

Parnell Place Bus Stops

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report to
Inform the EIA Screening Determination
PTSDT-ACM-ENV_AC_0016_001-18-RP-YE-0002

National Transport Authority

October 2023

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
Elaine Keenan Senior Environmental Consultant	Sherril Subrayan Associate Director	Michael McMullan Environment Director	Alan Rodgers Regional Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
P01	05 October 2023	Draft	ADR	Alan Rodgers	Regional Director
P02	13 October 2023	Final	ADR	Alan Rodgers	Regional Director
P03	18 October 2023	Revised to incorporate client comments	ADR	Alan Rodgers	Regional Director
P04	23 October	Revised to incorporate client comments	ADR	Alan Rodgers	Regional Director

Distribution List

# Hard Copies	PDF Required	Association / Company Name

Prepared for:

National Transport Authority

Prepared by:

AECOM Ireland Limited
4th Floor
Adelphi Plaza
Georges Street Upper
Dun Laoghaire
Co. Dublin A96 T927
Ireland

T: +353 1 238 3100
aecom.com

© 2023 AECOM Ireland Limited. All Rights Reserved.

This document has been prepared by AECOM Ireland Limited (“AECOM”) for sole use of our client (the “Client”) in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Legislation and Guidance	2
2.1	Requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment.....	2
2.2	Other Relevant Guidance.....	3
3	Project Description	4
3.1	Background	4
3.2	Site Description and Surroundings.....	4
3.3	Proposed Development.....	4
3.3.1	Construction.....	5
3.3.2	Operation.....	5
4	EIA Screening.....	6
4.1	Schedule 5 Part 1.....	6
4.2	Schedule 5 Part 2.....	6
4.3	Criteria as set out in Annex III of the EIA Directive and Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations	7
4.3.1	Characteristics of the Proposed Development	7
4.3.2	Location of the Proposed Development.....	9
4.3.3	Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts.....	12
5	Conclusions and Summary.....	14
	Appendix A Planning Search	15

Tables

Table 4-1 Mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Criteria Established under the Planning and Development Regulations	6
Table 4-2. Characteristics of the Proposed Development.....	7
Table 4-3 Location of the Proposed Development	9
Table 4-4. Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts	12

1 Introduction

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report to inform the EIA Screening Determination has been prepared by AECOM Ireland Limited (AECOM) on behalf of the National Transport Authority (NTA) (hereafter referred to as the 'Applicant').

The development includes the provision of two bus stops on Parnell Place accessed by a boarding island, the relocation of loading bays and removal of on street parking, alterations to lane designations and all other associated ancillary site works (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development). The Proposed Development is located within the administrative area of Cork City Council (CCC).

This report to inform the EIA Screening Determination looks to establish whether the Proposed Development necessitates the undertaking of a full EIA and subsequent publication of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) as required under Directive 2014/52/EU (the "EIA Directive"), and will consider the Proposed Development under Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended).

This report sets out:

- An overview of the Proposed Development.
- A description of the EIA screening process.
- The Proposed Development's potential to interact with the environment during the construction and operational phases.
- A summary of the findings and recommendations.

2 Legislation and Guidance

EIA requirements derive from Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC of 3 March 1997, Directive 2003/35/EC of 26 May 2003 and Directive 2009/31/EC of 23 April 2009, which were codified in Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. Directive 2011/92/EU was subsequently amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014. Together these comprise the EIA Directive.

The EIA Directive had direct effect in Ireland from May 2017 and was transposed into Irish planning law in September 2018 in the form of the European Union (EU) (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018. The regulation sets out the amendments made to a number of Irish acts and regulations in line with the EIA Directive (as transposed into Irish legislation). This includes amendments to the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) provide guidance as to the specific requirements for both public and private projects to assess their potential effects on the environment and the steps to be undertaken in relation to whether a full EIA is required.

Additionally, the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) sets out EIA requirements for roads projects and has been amended to take account of the requirements of the EIA Directive. Annex III of the EIA Directive is specifically referenced in Section 50(1)(e) of the Roads Act 1993, as amended, to be considered when identifying any potential likely significant impacts of a project.

2.1 Requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment

In order to determine whether the Proposed Development is categorised as an “EIA development”, reference to the EIA regulations is required.

EIA development falls into two Schedules in the EIA regulations. EIA is mandatory for developments listed within Schedule 5, Part 1, while Schedule 5, Part 2 developments require EIA if they would be “likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as nature, size or location”.

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 and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). 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.

As set out under the relevant legislation, there are three key steps when carrying out an EIA Screening for a particular development.

- **Step 1** is to determine if the proposed works represent a development as understood by the EIA Directive and if a mandatory EIAR is required. Such developments are defined in Article 4 of the EIA Directive and set out Annex I and II of the Directive and Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).
- **Step 2** is to determine whether the development exceeds a specific threshold as set out in Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) Schedule 5, Part 2 – Development for the purposes of Part 10 (the only type of development to which thresholds do not apply are those considered to always be likely to have significant effects and therefore require an EIAR).
- **Step 3** is to determine if the development is likely to have significant effects on the receiving environment. 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 the development in the context of characterisation of the development; location of the development 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 where further studies may be required, and where risks, if any, to the integrity of the receiving environment may lie.

2.2 Other Relevant Guidance

This report was also cognisant of the following guidelines:

- Section 3.2 of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 'Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (EPA, 2022).
- Practice Note PN02 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening. Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR 2021).
- 'Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development' (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), 2020).
- European Commission's (EC)'s 'Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening' (EC, 2017).
- 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' (DHLGH, 2018).

3 Project Description

3.1 Background

The bus network in Cork has been comprehensively redesigned as part of the BusConnects Cork programme. The redesign work was carried out in partnership with the City and the County Councils to ensure full integration with local, regional and national policy. There was extensive engagement with the public and with stakeholders.

The new bus network will provide over 50% more service than existing. It is planned to deliver these benefits during 2024 and 2025.

A detailed operational review of the new bus network was carried out and has identified the shorter-term stop and terminus alterations needed to support the introduction of the new bus system.

3.2 Site Description and Surroundings

The Proposed Development is located in Cork City adjacent to the River Lee, where the River Lee south Channel and the River Lee North Channel converge. The River Lee South Channel is located adjacent to the Proposed Development and the River Lee North Channel is located 73m north of the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development is situated within an area of artificial surfaces of a continuous urban fabric¹. The Proposed Development site includes existing loading bays, a cycle lane, and three lanes of one way traffic. The existing road is surrounded by commercial and educational properties including University College Cork (UCC) Centre for Executive Education and Erin School of English.

3.3 Proposed Development

Certain infrastructure is required to allow the new BusConnects Cork network to be operated. Some bus stops in the city centre will change and buses will require a means of turning around at the new endpoints of the new/extended routes. Following detailed planning and public consultations in 2021, it has been identified that most bus services from the southwestern suburbs will run along Parnell Place/Clontarf Street instead of South Mall. New stops at Parnell Place are required, the proposed works are summarised as follows:

The proposed works associated with the Proposed Development are summarised as follows:

1. Provision of two bus stops on the southern section of Parnell Place accessed via a boarding island.
2. Relocation of loading bays on southern section of Parnell Place to north of bus stops and to eastern side of road with associated removal of on street parking.
3. Alterations to lane designations on southern section and northern section of Parnell Place to suit above.
4. Existing parking, disabled parking, loading and cycle provision on northern section of Parnell Place retained as current.
5. Existing disabled parking and cycle provision on southern section of Parnell Place retained as current.
6. Kerbed buildout and footway widening between entrance/exit to Merchants Quay Carpark.
7. Existing gullies to be removed and new gully locations proposed on both carriageway and cycle track. Full details to be confirmed at detailed design.
8. Renewal/replacement of road signage and road markings as might be necessary.
9. All other associated ancillary site works.

The Proposed Development has been designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and, where relevant, the TII Design Manual for Roads & Bridges.

¹ Corine Land Cover 2018, available online at <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> [last accessed 26/09/2023 19:03]

3.3.1 Construction

Should consent be granted, the duration of the construction programme is expected to run for approximately three months. The overall programme for the works is still to be confirmed. The key activities during construction are as follows:

- Site clearance/earthworks.
- Demolition of existing facilities (e.g. existing kerbs and gullies).
- Construction of new facilities including two bus stops, new kerbs and footway areas gullies and replacement of road signage and markings.

A key mechanism for managing the impact of noise and vibration will be through adherence to site working hours as agreed with CCC. Site working hours are anticipated to be:

- 07:00 – 19:00 Monday to Friday.
- 08:00 – 14:00 Saturday.
- No noisy works will take place on Sundays or bank holidays.

Where especially noisy works is to take place, the appointed Contractor will contact CCC and residents who may be affected by the noise and vibrations, to inform them of the intended location and duration of works.

The construction works will be undertaken in accordance with safeguards included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This will ensure that construction is undertaken in line with industry best practice. The CEMP will set out a range of measures to avoid and mitigate potential adverse environmental effects of the Proposed Development during the construction phase. Its measures would typically include, inter alia, controls over the routing of construction vehicles, construction noise levels, dust, drainage and the handling and disposal of potentially contaminated soil and materials. The appointed Contractor will be responsible for preparing, implementing and reviewing the CEMP through construction.

Wastes and materials management during construction will be dealt with by a Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP). The plan will include consideration of opportunities to design out waste and improving materials efficiency with efforts made to maximise on-site reuse and off-site recycling and recovery of any construction material generated. The volume of waste arising from the Proposed Development is anticipated to be very low, with no impact on waste management facilities. The appointed Contractor will be responsible for preparing, implementing and reviewing the RWMP through construction including the management of all supplies and sub-contractors.

3.3.2 Operation

The Proposed Development will support a vital increase in sustainable transport with a 50% increase in the bus network service as part of the BusConnects Cork programme.

The Proposed Development will result in a positive and long-term effect on the local population through the improvement of available public transport methods within and between surrounding environs. A modal shift to public transport methods has the potential to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, improving air quality in the local environs.

The full details including the requirement for petrol/oil interceptors and silt traps are to be confirmed at detailed design stage. This should take into consideration Objective 9.5 of the Cork City Council Development Plan 2022-2028.

4 EIA Screening

The following elements should be considered in determining whether the Proposed Development constitutes EIA development under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended):

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

These points are explored further in this section with reference to the EIA regulations.

It is noted that the requirement for the preparation of an EIAR based on Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) has also been considered. The Proposed Development does not meet the descriptions or thresholds set out in Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) or Article 8 of the Roads Regulations 1994 (as amended).

4.1 Schedule 5 Part 1

EIA is mandatory for developments listed in Schedule 5, Part 1 of the EIA regulations. Schedule 5, Part 1 developments are large scale developments for which significant effects would be expected and comprise developments such as new airports and power stations.

The Proposed Development is not a type listed in Schedule 5, Part 1. The Proposed Development is reviewed in the following section to determine whether it is a type listed in Schedule 5, Part 2.

4.2 Schedule 5 Part 2

Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) sets out specified limits for proposed developments for which a mandatory EIA culminating in the preparation of an EIAR is required, should a proposed development exceed the specified limits.

The screening of the Proposed Development against Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) is contained in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 Mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Criteria Established under the Planning and Development Regulations

	Regulatory Reference	Mandatory Criteria Met?
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. (In this paragraph, "business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)	Schedule 5, Part 2, 10 (iv) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended	No Area of Proposed Development is 0.29 hectares.

Source: *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)*

As the Proposed Development is not a type of development identified in Schedule 5 Part 1 or Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), there is no automatic requirement under the EIA directive for it to be subjected to EIA. Notwithstanding this, the Applicant is a responsible developer and is committed to demonstrating that the Proposed Development will not result in significant effects on the environment. As such, this EIA Screening Report has been prepared to determine whether there are likely significant environmental effects from the Proposed Development on the receiving environment with regard to Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

4.3 Criteria as set out in Annex III of the EIA Directive and Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) sets out the selection criteria which relate to specific matters, including: the characteristics of the development; the location of the development; and the characteristics of the potential impact.

4.3.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Table 4-2. Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Criteria	Commentary
1.Characteristics of the Proposed Development	
(a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development	The area of Proposed Development is 0.29 hectares and is not significant within the urban setting.
(b) cumulation with other existing development	<p>A desktop search of proposed and existing planning applications was carried out on the 28th September 2023. The search used publicly available data from the MyPlan.ie's 'National Planning Application' database, ABP's database and Council Planning Portals and is provided in Appendix A.</p> <p>Planning permissions for a number of substantial developments have been granted in the environs surrounding the Proposed Development with an emerging pattern of large scale residential and mixed-use complexes, alongside the development of large-scale student residencies.</p> <p>No existing developments, or approved development around the site will affect or be affected by the Proposed Development. As such, there are no other plans or developments within the vicinity of the Proposed Development which would result in significant cumulative effects within the surrounding area.</p>
(c) the nature of any associated demolition works	The Proposed Development will require the breakout of existing carriageway and kerb to facilitate changes to road layout and to facilitate alterations to drainage. However, where road surfaces are of a good condition breakout will potentially not occur and road markings will be removed and replaced as required. No significant demolition works such as the demolition of buildings are required. Works will occur within the existing carriageway.
(d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	<p>The use of natural resources will be limited to the materials used during the construction works. Materials used within the Proposed Development would likely include precast kerbs, paving, stone, aggregate and asphalt. Exact quantities are currently unknown and would be identified at detailed design stage.</p> <p>It has been assumed that all materials will be sourced locally to minimise transportation distances. It has been assumed the importation of fill and materials will only be sourced from suppliers which comply with vetting requirements. Materials shall be reused where possible on site in line with waste regulations.</p> <p>A water supply will be required during the construction phase. It has been assumed that if water mains are utilised, all relevant permissions will be sought prior to works commencing, such as written agreement from Irish Water and relevant stakeholders. At no point should water be abstracted from rivers or streams. Works will occur within the existing carriageway.</p> <p>The use of natural resources is not considered significant.</p>
(e) the production of waste	<p>Construction waste will be kept to a minimum with only contaminated waste and demolition waste being removed off site. The following waste streams will be produced during the construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste produced by the construction of the bus lanes, revisions to the existing carriageway and footpaths. • Generic construction waste. <p>Prior to construction of the Proposed Development, the appointed Contractor will prepare a 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 Development.</p> <p>Any waste produced as part of the Proposed Development will be dealt with in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation and guidance under chain of custody procedures and that waste stored on site would be located away from any sensitive receptors.</p>
(f) pollution and nuisances	During the construction phase, potential pollution pathways and nuisances for consideration include but are not limited to:

Criteria	Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases in exhaust emissions to air as a result of construction machinery. • Noise and vibration from equipment use. • Social effects as a result of temporary traffic diversions on carriageways and footpaths. • Dust generation from construction activities. • Leaks and spills of materials used which contain hydrocarbons. • Potential runoff of material to nearby watercourses. <p>As the carriageway is currently in use, there is potential for existing surface contamination associated with vehicle use of carriageways (for example drips and spills of hydrocarbons) that could extend to areas of the Proposed Development where breakout/excavation will be required. While there have been no reports of potential contamination it should be considered when removing the material from site.</p> <p>Construction mitigation measures will be set out in the CEMP to be produced by the appointed Contractor, which will include noise and vibration limits as per best management practices and mitigation measures for dust. The appointed Contractor's CEMP should also include an emergency response procedure for any spills that may occur during the construction phase. It is also recommended a traffic management plan is prepared and agreed with CCC to minimise traffic disruptions and ensure the safe use of the carriageway and footpath during the construction phase.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be designed to ensure that the collection and disposal of effluent and run-off is appropriately isolated from unmade ground and porous surfaces so that the risk of a pollution incident is very low.</p>
(g) the risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge	<p>The Proposed Development is not likely to result in a major accident or disaster given its type, size and scale and the inherent measures that would be included in its design, implementation, and operation. Standard construction measures would be put in place during the construction phase such as a health and safety plan along with inherent environmental controls. It is also recommended that a CEMP is produced for the Proposed Development that contains emergency spill response measures and methods of work.</p> <p>During operation CCC will be required to implement an emergency response and a contingency and maintenance plan for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development site is located within a CFRAM (catchment flood risk assessment management) ² Low Probability river flood extent, having approximately a 1-in-a-1000 chance of occurring or being exceeded in any given year (Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) of 0.1%). In addition the Proposed Development is located within a CFRAM Low Probability flood event extent for coastal flooding, a small section of Parnell Place is also located in a Medium Probability coastal flooding extent, having approximately a 1-in-a-200 chance of occurring or being exceeded in any given year (AEP of 0.5%).</p> <p>The Lower Lee (Cork City) Flood Relief Scheme is now being advanced by Cork City and County Councils and will run from Inniscarra Dam to the City Centre. Flood relief measures are included for the River Lee north and south of Parnell Place. In line with international best practice, the standard of protection provided by the scheme is the 1 in 100-year flood from the River Lee and the 1 in 200-year flood from the tide³.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will not result in an increase to impermeable area. During the detailed design phase drainage will be designed to current standards and will ensure sufficient drainage is provided taking into consideration CFRAM river and coastal flood zones, in addition rainfall intensities will be factored up by 20% to account for predicted increased rainfall due to climate change. If deemed required by Cork City Council a Flood Risk Assessment will be carried out during the detailed design phase and appropriate mitigation measure applied if and/or where required.</p>
(h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)	<p>According to the 2022 census 781 of the population in Electoral Division (ED) Centre A consider themselves to be of 'Very Good' or 'Good' health⁴.</p> <p>Given the size and type of the Proposed Development and with the implementation of best practice measures on site, no likely significant effects are anticipated to human health during the construction phase. Construction would be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in the CEMP such that no significant construction effects on construction workers, residents and the environment would arise.</p>

² CFRAM Information is available from the OPW Flood Maps, available online at [Flood Maps - Floodinfo.ie](https://www.floodinfo.ie) [last accessed 27/09/2023 16:15]

³ Lower Lee (Cork City) Flood Relief Scheme, information available on line at <https://www.floodinfo.ie/frs/en/lower-lee/home/> [last accessed 27/09/2023 15:19]

⁴ 2022 Census data per Electoral Division is available online at <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2022> [last accessed 27/09/2023 15:47]

Criteria	Commentary
----------	------------

In summary, it is considered that the characteristics of the Proposed Development, indicate it would not constitute EIA development. Given the limited extent of the Proposed Development, in the context of the existing site, the limited likely use of natural resources, the low volume of waste likely to arise and the inclusion through a CEMP, of measures to mitigate effects of construction activities, the characteristics of the Proposed Development are not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

4.3.2 Location of the Proposed Development

Table 4-3 Location of the Proposed Development

Criteria	Commentary
2. Location of Proposed Development	
The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to	
(a) the existing and approved land use	<p>Corine Land Cover 2018⁵ identifies the landcover within the Proposed Development site as Artificial Surfaces of a continuous urban fabric.</p> <p>The Proposed Development and the surrounding environs are located within an area zoned as ZO 05, City Centre within the Cork City Development Plan 2022 to 2028⁶. An area zoned as an Architectural Conservation Area is located to the west of the Proposed Development site.</p> <p>The footprint of the Proposed Development will be within the existing bounds of public road and footpath alignments, and will not result in a change to the existing land zoning.</p> <p>Construction of the Proposed Development could have an effect on the surrounding commercial properties. A CEMP will be produced to identify potential environmental issues and control measures for their avoidance/mitigation. The appointed Contractor will inform and work with all stakeholders to address concerns. Control measures to avoid/mitigate impacts will be included in the CEMP.</p> <p>Access to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) will be restricted during construction and reinstated during operation.</p>
(b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,	<p>It is anticipated that required construction material for the Proposed Development would be sourced locally during the construction phase. Importation of fill and materials will be sourced from local suppliers where practicable. Materials will comply with vetting requirements. Materials should be reused where possible on site in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located entirely within an existing carriageway within a built up area.</p>
(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:	
(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths	<p>The River Lee is the principal surface waterbody in proximity to the Proposed Development. Both the River Lee north channel and the River Lee south channel are located adjacent to the north and south of the Proposed Development site. The River Lee discharges into Cork Harbour Special Protection Areas (SPA) (site code 004030) approximately 4.5km east of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>There is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity on the natural environment.</p>
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment	<p>The closest coastal and marine environment, Cork Harbour, is located approximately 4.4km east of the Proposed Development (at its closest point).</p>
(iii) mountain and forest areas	<p>Ballybrack Woods are located approximately 3.5km south east of the Proposed Development. There is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity on the natural environment.</p>
(iv) nature reserves and parks	<p>Cork Lough proposed Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) (site code 001081) is located 1.7km south west of the Proposed Development. The Beaumont Quarry Nature Reserve is located 2km to the south east of the Proposed Development. Given the nature and scale of the proposed works there is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment.</p>
(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas	<p>The Proposed Development site is not located within a classified or protected area. The closest designated sites are Cork Lough pNHA (site code 001081) located</p>

⁵ Corine Land Cover 2018 information is available on line at <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> [last accessed 20/09/2023 18:27]

⁶ Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 is available online at [Planning Cork City, a vision for Sustainable Development. \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.corkcity.ie/Planning-Cork-City-a-vision-for-Sustainable-Development/) [last accessed 27/09/2023 16:28]

Criteria	Commentary
designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive	<p>1.5km south west of the Proposed Development and Cork Harbour SPA (site code 004030) located approximately 4.4km east of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared for the Proposed Development which investigated the potential for the Proposed Development to have significant effect on a European Site(s) either alone or in combination with other plans or developments.</p> <p>The AA screening concluded “<i>In view of best available scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, likely significant effects from the Development on European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, can be excluded. In AECOM’s opinion, therefore, there is no requirement to proceed to the next stage of AA or for a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to be produced.</i>”</p>
(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure	<p>The Proposed Development is located adjacent to the River Lee (Lee Estuary Upper code IE_SW_060_0950), this transitional waterbody is considered ‘At Risk’ of failing to meet Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives by 2027. The Transitional Waterbody WFD Status 2016-2021 is documented as ‘Moderate’⁷.</p> <p>Leeching of pollutants is a risk during the construction phase. However, best practice measures will be employed through adherence to the appointed Contractor CEMP and accidental spills and silt generation will be dealt with through prescribed spill response and silt collection measures.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the location, nature, and size of the Proposed Development and the implementation of mitigation measures set out in the appointed Contractor CEMP, no likely significant effects are anticipated.</p>
(vii) densely populated areas	<p>The Proposed Development is located within Cork City and is within a predominantly commercial area and is not densely populated. The Proposed Development is located within Centre A ED and has a population of 1,260 people⁸.</p> <p>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 active travel opportunities for the local population.</p>
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance	<p>Landscape</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located in an area of existing hardstanding within a built up area of Cork City.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located within the Cork City and Harbour Landscape Character Area (LCA) in an area described as Historic Urban Core, and is located within the City Harbour and Estuary Landscape Character Type (LCT). The Cork City Landscape Study 2008 states “<i>the iconic visual landscape of the city’s central core is associated with historical buildings located on prominent hillside locations of the city’s north and south hillsides. In a wider context, the city profile is dominated by church spires, tall office blocks and the silos, cranes and built form of the docklands landscapes</i>”. The Proposed Development is located in a visual landscape described as ‘Iconic City Core’ and is described in the Cork City Landscape Study 2008 “<i>as a combination of the location, topography and visual landscape of the Lee with a multitude of landmark and historic buildings and structures. The iconic landscape of the city centre is the image which one immediately associates with the city, i.e. St. Anne’s Shandon, Patrick’s Hill and St. Finbarr’s Cathedral</i>”⁹.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is not located within a Landscape Preservation Zone or an area of High Landscape Value¹⁰. There are no strategic linear views within the Proposed Development site.</p> <p>Cultural Heritage¹¹</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located directly adjacent to several assets listed on the Record of Protected Structures and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A post box on South Mall (Ref No. PS1018) located 0m the Proposed development. The post box is also listed on the NIAH (Reg No 20515167, rating Regional).

⁷ WFD information available online at <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> [last accessed 27/09/2023 18:35]

⁸ 2022 Census information for electoral divisions is available online at <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2022&boundary=C04167V04938&quid=2ae19629-215b-13a3-e055-000000000001> [last accessed 27/09/2023 16:38]

⁹ Landscape Character Assessment available online at <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/media-folder/planning/cork-city-landscape-study-2008.pdf> [last accessed 27/09/2023 18:45]

¹⁰ Information on Landscape Preservation Zone and areas of High Landscape Value is available online at <https://corkcity.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e4af482c8da547de9f1689eba346a1ed> [last accessed 27/09/2023 21:34]

¹¹ Information on Cultural Heritage Assets available online at <https://corkcity.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e4af482c8da547de9f1689eba346a1ed> and <https://heritagemaps.ie/WebApps/HeritageMaps/index.html> [last accessed 21/09/2023 18:10]

Criteria

Commentary

- Trustee Savings Bank (Ref No. PS157) 5m from the Proposed Development. The building is also listed on the NIAH (Reg No 20512968, rating Regional).
- Former Provincial Bank (Ref No. PS378) located 5m from the Proposed Development. The building is also listed on the NIAH (Reg No 20514283, rating Regional).
- Facade of No. 17 Parnell Place (Ref No. PS822) located 5m from the Proposed Development. The building is also listed on the NIAH (Reg No 20512970, rating Regional).
- Facade of No. 18 Parnell Place (Ref No. PS823) located 5m from the Proposed Development. The building is also listed on the NIAH (Reg No 20512971, rating Regional).
- O' Flaherty's, 21 and 22 Parnell Place (Reg No 20512974 and 20512975, rating Regional) located 5m from the Proposed Development.
- O' Mahony Boylan Golden (Munster) Ltd. (Reg No 20512976, rating Regional).
- Permanent TSB (Reg No 20512967, rating Regional) located 5m from the Proposed Development.
- 15 Parnell Place (Reg No 20512966, rating Regional) located 5m from the Proposed Development.
- Crown Decorator Centre (Reg No 20512965, rating Regional) located 5m from the Proposed Development.
- 25 Parnell Place (Reg No 20513027, rating Regional) located 10m from the Proposed Development.
- 9 to 6, 25 Parnell Place (Reg No 20513028, rating Regional) located 10m from the Proposed Development.
- 26, 27,28, 29, 30 and 31 Parnell Place (Reg No 20512922, 20512923, 20512924, 20512925, 20512926 and 20512927, rating Regional) located 5m from the Proposed Development.
- 7 Parnell Place (Ref No. PS271) located 5m from the Proposed Development.
- 8 Parnell Place (Ref No. PS272) located 5m from the Proposed Development. The building is also listed on the NIAH (Reg No 20512934, rating Regional).
- 9 Parnell Place (Ref No. PS273) located 5m from the Proposed Development. The building is also listed on the NIAH (Reg No 20512935, rating Regional).
- 10 and 11 Parnell Place (Ref No. PS274 and PS 275) located 5m from the Proposed Development.
- Secrets, Oliver Plunkett Street Lower (Reg No 20512939, rating Regional) located 5m west of the Proposed Development.
- 13 Oliver Plunkett Street Lower (Reg No 20512940, rating Regional) located 15m west of the Proposed Development.
- The Medjugorje Prayer Centre (Reg No 20512942, rating Regional) located 25m west of the Proposed Development.

There are no archaeological monuments recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record within the Proposed Development, the closest archaeological Monuments to the Proposed Development are:

- Railway station (Monument No. CO074-119001) located 167m south east of the Proposed Development.
- Custom House (Monument No. CO074-118) located 300m east of the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development is not located within a Zone of Archaeological Potential. The Proposed Development is located directly adjacent (0m) to Oliver Plunkett Street Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) which is located immediately adjacent to the southwest. South Channel ACA is located 15m south of the Proposed Development.

Other ACAs located in the wider environs surrounding the Proposed Development include MacCurtain Street ACA (50m north of the Proposed Development site), Albert Quay, Albert St, Victoria Rd, ACA Proposal (240m east of the Proposed Development), and Paul Street ACA (410m west of the Proposed Development).

No works are proposed to any protected structures. The Proposed Development will seek to avoid impact to heritage assets.

No impact is anticipated. If artefacts of archaeological interest or expected interest are located during the works, works will cease, and these will immediately be reported to CCC and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the National Museum of Ireland. Control measures will be included in the appointed Contractor CEMP.

In summary, it is considered that the location of the Proposed Development will not constitute EIA development. The Proposed Development will be located on an existing carriageway. The proposed works will be in keeping with the approved land uses for the area. Given the existing and former use of the land in the area around the Proposed Development site there are limited natural resources in terms of soil, land and water that could be affected by the Proposed Development. Reference to the relevant PRow adjacent the proposed works will be maintained. With suitable control measures (as relevant during construction or operation) there is not likely to be any significant environmental effects.

4.3.3 Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Table 4-4. Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Criteria	Commentary
3. Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts	
(a) 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 0.29 hectares. The expected duration of the construction works is approximately three months. The types of development identified within the vicinity of the proposed works are commercial properties and health care facilities in an urban setting. 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. Due to the nature of the proposed works it is unlikely that the resident population would be significantly affected by the Proposed Development.
(b) the nature of the impact	There could be potential adverse construction impacts arising from temporary disruption or disturbance associated with construction activities. This has the potential to result in noise and air quality impacts but with the implementation of the control measures included in the appointed Contractor CEMP it is unlikely that impacts would give rise to significant environmental effects. The design will be developed to reduce operational impacts by incorporating control measures. CCC will engage with stakeholders including the adjacent businesses throughout the design and construction stages to address any concerns.
(c) the transboundary nature of the impact	Given the location of the site no likely significant transboundary impacts associated with the Proposed Development would occur.
(d) 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.
(e) the probability of the impact	Given the nature, size, and scale of the Proposed Development, and taking into consideration the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, such as the implementation of an appointed Contractor's CEMP and associated inherent controls, and adherence to appropriate national guidelines and codes of practice it is considered that any potential impacts on the receiving environment during the construction phase would be short term in duration. During the operational phase it is considered that the likelihood of significant impacts on the receiving environment is low, and no likely significant impacts are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development.
(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	The majority of potential impacts identified will occur during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. The expected duration of the construction phase is approximately three months; therefore, these impacts would be temporary and short-term in duration, and reversible upon completion of the works. Potential impacts associated with the operational phase will also be temporary and limited to maintenance works. The frequency and duration of potential impacts will vary depending on the activities being carried out however they are not anticipated to result in likely significant effects.
(g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development	There is potential for cumulative impacts such as temporary and transient impacts from noise, road traffic and dust to occur. However, it is not envisioned that all proposed and existing planning applications would progress to construction at exactly the same time. Under the assumption that all construction activities would be carried out in line with inherent environmental controls, regulatory controls and best practice measures, cumulative impacts are considered unlikely to be significant. During operation given the nature of the Proposed Development and taking into consideration that operational phase works will be limited to maintenance activities only, no cumulative impacts with other developments in the surrounding environs were identified during the operational phase.
(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	The Proposed Development is not anticipated to result in any significant effects. Where effects have been identified they are considered to be of a short duration, restricted to the construction phase only, and would be localised to the Proposed Development and local environs. During construction the impact of the proposed

Criteria	Commentary
	works would be reduced through the implementation of the appointed Contractor CEMP. During operation, potential impacts would be reduced by the inclusion of design measures and operational control plans.

From an assessment of the types and characteristics of the potential impacts likely to arise from the Proposed Development it is considered it will not constitute EIA development. With the implementation of the control measures included in an appointed Contractor CEMP during construction few impacts would be likely to arise. Those that do, would be restricted to the Proposed Development site and a limited area in proximity to the site and would not be significant. Apart from pedestrians and road users near the Proposed Development site the local population and other sensitive receptors are unlikely to be affected by construction activities.

5 Conclusions and Summary

The prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended. A review of the project types listed in the aforementioned Schedule 5, as amended has been carried out using the steps set out in Section 2.1 of this report.

The Proposed Development is a type set out in Part 2 Class 10 (b)(iv) of Schedule 5 as described previously (Section 4.2). It does not exceed the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part.

The information provided in this report provides details on the characteristics of the Proposed Development and its likely significant effects (if any) on the environment. It also provides the relevant details under each of the criteria set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

Based on the information provided in this report no thresholds are exceeded and there is no requirement under the EIA Directive for the Proposed Development to be subject to an EIA.

Appendix A Planning Search

A desktop search of proposed and existing planning applications was carried out on the 28th September 2023. The search used publicly available data from the MyPlan.ie's 'National Planning Application' database, ABP's database and Council Planning Portals.

The scope of the search, given the scale and nature of development, was based within a 100m radius from the approximate centrepiece of the Proposed Development. Only reasonably foreseeable developments were considered.

It is noted that Application 1838009 (a hotel development) is sited 35m from the proposed works, with Application 1837894 (a 15-storey office development) sited 48m from the proposed works.

Planning Authority	Reference	Address	Proposed Development	Grant / Due Date	Distance from Subject Site
Cork City Council	N/A	MacCurtain Street (and adjoining streets), Cork City	<p>The MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme includes the following key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade of footpaths • Provision of enhanced cycling infrastructure • Changes in traffic management to include additional bus priority facilities • Upgrade to junctions including upgrades to traffic signal system • Resurfacing of streets within the project area • Provision of additional street furniture and trees • Provision of set down spaces, disabled parking and loading areas • New and upgraded public lighting • Improved street signage and road markings <p>It is intended to reduce the speed limits to 30kph on MacCurtain Street, Bridge Street and Coburg Street alongside the traffic changes in the area.</p>	N/A	c.100m
An Bord Pleanála	303247	Morrison's Island, Cork City	Remedial works to the existing quay walls, construction of public realm improvement works and flood defence works between Parliament Bridge and Parnell Bridge along Morrison's Quay and Fr. Matthew Quay and a short section along Union Quay close to Trinity Footbridge.	17/06/2020	c.100m
Cork City Council	1838009	Site bounded by 7/8 & 9 Parnell Place, Deane Street, and Oliver Plunkett Street Lower	The proposed development will consist of the partial demolition, redevelopment and extension of 7/8 and 9 Parnell Place(Protected Structures Ref:PS271, PS272 and PS273);the demolition of existing structures to the rear of 7/8 and 9 Parnell Place on Deane Street and the demolition of existing structures on Deane Street, including the demolition of a habitable house, to facilitate a hotel-development of 165 no. bedrooms of between 3-7 storeys plus rooftop plant, principally accessed from Deane Street, as well as Parnell Place, with ground floor reception area, restaurant/bar, retail unit, foodhall and café/retail unit. A link bridge on 3 levels connecting 7/8 Parnell Place to the new building fronting Deane Street; green roofs; rooftop plant enclosures; signage; bin stores; ESB substation; and all associated ancillary services. The proposed development also includes the re-opening of an historic laneway connecting Parnell Place with Deane Street, a set down area on Deane Street and all associated site development works.	04/06/2019	c.35m
Cork City Council	1837894	Clontarf Street, Deane Street, and Oliver Plunkett Street Lower	The construction of an office building which will comprise of fifteen (15) storeys and a gross floor area of circa 5,985m ² on a triangular site which is bounded by Clontarf Street, Deane Street and Oliver Plunkett Street Lower. The proposed ground floor use will comprise of lobby, office rooms and building services and the first to fourteenth floors will comprise of office use and building services. A roof top terrace will be provided for staff above the fourteenth floor and will include a canopy structure that will oversail the public footpath adjoining Clontarf Street. A glass canopy oversails Deane Street at the third floor level. From the third floor up to the roof terrace the proposed building will overhang the public footpaths along Clontarf Street and Oliver Plunkett Street Lower by	24/05/2019	c.48m

Planning Authority	Reference	Address	Proposed Development	Grant / Due Date	Distance from Subject Site
			approximately 2 metres. The proposed development will also include a double basement with ancillary plant and equipment and a water tank. The main pedestrian access to the building will be via Clontarf Street and the existing electricity substation will be relocated within a secure room on the ground floor of the proposed building with secure access from Deane Street.		
An Bord Pleanála	302923	Clontarf Street, Deane Street, and Oliver Plunkett Street Lower, Cork City	Construction of an office building which will comprise of 15 storeys above ground level and a gross floor area of circa 5,985m ² .	05/11/2018	c.50m

aecom.com