AtkinsRéalis

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Cork City Council

May 2025

MARY STREET, DOUGLAS STREET AND WHITE STREET PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

Notice

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This document has 33 pages including the cover.

Document history

Document title: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Document reference: 5218684DG0039

Revision	Purpose description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
0	DRAFT	RG	RG	DE	DE	January 2025
1	Final	RG	RG	DL	DL	April 2025
2	Final	RG	RG/DL	DL	DL	14/04/2025
3	Final (Revised)	RG	RG/DL	DL	NC	06/05/2025

Client signoff

Client	Cork City Council
Project	MARY STREET, DOUGLAS STREET AND WHITE STREET PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT SCHEME
Job number	5218684

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1. Introduction

AtkinsRéalis have been appointed by Cork City Council (CCC) to prepare, on its behalf, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report in respect of the proposed Public Realm Enhancement Scheme along Mary Street, Douglas Street and White Street in Cork City. The proposed works involve the widening of existing footpaths, rejuvenation of the existing road surface, addition of traffic calming measures, construction of a new park, undergrounding existing overhead cables, removing through traffic using filtered permeability, and upgrading Red Abbey Square, as well as the planting of amenity vegetation and the installation of benches and lighting.

The EIA Screening will be submitted as part of the Part 8 planning documents for the proposed works.

1.1 Project Overview

Cork City Council is advancing the Mary Street, Douglas Street, and White Street Public Realm Enhancement Scheme, a pivotal project designed to rejuvenate one of the city's most historic and culturally rich areas. This initiative is part of a comprehensive strategy to enhance the public realm, improve transport infrastructure, and promote sustainable urban development. The scheme is aligned with key policy frameworks, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Project Ireland 2040, and the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028, all of which emphasize the importance of creating vibrant, accessible, and resilient urban environments.

The South Parish area, of Cork City encompassing Mary Street, Douglas Street, and White Street, is characterized by its narrow streets, high traffic volumes, and limited pedestrian facilities. These conditions have long posed challenges for residents, businesses, and visitors. The proposed upgrades aim to address these issues by implementing a range of measures, including pedestrian zones, one-way traffic systems, shared surfaces, and enhanced landscaping. These interventions are designed to reduce through traffic, improve safety, and create more attractive and functional public spaces that encourage walking and cycling.

The proposed development will consist of the following:

- Upgrading & widening of footpaths including the introduction of controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points through-out the scheme
- Re-alignment of the junction between Friar St. & Evergreen St. to provide traffic calming measures and provide controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points
- Re-alignment of the junction between Evergreen St. & Abbey St. to provide traffic calming measures and provide controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points
- Conversion of Abbey St. into a shared surface two-way Cul de sac street, incorporating removable barriers at the junction between Abbey St. and Mary St. allowing emergency vehicle access through to Douglas St. from Abbey St.
- Introduction of a landscaping area that maintains pedestrian stairway access between Abbey St. and the Southern End of Travers St.
- Creating a Cul de sac street on the Northen section of Travers St.

- Creation of a shared active travel facility on Douglas St. between the junctions with Mary St. and Dunbar St. with emergency vehicle access only.
- Conversion of Douglas St. into a one-way east bound street between the junctions of Dunbar St. and Rutland St.
- Introduction of a small city park on the eastern end of Douglas St and removing vehicle access to and from Douglas St. from the junction with Langford Row.
- Converting the existing signalised junction between Langford Row and Douglas St. into a Protected Junction with protected cycle facilities.
- Conversion of Douglas St. into a shared surface two-way Cul de sac street, between the junction with Rutland St. and the new city park
- Conversion of Meade St. into a one-way south bound street
- Conversion of Drinan St. into a one-way north bound street
- Conversion of Cove St. into a one-way east bound street between the junctions with Meade St. and Drinan St.
- Conversion of Cove St. into a one-way west bound street between the junctions with Mary St. and Goulds Sq.
- Upgrade of Red Abbey Sq. including traffic calming along Red Abbey St, the removal of railings around Red Abbey Tower and introduction of enhanced landscaping and lighting measures
- Conversion of White St. to a one-way south bound street
- Provision of contraflow cycle facilities to allow two-way cycle access along one-way streets for portions of Cove St, Mary St, Red Abbey St, Dunbar St and Douglas St.
- Introduction of raised tables and crossing points at street junctions through-out the scheme
- Introduction of landscaping measures including trees, planter beds and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) measures through-out the scheme
- Introduction of seating elements through-out the scheme.
- Introduction of bike parking through-out the scheme
- Introduction of TFI shared bike scheme on Abbey Street
- Introduction of community shared bin storage on Abbey St. & Dunbar St.
- Undergrounding of all overhead cables through-out the scheme
- Introduction of enhanced lighting through-out the scheme.

By altering the streets to become one-way combined with strategic usage of raised table junctions and parking modifications, the scheme creates additional width for improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The area of Mary Street, Douglas Street and White Street is currently open to motorised traffic in a mixture of one-way and two-way roads and faces a high-volume of traffic with relatively high speed. Apart from the provision of footpaths, there are no other segregated facilities for active travel modes.

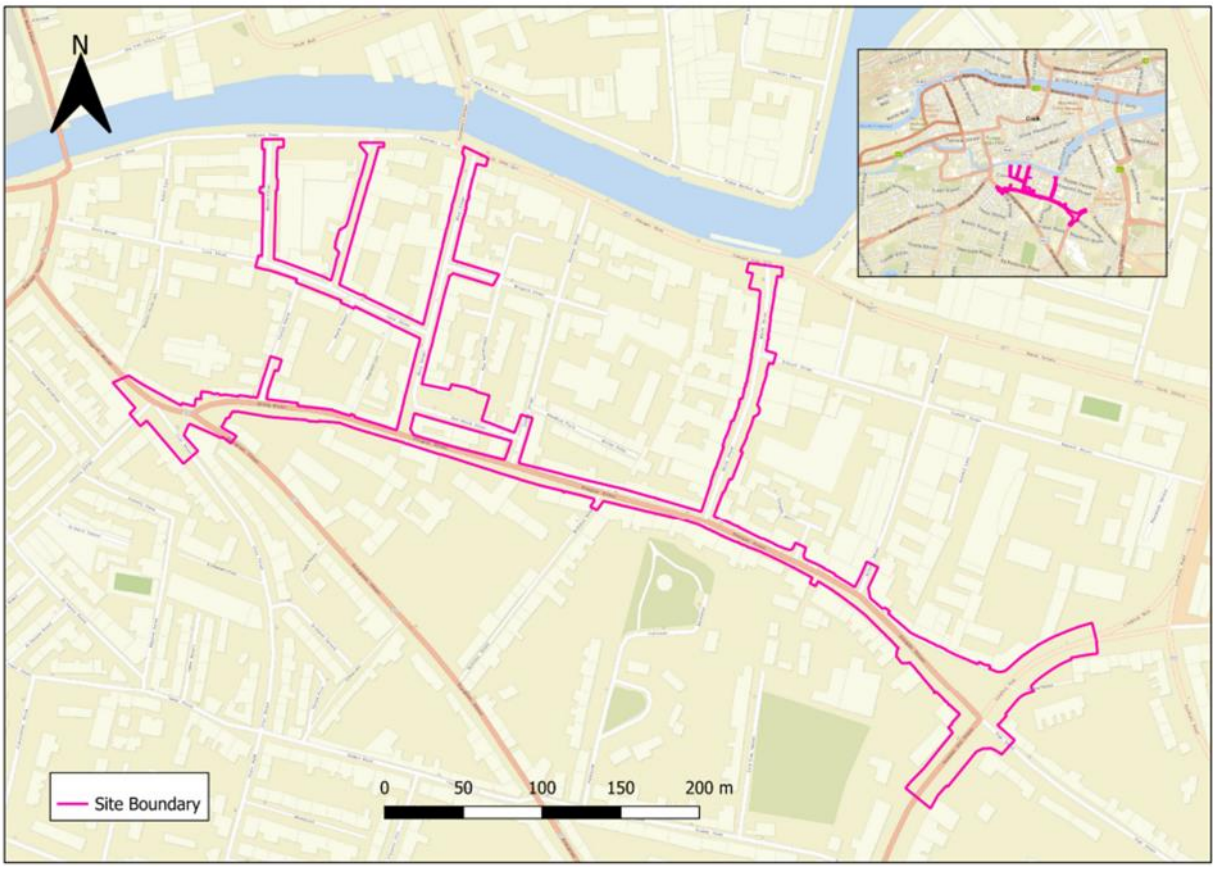

Figure 1-1 – Location of Proposed Development

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report has been prepared to support the Part 8 planning application for the Proposed Development. The purpose of this report is to determine if the Proposed Development requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The project has been screened to generate a summarised overview of the potential impacts on the receiving environment, and in the context of relevant statutory requirements.

A Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment has also been prepared for the Proposed Development (AtkinsRéalis, 2025). The Proposed Development has been assessed with regards to the likely significant effects of the project on European sites within the zone of influence (ZoI) of the Proposed Development.

The AA Screening Report concluded that '*the proposed works will not, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, give rise to impacts which would constitute significant effects on the Great Island Channel SAC, Cork Harbour SPA or any other Natura 2000 site, in view of their conservation objectives. Therefore, it is recommended that Cork City Council, as the competent authority, may determine that Appropriate Assessment is not required in respect of the proposed works. Should any aspect of the proposed works be materially changed, a new AA Screening Report would be required.'*

2. Receiving Environment

2.1 Hydrology

The Proposed Development is located within the Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment Area (Catchment ID: 19). The site is located directly south of the Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper (EPA Code: IE_SW_060_0950) section of the River Lee (EPA code: IE_NB_03B010800). This flows into the Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower, ca. 615m downstream. From the Estuary Lower, the River Lee flows in a north easterly direction and discharges into Lough Mahon (EPA Code: IE_SW_060_0750) 4.40km downstream.

The River Lee has been assigned 'Good' water quality status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and is 'At Risk' of failing to meet the WFD objectives by 2027 (EPA, 2025). Both the Lee Cork Estuary Upper and Lower have been assigned 'moderate' water quality status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and are 'At Risk' of failing to meet the WFD objectives (EPA, 2025).

The proposed works have hydrological connectivity to the tidal reaches of the River Lee vie the River Lee (south channel) and then the River Lee. Some of the drainage gullies within the site boundary discharge into the River Lee (specifically at three locations - on Sullivan's Quay at the end of Drinan Street and on George's Quay at the end of Mary Street, and on White Street). The drainage gullies within the site boundary do not currently have attenuation or treatment systems in place to filter any pollutants that might enter the drainage system.

2.2 Ecology

There are 2no. Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) within the Proposed Development site. These are Cork Harbour Special Protected Area (SPA) and Great Island Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The AtkinsRéalis AA Screening has concluded '*that the proposed works will not, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, give rise to impacts which would constitute significant effects on the Great Island Channel SAC, Cork Harbour SPA or any other Natura 2000 site, in view of their conservation objectives. Therefore, it recommended that Cork City Council, as the competent authority, may determine that Appropriate Assessment is not required in respect of the proposed works. Should any aspect of the proposed works be materially changed, a new AA Screening Report would be required.'*

2.3 Hydrogeology

There is 1no. Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) reported borehole located within the site of the Proposed Development located on Mary Street. This is a Borehole (GSI Name 1407SEW061) is located to 500m accuracy.

There are no Ground Water Drinking Water Source Protection Areas within 10km of the route. There are no Group Water Schemes located within 10km of the Proposed Development.

GSI (2025) has classified the groundwater vulnerability beneath the northern area of the site as predominately 'High' with portions of 'Moderate' groundwater vulnerability noted on White Street and the centre of Douglas Street.

The site is within the Lee Valley Gravels Groundwater Body (GWB) (Code IE_SW_G_094) which is reported by the EPA (2025) as having 'Good' WFD status for the 2021-2027 monitoring period and is 'At Risk' of failing to meet the Water Framework Directive objectives by 2027.

Given the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, the potential contamination to groundwater via excavation works is not likely as the anticipated maximum excavation depth is 1m.

2.4 Geology

The bedrock beneath the Proposed Development comprises of Walsortian Limestone (massive, unbedded lime-mudstone) with fault lines to the east and west of the Proposed Development (GSI, 2025). North of the study area is the Ballysteen Formation which consists of dark muddy limestones and shale. South of the study area is the Cork Red Marble Formation which consists of red bracciated calcilutite limestone.

There is one karst feature present within 5km of the study area, a cave (EPA ID: 1707SWK010), located approximately 2.45km east (GSI, 2025).

The Proposed Development is predominately underlain by a 'Locally important gravel aquifer'. A small portion is underlain by 'Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (diffuse)' (GSI 2025).

There are no recorded landslide events in the vicinity of the site. Landslide susceptibility within the site and surrounds is 'Low (inferred)' on made ground (GSI, 2025).

There are 7no. designated Geological Heritage Areas within 5km of the study area (GSI, 2025), as listed below:

- St Fin Barre's Cathedral (GSI Code: CC007), 0.6km west;
- Patrick's Hill (GSI Code:CC005), 1km north;
- Shandon Tower (GSI Code: CC006), 1.1km north;
- Ballinlough Fields (GSI Code: CC001), 1.5km southeast;
- Blackrock Diamond Quarry (GSI Code: CC003), 1.6km east;
- Beaumont Quarry (GSI Code: CC002), 2.4km southeast; and,
- St Joseph's Section (GSI Code: CC008), 4.6km west.

The site is predominately underlain by a locally important gravel aquifer with a small potion at the eastern end of Douglas Street underlain by a Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (diffuse).

2.5 Flood Risk

The proposed site has been assessed in accordance with the "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management" Guidelines. As part of the sequential test, the OPW flood hazard maps and the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment Maps (CFRAM) produced by the OPW were consulted. The OPW has reported previous recurrent or standalone flood events within the vicinity of the proposed project site. A Flood Risk Assessment will be required at detailed design stage.

2.6 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

The Proposed Development is located within the South Parish Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) with 25no. National Inventory of Architectural Heritage sites located within the site (NMS, 2025).

A Draft Archaeological Impact Assessment was conducted by John Cronin and Associates in January 2025 for the Proposed Development. The assessment concluded that '*This archaeological impact assessment was undertaken in order to assess the known and potential archaeological resource of the streets which encompass the proposed Mary Street, Douglas Street and White Street Upgrade Scheme and to determine the nature of potential impacts which may occur to this resource. Based on the evidence garnered from the available, relevant datasets and the historic documentary and cartographic sources, it is concluded that there will be no direct impacts on known elements of the recorded archaeological resource as result of the proposed scheme.*

However, due to the study area's location within the Zone of Archaeological Potential which surrounds the medieval historic core of Cork (CO074-034001-), the subject streets can be considered to possess a moderate to high archaeological potential. The western portion of the study area, in particular, possesses a heightened archaeological potential due to its location within, or in immediate vicinity to, an area that documentary sources indicate was close to the late 11th / early 12th-century Hiberno-Scandinavian settlement. This is also the case for areas in the vicinity of the church and graveyard of St. Nicholas and the Red Abbey.

As such, it is considered that, without the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, any sub-surface groundworks undertaken as part of the proposed scheme have the potential to directly and negatively impact on the unrecorded archaeological heritage resource of the area'.

It is recommended by John Cronin and Associates (January 2025) that '*all sub-surface groundworks carried out as part of the proposed scheme should be subject to archaeological monitoring by a suitably qualified project archaeologist and under a licence issued by the National Monuments Service. This will include monitoring of any required advanced geotechnical investigations as well as works such as drainage and service trenching during the construction phase. It is recommended that in the event that any advance geotechnical investigations (e.g. boreholes, trial pits and slit trenches) are proposed within the environs of the Red Abbey, they should be subject to advance archaeological review. The potential for incorporating targeted archaeological investigations as part of any such advance works, if required in this archaeologically sensitive area, should be considered in consultation with the Cork City Council Archaeologist.*

The archaeological monitoring of the proposed scheme should be undertaken until such time that the project archaeologist is satisfied that no further risk to the archaeological resource exists. In the event that any archaeological artefacts, features or deposits are revealed during the programme of archaeological monitoring, all machine excavation should be halted at the relevant location while the discovery is cleaned and cordoned off. The Cork City Council Archaeologist and the National Monuments Service should then be notified of the discovery and consulted to determine the appropriate mitigation strategy which may entail preservation in situ by avoidance or preservation by record through a licensed archaeological excavation.

In the event that any human remains are identified during monitoring, including within the environs of St. Nicholas Church and the Red Abbey, all works should be halted at the location while the National Museum of Ireland and An Garda Síochána are notified as per statutory requirements. The services of a suitably qualified osteoarchaeologist should also be retained in order to advise on any required future strategy for the treatment of any such human remains.

In addition, any other works within the environs of the Red Abbey, such as the removal of security fencing, should be subject to archaeological supervision which will include a written and photographic record of the works. It should be noted that the Red Abbey is a National Monument in the ownership of a Local Authority and, therefore, an application for a Ministerial Consent for any works within the environs of the monument may be required. It is recommended that the appointed project archaeologist should liaise with the Cork City Council Archaeologist in relation to any such application process well in advance of the commencement of any works at this location in order to ensure that no delays to the scheme programme will occur. It is also recommended that the location of the Red Abbey plaza area should also not be used as a compound or storage area during the construction phase and that the area should be kept well maintained at all times.

Per licensing requirements, upon conclusion of all works requiring archaeological monitoring, a report on the archaeological monitoring of the proposed scheme should be compiled by the project archaeologist and submitted to the Cork City Council Archaeologist, the National Monuments Service and the National Museum of Ireland.'

2.7 Noise and Vibration

According to EPA Noise Mapping (2025), the Proposed Development is located within Cork Conurbation. The primary source of noise pollution is N27 South Link Road located to the east of the Proposed Development. Based on available baseline noise mapping from TII (2025) day-time (Lden) noise levels in excess of 75dB and night-time (Lnight) levels of 65-69dB are reported in the vicinity of the site.

The location of the Proposed Development is a busy road and is surrounded by residential dwellings, local businesses and numerous healthcare, religious and educational facilities which are sensitive receptors in terms of noise and vibration. However, standard environmental management procedures will be put in place to reduce noise and vibration during the construction phase.

2.8 Landscape and Visual

The Proposed Development is located within Cork City and does not lie within an area of High Landscape Value (CCC, 2022-2028). The site is located within the South Parish Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)There are no scenic routes within the vicinity of the Proposed Development. The Lee to Sea Cycleway is located to the north of the River Lee.

2.9 Air Quality

According to the EPA (2025), the current baseline air quality index in the area is '2-Good' for Cork Lower Glanmire Road - Zone B, Cork Conurbation. It is noted that the information from monitoring instruments at representative locations in the location may not reflect local incidents of air pollution. The closest monitoring station to the Proposed Development located 150m east of the site (Station Code 55). However, it should be noted that this station is currently out of operation since July 10th 2024. The second closest station to the site is University College Cork (Station Code 21) located north of the site.

Sensitive receptors within the vicinity of the Proposed Development are residential dwellings, local businesses, recreational park areas and road users. There are numerous educational, healthcare and religious facilities within vicinity of the site such as Langford Hall Medical Centre, Haly Dental Care, City General Hospital, St Nicholas' Church of Ireland, St Finbarr's South Church and Cork College of FET Douglas Street Campus.

2.10 Population and Human Health

According to the most recent census conducted in 2022, the population of the Cork City is 224,004 persons (CSO, 2022). The Proposed Development is in Cork City within the boundary of Cork City Council (CCC) and falls within 2no. Electoral Divisions (ED), South Gate A and City Hall A.

Sensitive receptors within the vicinity of the Proposed Development are residential dwellings, local businesses, recreational park areas and road users. There are numerous educational, healthcare and religious facilities within vicinity of the site such as Langford Hall Medical Centre, Haly Dental Care, City General Hospital, St Nicholas' Church of Ireland, St Finbarr's South Church and Cork College of FET Douglas Street Campus.

3. Description of the Proposed Development

3.1 Nature and Extent of the Proposed Development

The construction activities within the Proposed Development area will encompass the following;

1. **Excavation and Removal**: This includes the excavation of street surfacing and sub-base, and the removal of existing surface materials.
2. **Installation of New and Relocated Utilities**: New and relocated utilities will be installed as part of the development.
3. **Street Build-Up and Repaving**: The street will be built up and repaved, incorporating high-quality public realm features.
4. **Landscaping**: Trees and other decorative plants will be planted.
5. **Street Furniture and Lighting**: New street furniture and street lighting will be installed.

Apart from removal of some minor retaining walls, no demolition works are required for this development. The construction will be executed in phases, with an estimated completion time of 12 months, starting in Q1 2026. The maximum excavation depth is anticipated to be 1 meter below the existing surface level, with most excavations around 500mm deep. The precise locations for trees and structural supports, such as street lighting, will be determined during the detailed design phase to avoid impacting existing services or underground structures.

Safety Measures and Phasing:

- Barriers and hoardings will be installed to restrict access and ensure safety for workers and the public.
- Excavation works will be phased to minimize disruption to street activities. Detailed phasing will be outlined in the Construction & Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Traffic Management Plan (TMP), which will be the responsibility of the Contractor and adhered to throughout the construction phase.

Access and Traffic Management:

- Access to the affected properties will be maintained at all times, potentially requiring night works for final surfacing and utility installations near property entrances. Specific scheduling details will be included in the CEMP and TMP which will be the responsibility of the Contractor.
- Lane closures will be enacted on Douglas Street at the ultimately proposed pedestrianised locations and traffic patterns will be modified to match the ultimate configuration, resulting in reduced traffic volumes throughout the project site.
- Implementation of a one-way system will allow more opportunities to maintain traffic adjacent to some construction activities, but the constrained street widths will necessitate full-width closures in multiple areas. Detour routes will be provided in these situations.
- On-street parking will be temporarily reduced within construction locations.
- The proposed development will result in the following permanent traffic management changes:
  - Pedestrianization of sections of Douglas Street to reduce traffic through the neighbourhood while providing improved pedestrian and cyclist facilities, including provision of a new park at Langford Row; and,
  - Conversion to one-way traffic systems on key streets to provide improved footpath widths.

Construction Staffing and Logistics:

- The number of construction staff on-site will vary, with multiple crews potentially working in different areas simultaneously. Typical crews will consist of 4-5 members plus an excavator operator. Asphalt resurfacing crews will have 10-15 members plus associated equipment and delivery trucks. On a typical day, no more than 20-25 staff will be on-site.
- The Contractor's Traffic Management Plan will include the location of construction site offices and staff parking arrangements, subject to agreement with CCC. Construction vehicles will require short-term parking for loading and unloading materials.

Regulatory Compliance and Environmental Impact:

- The Contractor will ensure compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 291 of 2013).
- The probability of accidents or pollution spillages is low due to the standard nature of the works, which are minor and frequently carried out in Cork City and other cities in Ireland. Therefore, significant effects on Natura 2000 sites are not anticipated.
- Localized dust and noise emissions may occur but are expected to be minimal due to the short duration of the works, the low level of construction activity, and the narrow construction footprint. No significant impact on noise-sensitive receptors, such as residential buildings and schools, is anticipated. Wildlife in the area is already accustomed to high traffic noise levels, so the development will not significantly impact any QI species.

4. EIA Screening Process

4.1 Desk-Based Studies

In undertaking this EIA Screening Assessment, AtkinsRéalis completed a detailed desk-based assessment using data from the following sources:

- Relevant guidance documents and legislation (listed in Section 4.2 below).
- Relevant published data from Government websites like the EPA's website (www.epa.ie), the Geological Survey of Ireland (www.gsi.ie), the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.
- AtkinsRéalis Appropriate Assessment Screening (April 2025).
- AtkinsRéalis Structural Survey Report (October 2023).
- Draft Archaeological Assessment Report conducted by John Cronin & Associates (January 2025).

4.2 EIA Screening Legislation and Guidance

The Project Types listed in Annex I and Annex II of the 2011 EIA Directive were transposed into Irish Planning & Development legislation in Schedule 5 Parts 1 and Part 2, respectively. EIA Regulations ((Planning and Development) Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I No. 296 of 2018)) transposing the 2014 EIA Directive were adopted and came into operation on 1st September 2018. These regulations amend the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. No.600 of 2001); they seek to transpose EIA Directive 2014/52/EU and to give further effect to the 2011 Directive, as follows;

- An EIAR is required as a matter of course on specified large-scale projects which have a high likelihood of impacting on the receiving environment. These projects are listed in full within the Planning & Development Regulations (2001-2025), Schedule 5, Part 1 – Development for the purposes of Part 10.
- Each EU Member State has discretionary consideration for the requirement of an EIA in relation to Class 2 Project Types. These projects are listed in full within the Planning & Development Regulations (2001-2025, Schedule 5, Part 2 – Development for the purposes of Part 10. If the proposed project is listed under Schedule 5, Part 2, but does not exceed the relevant stated thresholds, it is considered to be sub-threshold. Part 10, article 92 of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 as amended states "'sub-threshold development' means development of a type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5, which does not equal or exceed, as the case may be, a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development". Any sub-threshold developments should be evaluated to determine if the project is likely to have a significant impact on the environment.
- Criteria to evaluate whether significant impacts on the receiving environment will arise from a Proposed Development are listed under Schedule 7 of the relevant Planning & Development Regulations (2001-2025. A list of the relevant information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of sub-threshold EIA screening is presented in Schedule 7A of the Regulations, and summarised below;

1. A description of the Proposed Development, including in particular:

a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole Proposed Development and, where relevant, of demolition works; and,

b) a description of the location of the Proposed Development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.

2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development.

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

a. the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant: and,
b. the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.

The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

The Proposed Development has been screened in accordance with:

- Section 3.2 of the '*Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* (EPA, 2022);
- European Commission (2017), Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening;
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Developments;
- ORP Practice Note PN02 Environment Impact Assessment Screening (2021);
- Environmental Impact Directive (85/337/EEC) and all subsequent relevant amendments;
- Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2025), including S.I. No. 296 of 2018 - European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, which came into operation on 1st September 2018;and,

Figure 4-1 overleaf provides a summary of the main steps involved in the EIA screening process.

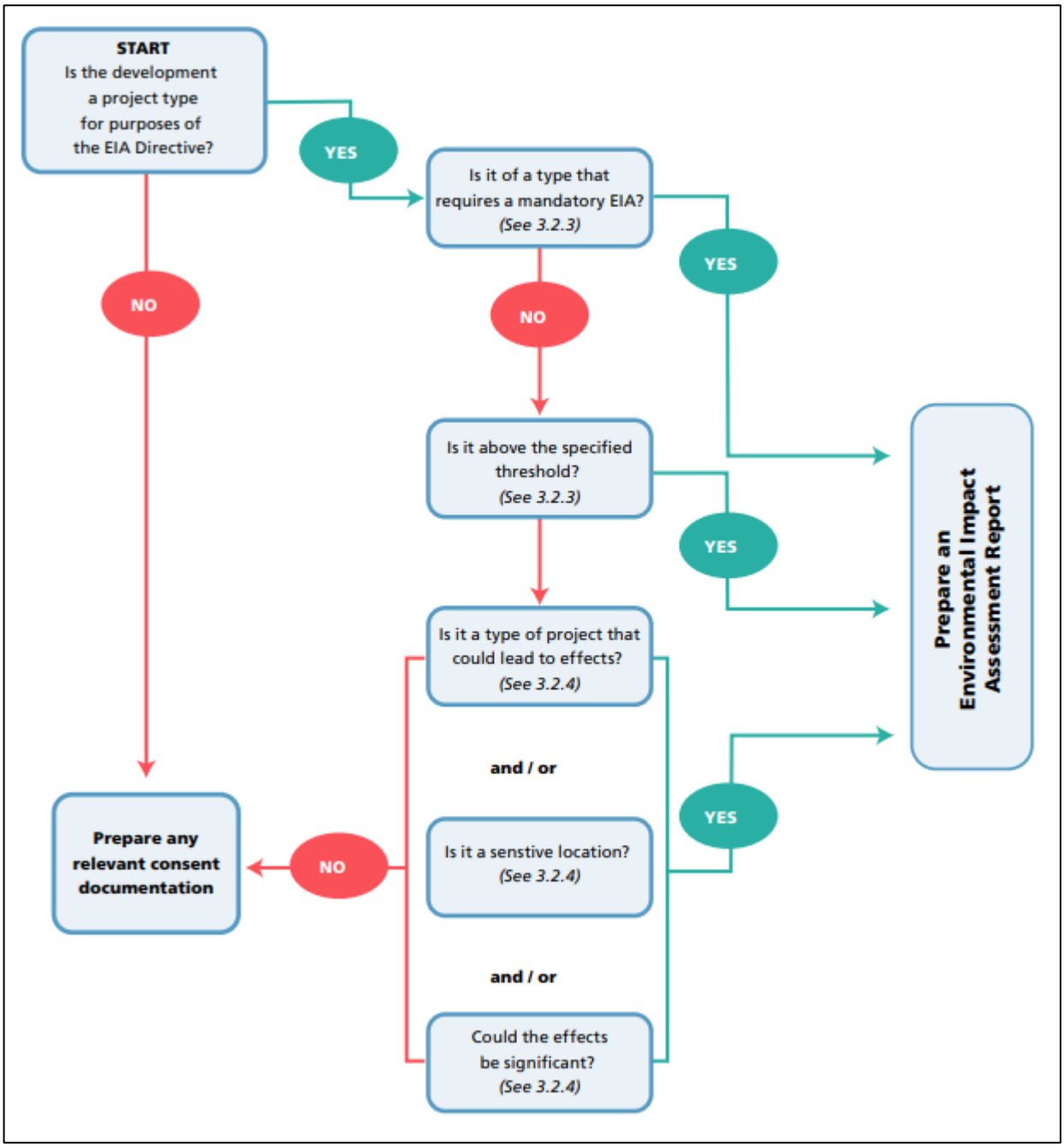

Figure 4-1 - EIA Screening Process (Source: 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (EPA, 2022)).

4.3 The Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended - Screening

The 2011 EU EIA Directive, as amended by 2014/52/EU differentiates between those projects that automatically requires an environmental impact assessment (listed as Annex 1 projects) and those which may require an assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects (Annex II projects). These project types have

been transposed into Irish legislation under Parts 1 and 2 respectively of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

The Proposed Development was screened using the following criteria:

- If the project is of a type listed in Schedule 5, Part 1;
- If not, whether:
  - it is listed in Schedule 5, Part 2;
  - it meets any of the relevant thresholds and criteria set out in Schedule 5, Part 2;
  - any part of it is located within sensitive area; or,
  - it would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

4.3.1 Part 1 Type Projects

The Proposed Development has been screened against the list of Project Types which have a high likelihood of impacting on the receiving environment and therefore require a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment, under Schedule 5 Part 1 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2024. **This project does not fall within any category of development requiring a mandatory EIA; hence the preparation of an EIAR is not required under Schedule 5 Part 1.**

4.3.2 Part 2 Type Projects

The project has been screened against the types of development, various processes and activities listed in Schedule 5 Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025 The project falls within the following categories which provide that an EIA must be completed – subject to specified thresholds being met or exceeded.

Table 3-2 Screening for Part 2 of Schedule 5

Class	Applicability	Screening
10(b) (iv)	Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.	The Proposed Development is ca. 1.83ha is size and is located in an urban location. The project is below the other relevant thresholds (i.e., 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere). **Hence the preparation of an EIAR is not required under Schedule 5 Part 2 (10) (b) (iv).**
13 (a)	Changes, extensions, development and testing (a) Any change or extension of development already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed (not being a change or extension referred to in Part 1) which would: -	Based on the nature and scale of the project, it is considered that the **preparation of an EIAR is not required under Schedule 5 Part 2 (13) (a).**

	(i) result in the development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule, and (ii) result in an increase in size greater than: - 25 per cent, or - an amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold, whichever is the greater. (In this paragraph, an increase in size is calculated in terms of the unit of measure of the appropriate threshold.)	
15.	Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development, but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.	Based on the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects on the environment, as detailed further in the following sections of this report. **Hence the preparation of an EIAR is not required under Schedule 5 Part 2 (15).**

The Proposed Development is therefore screened out for an environmental impact assessment under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

4.4 Roads Act Screening

The project has been screened against the criteria outlined in Section 50(1)(b) and 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act 1993-2023, as follows;

> Section 50(1)(a) – 'A road authority shall prepare a statement of the likely effects on the environment (hereinafter referred to as an "environmental impact statement") of any proposed road development consisting of - (iii) any prescribed type of proposed road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.
>
> Section 50(1)(b) – 'If An Bord Pleanála considers that any road development proposed (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment it shall direct that the development be subject to an environmental impact assessment.'
>
> Section 50(1)(c) – 'Where a road authority or, as the case may be, the Authority considers that a road development that it proposes (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the

construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it shall inform An Bord Pleanála in writing prior to making any application to the Bord for an approval referred to in section 51(1) in respect of the development.'

Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development should undergo an EIA screening to determine if an EIAR would be required in accordance with Sections 50(1)(a), 50(1)(b) and 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act 1993-2024

Section 50 (1)(e) of the Roads Act (1993-2021) states 'where a decision is being made pursuant to this subsection on whether a road development that is proposed would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, An Bord Pleanála, or the road authority or the Authority concerned (as the case may be), shall take into account the relevant selection criteria specified in Annex III.' Annex III has been transposed into Irish Legislation via Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025

There are no exacting rules as to what constitutes "significant" in terms of environmental impacts. The responsibility is on Planning Authorities to carefully examine every aspect of a development in the context of:

- characterisation of the project;
- location of the project; and.
- type and characteristics of potential impacts.

It is generally not necessary to provide specialist studies or technical reports to complete this screening process, rather to investigate whether further studies may be required, and where risks, if any, to the integrity of the receiving environment may lie.

For the purposes of screening sub-threshold developments for EIA, all of the relevant information as presented within EIA Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, (Schedule 7A) has been provided on behalf of the applicant, Cork City Council. The potential for the project to pose a significant impact to the receiving environment has also been evaluated in accordance with criteria listed in the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 – 2025 (Schedule 7).

The findings of the EIA screening assessment prepared for the project has informed our professional opinion as to whether an EIAR is warranted for the proposed project, with due regard to all relevant statutory requirements and technical guidance. However ultimately it is the responsibility of the relevant planning authority to decide as to whether an EIAR is required for a particular project, based on screening conducted by the planning authority.

5. Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

5.1 Determining if the project is likely to have significant effect on the receiving environment

All relevant information as required under Schedule 7 and 7A has been provided in this screening report. The potential for this project to pose a significant impact to the receiving environment has also been evaluated in accordance with criteria listed in the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001-2025 (Schedule 7), as presented within the tables below.

5.1.1 Characteristics of the proposed development

Table 5-1 below details the development characteristics criteria, as required under Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.

Table 5-1: Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Screening Criteria	Proposed Development
Size and design of the project	
Will the size and design of the whole project be considered significant?	No. The site area is ca. 1.83ha and the scheme scale and nature is not considered significant within the urban setting. Refer to the detailed description in Section 3 above.
Cumulation with other projects	
Will other existing project and/ or approved project be able to affect the project.	A search of the Cork City Council Planning Applications, An Bord Pleanála planning portal, Uisce Éireann and Transport Infrastructure Ireland project portals has been undertaken for the applications submitted within the past 5 years in the vicinity of the scheme (last reviewed 02/04/2025). Some of the granted applications have already been completed and of those which are not completed, most are generally small scale in nature (i.e. residential extension works, or property improvement works). Completed or granted applications of such small scale (such as residential improvements) have not been considered further in terms of potential for cumulative impacts. For the purposes of this study, only significant new developments that are likely to generate a significant number of trips and developments that may encroach have been considered, as follows: 2241197: Applicant - South Presentation Centre Company Limited. Submission date 21/06/2022. Permission is sought for the change of use of existing kiosk from storage to cafe server, ancillary to the on-site Garden Cafe and ground floor Reception/Retail, and for the erection of signage at Nano Nagle Place, Douglas Street, Cork (Protected Structure-PS071).

2241338: Applicant – Patricks Unity Ltd. Submission date 16/08/2022. Permission for the change of use of a public house to residential, namely; 2 no. 1 bedroom apartments and 1 no. 2 bedroom apartment along with associated elevation alterations, the construction of an open courtyard within the existing building footprint, and a new access gate as part of the Protected Structure Stone Archway to Former St. John's Market. All works to the ground floor of the building only.

2039248: Submission date: 20/04/2020. Permission for change of use from public house to retail use, at ground floor 18/19, Douglas Street, Cork City. (A Protected Structure)

2140490: Submission date: 10/09/2021. Permission for the change of use of my first and second floor apartments to a single two storey 3 bedroom apartment incorporating a first floor rear balcony area as well as internal works to the existing ground floor apartment with associated building works and elevational changes.

2039654: Submission date: 06/11/2021. Permission for the Retention of Alterations and Extension, consisting an increase of the number of residential units from a 1 no. 2-Bed Duplex Apartment at first and second floor levels subsequent to planning application 15/36440 to 2 No. 1-Bed Studio Apartments including external balcony space at first and second floor levels and all associated site works

2342067: Submission date: 09/06/2023. Permission for a 2-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling including roof garden/ terrace area and all associated site works.

ABP 313328: Decision date: 13/12/2023. Construction of new purpose-built research facility. An EIAR and NIS accompany this application.

2241614: Decision date: 18/04/2023. Permission for development at Copley Street, South Terrace, Union Quay and Stable Lane, Cork City. The redevelopment of the site comprises of demolition, construction and change of land use from builder's providers/storage to educational use and change of use from residential to café and study space and includes the following: Demolition of the former Brooks Haughton Builder's Merchant's buildings, structures, and boundary walls. Construction of a new Cork University Business School (CUBS) building ranging from 3 storeys to 6 storeys. Planning permission was granted in 2023 with 60no. conditions attached. The supporting planners report noted the following '*Having regard to the nature, location and context of the site and surrounding area, the policies and objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022 - 2028 and the nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in the Second Schedule, the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area, and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustain able development of the area'.* Subject to compliance with all required planning conditions (including but not limited to archaeological requirements, pre-commencement surveys, noise limits, contaminated land assessment), no

	significant cumulative effects are likely to occur, with respect to the consented CUBS development. Furthermore, the Proposed Development will not result in significant environmental impacts during the construction phase. As a result, no significant cumulative environmental impacts associated with this Proposed Development are likely to occur. Based on the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, outlined in Section 3 above, and based on the fact that standard environmental management procedures will be implemented for the Proposed Development, no significant cumulative effects are anticipated.
Nature of any associated demolition works	
Will the construction of the project include any significant demolition works.	No. There are no significant demolition works proposed.
Use of natural resources	
Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground which are non-renewable or in short supply?	The development of the site will require minimum earthworks involving the movement of soil material with an excavation of the subsoil to a 500 mm excavation depth with a maximum excavation depth of 1m. The use of natural resources will be modest; aggregates and soil will be re-used on site, where possible and not to the scale that requires an EIAR. The works will be undertaken using a combination of operatives using hand tools, mechanical excavators and dumper trucks with any spoil arisings to be removed off site or reused locally where testing confirms its suitability. To facilitate the main works, underground utilities which conflict with the main works will be uncovered using mechanical excavators and hand digging where appropriate. The base layers of the pavement are to be made of compacted stone materials. Should vegetation clearance be required along the proposed route, it would take place outside of the nesting season (February – August). If this is not possible, an ecologist will survey the vegetation for breeding birds no longer than 24 hours prior to clearance. If nesting birds are identified, then an alternative approach to the work will be used.
Production of waste	
Will the project produce wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	The construction phase of the proposed project will likely generate typical construction waste such as concrete, soil and subsoil, electrical cables off cuts, plastic, timber pallets, and green wastes. All wastes will be collected and segregated by the Contractor before removal off site for recycling/disposal. There are minimal earthworks proposed for the development. Containment of fluid for all works including fuel storage is to be suitably bunded and compounded. Construction waste will be kept to a minimum with only contaminated waste being removed off site. The following waste streams will be produced during the construction: ▪ Waste produced during the specific works including waste soil arisings

	▪ Generic construction waste. The proposed project involves an anticipated maximum excavation depth of 500mm bgl to facilitate works (including drainage pipes) and the ducting for the signalling associated with the scheme. All soil requiring disposal offsite will require waste classification in accordance with EPA requirements as set out in the documents 'Waste Classification List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-hazardous' (EPA, 2015), and 'Determining if waste is hazardous or non-hazardous' (EPA, 2018), and all relevant waste management legislation. In addition to screening against relevant WAC, the preparation of a waste classification tool (HazWaste online / EPA paper tool or similar etc.) will be required to be carried out in order to determine the relevant LoW / EWC code for the transport of any waste soils which require offsite removal and disposal. Prior to construction of the proposed works, the appointed contractor will prepare a Construction Resource and Waste Management Plan (RWMP). The RWMP will provide the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes including any litter arising during the construction phase of the proposed works.
Pollution and nuisances	
Will the project release any pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	The current baseline air quality index in the area is 2-'Good' for Cork Lower Glanmire Road - Zone B, Cork Conurbation. (EPA, 2025). It is noted that the information from monitoring instruments at representative locations in the location may not reflect local incidents of air pollution. The closest monitoring station to the Proposed Development is Cork Lower Glanmire Road located ca. 960m north of the site (Station Code 104). Due to the nature and scale of the Proposed Development as detailed in Section 3 it is anticipated that the construction works of the Proposed Development will not have a significant effect on air quality.
Will the project cause:	
Noise and vibration.	A review of the EPA Noise Maps (2025) indicates that the Proposed Development is located in the Cork Agglomeration. The primary source of noise pollution is the N27. Based on available baseline noise mapping from TII (2025) day-time (Lden) noise levels in excess of 75dB and night-time (Lnight) noise levels of 65-69dB are reported in the vicinity of the site. Noise levels will not exceed the indicative levels of acceptability for construction noise in an urban environment as set out in the NRA guidance 'Good Practice Guidance for the Treatment of Noise during the Planning of National Road Schemes' (NRA, 2014). Noise generated during the construction phase will not cause a significant increase in ambient noise levels to sensitive receptors i.e., residential dwellings and businesses along proposed scheme located adjacent to the site while construction is taking place, therefore no mitigation measures will be in place. Works will be scheduled during day-time hours. Construction contractors will be required to comply with the requirements of the European Communities (Construction Plant and Equipment) (Permissible Noise Levels) Regulations, 1988 as amended in 1990 and 1996 (S.I. No. 320 of 1988, S.I. No. 297 of 1990 and S.I. No. 359 of 1996), and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Control of Noise at Work)

	Regulations, 2006 (S.I. No. 371 of 2006). Due to the nature and scale of the project, detailed in Section 2 it is anticipated that the construction works, and operation of the works will not have a significant effect with regards to noise.
Release of light.	The lighting will be designed to minimise the effects of light pollution on neighbouring properties. Low energy LED lighting will be used to illuminate areas.
Heat.	The development will not cause release of heat.
Energy.	The development will not cause release of energy.
Electromagnetic radiation.	The development will not cause release of electromagnetic radiation.
Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants, including leachate, onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or sea?	The potential for accidents or incidents causing oil and chemical spillages are limited. With the adoption of site-specific risk management and remediation measures, as appropriate, during construction, no adverse impacts will arise and the residual effects on sensitive receptors will not be significant. Excavation works will be monitored and in the event that contaminated materials are encountered these will be segregated from uncontaminated soils, temporarily stored (any stockpiles will be lined and covered by heavy duty 1000-gauge plastic), sampled and analysed for relevant parameters (Waste Acceptance Criteria suite e.g., Rilta Disposal Suite). Any contaminated soils will be characterised as per the requirements of the relevant Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC) under the relevant European Communities Council Decision (EC) (92003/33/EC). The waste material will be classified in accordance with the requirements of the EPA as set out in the following documents 'Waste Classification List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-hazardous' (EPA, 2018). Any contaminated soils will be transported by appropriately permitted hauliers and disposed of to an appropriate EPA licensed Waste Facility in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation. Waste disposal records will be maintained by the Contractor.
Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the project concerned	
Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Ireland in general is at low risk of natural disasters: earthquakes are rare and of low magnitude, there are no active volcanos, and severe weather events are rarely experienced. Flooding is experienced throughout Ireland on a regular basis. There is a High probability of river flooding at River Lee, located adjacent to the north of the site and there have been past flood events recorded at this waterbody and within the vicinity (OPW, 2025). Possible accidents relevant to the development include vehicle collisions and fire, for both of which there will be plans in place to minimise the risk of harm caused by emissions or discharges. Major accidents affecting the development include generic risk of fire or explosion and airplane crashes. All these events will be covered by risk assessments and contingency plans which apply to the Proposed Development. In the event of accidents or fire, measures will be in place to limit emissions to land, water and air, as far as practicable. With these arrangements in place the impact of emissions on human health and sensitive receptors in general would be mitigated such that adverse impacts would be unlikely to arise in the event of an accident.

Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	The location is not susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme/adverse climatic conditions. Flooding is the most common and relevant environmental issue for the proposed works. There is a 'High' probability of river flooding at the River, located adjacent to the site with recorded past flood events within the vicinity (OPW, 2025). There is no indication of any flooding associated with the site of the Proposed Development.
The risks to human health	
Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)	Construction will be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a site-specific CEMP prepared by the appointed Contractor, such that no significant construction effects on construction workers, residents and the environment will arise. Given the nature of the works effects on population during operation, from water contamination, noise and vibration or air quality and climate are not anticipated to be significant.

5.1.2 Location of the development

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, requires a description of the location of the Proposed Development, with regards to the environmental sensitivity of the geographical area likely to be affected by the project. Table 5-2 below details the criteria considered and provides an assessment relating to same.

Table 5-2: Location of the Proposed Development

Screening Criteria	Proposed Development
Existing and approved land use	
Are there existing or approved land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	The Proposed Development is located within Cork City Centre along the existing road network. The construction of the development will have an effect on road users and sensitive receptors in the surrounding area. The contractor will inform and work with all stakeholders to address concerns. No existing, approved land uses for health, education, or community facilities in general, on, or around, the location will be affected by the Proposed Development.
The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	
Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project?	The AA Screening Report confirms that there is no risk of direct impacts on any of the designated sites within the ZoI *'it is concluded that the proposed works will not, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, give rise to impacts which would constitute significant effects on the Great Island Channel SAC, Cork Harbour SPA or any other Natura 2000 site, in view of their conservation objectives. Therefore, it recommended that Cork City Council, as the competent authority, may determine that Appropriate Assessment is not required in respect of the proposed works. Should any*

	aspect of the proposed works be materially changed, a new AA Screening Report would be required.' As referenced in section 2.2, excavation works will be monitored and in the event that contaminated materials are encountered these will be segregated from uncontaminated soils, temporarily stored (any stockpiles will be lined and covered by heavy duty 1000-gauge plastic), sampled and analysed for relevant parameters (Waste Acceptance Criteria suite e.g., Rilta Disposal Suite). Any contaminated soils will be characterised as per the requirements of the relevant Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC) under the relevant European Communities Council Decision (EC) (92003/33/EC). The waste material will be classified in accordance with the requirements of the EPA as set out in the following documents 'Waste Classification List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-hazardous' (EPA, 2018). Any contaminated soils will be transported by appropriately permitted hauliers and disposed of to an appropriate EPA licensed Waste Facility in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation. Waste disposal records will be maintained by the Contractor.
Absorption capacity of the natural environment	
Are there any other areas on or around the location which has the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths?	The River Lee is located to the north of the Proposed Development, however as referenced in section 2.2 above, the AA Screening (AtkinsRéalis, 2025) prepared for the Proposed Development concluded that '*with the absence of any mitigation measures the proposed works will not, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, give rise to impacts which would constitute significant effects on the Great Island Channel SAC, Cork Harbour SPA or any other Natura 2000 site, in view of their conservation objectives. Therefore, it is recommended that Cork City Council, as the competent authority, may determine that Appropriate Assessment is not required in respect of the proposed works. Should any aspect of the proposed works be materially changed, a new AA Screening Report would be required.'* Having regard for the location of the proposed project work site, and the nature and scale of the works, likely impacts on the receiving watercourses are not anticipated.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to coastal zones and the marine environment?	The Proposed Development is located south of the River Lee, with the River Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper located ca. 615m downstream. Having regard for the location of the proposed project work site, and the nature and scale of the works, likely impacts on the receiving watercourses are not anticipated.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to mountain and forest areas?	There are no mountain or forest areas within 2km of the Proposed Development and therefore no impacts on this habitat type.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas	A screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared for the Proposed Development (AtkinsRéalis, 2025) which investigated the potential for the proposed development to have significant effects on a European Site(s) either alone or in combination with other plans or developments.

classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC?	The AA screening concluded that there is no absorption capacity of the natural environment under national legislation.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the 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?	The absorption capacity of the natural environment is characterised as follows: The area around the proposed development is urban in nature. There are 2no. European Sites within the potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development as noted above. Based on the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development as detailed in section 3, there is no potential for impact on absorption capacity of the natural environment. There are numerous protected structures within the proximity of the Proposed Development, none of which will be impacted by the proposed works. The site is located within the Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment Area. The closest watercourse is the River Lee (EPA Code: IE_NB_03B010800) located 10m north of the site at the closest point. The River Lee has been assigned 'Moderate' status under the Water Framework Directive 2016-2021 and is 'At Risk' of not attaining 'Good' status by 2027. The River Lee outfall to the Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower, ca. 615m downstream. From the Estuary Lower, the River Lee flows in a north easterly direction and discharges into Lough Mahon (EPA Code: IE_SW_060_0750) 4.40km downstream. Contamination of these watercourses via. siltation or hydrocarbon spillages, is a risk during the construction phase, however, best practice measures will be employed through adherence to the CEMP which will be prepared, and accidental spills and silt generation will be dealt with through prescribed spill response and silt collection measures.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to densely populated areas?	No. There is no significant effect on the absorption capacity of the natural environment in relation to densely populated areas as a result of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will result in a positive impact in terms of facilitating pedestrians, cyclists and road users.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or Archaeological significance?	The site is entirely located within an ACA with 25no. protected structures within along the site (NMS, 2025), as identified within the Archaeological Assessment (JCA, 2025) undertaken during the design stage of the project. John Cronin and Associates (JCA) conducted an Archaeological Assessment in 2025 which concluded '*This archaeological impact assessment was undertaken in order to assess the known and potential archaeological resource of the streets which encompass the proposed Mary Street, Douglas Street and White Street Upgrade Scheme and to determine the nature of potential impacts which may occur to this resource. Based on the evidence garnered from the available, relevant datasets and the historic documentary and cartographic sources, it is concluded that there will be no*

direct impacts on known elements of the recorded archaeological resource as result of the proposed scheme.

However, due to the study area's location within the Zone of Archaeological Potential which surrounds the medieval historic core of Cork (CO074-034001-), the subject streets can be considered to possess a moderate to high archaeological potential. The western portion of the study area, in particular, possesses a heightened archaeological potential due to its location within, or in immediate vicinity to, an area that documentary sources indicate was close to the late 11th / early 12th-century Hiberno-Scandinavian settlement. This is also the case for areas in the vicinity of the church and graveyard of St. Nicholas and the Red Abbey. As such, it is considered that, without the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (see below), any sub-surface groundworks undertaken as part of the proposed scheme have the potential to directly and negatively impact on the unrecorded archaeological heritage resource of the area'.

The following recommendations by JCA (2025) will be fully implemented during the project:

- *'It is recommended that all sub-surface groundworks carried out as part of the proposed scheme should be subject to archaeological monitoring by a suitably qualified project archaeologist and under a licence issued by the National Monuments Service. This will include monitoring of any required advanced geotechnical investigations as well as works such as drainage and service trenching during the construction phase.*

- *It is recommended that in the event that any advance geotechnical investigations …..are proposed within the environs of the Red Abbey, they should be subject to advance archaeological review. The potential for incorporating targeted archaeological investigations as part of any such advance works, if required in this archaeologically sensitive area, should be considered in consultation with the Cork City Council Archaeologist. The archaeological monitoring of the proposed scheme should be undertaken until such time that the project archaeologist is satisfied that no further risk to the archaeological resource exists.*

- *In the event that any archaeological artefacts, features or deposits are revealed during the programme of archaeological monitoring, all machine excavation should be halted at the relevant location while the discovery is cleaned and cordoned off. The Cork City Council Archaeologist and the National Monuments Service should then be notified of the discovery and consulted to determine the appropriate mitigation strategy which may entail preservation in situ by avoidance or preservation by record through a licensed archaeological excavation.*

- *In the event that any human remains are identified during monitoring, including within the environs of St. Nicholas Church and the Red Abbey, all works should be halted at the location while the National*

Museum of Ireland and An Garda Síochána are notified as per statutory requirements. The services of a suitably qualified osteoarchaeologist should also be retained in order to advise on any required future strategy for the treatment of any such human remains.

- *In addition, any other works within the environs of the Red Abbey, such as the removal of security fencing, should be subject to archaeological supervision which will include a written and photographic record of the works. It should be noted that the Red Abbey is a National Monument in the ownership of a Local Authority and, therefore, an application for a Ministerial Consent for any works within the environs of the monument may be required. It is recommended that the appointed project archaeologist should liaise with the Cork City Council Archaeologist in relation to any such application process well in advance of the commencement of any works at this location in order to ensure that no delays to the scheme programme will occur.*

- *It is also recommended that the location of the Red Abbey plaza area should also not be used as a compound or storage area during the construction phase and that the area should be kept well maintained at all times.*

- *Per licensing requirements, upon conclusion of all works requiring archaeological monitoring, a report on the archaeological monitoring of the proposed scheme should be compiled by the project archaeologist and submitted to the Cork City Council Archaeologist, the National Monuments Service and the National Museum of Ireland.'*

Accordingly, taking account of the above environmental management measures during the construction phase, there is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment with particular attention to landscapes and sites of historical cultural or Archaeological significance.

5.1.3 Characteristics of potential impact

Table 5-3 below details the types and characteristics of potential impacts of the Proposed Development as required under Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.

Table 5-3: Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Screening Criteria	Proposed Development
The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	
Outline the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The spatial extent of the Proposed Development measures 1.83 hectares. The expected duration of the works is approximately 12 months. Direct impacts associated with the proposed works are likely to be located within the environs of the site, chiefly associated with impacts on pedestrians and vehicular movement within the local area. Traffic management will be implemented during construction so as to minimise disruption to traffic flow. Due to the nature of the proposed works it is likely that the resident population would potentially be affected by the development.
Nature of the impact	
Outline the nature of the impact.	There could be potential adverse construction impacts arising from temporary disruption or disturbance associated with the proposed works. This has potential to result in noise and air quality impacts but with the implementation of the control measures included in a CEMP, it is unlikely that impacts would give rise to significant environmental effects. Potential adverse construction impacts of the development would be associated with footfall as well as the lighting. Cork City Council will engage with stakeholders including the adjacent residents and commercial, premises throughout the design and construction stages to address any concerns.
Transboundary nature of the impact	
Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	Given the location of the site no transboundary impacts would occur.
The intensity and complexity of the impact	
Outline the intensity and complexity of the impact.	The impacts identified are unlikely to cause significant changes in environmental conditions within the site and surrounding area.
The probability of the impact	
Outline the probability of the impact.	During construction, best environmental practice techniques can be readily deployed. In order to minimise disruption, a CEMP will be implemented by the Contractor.
The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	
Outline the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.	It is expected that the duration of works will be approximately 12 months. The works will be conducted during normal working hours however given the location of the Proposed Development, adjusted shift and delivery times may need to be considered to minimise impacts on the local road users and it may be necessary to carry out some work outside of normal working hours however,

	this will be kept to a minimum and only undertaken following approval from Cork City Council. The noise and air quality impact peaks during construction will be intermittent with a potential background level of nuisance as they will depend on the works activities which are for their nature variable and not continuous. The selection and implementation of established best practice procedures as set out by the appointed Contractor will ensure potential environmental impacts during the construction phase are offset.
Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development	
Could this project together with existing and/ or approved project result in cumulation of impacts together during construction/ operation phase?	There are no approved developments in the vicinity with which cumulative impacts could arise.
Possibility of effectively reducing the impact	
What measures can be adopted to avoid, reduce, repair or compensate the impact?	During construction, the impact of the proposed works would be reduced through the implementation of the CEMP.

6. Potential for Significant Effects on the Receiving Environment

All relevant information as required under Schedule 7A has been provided on behalf of the client and is presented within Section 5 of this screening report. The potential for this project to pose a significant impact to the receiving environment has also been evaluated in accordance with criteria listed Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2025) (Schedule 7), as presented within Section 3.4 of this screening report. A full copy of required planning drawings and other supporting technical documents have been submitted as part of the Part 8 planning application.

It is considered that due to the size, nature, and characteristics of the Proposed Development, no significant effects on the receiving environment are expected; hence the preparation of a sub-threshold EIAR is not required.

7. Screening Conclusion

This EIA screening report has been carried out in accordance with the Planning and Development Regulations as amended 2001- 2025 (which give effect to the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU). The report assessed the impact of the Proposed Development in conjunction with committed developments in the surrounding area.

Based on all available information, and taking account of the scale, nature and location of the Proposed Development, it is our opinion that the preparation of an EIAR is not a mandatory requirement (under Schedule 5, Part 1 and 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 - 2025. The Proposed Development is deemed a sub-threshold development; hence the potential for significant environmental effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development has been evaluated, in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 7A and Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Acts 2001-2025.

Key findings are summarised as follows;

- Due to the limited nature of the works it is considered that there will be no significant cumulative impacts with other developments in the general area;
- There will be no significant impact on biodiversity, groundwater, surface water or traffic; and,
- There will be no significant impacts on recorded monuments or historic features.

In summary, no significant adverse impacts to the receiving environment will arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

Accordingly, we consider that the preparation of an EIAR is not required for the Proposed Development However, the competent authority will ultimately determine whether an EIA is required or not.

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