SUB THRESHOLD EIA SCREENING REPORT
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock – P8.HCP.26.11

Criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment as per the requirements of Article 120 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	
Size of Proposed Development	The overall project site covers approximately 0.91 of a hectare. The proposed development comprises the construction of 114 no. homes, consisting of 55 no. 1 bed apartments, 59 no. 2 bed apartments, provision of 56 no. car parking spaces and all ancillary site works and signage as outlined on the plans and particulars.
Cumulation with other Proposed Development	Given the nature of recent granted permissions for residential developments in the immediate vicinity of the site, it is not considered likely that the construction of the proposed development will result in significant cumulative impacts. No cumulative impacts are therefore likely.
The nature of any associated demolition works (* see article 8 of SI 235 of 2008)	The proposed development does not involve any demolition works. The site is a greenfield site and does not contain any existing buildings or structures requiring removal. Accordingly, no demolition-related impacts are anticipated as part of the proposed development. No significant negative impacts likely.
Use of Natural Resources	Energy, including electricity and fuel, will be required during the construction phase of the proposed development. A range of construction materials will also be used. The use of natural resources during construction will be typical of a residential development of this nature and scale, and no out-of-the ordinary use of natural resources is anticipated. – No significant impacts likely. During the operational phase, the use of natural resources will primarily relate to normal residential use, including water and energy consumption. No water-intensive or resource-intensive activities are proposed. – No significant negative impacts are likely.
Production of Waste	Waste will be generated during the construction phase of the proposed development, including typical construction and demolition waste such as concrete, soils, metals, timber, plasterboard, and general construction waste. An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) incorporating appropriate waste management measures will be implemented to ensure all waste is managed in accordance with best practice and applicable legislation. – No significant impacts likely. Waste generated during the operational phase will comprise typical household waste arising from the residential use of the development. Suitable waste storage facilities will be provided on site to facilitate segregation and collection. All waste will be managed by authorised waste collection services in accordance with standard practice. – No significant negative impacts are likely
Pollution and Nuisances	With appropriate mitigation in place, construction-related pollution and nuisance effects are expected to be temporary, localised, and manageable, and no significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated during the construction phase. – No significant impacts likely. During the operational phase, the proposed development will be used for residential purposes within an established suburban area. The nature of the use is not expected to result in significant pollution or nuisance. – No significant negative impacts are likely.
Risk of Major Accidents	No major accidents or disasters are anticipated during the construction phase of the proposed development, provided that all works are carried out in accordance with relevant building regulations, health and safety legislation, and environmental controls, in particular regarding the high-pressure gas pipeline to the west. – No significant impacts likely. During the operational phase, the proposed development will be used for residential purposes within an established urban area. No processes or activities are proposed that would give rise to an increased risk of major accidents or disasters. – No significant impacts likely.
Risk to Human Health	Access to the construction site will be regulated, and the public will not be allowed entry during the construction phase. Construction works will comply with relevant health and safety laws, and contractors must prepare and implement suitable site-specific health and safety procedures before commencing work. Measures to control noise, dust, air quality, traffic, and pollution will be implemented through the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). With the adoption of standard best practice construction management measures, no significant risks to human health are expected during the construction phase. – No significant impacts likely. During the operational phase, the proposed development will serve as a residential use within an established suburban area. It will be connected to the existing public water supply and foul sewer networks, with no industrial processes or activities planned that could produce emissions to air, land, or water. Surface water runoff will be managed using a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach to minimise the potential for contaminated runoff. Noise and air quality during operation will align with normal residential activities and are not expected to cause adverse effects on human health. Considering the nature and scale of the proposed development and its location within a built-up area, no significant risks to human health are anticipated during the operational phase. – No significant impacts likely.

2. LOCATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	
Existing Land Use	The proposed development involves the construction of a residential apartment scheme on a greenfield site located within an existing built-up area. The nature and scale of the proposed development are consistent with the zoning objective and represent an appropriate use of zoned residential land. Construction-related impacts will be temporary in nature and typical of residential development within an urban area. – No significant impacts likely. No significant adverse impacts on existing or approved land uses are anticipated during the operational phase. – No significant impacts likely.
Relative Abundance, Quality and regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources in the Area	Construction activities will utilise land that is zoned for residential development under the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028. Works will be confined to the site boundary, with limited disturbance to surrounding land. Any soils or excavated materials requiring removal from the site will be managed in accordance with applicable construction and demolition waste management procedures. – No significant impacts likely. The development includes landscaped communal and public open spaces, which will introduce planting on site and contribute positively to the local environment. The operational use of the site is not anticipated to adversely affect the abundance, availability, quality, or regenerative capacity of natural resources. – No significant impacts likely.
Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment	Construction works will be confined to the site boundary, and standard mitigation measures set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan will be implemented to manage potential impacts. With these measures in place, the natural environment is considered capable of absorbing the temporary construction impacts, and no significant adverse effects are anticipated. – No significant negative impacts are likely. The operational use of the site as residential accommodation will be consistent with surrounding land uses and will not give rise to impacts on environmentally sensitive areas. The scale of development proposed is considered appropriate for its location within a built-up suburban area. – No significant negative impacts are likely.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS	
Extent of the Impact	With the implementation of standard construction mitigation measures, construction impacts are not expected to extend beyond the immediate area or affect a wider population. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) report has been prepared, and the site was surveyed for potential ecological impact on any possible habitats within the red line boundary. – No significant impacts are likely. Once operational, the development will provide 114 residential units within a serviced urban location. The magnitude of operational impacts is considered moderate and localised, reflecting the introduction of additional residential population within an existing built-up area. – No significant negative impacts are likely.
Transfrontier nature of the Impact	The construction phase will not give rise to any transboundary impacts. All potential effects will be confined to the site and its immediate surroundings within Cork City. – No significant negative impacts are likely. The operational phase will not result in any transboundary environmental effects. The impacts associated with the development will be local in nature. – No significant negative impacts are likely.
Magnitude and Complexity of the Impact	Construction-related impacts such as noise, dust, and traffic disturbance will be temporary, intermittent, and localised. These impacts are not considered intense or complex and are typical of residential development of this nature. No unusually complex construction activities are proposed. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) report has been prepared, and careful consideration has been given to any potential impact of the proposed development on the surrounding areas. – No significant negative impacts are likely. The operational phase involves the use of the site for residential purposes. The scale and intensity of the activity will be consistent with other residential developments in the area and supported by existing infrastructure. – No significant negative impacts are likely.
Probability of the Impact	Temporary construction-related impacts are likely; however, they are predictable, short-term, and manageable with standard mitigation measures. – No significant impacts likely. The operational phase will result in a permanent change in land use; however, this change is consistent with the area's zoning and development patterns and is not expected to give rise to significant adverse effects. – No significant impacts likely.
Duration, Frequency and Reversibility of the Impact	Construction impacts will occur only during the construction phase. These impacts will be temporary and reversible, and no permanent adverse environmental effects are anticipated from construction activity. – No significant impacts are likely. The operational impacts of residential use of the site will be long-term. These impacts represent a permanent change in land use but are consistent with the established urban context. – No significant impacts are likely.

SCREENING CONCLUSION STATEMENT
The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening report has taken account of the contents and findings of the Appropriate Assessment Screening (AA) report and the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) prepared for the development. In addition, the proposed development has been screened to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required, and it has been concluded that there will be no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that an EIA is not required. Please refer to Appendix A for report titled; EIA Screening prepared by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants dated June 2026.

Name:	Martina Bredell
Position:	**A/Director of Services, Housing**
Date:	3/7/26

Appendix A

EIA Screening Report

EIA Screening

For Development at Skehard Road, Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork City

on behalf of Cork City Council

July 2026

McCutcheon Halley

CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS

Document Control Sheet

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Contents

1. Introduction

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report has been prepared by McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants on behalf of Cork City Council in relation to a proposed development that comprises the construction of 114 no. residential apartment units (consisting of a mix of 1-bed and 2-bed units) arranged in 2 no. apartment blocks, which varies in height from three to five storeys over ground floor, together with all associated site development works.

The development includes the provision of 56 no. car parking spaces and 231 secure bicycle parking spaces (including secure internal storage), private amenity spaces in the form of balconies and patios for each apartment. Additionally, it includes about 697.8 sq.m of communal open spaces and a centrally located public open space of approximately 1,701.5 sq.m. Ancillary works involve bin storage facilities, internal circulation routes, boundary treatments, public lighting, landscaping, and all relevant services infrastructure.

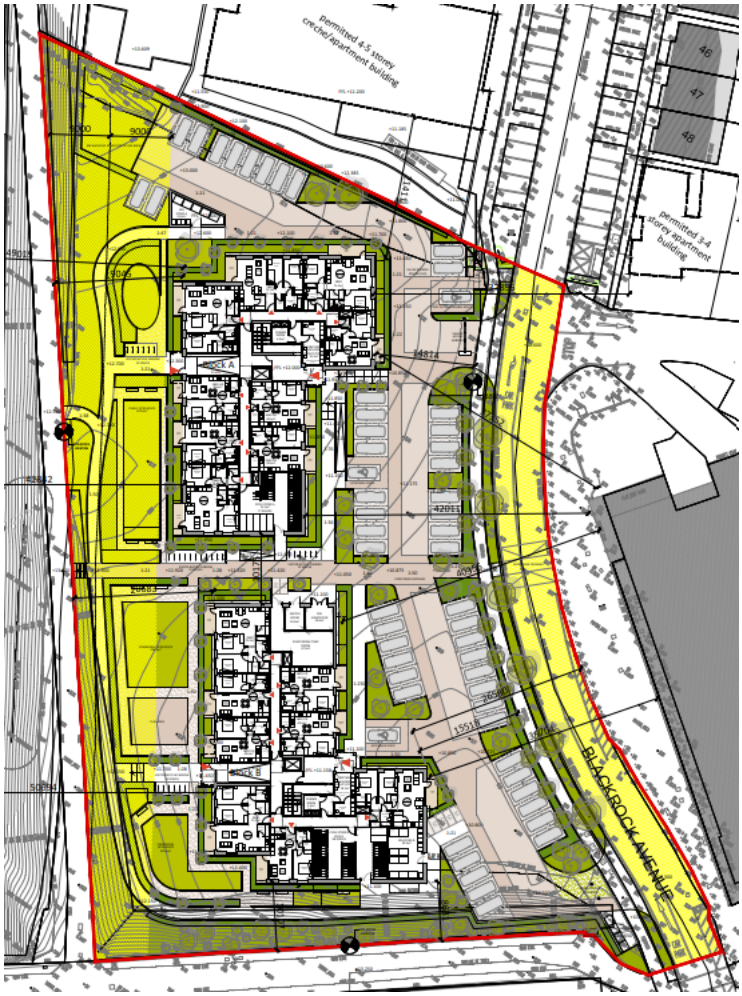

Figure 1 Proposed Site Layout Plan Prepared by O'Mahony Pike Architecture

Site development works include providing vehicular and pedestrian access from Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork, along with a direct pedestrian connection to the Mahon Boreen Pathway/Ballinsheen Road, and all related localised road, footpath, and public realm works needed to support the proposed development. The Passage Railway Greenway adjoins the western boundary of the site.

The proposed development also includes surface water and foul drainage infrastructure, incorporating a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) strategy, along with all necessary connections to existing public services and utilities. All associated site development works will be carried out within the application site boundary.

The purpose of this report is to provide the required information to enable the competent authority, in this case Cork City Council, to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required or not, as specified in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) in respect of the proposed development. Where a project is of a specified type but does not meet or exceed the applicable threshold, the likelihood of the 'sub-threshold' project having significant environmental effects (adverse and beneficial) needs to be considered.

1.1 Evidence of Technical Competence and Experience

Aida Vaisvilaite

This EIA Screening Report has been prepared by Aida Vaisvilaite of McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants. Aida holds a Bachelor's Degree in Arts, majoring in English and a Master's in Planning and Sustainable Development, both awarded by University College Cork.

Aida has over 4 years' experience working with multi-disciplinary teams and has provided input on a variety of projects. In particular, Aida has experience in the preparation of EIA Screening reports.

Majella O'Callaghan

This EIA Screening Report has been reviewed by Majella O'Callaghan of McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants. Majella holds an MSc in Urban and Regional Planning awarded by the Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh, a BA in Geography and Economics awarded by University College Cork and a Diploma in Project Management awarded by Central Institute of Technology, Perth, Australia.

Majella has over 13 years practical experience preparing Environmental Impact Assessments, EIA Screening and Scoping Reports and AA Screening Reports for a range of industries including mixed use development and residential development.

2. Legislative Context

Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (the EIA Directive) sets out the requirements for environmental impact assessment (EIA), including the screening for an EIA. The objective of the Directive is "to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for environmental impact assessment (EIA), prior to development consent being given, of public and private developments that are likely to have significant effects on the environment."

Projects requiring an EIA are defined in Article 4 and set out in Annexes I and II of Directive 2014/52/EU. These provisions are in turn transposed into domestic Irish legislation through Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. In determining the requirements for EIA, Schedule 5 differentiates between different types of projects in the context of 'project types'. The listed project types in Annex I of the EIA Directive require a mandatory EIA while projects listed in Annex II require screening to determine whether an EIA is required.

Having regard to the this, the first step in the EIA projects is to undertake a screening exercise to determine whether or not an EIA is required for a particular project. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the planning authority to enable that competent authority to determine whether or not this project has the potential to have significant effects on the environment.

The subject development does not fall within the development classes set out in Part 1 of Schedule 5. The relevant class/scale of development is set out in Class 10 of Schedule 5 (Part 2) of The Regulations:

> *Infrastructure projects*
>
> *(b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units*
>
> *(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area, and 20 hectares elsewhere*

The development proposes the construction of 114 no. residential apartment units on a gross site area of approximately 0.91 hectares, including Blackrock Avenue, with a net development area of approximately 7,833 sq.m / 0.78 hectares, located at Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork.

The proposed project does not meet the thresholds as prescribed by Class 10(b) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and therefore, the project does not require a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) as set out in Schedule 5.

2.1 Screening for Sub- Threshold EIA

In cases where a project is mentioned in Schedule 5, Part 2, but is classed as 'sub-threshold development', it is necessary for a planning authority to undertake a case-by-case examination of whether the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. In other words, screening for whether EIA is needed must be undertaken.

While it is clearly demonstrated above that the subject proposal does not trigger mandatory EIA, it is considered prudent to establish that the proposed project would not have significant effects on the environment and therefore does not require a sub-threshold EIA.

Article 4(4) of the Directive 2014/52/EU introduced Annex IIA to be used in the case of screening determinations. Annex IIA of Directive 2014/52/EU requires that the following information be provided by a developer in respect of projects listed in Annex II:

1. *A description of the project, including in particular:*

   a. A description of the physical characteristics of the whole project and, where relevant, of demolition works;

   b. A description of the location of the project, with particular regard to the environment sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.

2. *A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project.*

3. *A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, or the project on the environment resulting from:*

   a. The expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant;

   b. The use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.

4. *The criteria of Annex III shall be taken into account, where relevant, when compiling the information in accordance with points 1 to 3.*

Schedule 7 of the Regulations details the criteria the planning authority must consider in determining whether a sub threshold EIA should be undertaken. The Directive amends Annex III 'Selection Criteria referred to in Article (4)3'. The details to be considered in the new Annex III are as follows:

1. *Characteristics of the Proposed Development*

The characteristics of the proposed development, in particular:

- *The size of the proposed development*
- *The cumulation with other proposed developments*
- *The use of natural resources*
- *The production of waste*
- *Pollution and nuisance*
- *The risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used.*

2. *Location of Proposed Development*

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, having regard in particular to:

a. *The existing land use;*

b. *The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area;*

c. *The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:*

I. *Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;*

II. *Coastal zones and the marine environment;*

III. *Mountain and forest areas;*

IV. *Nature reserves and parks;*

V. *Areas classified or protected under national legislation, Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/42/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC.*

VI. *Areas in which there has already been a failure to meet environmental quality standards laid down in Union Legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;*

VII. *Densely population areas;*

VIII. *Landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.*

3. *Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts.*

The likely significant effects on the environment from the proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Annex with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(a), taking into account:

- *The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical areas and size of the population likely to be affected);*
- *The nature of the impact;*
- *The transboundary nature of the impact;*
- *The intensity and complexity of the impact;*
- *The probability of the impacts;*
- *The expected onset, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the impact;*
- *The cumulation of the impact with the other existing and/or approved projects;*
- *The possibility of effectively reducing the impact.*

In compliance with the requirements of the 2014 Directive, this Screening Report provides details of the information specified in Annex IIA, taking account of the criteria in Annex III, and provides the information required under Schedule 7A of the 2001 Regulations. This ensures that all of the information required under Schedule 7A has been furnished. It also presents the information to facilitate the competent authority in its screening assessment.

3. Information Required by the Annex II(A) of the 2014/52/EU

3.1 Physical Characteristics of the Whole Project

The overall project site covers approximately 0.91 hectares, including Blackrock Avenue, with a net development area of approximately 7,833 sq.m / 0.78 hectares. It is situated at Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork. Blackrock Avenue borders the site to the east, while the Mahon Boreen Pathway/Ballinsheen Road provides pedestrian connectivity, and the Passage Railway Greenway adjoins the western boundary as an ecological and active-travel corridor.

The majority of the site comprises greenfield public open space dominated by intensively managed amenity grassland, scattered trees, parkland, scrub

and ornamental shrubs. However, part of the northern area has previously been disturbed and partially cleared in connection with the adjoining Eden development and includes spoil/bare ground, recolonising ground and a temporary finished surface of imported stone fill. The site contains no protected structures or recorded monuments. There are no Architectural Conservation Areas within the site boundary.

The site generally slopes from northwest to southeast, with levels falling from approximately 14.21 m OD to 9.64 m OD. A small escarpment is present along the southern boundary. These topographical conditions inform the direction of overland flows and the inferred direction of groundwater movement.

Geotechnical site investigations were completed during April and May 2026 over approximately two to three days and included trial pits and soakaway testing. These works are distinguished from any future site-investigation works and the main construction phase.

The site is accessed directly from Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork, which links to the R852 Skehard Road. It also has convenient pedestrian access to the surrounding area through the Mahon Boreen Pathway/Ballinsheen Road, while the Passage Railway Greenway adjoins the western boundary. Located within a well-developed urban neighbourhood, it benefits from close proximity to shops, schools, healthcare services, recreational amenities, and public transport.

The proposed development comprises the construction of 114 no. residential apartment units arranged within 2 apartment blocks, which varies in height from three to five storeys over ground floor, together with all associated site development works. The proposed development includes the provision of 56 no. car parking spaces, 231 no. bicycle parking spaces (including secure internal storage), private amenity space in the form of balconies and patios, communal and public open space areas, bin storage facilities, plant, landscaping, boundary treatments, lighting, and all associated drainage and services infrastructure. The total hard-surface footprint will be approximately 4,995.27 sq.m / 0.5 hectares, comprising an apartment-block footprint of approximately 1,885.75 sq.m and approximately 3,109.52 sq.m associated with car parking, access routes, footpaths, play space and hard landscaping. Green open space will comprise approximately 2,837.73 sq.m, including approximately 697.8 sq.m of communal open space and approximately 1,701.5 sq.m of public open space.

The site is zoned ZO 01 – Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods under the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028, which aims to provide for residential development supported by appropriate local services, amenities, and sustainable transport infrastructure. The proposed development represents an efficient use of serviced urban land in accordance with compact growth principles.

The site benefits from strong public transport accessibility, with several bus routes within approximately 300 metres, providing regular connections to Cork City Centre and the wider metropolitan area. The site is also located

adjacent to sustainable transport corridors identified in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) 2040, including the indicative light rail corridor and strategic walking and cycling routes.

3.2 Location of the Project, with regard to Environment Sensitivities of Geographical Areas likely to be affected.

The subject site is located within an established suburban area at Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, with established housing to the west of the site and a mix of commercial and community uses to the east. The majority of the site remains greenfield in character; however, the northern part has previously been cleared and is partly finished with imported stone fill/temporary hardstanding. The site is located within an existing built-up area of Cork City.

There are no European or national designated ecological sites located within the site boundary.

Two European sites have been identified within the potential Zone of Influence, and these are Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code 004030), approximately 1.1 km from the site, and Great Island Channel SAC (Site Code 001058), approximately 5 km from the site. A Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared by Ecosystem Services in Practice Ltd. in June 2026. The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 site.

The Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment recorded that an ecological walkover was undertaken on 9 April 2026. The site does not provide suitable nesting, roosting or foraging habitat for the Special Conservation Interests of Cork Harbour SPA, does not contain the Qualifying Interest habitats of Great Island Channel SAC, does not contain Annex I habitat, and suitable otter habitat was not recorded within the site.

There are no protected structures, recorded monuments, or Architectural Conservation Areas located within the site boundary. The nearest heritage features are located outside the site and will not be directly affected by the proposed development.

The site is located within an area designated as High Landscape Value under the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028. However, the site is situated within an urban setting and is surrounded by existing development. The proposed development has been designed with regard to the area's existing character and incorporates landscaped communal and public open spaces.

The Teagasc General Soil Map shows that the soils within the area are identified as Acid Brown Earths, composed of mixed sandstone, limestone, and glacial till. According to EPA Maps, the subsoils are of till type. Till is sediment deposited by or from glacier ice.

The principal environmental sensitivities associated with the site relate to the amenity of existing residential properties in the vicinity, local ecological receptors and downstream water-quality receptors. The EcIA identifies scrub

along the southern and western boundaries as a Key Ecological Receptor of Higher Value Local Importance, the adjoining Passage Railway Greenway as an ecological corridor of High Value Local to County Importance, potential habitat for local birds, bats and small mammals, and downstream aquatic and estuarine receptors connected through surface-water and groundwater pathways.

The site is located within the Ballinhassig Ground Water Body (IE_SW_G_002). It is underlain by a Regionally Important Karstified Aquifer – diffuse, with groundwater vulnerability classified as *High and Extreme*. No mapped karst feature or fault traverses the site; the nearest mapped karst feature is approximately 1.2 km west at Beaumont Park. Groundwater was not encountered in trial pits extending to approximately 4.5 m below ground level, and groundwater flow is inferred to be generally northwest to southeast.

Surface water from the site will be managed through a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach comprising green roofs, rain gardens, rainwater-harvesting tanks, bio-retention tree pits, green open space, retention and enhancement of natural vegetation, a conventional attenuation tank, silt traps and sediment controls, bypass interceptors, and an off-site hydrocarbon interceptor within the receiving drainage system. Excess surface water will discharge to the existing surface-water drainage network on Blackrock Avenue, which ultimately discharges to the transitional and estuarine waters of the River Lee, Tramore River, Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour via a hydrocarbon interceptor. This drainage pathway establishes the potential hydrological connection between the site and downstream Natura 2000 sites.

The Flood Risk Assessment verifies that the proposed site falls within Flood Zone C, where the likelihood of flooding is low. Conducted in line with the OPW Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines, the assessment considered risks from tidal, fluvial, pluvial, and groundwater sources. It found no recorded flooding events in or around the site. The development will not worsen flood risk elsewhere, block flow paths, or reduce flood storage capacity. Proper drainage measures, including climate change allowances, will be used. In sum, the assessment confirms that flood risk to and from the site is minimal and manageable with standard design and construction practices.

The Caherlag-Marina high-pressure gas pipeline is shown to be running along the western boundary of the site. This area is to be kept clear of any proposed development. Additionally, the minimum separation distance between the proposed development and Gas Networks Ireland infrastructure must comply with IS329 'Gas Distribution Mains' and IS328 'Code of Practice for Gas Transmission Mains'. OMP architects suggest a 9m wayleave on either side of the gas main to comply with this guidance and avoid any adverse impacts.

Figure 2: High-Pressure Gas Main on western boundary of proposed project area. (Source OpenInfrastructureMap).

3.3 Description of Aspects of the Environment Likely to be Significantly Affected by the Project

The most likely potential adverse environmental effects associated with the proposed development, in the absence of appropriate mitigation measures, can be grouped as follows:

- **Land, soils and biodiversity:** habitat and vegetation removal, removal of amenity grassland, potential removal of trees, invasive alien plant species risk, possible disturbance or fragmentation of the adjoining Passage Railway Greenway, and potential effects on local terrestrial bird populations associated with glazing;
- **Construction disturbance and amenity:** construction traffic on the local road network, noise and vibration from piling and rock breaking, temporary lighting, visual and human disturbance, and temporary impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties;
- **Air quality and dust:** dust and particulate emissions associated with excavation, rock breaking, construction traffic and the importation or movement of fill material;
- **Water quality and drainage:** accidental release of suspended solids, concrete, bentonite, hydrocarbons or other construction-related contaminants, potential foul-water release from temporary welfare facilities, operational surface-water discharge and operational foul-water discharge;
- **Infrastructure and resource demand:** increased demand on existing foul and surface water drainage infrastructure and increased demand for potable water associated with occupation of the proposed residential units.

A range of measures have been incorporated into the design of the proposed development, or will be implemented as part of the construction process, to avoid, reduce, or mitigate potential adverse environmental effects, including:

- The preparation and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to manage construction-related impacts such as noise, dust, traffic, and waste;
- The incorporation of a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) strategy, including green roofs, rainwater-harvesting tanks, rain gardens, bio-retention tree pits and a conventional attenuation tank, together with silt traps, sediment controls and bypass interceptors, to manage surface water runoff and ensure that post-development runoff rates do not adversely impact the receiving environment;
- The implementation of a project-specific Aquatic Environmental Protection System (AEPS), including pre-earthworks drainage where required, silt-control devices around works areas and road gullies, sealed shuttering for concrete works, designated concrete-washout areas, settlement of water before discharge, screened pump heads and silt bags, controlled pumping of ponding rainwater or groundwater, preparation of a method statement, consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland where required, and maintenance of the system throughout vegetation clearance and construction;
- Implementation of the ecological avoidance and mitigation measures set out in the EcIA, including pre-construction surveys where required, appropriate timing of vegetation clearance and tree works, protection of retained scrub, trees and root-protection areas, invasive-species controls, native tree and shrub planting, wildlife-permeable boundary treatment, directional and shielded lighting, bird-safe glazing measures, and the provision of bird, Swift and bat boxes;
- The provision of appropriate foul and surface water infrastructure designed to connect to existing public networks;
- The inclusion of landscaped communal and public open space areas to enhance residential amenity and integrate the development within its surroundings; and
- The provision of bicycle parking and pedestrian connections to support sustainable modes of transport and reduce reliance on private car use.

During the operational phase of the development, no emissions are anticipated that would give rise to significant adverse effects on human health. The primary ongoing effects will relate to normal residential activity within an established urban area.

The most significant positive environmental effect of the proposed development will be the delivery of additional residential accommodation within an existing serviced urban area, supporting compact growth objectives

and making efficient use of zoned land in close proximity to services, amenities, and public transport.

3.4 Expected Residues and Emissions, and the Production of Waste

Any residues and emissions associated with the proposed development will arise primarily during the construction phase, including from site clearance, excavation, piling, limited rock breaking, construction traffic, temporary lighting, concrete works, and the operation of construction plant and machinery. Potential construction contaminants include suspended solids, concrete and other cementitious materials, bentonite, bituminous materials, fuel, oils, greases and hydraulic fluids, foul water, sealants, disinfectants, herbicides and other chemicals, and waste products.

Construction waste will be generated during site preparation and construction works. Approximately 4,516.6 cu.m, or approximately 7,226.6 tonnes, of made ground, topsoil, subsoil and overburden may require removal. Up to approximately 965.77 cu.m of infill material may be imported. Contaminated soil may potentially be encountered and, if present, would be removed by an authorised waste contractor to an appropriately licensed facility. Imported stone should be geochemically appropriate for the site. All waste arising will be managed in accordance with relevant waste management legislation and best practice.

No significant residues or emissions are anticipated during the operational phase of the development. Waste generated during operation will consist of typical household waste arising from the residential units and will be managed through authorised waste collection and disposal services in accordance with standard practice.

3.5 The Use of Natural Resources, in Particular Soil, Land, Water and Biodiversity

The proposed development is located on a site within an established suburban area of Cork City. The majority of the site remains greenfield in character; however, the northern part has previously been cleared and is partly finished with imported stone fill/temporary hardstanding. The development will utilise land zoned for residential development under the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028. Construction activities will be largely confined to the site boundary, with limited works required within the adjoining public road to facilitate access and services, which will be carried out in coordination with Cork City Council.

The development will be connected to the existing public water supply and foul sewer network. SuDS implementation will be the core proposed surface water drainage strategy on the site, enabling nature-based solutions.

No water-intensive processes are proposed as part of either the construction or operational phases. Water use during construction will be limited to typical construction requirements, while water use during operation will be associated with normal residential occupation.

Excavation works will be required as part of the construction process. Approximately 4,516.6 cu.m, or approximately 7,226.6 tonnes, of made ground, topsoil, subsoil and overburden may require removal, and up to approximately 965.77 cu.m of infill material may be imported. The construction phase will also involve approximately 140 Continuous Flight Auger piles, approximately 20 cu.m of rock breaking and the use of approximately 1,500 cu.m of ready-mix concrete. Any excavated material requiring removal from the site will be disposed of at an appropriately authorised facility.

The proposed development incorporates landscaped communal and public open spaces, introducing planting and soft landscaping across the site. Surface water will be managed through a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach comprising green roofs, rainwater-harvesting tanks, rain gardens, bio-retention tree pits and a conventional attenuation tank, with associated silt traps, sediment controls and bypass interceptors. Traditional permeable paving and soakaways are not proposed, as infiltration testing ruled them out.

The EcIA identifies potential effects associated with the removal of amenity grassland and trees, accidental disturbance of retained scrub, disturbance of birds and small mammals, lighting, glazing, invasive species and potential reductions in water quality. Following implementation of the avoidance and mitigation measures set out in the EcIA, the residual ecological effects are generally assessed as *Imperceptible* or *Temporary Slight Negative* and are not considered significant. Once the proposed native planting and wildlife enhancement measures are established, localised, permanent positive effects are anticipated.

Overall, the use of natural resources associated with the proposed development is considered typical of a residential development of this nature and scale, and no significant adverse effects on soil, land, water, or biodiversity are anticipated.

3.6 Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive established a framework for the protection, improvement and management of surface water and groundwater. Information on water features, water quality and Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of watercourses in proximity to the site was determined from the EPA website and interactive map viewer https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps and www.catchments.ie.

The site is located within the Ballinhassig Ground Water Body (IE_SW_G_002). It is underlain by a Regionally Important Karstified Aquifer – diffuse, with groundwater vulnerability classified as High and Extreme. No mapped karst feature or fault traverses the site, and the nearest mapped karst feature is approximately 1.2 km west at Beaumont Park. Groundwater was not encountered in trial pits extending to approximately 4.5 m below ground level, and groundwater flow is inferred to be generally northwest to southeast.

The proposed development site is located within an established urban area and does not include any surface water features within the site boundary. Surface water arising from the development will be managed on site through a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach comprising green roofs, rain gardens, rainwater-harvesting tanks, bio-retention tree pits, green open space, retention and enhancement of natural vegetation, a conventional attenuation tank, silt traps and sediment controls, bypass interceptors, and an off-site hydrocarbon interceptor within the receiving drainage system, prior to controlled discharge to the existing drainage network. Excess surface water will discharge to the existing surface-water drainage network on Blackrock Avenue, which ultimately discharges to the transitional and estuarine waters of the River Lee, Tramore River, Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour via a hydrocarbon interceptor. Potential downstream surface-water and groundwater pathways therefore extend beyond the immediate site, although likely significant effects are not anticipated having regard to the nature, scale and frequency of potential releases, distance, dilution and receptor sensitivity.

Foul wastewater generated by the proposed development will be conveyed via the existing public foul sewer network to an existing municipal wastewater treatment facility for treatment. No on-site wastewater treatment is proposed.

Ground disturbance will be limited to that required for construction works associated with the proposed development. Any groundwater encountered during construction will be managed in accordance with standard construction best practice to prevent contamination or uncontrolled discharge. Construction-related activities will be managed through appropriate pollution prevention measures to avoid impacts on surface water or groundwater quality.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development the incorporation of SuDS measures, the proposed development is not expected to give rise to significant adverse effects on surface water or groundwater quality. Accordingly, the proposed development is not considered likely to result in a deterioration of WFD status of any waterbody, either alone or in combination with other developments.

4. Screening Statement with Reference to Annex II EU Directive 2014/52/EU and Schedule 7 and 7A of the Regulations.

4.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

4.1.1 The Size and Design of the Whole Project

The proposed development site is located at Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork. The site extends to approximately 0.91 hectares, with a net site area of approximately 0.78 hectares, with vehicular and pedestrian access provided from Blackrock Avenue and direct pedestrian connectivity to the Mahon Boreen Pathway/Ballinsheen Road. The Passage Railway Greenway adjoins the western boundary of the site.

The site is situated within an established suburban urban environment. Residential development predominates to the west of the site, while a mix of commercial and community uses, including retail and healthcare facilities, is located to the east. The site benefits from existing footpaths and pedestrian infrastructure and is located within close proximity to public transport services.

The proposed development comprises the construction of 114 no. residential apartment units arranged within 2 apartment blocks, which varies in height from three to five storeys over ground floor, together with associated site development works. The design incorporates communal and public open space, internal circulation areas, bicycle parking, car parking, landscaping, and service infrastructure.

No demolition works are required for the proposed development. While the majority of the site remains greenfield in character, the northern part has previously been cleared and is partly finished with imported stone fill/temporary hardstanding. Construction activities will be confined to the site boundary, with limited works required within the adjoining public road to facilitate access and services, which will be undertaken in coordination with Cork City Council.

The scale and design of the proposed development reflect the site's zoning as ZO 01 – Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods under the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028 and its location within a serviced urban area. The proposed development represents an efficient use of zoned land and is consistent with national and local policy objectives for compact growth within existing urban areas.

Size and Design

The proposed site, approximately 0.91 hectares in size, with a net site area of approximately 0.78 hectares, is located at Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork. The majority of the site remains greenfield in character, with the

northern part previously cleared and partly finished with imported stone fill/temporary hardstanding. Access is provided from Blackrock Avenue, with pedestrian connectivity to the Mahon Boreen Pathway/Ballinsheen Road. The Passage Railway Greenway adjoins the western boundary.

The proposed development comprises the construction of 114 no. residential apartment units arranged within 2 apartment blocks, which varies in height from three to five storeys over ground floor, together with associated site development works. The site benefits from existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and is located within close proximity to public transport services serving the wider Cork metropolitan area.

4.1.2 Infrastructure and Services

The proposed development will be served by existing public infrastructure networks. All services will be designed and delivered in accordance with relevant standards and the requirements of the statutory service providers.

Surface Water Network

Surface water from the proposed development will be managed on site using a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) strategy comprising green roofs, rain gardens, rainwater-harvesting tanks, bio-retention tree pits, green open space, retention and enhancement of natural vegetation, a conventional attenuation tank, silt traps and sediment controls, bypass interceptors, and an off-site hydrocarbon interceptor within the receiving drainage system. Excess surface water will discharge to the existing surface-water drainage network on Blackrock Avenue, which ultimately discharges to the transitional and estuarine waters of the River Lee, Tramore River, Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour. Surface water will be managed separately from the foul network.

Foul Sewer Network

Foul drainage from the proposed development will be conveyed via the existing public foul sewer network. Foul flows will be managed through an internal drainage system designed to connect to the public sewer in accordance with standard practice. No on-site wastewater treatment is proposed.

Water Supply

The proposed development will be connected to the existing public water supply network. Water will be distributed internally within the development to serve the residential units. Water usage during operation will be consistent with typical residential demand, and no water-intensive uses are proposed.

Overall, the proposed development can be adequately served by existing infrastructure networks, and no significant impacts on services capacity are anticipated.

4.1.3 Cumulation with Other Existing and/or Proposed Development

The proposed development is located within an established and actively developing suburban area of Cork City. The surrounding area has experienced ongoing residential and mixed-use development in recent years, reflecting the zoning and policy objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028, which aim to promote compact growth and consolidation within serviced urban areas.

Given the site's location, it is reasonable to expect that additional development proposals may come forward on nearby lands over time. Any such development would be required to comply with the relevant environmental policies and objectives of the Development Plan and would be subject to the appropriate statutory assessment processes, including screening for Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as required.

The cumulative and in-combination assessment has had regard to nearby existing and approved projects, including Ref. 21/40196 / ABP-314310-22 for 204 apartments and a creche at Loughmahon Link Road, Ref. 24/42822 for office development at City Gate Plaza, and the Part 8 development of 22 residential units at Ballinure Avenue.

Cumulative and in-combination effects are more likely where construction programmes overlap, physical footprints overlap, Zones of Influence overlap, or the same downstream receptors or pathways are affected. Although temporal overlap may occur, having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the separation from other projects, the use of existing infrastructure, and the identified surface-water and groundwater pathways, no likely significant in-combination effects on Cork Harbour SPA or Great Island Channel SAC are anticipated.

Table 1 Neighbouring Planning Applications

Ref. No.	Development	Decision	Address	Distance from Site
21/40196 (ABP-314310-22)	Demolition of existing geodesic dome and the construction of 204 apartments across three blocks. The development also consists of the construction of a creche facility, ancillary rooms and facilities, car/bike parking and associated site development works. The proposed development would	21/12/23	Site adjacent to Telus International, Loughmahon Link Road, Mahon, Cork City.	c.450m

	be a material contravention of the development plan.			
24/42822	Permission for development at City Gate Plaza, Loughmahon Link Road, Mahon, Cork, comprising 2 no. four-storey over ground floor office buildings (Blocks A1 and A2) replacing a previously permitted office block, including rooftop plant enclosures, terraces, signage, and associated site development, drainage and landscaping works.	09/09/24	Site known as City Gate Plaza, (former Ma/Comm site), Loughmahon Link Road, Mahon Cork	c.300m
Part 8	The construction of 22 no. new residential units, comprising of 4 no. 2 storey townhouses and 18 apartments in a 3 and 4 storey building, and all associated ancillary site and landscape works including replacement of the vehicular and pedestrian gates at the entrance. The proposed development ranges in height from 2 storeys to 4 storeys.	Submitted 18th July 2025	Ballinure Avenue, Mahon, Cork	c.800m

Given the nature of recent granted permissions for residential developments in the immediate vicinity of the site, which would have been subject to their own EIA Screening Assessments and EIARs, it is not considered likely that the construction of the proposed development will result in significant cumulative impacts.

Operational Phase

The proposed development comprises 114 no. residential apartment units located within an established suburban area at Blackrock Avenue, Eden, Blackrock, Cork. The site is surrounded by existing residential development

to the west, and a mix of commercial and community uses to the east. The site benefits from existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and proximity to public transport services serving the wider Cork metropolitan area.

During the operational phase, the proposed development will function as a residential use within an existing built-up area. The development will change the immediate visual context of the site; however, this change will occur within an urban setting where residential development is the predominant land use. The scale and form of the proposed development have been designed with regard to the surrounding context and the site's zoning.

The proposed development will be served by the existing public water supply and foul sewer networks. Wastewater generated during the operational phase will be conveyed to the public sewer system for treatment. No on-site wastewater treatment is proposed. On this basis, no significant cumulative effects on water services infrastructure are anticipated during the operational phase.

Surface water runoff will be managed on site through a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach, which will continue to operate during the lifetime of the development to manage runoff rates and water quality.

The proposed development includes car and bicycle parking, along with pedestrian connections, to support a range of transport modes. Traffic generation during the operational phase will be consistent with that of a residential development of this nature and scale in a suburban location.

Overall, the operational phase of the proposed development is not expected to result in significant adverse environmental effects. The development represents the provision of residential accommodation within a serviced urban area and is consistent with established land uses in the vicinity. No significant cumulative environmental impacts are anticipated during the operational phase.

4.1.4 The Nature of any associated demolition works

The proposed development does not involve any demolition works. The majority of the site remains greenfield in character, although the northern part has previously been cleared and is partly finished with imported stone fill/temporary hardstanding. The site does not contain any existing buildings or structures requiring removal. Accordingly, no demolition-related impacts are anticipated as part of the proposed development.

4.1.5 The Use of Natural Resources, in Particular Land, Soil, Water and Biodiversity

Construction Phase

Energy, including electricity and fuel, will be required during the construction phase of the proposed development. A range of construction materials will also be used. The use of natural resources during construction will be typical of a residential development of this nature and scale, and no out-of-the-ordinary use of natural resources is anticipated.

The majority of the proposed development site comprises greenfield public open space dominated by amenity grassland, scattered trees and scrub, with the northern part previously disturbed and partly finished with imported stone fill. Construction will involve removal of amenity grassland and may involve the removal of up to 8 no. trees, subject to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and micro-siting. The scrub on the southern and western boundaries will be retained, as far as practicable, and retained trees, root-protection areas and scrub will be protected using hoarding or similar temporary barriers.

Surface water arising during construction will be managed through the project-specific Aquatic Environmental Protection System and CEMP. The construction methodology includes piling, excavation and limited rock breaking. These activities are established construction techniques but introduce potential noise, vibration, dust and water-pollution pathways that require assessment and control.

Operational Phase

During the operational phase, the use of natural resources will primarily relate to normal residential use, including water and energy consumption. No water-intensive or resource-intensive activities are proposed.

Surface water runoff will be managed through a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach, which will continue to operate throughout the lifetime of the development. Foul wastewater will be conveyed via the existing public sewer network for treatment. These measures ensure that the operational phase of the development will not give rise to adverse effects on surface water or groundwater quality.

The proposed development incorporates landscaped communal and public open spaces, introducing planting and soft landscaping across the site. Overall, the scale of natural resource use during both the construction and operational phases is not such as to give rise to significant adverse environmental effects.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, and the mitigation measures incorporated, no significant adverse impacts on land, soil, water, or biodiversity are anticipated.

4.1.6 The Production of Waste

Construction Phase

Waste will be generated during the construction phase of the proposed development, including typical construction and demolition waste such as concrete, soils, metals, timber, plasterboard, and general construction waste. An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) incorporating appropriate waste management measures will be implemented to ensure all waste is managed in accordance with best practice and applicable legislation.

Good site management practices will be employed to minimise waste generation, and opportunities for the reuse and recycling of materials will be

maximised where practicable. Waste will be segregated on site into appropriate streams and stored in designated areas prior to removal from the site.

All waste arising during the construction phase will be collected and removed by appropriately authorised waste contractors and transferred to licensed facilities for treatment, recovery, or disposal, as appropriate. No unusual or hazardous waste streams are anticipated beyond those typically associated with residential construction activity, although potentially contaminated soil may be encountered and, where identified, will be managed by an authorised contractor and transferred to an appropriately licensed facility.

With the implementation of appropriate waste management measures, no significant adverse environmental impacts associated with waste generation are anticipated during the construction phase.

Operational Phase

Waste generated during the operational phase will comprise typical household waste arising from the residential use of the development. Suitable waste storage facilities will be provided on site to facilitate segregation and collection. All waste will be managed by authorised waste collection services in accordance with standard practice.

Wastewater generated during the operational phase will be conveyed via the existing public foul sewer network to a municipal wastewater treatment facility for treatment. No on-site wastewater treatment is proposed.

Overall, the nature and volume of waste generated during both the construction and operational phases are not considered likely to give rise to significant adverse environmental effects.

4.1.7 Pollution and Nuisance

Construction Phase

Construction activities can cause temporary nuisances, including noise, dust, vibration, traffic-related disturbance and temporary lighting. The estimated construction programme is approximately 22 months, with anticipated commencement in October/November 2026, subject to planning approval.

A temporary haul road may be required due to ground conditions. The construction compound will include welfare facilities, storage areas, refuelling, concrete washout, wheel wash and waste-storage areas. Water will be obtained from the public supply, a hydrant or commercial bowser and not from a local waterbody. Temporary welfare wastewater will be removed off-site by a permitted contractor, and refuelling and maintenance will occur in a designated area.

An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be implemented for the development. The CEMP will set out measures to manage and minimise construction-related impacts, including dust suppression, noise control, appropriate storage and handling of materials, pollution prevention measures, and the management of construction traffic.

Construction activities will be undertaken in accordance with standard working hours to protect the amenity of nearby residential properties.

Surface water generated during construction will be managed using standard best practice measures to prevent pollution of the surrounding environment. These measures will address issues such as sediment control, fuel and oil management, and the prevention of accidental spillages. With the implementation of these measures, the risk of pollution arising during the construction phase is considered to be low.

With appropriate mitigation in place, construction-related pollution and nuisance effects are expected to be temporary, localised, and manageable, and no significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated during the construction phase.

Operational Phase

During the operational phase, the proposed development will be used for residential purposes within an established suburban area. The nature of the use is not expected to result in significant pollution or nuisance.

Waste generated during occupation will consist of typical household waste and will be managed through authorised waste collection services in accordance with standard practice. Surface water runoff will be managed through a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach that will continue to operate throughout the development's lifetime, reducing the potential for contaminated runoff.

Noise and disturbance during the operational phase will be consistent with normal residential activity and is not expected to adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties. Traffic levels associated with the development will be typical of residential use in a suburban location.

Overall, having regard to the nature of the proposed development, its location within an existing built-up area, and the mitigation measures proposed, no significant adverse pollution or nuisance effects are anticipated during the operational phase.

4.1.8 The Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters Relevant to the Project, Including Those Caused by Climate Change

Construction Phase

No major accidents or disasters are anticipated during the construction phase of the proposed development, provided that all works are carried out in accordance with relevant building regulations, health and safety legislation, and environmental controls, in particular regarding the high pressure gas pipeline to the west.

Construction activities will be managed in accordance with standard industry best practices, including proper site management, compliance with health and safety regulations, and the implementation of pollution prevention measures as outlined in the Construction Environmental Management Plan. With these measures in place, the risk of major accidents or construction-related incidents is deemed to be low.

The proposed development does not involve the storage or use of hazardous substances beyond those typically associated with residential construction activity. Accordingly, no significant risks relating to major accidents or disasters are anticipated during the construction phase.

Operational Phase

During the operational phase, the proposed development will be used for residential purposes within an established urban area. No processes or activities are proposed that would give rise to an increased risk of major accidents or disasters.

The development will be designed and constructed in accordance with current building regulations and fire safety requirements, ensuring a safe environment for future occupants. Climate-related considerations, including surface water management and drainage, have been incorporated into the design through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, and the mitigation measures incorporated into its design and operation, no significant risks of major accidents or disasters are anticipated during the operational phase.

4.1.9 The Risk to Human Health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)

Construction Phase

Construction activities can pose risks to human health, primarily through noise, dust, vibration, traffic, and general site operations. Access to the construction site will be regulated, and the public will not be allowed entry during the construction phase. Construction works will comply with relevant health and safety laws, and contractors must prepare and implement suitable site-specific health and safety procedures before commencing work. Measures to control noise, dust, air quality, traffic, and pollution will be implemented through the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). With the adoption of standard best practice construction management measures, no significant risks to human health are expected during the construction phase.

Operational Phase

During the operational phase, the proposed development will serve as a residential use within an established suburban area. It will be connected to the existing public water supply and foul sewer networks, with no industrial processes or activities planned that could produce emissions to air, land, or water. Surface water runoff will be managed using a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach to minimise the potential for contaminated runoff. Noise and air quality during operation will align with normal residential activities and are not expected to cause adverse effects on human health. Considering the nature and scale of the proposed development and its location within a built-up area, no significant risks to human health are anticipated during the operational phase.

Conclusion: There is no potential for significant effects on human health to arise from the characteristics of the proposed development.

The scale and nature of the proposed works are consistent with residential development in the area and with the zoning and land use objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028.

With the incorporation of standard construction and operational mitigation measures, the proposed development is not considered likely to result in significant adverse effects on the environment or human health.

4.2 Location of the Proposed Development

4.2.1 The Existing and Approved Land Use

Construction Impacts

The site is located within an established suburban area characterised primarily by residential development, with a mix of commercial and community uses in the wider vicinity. The site is identified as suitable for residential development under the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028.

Under the Development Plan, the site is zoned ZO 01 – Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods, with the objective of providing residential development supported by appropriate services, amenities, and sustainable transport infrastructure. The zoning also supports a range of complementary uses that serve residents' daily needs.

The proposed development involves the construction of a residential apartment scheme on a site located within an existing built-up area. The majority of the site remains greenfield in character, with the northern part previously cleared and partly finished with imported stone fill/temporary hardstanding. The nature and scale of the proposed development are consistent with the zoning objective and represent an appropriate use of zoned residential land. Construction-related impacts will be temporary in nature and typical of residential development within an urban area.

Operational Impacts

During the operational phase, the completed development will provide residential accommodation within a suburban urban setting. The proposed use is consistent with the existing and approved land uses in the surrounding area and aligns with the site's zoning objective.

No significant adverse impacts on existing or approved land uses are anticipated during the operational phase.

4.2.2 The Relative Abundance, Availability, Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources (Including Soil, Land, Water and Biodiversity)

Construction Impacts

The majority of the proposed development site remains greenfield in character and is located within an established suburban area of Cork City. The northern part has previously been cleared and is partly finished with

imported stone fill/temporary hardstanding. The site does not contain any Natura 2000 site, nationally designated ecological site, Annex I habitat, Qualifying Interest habitat or suitable ex-situ supporting habitat for the Special Conservation Interests of Cork Harbour SPA. However, the EcIA identifies the retained boundary scrub, scattered trees, local terrestrial species and the adjoining Passage Railway Greenway as ecological receptors of local importance.

Construction activities will utilise land that is zoned for residential development under the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028. Works will be confined to the site boundary, with limited disturbance to surrounding land. Any soils or excavated materials requiring removal from the site will be managed in accordance with applicable construction and demolition waste management procedures.

Water required during the construction phase will be limited to typical construction uses. Surface water will be managed using standard best practice measures to prevent pollution, as set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan. With the implementation of these measures, no significant adverse impacts on soil, land, water, or biodiversity are anticipated during the construction phase.

A Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared by Ecosystem Services in Practice Ltd. The screening concluded that likely significant effects on Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC could be excluded, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

Operational Impacts

During the operational phase, the development will be connected to the existing public water supply and foul sewer networks. Water usage will be consistent with normal residential occupation and is not expected to place undue pressure on local water resources.

Surface water runoff will be managed through a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach to control runoff rates and improve water quality.

The development includes landscaped communal and public open spaces, which will introduce planting on site and contribute positively to the local environment. The operational use of the site is not anticipated to adversely affect the abundance, availability, quality, or regenerative capacity of natural resources.

Overall, no significant adverse effects on soil, land, water, or biodiversity are anticipated during either the construction or operational phases of the proposed development.

4.2.3 The Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment

The proposed development site is not located within a Natura 2000 site, wetland, coastal habitat, mountain or forest area, nature reserve or park. However, the site is hydrologically and hydrogeologically connected through the existing drainage network and groundwater system to the River Lee,

Tramore River, Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour, including Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC.

A Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared and concludes that the proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 site.

There are no records indicating that the site is located within an area that has failed to meet the environmental quality standards set out in European Union legislation.

The AA Screening identifies potential sources of accidental release including suspended solids, hydrocarbons, cementitious materials, bentonite and bituminous materials, foul water, chemicals and herbicides. The surface-water pathway comprises overland runoff or construction contaminants entering gullies on Blackrock Avenue, Mahon Boreen Pathway or the Passage Railway Greenway, followed by the existing surface-water drainage network and the River Lee, Tramore River, Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour system. The groundwater pathway comprises percolation through the overburden into the underlying Ballinhassig groundwater body, with eventual discharge towards the River Lee, Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour. Potential receptors include supporting wetland habitat and Special Conservation Interests of Cork Harbour SPA and the Qualifying Interest habitats of Great Island Channel SAC.

The existence of a pathway does not itself mean that a significant effect will occur. The AA Screening concluded that likely significant effects could be excluded having regard to distance, dilution, receptor sensitivity and the nature, scale and frequency of potential releases, and this conclusion did not rely on mitigation measures.

The site is located within a densely populated urban area, characterised by existing residential development and supported by established infrastructure. The surrounding environment is therefore considered capable of absorbing the development of the nature and scale proposed without giving rise to significant environmental pressures.

There are no protected structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, or recorded archaeological monuments located within the site boundary. The surrounding landscape is urban in character, and the proposed development has been designed to integrate within this context.

Construction Impacts

During the construction phase, potential impacts on the receiving environment will include removal of amenity grassland and potentially up to eight trees, possible disturbance of retained scrub and the adjoining ecological corridor, noise, vibration and temporary lighting, potential impacts on local birds, bats and small mammals, potential surface-water and groundwater pollution pathways, invasive-species risks, temporary visual effects, site activity and construction traffic.

These effects will be managed through the Construction Environmental Management Plan, the project-specific Aquatic Environmental Protection

System, the SuDS strategy and the ecological avoidance and mitigation measures identified in the EcIA. With these measures in place, the natural environment is considered capable of absorbing the temporary construction impacts, and no significant adverse effects are anticipated.

Operational Impacts

During the operational phase, the development will be served by existing urban infrastructure networks. Surface water will be managed on site through a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approach, which will manage runoff rates and water quality.

The operational use of the site as residential accommodation will be consistent with surrounding land uses and will not give rise to impacts on environmentally sensitive areas. The scale of development proposed is considered appropriate for its location within a built-up suburban area.

Overall, the receiving environment is considered capable of absorbing the proposed development during both the construction and operational phases, and no significant adverse environmental effects are anticipated.

4.3 Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The likely effects of the proposed development on the environment are considered below having regard to the criteria set out under Annex III of Directive 2014/52/EU and Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, and with reference to the factors specified in Article 3(1).

The Magnitude and Spatial Extent of the Impact

Construction Impacts

The site is located within an established suburban urban area. The proposed development site extends to approximately 0.91 hectares, including Blackrock Avenue, with a net development area of approximately 0.78 hectares. Most construction disturbance will be localised. However, potential surface-water and groundwater pollution pathways extend to the River Lee, Tramore River, Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour.

Having regard to the nature, magnitude and frequency of potential releases, distance and dilution effects, and receptor sensitivity, likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites are not anticipated.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

Operational Impacts

Once operational, the development will provide 114 residential units within a serviced urban location. The magnitude of operational impacts is considered moderate and localised, reflecting the introduction of additional residential population within an existing built-up area.

The development will be supported by existing infrastructure networks and public transport services. No impacts of regional or wider spatial extent are anticipated.

The Nature of the Impact

Construction Impacts

The construction phase may cause temporary nuisances, including noise, dust, vibration, and increased construction traffic. These impacts are typical of construction activity in an urban environment and will be temporary in nature.

Such impacts will be managed through the implementation of appropriate construction management measures.

The AA Screening concluded that glazing would not give rise to likely significant effects on the Special Conservation Interests of Cork Harbour SPA. Potential effects on local terrestrial bird populations are separately assessed in the EcIA.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

Operational Impacts

During operation, the proposed use will be residential, compatible with surrounding land uses and consistent with the site's zoning. The impacts associated with the operational phase will be typical of residential occupation in a suburban area.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

The Transboundary Nature of the Impact

Construction Impacts

The construction phase will not give rise to any transboundary impacts. While most disturbance will be localised to the site and adjoining roads, potential downstream surface-water and groundwater pathways extend beyond the immediate site to the River Lee, Tramore River, Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour.

Operational Impact

The operational phase will not result in any transboundary environmental effects. The impacts associated with the development will be local in nature.

The Intensity and Complexity of the Impact

Construction Impacts

Construction-related impacts such as noise, dust, vibration, traffic disturbance and temporary lighting will be temporary and intermittent. The construction methodology includes piling, excavation, limited rock breaking, concrete use, potential dewatering, management of potential contaminated soils, and surface-water and groundwater controls.

These activities are established construction techniques but introduce potential noise, vibration, dust and water-pollution pathways that require assessment and control through the CEMP and project-specific Aquatic Environmental Protection System.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

Operational Impacts

The operational phase involves the use of the site for residential purposes. The scale and intensity of the activity will be consistent with other residential developments in the area and supported by existing infrastructure.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

The Probability of the Impact

Construction Impacts

Temporary construction-related impacts are likely; however, they are predictable, short-term, and manageable with standard mitigation measures.

Operational Impacts

The operational phase will result in a permanent change in land use; however, this change is consistent with the area's zoning and development patterns and is not expected to give rise to significant adverse effects.

The Expected Onset, Duration, Frequency and Reversibility of the Impacts

Construction Impacts

Construction disturbance will generally be temporary over the estimated 22-month construction period. However, the completed development will result in permanent land take, including the permanent removal of amenity grassland and potentially up to 8 no. trees. These permanent site changes will not result in direct habitat loss from Cork Harbour SPA or Great Island Channel SAC.

Operational Impacts

The operational impacts of residential use of the site will be long-term. These impacts represent a permanent change in land use but are consistent with the established urban context.

The Cumulation of the Impact with Other Existing and/or Approved Projects

Construction Impacts

Cumulative and in-combination effects are more likely where construction programmes overlap, physical footprints overlap, Zones of Influence overlap, or the same downstream receptors or pathways are affected. The assessment has considered nearby existing and approved projects, including Ref. 21/40196 / ABP-314310-22, Ref. 24/42822 and the Part 8 development at Ballinure Avenue. Although temporal overlap may occur, no likely significant in-combination effects on Cork Harbour SPA or Great Island Channel SAC are anticipated.

Operational Impacts

When considered cumulatively with other existing or permitted development, the operational impacts are unlikely to give rise to significant adverse environmental effects.

The Possibility of Effectively Reducing the Impact

Construction Impacts

Construction-related impacts can be effectively mitigated through standard construction management measures, including controls on noise, dust, traffic, and pollution, as set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Operational Impacts

The design and layout of the proposed development have been prepared having regard to the surrounding residential context. The provision of landscaping, appropriate building layout, and surface water management measures will help minimise potential impacts during the operational phase.

Overall, the potential impacts of the proposed development can be effectively mitigated, and no significant adverse environmental effects are anticipated.

5. Summary and Conclusion

The proposed development of the site for residential use is appropriate in the context of its zoning as ZO 01 – Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods under the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028 and is consistent with local and national planning policy objectives, which promote compact growth, consolidation within existing urban areas, and the efficient use of serviced land.

The proposed project does not meet the thresholds set out in Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and therefore does not require a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). A detailed screening has been undertaken in accordance with Schedule 7 and Schedule 7A of the Regulations.

Having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, and taking account of standard and well-established mitigation measures, it is concluded that the proposed development is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects during either the construction or operational phases, whether considered individually or in combination with other existing or permitted developments.

The proposed development is located within an established suburban area and will be served by existing infrastructure networks. The receiving environment is considered capable of absorbing the proposed development without significant adverse effects on land use, population, human health, water, biodiversity, or material assets.

The accompanying EcIA identifies several potential local ecological effects associated with the development's construction and operation. Following the implementation of the avoidance and mitigation measures identified in the EcIA, the residual ecological effects are not considered significant, with

localised positive effects anticipated as the proposed native planting and biodiversity enhancements become established.

The Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment concludes that likely significant effects on Cork Harbour SPA, Great Island Channel SAC or any other Natura 2000 site can be excluded, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. Accordingly, progression to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not considered necessary, subject to Cork City Council's determination as the competent authority.

In addition, the proposed development has been screened to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required and it has been concluded that there will be no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that an EIA is not required.