FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PROPOSED WORKS AT BLOCK 2, ST. FINBARR'S ROAD, CORK CITY

Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening

Prepared for:

Cork City Council

Cork City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

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Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Screening for Proposed Works at Block 2, St. Finbarr's Road, Cork City.

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Abstract: Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment Screening to Cork City Council for a Part 8 process for the Proposed Works at Block 2, St. Finbarr's Road, The Lough, Co. Cork.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cork City Council (CCC) is starting the Part 8 process for carrying out proposed works at Block 2 (No. 12-27 inclusive) at St. Finbarr's Road, Cork City. The works will comprise of the demolition of the existing apartment block at Block 2 and ancillary works.

Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) have been commissioned by CCC to prepare a report to inform their Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening for the Part 8 process for these proposed works.

The proposed works are herein referred to as 'the Proposed Development' and is detailed in Section 2 of this report.

This report presents an examination of whether the proposed works are likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is based on best available scientific knowledge. This report has been prepared to inform the competent authority in completing their statutory obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment, as required by Article 6(3) under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)[1].

1.1 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive)[2] provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The Directive requires that where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, while not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site, it will be subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to identify any implications for the European site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. Specifically, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

> *'6(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.'*

The competent authority must carry out a screening for appropriate assessment to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed project, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. If it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site, an appropriate assessment of its implications for the European Site(s) in view of the Site's conservation objectives is required to be carried out.

[1] European Commission. (2021). Commission notice- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Issue 2021/C 437/01).
[2] European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive).

The provisions of Article 6(3) do not apply where the proposed plan or project is 'connected with or necessary to the management of the site'. In this case, the proposed project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s).

1.2 Methodology

The purpose of appropriate assessment is to assess the implications of a plan or project on European site in view of that site's conservation objectives, individually and in combination with other plans or projects.

The assessment was conducted in accordance with the following guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin (2009, updated 2010) (Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2009)[3].
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. (European Commission, 2013)[4].
- Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2019). Brussels, (2019/C 33/01). OJ C 33, 25.1.2019[5].
- OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021)[6].
- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Commission Notice (2021) Brussels, 28.9.2021 C(2021) 6913 final (European Commission, 2021)[7].

[3] Environment Heritage and Local Government. (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities.
[4] European Commission. (2013). Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. EUR 28.
[5] European Commission. (2019). Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
[6] Office of the Planning Regulator. (2021). OPR Practice Note PN01. Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
[7] European Commission. (2021). Commission notice- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Issue 2021/C 437/01).

1.3 Relevant Experience and Expertise of Assessor and Reviewer

Conor Murphy of FT prepared the report. Conor is a Project Ecologist working in the Circular Economy and Environment Team in FT. Conor has four years' postgraduate experience and holds a BSc. (Hons) in Zoology from University of Galway (formerly National University of Ireland, Galway) and a MSc. in Wildlife Conservation and Management (1st Class Hons) from University College Dublin. Conor has in-depth knowledge of environmental policy, legislation and assessment procedures. Conor has an in-depth knowledge of the AA process and understanding of the legislation governing AA practice in Ireland and the EU.

Richard Deeney of FT was responsible for reviewing the assessment and report. Richard is a Principal Environmental Scientist working as part of the Circular Economy and Environment Team at FT. Richard holds a B.Sc. First Class Honours degree in Environmental Management from Technological University Dublin (formerly Dublin Institute of Technology) and an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law with the Honorable Society of King's Inns. Richard is a Chartered Environmentalist with the Society for the Environment and has 14 years' experience.

Bernie Guinan was responsible for reviewing and approving the report. Bernie is Director with FT and is a Chartered Waste Manager. She has 25 years' experience in delivering and managing projects and infrastructure delivery for a wide variety of sectors. Bernie has extensive experience in all aspects of strategic management planning and infrastructure development in Ireland, the UK, KSA and UAE. She is an experienced planning policy analyst and strategic planner. She has in-depth knowledge of all environmental and planning policy, legislation and guidance. She has been providing environmental, planning and waste management consultancy services to public bodies for over 25 years. She has a vast amount of experience coordinating EIA, SEA and AA projects, including national, large-scale and complex projects.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Overview of the Proposed Development

The proposed works will comprise the following:

- Demolition of 1 no. Apartment Block, namely 'Block 2' i.e. No's 12- 27 inclusive St. Finbarr's Road, The Lough, Cork City. Block marked in map attached.
- Removal of gardens, boundary walls, sheds, and fencing.
- Disconnection and removal of services
- New soft landscaping in preparation for the future proposed construction of a new multi- unit housing development.
- Construction of fencing around the site to form a boundary to prevent anti-social behaviour and dumping on the site, post demolition.

2.2 Purpose/Rationale for the Project

The existing units were completed by the end of 1964 using the direct labour unit of the then Cork Corporation. The units are now in a poor state of repair. Cork City Council have been vacating residents from the Noonan Road apartment blocks since 2023 and intend to apply for Part 8 Planning to demolish Block 2 St. Finbarr's Rd which will be the next available block of vacancy.

2.3 Detailed Description of the Proposed Works

The demolition works will be phased out over approximately 10 weeks. An indicative schedule and methodology of the works is provided below in Table 2-1:

Table 2-1: Proposed Works

Phase/ Week	Activities
Phase 1 – Week 1	• CCC will appoint the demolition contractor and carry out required paperwork (signing of contracts and other documentation) and coordinate meetings.
Phase 2 – Week 1 – 2	• The demolition contractor will carry out a prestart checklist of the properties in question and liaise with the client team on specific requirements special to each individual location on site. • The demolition contractor will assess the structures and carry out photographic condition surveys of the properties and surrounding ground conditions (e.g., footpaths, Roads green areas etc). • The demolition contractor will liaise with the Utility Management team to review isolations of services and establish throughout existing services drawings extent of services.
Phase 3 – Week 2 – 4	• The Utility Team will disconnect the properties of all live services associated with their discipline(s). The demolition contractor will coordinate and carry out a sign off sheet with those responsible to ensure the completeness of the works.

Phase/ Week	Activities
Phase 4 – Week 4 – 5	• The demolition contractor will mobilise resources and personnel to site to carry out the works. The demolition contractor staff/team works onsite. The operatives will setup boundary exclusions to the demolition site.
Phase 5 – Week 4 – 6	• Internals will be soft-stripped and asbestos-containing material (ACM) will be removed from existing structures. • A specialist team will carry out the ACM removal works in-line with the demolition contractors soft and asbestos removal methodology.
Phase 6 – Week 6 – 8	• The demolition contractor will then proceed to demolish the properties and surroundings (e.g., rear of gardens) in their entirety down, including the foundations by mechanical means, in line with the method statements. • The materials will be segregated and loaded in line with the waste management plans and recovered as required.
Phase 7 - Week 6 – 8	• The demolition contractor will proceed to carry out the processing and the reinstatement works to the site (i.e., topsoiling, levelling, grass seeding and landscaping) to the Proposed Development.
Phase 8 - Week 7 – 8	• The demolition contractor will proceed to reinstate new boundary fencing lines for areas outlined in project documentation, using smaller plant and equipment to excavate foundations and footings for fencing.
Phase 9	• The demolition contractor will reinstate the site area, including cutting of grassed areas.
Phase 10- Week 8/10	• The demolition contractor will hand over the site for practical completion to the client, along with associated documentation and carry out a site close-out walk with the client.

An indicative list of plant to be used over the demolition phase is provided below:

- 2 no. 360 Excavators
- 2 no. Dumper trucks
- Tipper Lorry
- Hand tools, including consaws, sledgehammers etc

Working hours for the Proposed Development have been proposed to be 08:00 to 17:00 for Mondays to Fridays. The Proposed Development will engage approximately 15 personnel for the duration of the works.

2.3.1 Environmental Management During the Demolition Phase

A Demolition and Environmental Management Plan will be prepared by the appointed contractor and will be implemented over the duration of the works.

2.3.1.1 *Noise and Vibration*

- Noise levels will be assessed during demolition works and every effort will be made to keep them as low as possible. Noise levels will be kept as low as reasonably practicable by the use of the following measures
- Machinery is maintained in good working condition on site.
- All works will take place upon prior notification to the public and written notification of working hours to the public in the vicinity of the demolition works
- Consideration will be given to noise emissions when hiring equipment onto site
- Demolition will be scheduled at a time that causes least disturbance to local residence
- Any rubble processing /crushing that takes place on site will be located in a practicable location to the works and kept to a minimum onsite so as to minimise the noise disturbances to local residents
- Particular care will be taken to reduce exterior noise levels onsite so as not to cause inconvenience outside of the site boundary.

2.3.1.2 *Demolition Dust*

- Care will be taken to keep demolition dust to a minimum. If dry conditions cause a problem, dust suppression techniques will be used to damp down the dust as required. These will include a fire hydrant hose with a sprinkler nozzle and a mobile unit. The source will include a fire hydrant hose with a sprinkler nozzle and a specific tender to demolition activities this will be sourced from the Cork City Council watermain.
- Concrete/ brick inert materials from the demolition works comprise the dustiest operation on site and this will be mitigated by damping down with a hydrant supply also. All concrete cutting saws will be maintained and are fitted with hand/electric-pumped pressurised water suppression tankers to ensure the silica dust is kept to a minimum during isolation operations.
- Nap sprayers and airless sprayers will be used during ACM removal activities

2.3.1.3 *Storm Drains*

- All stormwater drains will be identified prior to commencement of demolition activities.
- All stormwater drains to be monitored at regular intervals (Pre-start, intermediately and end of shift / project). These are to be checked weekly as part of the demolition contractors weekly environmental check list. A record of these inspections will be maintained for duration of works.
- Should drains and manhole covers be found within the site these covers will be protected with 30 mm heavy gauge steel plating to ensure they are not breached or compromised at any time during demolition and reinstatement works.
- The condition before and after the works are complete will also be recorded and kept of file for future reference should blockages occur the future after works are complete.

2.3.1.4 *Waste Management*

Materials and waste generated from the Proposed Development will be managed in accordance with a Resource and Waste Management Plan (RWMP), which will be prepared for the duration of the works by the appointed contractor.

The RWMP will clarify and augment the provisional waste management measures defined below. The RWMP will maximise the recycling, reuse and recovery of wastes and prioritise the diversion of water from landfills wherever possible. The plan will align with the EPA Waste Hierarchy Principles through the management of materials to reduce unnecessary use of new products, optimisation of use of secondary materials and promotion of on-site reuse to prevent the generation of waste.

The type of demolition wastes that are expected to be generated from the proposed works will typically include the following:

- Concrete Block/Brick from Internal & External Walls
- Concrete Rubble from excavated external surfaces
- Soils/Infill from excavated external surfaces
- Tiles/Slates from roof coverings
- Wood from sheds, furniture, Suspended Ground Floors, First Floors, staircases and roof beams
- Glass from windows
- Textiles from furniture and carpets Metals from internal and external structures Domestic Waste from Internals of the house & yard/garden clearance
- ACM (Asbestos Containing Materials) from internal and external asbestos removal
- General Site Waste consumables, packaging and waste from welfare facilities

The estimated quantities arising from these works are as follows:

- Recycled Quantities: 30 tonnes
- Reuse Quantities: 500 tonnes
- Disposal Quantities: 8 tonnes

2.3.1.4.1 Management of Potential Asbestos Containing Material

- All ACMs will be stripped and removed prior to demolition in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Exposure to Asbestos) Regulations 2006, as amended, and the relevant HSA Guidance documents.
- A suitably qualified contractor will be procured to carry out these works.
- Site-specific risk assessments and method statements will be developed for the Asbestos removal works to be undertaken.
- Asbestos waste material arising during the demolition/site clearance process will be taken from the site by an appropriately authorised waste collector and will be subject to final treatment/management in an appropriately authorised destination waste management facility.

2.3.1.5 Fuel Management and Storage

- All plant and equipment will be fuelled up prior to coming to site to reduce the risk of spillage of large volumes of hazardous and flammable liquids on site.
- In the unlikely event that refuelling of diesel is required on site, fuel shall be stored only in a bunded fuel tank which will be brought to the side of the excavator and pumped into the tank. Once the construction works for the day is complete, the tank will be removed to local storage yard.
- New oils like hydraulic and engine oils will be stored in a bunded container within our company maintenance / plant vehicle. It will be stored in small manageable quantities, and used in the unlikely event of minor hydraulic breakdown of attachment hoses onsite and to top up on engine oils as part of prestart equipment checks.
- Greases for maintaining equipment linkages and pins will be stored in a bunded container within our company maintenance / plant vehicle.
- Oily rags etc used during maintenance will be placed into a designated vehicle bin/ waste bag and removed from the vehicle at regular intervals to the demolition contractors' storage yard where once a sufficient quantity is stored will be removed to a licensed treatment facility for treatment and final disposal.
- Petrol will be stored in a steel jerry can. Only small quantities will be stored in company vans onsite for use in consaws.
- Oxygen and Propane gases are not envisaged to be used for the demolition works. Should they be required for plant maintenance, they will be brought to site in a secure trailer stored upright and remain within this position until the works are complete, where they will again be removed from site.

Note: No environmental mitigation measures have been considered when examining whether the proposed works are likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects)**.**

2.4 Post Demolition Phase

The Proposed Development site will be reinstated post the demolition works, landscaped and fenced off to prevent any anti-social behaviour or dumping. The site may be subject to future development at a later stage, in line with the zoning objective 'ZO 1 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods'.

2.5 Existing Environment

The Proposed Development site comprises an apartment block (inclusive of rear gardens) intended for demolition, at Block 2 (No. 12- 27 inclusive). The extent of the site to be demolished at Block 2 is 0.118 hectares (ha). The site will be referred to as 'the site' or 'the Proposed Development site' throughout this report.

The site is located in the functional area of Cork City Council, forming part of the Cork City South Central Local Electoral Area. The site is bounded by residential premises on Saint Finbarr's Road to the west, Noonan Road to the south, and 98th Street to the east. There are commercial premises as well as residential premises on Gillabbey Street to the north of the site.

2.5.1 Description of Existing Ecological Baseline

2.5.1.1 Desktop Assessment

In September 2026, a desk study was carried out to collate available information on the existing natural environment at the location of the Proposed Development. This comprised a review of the following publications, data and datasets:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (on-line map-viewer including the Appropriate Assessment Tool);
- Aerial imagery of the Proposed Development and surrounding lands;
- Tailte Éireann National Land Cover Map;
- OSI Aerial photography and 1:50000 mapping;
- Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) maps and data;
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government- EIA Portal;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – online European site network information, including site conservation objectives;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – Information on the status of EU protected habitats and species in Ireland (including Article 17 and Article 12 Reports);
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) Biodiversity Maps viewer (Accessed September 2026); and
- National Land Cover (2018) dataset (Accessed September 2026).

The area surrounding the Proposed Development location is sub-urban in nature, comprising various commercial and residential properties. The Proposed Development's car park is located to the west and north of the building with gardens and residential developments adjoining the eastern and southern boundaries.

The wider road network surrounding the Proposed Development includes Gillabbey Street to the north, Noonan Road to the south, 98th Street to the east and St Finbarr's Road outside the western car park.

The Proposed Development is predominantly underlain by the Lee Valley Gravels ground waterbody (ID: IE_SW_G_094) and the Ballincollig ground waterbody (ID: IE_SW_G_002). The Water Framework Directive (WFD) status (2019-2024) for both the Lee Valley Gravels ground waterbody and Ballincollig ground waterbody is *'Good'*.

The Proposed Development is underlain by a Regionally Important Aquifer, described as '*Karstified* (diffuse)' (An aquifer is a body of rock that holds groundwater. This is a good aquifer and is capable of supplying regionally important supplies [e.g., large public water supplies]). Groundwater vulnerability is classified as *'Moderate'*, indicating that groundwater at the site has natural characteristics that makes it vulnerable to contamination by human activities.

Soils underlying the Proposed Development are classified as '*Urban*', described as *'Urban* - soil concreted cover*'*, and are underlain by '*Made*' subsoils.

The Proposed Development is located within the WFD Catchment Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay (ID: 19), the Glasheen[Cork City]_SC_010 Sub-catchment (ID: 19_17) and the Glasheen[Cork City]_010 River Sub Basin (ID: IE_SW_19G040700). The closest waterbody within the same sub-basin is the River Lee (EPA Segment Code: 19_2147, Order 4th), located approximately 242 m to the north. The River Lee is located within the Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper (ID: IE_SW_060_0950) flows in an easterly direction before discharging into the Cork Harbour (ID: IE_SW_060_0000) approximately 15.76 km (instream distance) south-east of the site. The receiving Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper is of '*Moderate*' biological status (WFD Status 2019-2024) and is at risk of failing to meet '*Good*' status.

As per CORINE land use (2018), the Proposed Development is classified as *'Artificial Surfaces'* (121).

According to the National Land Cover mapping, the Proposed Development site comprises Buildings (110) and Other Artificial Surfaces (130). Examination of the orthophotography indicates the presence of Scrub (450) located along the eastern boundary of the Proposed Development.

Examination of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment (CFRAM) flood maps for the area indicate that the Proposed Development does not lie within a fluvial flood risk zone. No pluvial flood risk data is available for the Proposed Development location.

There are records of Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*) within the Proposed Development site. This third schedule invasive species (Japanese knotweed) is currently being treated on site at the time of reporting.

3. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report examines whether the proposed works are likely to have a significant effect upon European Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

3.2 Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development

The process of determining the likelihood of significant effects from a Proposed Development on European sites is an iterative process centred around a Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model as per OPR, 2021[8]. For an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect cannot occur.

- Source(s) – e.g. pollutant run-off, noise, removal of vegetation, etc.;
- Pathway(s) – functional link, or ecological pathway e.g. watercourse flowing into a downstream SAC; and
- Receptor(s) – the qualifying habitats and species of European sites and ecological resources supporting those habitats/species.

In the context of this report, a source is any identifiable element of the Proposed Development that is known to interact with the receiving environment. A receptor is the Qualifying Interests (QI)[9] for an SAC/cSAC or Special Conservation Interests (SCI)[10] for an SPA/cSPA or an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the QI/SCI. In practice, the term QI also applies to SCIs (and is used in this document for simplicity). A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor.

[8] Office of the Planning Regulator. (2021). OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management

[9] SACs are areas designated under the Habitats Directive to conserve habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and plant and animal species listed in Annex II. Collectively these are referred to as the 'Qualifying Interests' or 'QIs' of the SAC / cSAC.

[10] SPAs are sites classified under the Birds Directive to protect rare or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I to the Directive as well as regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands. Wetland habitats that support internationally important populations of migratory birds may be coastal or inland. Collectively, these species and habitats are referred to as the 'Special Conservation Interests' of the SPA / cSPA.

The European Commission Notice (2021) on the 'Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC', states that in identifying European sites (Natura 2000 sites), which may be affected by the project, the following should be identified:

- Any European sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the Proposed Development in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;
- Any European sites within the likely zone of influence (ZoI) of the Proposed Development. European sites located in the surroundings of the Proposed Development (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the proposed development, including as regards the use of natural resources (e.g., water) and various types of waste, discharge or emissions of substances or energy;
- European sites whose connectivity or ecological continuity can be affected by the Proposed Development.

There are no European sites geographically overlapping with the Proposed Development. As such, further consideration is given to the 'likely zone of influence' and 'connectivity or ecological continuity'.

3.3 Zone of Influence

As per CIEEM guidelines (2018)[11], the ZoI for a Proposed Development is defined having regard to the spatial and temporal scale of potential biophysical changes in the environment which might occur because of the Proposed Development and throughout its lifetime. In considering such potential biophysical changes, the following was considered:

- Impacts on habitats - the potential for biophysical change by disturbance/damage/ degradation is taken as the footprint of the works (including site clearance) plus 10 m beyond (based on Ryan Hanley, 2014)[12]. There are no European sites located within 10 m of the Proposed Development.
- For groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE), regard is had to SEPA guidelines[13] which prescribes a potential hydrogeological effect zone of 250 m from ground works. There are no European sites located 250 m of the Proposed Development.
- The NRA (2006) Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes[14] notes a 150 m potential disturbance ZoI for otter for breeding holts and 20 m for non-breeding active holts. As such the study area included the Proposed Development site plus a 150 m buffer to assess habitat suitability for otter and potential association with an SAC population. The Proposed Development is not located within 150 m from an SAC.

[11] CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.3. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester
[12] Ryan Hanley (2014b) Stage 1: Appropriate Assessment Screening Methodology for the Maintenance of Arterial Drainage Schemes. Prepared by Ryan Hanley Consulting Engineers on behalf of the Office of Public Works
[13] Scottish Environment Protection Agency (2014) Land Use Planning System SEPA Guidance Note 31. Guidance on Assessing the Impacts of Development Proposals on Groundwater Abstractions and groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems.
[14] NRA, 2006. Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes. Dublin: National Roads Authority. Available at: http://www.nra.ie/Environment/

- The potential disturbance ZoI for birds beyond the footprint of the Proposed Development was considered having regard to Cutts et al (2013)[15] and was defined as 500 m. Consideration of connectivity or ecological continuity for birds is set out in 3.3.1.

3.3.1 Connectivity or Ecological Continuity

Connectivity or ecological continuity refers to the degree to which different parts of a landscape, ecosystem, or habitat are physically or functionally linked, allowing the movement of organisms, nutrients, energy, or ecological processes across space. Consideration is therefore given to whether there could be landscape[16] or ecological connectivity[17] to any QI or SCI species. In considering connectivity or ecological continuity the following is noted:

- None of the terrestrial habitats that will be lost, damaged or degraded as a result of the Proposed Development are integral to the maintenance of the structure or function of any other habitats within any European sites and do not form continuity with any such habitats.
- The Institute of Air Quality Management (Holman et al, 2024)[18] states that for sensitive ecological receptors, sensitivity to dust is 'High' up to 20 m from the source and reduces to 'Medium' over 50 m from the source. The guidelines also stipulate that dust deposition from construction typically occurs up to 500 m from large sites, 200 m from medium sites and 50 m from small sites. A 50 m ZoI for dust is adopted given the small scale of the Proposed Development. There are no European sites located within the ZoI of dust deposition and there are no surface waterbodies located within the ZoI for dust deposition. S-P-R connectivity is ruled out.
- For potential for impacts on surface waters, regard is had to IFI (2020) guidelines[19] which states that 'The recommended [riparian] buffer zone width for larger river channels (>10 m) is 35 m to 60 m and for smaller channels (<10 m) is 20 m or greater'. There are no surface waters located within the ZoI. Examination of the CCC stormwater sewer system mapping indicates the potential for a hydrological connection between the Proposed Development and the River Lee *c*. 617 m to the north east at the corner of French's Quay/Probys Quay. There is a potential indirect hydrological connection between the Proposed Development and Cork Harbour SPA via the existing stormwater sewer system with an instream distance of *c*. 6.2 km.
- In terms of birds there are no SPAs within the 500 m potential disturbance ZoI for birds. In order to assess potential connectivity between the Proposed Development and mobile SCIS, regard was had to the SNH guidelines for the core foraging ranges of SPA birds, and a 15 km range was adopted for consideration. That is, an assessment was made as to whether the habitats within the ZoI of the Proposed Development could act as foraging or roosting habitat for any avian SCIs of SPAs which are located within 15 km of the Proposed Development, having regard to the conservation objective backing documents for each SPA. The sole SPA located within 15 km of the Proposed Development is the Cork Harbour SPA (IE0004030) (*c*. 3.44 km).

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[15] Cutts N, Hemingway K and Spencer J (2013). The Waterbird Disturbance Mitigation Toolkit Informing Estuarine Planning and Construction Projects. Produced by the Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS). Version 3.2.
[16] Landscape connectivity is a combined product of structural and functional connectivity, i.e. the effect of physical landscape structure and the actual species use of the landscape.
[17] Connectivity is defined as a measure of the functional availability of the habitats needed for a particular species to move through a given area. Examples include the flight lines used by bats to travel between roosts and foraging areas or the corridors of appropriate habitat needed by some slow colonising species if they are to spread.
[18] Holman et al (2024). IAQM Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction, Institute of Air Quality Management, London.
[19] Inland Fisheries Ireland (2020) A Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation, Climate / Flood Risk and Recreational Planning.

- Cork Harbour SPA (IE0004030): This SPA is located *c*. 3.44 km from the Proposed Development. There is the potential for indirect hydrological connectivity to exist between the Proposed Development and Cork Harbour SPA via the existing stormwater sewer system with an instream distance of *c*. 6.2 km. The Proposed Development is located outside of the core foraging range of several avian SCIs with the exceptions of Cormorant, Common Tern and Gull species. Foraging ranges for Cormorant is approximately 33.9 km (Nature Scot, 2023[20]), Common Tern is *c*. 26.9 km (Nature Scot, 2023[21]) and core foraging ranges for Gull species associated with the SPA lie between 18.5 - 236 km respectively (Nature Scot, 2023[22]). The Proposed Development and 500 m disturbance distance and provides sub-optimal foraging habitat for these species. This SPA is considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects in Table 3-1.

Based on the above, the Cork Harbour SPA is considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects (see Table 3-1):

[20] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency

[21] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency

[22] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency

Table 3-1: Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (qualifying interests & special conservation interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
(004030)	Cork Harbour SPA	3.44	Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004] Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A005] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017] Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) [A028] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048] Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052] Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054] 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]	This SPA is located *c*. 3.44 km from the Proposed Development. There is the potential for indirect hydrological connectivity to exist between the Proposed Development and Cork Harbour SPA via the existing stormwater sewer system with an instream distance of *c*. 6.2 km. However, the receiving River Lee waterbody lies within the Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper which is characterised by substantial water volumes, regular tidal exchange, and a high degree of dilution and dispersion capacity. Any residual surface water runoff arising from the Proposed Development would be localised, temporary and negligible in magnitude, and would not result in measurable changes to the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of the estuarine waterbody. Given the scale (0.118 ha), temporary duration of works (*c*. 10 weeks), downstream distance (*c*. 6.2 km) and the assimilative nature of receiving and downstream surface waters in the Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper (ID: IE_SW_060_0950), the Proposed Development will not give rise to a likely significant effect on the supporting habitat of the Cork Harbour SPA. The bird species present within this European site are largely coastal/estuarine bird species and largely have short foraging ranges, e.g., Dunlin and Plover species have core ranges of 500 m and 3 km, respectively (SNH, 2016[23]).	No

[23] SNH (2016) Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Guidance. Scottish Natural Heritage. Version 3 - June 2016.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (qualifying interests & special conservation interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
			Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) [A855] Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	The Proposed Development is located outside of the core foraging range of several avian SCIs with the exceptions of Cormorant, Common Tern and Gull species. Foraging ranges for Common tern and Cormorant are approximately 26.9 km and 33.9 km respectively (Nature Scot, 2023[24]). Although the Proposed Development and 500 m disturbance zone theoretically overlap with the core foraging ranges of these SCIs, the Proposed Development and habitat within 500 m is predominantly built environment and disturbed, amenity grassland and is sub-optimal for these largely marine species. Given the scale (0.118 ha), temporary duration of works (*c*. 10 weeks), baseline level of anthropogenic disturbance and sub-optimal habitat located within the 500 m disturbance distance from the Proposed Development, there will be no significant effects on SCIs Common tern and Cormorant. Core foraging ranges for Black-headed Gull, Common Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull are 18.5 km, 50 km and 236 km respectively (Nature Scot, 2023[25]). Birdwatch Ireland indicates that these species forage on insects, other smaller invertebrates and will often exploit fisheries waste within coastal and inland habitats. The habitat within 500 m of the Proposed Development is built environment and disturbed, amenity grassland and is sub-optimal for these listed SCIs.	

[24] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency
[25] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (qualifying interests & special conservation interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
				More valuable habitat is present within the wider landscape. Furthermore, Gull species are currently exposed to background levels of noise associated with local roads. The EPA's Round 4 Road Noise Agglomeration Maps for road traffic indicates an Lden[26] of 55 - 59 dB along St. Finbarr Road and Noonan Road with an increased Lden of 60 - 64 dB along Gillabbey Street. These figures indicate noise levels typical of an urban environment dominated by road traffic, and which persist around the Proposed Development. Due to the scale (0.118 ha), temporary duration of works (*c.* 10 weeks), baseline level of anthropogenic disturbance and sub-optimal habitat located within the Proposed Development and its 500 m disturbance buffer, there will be no significant effects on SCIs Black-headed Gull, Common Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull as result of the Proposed Development.	

[26] Lden refers to the day–evening–night long-term average noise indicator. It is 'weighted' with a penalty for evening and night to account for extra annoyance in the evening and night-time periods.

3.4 Other plans and projects considered for potential in-combination effects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that:

> *'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives'.*

It is therefore required that the likely significant effects of the proposed project are considered in-combination with any other plans or projects within the zone of influence.

As there are no meaningful pathways for effects identified with respect to European sites - given the nature of the habitats that will be affected by the project and the distance from relevant SPA location for SCI species. There are no further considerations required as the S-P-R model has been completed with no potential effects that could arise from the proposed project.

3.5 Screening Conclusion

The results of the S-P-R modelling process identified that - given the scale and nature of the potential sources identified in Section 3 - there are **no likely significant effects** identified to any European sites.

The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during all phases of the proposed project. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the sources for impacts, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European site.

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