



Planning Ref: 2560977

08 December 2025

Planning Section
Kerry County Council

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: 2560977 - PERMISSION TO DEVELOP A SITE TO INCLUDE (I) PARTLY DEMOLISH, RENOVATE AND EXTEND 2NO. EXISTING TWO-STOREY HOUSES AT STREET FRONT, (II) DEMOLISH SINGLE STOREY ANNEX STORE AT STREET FRONT (III) CONSTRUCT A TWO-STOREY APARTMENT BLOCK AT REAR OF SITE CONTAINING FOUR APARTMENT IN TOTAL (TWO APARTMENTS ON GROUND FLOOR AND TWO APARTMENTS ON THE FIRST FLOOR) AND (IV) ALL ASSOCIATED SITE SERVICES AT NORTH SQUARE, INCHINALEEGA EAST, SNEEM, CO. KERRY.

Comment

The Heritage Council was established in 1995 as a statutory body under the Heritage Act 1995 with a Council (the Board of the body) appointed by the Minister. The Heritage Council is a prescribed body under the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 and S.I. No. 600/2001 of the Planning and Development Regulations, section 28 inter alia, in accordance with its functions under Section 6 of the Heritage Act, 1995. We seek to provide submissions on forward planning, development management and strategic infrastructure developments as they relate to Ireland's heritage, namely built, cultural and natural heritage.

The Heritage Council has reviewed the proposed drawings and documentation submitted with this application. It is important to note in the first instance that the proposed development site is in the Sneem Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), in the village centre of Sneem.

In general terms, the Heritage Council supports infill development such as this, as it is in line with the principles of compact growth and sound planning. Village centre development, particularly on underutilised sites, prevents unnecessary expansion of the built environment and offers an alternative to a dispersed settlement pattern. Therefore, the principle of residential development in this location is valid.

However, and equally so, developments, particularly those involving demolition in an ACA, should be supported by an Architectural Heritage Assessment. Not only is this necessary to justify demolition and impact, but it is also needed to inform the overall approach to site design. The lack of such an assessment has led to a scheme that is not

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sympathetic to village character, and furthermore, does not optimise the land use in this location.

The character of the ACA has been described in Volume 3 of the Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028, where the buildings are noted as being of traditional structure, incorporating pitched roofs, gable ended chimney stacks and classical proportioning. There is a mix of 2 storey and 1/1.5 storey buildings in the ACA.

In this regard, we believe that the proposed apartment building, as currently designed, is not an appropriate design. A linear terrace/mews development, perpendicular to the existing building line would have been more appropriate to the character of Sneem Village. Whilst apartments per se are not necessarily unsuitable, these could be achieved in the form of duplexes, where the general building form could be achieved in a manner more reflective of the character of a rural south Kerry village.

It is also important to state that in this regard the local authority should consider flexibility on development management standards so that a more sympathetic design, that is more responsive to site context, is achieved.

The retention of the two-storey building is essential, as it is an integral part of this area of the ACA that fronts onto 'the Triangle' in Sneem. Equally the existing windows appear to be original sash windows and should be retained/repared. This is expected for developments within ACAs. Justification for the demolition of the single storey structure, as opposed to reuse is necessary also, while any replacement proposal should be informed by the character statement for the ACA.

The two following policies from the Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028 are relevant.

- **KCDP 8-44** Ensure developments in an ACA have a positive impact on the intrinsic character of the area, respect the existing streetscape and layout, and are compatible in terms of design, materials, traffic, views, and intensity of site use.
- **KCDP 8-45** Resist demolition in an ACA and avoid the removal of structures and distinctive elements including boundary detailing, historic street furniture, cobblestones, flagstones, post boxes, water pumps and ensure new elements are respectful of the character of the historic ACA environment.

Whilst infill and back land development in village centres is supported, there needs to be a fully informed design rationale for proposals, particularly in ACAs. The Heritage Council is not convinced that this is currently the case and therefore believe that the proposal, in its current form, does not accord with the aforementioned county development plan policies.

We trust these views will inform Kerry County Council's determination of the application.

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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive Officer