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ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

DEMOLITION OF TWO-STOREY BUILDING,
UNIT 19, CRAG AVENUE,
CLONDALKIN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,
DUBLIN 22

On behalf of

KN Network Services (Ire.) Ltd.

OCTOBER 2021

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1 INTRODUCTION

Gannon + Associates were commissioned by KN Network Services (Ire.) Ltd., the applicant, to produce an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) report, including a bat roost inspection and emergence survey, in regards to the proposed demolition of a two-storey building at Unit 19, Crag Avenue, Clondalkin Industrial Estate, Dublin 22. The application site comprises a two-storey 463m² former office building and hard-standing areas.

FIGURE 1. APPLICATION SITE (SOURCE - GOOGLE 3D IMAGERY).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Scope of Assessment

The scope of the assessment outlined in this report comprises the following:

- Undertake desktop assessment and ecological surveys to establish the baseline environment, and evaluate the nature conservation importance of the application site;
- Identify and assess the potential direct, indirect and/or cumulative ecological impacts of the proposed project during its lifetime; and
- Where necessary, propose mitigation measures to remove or reduce those impacts at the appropriate stage of the development.

2.2 Guidance and Legislation

This report was prepared having regard to the following legislation:

- Planning and Development Acts and Regulations 2000-2015;
- Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Flora (Protection) Order 2015; and
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.

In addition, the assessment was carried out with regard to the following guidance and best-practice documents:

- Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2019);
- Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017);
- Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2009);
- A Guide to Habitats in Ireland (Fossit, 2000);
- Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping (Smith *et al.*, 2011);
- Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, third edition (Collins, 2016); and
- Bat Tree Habitat Key. AEcol, Bridgwater, (Andrews, H et al., 2013).

2.3 Desktop Assessment

A detailed desktop assessment was carried out in order to identify any features of ecological importance which have the potential to be affected by the proposed project. This desktop assessment, completed in October 2021, relied on the following resources:

- Information on species records and distributions, obtained from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) at maps.biodiversityireland.ie;
- Information on European sites and their qualifying features and conservation objectives, available from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at www.npws.ie;
- Information on waterbodies, water quality data and catchment areas available from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at www.epa.ie;
- Information on geology, soils and hydrogeology available from the Geological Society of Ireland (GSI) available at www.gsi.ie;
- Satellite imagery and mapping available from multiple sources including: Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI), Google, Bing and Digital Globe;
- Information on the status of EU protected species and habitats in Ireland (NPWS 2019a & 2019b); and
- Information on any relevant consented, in-progress or existing developments available from the respective County Council online resources.

2.4 Field Survey

An ecological field survey was carried out by a qualified ecologist with Gannon + Associates on 20th September 2021. The methodologies followed as part of the field survey are outlined below.

2.4.1 Habitats and Flora

The habitat survey was carried out at the application site in accordance Smith *et al.* (2011) and habitats were classified to level 3 in accordance with Fossit (2000).

The application site was also searched for the presence any invasive plant species (i.e. those listed on Part 1 of the Third Schedule of S.I No. 477 of 2011, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011), in addition to any species protected under the Flora Protection Order 2015.

2.4.2 Non-volant Mammals

The mammal survey involved a thorough search of the application site for any signs of mammal activity. Signs searched for included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Tracks and paths;
- Droppings and/or latrines;
- Hairs;
- Resting places (e.g. setts, holts, couches, earths etc.)
- Snuffle holes; and
- Feeding remains.

2.4.3 Bats

A roost inspection survey was carried out the two-storey building within the application site, in addition to any suitable trees. This survey was carried out in-line with the best practice methods outlined in the Bat Conservation Trusts "*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists*" (Collins, 2016) and the assessment of trees within the site was carried out with accordance to the methodology given in the *Bat Tree Habitat Key* (Andrews *et al.*, 2013).

A bat emergence survey was carried out on the two-storey building within the application site by Gannon + Associates on 20th September 2021 using direct observation and handheld bat detectors (both heterodyne and full-spectrum). The purpose of the emergence survey was to determine the presence of roosting bats in the building via the direct detection of emerging bats post-sunset. The survey focussed on any potential entry/exit points identified during the roost assessment survey. The emergence survey followed the best practice methods outlined in the Bat Conservation Trusts "*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists*" (Collins, 2016).

2.4.4 Other protected fauna

Other protected fauna were recorded on a 'as seen' basis during the course of the field survey. The habitats within the application site were assessed for their potential to support protected species.


Legend
Site Boundary
Gallanstown Stream
pNHA_ITM_2015_11
Title
Figure 2. Application site.
Project
Demolition of two-storey building at Unit 9 Crag Avenue Clondalkin Industrial Estate Dublin 22
Client
KN Network Services (Ire.) Ltd
Date 17/10/2021 Scale 1:1,000
Imagery Google Satellite
Notes
Site boundaries are for demonstrative purposes and do not represent exact legal or planning boundaries
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3 BASELINE ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Site Location

The application site is located within Clondalkin Industrial Estate in West Dublin. The site is bounded on all sides by existing industrial developments. The only structure within the site is a two-storey former office building. The remainder of the site is hardstanding used for vehicle parking.

There are no surface water bodies present within the application site or immediate surrounding area. The closest waterbody to the application site is the Grand Canal situated over 200m to the south. The intervening environment between the site and the Grand Canal consists of hardstanding, industrial buildings, fencing and a line of scrub. The Gallanstown Stream flows east directly parallel to the Grand Canal before flowing culverted under the M50 (this watercourse is not mapped by the EPA). The Gallanstown Stream is piped through Park West and joins the Blackditch Stream at Killeen Road. This stream then flows open through Kylemore Industrial Park before being culverted under the Grand Canal and joining the Camac River (EPA code: 09C02). The site is not hydrologically connected to either of these watercourses and is currently connected to the existing surface and foul water services.

3.2 Outputs of Desktop Assessment

3.2.1 Designated Sites

There site is wholly outside any nationally or internationally designated sites, and there are no such sites within the immediate surrounding area.

The closest designated site to the application site is the Grand Canal pNHA[1] (002104), situated approximately 200m to the south. This pNHA comprises the Grand Canal and the banks on either side. The ecological value of the canal relates to the diversity of species it supports along its linear habitats, notable otter, smooth newt and a range of flora. All other pNHAs are located greater than 3km from the application site. The closest European sites to the application are over 11km distant and there are no NHAs within the surrounding area. There is no connectivity between the application site and these designated sites.

3.2.2 National Biodiversity Data Centre Records

The National Biodiversity Centre database was searched for records of protected species from within the 1km grid square which encompasses the application site (O0732). The records from this grid square comprise some common flowering plants, the invasive Japanese knotweed, red fox, rabbit and a number of bat species: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, daubenton's bat and Lesiler's bat.

3.2.3 Results of Previous Ecological Assessments

A review of past ecological surveys and assessments which were carried out within proximity to the application site was also undertaken to inform this assessment. The results of relevant surveys and assessments are presented below.

Data Centre at 3-4 Crag Avenue

[1] Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995 and have not since been statutorily proposed or designated.

Ecological surveys were carried out for the data centre development at 3-4 Crag Avenue (SD18A/0068). Connectivity to all nationally and internationally designated sites was excluded. Surveys at the site did not record any protected or rare species or habitat. The only species recorded were some commonly occurring urban birds and the non-native rabbit.

3.3 Outputs of Field Surveys

3.3.1 Habitats and Flora

The application site is comprised entirely of man-made surfaces (BL3 - Fossitt (2000) habitat codes) including the two-storey building and hardstanding. There is some scrub (WS1) along some the northern and western boundaries of the site. No Japanese knotweed or other invasive plant species listed in Part 1 of the Third Schedule were recorded within the application site during the survey.

FIGURE 3. MAN-MADE HABITATS WITHIN APPLICATION SITE.

Some flora was recorded within the site in cracks within the hardstanding, including butterfly bush, greater plantain and rosebay willowherb. Directly north of the application site are some landscaping trees along the road (Lime spp.) and there a small group of mature sycamore trees outside the north-west corner of the site.

3.3.2 Fauna

No evidence of any protected faunal species was recorded within the application site during the field assessment. The application site comprises entirely man-made habitats and there is no suitable habitat for any protected and/or rare fauna within the application site.

3.3.3 Bats

The results of the bat roost inspection survey and dusk emergence survey carried out at the application site are outlined below.

3.3.3.1 Roost Inspection Survey

The only structure within the application site is the two-storey former office building. This is a flat roofed masonry structure dating to approximately 30 years ago. The building currently comprises some small offices and storage areas. There is no attic space within the building, with the suspended ceilings being position a few inches below the concrete roof slabs.

It is of note that the entire application site is significantly illuminated from the existing lighting within the KN Networks site directly south of the site. Similarly, there is street lighting bounding the north of the site. This level of lighting significantly reduces any suitability of the site for bats.

FIGURE 4. EXISTING LIGHTING IN AREA OF APPLICATION SITE.

No evidence of roosting bats was recorded in the interior or exterior of the building during the survey. The building does not contain features considered suitable for roosting bats and there is no suitable foraging or commuting habitat within the site.

3.3.3.2 Dusk Emergence Survey

No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the emergence survey and there was no incidental activity recorded in the surrounding area.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project comprises the demolition of the existing two-storey former office building within the site, including the floor slab and foundations. The existing drainage and water services at the site will be capped and hardcore will be installed on the footprint of the removed building.

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no habitats of value within the application site and no protected and/or rare species were recorded during site surveys. There are no watercourses within the site or surrounding area, and the site is currently connected to existing services. The proposed project involves the demolition of a two-storey building within the site. The application site is not hydrologically connected to any designated sites or va-

lued habitats/species. There is no pathway for impact to any ecological receptors from the proposed project.

6 CONCLUSION

There will not be any significant negative impact to any valued habitats, designated sites or individual or group of species as a result of the proposed project.

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