

Introduction and Terms of Reference

Introduction

This is an appropriate assessment screening for the proposed extension of an existing Nursing Home (GR IO 1132 2738). The proposed development will occupy a portion of the existing gardens to the front of the building. The Nursing Home is located in Knocklyon, South Dublin and is surrounded by housing and commercial development. The gardens are heavily modified and little of native vegetation currently exists. The encroachment, by housing developments, on the original Sally Park site has resulted in a compromised habitat with exotic flower and shrub layers having little value from an Irish biodiversity perspective.

Site visit took place on the 10th May 2019.

. This screening has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and in line with the Guidance for Planning Authorities entitled "Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland" as published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in December 2009.

The 1992 Habitats Directive requires member states to designate areas of their territory containing a representative sample of important habitats and species. These areas are known as Natura 2000 sites, and in Ireland they include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) and Special Protection Areas (SPA's). Article 6(3) and (4) require that an Appropriate Assessment be carried out for these sites where projects, plans or proposals are likely to have an effect on the protected site.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states: 'any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not

adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public’.

Article 6(4) states: ‘if, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of economic or social nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest’.

Methodology

The methodology as set out in Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (December 2009) has been followed.

Stage 1: The aim of Stage 1, ‘Screening’ is to determine whether or not Stage 2, the Appropriate Assessment is required, i.e. to determine whether or not the Plan is likely to negatively affect the conservation objectives on any Natura 2000 site. This is done by examining the design of the proposed project; and the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites that might potentially be affected.

Stage 2: The aim of the 'Appropriate Assessment' proper, is to identify any significant negative impacts that the plan might have upon Natura 2000 sites and to propose changes to the project design that will avoid any such negative impacts. The project design should then be amended accordingly, thereby avoiding the need to progress to Stage 3, which would require the implementation of measures to mitigate or compensate for the identified negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites. A key consideration of Appropriate Assessment is that the Plan or Project under consideration must take account of potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites 'in combination' with other plans or projects.

Stage 3: Alternative Solutions Following a Stage 2 negative result, that is, adverse effects cannot be excluded; an examination of alternative solutions or options, described in Article 6(4) of the Directive should be examined. These alternative solutions which should have been identified in the appropriate assessment stage should then return to be reassessed by a Stage 2 appropriate assessment, similar to a new plan or a variation of an existing plan. Alternatively, should no alternative solution which does not adversely effect a Natura 2000 site be identified, the 'least damaging' option should be considered with regard to Stage 4.

Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) / Derogation Described as the derogation process of Article 6(4), this final stage allows for the plan or project to proceed in the knowledge that it will have adverse effects on the conservation objectives and as a consequence the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. This is essentially an assessment of the compensatory measures which should be proposed to offset damage to the site and should be practical, implementable, enforceable and approved by the Minister and referred to the European Commission.

In accordance with this guidance, the following four steps have been used to produce this stage 1 screening statement:

- Description of project and project area characteristics
- Identification of Natura 2000 sites and compilation of information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives.
- Assessment of Likely Effects
- Screening conclusion and statement.

Screening

Description of project and project area characteristics

Habitats were identified using "Guide to Habitats in Ireland", Fossitt J., Heritage Council 2000.

The project consists of the extension of an existing building into an area currently occupied by gardens.

There are three main habitats within the study area:

- Amenity Grassland (GA2)(Lawn) to the front of the building Zone C
- Flower Beds and Borders (BC4) at the side and rear of the building Zone A
- Ornamental, Non-Native Shrub (WS3) on the boundaries Zones B, D and E

2.2 Amenity Grassland (GA2) :

Lawn

Perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*)

Annual meadow grass(*Poa* spp.)

Fescue(*Festuca* spp.)

Scutch grass(*Elymus repens*)

Daisy (*Bellis perrennis*)

Clover (*Trifolium* spp.)

Dandelion (*Taraxacum* spp.)

Lady's Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*)

Ragwort (*Senecio jacobea*)

Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp).

Dock (*Rumex acetosa*)

Thistle (*Cirsium* spp.)

Chickweed(*Stellaria media*)

Plantain (*Plantago major*)

This is a heavily modified habitat as a result of mowing and the application of selective herbicides.

2.3 Flower Beds and Borders (BC4)

East side of the building

Choisya ternata

Griselinia littoralis

Hypericum Hidcote

Lawson cypress (Chamaecyparis lawsonia)

Clematis vitalba

Camelia spp.

Euonymus fortune

Viburnum spp.

Pittosporum spp.

Hebe spp

Potentilla erecta

Holly Ilex spp

Rose Rosacea spp

Lonicera nitida

Mahonia japonica

Photinia spp

Cotinus spp

Aucuba japonica

Box wood(Buxus spp).

Callistemon spp.

Berberis spp.

Pieris spp.

Skimmia spp.

Cistus spp.

Spiraea spp.

Santolina spp.

Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)

Sunspurge(Euphorbia helioscopia)

Buttercup(Ranunculus spp.)

Nettle (Urtica dioecea)

Bindweed (Convolvulus spp).

Willow herb (Epilobium spp).

Bramble(Rubus spp)

Robin run the hedge(Galium aparine)

Ragwort(Senecio jacobea)

Lady`s Smock(Cardamine pratensis)

Sow Thistle(Cicerbita spp.)

This is a habitat comprised of mainly exotic, non-native, flower and shrub species.

Gravel drive

Annual Meadow Grass (Poa spp)

Willow herb(Epilobium spp).

Groundsel senecio vulgaris

Robin Run the Hedge (Gallium aparine)

Creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*)

2.4 Ornamental/ Non-Native Shrub (WS3) Zones B,D and E :

This comprises:

Area B

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
Ivy (*Hedera helix*),
Whitethorn (*Crataegus monogyna*),
Fern (*Asplenium* spp.),
Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.)
Dandelion (*Taraxicum officinale*)
Plantain(*Plantago lanceolata*),
Daisy (*Bellis perennis*),
Rosebay willow herb (*Epilobium angustifolium*),
Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*),
Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*),
Chickweed (*Stellaria media*),
Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*),
Nettle(*Urtica dioica*),
Lords and Ladies (*Arum maculata*),
Vetch (*Vicia sativa*),
Moss,
Bind weed (*Convolvulus arvensis*),
Perennial rye grass (*Lolium Perenne*),
Fescue (*Festuca* spp.),
Couch grass (*Agropyron repens*),
Nettle (*Urtica dioeca*)
Plantain (*Plantago* sp.)
Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*)
Lords and Ladies (*Arum maculata*)
Dock (*Rumex acetosa*)
Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp.)

Woodbine (*Lonicera spp.*)

Sycamore (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*)

Area D

Lawson cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsonia*)

Beech (*Betula spp.*)

Sycamore (*Acer spp.*)

Sawara cypress(*Chamaecyparis pisifera*)

Pittosporum spp.

Elm (*Ulmus spp.*).

Yew (*Taxus baccata*)

Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitania*)

Rowan (*Sorbus spp.*)

Robinia spp

Californian lilac (*Ceanothus spp.*).

Eleagnus spp.

Lonicera nitida

Aquilegia spp

Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Honesty(*Lunaria annua*)

Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*)

Ground elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*)

Buttercup (*Ranunculus spp.*)

Ladies Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*)

Willow herb (*Epilobium* spp.)

Winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrens*)

Sow Thistle (*Cicerbita* spp.)

Elder (*Sambucus niger*)

Comfrey (*Symphytum* spp).

Area E

Irish Yew (*Taxus baccatta*)

Sycamore (*Acer pseudopalmatum*)

Lawson cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsonia*)

Holly (*Ilex* spp.)

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

Elm (*Ulmus* spp.)

Purple cherry Plum(*Prunus* spp.)

Lessor periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

Hebe spp.

Berberis spp

Boxwood(*Buxus* spp.)

Lonicera pileate

Forsythia Spp.

Ivy (*Hedera helix*).

Fern (*Asplenium* spp.)

Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*)
Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
Vetch (*Vicia* spp.)
Sunspurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*)
Winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*)
Robin run the hedge (*Gallium aparine*)
Ground elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*)

3. Fauna

Fauna was identified by visual, and spraint evidence and the probable presence of certain species was ascertained by the availability of suitable habitat. Terrestrial vertebrate and invertebrate fauna on-site can be assumed to be mobile and capable of movement between the various habitats.

3.1 Invertebrates

Cinnabar Moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*) (because of the presence of ragwort)
Hawthorn Shield Bug (*Acanthasomosa haemorrhoidale*)
Earwig (*Forficula auricularia*)
Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera* spp.)
Ladybird (*Coccinell 7-punctata*)
Garden Spider (*Araneus diadematus*)
Woodlouse (*Oniscus asellus*)

This is not an exhaustive list of the invertebrate species and is merely representative of the species found during field work.

3.2 Birds

Pied wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)
Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)
Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)
Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)
Great Tit (*Parus major*)
Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)
Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)
Magpie (*Pica pica*)
Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)
Hooded Crow (*Corvus corone*)
Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)
Sparrow Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*)
Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)
Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)
Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)
Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)
Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)
Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)
Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*),
Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*),
Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)
House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
Tree Creeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Were all seen, heard.

3.3 Mammals

No suitable roosting areas were seen for Bats (*Chiroptera*) within the site but a foraging presence is likely. (Results of bat Survey by Brian Keeley over two seasons) (see appendix)

Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)(Red Data Book 2,Hab. Dir. 4,Bern Convention 3)

Soprano Pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*) (as per common)

Leislars Bat(*Nyctalus leisleri*)(Red Data Book 2,Hab. Dir. 4,Bern Convention3)

Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) (Red Data Book 2,Bern Convention 3)

Field mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*)

Pygmy shrew (*Sorex minutus*)

Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus cariolensis*)

Can all be expected on-site.

No badger setts were found.

Identification of Natura 2000 sites and compilation of information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives.

There is one Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within the possible impact zone of 15km distance from the site, as set out for plans in the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities;

Glenasmole Valley Sac site code 001209

Generic Conservation objectives: Detailed objectives to follow.

Generic objectives can be stated as follows:

- Avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species and species of special conservation interest or significant disturbance to these species thus ensuring the integrity of the sites are maintained.
- To ensure for the qualifying species and species of special conservation interest that the following are maintained in the long-term:
 - (1) The population of the species as a viable component of the site
 - (2) The distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
 - (3) The structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species.

Natura 2000 sites

Site Name	Area reduction	Disturbance	Fragmentation	Density reduction	Water Quality Modification
Glenasmole Valley SAC	None anticipated	None anticipated	None anticipated	None anticipated	None anticipated

Special Areas of Conservation

Site Name: Glenasmole Valley SAC

Site Code: 001209

Glenasmole Valley in south Co. Dublin lies on the edge of the Wicklow uplands, approximately 5 km from Tallaght. The River Dodder flows through the valley and has been impounded here to form two reservoirs which supply water to south Dublin. The non-calcareous bedrock of the Glenasmole Valley has been overlain by deep drift deposits which now line the valley sides. They are partly covered by scrub and woodland, and on the less precipitous parts, by a herb-rich grassland. There is much seepage through the deposits, which brings to the surface water rich in bases, which induces local patches of calcareous fen and, in places, petrifying springs.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[6210] Orchid-rich Calcareous Grassland* [6410] Molinia Meadows [7220] Petrifying Springs*

At this site, examples of calcareous fen and flush occur between the two reservoirs, where sedges (including *Carex flacca* and *C. panicea*) are joined by such species as Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*), Few-flowered Spike-rush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*), Zig-zag clover (*Trifolium medium*) and the scarce Fen Bedstraw (*Galium uliginosum*). Tufa depositing springs are long-known from the site, along the valley sides, and some have substantial tufa mounds and banks. Tufa formation is also known from small streams within the woodland at

the site. Within the hazel woods, and associated with the springs and flushes, a distinctive flora with Marsh Hawk'sbeard (*Crepis paludosa*) and luxuriant stands of Great Horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia*) has developed.

Orchid-rich grassland occurs in the drier parts of this site and in places grades into *Molinia* meadow. Orchids recorded in these habitats include Frog Orchid (*Coeloglossum viride*), Northern Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*), Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*), Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*). Two further orchid species, both Red Data Book-listed, have also been found here, Greenwinged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) and Small-white Orchid (*Pseudorchis albida*). Common grasses in the sward include Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*). Other species which occur are Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*), Common Restharrow (*Ononis repens*), Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) and Autumn Gentian (*Gentianella amarella*). While much of the calcareous grassland has been improved to some extent for agriculture, a suite of typical species still remain.

The areas of *Molinia* meadows at the site occur associated with the grasslands on the valley sides, and in particular in seepage and flushed areas. Typical and indicative species include Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus uliginosus*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Sharp-flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*), Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Meadow Thistle (*Cirsium dissectum*) and Fen Bedstraw. As noted above, orchids are frequent in the grasslands at this site.

Woodland occurs in patches around the site. On the east side of the valley, below the northern lake, a Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) wood has developed on the unstable calcareous slopes and includes other species such as Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) and (Irish) Whitebeam (*Sorbus hibernica*). Spring Wood-rush (*Luzula pilosa*), Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) are present in the ground flora.

Wet semi-natural broadleaved woodland is also found around the reservoirs and includes Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and willow (*Salix* spp.), with Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), horsetails (*Equisetum* spp.), Bramble and localised patches of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), an introduced and invasive species.

The lake shore vegetation is not well developed, which is typical of a reservoir. There are occasional patches of Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and Purpleloosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which are more extensive around the western shore of the northern lake, along with Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*). Other vegetation includes Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*) and the scarce Water Sedge (*Carex aquatilis*).

As well as the Green-winged Orchid and Small-white Orchid, two other threatened species which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book occur in the site, Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*) and Yellow Bird's-nest (*Monotropa hypopitys*). Small-white Orchid is legally protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.

The site provides excellent habitat for bats, with at least four species recorded: Pipistrelle, Leisler's, Daubenton's and Brown Long-eared. Otter occurs along the river and reservoirs.

The site supports Kingfisher, an Annex I species under the E.U. Birds Directive.

Glenasmole Valley contains a high diversity of habitats and plant communities, including three habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The presence of four Red Data Book plant species further adds to the value of the site, as does the presence of populations of several mammal and bird species of conservation interest

Conservation objectives for Glenasmole Valley SAC [001209]

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

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

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

Code Description 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) 6410 Molinia meadows on

calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* * denotes a priority habitat

21/02/2018 Generic Conservation Objectives

Citation: NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Glenasmole Valley SAC [001209].
Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Mitigation Measures:

Measure 1: Mitigation measures as per Keeley Bat report See appendix for citation.

Potential impact of work on bat/bird fauna

There will be no negative impact on bat/bird species..

Predicted and Residual impact of the proposal

No impact on the Natura 2000 sites is anticipated.

Assessment of Likely Effects

Potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites from the proposed development are not anticipated

Based on the available information and data it is not expected that the proposed project will cause any impact on the SAC's or SPA's located within 15 km of the project site. It is of such a minor scale, and within an existing serviced area that it will cause neither changes nor have any significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites within the threshold distance.

More specifically, there will be no reduction in habitat area; no disturbance of key species, habitat or species fragmentation; no reduction in species density; no changes

in key indicators of conservation value and no climate change brought about to the SAC and SPA sites within the 15 kms zone.

Screening Conclusion and Statement

This screening process was carried out to ascertain if the project was likely to have significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites within the threshold distance of the project site. If this were the case then it would be necessary to carry out an Appropriate Assessment.

Following the review of the project in accordance with the Guidance for Planning Authorities entitled “Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland”, this screening has established that the project poses no potential for significant effects and as such requires no further appropriate assessment.

Gerry Tobin BSc, MA
Environmental Consultant

Appendix

Keeley B “A Bat Assessment of Sally Park Nursing Home, Knocklyon, South Dublin Over Two Seasons and an Evaluation for Potential Impacts of The Proposed Modifications on the Bat Fauna (unpublished)

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May 2019**