2025

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

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Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Clúid Housing, Skehard Road Site, Mahon, Co. Cork

Document Control Sheet

Client:	Plus Architecture
Document No:	210510-ORS-XX-XX-RP-EN-13d-001

Revision	Status	Author:	Reviewed by:	Approved By:	Issue Date
P01	Draft	LM	AK	JB	23/03/2023
P02	Information	LM	AK	JB	06/06/2023
P02	Information	LM	NK	JB	15/04/2025

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening exercise has been prepared in support of an application for planning permission for a 22-unit residential development at Skehard Road, Mahon, Co. Cork. The purpose of this exercise is to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required for consideration of the proposed development by the competent authority, which in this case is Cork City Council.

EIA requirements are derived from legislation set by the European Union in the form of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. Most pertinent to the screening stage of the EIA process, are **Annexes I** and **II** of the EU Directive which comprise a list of project categories with the potential to have significant effects on the environment. Annexes I and II are broadly transposed into Irish Legislation by the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025*, in **Schedule 5 Parts 1** and **2**.

This EIA Screening exercise first provides a description of the proposed development under the criteria defined in **Schedule 7A** of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2025*, further described in section 3.

The project description for the proposed development is as follows:

Cork City Council has supported Clúid Housing with the proposed development of approximately 22 units on lands in their ownership.

Plus Architecture has proposed a design that will deliver 22 units, in a mix as follows:

- 1 bedroom: 7 units (32%)

- 2 bedroom, 3 person: 1 units (4.5%)

- 2 bedroom, 4 person: 13 units (59%)

- 3 bedroom: 1 unit (4.5%)

The development consists of 18 apartments and 4 modest townhouse units that vary in height from two stories. Three stories up to four stories. The L shape footprint aims to make the most of the site availacounty dble, putting an emphasis on the corner aspect and achieving a dual aspect for most of the apartments. The building entrance connects the North and South of the building by a pedestrian route through the building. While the South of the development has open green spaces with a connecting pathway to the East of the site, creating a semi-public interior garden space with private open spaces opened into it from the townhouses.

An initial screening appraisal was then carried out for this activity against the relevant categories in **Schedule 5 Parts 1** and **2** of the Regulations, further described in section 4.

In the event where an EIA screening is deemed necessary, the screening process is continued, and characteristics of the proposed development are considered in further detail against the relevant criteria defined by **Schedule 7** of the Regulations, summarised as follows:

1. Characteristics of proposed development – size, cumulative effects, natural resources etc.
2. Location of proposed development – environmental sensitivity of the areas likely to be affected by the development.
3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts – likely significant effects on the environment.

2 EIA Screening Methodology

2.1 Legislative Requirement for EIA

Screening is the initial stage in the EIA process and determines whether or not the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, as such, require EIA to be carried out prior to a decision for a development consent application being made.

EIA requirements are derived from legislation set by the European Union in the form of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, collectively titled: '*on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*'. These directives set out the principles for the environmental impact assessment of projects by introducing minimum requirements regarding:

- The type of projects subject to assessment
- The main obligations of developers
- The content of the assessment
- The participation of competent authorities

Most pertinent to the screening stage of the EIA process, are **Annexes I** and **II** of the EU Directive which comprise a list of project categories with the potential to have significant effects on the environment. **Annexes I** and **II** are broadly transposed into Irish Legislation by the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025*, in **Schedule 5 Parts 1** and **2**, with national thresholds added to many of the **Part 2** classes of development.

2.2 Project Categorisation

Once the proposed development is described and the principal activities are defined, the first step in the screening process can be undertaken. This involves assigning the development to a category listed in either **Parts 1** or **2** of schedule 5 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025:*

- **Part 1 Activities** – consists of activities which have significant effects on the environment. Proposed developments which exceed the relevant thresholds in Part 1 are subject to a mandatory EIA. Part 1 sub-threshold developments require screening in cases where the same class of development is not listed in Part 2 with a lower mandatory threshold.
- **Part 2 Activities** – do not necessarily have significant effects on the environment in every case; Proposed developments which exceed the relevant thresholds in Part 2, as defined by the Irish State are subject to a mandatory EIA. For all sub-threshold developments listed in Schedule 5, Part 2, where no EIAR is submitted or EIA determination requested, a screening determination is required to be undertaken by the competent authority **unless**, on preliminary examination it can be concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.

Corresponding developments automatically require EIA if no threshold is given or if they exceed a given threshold. Developments which correspond to **Part 2** project types but are below the given threshold must be subject to a screening exercise to determine whether they require EIA or not.

2.3 Project Screening Determination

In cases where a project is deemed eligible for a mandatory EIA, a sub-threshold EIA or an exemption the EIA screening process is concluded, and suitable recommendations are made in order to progress the project further.

In the event where a given project is deemed to be **below** the relevant **Part 2** thresholds, further screening is required and characteristics of the proposed development are considered in further detail against the relevant criteria outlined in **Schedule 7** of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2025*.

This exercise is carried out for the project in **section 4**.

2.4 Determination of the EIA Requirement for Sub-Threshold Projects

If the initial project screening determination did not confirm the requirement or the exemption of an EIA, the proposed development is subject to further screening to determine if a significant risk to the environment is posed. **Schedule 7** of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025* outlines specific criteria for the determination of EIA requirements for sub-threshold projects. The screening process involves the appraisal of impacts from the proposed development according to three main criteria:

1. ***Characteristics of the project***
    - *a. size and design of the whole of the proposed development*
    - *b. cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development*
    - *c. nature of any associated demolition works*
    - *d. use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity*
    - *e. production of waste*
    - *f. pollution and nuisances*
    - *g. the risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change*
    - *h. the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)*

2. ***Location of proposed project***
    - *a. the existing and approved land use,*
    - *b. relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,*
    - *c. absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:*

(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment
(iii) mountain and forest areas
(iv) nature reserves and parks
(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive
(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;
(vii) densely populated areas;
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

3. ***Characteristics of potential impacts***
   a. *magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),*
   b. *nature of the impact,*
   c. *transboundary nature of the impact,*
   d. *intensity and complexity of the impact,*
   e. *probability of the impact,*
   f. *expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,*
   g. *cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment*
   h. *possibility of effectively reducing the impact.*

These criteria are assessed for the proposed development in **section 5.**

2.5 Information to be Provided for the Purposes of Sub-Threshold Projects

In the event that the requirement for a full screening exercise is triggered, **Schedule 7A** of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2025* outlines specific information to be provided by the applicant pertaining to the project to be provided by the applicant for the purposes of screening sub-threshold projects to the competent authority's satisfaction. This includes:

1. ***Description of the proposed development*** (Outlined in **Section 3**)
   a. *description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works.*
   b. *description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.*

2. ***Description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development*** (Criteria incorporated into **Tables 5.1 - 5.3**)
3. ***Description of any likely significant effects****, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from:*
    a. *expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant.*
    b. *use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.*
    (Criteria incorporated into **Tables 5.1 - 5.3**)

3 Description of the Proposed Development

3.1 Site Description

The site is located at the corner of Skehard Road and Ballinure Avenue, in Mahon, Cork City (ITM Coordinates: 572488, 571008). It is located *ca.* 1.6km from Mahon Shopping Centre. The surrounding area features a range of terraced and semi-detached dwellings.

The site is bounded to the south by St Michael's Cemetery. The site, which is the ownership of Cork City Council, was previously occupied by a hostel. This has recently demolished in preparation for redevelopment of the site.

The total extent of the site covers an area of *ca.* 2,555m^2 (0.255ha).

The site layout is detailed in drawing **MAH-PLA-ZZ-RF-DR-AR-01002**, which accompanies this application.

3.2 Planning Description

Cork City Council has supported Clúid Housing with the proposed development of approximately 22 units on lands in their ownership.

Plus Architecture has proposed a design that will deliver 22 units, in a mix as follows:
- 1 bedroom: 7 units (32%)
- 2 bedroom, 3 person: 1 units (4.5%)
- 2 bedroom, 4 person: 13 units (59%)
- 3 bedroom: 1 unit (4.5%)

The development consists of 18 apartments and 4 modest townhouse units that vary in height from two stories, three stories up to four stories. The L shape footprint aims to make the most of the site available, putting an emphasis on the corner aspect and achieving a dual aspect for most of the apartments. The building entrance connects the North and South of the building by a pedestrian route through the building. While the South of the development has open green spaces with a connecting pathway to the East of the site, creating a semi-public interior garden space with private open spaces opened into it from the townhouses.

3.3 Environmental Setting

3.3.1 Population

The site is located within the Mahon B electoral division which forms part of the wider Cork City South East electoral area. This division a densely settled urban area 3.1km^2 in size, with a total population of 5,125 people in 2022 and a population density of 1,653 per km^2.

3.3.2 Hydrology & Topography

The proposed development site is located within the Southwestern Basin District; Glasheen [Cork City]_010 Sub Basin; Hydrometric Area 19; Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay Catchment.

The principle hydrological feature within the vicinity of the site is the Lough Mahon Estuary located *ca.* 550m east of the site boundary.

A topographical survey of the site revealed that the site is relatively level, likely as a result of the previous development which existed here. The ground level is slightly higher towards the south of the site at 10.46mOD (Malin), falling to an average level of 9.66mOD Malin towards the centre of the site. The site is slightly higher than the Skehard Road with runs from West to East, adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.

3.3.3 Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology

Teagasc soil mapping indicates that soils in the site vicinity consist of both Made Ground and likely Till derived from Devonian Sandstones. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) bedrock database indicates that soils at the site are underlain at depth by the Little Island Formation, which consists of massive and crinoidal fine limestone. No known karst features occur locally within the Little Island Formation

According to GSI groundwater maps, the site overlies a regionally important aquifer, and it has a high groundwater vulnerability index. The hydrogeological setting at the site is described as made ground with moderate permeability subsoil. No groundwater source protection zones or protected hydrological features such as holy wells or springs are located within proposed boundary of the site.

There are no geological heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development site, the closest being a ‘Beaumont Quarry’ *ca.* 2km to the West. (CC002).

3.3.4 Designated Areas

There are no designated areas (SPAs, SACs or NHAs) detected within the site boundary according to the National Parks and Wildlife Services site maps. The nearest designated areas to the site boundary include Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030) located *ca*. 595m E of the site and Douglas River Estuary pNHA (Site Code: 001046) located *ca.* 550m E of the site.

3.3.5 Flood Risk

OPW Flood maps do not indicate a risk of fluvial, coastal or groundwater flooding within the boundary of the subject site. Coastal Flood extents – 0.1%, 1% & 10% AEP were noted *ca.* 600m E of the site.

3.3.6 Cultural Heritage

There are no archaeological heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development site, the closest being a 'Castle - tower house' *ca*. 500m to the North. (CO074-053).

There are no architectural heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development site, the closest being 'Ringmahon House' *ca*. 500m to the North (SURV024).

3.3.7 Landscape

The landscape surrounding the proposed site is predominantly urban with the majority of land currently occupied by residential units. The site itself consists of a recently demolished hostel. The proposed development is not envisaged to alter the character of the landscape significantly.

3.3.8 Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna

The AA screening report (Document Ref: **2105010-ORS-XX-XX-RP-EN-13d-002**) which accompanies this application identified two no. designated sites within 15 km of the proposed development. Both sites were eliminated during stage 1 of the screening process on the basis of there being no hydrological connectivity between the proposed development and the designated area.

3.4 Environmental Management Measures

The construction and operational phases of the proposed development will consist of similar nuisance-generating activities in terms of plant and vehicle movements; hence the following mitigation measures shall apply to both the construction phase and the operational phase.

3.4.1 Noise

A preliminary risk assessment was carried out for the proposed site location in accordance with the Air Quality Monitoring and Noise Control Unit's Good Practice Guide for Construction and Demolition, produced by the London Authorities Noise Action Forum, July 2016. This assessment took into account factors relating to the proximity of the site to sensitive receptors and rated the level of nuisance anticipated with scheduled work practices.

Following the completion of this risk assessment, the proposed development was determined to be a **high-risk** site based on the densely settled site setting. This section outlines suitable measures to minimise nuisance noise and dust emissions in order to minimise any impact of the prosed developments on surrounding receptors.

Marked variation of noise levels from those experienced as part of everyday life in an area can result in extreme disruption. Noise emanating from the project during the construction phase has the potential to impact off-site receptors.

The proposed development will be obliged to comply with BS 5228 “Noise Control on Construction and open sites Part 1”. The appointed contractor shall implement the following measures to eliminate or reduce noise levels where possible:

- All site staff shall be briefed on noise mitigation measures and the application of best practicable means to be employed to control noise.
- All staff should be briefed on the complaint’s procedure, the mitigation requirement and their responsibilities to register and escalate complaints received.
- Good quality site hoarding to be erected to maximise the reduction in noise levels.
- Contact details of the contractor and site manager shall be displayed to the public, together with the permitted operating hours.
- Material and plant loading and unloading shall only take place during normal working hours.
- Ensure that each item of plant and equipment complies with the noise limits quoted in the relevant European Commission Directive 2000/14/EC.
- Fit all plant and equipment with appropriate mufflers or silencers.
- Use all plant and equipment only for the tasks for which it has been designed.
- Locate movable plant away from noise sensitive receptors.
- Ensure at least 4 days’ notice is given to Cork City Council Planning Department when applying for extensions to normal working hours. No out of hours work to be undertaken unless permission to do so has been granted.

3.4.2 Dust and Air Quality

Dust prevention measures will be put in place for any particulate pollution. The extent of dust generation under construction activities been carried out is dependent on environmental factors such as rainfall, wind speed and wind direction. The most likely sources of dust generation at this site include soil stripping, excavation of foundations and the sawing of concrete.

Control Measures are outlined as follows:

- Soil will not be exposed until a replacing capping layer is almost ready to be placed. This is to ensure that soil is left exposed for the minimum amount of time possible.
- Material stockpiles will be strategically placed to reduce wind exposure. Materials will be ordered on an ‘’as needed’’ basis to reduce excessive storage.
- All trucks will be required to use the truck wheel wash prior to exit from the site.
- A manned power washer shall be put in place to assist the wheel wash system.
- Appropriate dust suppression will be employed to prevent fugitive emissions affecting those occupying neighbouring properties or pathways.

- Restrict vehicle speeds to 15 kmph on-site as high vehicle speeds cause dust to rise.
- Covers are to be provided over soil stockpiles when high wind and dry weather are encountered if required.
- All consignments containing material with the potential to cause air pollution being transported by skips, lorries, trucks or tippers shall be covered during transit on and off site.
- Street and footpath cleaning shall be undertaken during the demolition and ground works phase to minimise dust emissions.
- No materials shall be burned on-site.

3.4.3 Surface Water Run Off

The main pollutants with the potential to impact site water are silt, fuel/oil, concrete and chemicals. There are a number of steps outlined below to eliminate contamination of site surface water runoff during the construction phase:

- Harmful materials such as fuels, oils, greases, paints and hydraulic fluids must be stored in bunded compounds well away from storm water drains and gullies. Refuelling of machinery should be carried out using drip trays.
- Runoff from machine service and concrete mixing areas must not enter storm water drains and gullies leading off-site.
- Stockpile areas for sands and gravel should be kept to minimum size, well away from storm water drains and gullies leading off-site.

3.5 Roles and Responsibilities

3.5.1 Construction Project Manager

The Construction Project Manager/Site Manger will have the overall responsibility of ensuring the measures outlined in the Project CMP/EOP are adhered to for the duration of the construction phase. The primary responsibilities of the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger are as follows:

- Promotion of awareness of environmental issues associated with each project phase/site rules.
- Facilitate environmental audits and site visits.
- Monitor the impact of construction/operational traffic on local traffic conditions.
- Monitor the impact of construction/operational traffic on local road conditions.
- Awareness and implementation of relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidance notes as stated in the CMP/EOP.
- Conduct regular site inspections to facilitate the timely identification of environmental risks or incidents.
- Ensure all construction activities are carried out with minimal risk to the environment.
- Report environmental incidents in a timely manner to the project environmental consultant and the relevant authorities.

3.5.2 Project Environmental Consultant

The main contractor will nominate a suitably qualified person/organisation as the Project Environmental Consultant, prior to construction works taking place. The primary responsibilities of the Project Environmental Consultant are as follows:

- Quality assurance of the Project CMP/EOP.
- Update of the Project CMP/EOP as required paying particular attention to site-specific environmental hazards or changes in legislation.
- Ensuring compliance of Project CMP/EOP with the conditions of the Planning Permission.
- Provide expertise to the Construction Project Manager/Site Manager on environmental concerns.
- Conduct the various specialist environmental monitoring tasks outlined in **section 3.5**.
- Prompt response to environmental issues if they arise.

3.5.3 Resident Engineer

Typically, the Resident Engineer's primary role involves assurance that the construction work of a project is carried out according to the quality, time and cost requirements of the contract. A significant degree of cross-over can usually be anticipated between the roles of a Resident Engineer, a Construction Project Manager and an Environmental Consultant. With respect to the Project CMP, the Resident Engineer is expected to play a crucial role in the Traffic Management Plan along with the following responsibilities:

- Performing or coordinating site inductions.
- Monitoring the performance of subcontractors.
- Monitoring the performance of the traffic management plan.
- Managing and supervising less experienced site engineers and operatives.
- Ensuring that work activities have been carried out in accordance with the plans, specifications and industry standards.
- Ensuring that tests and inspections are performed.
- Liaising with construction management to remove any hazards associated with work activities.
- Ensuring that delivered materials meet specifications and established quality standards.
- Initiating and maintaining records, back-charge procedures, progress reports etc.

3.6 Awareness and Training

3.6.1 Environmental Induction

The key environmental topics outlined in **section 3.5** will be summarised and integrated into the general site induction. Site-specific concerns and best work practices will be outlined to all contractors and sub-contractors due to carry out work at the site. As a minimum this will include:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Construction Project Manager; the Environmental Consultant and the Resident Engineer; along with the responsibilities of contractors/sub-contractors themselves.
- Incident and complaints procedure.
- Outline of the EOP structure.
- Site specific environmental concerns.
- Best work practices

3.6.2 Toolbox Talks

Daily toolbox talks will be conducted by the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger as standard practice. It is the duty of the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger to liaise with the Project Environmental Consultant and Resident Engineer to assess site operations for environmental concerns particularly as the project advances and new activities commence. Appropriate mitigation measures will be devised and communicated to the relevant personnel prior to the commencement of any such activities.

3.7 Environmental Incidents and Complaints Procedure

The Construction Project Manager/Site Manger will maintain a register of environmental incidents which will document the nature, scale and severity of any environmental incident or complaint which arises as a result of site activities. In the event of an environmental incident the following steps must be followed:

- The Project Environmental Consultant is notified immediately.
- The Project Environmental Consultant will liaise with the competent authority if necessary.
- The details of the incident will be recorded on an Environmental Incident Form which will record the following details:
    - Cause of the incident
    - Extent of the Incident
    - Immediate actions
    - Remedial measures
    - Recommendations made to avoid reoccurrence
- If the incident has impacted on an ecologically sensitive receptor (SPA, SAC, NHA) an ecological specialist will be consulted.
- The Project Environmental Consultant and Construction Project Manager will fully cooperate with any investigations conducted by the competent authority.

4 Initial EIA Screening

4.1 Project Categorisation

A detailed description of the proposed development is outlined in **Section 3.2**. In terms of the different categories of development listed in **Schedule 5** of the of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2025*, there is only a single aspect of the project which could bear relevance to the thresholds outlined in **Part 1** and **2** of Regulations:

- Construction 22-unit residential development.

4.1.1 Part 1 Activities

Considering the categories listed in **Part 1** of the Regulations, the subject development does not relate to any of the activities listed.

Based on this criteria, the proposed activity is below the **Part 1** threshold hence a mandatory EIA is **not required** for the project based on this category.

4.1.2 Part 2 Activities

Considering the categories listed in **Part 2** of the Regulations, the subject development most relates to category 10. (b) "Infrastructure Projects", stated as follows:

Category 10. (b) (i): '*Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.*

Category 10. (b) (iv): *'Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.'*

In relation to the threshold set in **Category 10. (b) (i),** the proposed development will consist of 22 no. units which is below the sub-threshold limit of 500 dwelling units by a considerable margin. As a result, EIA is **not required** for the project based on this category.

In relation to the threshold set in **Category 10 (b) (iv),** the proposed site area will be *ca.* 0.255ha which is below the sub-threshold limit of 10ha in the case of a built-up area. As a result, EIA is **not required** for the project based on this category.

4.2 Project Screening Determination

Based on a review of the relevant categories listed in **Schedule 5, Part 1** and **2** of Regulations the proposed development is not deemed eligible for a mandatory EIA, a sub-threshold EIA or an exemption. Therefore, the proposed development is subject to further screening under the relevant criteria outlined in **Schedule 7** of the Regulations. This exercise is outlined in **section 5** of this report.

5 EIA Screening

Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025* outlines specific criteria for the determination of EIA requirements for sub-threshold projects, summarised in **section 2.4** of this report. Specific aspects of the project are screened against these criteria in **Tables 5.1** to **5.3** below.

5.1 Characteristics of Proposed Development

Table 5.1. Section 7 Criteria to determine the characteristics of the proposed development

Section 7 Criteria	Information
(a) size and design of the whole of the proposed development	The proposed development site covers an area of 0.255ha. A description of the project and of the construction methodology is provided in **section 3** of this report. The proposed location of the site is within a densely settled, urban area with a population density of 1,653 per km^2. Access to the site will be from the Ballinure Avenue. The proposed development will not be a significant traffic generator and will not adversely impact the future operational capacity of the 2No. neighbouring junctions. The size and design of the project is not likely to cause significant negative effects on the environment.
(b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	A review of existing and previous planning applications under consideration by Cork City Council indicates that developments locally are mainly of a minor nature, consisting primarily extensions to existing residential units or the nearby school. It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant negative effects on the environment
(c) nature of any associated demolition works	The proposed development does not require any associated demolition works.
(d) use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	The project does not include the extensive use of natural resources. No negative impacts arising from the use of land or soil are anticipated
(e) production of waste	It is not anticipated that significant quantities of waste will be generated as a result of site activities other than that typical of a residential household which is minor in nature at this site.
(f) pollution and nuisances	Potential noise, light, air quality and water pollution impacts are anticipated.

	The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of soil, water courses and groundwater bodies. Dust, Noise and Vibration will be generated from HGV traffic entering and exiting the site and by 360º excavators and dozers during soil extraction. Baseline environmental survey's will be conducted for each of these parameters and these will be monitored during the operation of the facility at a frequency to be agreed by the local authority. Significant negative effects on the environment are not likely to arise due to pollution or nuisance due to the nature and scale of the project and the mitigation measures proposed.
(g) risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge	Standard construction practices will be employed throughout the construction phase and a Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be adhered to. A review of PFRA and CFRAM maps for the area confirms that the site is outside lands at risk from pluvial, fluvial or coastal flooding. The site drainage system will be designed to control the flow of incident run-off in an effort to imitate the natural greenfield run-off rate of the site. The development will not be at risk from flooding and will not lead to flooding elsewhere. The potential impacts due to risk of accidents and/or disasters are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development including standard procedures that will be applied.
(h) risks to human health (e.g. due to water contamination or air pollution)	The risks to human health are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development including standard procedures that will be applied to avoid effects.

5.2 Location of the Proposed Development

Table 5.2. Section 7 Criteria to determine the characteristics of the site environs

Section 7 Criteria	Information
(a) existing and approved land use	The existing use of the land consists a disused hostel, recently demolished.
(b) relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural	The Lough Mahon Estuary is located *ca*. 550m east of the site boundary. currently has a 'Moderate WFD status' according to EPA Maps. Construction activities are not deemed to pose a risk to this nearest water receptor.

resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	The site overlies a regionally important aquifer with a GW vulnerability classed as 'High'. General housekeeping and measures to prevent nuisances at the site will be outlined in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the Environmental Operation Plan (EOP). Following the implementation of the above measures, impacts to soil, land and biodiversity are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development.
(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:	
i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths	The proposed development is not located close to wetlands, coastal zones, mountains and forest areas, nature reserves or parks. The proposed development site is not hydrologically connected to the marine environment. The proposed development site is not within or directly connected to any mountain or forest areas. The proposed development is not within or directly connected to any nature reserves or parks.
ii. coastal zones and the marine environment	
iii. mountain and forest areas	
iv. nature reserves and parks	
v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive	The AA screening report which accompanies this application identified two no. designated sites within 15 km of the proposed development. Both sites were eliminated during stage 1 of the screening process on the basis of there being no hydrological connectivity between the proposed development and the designated area. This report concluded the nature and scale of the proposed activities at this site posed no significant impacts upon the Natura 2000 site identified hence flora, fauna and biodiversity is not anticipated to be affected.
vi. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure	The site is not located within such an area.
vii. densely populated areas	The site is located within a densely settled, urban area with a population density of 1,653 per km^2. At 22- residential units, the proposed development can be considered minor in nature, hence significant impacts in the local population is unlikely.
viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance	There are no archaeological heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development site, the closest being a 'Castle - tower house' ca. 500m to the North. (CO074-053).

	There are no architectural heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development site, the closest being 'Ringmahon House' ca. 500m to the North (SURV024). There are no geological heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development site, the closest being a 'Beaumont Quarry' ca. 2km to the West. (CC002). Impacts to visual (geological), historical, cultural or archaeological features are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

5.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Table 5.3. Section 7 Criteria to determine the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed development

Section 7 Criteria	Information
(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected), **(b) nature of the impact**	The site is located in a densely populated area of low environmental sensitivity. Some slight impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed activity however the extent of these is anticipated to be localised hence significant impacts are not envisaged.
i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health	Potential impacts identified to the local population included noise, dust and traffic. Given the mitigation measures proposed, the systems and practices in place and the low population density within the surrounding environs, impacts to human health are anticipated to be slight.
ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	The release of suspended solids into a watercourse are unlikely to occur during periods of rainfall due to the distance of the nearest water receptor. The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of water courses and groundwater bodies. Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been carried out for the proposed development in order to address the potential impact on Natura 2000 sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). This assessment addresses the potential impact the project may have on the Qualifying interest (habitats and species) and Special Conservation Interests (Birds) of the designated sites and the conservation objectives for same. The AA Screening Report recommended that AA is not required in respect of the Project. There are no impacts and effects to Natura 2000 sites predicted to occur as a result of the proposed development.

	Overall, the residual effects from an ecological perspective are not anticipated to be significant and impacts to biodiversity, flora and fauna is anticipated to be slight.
iii. Land and Soil	The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of soil both on-site and at neighbouring sites. This risk is mitigated by a rigorous waste acceptance procedure, highly trained members of staff and good housekeeping practices.
iv. Air & Climate	None identified or likely.
v. Material Assets, landscape and cultural heritage including architectural aspects	The development does not require any acquisition of privately owned lands, any loss of land / property used by the community or any demolition of property. The development will not give rise to a revaluation of or change in the development potential of adjoining lands / properties. The construction of the Project is not expected to have a significant effect on the visual amenity. There are no protected views within the area that will be affected by the proposed development. It is not considered that any elements of the development proposals will cause any direct or visual impacts with respect to previously recorded and/or extant archaeological monuments or architectural heritage features.
vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics	Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats were considered. Mitigation measures implemented are expected to reduce the residual impacts associated with such to slight/negligible.
(c) transboundary nature of the impact	There are no transboundary impacts associated with this project.
(d) intensity and complexity of the impact	
i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health	Impacts during construction stage anticipated to be slight and temporary in nature and will have a low intensity type impact. Impacts during operation stage anticipated to be slight and permanent in nature and will have a low intensity type impact.
ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	
iii. Land and Soil	
iv. Air & Climate	None identified or likely.
v. Material Assets, landscape & cultural heritage including architectural aspects	None identified or likely.
vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics	Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats were considered. Mitigation measures implemented are expected to reduce the residual impacts associated with such to slight/negligible.
(e) Probability of the impact	

i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health	Negative impacts associated with the construction stage are certain and temporary. Negative impacts associated with the operation stage are possible, but unlikely and long-term.
ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Impacts during construction stage are possible, but unlikely. Impacts during operation stage are possible, but unlikely.
iii. Land and Soil	Impacts during construction stage are possible, but unlikely. Impacts during operation stage are possible, but unlikely.
iv. Air & Climate	No significant impact identified or likely.
v. Material Assets, landscape & cultural heritage including architectural aspects	Negative impacts associated with the construction stage are certain and temporary.
vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics	None identified or likely.
(f) Expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	
i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Effects associated with the operational phase are anticipated to be long-term.
ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Operational phase impacts on Flora, Fauna, surface water, groundwater and biodiversity are anticipated to be slight and long-term.
iii. Land and Soil	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Operational phase impacts on Flora, Fauna, surface water, groundwater and biodiversity are anticipated to be slight and long-term.
iv. Air & Climate	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. No impacts identified by operational stage.
v. Material Assets, landscape & cultural heritage including architectural aspects	The potential impacts during the development will be associated with the construction stage. No impacts identified by operational stage.
vi. interrelationship between the environmental topics	Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats are anticipated to be long-term but unlikely.
(g) cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact	It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant effects on the environment.

Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment	
(h) possibility of effectively reducing the impact	A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and an Environmental Operating Plan (EOP) will be submitted by the main contractor to the local authority for approval and will include the following features designed to ensure maximum protection for the environment: • Any excavations and/or vegetation removal will minimised during construction and/or maintenance works. • Excavated material will not be stored immediately adjacent to watercourses. • Disturbance to natural drainage features should be avoided during the construction and/or maintenance. • Construction machinery should be restricted to public and or site roads. As a general rule machinery should not be allowed to access, park or travel over areas outside the footprint of proposed development. • Suitable prevention measures should be put in place at all times to prevent the release of sediment to drainage waters associated with construction areas and migration to adjacent watercourses to reduce erosion and silt-laden runoff, create, where possible, natural vegetation buffers and divert runoff from exposed areas, control the volume and velocity of runoff, and convey that runoff away from watercourses. • Where necessary drainage waters from construction areas should be managed through a series of treatment stages that may include swales, check dams and detention ponds along with other pollution control measures such as silt fences and silt mats. • Where vegetation removal associated with treelines, hedgerows, individual mature trees, scrub or woodland is required, this shall only be undertaken outside the breeding bird season, between March and August inclusive. • Where extensive areas of ground are to be exposed during route construction or maintenance dust suppression should be undertaken during periods of dry weather. • All chemical substances required during construction and/or maintenance works will be stored in sealed containers. • Any refuelling or lubrication of machinery will not be undertaken within 50m of a watercourse • Spill kits will be required on site during construction and/or maintenance works. • Ensure non-native, invasive species do not occur at construction/maintenance areas, or if occurring, are not spread as a results of works. The NRA Guidance on invasive species, outlined above will be adhered to as well as the preparation and implementation of a site specific Invasive Species Management and Control Plan. • Disseminate information on sensitive ecological receptors, such as sensitive habitats, breeding birds etc. occurring adjacent to or in the wider area. This information will aim to educate recreational users on the conservation status and sensitivities of such receptors to encourage responsible usage of the area.

6 Conclusions

The construction and operation of the proposed development does not trigger any thresholds for mandatory EIA/EIAR as set in EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended and transposed into Irish Law by the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2025*.

This EIA Screening Assessment has determined that the characteristics of the proposed development are considered not significant, detailed as follows:

- the scale and nature of the proposed development which is confined to an area 0.255 ha in size.
- the characteristics and sensitivities of the receiving environment in which no sensitive receptors are identified within the immediate vicinity of the site.
- the mitigation measures that will be implemented as part of the construction phase in the form of CEMP and, detailed in **Table 5.3**.
- the best practice procedures to be implemented at the site during the operational phase in accordance with EPA Best Practice Guidelines, listed in **Table 5.1**.

Given the scale and nature of the proposed development the overall risk posed to the environment is considered to be low with no significant impacts anticipated following the implementation of suitable mitigation measures associated with standard construction practices.

The information provided in this EIA Screening Report can be used by the competent authority, Cork City Council, to assess whether an EIA is required for the proposed development relating to the proposed development as no significant effects are anticipated.

The overall conclusion for this screening exercise is that having considered the appropriate statutory criteria, Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for the proposed development.