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Wildlife Licensing Unit,

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

16th December 2024

National Parks and Wildlife Service,

Wildlife Licencing Unit, R.2.03

Smithfield,

Dublin 7 D07 N7CV

RE: Application for derogation licence at The Coach House, An Gairdín Rundach, Fermoy.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I attach a second completed application for a derogation licence at the Coach House, An Gairdín Rundach, College Road, Fermoy on behalf of the client and owner Deborah Gaffney. Also by way of this letter additional information is provided regarding 11.1, 11.2 and 11.3. I hope this will enable approval of the application which was initially made in July 2024. It is now a matter of urgency to enable planning permission for this building to proceed.

The applicant is seeking planning permission to develop an existing derelict coach house and stables into a dwelling house. These works include reroofing of the derelict building which appears to support a small colony of Soprano Pipistrelle bats. A bat survey report submitted with this application includes mitigation measures to prevent negative impacts on the Soprano Pipistrelle bats by providing long term alternative roosting habitats in the restored building.

The derogation licence falls under the following category:

In the interests of public health and public safety, or for other reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a serial or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

The proposed development site is a town of 6,500 persons where the vision is to boost the population of the town (Vol. 3 North Cork Development Plan 2022). An additional 675 housing units

are required including reuse of vacant stock, highly desirable in terms of supporting the existing community and maintaining the vitality of the town centre area.

The Development Plan also states 'In recognition of its (Fermoy) architectural character and heritage interest (The application site is incorporated within an Architectural Conservation Area). The priority for development in this area should therefore be on refurbishment and sensitive redevelopment where appropriate. Protected structures will be subject to statutory protection and the emphasis will be on preserving the physical integrity and setting of these buildings'. The Coach House, An Gairdín Rundach is a protected structure, No. 2, 198.

11.1 Explanation as to why the derogation licence sought is the only available option for works and no suitable alternative exists as per Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations.

The Coach House, An Gairdín Rundach is in a state of disrepair and will continue to deteriorate in the absence of repairs and refurbishment. It is a Health & Safety risk and being located in the centre of Fermoy town liable to be visited by trespassers. In a do-nothing scenario the buildings are not sustainable as a bat roost.

11.2 Evidence the actions permitted by a derogation licence will not be detrimental to the maintenance of populations of the species to which the Habitats Directive relates at a favourable conservation status in their natural range as is required under section 54 (2) of the communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations.

A range of mitigation measures have been proposed to ensure there will be no detrimental effects to Soprano Pipistrelle bats. Full details of the mitigation measures are included in the bat report which accompanies this planning application (see attached).

11.3 Details of any mitigation measures planned for the species affected by the derogation at the location, along with evidence that such mitigation has been successful elsewhere.

Details mitigation measures for the proposed development are included in the application. Their implementation will be supervised by myself drawing upon 30 years' experience with bats.

11.4 As much information as possible to allow a decision to be made on this application.

Please see details of application and attached report.

Yours sincerely



Mark Donnelly BSc