Whitehill
Environmental

Whitehill
Edgeworthstown
Co. Longford
& (087) 4127248 / (043) 6672775

Noreen McLoughlin, MSc
Environmental Consultant

HABITATS DIRECTIVE SCREENING OF A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IN SLADE, SAGGART, CO DUBLIN

Bernard Reilly
c/o Rowan Engineering Consultants Ltd.
Unit 1
Scurlockstown Business Park
Trim,
Co. Meath

October 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Article 6 of the EU Habitat's Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that all plans and projects be screened for potential impacts upon Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The aim of this screening process is to establish whether a full Appropriate Assessment of the proposed plan or project is necessary.

A comprehensive assessment of the potential significant effects of an existing development (proposed for retention) at Slade, Saggart, Co. Dublin on designated sites was carried out in October 2022 by Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM of Whitehill Environmental. This screening report will allow the competent authority, in this case South Dublin County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive.

The location of the proposed development is within 15km of sites designated under European Law. As such and in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitat's Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) regarding Appropriate Assessment, this screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment was carried out in order to identify whether any significant impacts on designated sites are likely. This exercise will also determine the appropriateness of the proposed project, in the context of the conservation status of the designated sites.

1.3 Regulatory Context

1.3.1 Relevant Legislation

The Birds Directive (Council Directive2009/147/EC) recognises that certain species of birds should be subject to special conservation measures concerning their habitats. The Directive requires that Member States take measures to classify the most suitable areas as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the conversation of bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive. SPAs are selected for bird species (listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive), that are regularly occurring populations of migratory bird species and the SPA areas are of international importance for these migratory birds.

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires that Member States designate and ensure that particular protection is given to sites (Special Areas of Conservation) which are made up of or support particular habitats and species listed in annexes to this Directive.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive also call for the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects not directly connected with or necessary to the management of, but which are likely to have a significant effect on any European designated sites (i.e. SACs and SPAs).

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC), which came into force in December 2000, establishes a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The WFD was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003). The WFD rationalises and updates existing legislation and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs). RBDs are essentially administrative areas for coordinated water management and are comprised of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD. The aim of the WFD is to ensure that waters achieve at least good status by 2027 and that status does not deteriorate in any waters.

Appropriate Assessment and the Habitats Directive

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora – the 'Habitats Directive' - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as *Natura 2000*. Natura 2000 sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive sets out the decision-making tests for plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan

or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."

Article 6(4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of appropriate assessment, that a plan/project will adversely affect a European site. Issues dealing with alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures need to be addressed in this case.

Article 6(4) states:

"If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the 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.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

The Appropriate Assessment Process

The aim of Appropriate Assessment is to assess the implications of a proposal in respect of a designated site's conservation objectives.

The 'Appropriate Assessment' itself is an assessment which must be carried out by the competent authority which confirms whether the plan or project in combination with other plans and projects will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment shall be carried out by the competent authority as set out in Section 177U(1) and (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) as follows:

'(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) A competent authority shall carry out a screening for appropriate assessment under subsection (1) before—

(a) a Land use plan is made including, where appropriate, before a decision on appeal in relation to a draft strategic development zone is made, or

(b) consent for a proposed development is given.'

The competent authority shall determine that an Appropriate Assessment is not required if it can be excluded, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or project will have a significant effect on a European site.

Where the competent authority cannot exclude the potential for a significant effect on a European site, an Appropriate Assessment shall be deemed required.

Where an Appropriate Assessment is required, the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Report (Natura Impact Statement (NIS)) should enable the competent authority to ascertain whether the plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of the European site. If adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site cannot be avoided, then mitigation measures should be applied during the appropriate assessment process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site remain. Under the terms of the Habitats Directive consent can only be granted for a project if, as a result of the appropriate assessment either (a) it is concluded that the integrity of any European sites will not be adversely affected, or (b) after mitigation, where adverse impacts cannot be excluded, there is shown to be an absence of alternative solutions, and there exists imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project should go ahead.

Section 177(V) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) outlines that the competent authority shall carry out the Appropriate Assessment, taking into account the Natura Impact Statement (amongst any other additional or supplemental information). A determination shall then be made by the competent authority in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive as to whether the plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of a European site, prior to consent being given.

2. Methodology

2.1 Appropriate Assessment

This Statement of Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1) has been prepared with reference to the following:

- European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2021). 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 (2006). Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice.
- European Commission (2007). Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solution, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission.
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.

The EC Guidance sets out a number of principles as to how to approach decision making during the process. The primary one is 'the precautionary principle' which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty.

When considering the precautionary principle, the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating with supporting evidence that:

- There will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site;
- There will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site;
- There is an absence of alternatives to the project or plan that is likely to have an adverse effect to the integrity of a Natura 2000 site; and
- There are compensation measures that maintain or enhance the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

This translates into a four stage process to assess the impacts, on a designated site or species, of a policy or proposal.

The EC Guidance states that "each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required". Consequently, the Council may not need to proceed through all four stages in undertaking the Appropriate Assessment.

The four-stage process is:

Stage 1: Screening – The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether or not these impacts are likely to be significant;

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment – The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions – The process which examines alternative ways of achieving objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

Stage 4: **Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain** – An assessment of the compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

In complying with the obligations set out in Articles 6(3) and following the guidelines described above, this screening statement has been structured as a stage by stage approach as follows:

- Description of the proposed project;
- Identification of the Natura 2000 sites close to the proposed development;
- Identification and description of any individual and cumulative impacts on the Natura 2000 sites likely to result from the project;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects;
- Description of proven mitigation measures.

2.2 Statement of Competency

This NIS was carried out by Noreen McLoughlin, BA, MSc, MCIEEM. Noreen has an honours degree in Zoology and an MSc in Freshwater Ecology from Trinity College, Dublin and she has been a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management for over sixteen years. Noreen has over 17 years' experience as a professional ecologist in Ireland.

2.3 Desk Studies & Consultation

Information on the site and the area of the proposed development was studied prior to the completion of this statement. The following data sources were accessed in order to complete a thorough examination of potential impacts:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service - Aerial photographs and maps of designated sites, information on habitats and species within these sites and information on protected plant or animal species, conservation objectives, site synopses and standard data forms for relevant designated sites.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- Information pertaining to water quality, geology and licensed facilities within the area;
- Myplan.ie – Mapped based information;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) – Information pertaining to protected plant and animal species within the study area;
- Bing maps & Google Street View – High quality aerials and street images;
- Bernard Reilly – Plans and Information Pertaining to the Development
- South Dublin County Council – Information on planning history in the area for the assessment of cumulative impacts.

2.4 Assessment Methodology

The proposed development was assessed to identify its potential ecological impacts and from this, the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposed development was defined. Based on the potential impacts and their ZoI, the Natura 2000 sites potentially at risk from direct, indirect or in-combination impacts were identified. The assessment considered all potential impact sources and pathways connecting the proposed development to Natura 2000 sites, in view of the conservation objectives supporting the favourable conservation condition of the site's Qualifying Interests (QIs) or Special Conservation Interests (SCIs).

The conservation objectives relating to each Natura 2000 site and its QIs/SCIs are cited generally for SACs as "to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or Annex II species for which the SAC has

been selected", and for SPAs "to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA".

As defined in the Habitat's Directive, the favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range and area it covers within that range is 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 favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- The 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.

Where site-specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) have been prepared for a European site, these include a series of specific attributes and targets against which effects on conservation condition, or integrity, can be measured. Where potential significant effects are identified, then these SSCOs should be considered in detail.

3. Screening

3.1 Development Description

Bernard Reilly is seeking planning permission for the retention of works previously completed at Slade, Saggart, Co. Dublin. Planning permission is being sought here for:

- Retention planning for a porta cabin with an area of c.54 m^2
- Retention planning for mobile home, with an area of c. 54 m^2
- Retention planning for installation of electronic gates, with a width of c. 10m
- Retention planning for installation of hardstanding / cement yard with an area of c.1,020m^2

An extract from the planning drawings can be seen in Figure 1.

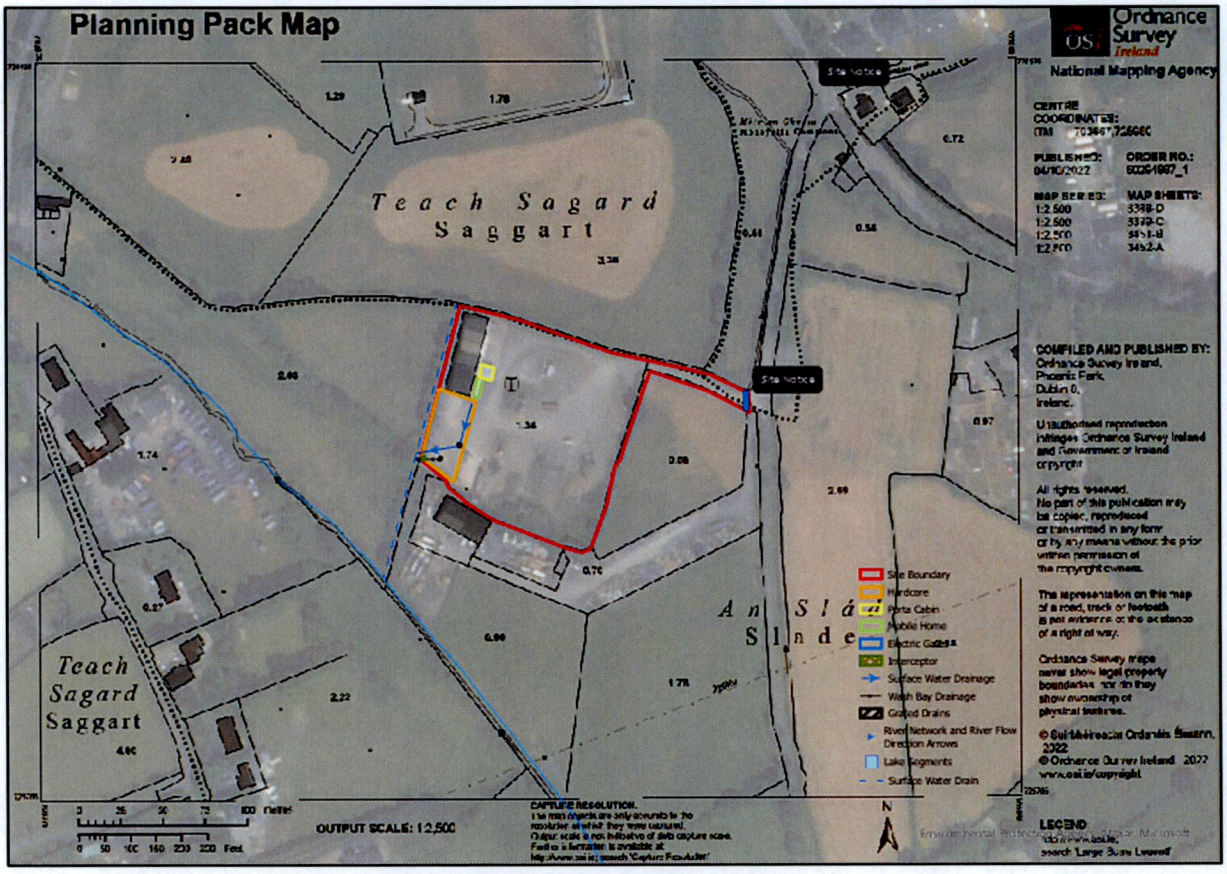

Figure 1 – Extract from Planning Drawings

Foul Water and Surface Water

Foul water from the site (existing toilets etc) is being directed to an existing septic tank on site.

Surface water from the yard is directed via an oil interceptor to a drain at the back of the site.

3.2 Site Location and Surrounding Environment

3.2.1 Site Location

The application site is approximately 1.5ha, and it is located on the rural outskirts of Saggart, approximately 700m south of the town centre. The site is accessed via an existing entrance from a local, third-class road. The site is bounded to the south by an equipment and materials storage yard, to the east by the local road and to the west and north by pastureland.

The land-use surrounding the site is predominantly agricultural and improved / semi-improved agricultural grassland is the dominant habitat in the lands that surround the site. Other habitats represented locally include woodlands, hedgerows and treelines. There are a number of watercourses close to the application site, including the Camac River which flows to the south of the site. There is a moderately high level of residential and commercial sites locally and the dominant habitats associated with these areas include buildings and artificial surfaces and amenity grasslands and gardens.

Site location maps are shown in Figures 2 and 3, whilst an aerial photograph of the site and its surrounding habitats is shown in Figure 4.

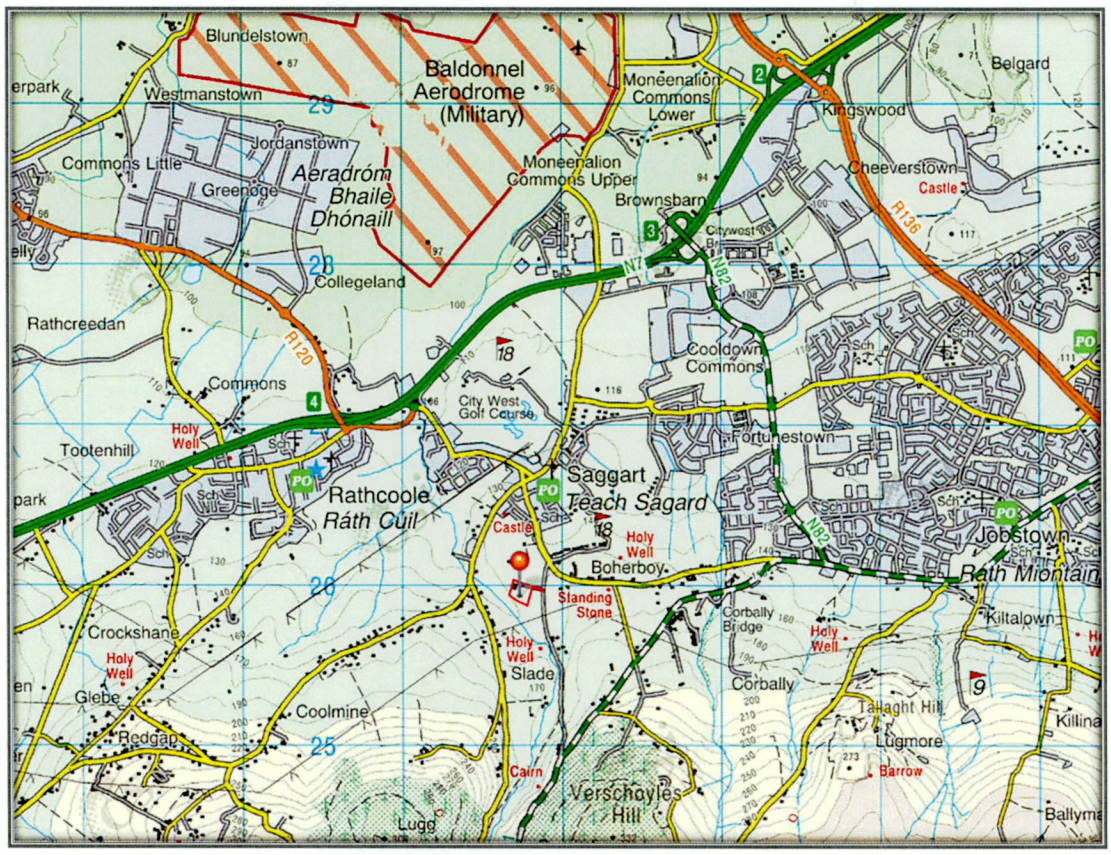

Figure 2 – Site Location Map (Site Pinned)

Figure 3 – Site Location Map.

3.2.2 Habitats within the Application Site

The application site does not lie within or adjacent to any area that has been designated for nature conservation purposes. The dominant habitat within the application site is buildings and artificial surfaces, i.e., the concrete yard that is proposed for retention. The boundaries of the site consist of hedgerows and treelines.

In order to gain an understanding of the habitats that occurred prior to the works requiring retention, historic OSI maps were examined. Aerials from 1995 and 1999 show that the site previously consisted of an agricultural field, with an area of hard core / stone in the western section containing a storage compound. Aerials from 2004 / 2005 show the yard expanded further into the field. From 2013 onwards, it is shown that the original field has been entirely replaced by the yard.

3.2.3 Water Features and Quality

The application site is located within the Liffey and Dublin Bay Hydrometric Area (09) and Catchment (09), the Liffey Sub Catchment (090) and the Camac Sub-Basin (010). There is an open ditch along the back of the site and surface water from the site is being directed into this ditch. Water in this ditch is likely to flow towards the River Camac, which is 73m south of the site boundary.

The Camac River rises in the foothills of the Wicklow Mountains. If flows through Slade a north-westerly direction, along the western suburbs of Saggart. If then flows though the southern suburbs of Dublin city. It is channelized and culverted for much of its journey though Dublin city and suburbs. It flows into the River Liffey near Heuston Station.

The EPA have defined the ecological status of the Camac River as good at points close to the application site. However, this deteriorates to moderate status further downstream of the Coolmine Cross Roads. Further downstream again in the more intensely urban areas, ecological status deteriorates to poor. Under the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, all waterbodies must achieve good status within the timeline set out on the Directive (2027).

Figure 4 – Aerial Photograph of the Proposed Site and its Surrounding Habitats © Google

3.3 European Sites Identified

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, a list of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development has been identified and described according to their site synopses, qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its zone of influence can also be considered. The zone of influence may be determined by an assessment of the connectivity between the application site and the designated areas by virtue of hydrological connectivity, atmospheric emissions, flight paths, ecological corridors etc.

For significant effects to arise, there must be a potential impact facilitated by having a *source*, i.e., the proposed development and activities arising out of its construction or operation, a *receptor*, i.e., the European site and its qualifying interests and a subsequent *pathway* or *connectivity* between the source and receptor, e.g., a water course. The likelihood for significant effects on the European site will largely depend on the characteristics of the source (e.g., nature and scale of the construction works), the characteristics of the existing pathway and the characteristics of the receptor, e.g., the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests (habitats or species) to changes in water quality.

There are six Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km of this application site, plus four other sites that are hydrologically connected to it via the River Camac. These sites are summarised in Table 1 and a map showing their locations relative to the application site is shown in Figure 5. A full description of these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

Site Name & Code	Distance	Features of Interest	Potential Significant Effects?
Glenasmole Valley SAC 001209	4.9km south-east	• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) • Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) • Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)	*No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.*

Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122	5.9km south-east	• Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) • Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds • Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* • European dry heaths • Alpine and Boreal heaths • Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae • Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) • Blanket bogs (* if active bog) • Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani • Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation • Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation • Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles • *Lutra lutra* (Otter)	*No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.*
Wicklow Mountains SPA 004040	9.4km south-east	• Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) • Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)	*No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SPA, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.*
Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA 004063	10.5km south	• Greylag goose Anser anser • Lesser black-backed gull Larus fuscus	*No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SPA, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.*

Red Bog Kildare SAC 000397	10.2km south-west	• Transition mires and quaking bogs	*No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.*
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398	10.2km north	• Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) • *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) • *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail)	*No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.*
South Dublin Bay SAC 000210	23km downstream	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Annual vegetation of drift lines • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Embryonic shifting dunes	*There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 23km. Although it is unlikely, significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.*
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024	23km downstream	• Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota)* • Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) • Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) • Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola)* • Knot *(Calidris canutus)* • Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* • Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* • Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* • Redshank *(Tringa totanus)* • Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* • Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)* • Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo)* • Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea)* • Wetland and Waterbirds	*There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 23km. Although it is unlikely, significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.*

North Bull Island **SPA 004006**	23km downstream	• Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota)* • Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) • Teal (*Anas crecca*) • Pintail (*Anas acuta*) • Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) • Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus)* • Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) • Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) • Knot (*Calidris canutus*) • Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) • Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) • Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa)* • Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica)* • Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) • Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) • Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) • Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) • Wetland and Waterbirds	*There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 23km. Although it is unlikely, significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.*
North Dublin Bay SAC 000206	23km downstream	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Annual vegetation of drift lines • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) • Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) • Embryonic shifting dunes • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) • Humid dune slacks • *Petalophyllum ralfsii* (Petalwort)	*There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 23km. Although it is unlikely, significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.*

Table 1 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km of the Proposed Site

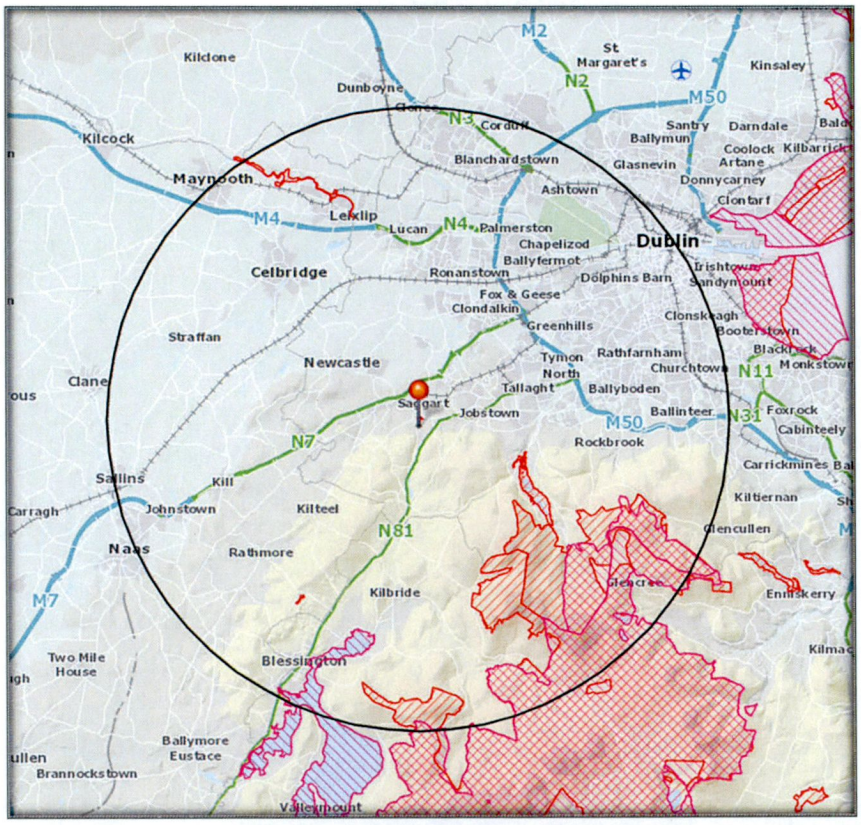

Figure 5 – The Proposed Site (Pinned) in relation to the Designated Sites (Black Circle) within 15km of the Application Site (Pinned). SACs – Red Hatching; SPAs – Pink Hatching.

3.3.1 Site Specific Conservation Objectives

There are four Natura 2000 downstream of the application site and potential significant effects upon these sites will be considered in light of their Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs). These sites are approximately 24km downstream of the application site and given this distance, significant effects upon these sites arising from the proposed development are unlikely.

These SSCOs aim to define the favourable conservation condition for the particular habitats or species at the Natura 2000 site. They outline certain attributes (e.g., distribution, population structure, water quality) for different species and habitats with targets, which define the favourable condition for a habitat or species at a particular site. The maintenance of habitats and species within the Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at national level.

For each Qualifying Interest of the SAC or SPA, the SSCO is either to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of that interest, by defining a list of attributes and targets which are indicative of the conservation status of that interest. For habitats, the main attributes include habitat area; habitat and community distribution; vegetation structure/composition and physical structure. The main target

is to ensure that the habitats are stable or increasing in area and that the other attributes are maintained or restored. For the Annex II species of the SAC or Annex I species of SPAs, the main attributes are population trend and distribution, whilst the targets aim to ensure that the long term population trends of the species are stable or increasing and that there is no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by the species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024

SSCOs for this site were produced by NPWS in 2015. They are summarised in Table 2 below:

Qualifying Interest	SSCO
Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*	Maintain
Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*	Maintain
Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*	Maintain
Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*	No SSCO – Species set for Removal as a QI of this SPA
Knot *Calidris canutus*	Maintain
Sanderling *Calidris alba*	Maintain
Dunlin *Calidris alpina*	Maintain
Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*	Maintain
Redshank *Tringa totanus*	Maintain
Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	Maintain
Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*	Maintain
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*	Maintain
Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*	Maintain
Wetland and Waterbirds	Maintain

Table 2 – SSCOs for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA

The objectives for all these bird species with the exception of the tern species, are the same and are presented in Tables 3a-3c.

Attribute	Measure	Target
Population trend	Percentage Change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by the QI, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation

Table 3a – Attributes, Measures and Targets for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA

The SSCOS for the three tern species include:

Attribute	Measure	Target
Passage population: individuals	Number	No significant decline
Distribution: roosting areas	Number; location; area (ha)	No significant decline
Prey biomass available	Kg	No significant decline
Disturbance at roosting site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the number of roseate tern/common tern/artic tern among the post-breeding aggregation of terns.
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests	Number	No significant decline
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline
Passage population: Individuals	Number	No significant decline
Distribution: breeding colonies	Number; location; area (ha)	No significant decline
Prey biomass available	Kg	No significant decline
Barriers to connectivity	Number; location; shape; area (ha)	No significant increase
Disturbance at the breeding site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding common tern population

Table 3b – Attributes, Measures and Targets for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA (Tern Species)

The SSCOS for the wetlands are:

Attribute	Measure	Target
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 2,587ha, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

Table 3c – Attributes, Measures and Targets for Wetlands in South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA

North Bull Island SPA 004006

SSCOs for this site were produced by NPWS in 2015. They are summarised below:

Qualifying Interest	SSCO
Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*	Maintain
Shelduck Tadorna *tadorna*	Maintain
Teal *Anas crecca*	Maintain
Pintail *Anas acuta*	Maintain
Shoveler *Anas clypeata*	Maintain
Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*	Maintain
Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria	Maintain
Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*	Maintain
Knot *Calidris canutus*	Maintain
Sanderling *Calidris alba*	Maintain
Dunlin *Calidris alpina*	Maintain
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*	Maintain
Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*	Maintain
Curlew *Numenius arquata*	Maintain
Redshank *Tringa totanus*	Maintain
Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*	Maintain
Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	Maintain
Wetland and Waterbirds	Maintain

Table 4 – SSCOs for the North Bull Island SPA

The attributes, measures and targets for all these bird species are the same as that listed for the QIs of the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA. The attributes, measures and targets for the wetlands are also the same as the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA.

Potential Impacts upon the QIs of these SPAs

The application site is 23km upstream of the areas designated for these bird species. The retention of the works will not occur in an area used by the bird species listed above. The habitats within the application site are not suitable for these wading bird species. The application will not lead to decreases in the population trend of any bird species. The application will not lead to any decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of any areas within the SPA by the QI bird species. The applicaiton will not lead to the loss of any wetland habitat area within either SPA.

South Dublin Bay SAC 000201 / North Dublin Bay SAC 000206

SSCOS for these SACs were produced by the NPWS in 2013. These QIs and the potential impacts arising on their attributes and targets from the proposed development at Slade, Saggart are considered below in Tables 5 - 14.

Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide (Both Sites)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.	No
Community Extent	Hectares	Maintain the extent of the *Zostera*-dominated community and the *Mytilus edulis*-dominated community complex, subject to natural processes.	No
Community Structure: *Zostera* Density	Shoots / m^2	Conserve the high quality of the *Zostera*-dominated community, subject to natural processes	No
Community Structure: *Mytilus edulis* density	Individuals / m^2	Conserve the high quality of the *Mytilus edulis* dominated community, subject to natural processes	No
Community Distribution	Hectares	Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Fine sands with *Angulus tenuis* community complex.	No

Table 5 – SSCOs for Mudflats and Sandflats

Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines (Both Sites)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities with typical species: sea rockey; sea sandwort; prickly saltwort and oraches	No
Vegetation Composition; Negative Indicator Species	Hectares	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover.	No

Table 6 – SSCOs for Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines

Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand (Both Sites)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain, or where necessary restore, natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities listed in SMP	No
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species – *Spartina anglica*	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass (*Spartina anglica*). No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur	No

Table 7 – SSCOs for Salicornia and Other Annuals

Embryonic Shifting Dunes (Both Sites)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure:	Presence / Absence of	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without	No

Functionality and Sediment Supply	Physical Barriers	and physical obstructions	
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Plant health of dune grasses	% Cover	95% of marram grass *Ammophilia arenaria* and or lyme'grass *Leymus arenarius* should be healthy (i.e., green plant parts above ground and flowering heads present)	
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities with typical species: sand couch and/or lyme grass.	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species – *Spartina anglica*	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No

Table 8 – SSCOs for Embryonic Shifting Dunes

Atlantic Salt Meadows (North Dublin Bay SAC only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species	Percentage Cover at a Representative	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in SMP	No

and Sub-Species Communities	Sample of Monitoring Stops		
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species – *Spartina anglica*	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass (*Spartina anglica*), with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.	No

Table 9 – SSCOs for Atlantic Salt Meadows

Mediterranean Salt Meadows (North Dublin Bay SAC only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. For sub-site mapped: Malahide Estuary- 0.64 ha	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain/restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of saltmarsh habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in SMP	No
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species – *Spartina anglica*	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass (*Spartina anglica*), with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.	No

Table 10 – SSCOs for Mediterranean Salt Meadows

Shifting Dunes along the Shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) (North Dublin Bay SAC only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. Total area mapped - 1.8 ha	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Plant health of dune grasses	% Cover	95% of marram grass *Ammophilia arenaria* and or lyme'grass *Leymus arenarius* should be healthy (i.e., green plant parts above ground and flowering heads present)	
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities dominated by marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) and/or lyme-grass (*Leymus arenarius*)	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species – *Spartina anglica*	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No

Table 11 – SSCOs for Shifting Dune lines along the Shorelines

Fixed Coastal Dunes with Herbaceous Vegetation (Grey Dunes) (North Dublin Bay Only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion	No

		and succession	
Vegetation Structure: Bare Ground	Percentage cover	Bare ground should not exceed 10% of fixed dune habitat, subject to natural processes	No
Vegetation Structure: Sward Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in Ryle et al. (2009)	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species- including *Hippophae rhamnoides*	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No
Vegetation Composition: Scrub and trees	Percentage Cover	No more than 5% cover or under control	No

Table 12 – SSCOs for Fixed Coastal Dunes

Humid Dune Slacks (North Dublin Bay only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Physical structure:hydrological and flooding regime	Water table levels' groundwater fluctuations	Maintain natural hydrological regime	
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Bare Ground	Percentage cover	Bare ground should not exceed 5% of dune slack habitat, with the exception of pioneer slacks which can have up to 20% bare ground.	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in Delaney et al. (2013)	No
Vegetaion composition: Cover of *Salix repens*	Percentage cover; centimetres	Maintain less than 40% cover of creeping willow (Salix repens)	

Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No
Vegetation Composition: Scrub and trees	Percentage Cover	No more than 5% cover or under control	No

Table 13 – SSCOs for Humid Dune Slacks

Petalwort (North Dublin Bay SAC only)

The SSCO for this species is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Distribution of Populations	No and geographical spread of populations	No decline	No
Population size	Number of individuals	No decline	No
Area of suitable habitat	Ha	No decline	No
Hydrological conditions: soil moisture	Occurrence		No
Vegetation Structure: Height and cover	Centimetres and Percentage	Maintain open, low vegetation with a high percentage of bryophytes and bare ground/	No

Table 14 – SSCOs for Petalwort

<u>Potential Impacts upon the QIs of the South Dublin Bay SAC 000201 / North Dublin Bay SAC 000206</u>

Potential significant effects upon all the QIs of these SACs arising from retention of the works have been considered. There is a weak hydrological link (23km) between the application site and the habitats and species of the Natura 2000 sites in Dublin Bay via the River Camac. Water quality is not a target for the maintenance of any of the QIs within either SAC of Dublin Bay. The targets relate to habitat distribution and area, as well as vegetation structure and control of negative indicator species and scrub. The proposed development will not lead to any impacts upon these QIs, by virtue of changes to the physical structure of the habitats or to the vegetation structure which defines their favourable conservation status.

3.4 Natura 2000 Impact Assessment

The potential significant effects of the development on the Natura 2000 sites identified above are described below. Effects have been considered to include those that might have arisen in the past with the initial works now requiring retention, along with ongoing and future effects arising from the continued operation of the site as a plant and equipment hire business.

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on nearby Natura 2000 site:
The retention of the works at Slade, Saggart will not lead to any significant effects upon the European designated sites identified within the Zone of Influence of the application site. The initial development of the works did not give rise to any significant effects upon these sites. There are no individual elements of the retention that are likely to give rise to negative impacts on these sites in the future. Considering the extensive hydrological separation distance, there are no emissions from the works that could give to rise to impacts and subsequent negative effects on these sites, either in the past or the future. Mitigation measures were not required nor will they be required at any stage of the works to protect the integrity of any European site.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the nearby Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:
Size and scale: Given the small size and scale of the development in relation to the overall size of the Natura 2000 sites identified, the likelihood of any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on these designated sites arising from the retention of the works is low. **Land-take:** There was / will be no land-take from any designated site. There was / will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site. There was / will be no loss of any undesignated Annex I habitats. **Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site:** There are six Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development. The closest of these is the Glenasmole Valley SAC and this is 4.9km south east of the application site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the application site and this SAC or any other European site. The hydrological distance (~23km) between the application site and the SACs / SPAs of Dublin Bay is sufficient to ensure that no significant effects arose in the past, nor will they arise in the future. **Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.):** No resources were taken from any European site and there are no resource requirements that will impact upon any designated site in the future. **Emissions:** The site is 23km upstream of the SACs and SPAs associated with Dublin Bay. There were no emissions during construction that could have given rise to significant effects on these sites. Surface water from the site is being directed via an oil interceptor to a local drain. Having regards to the extensive downstream distance, this discharge will not lead to significant effects upon the European sites associated with Dublin Bay. The oil interceptor is not considered mitigation for the purpose of protecting water quality in any European site.

Excavation requirements: There were no excavation works in the SAC / SPA. There were no excavation works within either site that could have given rise to significant effects upon the SAC / SPA in the past, nor will any arise in the future.

Transportation requirements: There are no additional transportation requirements resulting from the application and associated works that will have any impact upon the European sites identified.

In-Combination / Cumulative Impacts: An examination of the planning portal on the website of South Dublin County Council was undertaken for information pertaining to other recent or pending planning applications in the general Slade / Saggart areas for the past three years. In the preceding three years, many other developments have been granted planning permission in the general area. The majority of the permissions granted pertained to small domestic and agricultural developments. Where necessary, these applications were screened for AA by the applicant or Planning Authority or else full AA was carried out and an NIS submitted. In the future, any application that has the potential to impact upon any SAC/SPA will be subjected to Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The proposed development will not lead to any cumulative effects upon any designated site when it is considered on its own or in combination with other plans or projects.

Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc: Works are completed and operation of the site will be ongoing.

Describe any likely changes to the nearby Natura 2000 sites arising as a result of:

Reduction of habitat area: There was no reduction of designated habitat area within any SAC or SPA with the initial development of works at Slade. There was no loss or fragmentation to any of the protected habitats within any SAC or SPA. There will be no reduction of habitat area in any designated site in the future.

Disturbance to key species: There was no direct or indirect disturbance to any species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive or Annex II of the Habitats Directive. There will be no disturbance to any key species in the future arising from the retention of the works in Slade.

Habitat or species fragmentation: There was no nor will there be any habitat or species fragmentation within any SAC or SPA. No ecological corridors between the site and any Natura 2000 site were / will be damaged or destroyed.

Reduction in species density: There was no nor will there be any reduction in species density within any SAC / SPA.

Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.): There was no nor will there be any negative impacts upon surface or ground water quality within any designated site.

Describe any likely impacts on the nearby Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:

Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site: It is not considered likely that there was or will be any impacts on the key relationships that define the structure or function of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:
Loss - Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat: None **Fragmentation**: None **Disruption & disturbance**: None **Change to key elements of the site** (e.g. water quality etc.): None

3.5 Finding of No Significant Effects

Finding of No Significant Effects Report Matrix	
Name of project	Retention of a Concrete Yard at Slade, Saggart, Co. Dublin
Name and location of Natura 2000 site	There are six Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development. The closest of these is the Glenasmole Valley SAC and this is 4.9km south east of the application site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the application site and this SAC or any other European site. The hydrological distance (~23km) between the application site and the SACs / SPAs of Dublin Bay is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise.
Description of project	Retention of Works for a Plant Hire Company
Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?	No
Are there other projects or plans that together with project being assessed could affect the site?	No
The Assessment of Significance of Effects	
Describe how the project is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site	Having regard to the location, nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects either from the proposed development on its own or in combination with other plans and projects.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant	Not applicable as there is no potential for negative effects
Describe how the project is likely to affect species designated under Annex II of the Habitats Directive.	No significant effects likely
Data Collected to Carry out the Assessment	
Who carried out the assessment	Noreen McLoughlin, MSC, MCIEEM. Consultant Ecologist
Sources of data	NPWS, EPA, National Biodiversity Data Centre, South Dublin County Council, RPS (2018)
Level of assessment completed	Stage1 Appropriate Assessment Screening
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed	Full results included

4. Appropriate Assessment Conclusion

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, the relevant case law, established best practice and the precautionary principle, this AA Screening Report has examined the details of the project in relation to the relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the application site.

At this stage of the AA process, it is for the competent authority, i.e., South Dublin County Council, to carry out the screening for AA and to reach one of the following determinations:

a) AA of the proposed development is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites;

b) AA of the proposed development is not required if it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites.

It is of the opinion of the author that an AA of the proposed development is not required as it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information provided in this report, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites. Therefore, this proposed project does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment Process, i.e., a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

Noreen Mc Loughlin

Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM.
Ecologist.

(PI Insurance details available on request)