Enviroguide CONSULTING

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

FOR

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

AT

UNIT 21, FIRST AVENUE,
COOKSTOWN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,
DUBLIN 24

ON BEHALF OF

Bartra Property Cookstown Limited

Prepared by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

REPORT LIMITATIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Enviroguide Consulting was commissioned by Bartra Property Cookstown Limited to undertake a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in relation to the Proposed Development at Unit 21, First Avenue, Cookstown Industrial Estate, Dublin 24. This report contains information to enable the Competent Authority to undertake Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment screening in respect of the Proposed Development.

1.2. Legislative Background

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) seeks to protect birds of special importance by the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law through the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011).

SACs and SPAs are collectively known as Natura 2000 or European Sites. It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SPAs and SACs. SACs are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats (including priority types which are in danger of disappearance) and Annex II species (other than birds). SPAs are selected for the conservation of Annex I birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats. The annexed habitats and species for which each site is selected correspond to the qualifying interests of the sites; from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived.

An 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) is an assessment required prior to the grant of planning permission to determine whether a plan or project, based on best scientific knowledge, will have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European Site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. It is required for any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a site but likely to have a significant effect on it. Accordingly, a screening for AA determines whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European Site, in view of its conservation objectives..

A competent authority must determine that an Appropriate Assessment is required in respect of any European Site where, following screening, it cannot be excluded that the plan or project will have a significant effect on the European Site, in view of its conservation objectives

This AA Screening Report has been undertaken to determine whether the Proposed Development is likely to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, on any European Site, in view of their conservation objectives..

1.2.1. Legislative Context

An Appropriate Assessment is required under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive where a project or plan may give rise to significant effects upon a European Site. Paragraph 3 states that:

"*6(3) 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."

These obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment have been implemented in Ireland under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (**"the 2000 Act"**), and in particular Section 177U and Section 177V thereof. The relevant provisions of Section 177U in relation to AA screening have been set out below:

"***177U.—*** *(1) A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European Site.*

(2) ...

(3) ...

(4) The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European Site.

(5) The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is not required if it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European Site."

1.2.2. Stages of AA

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (the "**Screening Report**") has been prepared by Enviroguide Consulting. It considers whether the Proposed Development is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site and whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required.

The AA process is a four-stage process, with issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

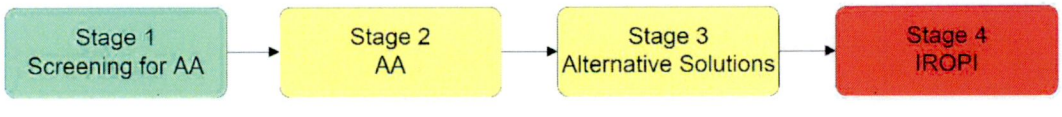

FIGURE 1. THE FOUR STAGES OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS (DEHLG, 2010).

The four stages of an AA, can be summarised as follows:

- Stage 1 *Screening* addresses:
    - whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, or
    - whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European Site in view of its conservation objectives.
- Stage 2: *Appropriate Assessment (AA).* The second stage of the AA requires the competent authority to determine whether the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European Site, having regard to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure and function. The developer must provide a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to the competent authority to inform the AA, which is a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, of the implications of a proposed development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for one or more than one European Site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. It must include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify and classify any implications for one or more than one European Site in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. The competent authority must consult with the public in relation to any plan or project that requires AA. If the competent authority determines that the plan or project would have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European Site, it can only grant consent after proceeding through steps 3 and 4.
- Stage 3: *Assessment of alternative solutions.* If the outcome of Stage 2 is negative i.e., adverse impacts to the sites cannot be scientifically ruled out, despite mitigation, the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned. This stage examines alternative solutions to the proposal.
- Stage 4: *Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.* The final stage is the main derogation process examining whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project to adversely affect a European Site, where no less damaging solution exists.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Guidance

This AA Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities.* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision),
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities.* Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- *Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle* (European Commission, 2000);
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission, 2019).
- *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites -Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC Brussels, 28.9.2021 C*(European Commission, 2021), and
- *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, OPR Practice Note PN01, Office of the Planning Regulator March 2021.*

2.2. Screening Steps

Screening for AA involves the following steps:

- Establish whether the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary for the management of a European Site,
- Description of the plan or project and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the European Site,
- Identification of European Sites potentially affected,
- Identification and description of potential effects on the European Site,
- Assessment of the likely significance of the effects identified on the European Site, and
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

2.3. Desk Study

A desktop study was carried out to collate and review available information, datasets and documentation sources relevant for the completion of this Screening Report. The desktop study relied on the following sources:

- Information on the network of European Sites, boundaries, qualifying interests and conservation objectives, obtained from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at www.npws.ie,

- Text summaries of the relevant European Sites taken from the respective Standard Data Forms and Site Synopses available at www.npws.ie,
- Information on species records and distributions, obtained from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) at www.maps.biodiversityireland.ie,
- Information on waterbodies, catchment areas and hydrological connections obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at www.gis.epa.ie,
- Information on bedrock, groundwater, aquifers and their statuses, obtained from Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) at www.gsi.ie,
- Satellite imagery and mapping obtained from various sources and dates including Google, Digital Globe, Bing and Ordnance Survey Ireland,
- Information on the existence of permitted developments, or developments awaiting decision, in the vicinity of the Proposed Development available at the National Planning Application Database and South Dublin County Council.

For a complete list of the specific documents consulted as part of this assessment, see *Section 5 References*.

2.4. Assessment of Significant Effects

The potential for significant effects that may arise from the Proposed Development were considered through the use of key indicators, namely:

- Habitat loss or alteration
- Habitat/species fragmentation
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species
- Changes in population density
- Changes in water quality and resource

In addition, information pertaining to the conservation objectives of the European Sites, the ecology of the designated habitats and species and known or perceived sensitivities of the habitats and species were considered.

3. STAGE 1 SCREENING

3.1. Management of European Sites

The Proposed Development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites. There are no European Sites located either within or immediately adjacent to the Site of the Proposed Development.

3.2. Description of Proposed Development

3.2.1. Site location

The Site of the Proposed Development, as shown in Figure 2, is 1.67ha, and is located at the junction of Cookstown Road and First Avenue, which border the east and the north boundaries of the Site, respectively. The southern and western borders are abutted by industrial buildings. The Site is located 1.8km southwest of the M50 and 500m northeast of the Tallaght University Hospital. The surrounding landscape is predominantly urban in nature.

3.2.2. Description of Development

Bartra Property Cookstown Limited intend to apply for permission for development at a site of c.1.67ha at Unit 21, First Avenue, Cookstown Industrial Estate, Dublin 24. The development will consist of the following:

- Demolition of all existing 1-3 storey industrial/commercial structures and small café on site totalling c.5,500sqm in area;
- Construction of a 1-5 storey Transitional Care Facility (step-up/step-down) providing 131 no. bedspaces over partial basement (total floor area c.6,743sqm) with central courtyard (c.519sqm);
- The basement consists of a sprinkler tank and pump rooms, water tank room, plant room and workshop;
- Provision of dining and kitchen areas, siting/family rooms, activity rooms, coffee dock, hair salon, oratory, lobbies/reception areas, ancillary offices and staff areas, stores, toilets, shower/changing facilities, ESB substation, generator, switchroom, service yard and waste areas serving the facility;
- Lobbies, stair/lifts, photovoltaic panels and green roofs throughout;
- Partial provision of the pocket park identified in the Tallaght LAP (c.1,286sqm);
- New vehicular access from First Avenue and egress onto Cookstown Road via a one-way system through the subject site;
- Entrance signage on the eastern elevation of the proposed facility;
- All associated site development works, services provision, connection to the water supply, foul and surface water networks on First Avenue and Cookstown Road including partial diversion of the foul line to the north east of the site at First Avenue, temporary foul pump station, attenuation/bioretention systems, vehicular and pedestrian access including internal road and footpaths, interim pedestrian facilities/public realm upgrade works, landscape and boundary treatment works, tree removal, bicycle storage (76 no. total spaces), car parking (32 no. total spaces), set-down parking spaces, 1 no. ambulance set-down space serving the facility and delivery/loading areas to First Avenue.

The proposed site layout can be seen in Figure 3.

3.2.3. Surface Water

According to the Engineering Services Report (OCSC, 2022) accompanying this report, surface water run-off from the Site will be discharged, at an attenuated flow rate, to the existing 450mm-diameter surface water sewer, which lies approximately 40m southeast boundary of the Proposed Development. A flow control device will be installed immediately downstream of attenuation system to restrict the surface water discharge from the Site to a flow rate equivalent, or below, the natural greenfield runoff rate. The Site is located within the Poddle River Storm Level 1 Catchment, and therefore the surface water from the Site will eventually discharge to the River Poddle 1.3km southeast of the Site.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) measures are included in the Project design however, they are not being relied upon in any way to mitigate against likely significant effects on a European Site. These measures include pervious paving, green roofs, tree pits, trapped road gullies, underground gravity pipe network, geocellular storage, silt trap, interception storage, fuel separators, and a flow control device (OCSC, 2022) .

3.2.4. Foul Water

According to the Engineering Services Report (OCSC, 2022) accompanying this report, the Site of the Proposed Development is a brownfield site and is currently served by the existing public foul water network. The Proposed Development will be connected to the existing foul water sewer 40m southeast of the Site, along with a pump station, which will be located within the southwest corner of the Proposed Development Site. This foul water will be eventually treated at the Ringsend WwTP before it is discharged into Dublin Bay.

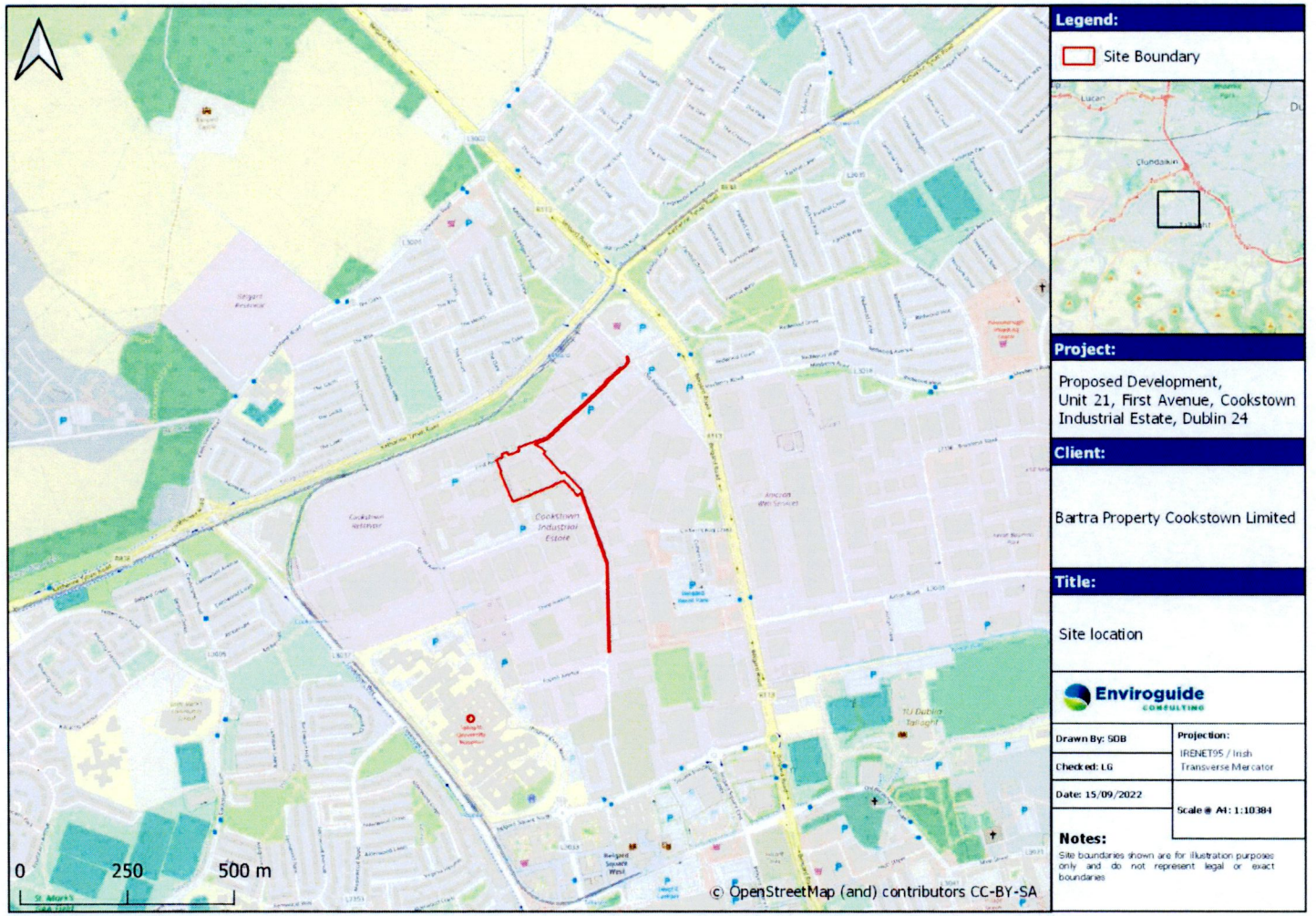

FIGURE 2. SITE LOCATION

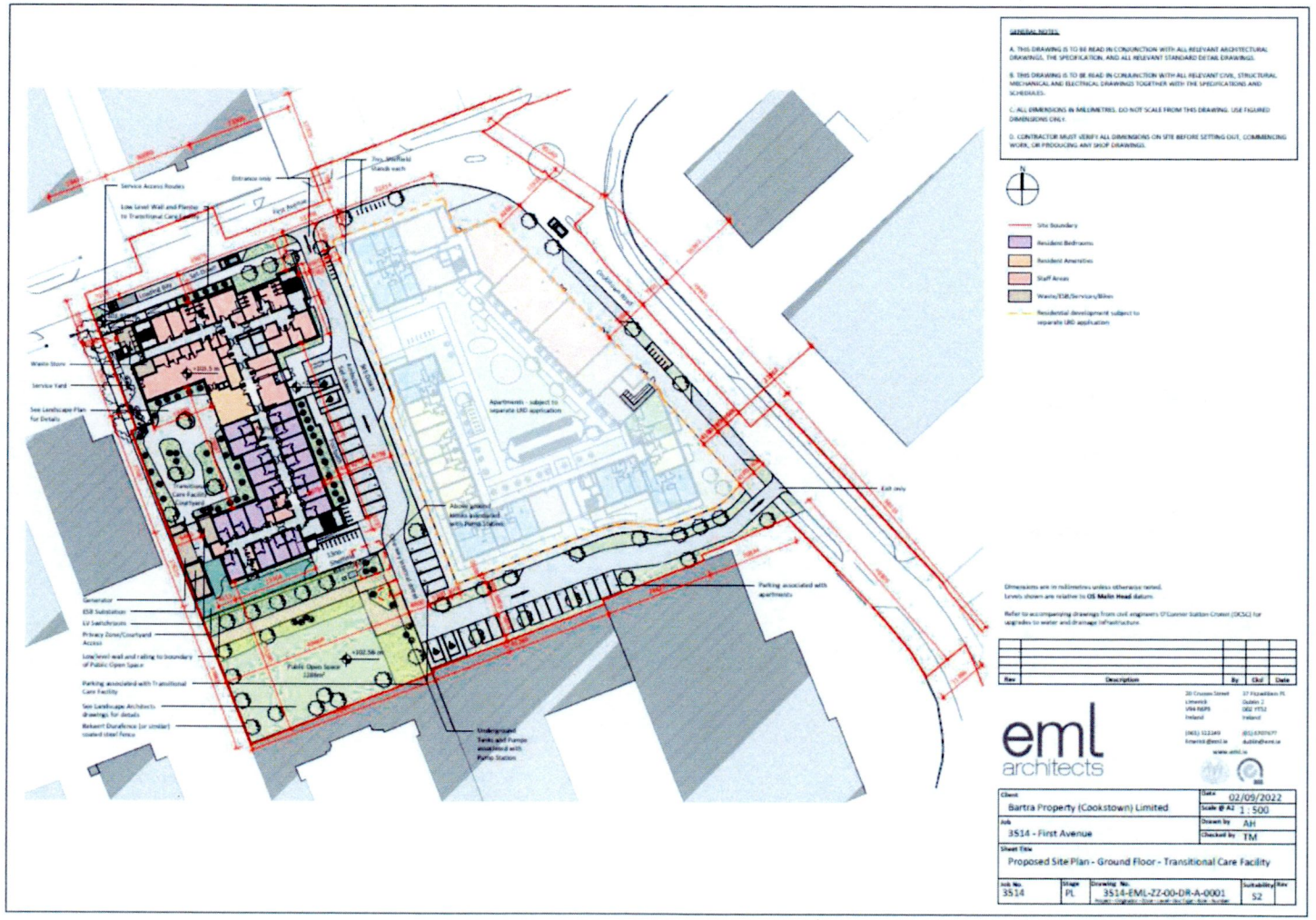

FIGURE 3. PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT – GROUND FLOOR (EML ARCHITECTS, 2022)

3.3. Existing Environment

3.3.1. Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The Site of the Proposed Development is within the *Liffey and Dublin Bay* catchment and *Liffey_SC_090* sub-catchment. The closest watercourse to the Site of the Proposed Development is the River Poddle, 1.3km southeast of the Site, which flows approximately 10km northeast before discharging to the River Liffey, and ultimately entering Dublin Bay. The River Poddle is currently *At Risk* of not meeting its WFD objectives and was designated a *Poor* ecological status during the most recent 2013-2018 survey period (EPA, 2022). The status of the River Poddle was designated as *Poor* (Q-Value:3) by the EPA in 2007 (station code: RS09P030400).

The Site is situated on the *Dublin* groundwater body, which is *Not at Risk* of not meeting its WFD objectives. The aquifer type within the Site boundary is a *Locally Important Aquifer* (Ll) on bedrock which is *Moderately Productive only in Local Zones*. The groundwater rock units underlying the aquifer are classified as *Dinantian Upper Impure Limestones* (GSI, 2022). The predominant level of vulnerability of the Site to groundwater contamination via human activities is *High*, and *Extreme* along the north and northwest boundary of the Site. The soil is classified as *Urban* and the subsoil is made ground (*Made*) (EPA, 2022).

3.4. Identification of Relevant European Sites

In order to identify the European Sites that potentially lie within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the Proposed Development, a Source-Path-Receptor method (S-P-R) was adopted, as described in 'OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management' (OPR, 2021), a practice note produced by the Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin. This note was published to provide guidance on screening for appropriate assessment (AA) during the planning process, and although it focuses on the approach a planning authority should take in screening for AA, the methodology is also readily applied in the preparation of Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports such as this.

The guidance document published by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (then DEHLG) 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities' (2009) recommends an arbitrary distance of 15km as the precautionary ZOI for a plan or project being assessed for likely significant effects on European Sites, stating however that this should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

As such, the 15km ZOI is used in this report as an initial starting point for collating European Sites for AA screening.

The methodology used to identify relevant European Sites comprised the following:

- Use of up-to-date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments – downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) and the EPA website (www.epa.ie) to identify European Sites which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development;
- The catchment data were used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the Project Boundary and any European Sites.

- All European Sites within the zone of influence (within 15km of the Proposed Development Site) were identified and are shown in Figure 4.
- The potential for connectivity with European Sites at distances greater than 15km from the Proposed Development was also considered in this initial assessment. In this case, there is no potential connectivity between the Proposed Development Site and European Sites located at a distance greater than 15km from the Proposed Development based on the S-P-R model.
- Table 1 provides details of all relevant European Sites as identified in the preceding steps. The potential for pathways between European Sites and the Proposed Development Site was assessed on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework as per the OPR Practice Note PN01 (March 2021). Those European Sites where a pathway has been identified are highlighted in green. Pathways considered included:
    - Direct pathways e.g., proximity (i.e., location within the European Site), water bodies, air (for both air emissions and noise impacts).
    - Indirect pathways e.g., **disruption to migratory paths, 'Sightlines'** where noisy or intrusive activities may result in disturbance to shy species.
- The site synopses and conservation objectives of these sites, as per the NPWS website (www.npws.ie), were consulted and reviewed at the time of preparing this report.
- There is absolutely no reliance placed in this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report on measures intended to avoid/reduce harmful effects on the European Sites.

The result of this preliminary screening concluded that there is a total of six SACs and four SPAs located within the ZOI of the Proposed Development Site. The distances to each site listed are taken from the nearest possible point of the Proposed Development Site boundary to the nearest possible point of each European Site.

Potential pathways between the Proposed Development Site and four European Sites within the ZOI was identified. The European Sites linked to the Proposed Development are:

- South Dublin Bay SAC
- North Dublin Bay SAC
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA
- North Bull Island SPA

TABLE 1. EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN THE 15KM PRECAUTIONARY ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND POTENTIAL PATHWAYS BETWEEN THEM. THOSE EUROPEAN SITES FOR WHICH A S-P-R LINK WAS IDENTIFIED ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN.

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (*= priority habitats)	Distance to Site	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Glenasmole Valley SAC (001209)	[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)*	4.1km S	**None –** There is no hydrological connection. In addition, the intervening distances between the Site and the SACs are sufficient to exclude the possibility of significant effects on the SACs arising from: emissions of noise, dust, pollutants and/or vibrations emitted from the Site during the Construction Phase; increased traffic volumes during the Construction and Operational Phase and associated emissions; potential increased lighting emitted from the Site during Construction and Operational Phase; and increased human presence at the Site during Construction and Operational Phase.
Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122)	[3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*); [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds; [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix;* [4030] European dry heaths; [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths; [6130] Calaminarian grasslands of the *Violetalia calaminariae*; [6230] Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe); [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog); [8110] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*); [8210] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; [8220] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles; [1355] *Lutra lutra* (Otter)	6.5km SE	
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (001398)	[7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion); [1014] *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail); [1016] *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail)	10.5km NW	
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)	[1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; [1210] Annual vegetation of drift lines; [1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand; [2110] Embryonic shifting dunes	11.5km NE	**Yes –** Weak hydrological pathway via surface water discharges to the River Poddle during both the Construction and Operational Phases and discharges from Ringsend WwTP into Dublin Bay during the Operational Phase.
Knocksink Wood SAC (000725)	[7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion); [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles; [91E0] Alluvial forests	14.2km SE	**None –** There is no hydrological connection. In addition, the intervening distance between the Site and the SAC is sufficient to exclude the possibility of significant

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (*= priority habitats)	Distance to Site	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)
	with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)		effects on the SAC arising from: emissions of noise, dust, pollutants and/or vibrations emitted from the Site during the Construction Phase; increased traffic volumes during the Construction and Operational Phase and associated emissions; potential increased lighting emitted from the Site during Construction and Operational Phase; and increased human presence at the Site during Construction and Operational Phase.
North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)	[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats; [1210] Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines; [1310] Salicornia Mud; [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows; [1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows; [2110] Embryonic Shifting Dunes; [2120] Marram Dunes (White Dunes); [2130] Fixed Dunes (Grey Dunes)*; [2190] Humid Dune Slacks; [1395] Petalwort (*Petalophyllum ralfsii*)	14.7km NE	**Yes** – Weak hydrological pathway via surface water discharges to the River Poddle during both the Construction and Operational Phases and discharges from Ringsend WwTP into Dublin Bay during the Operational Phase.
Special Protected Area (SPA)			
Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040)	[A098] Merlin *Falco columbarius*; [A103] Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*	8.1km SE	**None** – There is no hydrological connection. In addition, the significant marine buffer and intervening distance between the Site and the SPA is sufficient to exclude the possibility of significant effects on the SPA arising from: emissions of noise, dust, pollutants and/or vibrations emitted from the Site during the Construction Phase; increased traffic volumes during the Construction and Operational Phase and associated emissions; potential increased lighting emitted from the Site during Construction and Operational Phase; and increased human presence at the Site during Construction and Operational Phase. The Site does not provide significant *ex-situ* habitat for QI/SCI species within the Site of the Proposed Development.

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (*= priority habitats)	Distance to Site	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)	[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota;* [A130] Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus;* [A137] Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula;* [A141] Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola;* [A143] Knot *Calidris canutus*; [A144] Sanderling *Calidris alba*; [A149] Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina* ; [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica;* [A162] Redshank *Tringa tetanus;* [A179] Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*; [A192] Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii;* [A193] Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*; [A194] Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*; [A999] Wetlands and Waterbirds	11.5km NE	**Yes –** Weak hydrological pathway via surface water discharges to the River Poddle during both the Construction and Operational Phases and discharges from Ringsend WwTP into Dublin Bay during the Operational Phase.
Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (004063)	[A043] Greylag Goose *Anser anser*; [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*	14.6km SW	**None –** There is no hydrological connection. In addition, the significant marine buffer and intervening distance between the Site and the SPA is sufficient to exclude the possibility of significant effects on the SPA arising from: emissions of noise, dust, pollutants and/or vibrations emitted from the Site during the Construction Phase; increased traffic volumes during the Construction and Operational Phase and associated emissions; potential increased lighting emitted from the Site during Construction and Operational Phase; and increased human presence at the Site during Construction and Operational Phase. The Site does not provide significant *ex-situ* habitat for QI/SCI species within the Site of the Proposed Development.
North Bull Island SPA (004006)	[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*; [A048] Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*; [A052] Teal *Anas crecca;* [A054] Pintail *Anas acuta* ; [A056] Shoveler *Anas clypeata;* [A130] Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus;* [A140] Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria;* [A141] Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola;* [A143] Knot *Calidris canutus;* [A144] Sanderling *Calidris alba;* [A149] Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpine;* [A156] Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa;* [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica;* [A160] Curlew *Numenius arquata;* [A162] Redshank *Tringa tetanus;* [A169] Turnstone *Arenaria interpres;* [A179] Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus;* [A999] Wetlands and Waterbirds	14.7km NE	**Yes –** Weak hydrological pathway via surface water discharges to the River Poddle during both the Construction and Operational Phases and discharges from Ringsend WwTP into Dublin Bay during the Operational Phase.

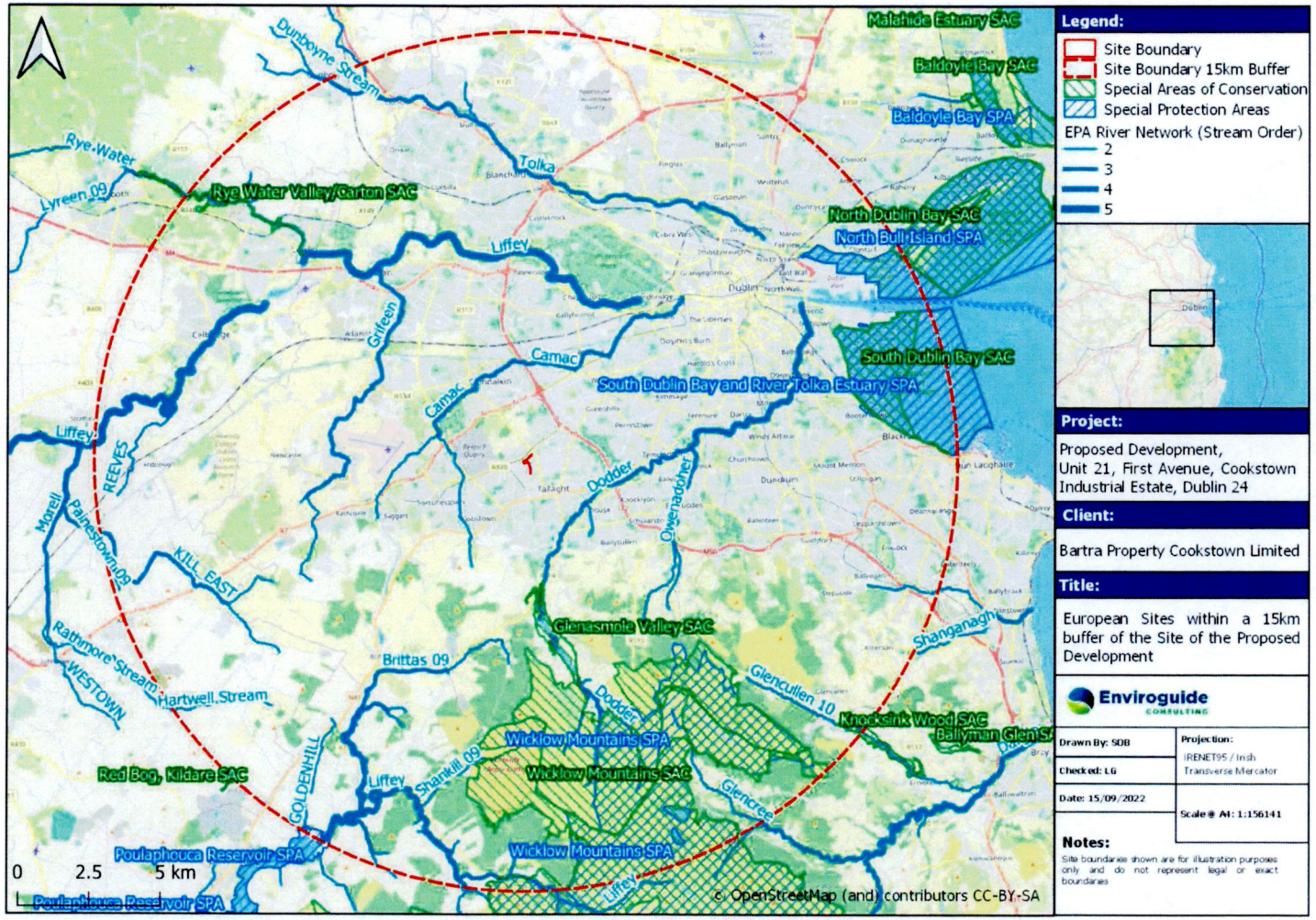

FIGURE 4. EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN 15KM OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE. 1ST ORDER STREAMS ARE NOT SHOWN.

3.5. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

A European Site will only be at risk from likely significant effects where the Source-Pathway-Receptor link exists between the Proposed Development and the European Site. As such, the remainder of this AA Screening report will focus on the European Sites for which a potential S-P-R link was identified, namely:

- South Dublin Bay SAC
- North Dublin Bay SAC
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA
- North Bull Island SPA

3.5.1. Conservation objectives

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.

Site specific conservation objectives (SSCO) have been compiled for the European Sites listed above. Site-specific conservation objectives aim to define favourable conservation condition for habitats or species at a site.

The maintenance of habitats and species within European 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future.
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

3.5.2. Identification and Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

The conservation objectives of the European Sites within the zone of influence were reviewed and assessed to establish whether the construction and operation of the Proposed Development has the potential to have a significant effect on any of the qualifying interests and/or conservation objectives listed for said sites.

The assessment framework is taken from the best practice guidelines issued by the European Commission, i.e., "**Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting** Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC".

The potential for significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development during the Construction and Operational Phases was determined based on a range of indicators, including:

- Habitat loss or alteration,
- Habitat/species fragmentation,
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species,
- Changes in population density, and
- Changes in water quality and resource.

The following elements of the Proposed Development were assessed for their potential for likely significant effects on European Sites.

Construction Phase

- Uncontrolled releases of silt, sediments and/or other pollutants to air due to earthworks
- Surface water run-off containing silt, sediments and/or other pollutants into nearby waterbodies.
- Surface water run-off containing silt, sediments and/or other pollutants into the local groundwater.
- Waste generation during the Construction Phase comprising soils, construction and demolition wastes.
- Increased noise, dust and/or vibrations as a result of construction activity.
- Increased dust and air emissions from construction traffic.
- Increased lighting in the vicinity as a result of construction activity.

Operational Phase

- Surface water drainage from the Site of the Proposed Development.
- Foul water from the Proposed Development leading to increased loading on wastewater treatment plants.
- Increased lighting in the vicinity emitted from the Proposed Development; and
- Increased human presence in the vicinity as a result of the Proposed Development.

3.5.2.1. Habitat Loss and Alteration

The project is not located within any European Site and therefore there will be no loss or alteration of habitat as a result of the Proposed Development. The Site provides no suitable *ex-situ* habitat for any SCI species listed for SPAs.

3.5.2.2. Habitat / Species Fragmentation

As there will be no direct habitat loss within any European Sites, no habitat fragmentation will arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

3.5.2.3. Changes in Water Quality and Resource

The Proposed Development will be served by the existing surface water network via a new connection. Therefore, there is a weak hydrological link between the Site and South Dublin

Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and North Bull Island SPA via surface water discharges into the River Poddle from the Site during the Construction and Operational Phases.

SuDS Measures are included in the Project Design however, they **are not** being relied upon in any way to mitigate against likely significant effects on a European Site. It is a policy of South Dublin County Council (IE2 Obj-**4) to "incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems** (SuDS) as part of Local Area Plans, Planning Schemes, Framework Plans and Design **Statements". As s**uch, the Proposed Development design will entail a suite of SuDS measures that will be incorporated into the Proposed Development.

Even in the absence of SUDS measures, the potential for surface water generated at the Site of the Proposed Development to reach European Sites within Dublin Bay and cause significant effects, during both the Construction and Operational Phase, is negligible due to:

- The distance and consequent potential for dilution within the River Poddle, River Liffey and Dublin Bay. Surface water discharges would have to travel over 16km along the River Poddle and River Liffey before discharging into Dublin Bay.
- The potential for dilution in the receiving surface water network during heavy rainfall events.

The Site will be served by a public foul sewer via a new connection. Therefore, there is a weak hydrological link between the Site and South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and North Bull Island SPA via discharges from Ringsend WwTP during the Operational Phase. The potential for foul waters generated at the Site of the Proposed Development to reach these European Sites within Dublin Bay and cause significant effects, during the Construction and Operational Phases, is negligible due to:

- The ongoing upgrade works to Ringsend WWTP which will increase the capacity of the facility from 1.6 million PE to 2.4 million PE (see section 3.5.2.6 below for more details).
- It is considered that effects on marine biodiversity and the European Sites within Dublin Bay from the current operation of Ringsend WwTP are unlikely (see section 3.5.2.6 for more details).
- The main area of dispersal of the treated effluent from Ringsend WwTP is in the Tolka Basin and around North Bull Island. South Dublin Bay is unaffected by the effluent from the plant (Irish Water, 2018).
- The increase of the Population Equivalent (PE) load at the facility as a result of the Proposed Development, assuming each PE unit was not previously supported by the WwTP, is considered to be an insignificant increase in terms of the overall scale of the facility. The increased load does not have the capacity to alter the effluent released from the WwTP to such an extent as to result in likely significant effects on European sites in Dublin Bay.

3.5.2.4. Disturbance and / or Displacement of Species

As outlined in section 3.5.2.3 above, the hydrological link between the Site and the European Sites assessed here will not result in significant effects on the water quality and resource indicator during both the Construction and Operational Phases. In addition, there is no potential for disturbance effects on the species within the European Sites due to the intervening distances between said sites and the Proposed Development.

3.5.2.5. Changes in Population Density

For the same reasons outlined in section 0 above, the Proposed Development does not have the capacity to cause any significant changes in the population density of any species within any European Site.

3.5.2.6. Potential for In-combination Effects

Existing Planning Permissions

A search of planning applications located within 500m of the Site of the Proposed Development was conducted using online planning resources such as the National Planning Application Database (NPAD) (MyPlan.ie) and South Dublin County Council's Planning Application Map. This distance was deemed appropriate based on the location of the Site of the Proposed Development and the types of other developments present in the area.

Any planning applications listed as granted or decision pending from within the last five years were assessed for their potential to act in-combination with the Proposed Development and cause likely significant effects on the relevant European Sites. Long-term developments granted outside of this time period were also considered where applicable.

There are several existing planning permissions on record in the area ranging from small-scale extensions and alterations to existing residential properties to some larger-scale developments. The larger-scale developments identified within the vicinity of the Proposed Development are as follows:

Planning Application Reference: SD22A/0292

Construction of additional floor area of 192.43sqm to existing warehouse and office building of 1658.44sqm, alterations to layout of 152.11sqm of existing warehouse and alterations to existing parking layout to accommodate disabled parking. New first floor of 169.75sqm internally in existing warehouse, internal alterations at ground level, 2 storey extension to southern elevation of existing warehouse to accommodate new entrance lobby and all associated site works.**(Decision: Request Additional Information. Decision Date: 24/08/2022).**

Planning Application Reference: SD21A/0322

Retention of alterations to development permitted under Ref. SD12A/0190 including single storey rear extension; air conditioning units and associated flues to the west and east of the building; elevational alterations of the building including the installation of 2 fire escape external stairways and relocated openings; covered bicycle store and smoking area; car parking and circulation; all associated site works; permission is sought for the covering of the fire escape stairs with awnings; all development over an application site area of 0.57 hectares. **(Decision: Grant Permission and Grant Retention. Decision Date: 24/01/2022).**

Planning Application Reference: SD20A/0148

Retention for internal mezzanine storage area (132sq.m); single storey compressor room extension (12sq.m) to rear of existing building and single storey packaging shed extension (38sq.m) to side of existing building. **(Decision: Grant Permission for Retention. Decision Date: 14/08/2020).**

Planning Application Reference: SD21A/0006

Change of use of 58.4sq.m of the front ground floor single storey part of Unit 1 from office/light industrial use to click-and-collect retail use and ancillary site works. **(Decision: Grant Permission. Decision Date: 16/03/2021).**

Planning Application Reference: SHD3ABP-309916-21

Demolition of the existing industrial and commercial office buildings totalling c.4,628sqm; Construction of a Build-to-Rent Housing Development comprising 170 apartment units and crèche arranged in 2 blocks across 4-7 storeys over basement car park (total gross floor area c.13,880sq.m excluding basement); The residential development consists of: 9 x1 bedroom studio apartments; 94 x1 bedroom/2 person apartments; 2 x2 bedroom/3 person apartments; 34 x2 bedroom/4 person apartments; 24 x2 bedroom/4 person duplex apartments and 7 x3 bedroom/5 person apartments with north, south, east and west facing terraces/balconies throughout; Internal communal amenity spaces at ground and fourth floor levels comprising reception, gym, lounge, cinema/tv room, events rooms and ancillary areas; External communal open space including children's play areas and informal amenity spaces at ground floor level between Blocks A and B; Communal roof garden at fourth floor level - total external communal open space c.1,005sq.m; Public open space at ground floor level to the east and south of Block B totalling c.1095sq.m; 1 creche with associated outdoor play area at ground floor level; 73 car parking spaces comprising 64 basement spaces, 4 accessible parking spaces and 5 visitor spaces at surface level; 354 bicycle spaces comprising 264 resident spaces at basement level and 90 visitor spaces at ground floor level; Reconfiguration/removal of existing car parking to the north of the site and access road resulting in a total of 28 car spaces serving the adjoining site; All associated plant including heating centres, gas room, water storage room, break tank room, comms room and bin storage at basement level, ESB substation and switch room at ground level and circulation spaces and stair and lift cores throughout; Vehicular/pedestrian access to the east from Belgard Road. All existing vehicular entrances serving adjoining sites maintained. Fire/emergency and refuse vehicle access and pedestrian access to the south from Colbert's Fort; All associated site development and infrastructural works, services provision, foul and surface water drainage, extension to the foul network, access roads/footpaths, lighting, landscaping and boundary treatment works. **(Decision: Grant Permission. Decision Date: 21/09/2021).**

Planning Application Reference: SD21A/0030

Demolition of existing fire damaged commercial unit and site clearance including all associated site works. **(Decision: Grant Permission. Decision Date: 12/04/2021).**

Planning Application Reference: SHD3ABP-303306-18

Development of 438 apartment units consisting of 158 no. 1 beds, 230 no. 2 beds and 50 no. 3 beds (total apartment units include 8 no. live/work units with a total c. 509 sqm work areas at ground floor) and c. 732 sqm of tenant/resident service amenities all within blocks A1, A2, A3 and B1. Block B2 to comprise a 403 bedspace student accommodation scheme and associated student amenity and staff facilities (c.815 sqm); childcare facility (c.380 sq.m) and external playing area (c. 242sq.m); 6 retail/commercial units (c. 632sq.m in total); security room (c.52sq.m); 107 car parking spaces below podium; 22 car parking spaces at surface level; 1227 bicycle parking spaces; 4 semi-private courtyards of c. 5,516sq.m; public plaza;

public realm & landscaping (c.7,442sq.m). **(Decision: Grant Permission. Decision Date: 15/04/2019).**

Planning Application Reference: SHD3ABP-308398-20

(i) Demolition of the existing industrial buildings, (ii) construction of: (a) 252 'build-to-rent' apartments in a two to nine storey development. Each apartment has associated private open space in the form of a ground floor terrace or a balcony and has access to 613sq.m of internal communal amenity space (including a concierge and management facilities, communal gym, flexible meeting rooms, library/co-working space, lounge, cinema/multimedia room and external covered game area); 1792sq.m of external communal amenity space at first and second floor levels; and a 65sq.m external covered communal amenity area at first floor level. The development is served by an under-croft carpark accessible from the south-western corner of the site providing a total of 73 parking spaces (including 58 standard spaces, 10 go-car spaces and 5 mobility impaired user parking spaces) and 500 bicycle spaces at ground floor level (372 resident spaces and 128 visitor spaces); and (b) 2 commercial units (comprising of a 95sq.m unit accommodating a café/restaurant and a 145sq.m unit accommodating Class 1, 2 and 8 uses as per the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001-2019, as amended) and a 275sq.m crèche, with associated 86sq.m play area, at ground floor level; (iii) road, junction and streetscape upgrade works along Fourth Avenue and Cookstown Road, including the installation a signalized junction at the intersection of Fourth Avenue and Cookstown Road; (iv) Construction of a temporary access road along the southern site boundary; and (v) associated site and infrastructural works are also proposed which include: foul and surface water drainage; attenuation tanks; lighting; landscaping; boundary treatment; plant areas; ESB substations; and all associated site development works. **(Decision: Grant Permission. Decision Date: 28/01/2021).**

Planning Application Reference: SHD3ABP-305763-19

Demolition of the existing industrial buildings on site (4,800sq.m) and the construction of 2 blocks comprising: 328 apartments (93 1-bed, 222 2-bed and 13 3-bed), ancillary residential support facilities and commercial floorspace measuring 31,147sq.m gross floor space above a single basement level measuring 5,861sq.m. Block A is a part-5 to part-7 storey (13,710sq.m) over basement block comprising 149 apartments with office space (222sq.m). Block B is a part-6 to part-9 storey (17,437sq.m) over basement block comprising 179 apartments, 2 double-height retail/commercial (Class 1/Class 2) units (354sq.m), a café/restaurant (313sq.m) , a creche (360sq.m), internal residents amenity area (644sq.m) at ground floor including reception (37.7sq.m), residents lounge (91.3sq.m), private dining area (52.6sq.m), co-working space (45.5sq.m), games room (47.3sq.m), gym (80sq.m) and communal lounge (220sq.m) at 6th floor level. The development also consists of the provision of a landscaped courtyard; public plaza at the corner of Airton and Belgard Road; pedestrian access from Airton Road to the Technological University campus; balconies; landscaped roof terrace at 6th floor level (7th Storey) of Block B (671sq.m); 184 car parking spaces at basement level including 14 club car spaces, 10 disabled parking spaces and 4 creche parking spaces; 727 basement and surface bicycle parking spaces; 4 motorbike parking spaces; bin storage; boundary treatments; green roofs; hard and soft landscaping; plant; lighting; Vodafone cabin sub-station; ESB sub-stations, switch rooms and generators; and all other associated site works above and below ground. **(Decision: Grant Permission. Decision Date: 20/02/2020).**

Planning Application Reference: SD208/0005

Development of public realm works totalling approximately 1.2ha at Belgard Square North and on South Dublin County Council lands to the south and north of Belgard Square North, Tallaght including: • Proposed new public space at Innovation Square; • Proposed works to include a new advertising totem in Innovation Square extending to a maximum height of 2.4m x 1.5m; • Proposed new Belgard Square North/Airton East West pedestrian link street; • Pedestrian crossings at Belgard Square North and Belgard Cookstown Link Street; • Redevelopment of County Hall Pedestrian Link • Redevelopment and reprofiling of levels within Chamber Square; • Proposed works to include the reconfiguration of existing County Council carpark including widening of County Hall Pedestrian Link with additional planting, seating and relocation of wheelchair accessible parking spaces, a new pedestrian crossing and associated amendments to the carpark. • All ancillary site development and landscaping works, including public lighting, play equipment, furniture and sports equipment, cycle parking, seating, pathways, planting, surface water drainage and boundaries. The proposal has undergone Appropriate Assessment Screening under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and screening for Environmental Impact Assessment under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU. **(Decision: Part 8 Approved by Council. Decision Date: 12/10/2020).**

These sites lie within approximately 500m of the Proposed Development Site. The distance between the Proposed Development Site, the permitted development sites above and the closest European Site is approximately 3.6km. This distance, in addition to the significant urban buffer between the sites and European Sites, is sufficient to exclude the possibility of significant effects on the European Site arising from combined emissions of noise, dust, pollutants and/or vibrations emitted from the Site during the Construction Phase; increased traffic volumes during the Construction and Operational Phase and associated emissions; potential increased lighting emitted from the Site during Construction and Operational Phase; and increased human presence at the Site during Construction and Operational Phase.

At the time of writing, there are no proposed or permitted forestry operations (thinning, clear felling, road construction) in close proximity to the Site of the Proposed Development[1].

Relevant Policies and Plans

The following policies and plans were reviewed and considered for possible in-combination effects with the Proposed Development.

- Connecting with Nature – Draft Biodiversity Action Plan for South Dublin County 2020-2026
- South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022

The Connecting with Nature – Draft Biodiversity Action Plan for South Dublin County 2020-2026 is set out to protect and improve biodiversity, and as such will not result in negative in-combination effects with the Proposed Development. The South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022 has directly addressed the protection of European Sites through specific policies (HCL12 Obj1-Obj2, HCL13 Obj1-Obj2). The relevant recommendations and mitigation measures have been integrated into the plan.

[1] https://forestry-maps.apps.rhos.agriculture.gov.ie/

On examination of the above it is considered that there are no means for the Proposed Development to act in-combination with any plans or projects, that would cause any likely significant effects on any European Sites.

Operation of Ringsend WWTP

In June 2018 Irish Water applied for and subsequently received planning permission in 2019 for upgrade works to the Ringsend WwTP facility. The first phase of upgrade works to Ringsend WWTP was completed in December 2021, which increased the capacity of the facility by 400,000 P.E. These works, together with the further works permitted in 2019 will ultimately increase the capacity of the facility from 1.6 million PE to 2.4 million PE. This plant upgrade will result in an overall reduction in the final effluent discharge of several parameters from the facility including BOD, suspended soils, ammonia, DIN and MRP. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) was submitted by Irish Water as part of that application. The EIAR contains sections relating to Marine Biodiversity and Terrestrial Biodiversity, and each contains a section on the 'do-nothing scenario'. These review the effects of the WwTP on biodiversity in Dublin Bay *in the absence of the upgrade works* and so are relevant to this report.

The EIAR report acknowledges that under the do-nothing scenario "*the areas in the Tolka Estuary and North Bull Island channel will continue to be affected by the cumulative nutrient loads from the river Liffey and Tolka and the effluent from the Ringsend WwTP*", which could result in a decline in biodiversity and the deterioration of the biological status of Dublin Bay (Irish Water, 2018). Nevertheless, these negative impacts of nutrient over-enrichment are considered "unlikely" (Irish Water, 2018). This is because historical data suggests that pollution in Dublin Bay has had little or no effect on the composition and richness of the benthic macroinvertebrate fauna. The EIAR notes that "*although a localised decline could occur, it is not envisaged to be to a scale that could pose a threat to the shellfish, fish, bird or marine mammal populations that occur in the area.*" Indeed, the results of the marine macroinvertebrate studies undertaken for the EIAR show that "*the Inner Tolka Basin is host to macroinvertebrate communities as rich (if not richer) than those found in the north Dublin Bay and south Dublin Bay mudflats and sandflats*". Furthermore, the EIAR notes that significant impacts on waterbird populations foraging on invertebrates in Dublin Bay due to nutrient over-enrichment are "*unlikely*" to occur (Irish Water, 2018). What is important in the context of this AA screening report is that the do-nothing scenario predicts that nutrient and suspended solid loads from the WwTP will "*continue at the same levels and the impact of these loadings should maintain the same level of effects on marine biodiversity*" and that "*if the* status *quo is maintained there will be little or no change in the majority of the intertidal faunal assemblages found in Dublin Bay which would likely continue to be relatively diverse and rich across the bay.*"

Therefore, it can be concluded that significant effects on marine biodiversity and the European Sites within Dublin Bay from the current operation of Ringsend WwTP are unlikely. Importantly, this conclusion is not dependent upon any future works to be undertaken at Ringsend. Thus, in the absence of any upgrading works, significant effects to European Sites are not likely to arise.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON EUROPEAN SITES AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

Site	Habitat Loss / Alteration	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Disturbance and/or Displacement of Species	Changes in Population Density	Changes in Water Quality and/or Resource	In-combination effects	Stage 2 AA Required
SAC							
Glenasmole Valley SAC (001209)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (001398)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
Knocksink Wood SAC (000725)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
SPA							
Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (004063)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO
North Bull Island SPA (004006)	No	No	No	None	None	No	NO

4. Appropriate Assessment Screening Conclusion

The Proposed Development at Unit 21, First Avenue, Cookstown Industrial Estate, Dublin 24 has been assessed taking into account:

- the nature, size and location of the proposed works and possible impacts arising from the construction works.
- the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the European Sites
- the potential for in-combination effects arising from other plans and projects.

In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that, on the basis of objective information; the possibility **may be excluded** that the Proposed Development will have a significant effect on any of the European Sites listed below:

Glenasmole Valley SAC (001209)

Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122)

Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (001398)

South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)

Knocksink Wood SAC (000725)

North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)

Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040)

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)

Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (004063)

North Bull Island SPA (004006)

In carrying out this AA screening, mitigation measures have not been taken into account. Standard best practice construction measures which could have the effect of mitigating any effects on any European Sites have similarly not been taken into account.

On the basis of the screening exercise carried out above, it can be concluded, on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available, that the possibility of any significant effects on any European Sites, whether arising from the project itself or in combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded. Thus, there is no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process; and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is not required.

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