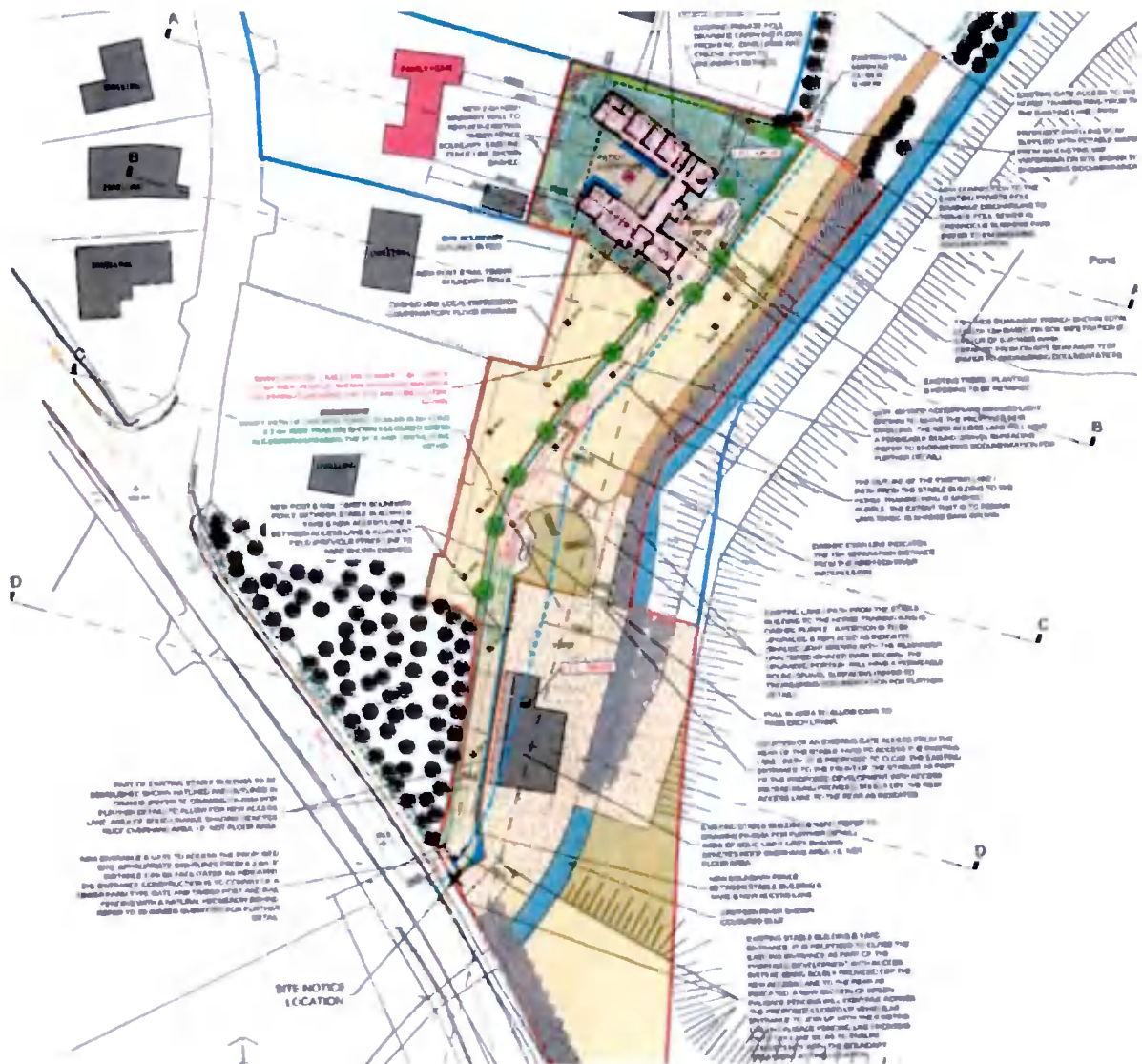


Figure 15.0 Site layout of granted development Reg. Ref. SD20A/0279

The development was granted permission with 17 no. conditions. The applicant had provided evidence of ties to a local business as well as with the local village. The application sought to develop a single storey home on the land of their father in order to continue to contribute to the local rural community by living independently

Example 2: Redgap, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin

Reg. Ref. SD05A/0755 Permission granted by South Dublin County Council on 06th November 2006 for the construction of a new bungalow, garage and bio waste water treatment system together with the upgrading of existing farm gate as entrance.

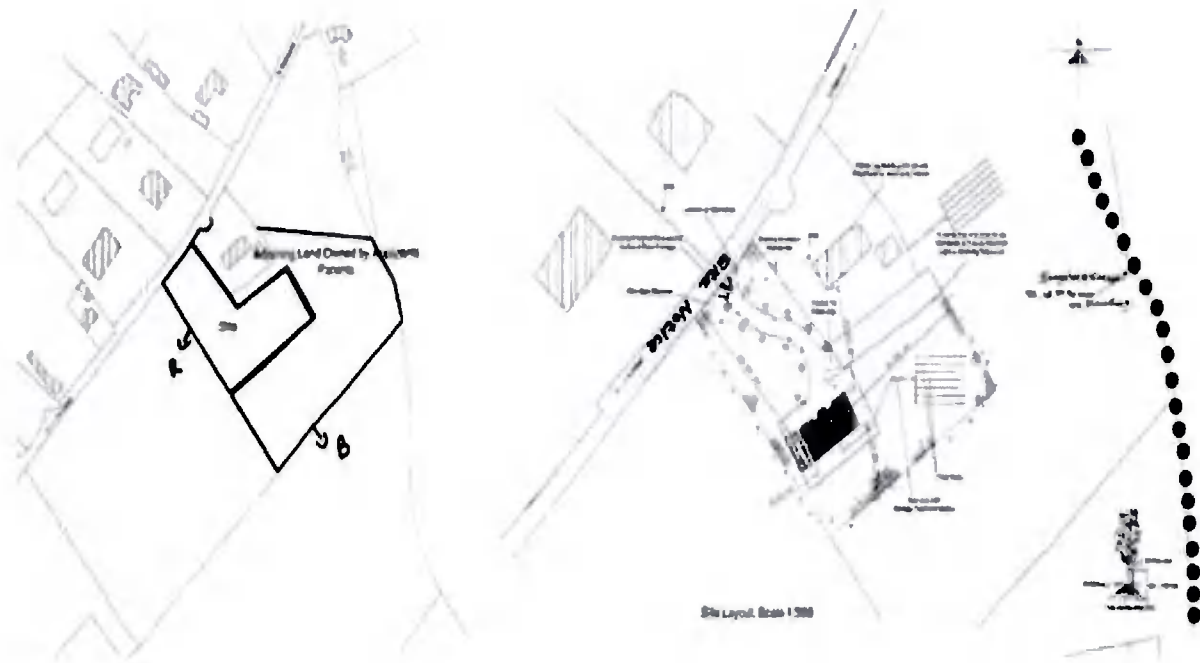


Figure 16.0 Site layout of development approved under Reg Ref SD05A/0755

The development was granted permission with 18 no. conditions following a request for further information of proof that the landowners approved of the development and an updated plan to improve vision along the road. The applicant needed an independent family home and was building on their parents' land.

This planning application at Mattie, Windmillhill, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, also proposes to develop an independent dwelling for the child of the site owner also with significant business ties and family ties to the local area. In this instance we are not proposing the demolition of any structure, but to retain an existing stables building in order to make an environmentally friendly development which will remain in keeping with rural aesthetics and character.

The above examples provide a clear precedent for the proposed development as they indicate the approval of the Planning Authority for high quality proposals where the applicants have shown that they are employed locally, have lived in the area for a long period of time and have strong family ties in the area and thus meet the zoning objectives.

5.0 Planning Context and Zoning Objectives

This section of the report will examine the planning framework that informs the use and development of the subject site. The South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022 is the relevant statutory development plan for the proposed application site.

5.1 Zoning Objective

The subject site is zoned RU – ‘To protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture’. Residential use class is ‘open for consideration’ in accordance with Council policy for residential development in rural areas’ under the RU uses zoning matrix contained within the South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022. It is considered that the proposed development is compliant with the stated zoning objective of the area and is consistent with the overall vision for this zone.

- 5.2** Policy HCL1 Heritage, Conservation and Landscapes,
Policy HCL2 Archaeological Heritage
Section 9.2.0 Landscapes
Schedule 1: Record of Monuments and Places
Schedule 2: Record of Protected of Structures

This is not a historical building; the application is seeking to convert an existing stable building to a residential dwelling. The site is also not close to any historic curtilage or archaeological heritage, either directly or indirectly.

The closest noted monument to the site, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is the DU021-039 which is a ring barrow in Newtown Lower. This is almost 2km away and there are no sightlines between the two sites therefore this should not have any relevance to the proposed development.

The nearest protected structure to the site outlined by Schedule 2: Record of Protected Structures has an RPS reference of 368, The Gate Lodge, Steelestown. The conversion of the stables would not affect this protected building as the footprint of the stables is not being altered, it is on the main road and is separated by elevation and a line of large conifer trees.

- 5.3** Policy HCL 7 Landscapes
Policy G2 Green Infrastructure Network
Section 8.1.0 Green Infrastructure Network
Policy HC8 Views and Prospects
Section 9.2.1 Views and Prospects
Policy HC9 Dublin Mountains
Section 9.2.4 Liffey Valley and Dodder Valley

A key priority of the conversion is to have minimal disruption or impact on the surrounding environment including flora and fauna. The site is on a 6.25 acre property and in the last ten years, a small orchard with fruit and berries, a vegetable growing area including raised vegetable beds have been developed as well as a planned beehive. These small scale agricultural works have made use of the rural environment and help to promote biodiversity in the area. The proposed stable conversion is for the needs of the son of the property owners, to be able to live

independently with his partner and continue to help develop the land and maintain it into the future.



Figure 17.0 Raised beds on the opposite side of the tennis court.



Figure 18.0 Vegetables growing on a portion of land North-West on the site.

The stable is at the back of the property and was built in the 1970s. The owners will continue to promote the local biodiversity and the environment of the area, for example, plans to grow more native trees and shrubs, and promote native hedgerows and wild meadows. The proposed conversion will preserve any views and prospects of surrounding areas such as preserved and protected sites, and the Dublin Mountains as there will be minimal exterior changes. The proposed development is not located near the Liffey Valley and Dodder Valley therefore HCL10 should not be a concern.

This proposal meets the standards laid out by Policy HCL 7 Landscapes, to protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture, as well as criteria out by the Rural Settlement Strategy; the Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County (2015); Policy G2 Green Infrastructure Network laid out in Section 8.1.0; Section 8.2.0 Watercourses Network; 9.2.1 Views Prospects and Policy; HCL8 Views and Prospects; HCL9 Dublin Mountains; and HCL10 Liffey Valley and Dodder Valley. Table 9.2 in the South Dublin County Development Plan was consulted to ensure the site was not located on any preserved and protected sites.

- 5.4** Policy HCL12 Natura 2000 Sites
- Section 11.8.2 Appropriate Assessments
- Policy HCL13 Natural Heritage Areas

Section 9.3.0 Natural Heritage Areas

Section 9.3.1 Natura 2000 Sites

Section 9.3.2 Natural Heritage Areas

The site is over 9km from the nearest Natura 2000 sites, Glenasmole Valley (SiteCode: IE0001209); Wicklow Mountains (SiteCode: IE0002122); and Poulaphouca Reservoir (SiteCode: IE0004063), therefore the conversion should not require an appropriate assessment.

The proposed development will be adjacent to a proposed Natural Heritage Area, the Slade of Saggart and Crookslin Glen area, and therefore will aim to protect the ecological, visual, recreational, environmental and amenity value of the area. The alterations have been designed to minimise the impact on the biodiversity of the area and conserve the natural heritage, with particular interest given to plants and animal species listed under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000 and Birds Directive 1979. The site is not designated as a Special Area of Conservation.

5.5 Policy HCL15 Non-Designated Areas

Section 9.3.5 Non-Designated Areas

The site is not situated in a non-designated area; the preservation of species and habitats that are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, the Birds Directive 1979, and the Habitats Directive 1992, have been considered throughout the development of this proposal. The existing flora and fauna will be impacted minimally and there are no plans for expansions of the building's footprint.

5.6 Policy H20 Management of Single Dwellings in Rural Areas

'It is the policy of the Council to restrict the spread of dwellings in the rural "RU" – to focus such housing into existing settlements.'

The property owners want to utilise the land by the development of large areas to grow vegetables, herbs, wild meadows, a small fruit bearing orchard as well as plans to develop an area of land solely for planting local native trees and a beehive to help with pollination. Currently the stables are underutilised and vacant. The proposed plan to convert the stables into a residential dwelling will allow for the property owners' son and his partner to reside and help to work the land further while also gaining independence and privacy to develop a family of his own. This plan is in line with the zoning objective of RU, 'to protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture'.

5.7 Policy H21 Rural Housing Policies and Local Need Criteria

Policy H22 Rural Housing in RU Zone: New or Replacement dwellings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances

The property owners comply with Section 3.2.3 of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005) with this proposal. They have lived at the property for over 10 years. Paula Egan (applicant) is an intrinsic member of the rural community through her accounting company, Comprehensive Business Services Ltd trading as Finance Services by contributing to the local rural economy by providing employment locally since 2002. The business is located at Unit 9, Beechwood Buildings, 14G Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, County Dublin. Since the company started, it has prioritised both hiring locally and doing business with clients who are also local. Her son has played an important role in that company full time since 2014 which allows it to continue to grow. It is with the belief that both the property owners and individuals hoping to live in the proposed dwelling are both "persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community" and "*persons working full-time and part-time in rural areas*" as outlined in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005). For the reasons laid out above the proposed plan is also in line with Policy H22 Rural Housing as they show a '*genuine need to reside in proximity to their employment (such employment being related to the rural community*' as the proposal would allow for the property owners' son to continue to work full time at the finance business while also being in proximity to the land that the family are looking to continue to develop. The plan meets the criteria laid out by Section 2.5.0 Rural Housing, Section 11.3.4 Rural Housing (i) Housing Need as well as the Rural Settlement Strategy. Furthermore the proposal is in line with the objective of policy H22 as the applicant has 'close family ties with the rural community'. The applicant's father is admitted in Rathcoole Nursing Home and requires assistance in order to deal with any issues arising and to maintain a close relationship. The approval of this planning application would provide a long term dwelling for the applicants son and his partner to continue to support both his parents on the same site, and his grandfather in Rathcoole Nursing Home.

Supporting documentation is also submitted alongside this report. A letter from Fergal Britton in support of this planning application is submitted. It corroborates that Paula Egan and her team look after the accounts and payroll of Britton's own retail business as well as that of other local business in Rathcoole village. A letter from Rathcoole Nursing Home is also submitted providing evidence for family ties in the local area. Paula Egan's father is residing in the local nursing home under long term care and is being assisted by Egan in his affairs.

5.8 Policy H23 Rural Housing in HA- Dublin Mountain Zone Section 9.2.3 Dublin Mountains

While the Dublin Mountain Zone is close-by, the property and structure are not visible from the zone. While the property is not in the zone, the plans for the building and surrounding land aim to "preserve the environmental and landscape quality of this area". The footprint of the building and no additional walls or changes to the surrounding environments are included in the plans. This meets the criteria set out by Policy HCL9 Dublin Mountains.

5.9 Policy H26 Occupancy Condition

'The stipulation that the house must be first occupied as a place of permanent residence by the applicant and/or by members of his/her immediate family, for a minimum period of seven years'

The property owners applying for planning have lived in the house since 2012 and it is their permanent residence. The son of the property owners has also lived there during this time. The conversion of the stables is to allow him to move from the family home while also being able to continue in his employment and for him to continue to help maintain and develop the land. For these reasons the plan should meet the criteria laid out in Section 2.5.7 Rural Dwelling Occupancy.

5.10 Policy H27 Rural House and Extension Design

'Houses and extensions are designed and sited to minimise visual impact on the character and visual setting of the surrounding landscape'

As laid out above and in Section 2.5.8 Rural House & Extension Design, the plans for the proposed conversion of the stables to a residential dwelling aim to do minimal alterations to the exterior of the current existing structure therefore there will be no change to natural contours of the area. The footprint of the building will remain the same as will the sliding outside stable doors, and the corrugated iron and tin roof. Windows skylights, and doors as laid out in the plans will be installed. The site is not visible to the road or any other dwellings due to the number of trees surrounding the structure. The appearance of the building will be improved with high quality facade finishes and increased maintenance of the building and its immediate surroundings. By facilitating the property owners' son to stay on the property in an independent dwelling it will help the land to continue to be developed for both promoting the natural environment and utilising the land to produce the vegetables and fruit for the family. This will be vital for the land especially as his parents get older. The well and septic tank which is planned to service the conversion is already on site so there will be no need for the installation of more services therefore, there will be no intrusive engineered solutions required. This is also in line with the criteria laid out by Section 11.3.4 (iii) Rural Housing Design.

5.11 Water Usage and Waste

Section 11.3.4 Rural Housing (iii) Wastewater Treatment

Section 8.2.0 Watercourses Network

Policy G3 Watercourses Network

2021 Code of Practice Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems

The current residential house on site sources its water from a well, situated on the property. The well has also supplied water to the stable since its development and when the stables were providing for horses. The stables have the capacity to house six horses. The water requirement for each horse would be around 15 gallons per

day with six horses it would be 90 gallons per day. The average water consumption per person is 35 gallons per day and therefore will have less water requirements and the couple who hope to move into the proposed converted stables use the well from the main house already. In September 2020, new water pipes and pumps were installed as well as a water purification system (Sterilight SQ5 Ultraviolet Unit, well shock Chlorination, wellhead riser pipe), this work was carried out by Pump Plant Ltd. Invoices for these works are submitted alongside this report. It is proposed that the building continues to use the existing water supply from the well to serve the new usage.

In order to formalise surface water run off from the roof, there will be installation of new gutters. The downpipes will bring the water to the ground and to the existing access junction which discharges to a soakaway.

The septic tank can handle the waste of the individuals planning to move into the proposed development as they currently live in the main dwelling on the property therefore the amount of people on the property will not be changing. The plan is to install an additional waste pipe from the proposed structure to the septic tank for foul waste. The septic tank is located on a downward slope from the stables. It is located at the South-West of the property and conforms to the minimum separation distance, depths of unsaturated soil and/or subsoil above the bedrock and the water table. This is in agreement with accompanying reports from Civil Engineer Mr. Gordon White relating to the suitability and current efficiency of the septic tank. This proposed plan for the building of water usage and treatment meets the standards laid out in the Rural Settlement Strategy.

6.0 Impact on Neighbouring Dwellings

There will be no visual impact to existing residents. The structure is located at the back of the property and is not in sight of the main road as seen in Figure 4.0. The building is surrounded by large trees which provide significant protection from views to neighbouring properties. Figures 19.0 and 20.0 show the isolated location of the building and the minimal impact to neighbours. As there is no change to the exterior footprint of the existing stables, there will be no overshadowing experienced by neighbours due to the proposed changes.



Figure 19.0 The view from the building of the surrounding trees and closest neighbour beyond the tree line.



Figure 20.0 The view from the building towards Windmillhill and neighbouring Steelstown Lodge.

7.0 Conclusion

It is considered that the change of use planning application is compliant with the policies and objectives as set out in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022. The proposal seeks to change the use of a currently vacant stable to a dwelling.

The proposal does not seek to change the exterior footprint of the existing building, it does seek to render the building and install windows and doors to improve insulation and make the building fit for residential use. The biodiversity of flora and fauna have been a priority throughout this process, and there are no proposed alterations to the natural surroundings. The proposal will make efficient use of a currently underutilised building and therefore improve rural amenities in the local area.

It is considered that this proposal is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and as such we request planning permission be granted in this instance.