



Residential Development

Redemption Heights

Lover's Walk, Redemption Road,
Blackpool, Cork

Screening Report for Appropriate
Assessment

DEC Ltd.

April 2024

Residential Development

Redemption Road, Blackpool, Cork

Screening Report in support of Appropriate Assessment

Document Stage	Document Version	Prepared by
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

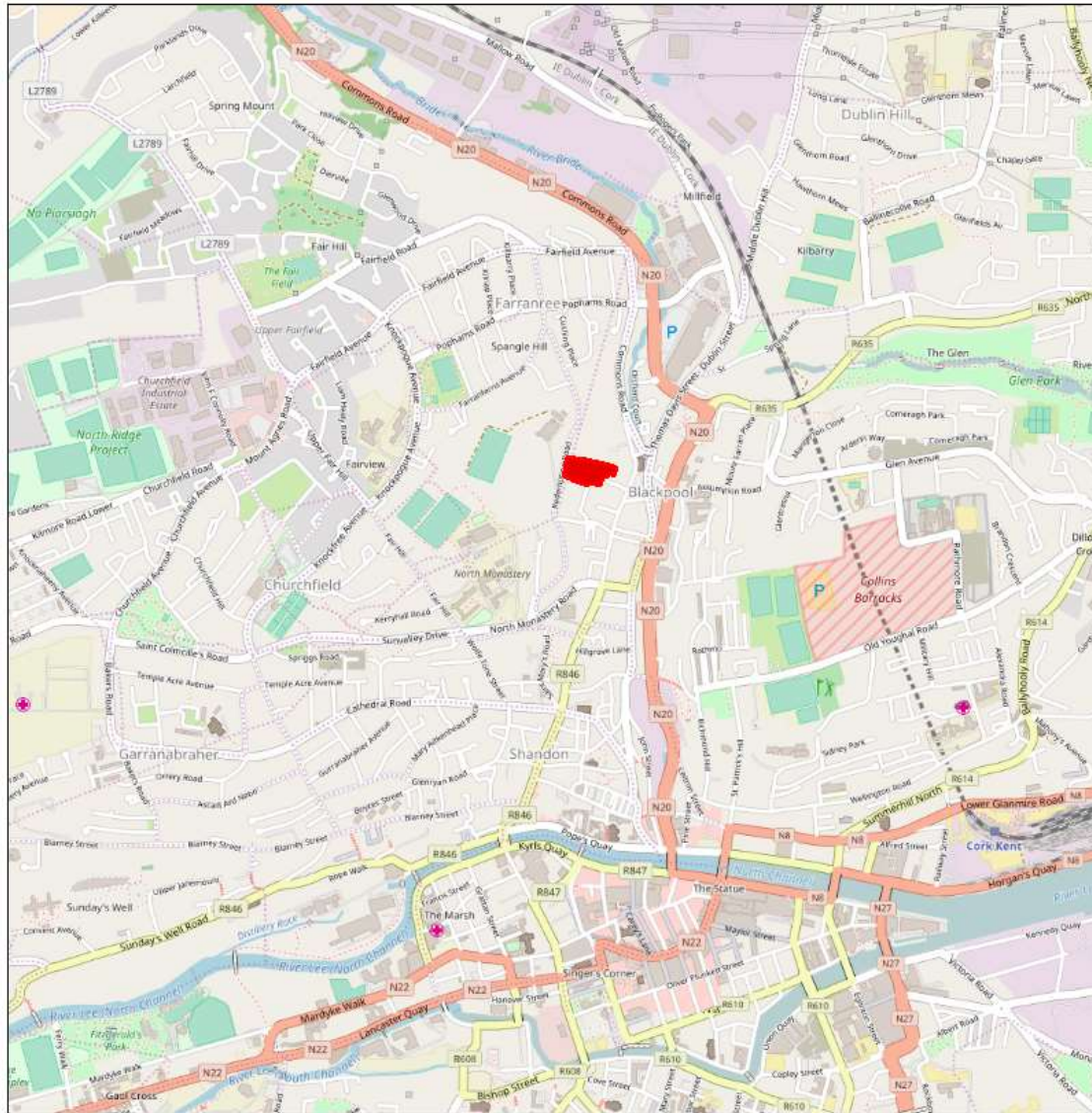
Doherty Environmental Consultants Ltd has been commissioned by Mallow Contracts Ltd . to undertake a Screening Statement in support of an Appropriate Assessment (AA), under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, for a proposed housing development at Redemption Heights, Lover’s Walk, Redemption Road, Blackpool, Cork (see Figure 1.1 for location).

Figure 1.1 shows the location of the project site.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment forms Stage 1 of the Habitats Directive Assessment process and is being undertaken in order to inform the competent authority’s assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (as amended). The function of this Screening Report is to identify the potential for the project to result in likely significant effects to European Sites and to provide information so that the competent authority can determine whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required for the project.

1.1 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Mr. Pat Doherty BSc., MSc, MCIEEM, of DEC Ltd. Mr. Doherty is a consultant ecologist with over 20 years’ experience in completing ecological impact assessments and environmental impact assessments. Pat has been involved in the completion of assessment reports for proposed developments and land use activities under the EIA Directive and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive since 2003 and 2006 respectively. He has extensive experience completing such reporting for projects located in a variety of environments and has a thorough understanding of the biodiversity issues that may arise from proposed land use activities. Pat was responsible for completing one of the first Appropriate Assessment reports for large scale infrastructure developments in Ireland when he prepared the Appropriate Assessment for the N25 New Ross Bypass in 2006/07. Since then, Pat has completed multiple examinations of both plans and projects in Ireland. He has completed Natura Impact Statements for national scale plans such

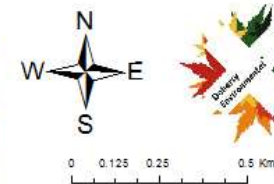


Residential Development Lover's Walk Redemption Road

Figure 1.1

Site Location

 Project Site



Drawn By	PD
Date	21/03/2019
Data Source	OSM

as Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan and National Seafood Development Plan and regional and county scale plans including County Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Tourism Strategies and Climate Action Plans. Pat has completed multiple Natura Impact Statements for a range of development types that include large scale infrastructure developments in sectors such as transport and energy as well as industrial, commercial and residential developments.

Pat has completed focused certified professional development training in Appropriate Assessment as well as in a range of ecological survey techniques and assessment processes. Training has been completed for National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and Irish Vegetation Classification (IVC) surveying, bryophyte survey for habitat assessment and identification, professional bat survey and assessment training, mammal surveying and specific training for bird and bat survey techniques. Ongoing training has been completed by approved training providers such as CIEEM, British Trust for Ornithology, the Botanic Gardens and the Field Studies Council.

1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Legislative protection for habitats and species is provided within the European Union by the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive has been implemented in Ireland and throughout Europe through the establishment of a network of designated conservation areas known as the Natura 2000 (N2K) network. The N2K network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (as amended). SACs are designated in areas that support habitats listed on Annex I and/or species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. SPAs are designated in areas that support: 1% or more of the all-Ireland population of bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive; 1% or more of the population of a migratory species; and more than 20,000 waterfowl.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment is being prepared in order to enable the competent authority to comply with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive). It is prepared to assess whether or not the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of best

scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European Sites and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated. Measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the proposed project on European sites (i.e. “mitigation measures”) or best practice measures have not been taken into account in this screening stage appraisal.

1.2.1 Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

According to section 177U(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the competent authority has a duty to:

- Determine whether the proposed Project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of one of more European Sites; and, if not,
- Determine if the Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the European Site(s) in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the site(s).

This report contains information to support a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is intended to provide information that assists the competent authority when assessing and addressing all issues regarding the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project and to allow the competent authority to comply with the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive defines the requirements for assessment of projects and plans for which likely significant effects on European Sites may arise. The Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive together list habitats and species that are of international importance for conservation and require protection. The Habitats Directive requires competent authorities, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects that are not directly connected to or necessary for the management of a European Site, to assess whether the plan or project alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site’s conservation objectives. This requirement is transposed

into Irish Law by, inter alia, Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Section 177U(4) of Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act states:

"The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site."

1.3 SCREENING METHODOLOGY

This Screening Report has been prepared in order to comply with the legislative requirements outlined in Section 1.1 above and aims to establish whether or not the proposed project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site's conservation objectives. In this context "likely" means a risk or possibility of effects occurring that **cannot** be ruled out based on objective information and "significant" means an effect that would undermine the conservation objectives of the European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects (Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), 2021).

The nature of the likely interactions between the proposed development and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites will depend upon the:

- the ecological characteristics of the species or habitat, including their structure, function, conservation status and sensitivity to change; *and/or*
- the character, magnitude, duration, consequences and probability of the impacts arising from land use activities associated with the project, in combination with other plans and projects.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with respective National and European guidance documents: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and

Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2010) and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*; Office of the Planning Regulator – OPR Practice Note PN01: *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management* (2021), and recent European and National case law. The following guidance documents were also of relevance during the preparation of this Screening Report:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010). DEHLG.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/42/EEC. European Commission (EC) (2021).
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2018).

The EC (2021) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for projects. The methodology adopted during the preparation of this Screening Report is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Describe the project and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of European Sites;
2. Identify European Sites that could be influenced by the project;
3. Where European Sites are identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the project identify potential effects arising from the project and screen the potential for such effects to negatively affect European Sites identified under Point 2 above; and
4. Identify other plans or projects that, in combination with the project, have the potential to affect European Sites.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project comprises the proposed development of a 54 no. dwelling units. It is proposed to tiered the development site into a number of distinct housing zones which will be characterised by distinct types of housing. The proposed tiering approach has been adopted to reflect the sloping topography of the project site. The diversity of mix will consequently correspond to this tiered nature of the site. The upper tier will consist of a new apartment complex and landscaped grounds. The height of such a building respects the height of an existing building and the streetscape. The existing apartment building on the site which is 4 stories will be demolished. This currently comprises of 12no. 1-bed apartments. The number of units in the proposed complex will consist of a total of 54 units, comprising of 34 no. apartment units, 20 no. sheltered apartments.

The Design Brief for this complex was based on the requirements of a housing association. The lower tier which is a back-land infill type site will consist of sheltered housing as it has immediate connectivity to Blackpool and is fully accessible in this regard. This building benefits from its immediate adjacency to Blackpool community and medical centre. Sheltered housing in turn has a ripple effect of freeing up houses elsewhere in the locality which can consequently be used by families.

The site is laid out in response to the Cork tradition of building on a level contour. Notable examples include the neighboring Farranferris Educational Campus building as well as numerous other examples in Cork. The masterplan reinforces this pattern of development for the overall site which consist of a series of layers of building and layers of soft landscaping. This in turn is the response to the landscape protection zone which the site form part of.

2.2 BOUNDARY CONDITIONS/PROPOSED WORKS

The site has extensive site boundary conditions. The site has road frontage to the west which fronts onto Redemption Road. This boundary is a mixture of high walls and gates buildings together with some residential scaled gates and railings. The Redemption Road boundary treatment is to be

replaced in its entirety with typically residential scaled gates and railings. A new road entrance is provided.



The northern boundary is bound on the upper tier by an unused laneway, on the middle tier by an unused overgrown green area and on the lower tier the site bounds with the community centre astroturf ball court and car park. These northern boundaries are to be secured with fencing/walling.

The eastern boundary is typically bound by the rear gardens of adjoining properties. These boundaries are to be typically retained as fencing/walling with limited alterations where required.

The Southern boundary is typically bound by rear gardens of adjoining properties. These boundaries are to be typically maintained as fencing/walling with limited alterations where required. On the lower tier, the existing vehicular entrance gate and walls are to be retained. On the upper tier the site adjoins the current land owner's residential accommodation outside the site boundary. This boundary is to be realigned to suit the development.

2.3 ROADS STANDARD

Roads are typically 6m wide with dedicated turning areas. Footpaths range from 1.5m to 2m wide. The roads and paths slope at 1 in 21 providing gentle slopes throughout.

Roads have been designed with the aid of the “Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets” (DMURS) published by Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. The DMURS aims to aid the design of safer, more attractive and vibrant streets which will generate and sustain communities and neighbourhoods. As well as cars and other vehicles this encompasses pedestrians, cyclists and those using public transport. All roads within the development will be cul de sacs.

The road surfaces will be formed from macadam with footpaths formed from concrete.

The proposed roads and footpaths within the site will be taken in charge by Cork City Council following completion of the works given that this will be a social housing project.

2.4 UTILITY AND EMERGENCY ACCESS

All roadways are provided with suitable access for refuse vehicles and fire trucks.

2.5 CAR PARKING

For the upper tier apartments 38 parking spaces are provided on-site and on-street. In addition 1 no. disabled parking space is provide on-site at the rear and 1 no disable parking space is provided on-street.

The lower tier sheltered housing is provided with wheelchair accessible and set down parking.

2.6 BICYCLE PARKING

Bicycle parking is proposed in the rear parking area.

2.7 MATERIALS

The external building material consists predominantly of blue-grey brick walls and complimentary painted metalwork for projecting canopies balconies and glazing. Boundary and retaining wall treatment is finished in concrete masonry. This limited palette of robust materials give the scheme its simplicity and continuity.

2.8 ENERGY USE

Building Energy Rating Certificates will be required for each unit in this development. The Building Regulations will require a A3 rating in this regard. An energy assessment will be carried out at the detail design stage to demonstrate compliance with TGD Part L. Of note, measures include solar panels as a suitable renewable, increased thermal insulation, higher thermal performance windows and doors, elimination of cold bridging, and airtight construction together with low energy lighting and controls will be incorporated into the development.

2.9 STORM WATER DRAINAGE

Currently Storm water drainage from the site is primarily by infiltration to ground with certain volumes running off at low level into the Hattons Alley Lane site at the bottom of the site. The existing runoff from the site finds its way into the existing combined sewer network on Hatton's Alley Lane.

It is proposed to install 3 no. storm water soakaways to deal with stormwater generated on the site. Runoff from the top tier of apartments fronting onto Redemption Road will be transferred to a soakaway to be located to the rear of the apartments in what is proposed to be a green area. A second soakaway to be located on the green area to the east of the proposed terrace houses will deal with the middle tier of housing including any over spill from the top tier.

Runoff from the bottom apartment block (Eastern network) is to be collected in a separate soakaway adjoining the proposed building. As the bottom block of apartments will be piled, there will be no danger of the soakaway having a detrimental effect on the building sub structure.

Stormwater discharge from the site will be limited to the 1 in 30 year greenfield runoff rate. The greenfield runoff rate was calculated separately for the two separate drainage networks on the site. The calculations were based on an IH124 Greenfield Runoff rate calculation for the area using a SOIL value of 0.4, based on the shallow depth of rock and the steep gradients at much of the site. A SAAR value of 1,200mm was used in the calculation of the greenfield runoff rate.

For the western network (Upper and middle tiers) on the site the runoff rate was calculated as 7.6l/s, and for the eastern network (lowest tier) of the site the runoff rate was calculated as 1.3l/s.

The storage capacities of the three soakaways tanks have been calculated as part of the overall drainage design. To ensure that there is no flooding in the 1 in 100 year rainfall event with a 20% allowance for climate change, attenuation tanks will be provided.

2.10 FOUL WATER DRAINAGE

It is proposed to connect the foul water drainage from the top tier of the site to the combined sewer which flows southwards along Redemption Road. The existing Glen View House is connected to an existing manhole on the footpath south of the proposed entrance to the site. It is proposed to reuse this pipe if it can be proven to suit the purposes of the new development.

The foul water waste from the bottom level tier comprising of the sheltered housing apartments will be disposed of to the combined sewer on Hattons Alley Lane.

The basic approach adopted for the design of the proposed foul water drainage is to connect each proposed house to a proposed foul sewer system running through the proposed development, following the route of the access road and discharging ultimately towards the existing combined sewer. It is proposed that foul drainage from each house will connect via 100mm diameter branch lines.

2.11 WATERMAIN DESIGN

A pre-enquiry form has been submitted to Irish Water with respect to the required water connection. A confirmation of feasibility has been received from Irish Water. It is proposed to make a connection to the water supply network at both ends of the site at Redemption Road and Hattons Alley Lane with the main snaking its way through the development.

Generally it is required by Irish Water that a 'ring main' setup is constructed to allow for the network to be partially isolated in the event of a leak or breakage. Due to the geometry and constraints of the site and the proposed development layout, it is considered that the requirement for a ring main has been satisfied. A 100mm diameter main is proposed for the site, although this is open to review by Irish Water.

Fire hydrants have been included in the design for the site layout. These have been positioned such that all proposed dwellings have a fire hydrant within 46m as per the Irish Water standard detail requirements.

2.12 CONSTRUCTION PHASE MONITORING

The construction phase of the project will be monitored to ensure that environmental best practice is adhered to and effectively implemented throughout the duration of this phase. The following systems will be put in place to ensure adherence to best practice:

- The contractor will assign a member of the site staff as the environmental officer with the responsibility for ensuring the environmental measures prescribed above are adhered to. A checklist will be filled in on a weekly basis to show how the measures have been complied with. Any environmental incidents or non-compliance issues will immediately be reported to the project team.
- The project managers will be continuously monitoring the works and will be fully briefed and aware of the environmental constraints and protection measures to be employed.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT SITE

The project site is located at Redemption Road, Blackpool, Cork City. Blackpool village is located immediately east of the site. The site is approximately 400 metres southeast of Blackpool shopping centre and 1.5 km north of Cork City centre. Figure 3.1 provides an aerial view of the project site, showing an approximate site boundary (please refer to engineering drawings for exact dimensions of site features). There is an urban landscape surrounding the site. Much of the surrounding landscape appears to be residential. There are however a number of bars, cafes and shops located east of the site in Blackpool village. There are two schools located nearby. These include Gaelscoil Pheig Sayers, which is located at Farranferris Educational Campus, west of the proposed site. North Monastery Secondary School is located south-west of the site. There are also various recreational facilities in the vicinity of the proposed site. These include an Astro turf pitch located along the north-east boundary of the site that belongs to Blackpool Community Centre. There are green areas/sports pitches located next to Gaelscoil Pheig Sayers to the west of the site. There are also sport pitches belonging to North Monastery Secondary School located south-west of the site.

The River Bride is located approximately 120 metres east of the site. This river joins with the Glen River approximately 150 metres downstream to form the River Kiln, which discharges into the River Lee ~1 km downstream.



Figure 3.1. Project site aerial photograph (Data Source: Google Earth, 2018).

4.0 IS THE PROJECT NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES

The project has been described in Section 2 of this Screening Report and it is clear from the description provided that the project is not directly connected with or necessary for the future conservation management of any European Sites.

5.0 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT

5.1 WITHIN/ADJOINING EUROPEAN SITES

Current guidance (OPR, 2021) informing the approach to screening for Appropriate Assessment defines the zone of influence of a proposed development as the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. It is recommended that this is established on a case-by-case basis. In order to identify European Sites that could potentially be located within the zone of influence of the project, the current digital mapping (shapefile) of European Sites in Ireland¹, as published by the NPWS, was reviewed to identify the European Sites that could conceivably be connected to the project site via pathways. The OPR guidelines recommend that for projects that are located within or immediately adjacent to European Sites, the relevant European Site should be automatically selected for consideration in the screening exercise. No European Sites occur within or adjoin the project site and as such automatic inclusion of European Sites for consideration in this screening is not triggered. In view of this, the screening moves on to consider the potential for European Sites to occur within the zone of influence of the project as a result of indirect connections. This is completed using a source-pathway-receptor (SPR) model

¹ Current SAC shapefile layer dated April 2022; current SPA shapefile layer dated October 2021

5.2 SOURCE-PATHWAY-RECEPTOR MODEL

Current guidance informing the approach to screening for Appropriate Assessment defines the zone of influence of a project as the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. It is recommended that this is established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) model.

Under the SPR model the project, the works associated with the construction and decommissioning phase and the operation of the project represent the source of potential impacts. Pathways are represented by vectors that could potentially convey impacts from the project site to European Sites and features of interest. The receptors are European Sites and their features of interest.

The European Sites occurring in the wider area surrounding the project site are shown on Figure 5.1. These European Sites are:

Cork Harbour SPA

Great Island Channel SAC

Blackwater River SAC

See the Table 5.1 – 5.3 overleaf for a summary of the qualifying interests and generic conservation objectives for these European Sites.

Table 5.1: Cork Harbour SPA– Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives

Site Name and Code	Qualifying Interests [Natura 2000 Code] *Denotes priority habitat	Conservation Objectives
Cork Harbour SPA [004030]	[A004] Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> [A005] Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> [A017] Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> [A028] Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i> [A048] Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> [A050] Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> [A052] Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> [A054] Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> [A056] Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i> [A069] Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i> [A130] Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> [A140] Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> [A141] Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> [A142] Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> [A149] Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> [A156] Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> [A160] Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> [A162] Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> [A179] Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> [A182] Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i> [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> [A193] Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> [A999] Wetlands	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interests in Cork Harbour SPA (see left).

Table 5.2: Great Island Channel SAC - Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives

Site Name and Code	Qualifying Interests [Natura 2000 Code] *Denotes priority habitat	Conservation Objectives
Great Island Channel SAC [001058]	[1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the habitat ‘Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide’ • To restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitat ‘Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)’

Table 5.3: Blackwater River SAC - Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives

Site Name and Code	Qualifying Interests [Natura 2000 Code] *Denotes priority habitat	Conservation Objectives
Blackwater River SAC [002170]	[1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> [1092] White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1095] Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> [1096] Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> [1099] River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> [1103] Twaite Shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> [1106] Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> (only in fresh water) [1130] Estuaries [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1220] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1310] <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1355] Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1421] Killarney Fern <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91E0] *Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91J0] * <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.

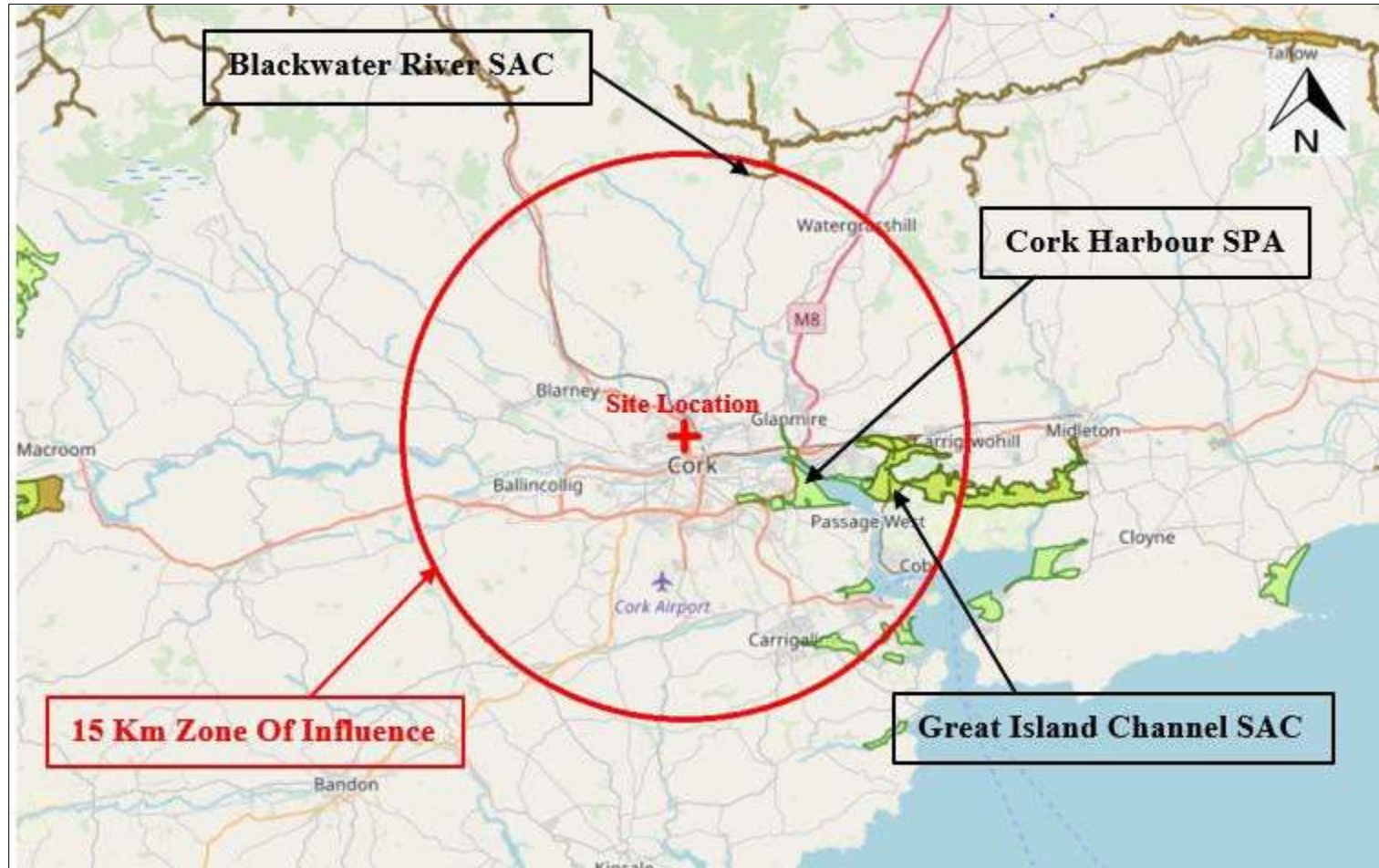


Figure 5.1. European Sites in the Wider Surrounding Area

Once all European Sites in this area were identified, an initial assessment of the project's The type of pathways that could represent vectors for the conveyance of impacts are considered in Section 5.2.1 below.

5.2.1 SPR Model Pathways

Pathways that can arise as a result of development projects and lead to offsite/downstream impacts are listed below and an appraisal of the potential for these pathways to connect the project to European Sites and their qualifying features of interest are also listed below and each are examined for their potential to function as pathways connecting the project to European Sites.

5.2.1.1 Emissions to Surface water

For this project, there are no obvious pathways connecting the proposed site to Blackwater River SAC. This SAC will not be discussed further in this report.

As previously mentioned, the River Bride is located approximately 120 metres east of the site. This river discharges into the River Lee just over 1 km downstream via the River Kiln. The River Lee flows into Cork harbour SPA approximately 5 km downstream and meets Great Island Channel SAC 10 km downstream. The proximity of the site to the River Bride pathway to Cork Harbour are shown in Figures 5.1 and 5.2.

Given the buffer distance of c. 120m separating the project site from the nearest point of the River Bride, the requirements to construct, design and operate the project in accordance with Objectives 9.4; 9.5; 9.6 and 9.7 of the Cork City Development Plan, the project will not have the potential to result in the discharge of potentially contaminating surface water emissions to the River Bride and to the European Sites occurring downstream at Cork Harbour. In view of this hydrological pathway is ruled out.



Figure 5.1: Rivers/streams located in the vicinity of the proposed site location



Figure 5.2: Water pathway from site location to Cork harbour SPA/Great Island Channel SAC

5.2.1.2 Emissions to Groundwater

The project will not result in interactions with underlying groundwater bodies and will not pose a risk to ground water quality.

5.2.1.3 Noise & Vibration Emissions

Noise and vibration emissions are considered to have the potential to result in negative impacts to biodiversity up to a 300m distance from the emission source. This distance is based on the maximum noise disturbance zone of 300m for wetland bird species, as specified by Cutts et al. (2013)². Noise and vibration effects for other qualifying species as well as qualifying habitats of European Sites are less than 300m. For mammal species listed as qualifying features of interest for SACs in the surrounding area this distance is set at 150m, as per the NRA (2009). For qualifying aquatic species, a potential noise and vibration impact pathway will only arise where works such as piling or blasting are proposed at instream or bankside locations within adjoining SACs. Given that no SPAs are located within a 300m buffer zone of the project site and no Annex 2 species occur within or within a 150m zone of the project site there will be no potential for the project to result in noise or vibration disturbance to otters.

5.2.1.4 Emissions to Air

Air emissions that have been identified as arising from the proposed development relate to the generation of dust emissions during the construction phase. Dust emissions can have the potential to result in negative impacts to biodiversity up to 50m from the source of the emission. This is supported by the guidance outlined by Holman et al. (2014), which provides a risk

² It is noted Nature Scotland (2022) published disturbances zones for bird species at a greater distance than 300m. However, unlike Cutt et al. (2013) who specifically examined disturbance effects generated by noise stimuli, the potential disturbance stimuli set out in the Nature Scotland publication are not concerned specifically with noise stimuli. As such the Cutts et al. (2013) publication and maximum noise disturbance distance is relied upon.

assessment for ecological impacts arising from dust deposition. European Sites are ranked as high sensitive sites and the risk to high sensitive sites ranges from high (at less than 20m from source) and medium (at less than 50m from source), while low risks, representative of insignificant and de-minimis effects arise at distances greater than 50m from source. No European Sites are located within 50m of the project site and as such the potential for an air emission pathway to connect the project site to other European Sites is ruled out

5.2.1.5 Light Emissions

The proposed development is located at a remote distance from European Sites and is located within the urban area of Cork City. It will not result in perceptible changes to night time lighting in the vicinity of the project site or at any European Sites in the wider surrounding area.

5.2.1.6 Visual Emissions

Certain qualifying species of European Sites can be sensitive to visual changes in the landscape and visual disturbance as a result of new structures. However given the distance between the project site and European Sites the project will not have the potential to result in visual emissions to qualifying species of the SAC.

5.2.1.7 Mobile Species Pathways

Development projects that are located outside of European Sites can also result in impacts to mobile qualifying species of European Sites in the event that such species rely on habitats occurring within the proposed development site. The project site is representative of an infill site in an area surrounded by urban land cover and does not offer suitable habitat for any mobile qualifying interests of European Sites such as special conservation interest bird species of the Cork Harbour SPA. As such a mobile species pathway is ruled out.

5.3 SUMMARY OF SOURCE-PATHWAY-RECEPTOR MODEL

During the examination of potential pathway that could conceivably connect the project to European Sites, none were identified as being present and linking the project site to European Sites. In the absence of pathways the project will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. In view of this all European Sites are considered to lie outside the zone of influence of the project.

5.4 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

A review of Cork City Council's EPlan online planning viewer identified no recent (within the last five years) planning applications in the immediate vicinity of the project site.

The nearest recent planning applications identified are located approximately to the south, southwest of the project site and relate to the demolition and replacement with a vehicular gate to provide parking (Planning References: 1638890 and 1737458).

The works associated with this other project are minor in scale and are likely to have been completed at the time of writing. There will be no potential for the project to combine with this other project to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

6.0 SCREENING CONCLUSION

The proposed project has been screened for its potential to result in likely significant effects to surrounding European Sites. As this project site is located outside the boundary of any European Site, a Source-Pathway-Receiver model was used to identify potential impact pathways linking the project site to European Sites. No pathways have been identified and all European Sites are considered to lie outside the zone of influence of the project.

Given the absence of any pathways and any European Sites within the zone of influence of the project, there will be no potential for the project to combine with other plans, projects or existing pressures to result in cumulative adverse effects to European Sites in the wider surrounding area.

In light of the findings of this report it is the considered view of the authors of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment that it can be concluded by Cork City Council that the project is not likely, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to have a significant effect on any European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.

This Screening has resulted in a Finding of No Significant Effects and as such a Stage II Appropriate Assessment is not required.

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