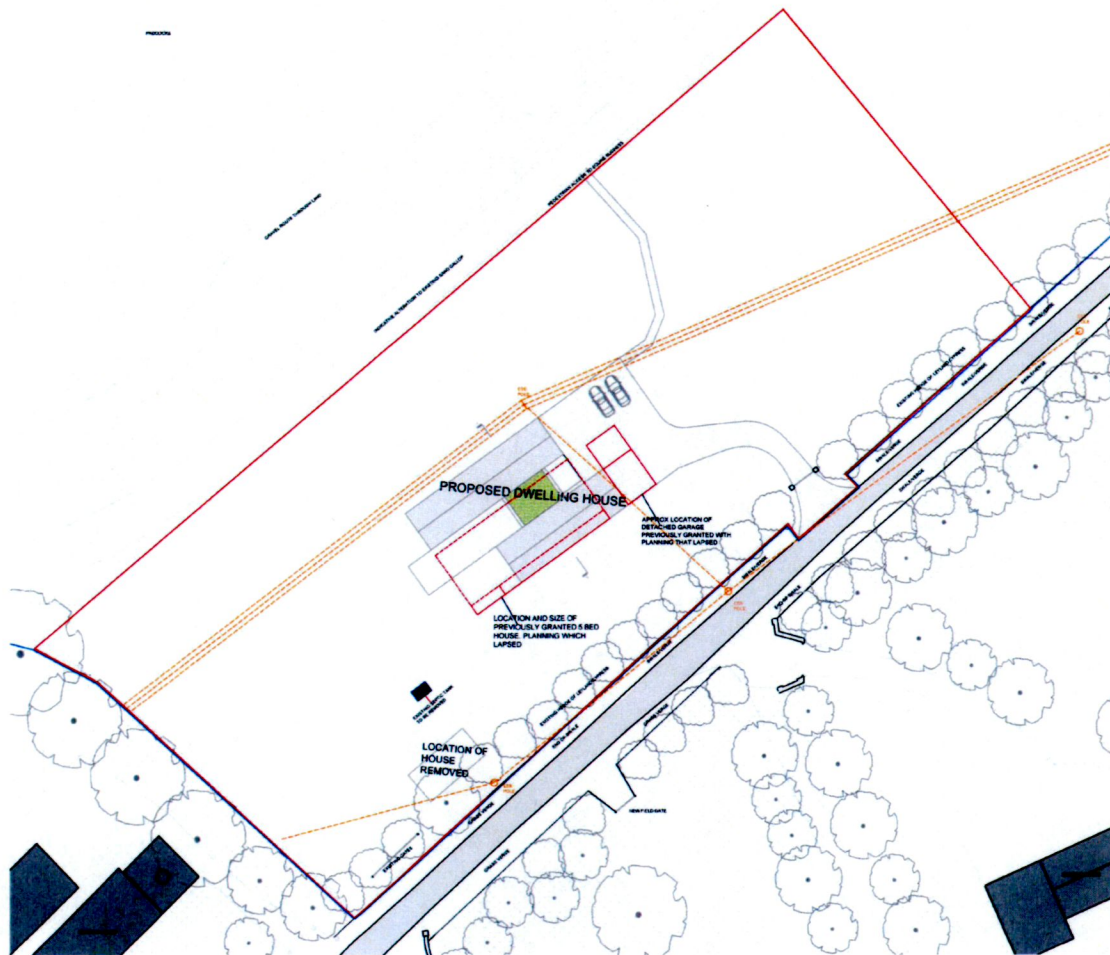


Proposed Dwelling House, Redgap, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin

Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment



REPORT

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Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Background.....	3
1.2 Legislative Background.....	3
1.3 Stages of Appropriate Assessment.....	5
2. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT	6
2.1 Description of the plan or project.....	6
2.2 Desk study	7
2.3 Assessment of relevance of proposed development to NATURA 2000 sites.	8
2.4 Assessment of Potential Impacts	13
2.5 Assessment of Significance.....	15
2.6 Conclusion	16
3. REFERENCES.....	17

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Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report has been prepared by John Harte BSc CEnv MCIEEM (an independent ecological consultant) who was appointed by Pearse Mc Kiernan the applicant who is applying for permission for the erection of a three bedroom detached dwelling house (233.6sqm), single storey, installation of a packaged wastewater sewage treatment system and polishing filter, stormwater harvesting tank and soakaways, well, new vehicular access, landscaping, and ancillary site works, all in association with equine business at Hillcrest House, Crockaunadreenagh Road, Red Gap, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin.

The planning history for the site shows that planning permission was granted for a 5 bed house with detached garage, which lapsed and it was a condition of planning to remove the existing property on the site. The site hasn't changed from that previously submitted last year which planning was refused under Reg Ref SD21A/0073. It was agreed in the Chief Executive's Order (PR/0672/21) Page 21 under the heading Appropriate Assessment that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was not required.

1.2 Legislative Background

The aim of the European Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of wild habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is to create a network of protected wildlife sites across Europe, which are to be maintained at a favourable conservation status¹. Each member state must designate their most important natural areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The Directive specifies the scientific criteria on the basis of which SAC sites must be selected and very strictly curtails the grounds that can be used as justification for damaging a site. The network of sites is referred to as NATURA 2000 and includes SACs (Special Areas of Conservation) for protected habitats and species and SPAs (Special Protection Areas) for birds, which are designated under the European Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by Directive 2009/147/EC).

It is a requirement of the Habitats Directive ((92/43/EEC) that the competent consent authority, which is either the planning authority or An Bord Pleanála on appeal, must ensure that a proposal, which is likely to have a significant effect on an SAC or

¹ The conservation status of a **habitat** can be taken as "favourable" when its natural range and area it covers within that range is stable or increasing and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future.

The conservation status of a **species** can be taken as "favourable" 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 and there is and will continue to be a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis. Article 1 (i) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

SPA, is authorised only to the extent that the authority is satisfied it will not adversely affect the integrity of the area and that an appropriate assessment of the implications of the development for the conservation status of the site is undertaken.

The European Parliament, in a communication to the European Council in September 2000, states: The implementation of the European Habitats Directive and Birds Directive, both with respect to species conservation and with respect to the establishment of the Natura 2000 network, is one of the most important tools for achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the European Union and member states (European Parliament 2000).

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive provides a strict assessment procedure for any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a designated European site but which has the potential to have implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In 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 [Natura 2000] 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 a social or economic nature, Member States 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.

The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 were implemented to transpose the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive into Irish law as well as addressing transposition failures identified in the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) judgements.

This report has taken into consideration the relevant requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended by the Planning and Development Act 2010).

References to Natura 2000 sites throughout this report are to be taken as referring to European sites as defined in the above Planning Act.

1.3 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents where relevant:

- *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* (European Commission Environment Directorate General, 2001)
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (EC Environment Directorate General, 2000)
- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities.* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision)
- *Guidelines for Good Practice, Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive* (International Workshop on Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Directive, 2011)
- *Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Clarification of the Concepts of Alternative Solutions, Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence.* Opinion of the European Commission (European Commission, January 2007)

There are four stages in an Appropriate Assessment as outlined in the European Commission Guidance Document (2001), summarised below:

• Stage 1: Screening

The first step to establishing if an appropriate assessment is required is referred to as 'screening' and its purpose is to determine on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria if the plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site in view of the sites conservation objectives. The process identifies any likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

• Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

This step considers the impact of the project or plan on the integrity of the Natura 2000 Site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are deemed to be adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts is considered.

• Stage 3: Alternative Solutions

This stage examines alternative means of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that aim to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

• **Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest**

This stage is the main derogation process outlined in Article 6(4) which examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project which will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site to proceed.

This report was prepared to inform one stage in Appropriate Assessment; the Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1).

Neither **Stage 2 A full Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement)**, **Stage 3. Assessment of Alternative Solutions** nor **Stage 4. Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain** were applicable in this instance, as the proposed development at Redgap, Rathcoole will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

The report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment was based on a desk-top study drawing on information sources which included the following: NPWS on-line data for Natura 2000 sites; Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography; geological, hydrological and soils data available from GSI; coupled with data gathered during field visits in June 2020 and March 2021.

2. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

2.1 Description of the plan or project

Pearse Mc Kiernan intends to apply for permission for the erection of a four bedroom detached dwelling house (233.6sqm), single storey, installation of a packaged wastewater sewage treatment system and polishing filter, stormwater harvesting tank and soakaways, well, new vehicular access, landscaping, and ancillary site works, all in association with equine business at Hillcrest House, Crockaundreenagh Road, Red Gap, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin.

The subject site comprises an area of 0.8490 hectares and is located along the north west of boundary of Crockaundreenagh road (L6019) intersecting Lynch Park road (L3605) 315m further north. The repositioned site access will be from Crockaundreenagh road on the south east boundary of the site. The site history shows that there was a house on the land and planning permission was granted for a 5 bed house on the land which has lapsed. The site is currently part of the applicants' farm and family home, comprising over 120 acres specialising in the breeding and training of both national hunt and flat race horses.

The site consist of a several paddocks of improved agricultural grassland (GA1), which are currently grazed by horses within the applicants Breeding & Training Business. There is part of the half mile sand gallop (Part of training facilities) which cuts through the proposed site, which will be re-directed outside the red line on the northern boundary of site. Each paddock is cordoned off with stud rail fencing and this fencing runs along the outside of sand gallop. The lands to the north are part of Pearse Mc Kiernan's Breeding & Training Facilities and the site is adjoined to its west by an adjoining residential property. The existing house to east of site is the family home. The site is elevated and slopes down to the north and is rectangular in shape.



Figure 2.1. Site proposed for dwelling house (outlined in Red) adjoining the applicants 8-Hectares of leased land from his parents, which is designated for a thoroughbred breeding establishment at Redgap, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin.

2.2 Desk study

A desk study was carried out again to collate the available information on the ecological environment potentially impacted by the proposed site at Redgap, Rathcoole. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) database of designated conservation areas and NPWS records of rare and protected plant species as listed under the Irish Red Data Book I - Vascular Plants (Curtis & McGough 1988) were checked regarding the location of the lands at Redgap, Rathcoole. Findings were consistent with previous desk study.

Information on protected species of fauna and flora listed for protection under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), Annex I of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act (2000) was also sought from NPWS and published sources. This and the rare plant information are presented in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report, which accompanies this report. This Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment only deals with potential impacts of the development on the Natura 2000 network of sites.

The lands consist of a field of improved agricultural grassland (GA1 in Fossitt 2000) which is grazed by horses. A sand gallop cuts through the proposed site, which will

be re-directed outside the red line on the northern boundary of site. The site is rectangular in shape and is located on the northern side of the public road. Each paddock is cordoned off with stud rail fencing and this fencing runs along the outside of sand gallop. The lands to the north are part of the applicant's 8-Hectares of leased land which is designated for a thoroughbred breeding establishment. The site is adjoined to its west by a residential property. The existing house to east of site is the applicant's family home. The site is elevated and slopes down to the north and is rectangular in shape. A habitat map of the site is presented in **Figure 2.2** below.

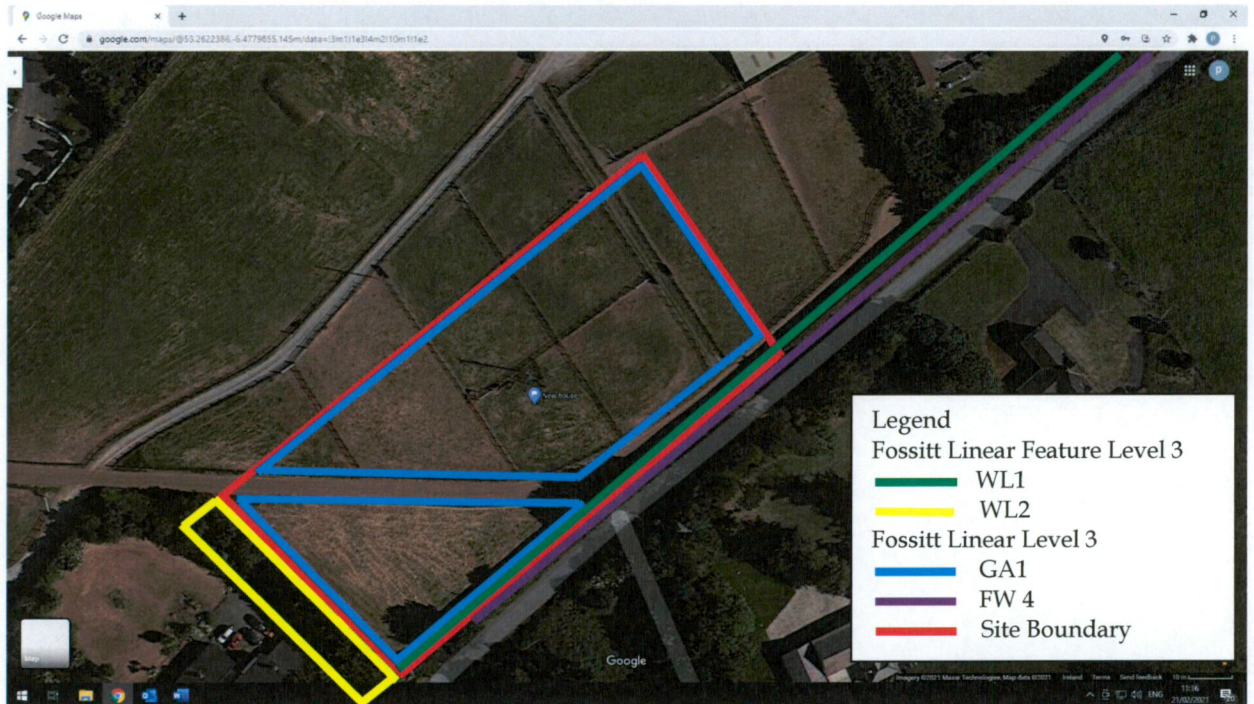


Figure 2.2. Habitat Map of the site at Redgap, Rathcoole.

2.3 Assessment of relevance of proposed development to NATURA 2000 sites

In line with the European Commission Methodological Guidance (EC (2001)) and the DoEHLG Guidance (DoEHLG (2010)) a review of all Natura 2000 sites that could be potentially affected by the proposed project was made using the NPWS online map viewer. These included any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the site at Redgap, Rathcoole and any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the proposed development (a 15km radius) including those sites downstream. These are summarised in **Table 2.3** below.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are habitats of international significance that have been identified by NPWS and submitted for designation to the EU. The obligations imposed in relation to SACs and SPAs (or "European Sites") are set out in the Planning Acts and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011). The main implication of this designation is that any project likely to have a significant adverse impact on the integrity of a "nonpriority" site of international importance for nature conservation may only be carried out for "*imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature*".

Proposed NHAs are also habitats or sites of interest to wildlife that have been identified by NPWS. These sites become NHAs once they have been formally advertised and landowners have been notified of their designation. NHAs are protected under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, from the date they are formally proposed. NHA is a statutory designation according to the Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended) and requires consultation with NPWS if any development impacts on a pNHA.

NHAs are of national importance, while SACs and SPAs are of international importance for nature conservation.

The site at Redgap, Rathcoole are not currently designated for any nature conservation purposes under national or international legislation. There are four Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within a 15km radius of the site. These are Red Bog SAC (Site Code: 000397), Glenasmole Valley SAC (Site Code: 001209), Rye Water Valley/Cartron SAC (Site Code: 001398) and the Wicklow Mountains SAC (Site Code: 002122).

There are two Special Protection Areas (for birds) (SPA) within a 15km radius of the site. These are the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (Site Code: 004063) and the Wicklow Mountains SPA (Site Code: 004040) as illustrated on **Figure 2.3** below.

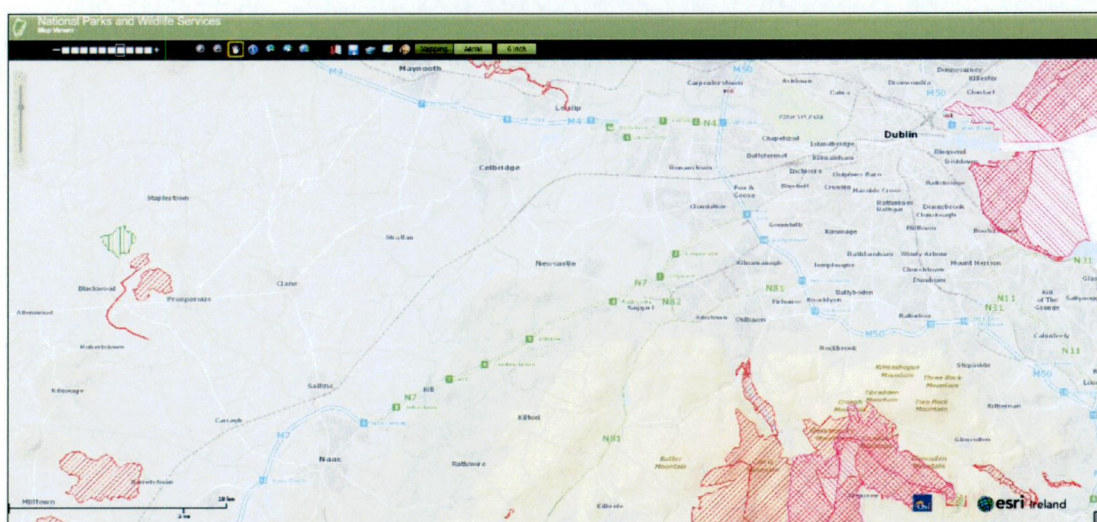


Figure 2.3. Designated areas in the vicinity of the lands at Rathcoole (Source: National Parks and Wildlife Service).

While the site is not located within close proximity to the River Liffey, it is hydrologically connected to it. The land at Redgap, Rathcoole drains towards the Tootenhill Stream, which flows through the site, joins the Highdownhill River beyond the N7. This is a tributary of the Griffeen River and ultimately the River Liffey. This stream provides a hydrological link to the Natura 2000 sites downstream within Dublin Bay but by virtue of their distance from same any ecological impacts on same are deemed unlikely.

Table 2.3. Designated Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the site at Redgap, Rathcoole.

Site Code, Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the site at Redgap, Rathcoole	Qualifying Habitats and Species
001209 Glenasmole Valley SAC	7.8km east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]
002122 Wicklow Mountains SAC	7.2km south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010] European dry heaths [4030] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]
000397 Red Bog SAC	7.8km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]
001398 Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC	11.1km north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]
004063 Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	8.9km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183]
004040 Wicklow Mountains SPA	10.4km south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103]

Conservation Management Plans:

A detailed conservation management plan for all these sites has not been published yet but the following general objectives for sites have been outlined by NPWS.

'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. 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.'

Glenasmole Valley SAC Conservation Management Plan²

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:

- 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*)*

Wicklow Mountains SAC Conservation Management Plan³

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:

- Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or *Isoeto-Nanojuncetea* [3130]
- Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* [4010]
- European dry heaths [4030]
- Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]
- Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]
- Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]
- Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*) [8110]
- Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]
- Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]
- Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]

² NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Glenasmole Valley SAC [001209]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

³ NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Red Bog SAC Conservation Management Plan⁴

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:

- 7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs

Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC Conservation Management Plan⁵

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:

- Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220]
- *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]
- *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]

Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA Conservation Management Plan⁶

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) [A043]
- Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183]

Wicklow Mountains SPA Conservation Management Plan⁷

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) [A098]
- Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) [A103]

This report has examined the detailed and generic conservation objectives for each Natura 2000 site and has not identified any potential risk of significant impact on any of these targets.

⁴ NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Red Bog, Kildare SAC [000397]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁵ NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [001398]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁶ NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA [004063]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁷ NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Wicklow Mountains SPA [004040]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

2.4 Assessment of Potential Impacts

This section of the report considers the potential impacts of the proposed dwelling house at Redgap, Rathcoole on the Natura 2000 sites detailed in **Table 2.3** above and their qualifying habitats and species under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

The potential impacts of the proposed dwelling house at Redgap, Rathcoole on the Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the lands are assessed using the following factors (European Commission (2001). Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites - methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC):

- size and scale
- land-take
- distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site
- resource requirements (water abstraction etc.)
- emissions (disposal to land, water or air)
- excavation requirements
- transportation requirements
- duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.
- reduction of habitat area
- disturbance to key species
- habitat or species fragmentation
- reduction in species density
- changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)
- climate change
- key relationships that define the structure of the sites
- key relationships that define the function of the site

These impacts on the Natura 2000 sites are summarised below in **Table 2.4** and further elaborated on in **Table 2.5** and **2.6**.

Table 2.4. Likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the proposed development (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the site by virtue of:

Size and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None within any Natura 2000 site
Land-take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None within any Natura 2000 site
Distance from Natura 2000 site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The closest Natura 2000 site is 002122 Wicklow Mountains SAC, which is 7.2km south east of the site
Resource requirements (water abstraction, etc.)	All water requirements for this project will be provided from the new well, rain water harvesting tank and water butts shown on the drawing RSA/015/17-21/01 prepared by Patrick Joyce.
Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface water drainage from the house will be discharged to a soakaway system 5m x 5m with an effective depth of 0.9m via a series of underground pipes which surround the house as shown on the drawing RSA/015/17-21/01 prepared by Patrick Joyce. • Wastewater generated from the proposed dwelling house will be discharged from the house to a packaged wastewater sewage treatment system and polishing filter as shown on the drawing RSA/015/17-21/01 prepared by Patrick Joyce. • There will be no direct discharges to any SAC/SPA from the development.
Excavation requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None within any Natura 2000 site
Transportation requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown at present, the local road network will be used.
Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated to be six months .
Reduction of habitat area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None within any Natura 2000 site

Changes to the Natura 2000 site arising as a result of disturbance, fragmentation, etc. are summarised below in **Table 2.5.**

Table 2.5 Description of likely changes to the site arising as a result of:

Disturbance to key species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no direct impacts to any key species in any Natura 2000 site
Habitat or species fragmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Reduction in species density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no reduction in species density within any Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed development
Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no direct discharges to the watercourse within the site during either the construction works or operational phase of the development.

Climate change	• Unknown
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Likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of structure and functions are described below in **Table 2.6**.

Table 2.6. Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:

Key relationships that define the structure of the sites	• None
Key relationships that define the function of the site	• None

2.5 Assessment of Significance

This section considers the Natura 2000 sites detailed in **Table 2.3** and their qualifying habitats and species under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

The proposed dwelling house at Redgap, Rathcoole will not have any significant impacts, direct or indirect on the qualifying species or habitats of the Natura 2000 sites listed above.

All of the Natura 2000 sites were excluded from further assessment on the basis that potential impacts from the development at Redgap, Rathcoole will have no significant adverse effects on the integrity of these sites as defined by their status and conservation objectives.

Cumulative/In Combination Impacts

The EC Habitats Directive, the Planning Acts and the Habitats Regulations 2011 require that the impacts on Natura 2000 sites from the plan or project in question are assessed and that they are assessed in combination with other plans and projects that could affect the same Natura 2000 sites.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Process identified other plans and projects that could act in combination with the proposed development of the site at Redgap, Rathcoole to pose likely significant effects on European sites within the study area and its environs.

These included:

- The South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022
- Other Housing Developments in the Rathcoole area.

All of these plans and/or projects have been screened for Appropriate Assessment or undergone an Appropriate Assessment themselves and it is therefore assumed that if a plan has been adopted or a project given planning permission following an AA that it cannot pose likely significant adverse effects on a Natura 2000 site.

As noted below, it is concluded that in relation to the Natura 2000 sites proximate to the proposed development at Redgap, Rathcoole, there is no likelihood of **significant** effects on those or other sites of conservation importance.

In addition the proposed dwelling house at Redgap, Rathcoole in combination or cumulatively with the above plans and projects is not likely to have a significant effect on any of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

2.6 Conclusion

In order to determine the potential impacts, if any, of the proposed development at Redgap, Rathcoole on nearby Natura 2000 sites a screening process was completed. This identified six Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the site. There four Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and two Special Protection Areas (for birds) (SPA) within a 15km radius of the site. These are:

- 001209 Glenasmole Valley SAC, which is 7.8km east,
- 002122 Wicklow Mountains SAC, which is 7.2km south east,
- 000397 Red Bog SAC, which is 7.8km south,
- 001398 Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC, which is 11.1km north,
- 004063 Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA, which is 8.9km south, and
- 004040 Wicklow Mountains SPA, which is 10.4km south east

It has been determined that there is no likelihood of **significant** effects on any of the Natura 2000 sites or on any other sites of conservation importance from the development of site at Redgap, Rathcoole.

Following the review of the project during the Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the guidelines it is concluded that the proposed development of the site at Redgap, Rathcoole cumulatively or in combination with the other identified plans and projects will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Natura 2000 Sites, it is concluded that the proposed dwelling house at Redgap, Rathcoole will not have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 network and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

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