



The Railyard Apartments

Screening Report for Appropriate
Assessment

Albert Quay, Co. Cork

DEC Ltd.

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Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

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Albert Quay, Co. Cork

Document Stage	Prepared by
Final	Pat Doherty MSc, MCIEEM

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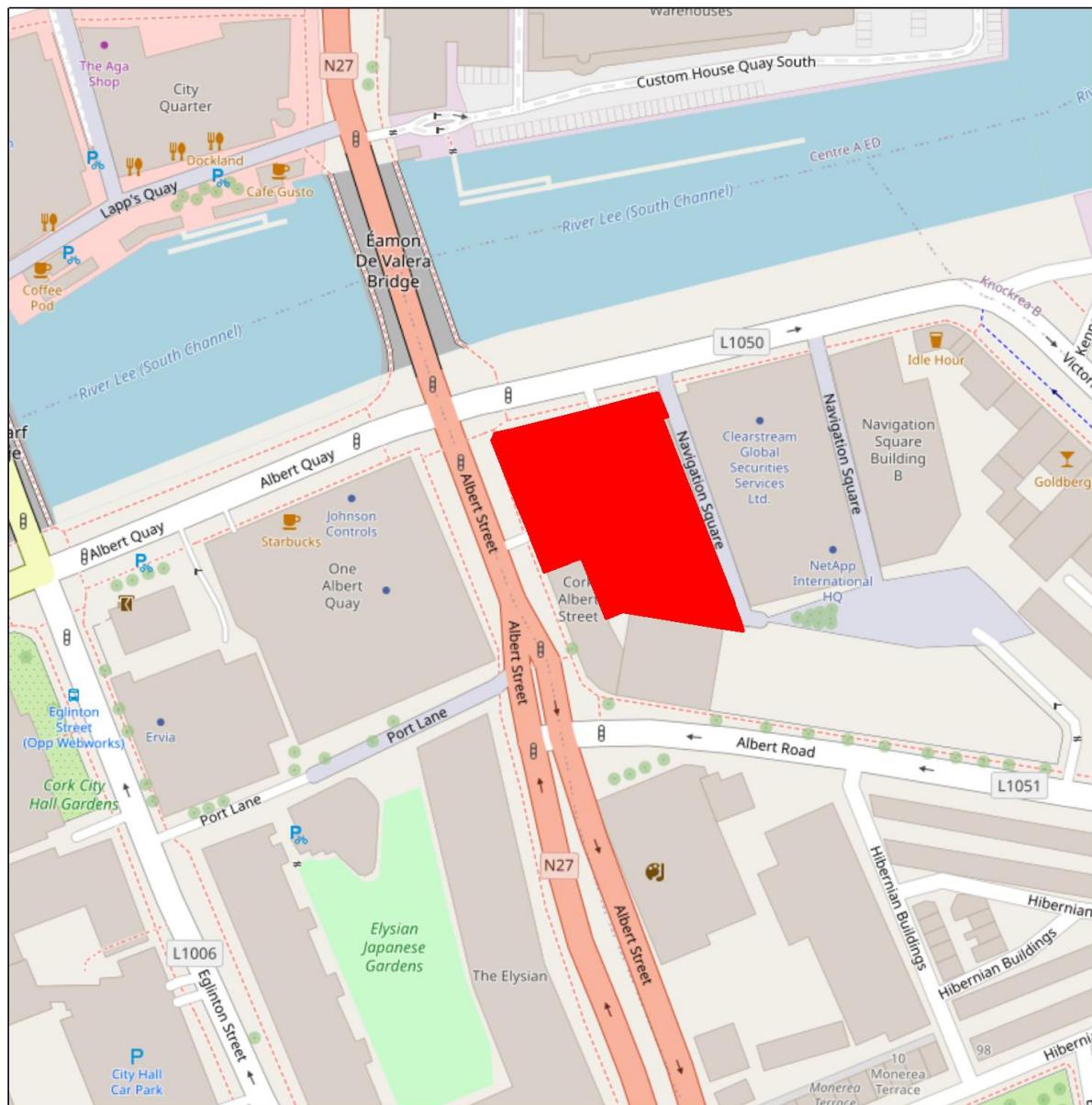
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Doherty Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd. have been commissioned by Progressive Commercial Construction Ltd to undertake a Screening for Appropriate Assessment for a proposed residential development, The Railyard Apartments, at Albert Quay, Cork (see Figure 1.1 for the location of 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.

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,

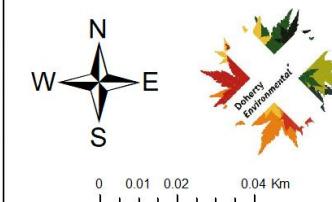


Railyard Residential Development

Figure 1.1

Location of the Project Site

Project Site



Drawn By	PD
Date	12/06/2024
Data Source	Bing

such 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.

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”) have not been taken into account in this screening stage appraisal of the project. It is noted that, as per the EC (2021) Guidelines, design and generic measures can be taken into account at the screening stage. Furthermore, it is noted that European legal precedent¹ has established that account may be taken of features of a project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing the harmful effects of the project on a European Site, where those features have been incorporated into that project as standard features, inherent in such a project, irrespective of any effect on the site.

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

¹ **ECJ Judgement C-721/21 of the 15th June 2023**

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. "

2.0 STAGE 1 SCREENING METHOD

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 plan, 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); *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*; and *Office of the Planning Regulator – OPR Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management* (2021), and recent European and National case law. The guidance document *Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission* (2018) was also of relevance during the preparation of this Screening Report.

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.

3.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Progressive Commercial Construction Limited proposes a residential development at the former Carey Tool Hire site, currently occupied (principally) by Park Facilities Management Ltd., at Albert Quay, Cork City.

The site is bounded by Albert Quay East to the north, Albert Street to the west, the former Blackrock and Passage Railway Terminus – Ticket Office, a Protected Structure, Ref. No. PS 1138, and which is also a Recorded Monument, CO074-119002, the two-storey former Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway Offices, Protected Structure, Ref. No. PS 1137, and the Albert Road Post Box, which is also a Protected Structure Ref. No. PS942 and Albert Road to the south, and Navigation Square to the east. The site is accessed by Albert Quay East and Albert Street.

The project consists of a residential development comprising 217 no. apartments [25 no. studio units; 92 no. 1-bed units; 88 no. 2-bed units; and 12 no. 3-bed units] in a building that ranges in height from 8 to 11 to 24 storeys over ground floor; and the provision of external balconies on the east, west and south elevations to the 12th floor on the east and west elevation, and to the 9th floor on the southern elevation. The project also comprises an external public realm area at ground level, an eastern laneway for servicing of the proposed development, in addition to its use as a pedestrian link; internal communal space areas at ground floor, 1st floor, and 2nd floor, and 2no. external rooftop terraces on the 9th floor and the 12th floor; a ground floor community/arts use, with external seating area; a ground floor creche with external covered play area; ground floor plant, ancillary uses, and bin store; bicycle spaces at lower ground floor and ground floor level; additional visitor bicycle spaces; and a set down delivery area at ground floor level on Albert Street; set back of the eastern boundary wall to the north

and south; and all site development, public realm and landscaping works. The project involves the demolition of the existing two-storey Carey Tool Hire building, currently principally occupied by Park Facilities Management Ltd.

SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT

The project site is located within sub-section 1 of the south Docklands development drainage sub-catchment. The South Docklands Local Area Plan directs that the drainage from sub-catchment 1 should outfall directly to the River Lee.

The proposed storm network has been reviewed with the Cork City Council Drainage Department and it has been agreed that an existing outfall to the River Lee, located at the junction of Albert Quay and Victoria Road can be utilised.

The project engineer (MMOS) has noted in the Civil Engineering Report (provided under separate cover with the planning application documentation) that there is no specific requirement to provide attenuation storage for a proposed development on a brownfield site in close proximity to the River Lee, such as this project. However, the design of the project has included for an onsite attenuation storage volume of 50m³ to allow for storage on site in the case of a 1:20 year flood event.

It is proposed to provide a new 375 diameter sewer laid across Albert Quay East with an outfall to the River Lee as described above. In addition, rain gardens are proposed to provide a sustainable urban drainage system for the scheme.

SUDS MEASURES

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) measures address challenges associated with urbanization, including flooding, water pollution and habitat loss. In essence, SuDS principles aim to mimic natural water management processes, promoting infiltration, storage, and evapotranspiration.

The landscaping for the project site has been designed to utilise rain gardens to provide a sustainable urban drainage system for the scheme. Rain gardens are shallow, vegetated depressions designed to capture and treat stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, which comprise soil media, vegetation, and sometimes mulch or decorative stones. The functionality of rain garden lies in facilitating infiltration, pollutant removal, and groundwater recharge, while also offering aesthetic and ecological benefits. The rain gardens are proposed to infiltrate the surface water from paving around the site, and will be fitted with a high-level overflow drain in the event that the rain garden is overwhelmed during a flood event. The overflow drain is itself proposed to be connected to the stormwater network that is, itself, connected to the underground attenuation tank. There are 192m² of landscaping, green areas and tree pits incorporated onto the site to work as SuDS in addition to the attenuation tank.

FOUL WATER DRAINAGE

A large (1800mm diameter) interceptor sewer exists on Albert Quay and is connected into the siphon chamber at the Victoria Road Junction. From this point, sewage effluent drains to the Atlantic Pond pumping station. It is proposed that dedicated foul sewer outfalls will be provided from the development and connect directly to the 1800mm diameter sewer on Albert Quay.

A pre-connection inquiry connection was made to Uisce Éireann in 2023. Uisce Éireann has indicated that the foul drainage connection is feasible without upgrades to existing Uisce Éireann infrastructure in its Confirmation of Feasibility, reference CDS23008059, dated 21st December, 2023.

The existing sewer invert and the proposed sewer outfall invert from the project are at levels which allow a connection to the existing manholes on the 1800mm diameter interceptor sewer. All connection works will be subject to the approval and supervision of Cork City Council Drainage Department and Uisce Éireann.

All foul effluent arising from the project will discharge into the foul sewer system. Any foul effluent arising from kitchens/canteens or any other food preparation areas will drain to a suitable grease trap/interceptor prior to discharge to the public sewerage system. Grease traps will be designed to BS EN 1825.

It is proposed that all foul sewage effluent will pass through non-return valves, located within the site, to prevent back up in the sewers in the event of a flood in public sewage system.

Calculations for the Foul sewer show a peak outfall of 6.71 l/sec to the Albert Quay Sewer. It is noted by the project engineers, MMOS, that the existing sewer on Albert Quay is sufficiently sized to cater for this minimal additional flow.

WATER SUPPLY

There is a 250mm diameter water main on the near side of Albert Quay. There are 3no. hydrants in the vicinity of the development, on the near side of Albert Quay at the entrance to the existing carpark, on Albert Street and on the opposite side of Albert Road. An additional hydrant is proposed on Albert Quay. It is also proposed to provide a new 150mm diameter connection to the 250mm diameter water main on the near side of Albert Quay to serve the overall development. Uisce Éireann has indicated that this connection is feasible without upgrades to existing Uisce Éireann infrastructure in its Confirmation of Feasibility, reference CDS23008059, dated 21st December, 2023.

CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Construction Sequence

As set out in more detail below, the construction of the project will be carried out in the following phases:

- Phase 1: Site Preparation & Enabling Works.
- Phase 2: Substructure Works.
- Phase 3: The RC Superstructure Works, including all associated works.
- Phase 4: Public Realm Works.

The proposed works will be constructed in the following sequence.

- Demolition of existing building structures as listed above.
- The installation of the CFA piles from the existing ground level into the dense gravels, approx. 22m BGL.
- The local excavation of the lower ground floor and lift bases below ground level for the construction of the reinforced concrete pile caps, rafts and ground beams.
- The construction of the reinforced concrete pile caps and ground beams from the remaining of the substructure close to the existing ground level to allow for the raised ground floor level for passive flood protection.
- The construction of the underground drainage and services.
- The structural works to the railway terminus building including the repair of the steel roof trusses and the repair works to the external walls/ ground floor slab.
- The installation of the first level of the superstructure reinforced concrete walls and columns.
- The installation of the insulation and waterproofing below the ground floor slab.

- The construction of the ground floor reinforced concrete floor slab.
- Erection of concrete stairs and lift cores to roof level. This core will be undertaken in concrete framed construction.
- Erection of the remaining reinforced concrete framed superstructure. The structure will consist of a concrete flat slab supported on internal/ perimeter columns and reinforced concrete cores.
- Construction of glazing and facades in accordance with the architect's drawings and specifications.
- Roof completions.
- Mechanical and electrical installations.
- Internal fitout works.
- The remaining tie in works to the substructure drainage.
- External works.

Site Hoarding

Drawing 18254-MMS-ZZ-ST-DR-C-10006 prepared by MMOS and provided under separate cover with the planning application documentation indicates the proposed layout of the hoarding that will be required during the construction phase of the project. It is noted that the location of hoarding on the public street will be subject to a separate agreement and or licence between the main contractor and Cork City Council.

The hoarding will be provided to the edge of the existing footpaths on Albert Street and Albert Quay East and pedestrian movements will be diverted in agreement with the Cork City Council.

Construction access during the works will principally be from Albert Quay and it is intended to install a cycle lane along Albert Quay (if not previously installed); and a 3.0m high hoarding along Albert Quay and Albert Street.

Signage will be provided on all hoarding in conjunction with adjoining traders to direct pedestrians and to convey that “business as usual” will continue during the construction process.

The hoarding will be removed on completion of the building facades & external paving works.

Tower Crane

It is intended that at least one tower crane will be erected for the construction of the superstructure. The tower cranes will be required for the erection of the building frame and super structure and, given the scale of the building, a Heavy-Duty Tower Crane will be provided and will be located centrally within the site.

Piling

The structure will be supported on reinforced concrete piles (CFA/Displacement) found in the dense gravels.

There will be some limited dewatering works required for the lower ground floor of this development. The dewatering will be undertaken in localised areas and will be used to drop the water table locally during the construction of the foundations. It is proposed to pump the ground water to the river using the stormwater crossing. The double basement previously permitted has been omitted from the project and will not be constructed. The piles will be installed from the existing ground level using the concrete hardstanding as a piling matt for the scheme.

A low-noise-and-vibration piling rig will be used for all piling works.

Excavation

The construction works will involve the excavation of approximately 1,280m³ of soil from the site.

All excess soil arising from the excavation and construction works will be removed by a licensed contractor to one or more of the following appropriately licensed facilities:

- Roadstone Limited Midleton Quarry (WO307-01); and/or
- Tulligmore Quarry Solutions Limited (W0255-02).

Soils arising from the site are anticipated to be as follows.

- 0 - 2.2 m BGL Fill material or made ground of sandy gravelly clay material.
- 2.0 m – 4.0 m BGL Sandy Gravelly SILT layers that are generally weak in nature.
- 4.0 m – 11.0 m BGL - Medium Dense, becoming denser with depth, Sandy GRAVEL layers that are rounded in shape.

The site history suggests that the site was formerly used as a Rail Terminus to the south of the site, office use to the west of the suite and a Stock Yard to the east of the site.

Based on the knowledge of the site history, it is anticipated that the majority of material to be removed off site is likely to be inert in nature, however, the site investigation process will confirm the precise classification of the material present.

Confirmatory site investigations and further testing will be undertaken post demolition to ascertain the final classification and removal of all material from the site. Any material that is determined to be non-inert will be segregated on site before being transported to a non-inert landfill (located at East Cork Landfill Site (W0022-01) or Raffeen (W0023-01).

Final certification for all materials removed off site will be provided by the main contractor on completion of the excavation works.

Construction Sequence – Further Details

As stated above, the construction of the proposed development will be carried out in the following phases:

- Phase 1: Site Preparation & Enabling Works.
- Phase 2: Substructure Works.
- Phase 3: The RC Superstructure Works, including all associated works.
- Phase 4: Public Realm Works.

It is estimated that the proposed phases will take approximately 2 years.

3.1.1.1 Phase 1

The former Carey Tool Hire trade warehouse (now occupied by Park Facilities) (and covering 1,726m² of the site) is to be demolished. The existing hardstanding areas are to be excavated, crushed and, where possible, recycled on site, in accordance with a Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan to be finalised prior to the commencement of development (containing the measures included in the MMOS Construction, Environmental and Demolition Waste Management Plan submitted with the planning application documentation).

The location and operation of the site compound will be co-ordinated by the main contractor on appointment.

It is also proposed to reuse the former tracks and cobble sets of the former Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway as part of the landscape strategy for the proposed development, as a memory of the former railway use. The piers and wrought iron gate on Albert Street will be retained and relocated to the north of Carey House. The northern and southern section of the existing eastern stone boundary is to be set back, and the existing pier relocated to the northern boundary of the setback eastern boundary

wall. The existing access from the N27 (Albert Street) is to be retained for use during the initial phases of construction.

3.1.1.2 Phase 2

The piling for the substructure will be carried out from the existing ground level that is currently a concrete slab. Much of the substructure will be constructed at the existing ground level, thereby reducing the volume of excavation and soil to be removed off site.

The partial lower ground floor area (c. 320m²) is to be constructed below the existing ground level, involving the excavation of the site to formation level, including the removal of approximately 1,280 m³ of soil from the site. The reinforcement concrete pile caps and the ground beams will be constructed below the lower ground floor level with RC retaining walls to ground floor level at the perimeter.

The lower ground floor will accommodate plant rooms and bicycle storage. The site clearance and substructure works will facilitate the development of the project, which will involve the construction of the reinforced concrete pile caps and ground beams to support the ground floor slab and columns for the superstructure. The associated water proofing of the lower and upper ground floor slab will be installed followed by the ground floor slab and the erection of concrete stairs and lift cores to roof level.

3.1.1.3 Phase 3

The main structural Frame will be completed following from the execution of the substructure works and ground floor slab.

The cores will be undertaken in concrete-framed construction; construction of concrete columns and upper floor concrete slabs; construction of glazing and stone facades; roof completions; mechanical and electrical installations; internal apartment fit out works; and external drainage and services.

On completion of the building structure, the building envelope will be completed and will include glazing and other façade elements, roof finishes and other completions.

3.1.1.4 Phase 4

The public realm and landscaping works, including boundary treatments, to the ground floor plaza are to be completed in this final phase, as is the upgrade of the public footpaths on Albert Quay, Albert Street and Albert Road in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site. Cork City has given its consent to the works to the public footpaths on Albert Quay, Albert Street and Albert Road.

Construction Access

During the construction phase of the project, delivery vehicles will access the site via Horgan's Quay or the South link. Site traffic entering via Horgan's Quay will turn left at Eamon De Valera bridge and access the site via the access gate on Albert Quay. Site traffic entering via South City Link will continue onto Eglinton Road, turning right onto Albert Quay. An alternative site access to the site compound will be provided, whereby traffic will continue onto Albert Quay East, Victoria Road and Albert Road to the access gate on Albert Road.

Vehicles leaving the site will proceed to end of Albert Quay onto Victoria Road and Albert Quay. From here traffic can proceed south to the South Link or North to Penrose Quay.

Site Compound

The location and operation of the site compound will be co-ordinated by the main contractor with details provided to the planning authority prior to commencement.

Work on Public Roads

Works on public roads outside the site will be co-ordinated and will be co-ordinated with Cork City Council and the adjoining businesses and residents. These works

include: footpath replacement and/or repair works; public lighting; and improved public realm works. Any existing dropped kerbs, not intended to serve as a vehicle access route or pedestrian crossing, are to be removed and replaced with full height kerbs.

Secure site hoarding will be installed around any works outside of the site, with controlled access points.

Hours of Work

Working hours during site clearance and construction shall be restricted to 0800-1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays. Activities outside these hours shall require the prior approval of the CCC Housing Capital Section.

Demolition

Table 3.1 shows the estimated volume of waste/asbestos from the proposed demolition at the Carey Tools retail building and office building which are due for demolition

Table 3.1: Estimated volume of waste/asbestos from demolition

Non-Hazardous

Material	Volume (m ³)	Code
Timber	292.80	17 02 01
Plasterboard	2.21	17 08 00
Metals	287.23	17 04 00
Concrete	811.83	17 01 00
Others	209.10	17 09 00
Total =	1603.17	

Hazardous

Material	Volume (m ³)	Code
Asbestos Cement Sheeting	3.45	17 06 05
Asbestos containing felt	2.04	17 06 05
Asbestos containing floor tiles	0.40	17 06 05
Asbestos cement pipes	0.12	17 06 05
Total =	6.01	

An Asbestos Survey report of the buildings at the Carey Tools Building now occupied by Park Facilities was carried out by Pheonix Environmental Safety Ltd with the aim of finding asbestos containing materials within the site. The scope of the asbestos survey encompassed all accessible areas of the existing Carey Tools retail building and office building which are due for demolition. Shown in Figure 3.1 are the findings from the survey.

During the asbestos survey of the Carey Tools building, the following asbestos containing materials were detected:

- Asbestos cement sheeting was identified on the main pitched roof over the retail area (525 m² approx. floor area). Asbestos cement side sheeting was also identified adjacent to this roof.
- Asbestos cement sheeting was identified on the roof and gable at the rear left-hand side (50 m² approx. floor area)
- Asbestos containing felt was identified on the main pitched roof over the building warehouse (680 m² approx. floor area)
- Asbestos containing floor tiles and bitumen adhesive was identified on the floor under the slated roof in the warehouse (40 m² approx.)
- Asbestos cement slate debris was identified in the attic in the house / office building. Some areas of the roof may contain asbestos cement slates mixed through the natural slates
- An asbestos cement pipes were identified outside the 1st floor W/C on the house / office building (10 linear meters total approx.)

See Appendix C & F for more details

Figure 3.1: Asbestos Survey from Carey Tools

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT SITE

The project site is located on Albert Quay within the urban environs of Cork City. The project site consists of the former Carey Tool Hire site, currently occupied (principally) by Park Facilities Management Ltd., and the footprint of the previously demolished Sextant Public House, at Albert Quay, Cork City.

The land cover (as per Fossit, 2000) at and surrounding the project site is representative of buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3).

The project site does not support any natural or semi-natural habitats. The structures occurring within the project site consists of the former Carey's Tool Hire building, now occupied by Park Facilities. This is a corrugated roofed building. The structures occurring adjacent to the project site include the former Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway Offices are of pre-1950's origin.

The project site is separated from the south channel of the River Lee by Albert Quay. The quay wall is located approximately 25m to the north of the site boundary. This section of the River Lee is tidal and forms part of the Lee Estuary Lower transitional waterbody (Water Framework Directive (WFD) Code IE_SW_060_0900). The WFD water quality of this transitional waterbody between 2010 and 2015 was classified as Moderate. More recently for the period 2018 to 2020 the WFD water quality for this transitional waterbody has been classified as Intermediate. Further details on water quality within this waterbody and downstream in Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour are provided in Section 6 below.

The soils and subsoils occurring within the project site consist of made ground while the bedrock is comprised of dark muddy limestone and shales of the Ballysteen Formation and unbedded limestones of the Waulsortian Formation. The project site overlies the Lee Valley Gravels groundwater catchment (Code: IE_SW_G_094). The Geological Survey of Ireland has categorised this groundwater catchment at high vulnerability.

A review of the historical 6 inch maps from 1829 to 1842 indicate that the southern portion of the site was utilised as a metal works factory. The historical 25 inch map from 1888 to 1913 show the presence of the Blackrock and Passage Railway terminus and office buildings. The area formerly occupied by Carey Tool Hire building, and now accommodating Park Facilities is depicted as an unbuilt yard area.

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

The project has been described in Section 2 of the 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.

6.0 EUROPEAN SITES OCCURRING WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT

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. 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. The project is not located within or adjoining any European Sites and as such no European Site are automatically selected for further consideration.

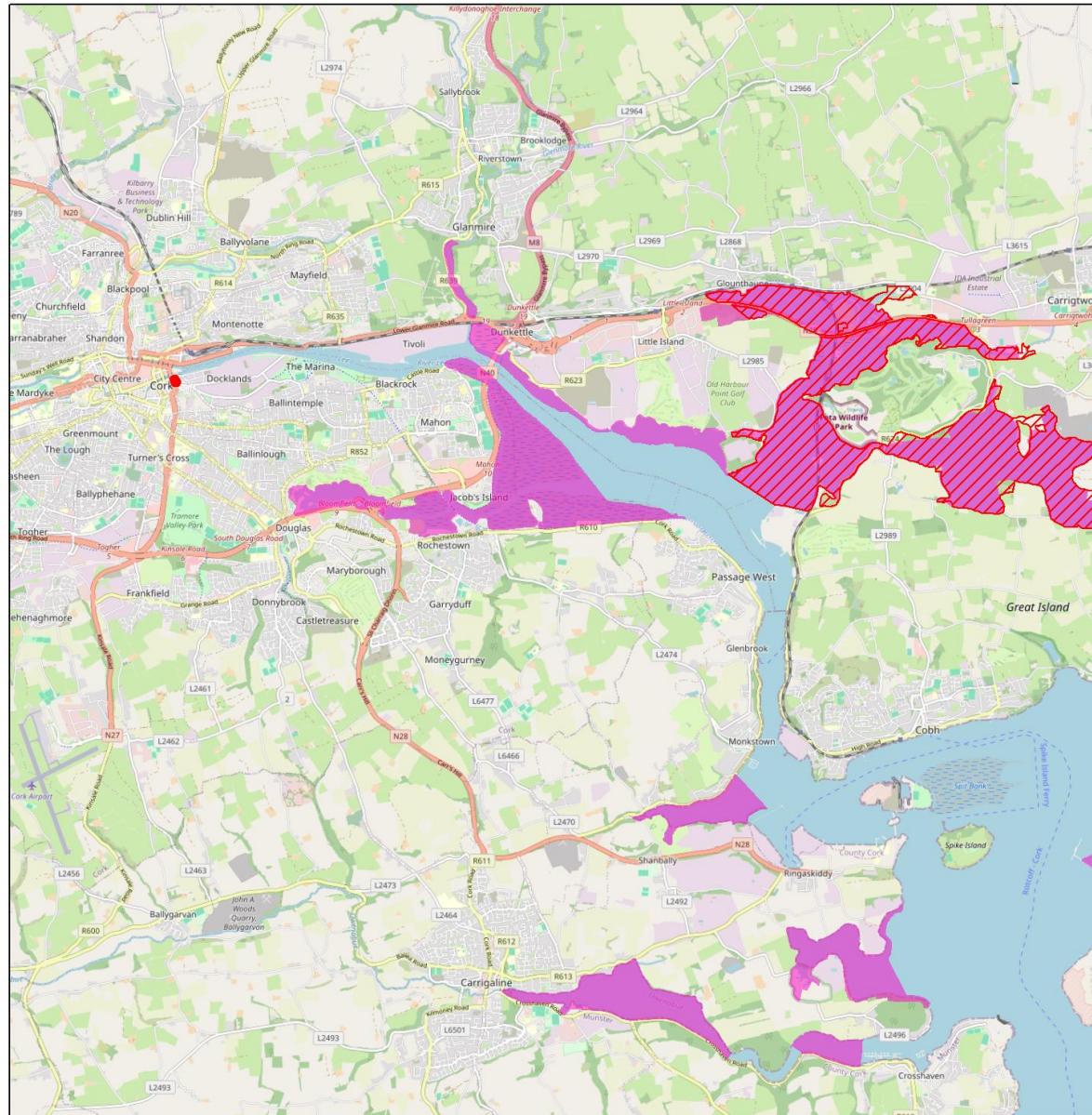
For European Sites located further afield it is recommended that a Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) framework is used to established whether or not European Sites occur within the zone of influence of the project (OPR, 2021). The European Sites occurring within the wider surrounding area comprise the Cork Harbour SPA and the Great Island Channel SAC. The Cork Harbour SPA is located approximately 4km (as the crow flies) overland to the east the project, whilst the Great Island Channel SAC is located

approximately 8km (as the crow flies) overland to the east the project. The spatial relationship between these two European Sites and the project is shown on Figure 6.1.

Other European Sites occur at a greater distance from the project site. These European Sites are not considered in this screening report as there is no connectivity or potential impact pathways linking the project site to these European Sites due to their location in separate hydrological catchments; the distance from the project site to these European Sites; the absence of suitable habitat at the project site to support mobile species; and/or the absence of any evidence of mobile species, such as special conservation interest bird species of SPAs, relying on the project site.

The next step of this Screening exercise is to identify whether or not the Cork Harbour SPA or the Great Island Channel SAC occur within the zone of influence of the project. This is established using the SPR model.

Using the SPR framework, the project, as described in Section 3 of this Screening Report, represents the elements that are required to be examined as the potential source of any impacts to these European Sites. The receptors represent European Sites and their associated qualifying features of interest. European Sites and their associated qualifying features are likely to occur in the zone of influence of the project only where pathways establish a link between the project and a European Site. The presence of pathway connecting the project site to European Sites is provided in Section 6.2 below. In advance of this an overview of the Cork Harbour SPA and the Great Island Channel SAC is provided in Section 6.2

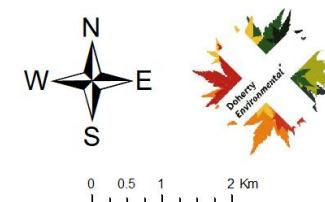


Railyard Residential Development

Figure 6.1

Location of the Project Site and European Sites

- Project Site (Red)
- Great Island Channel SAC (Red Hatched)
- Cork Harbour SPA (Pink)



Drawn By	PD
Date	23/01/2024
Data Source	OSM

OVERVIEW OF EUROPEAN SITES

Cork Harbour SPA

Cork Harbour SPA is a large European Sites consisting of a number of discrete sections associated with river estuaries. The section most relevant to the project site is that occurring along either bank of the River Lee Estuary. Other areas of the SPA are located in the outer River Lee estuary and Cork Harbour and these are considered in the context of this NIS by examining the potential for wastewater generated at the project site to combine with existing effluent discharges from the Carrigrennan WWTP outfall to result in negative effects to water quality and associated adverse effects to wetland habitats and bird species of the SPA.

The special conservation interests of Cork Harbour SPA include a list of 23 wetland bird species and wetland habitats.

The special conservation interest bird species (with EU Birds Directive Code No. in parenthesis) are as follows:

- Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004]
- Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A005]
- Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017]
- Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) [A028]
- Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048]
- Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]
- Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052]
- Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054]
- Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [A056]
- Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) [A069]
- Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130]
- Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]
- Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141]
- Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142]

- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149]
- Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156]
- Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157]
- Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160]
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162]
- Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179]
- Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182]
- Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183]
- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193]

The wetland habitats of the SPA include intertidal mudflats, saltmarshes and estuaries.

6.1.1.1 Documented threats & pressures

The NPWS have documented threats and pressures to the Cork Harbour SPA in their Natura 2000 Data Return Form for this SPA. The threats and pressures to this SPA have been ranked in terms of low, medium and high impacts. These threats and pressures and their associated impact rank are as follows:

- Nautical sports (medium impact);
- Shipping lanes (medium impact);
- Fertilisation (medium impact);
- Leisure fishing (medium impact);
- walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles (medium impact);
- Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture (High Impact);
- Industrial or commercial areas (high impact);
- Roads, motorways (high impact);
- Urbanised areas, human habitation (high impact);
- Port areas (high impact).

In addition to the threats and pressures listed above the Conservation Objectives Supporting Documentation (NPWS, 2014) for the Cork Harbour SPA has identified activities within or in the vicinity of the River Lee Estuary and the associated sub-sites that have the potential to result in a disturbance effect to wetland bird species. The activities that have the potential to result in disturbance events to birds within these subsites are as follows:

1. Shipping channels;
2. Railway;
3. Power boating and water skiing; and
4. Walking, including dog walking.

6.1.1.2 Conservation Objectives

Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the Cork Harbour SPA have been published by the NPWS (NPWS, 2014a). The overall Conservation Objectives for the special conservation interest bird species of the Cork Harbour SPA is to maintain the favourable conservation status of bird species for which the SPA is designated. The favourable conservation status of bird species will be achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis

Favourable conservation status of wetland habitats is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing

- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and;
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The site-specific Conservation Objectives for the Cork Harbour SPA aim to define the favourable conservation status its special conservation interest bird species. The site-specific Conservation Objectives for these species occurring within the sphere of influence of the project are outlined in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Site-Specific Conservation Objectives for Cork Harbour SPA Special Conservation Interest Species and the Great Island Channel SAC qualifying habitats

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Cork Harbour SPA			
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Waterbird population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	No significant decrease in the range, timing and intensity of use of areas by light-bellied brent geese, Oystercatcher, Black-tailed Godwit, Dunlin and Redshank other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2011/2012 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document.

Great Island Channel SAC

Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the Cork Harbour SPA have been published by the NPWS (NPWS, 2014b).

The site-specific Conservation Objectives for the Cork Harbour SPA aim to define the favourable conservation status its special conservation interest bird species. The site-specific Conservation Objectives for these species occurring within the sphere of influence of the project are outlined in Table 6.2 below.

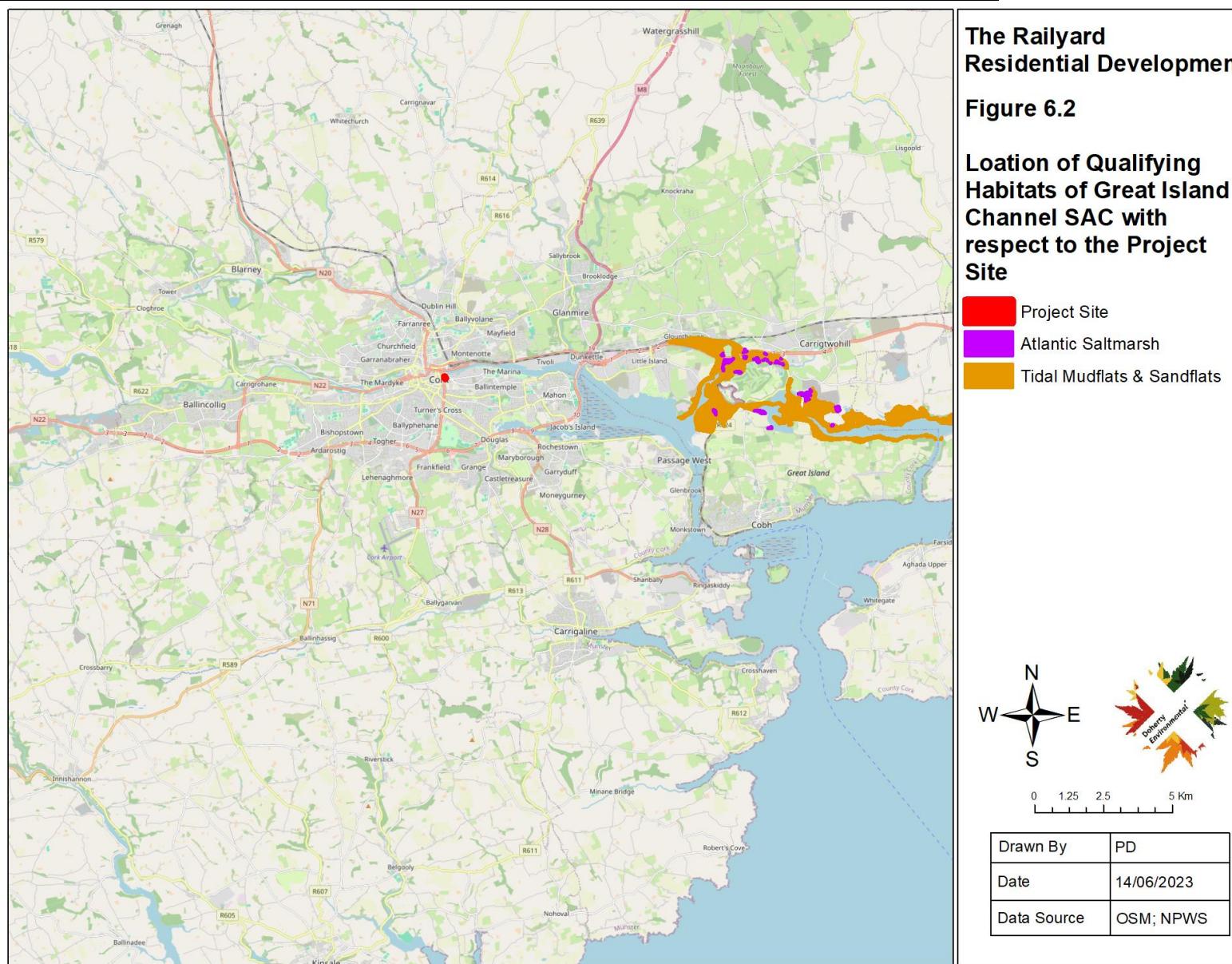


Table 6.2: Site Specific Conservation Objectives for the Great Island Channel SAC

Attribute	Measure	Target
Mudflats		
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.
Community distribution	Hectares	Conserve the following community type in a natural condition: Mixed sediment to sandy mud with polychaetes and oligochaetes community complex.
Saltmarsh		
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.
Physical structure: sediment supply	Presence/ absence of physical barriers	Maintain/restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions
Physical structure: creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession
Physical structure: flooding regime	Hectares flooded; frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime
Vegetation structure: zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession
Vegetation structure: vegetation height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward
Vegetation structure: vegetation cover	Percentage cover at a representative number of monitoring stops	Maintain more than 90% area outside creeks vegetated

Vegetation composition: typical species and sub-communities	Percentage cover at a representative number of monitoring stop	Maintain range of sub-communities with typical species listed in SMP
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IDENTIFICATION OF PATHWAYS

Using the SPR model ecological and functional pathways are set out in Table 6.3 below and those pathways that could conceivably connect the project to the Cork Harbour SPA and the Great Island Channel SAC is provided.

Table 6.3: Identification of Pathways

Pathway	Does the Pathway Connect the Project to Other European Sites	Reason
Hydrological pathway	Yes	<p>A hydrological pathway connects the project site to this SPA. Surface water runoff generated at the project site during the construction phase and operation phase will be discharged to the River Lee Estuary Lower approximately 25m to the north of the project site.</p> <p>During the construction and operation phase wastewater generated at the project site will be directed to the existing combined sewer network and will be conveyed to the Carrigrennan WWTP for treatment. The outfall of the Carrigrennan WWTP is located in Lough Mahon to this south of this SPA. The outfall location is buffered from the nearest</p>

Pathway	Does the Pathway Connect the Project to Other European Sites	Reason
		<p>point of the SPA by over 500m of transitional waters. However tidal flows may result in the movement of discharge effluent from the WWTP outfall into this SPA.</p>
Noise & Vibration	Yes	<p>Noise emissions from the project during the construction phase will have the potential to function as a pathway between the project and special conservation interest bird species of the SPA that are known to occur along the River Lee in the vicinity of the project site.</p>
Air Emissions	No	<p>An examination of air emissions for a previously consented SHD project at the same location was completed by Axis Environmental Services Ltd (2019). The results of that assessment provide baseline scientific evidence application to the current project. The principal emission identified for the previously consented SHD project was dust, relating to the construction phase. This finding is considered to apply to the current project. Holman <i>et al.</i> (2014) provides a risk assessment for ecological impacts arising from dust deposition. European Sites are ranked as highly sensitive sites and the risk to highly 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</p>

Pathway	Does the Pathway Connect the Project to Other European Sites	Reason
		distances greater than 50m from source. Given that there are no European Sites occurring within 50m of project site, no air emissions generated by the project will have the potential to function as pathways between the project and European Sites. As such this pathway is not considered further in this screening exercise.
Light Emissions	No	The project site is located within the urban centre of Cork City and will not result in changes to the night time lighting at and surrounding the project that will represent a change from the baseline artificial lighting in the wider surrounding area. As such no light emission pathway are considered further in this screening exercise.
Visual Emissions	No	Given the distance of over 4km from the nearest European Site there are no visual emissions from the project site to European Sites in the surrounding area.
Mobile species pathway	No	Special conservation interest bird species of the Cork Harbour SPA do not rely on the project for foraging or roosting. However, these species are known to foraging on the River Lee adjacent to the project site

Pathway	Does the Pathway Connect the Project to Other European Sites	Reason
		and occur downstream of the project site (see Noise Pathway above).

A hydrological, noise and mobile species pathway is identified as connecting the project site to the Cork Harbour SPA.

A hydrological pathway is identified as connecting the project site to the Great Island Channel SAC.

7.0 EXAMINATION OF PATHWAYS

Hydrological Pathway

7.1.1.1 *Surface Water*

The River Lee adjacent to the site to the north represents the hydrological pathway connecting the project to the Cork Harbour SPA downstream. The potential impact to the River Lee that could arise as a result of the project is the discharge of polluted waters generated at the site to the river. The risk of a release of polluted surface waters to the River Lee is considered to be low and not significant given that the project site is buffered from the river by c. 25m. This buffer distance exceeds standard set back requirements set out in a range of best practice guidance documents. For instance, the Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) guidance document *Protection and conservation of fisheries habitat with particular reference to road construction* (IFI, 2016) specifies a setback distance of 5m from a watercourse, whilst the *Working at Construction and Demolition Sites: PPG6 Pollution Prevention Guidelines* (Environment Agency, Northern Ireland Environmental Agency and Scottish Environment Protection Agency, 2012) specifies a setback distance of 10m from a watercourse. The presence of this buffer distance is representative of a feature of the project that will avoid or minimise potential impact from the outset as specified in the EC (2021) guidelines.

Furthermore, it is noted that standard best practice measures are identified in the MMOS Construction, Environmental and Demolition Waste Management Plan, the implementation of which shall provide further protection against any potential pollution being generated at the project site. The measures set out in the MMOS Construction, Environmental and Demolition Waste Management Plan are consistent with Objective 9.5, Objectives 9.6 and Objectives 9.7 of the Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and their full implementation will in turn protect the River Lee against pollution during the construction phase of the project.

The full suite of standard and generic construction measures that will be put in place to protect against the generation of contaminated waters at the project site during the construction phase are as follows:

- Surface water generated at the project site during the construction phase will be directed to an excavated surface water sump within excavated ground at the project site. The surface water will be pumped from the sump to an onsite settlement tank, such as a Siltbuster, or similar, that will treat surface water. Only settled and clean surface water will be discharged from the tank to the receiving environment.
- Storage – all equipment, materials and chemicals will be stored a minimum distance of 25m away from any surface water body (i.e. the River Lee). Chemical, fuel and oil stores will be sited on impervious bases and within a secured bund of 110% of the storage capacity, within the lay down area.
- The integrity and water tightness of all the bunding structures and their resistance to penetration by water or other materials stored therein shall also be tested and demonstrated.
- All fuel oil fill areas will have an appropriate spill apron and spill kits will be provided on site.
- Vehicles and refuelling – standing machinery will have drip trays placed underneath to prevent oil and fuel leaks causing pollution. Where practicable, refuelling of vehicles and machinery will be carried out on an impermeable surface in designated areas, well away from any surface waterbody.

- Maintenance – maintenance to construction plant will not be permitted on site, unless vehicles have broken down necessitating maintenance at the point of breakdown. All necessary pollution prevention measures will be put in place prior to commencement of maintenance in this instance;
- Concrete - Wet concrete operations will be carried out in dry conditions. Runoff from wastewaters or contaminated surface water runoff will be directed to construction phase surface water drainage system to be installed on site;
- Mess, sanitation and welfare facilities will be required during construction and will be located at the construction compound. Foul effluent will make use of chemical facilities with periodic removal for offsite disposal.

In view of the separation distance between the project site and the River Lee of c. 25m and the standard and generic construction phase measures that will be implemented during the construction phase, that can be considered as part of this screening exercise², it is found that the construction phase of the project will not pose a risk to the water quality of the River Lee and as such no functional hydrological impact pathway will connect the project to the Cork Harbour SPA during the construction phase of the project.

Surface water will be discharged from the project site to the River Lee during the operation phase. SuDS measures, as described in Section 3.2 above, will be implemented during the operation phase to manage and treat surface water generated during the operation phase. Also given that no car parking is proposed as part of the project there will be no potential for surface water to interact with project car parking areas. It is further noted that surface water generated at the project site during the operation phase will not represent a risk to the water quality of the River Lee. For instance, the CIRIA c753 Simple Index approach assigns a pollution hazard ranking to surface water generated from residential roofs as very low.

² See Section 1.2 regarding EC (2021) Guidelines & Judgement C-721/21 of the 15th June 2023

In view of the separation distance between the project site and the River Lee of c. 25m and absence of activities on site that could result in the contamination of surface water during the operation phase and the very low pollution hazard ranking associated with residential roofs, it is found that the operation phase of the project will not pose a risk to the water quality of the River Lee and as such no functional hydrological impact pathway will connect the project to the Cork Harbour SPA during the construction phase of the project.

7.1.1.2 Wastewater

Wastewater generated during the construction and operation phase will be directed to the Carrigrennan Wastewater Treatment Plant, prior to release to Lough Mahon. A review of the 2022 Annual Environmental Report (AER) (Uisce Éireann, 2023) for the Carrigrennan wastewater treatment plant has been completed. The 2022 AER reported that the wastewater treatment plant discharge was not compliant with emission limit values (ELVs) for the following parameters: BOD, 5 days with Inhibition (Carbonaceous mg/l, Total Nitrogen mg/l. Whilst the AER reported that ambient monitoring results did not meet the required environmental quality standard relating to the Oxygenation and Nutrient Conditions, as set out in the Surface Water Regulations 2009, it also concluded that the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant does not have an observable impact on the water quality of the receiving waterbody and that the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant does not have an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Directive status.

It is further noted that Uisce Éireann have confirmed that there is sufficient capacity at the Carrigrennan wastewater treatment plant to treat additional wastewater loads generated by the project.

In view of the above it is found that the wastewater generated by the project will not have the potential to negatively affect the water quality of the receiving waterbody and on this basis no function hydrological impact pathway connects the project to the Cork Harbour SPA or the Great Island Channel SAC.

Noise

Special conservation interest bird species of the Cork Harbour SPA, in the form gull species (i.e. Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Common Gull) are known to occur along the River Lee and within Cork City area surrounding the project site. These species opportunistically feed within

the urban environment of Cork City and are well habituated to the urban environment, human activity and associated noise emissions. In view of their high tolerance of human activity and associated noise emissions these species are not considered to be sensitive to noise emissions that will arise during the construction phase of the project. Notwithstanding their habituation and high tolerance of human activity and noise emissions it is noted that standard and generic noise management measures, as set out in the guidance document *BS5228 Code of Practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites* will be implemented as part of the project. In particular the following standard noise management measures from this guidance document will be implemented:

- Limiting the hours during which site activities likely to create high levels of noise are permitted.
- Establishing channels of communication between the contractor/developer, local authority and residents.
- Appointing a site representative responsible for matters relating to noise.
- Ensuring all site access roads are kept as even as possible so as to mitigate the potential for vibration from lorries.
- Monitoring typical levels of noise during critical periods at sensitive locations.
- Selection of plant with low inherent potential for generation of noise.

In view of the habituation of gull species occurring within Cork City to the urban environment and their tolerance of human activity and associated noise emissions, along with the standard and generic noise management measures that will be implemented at the project it is found that the project will not have the potential to result in disturbance gull species and in turn will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to special conservation interest bird species of the Cork Harbour SPA.

8.0 EXAMINATION OF IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

An examination of recently permitted projects, listed below, has concluded that there is no potential for this project to combine with other existing and/or approved projects to result in cumulative impacts to European Sites.

An evaluation of the potential for cumulative effects to the environment to arise as a result of the project in combination with these other projects is set out below.

Planning Reference No. 2342106: this proposed residential development was subject to an Natura Impact Statement and Appropriate Assessment by the Planning Authority. The Appropriate Assessment completed by Cork City Council concluded that likely significant effects to European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of this project would be mitigated by measures set out in the Natura Impact Statement, and that the provision of these measures will eliminate the potential for this project to combine with other projects to result likely significant effects, in-combination with other plans or projects, to European Sites. On the basis of this conclusion, the potential for the current project to combine with this other previously consented project to result in cumulative likely significant effects to European Sites is ruled out.

Planning Reference No. 2241572: this development relates to the erection of new signage at the Jury's Inn Hotel, Anderson's Quay. Cork City Council have completed a screening for Appropriate Assessment for this project and found that this development will not have the potential, alone or in-combination with other projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

Planning Reference No. 2241206: This development comprised a change of use of a previously consented project. Cork City Council have completed a screening for Appropriate Assessment for this project and found that this development will not have the potential, alone or in-combination with other projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

Planning Reference No. 2140713: this project relates to the development of a rehabilitation hospital at a site bounded by Kennedy Quay and Victoria Road. This project was subject to an Natura Impact Statement and Appropriate Assessment by the Planning Authority. The Appropriate Assessment completed by Cork City Council concluded that likely significant effects to European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of this project would be mitigated by measures set out in the Natura

Impact Statement, and that the provision of these measures will eliminate the potential for this project to combine with other projects to result likely significant effects, in-combination with other plans or projects, to European Sites. On the basis of this conclusion, the potential for the current project to combine with this other previously consented project to result in cumulative likely significant effects to European Sites is ruled out.

Planning Reference No. 2140702: this project relates to the development of a mixed use facility at a site bounded by Kennedy Quay, Marina Walk and Victoria Road. This project has been subject to an Natura Impact Statement and Appropriate Assessment by the Planning Authority. The Appropriate Assessment completed by Cork City Council concluded that likely significant effects to European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of this project would be mitigated by measures set out in the Natura Impact Statement, and that the provision of these measures will eliminate the potential for this project to combine with other projects to result likely significant effects, in-combination with other plans or projects, to European Sites. On the basis of this conclusion, the potential for the current project to combine with this other previously consented project to result in cumulative likely significant effects to European Sites is ruled out.

Planning Reference No. 2039173: This project relates to an application for the modification to office block D at the Navigation Square Development. Cork City Council determined that this project will not have the potential, alone or in-combination with other projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

Planning Reference No. 2039114: This project relates to the retention of a change of use at a building on Victoria Road. Cork City Council determined that this project will not have the potential, alone or in-combination with other projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

9.0 SCREENING MATRIX

The examination of the potential for the project to result in likely significant effects to the Cork Harbour SPA and the Great Island Channel SAC is undertaken following the guidance set out in the EC 2021 guidelines for screening for Appropriate Assessment. These guidelines provide a screening matrix against which projects or land use activities can be examined. Table 9.1 provides this screening matrix and an examination of the project's potential to result in likely significant effects to these two European Sites.

Matrix	Examination
Brief description of the project or plan	The project and associated activities are described in Section 3 above.
Brief description of the European Sites	The European Sites occurring in the wider surrounding area are identified in Section 6 above. The qualifying features of interest of these European Sites are set out in Section 6.
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European Sites.	In view of the examination provided in Sections 6, 7 and 8 above it can be objectively concluded that no impact pathways connect the project to the Cork Harbour SPA and the Great Island Channel SAC and that no element of the project will, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, have the potential to result in likely significant effects to these European Sites.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European Sites site by virtue of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size and scale; • land-take; • distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site; • resource requirements (water abstraction etc.); • emissions (disposal to land, water or air); • excavation requirements; • transportation requirements; • duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.; 	The project will not have the potential to result in direct, indirect or secondary impacts to European Sites. The Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC and all other European Sites in the wider surrounding area have been identified to be not at risk of likely significant effects as a result of the project.
Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction of habitat area; • disturbance to key species; • habitat or species fragmentation; • reduction in species density; 	The Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC and all other European Sites in the wider surrounding area have been identified to be not at risk of likely significant effects as a result of the proposed development.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• changes in key indicators of conservation status	<p>The project will not have the potential to result in changes to the Annex 1 habitats of the Great Island Channel SAC, wetland habitats of the Cork Harbour SPA or any other European Sites arising from these factors listed in Column 1 opposite.</p> <p>The project will not result in the reduction of habitat area for special conservation interest bird species or waterbirds of SPAs in the wider surrounding area.</p> <p>The project will not result in habitat or species fragmentation for any Annex 1 habitats or habitats relied upon by Annex 2 qualifying species or special conservation interest bird species of the surrounding European Sites.</p> <p>Examples of key indicators of the conservation status of bird species of surrounding SPAs are population size; distribution; habitat structure; foraging habitat and prey availability etc.</p> <p>Key indicators of the conservation status for the Annex 1 habitats of these European Sites include habitat area, habitat distribution, vegetation supported by the habitat, water quality, nutrient status etc.</p> <p>Given that the European Sites surrounding the project are not at risk of likely significant effects, as established above, there will be no potential for the project to undermine the conservation status and conservation objectives for any European Sites.</p>
Describe any likely impacts on the European Sites site as a whole in terms of:	For reasons set out above the project will not have the potential to interfere with key relationships that define the structure and function of European Sites.

<p>interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site; interference with key relationships that define the function of the site</p>	
<p>Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• loss;• fragmentation;• disruption;• disturbance;• change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.).	<p>For reasons set out above the project will not have the potential to result in such effects to European Sites.</p>
<p>Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.</p>	<p>The project will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>

10.0 SCREENING CONCLUSION

In accordance with the Habitats Directive, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been carried out on the project, in relation to any potential impacts upon the Cork Harbour Special Protection Area [Site No. 004030] and the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation [Site No. 001058]. The findings of the AA screening noted that no significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites is likely and it was not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

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