

Habitats Directive Assessment

Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment for a development at St. Michael's House, 61 Dublin Road, Swords



in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1.....	2
1.1. Introduction	2
1.2. Legislative Background.....	2
1.3. Methodology.....	4
1.4. Guidance and Data Sources.....	5
SECTION 2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT.....	7
2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN OR PROJECT	7
2.1.1 Description of the Proposed Development.....	7
2.2 ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT TO NATURA 2000 SITES.....	13
SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.....	26
SECTION 4 CONCLUSIONS.....	28
SECTION 5 REFERENCES.....	29

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SECTION 1

1.1. Introduction

Faith Wilson Ecological Consultant prepared this Habitats Directive Assessment Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the proposed development of a day care centre for people with disabilities by St. Michael's House. In a land swap, Fingal County Council are giving them a site adjoining their premises at 61 Dublin Road, Swords.

This report contains the information required for the consenting authority, Fingal County Council, to undertake the Screening for Appropriate Assessment for this development.

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 status.

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 consenting authority, which is either the planning authority or on planning appeal An Bord Pleanála, must ensure that a proposal, which is likely to have a significant effect on an SAC or SPA, is authorised only to the extent that the authority is satisfied it will not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site 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. 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 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. Methodology

This report is based on a desk study and field surveys.

The information for screening presented in this report is as follows:

- Description of the proposed development.
- Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development.
- Description of the existing ecological environment at the site.
- Assessment of likely significant adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.
- Screening statement and conclusions.

If, based upon the currently available information, there are aspects of the proposed development that could have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites, then further analysis in the form of an Appropriate Assessment is required.

If the outcome of the screening exercise is that there are no significant impacts predicted, then an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

1.4. *Guidance and Data Sources*

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)
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (Commission Notice C(2018) 7621 final, Brussels, 21.11.2018)
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10*
- *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)

The competent authority (in this case Fingal County Council or An Bord Pleanála on appeal) is required to carry out appropriate assessment, as required by Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, as follows:

- **Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

The first step to establishing if an appropriate assessment is required is referred to as 'screening' and its purpose is to determine, in view of best scientific knowledge, 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 site's 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 is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site.

The appropriate assessment must include a final determination by the competent authority as to whether or not a proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. In order to reach a final determination, the consenting authority must undertake examination, analysis and evaluation, followed by findings, conclusions and a final determination. The appropriate assessment must contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions, and may not have lacunae or gaps.

Additionally, where there are deemed to be adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts is considered.

- **Stage 3: Assessment of 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: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain**

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.

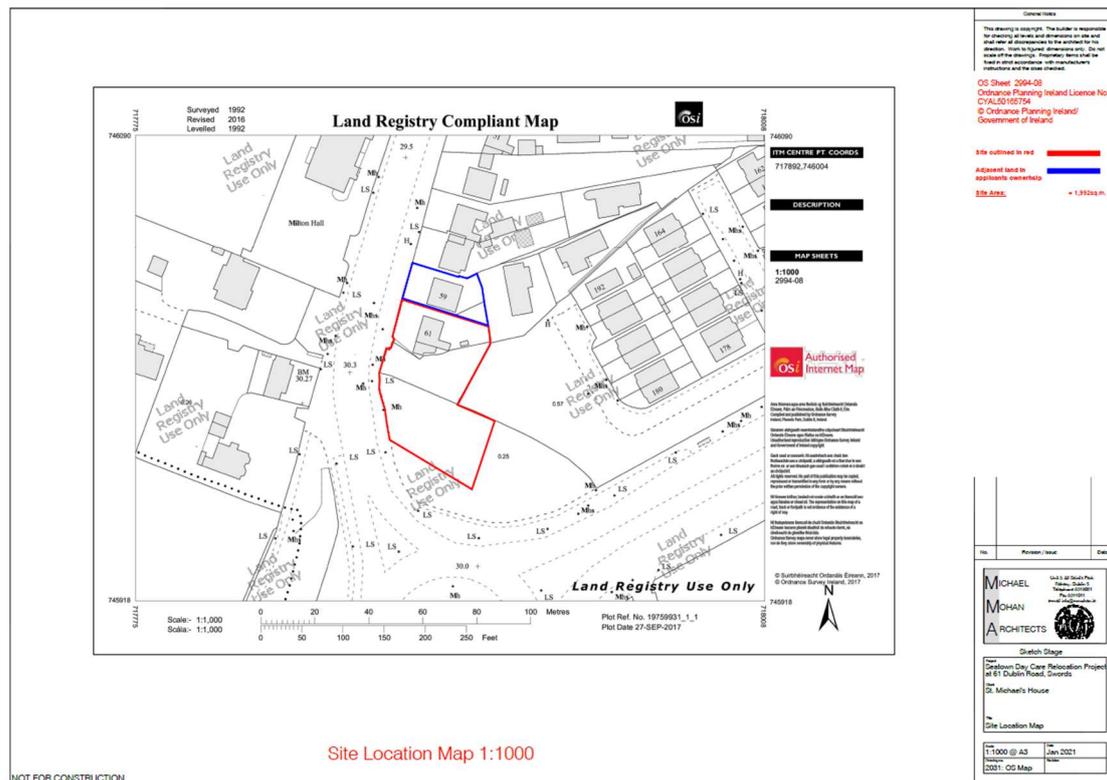
This report is to provide information to the consenting authority to carry out Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment. This report deems that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process (refer to Section 4 Conclusions).

SECTION 2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN OR PROJECT

2.1.1 Description of the Proposed Development.

The site is located in lands adjoining St. Michael's House on the Dublin road in Swords as shown by the red line boundary below on **Figure 2.1**.



The proposed development involves the construction of a day care centre adjacent to St. Michael's House.

Part of the site is within a wooded area, which is owned by Fingal County Council.

As part of the planning application for St. Michael's House, The Fingal County Council requested the following:

- an Environmental Report on the wooded area to see if it will affect bats or other wildlife (Wilson, 2021),
- a report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment to determine if the proposed development could have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites.

This report fulfils the latter.

2.1.2 Desk study and consultation

A desk study was carried out to collate the available information on the ecological environment potentially impacted by the proposed development at St. Michael's House and to determine the proximity of the proposed development to designated areas for conservation. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) database of designated conservation areas and NPWS records of rare and protected plant species as listed under the Irish Red Data list of Vascular Plants (Wyse Jackson, 2016) were checked with regard to the location of the lands at St. Michael's House.

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 Act 1976 (as amended) was also sought from NPWS, publications and other sources, including previous studies in the Swords area.

These included a survey of lands to the east of the R132 at Barrysparks conducted by this author in December 2020 and surveys conducted as part of the Swords/ Airport to City Centre Swiftway project by this author in 2015.

2.1.3 Field Surveys

The site was visited on 8th January 2021 by Faith Wilson to survey and map the habitats present using the habitat survey and mapping techniques described by Smith *et al.* (2011) and described using the Heritage Council Habitat Classification (Fossitt, 2000). A survey for invasive and non-native terrestrial vascular plant species, which threaten biodiversity was completed during the site visits.

A dedicated large mammal survey was carried out during the site visit on 8th January 2021 by Faith Wilson, using the techniques as prescribed in Ecological Survey Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna (NRA, 2009). This entailed searching for and identification of signs, tracks and droppings of various mammals (including otter, badger, pine marten, Irish stoat, Irish hare, red squirrel, hedgehog and pygmy shrew along with non-native species such as American mink, grey squirrel and rabbit) within the site. Badger setts, trails and foraging areas were looked for along earthen banks and treelines within the property. The presence of mammals is indicated principally by their signs, such as dwellings, feeding signs or droppings, through direct observations are also occasionally made. Birds were assessed during the course of the main habitat surveys.

2.1.4 Description of the Receiving Environment - Habitats

The lands adjoining St. Michael's House on the Swords Road/Pinnockhill Roundabout are currently dominated by **immature woodland (WS2)**. This was established as part of landscaping planting associated with the development of a dual carriageway when the Swords Bypass was developed in the 1980s see **Figure 2.2**. The main species present are Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Scot's pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Field maple (*Acer campestre*), Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), and Black pine (*Pinus nigra*) with an understorey of more

rarely Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). The non-native invasive species Cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), Cotoneaster and Wilson's honeysuckle (*Lonicera nitida*) are also present. These are all garden escapes.



Figure 2.2. Google mapping showing extent of wooded area adjoining St. Michael's House (indicated by the red arrow) at the Pinnockhill Roundabout.

Along the northern boundary of the woodland is a remnant **treeline (WL2)** with some mature trees including a multi-stemmed Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), elder and Wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) (Plate 1) with an associated **earthen bank (BL2)** (Plate 2) – this is the remains of an old field boundary, which is shown on the first edition of the 6" series Ordnance Survey maps.

The ground flora within the woodland was dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Ivy (*Hedera helix*) with Cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), and occasional Red dead nettle (*Lamium purpureum*).

Adjoining the area of woodland to the north in the environs of Carlton Crescent is an area of mown **amenity grassland (GA2)**, adjoining the Pinnockhill Roundabout is also a non-native planted hedge, a mown grassy verge and some **ornamental planting (BC4)** (Plate 3).



Plate 1. Multi-stemmed Wych elm on the old field boundary.



Plate 2. The earthen banks and associated ditch of the old field boundary.



Plate 3. The woodland edge, non-native hedgerow and ornamental planting adjoining Pinnockshill Roundabout.

2.1.5 Description of the Receiving Environment - Fauna

There was no evidence of the presence of badgers (*Meles meles*) within the study area. This is unsurprising on account of the small area of woodland habitat, the history of land use and levels of disturbance in the area and the surrounding developed lands of Swords and environs.

The Bat Conservation Ireland Database of bat records was searched for records of bats from the Swords/Malahide area. The database contains records of roosts, ad hoc observations and the results of surveys such as the BATLAS 2010 project and the All Ireland Daubenton's Monitoring Project. Bat species recorded from within a 10km radius of Swords include: Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*),

- Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*),
- Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*),
- Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*),
- Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*),
- Several unidentified *Myotis* species, and
- an unidentified pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus* sp.).

It was not possible to conduct a bat detector survey of the study area due to seasonal constraints and Covid19 restrictions precluded an examination of the building owned by St. Michael's House.

A number of trees within the site were identified as having potential to support roosting bats. These were examined from ground level using an endoscope to see if any bats were present but none were in residence at the time of survey.

Surveys conducted by this author of nearby lands in Barrysparks on the other side of the Swords Bypass recorded three species of bats foraging in the area. These were soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*).

A previous bat survey had also been completed by this author of lands near the Holywell Distributor Road in June 2018 when two species of bat were recorded - soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*).

Studies conducted in 2013 by this author for the Swords to Dublin City BRT Project recorded no bat activity along the length of the R132 between Swords and Dublin Airport. Although much of the carriageway is well planted with mature treelines of poplar, ash, sycamore, beech and willows with an understorey of Wych elm, field maple, dogwood, hawthorn and bramble the route is brightly lit, which would make the area less favourable for foraging bats.

The terrestrial fauna consists of relatively few species. The surveys confirmed the presence of brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and pygmy shrew (*Sorex minutus*), while rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), and wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) would also be expected.

A good variety of bird species were recorded during the survey. These include blackbird (*Turdus merula*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*).

2.2 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 development was made using the NPWS online map viewer.

These included any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the proposed development, and any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the proposed development (source-path-receptor) including those downstream.

In addition to the identified Natura 2000 sites, consideration was also given to relevant species listed under Annexes I and II and IV of the Birds and Habitats Directives, respectively.

Best practice recommends assessing Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of a proposed plan or project. Details of Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence of the proposed development and their locations in relation to the proposed development are provided in **Table 2.1**.

The lands adjoining St. Michael's House on the Swords Road/Pinnockhill Roundabout are not currently the subject of any conservation designations under either international or national conservation legislation (see **Figure 2.3**).

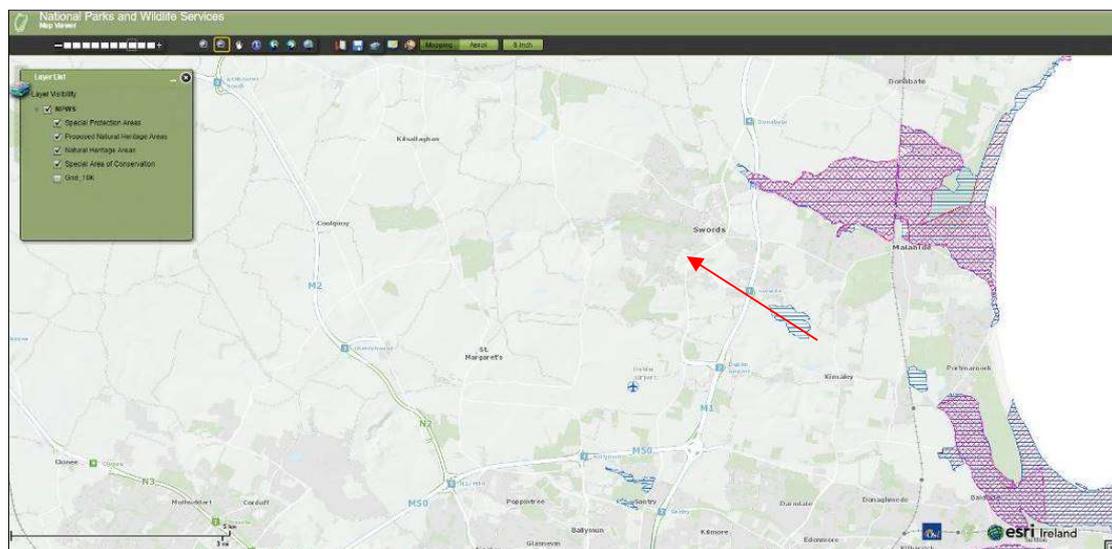


Figure 2.3. Site location at Swords indicated by the red arrow. (Source: National Parks and Wildlife Service online map viewer).

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) 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 land owners 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 considered to be of national importance, while SACs and SPAs are of international importance for nature conservation.

There are seventeen Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the lands at St. Michael's House as follows:

- Baldoyle Bay SAC 000199
- Baldoyle Bay SPA 004016
- Howth Head SAC 000202
- Howth Head Coast SPA 004113
- Ireland's Eye SAC 002193
- Ireland's Eye SPA 004117
- Lambay Island SAC 000204
- Lambay Island SPA 004069
- Malahide Estuary SAC 000205
- Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA 004025
- North Dublin Bay 000206
- North Bull Island SPA 004006
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000
- Rogerstown Estuary SAC 000208
- Rogerstown Estuary SPA 004015
- South Dublin Bay SAC 000210
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024

There are twenty proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)/Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within 15km of the site some of which are also designated as Natura 2000 sites. These pNHAs include:

- Baldoyle Bay pNHA 000199
- Bog of the Ring pNHA 001204
- Booterstown Marsh pNHA 001205
- Dolphins, Dublin Docks pNHA 000201
- Feltrim Hill pNHA 001208
- Grand Canal pNHA 002104
- Howth Head pNHA 000202
- Ireland's Eye NHA 000203
- Knock Lake pNHA 001203
- Lambay Island pNHA 000204
- Liffey Valley pNHA 000128
- Loughshinny Coast pNHA 002000
- Malahide Estuary pNHA 000205
- North Dublin Bay pNHA 000206
- Portraine Shore pNHA 001215
- Rogerstown Estuary pNHA 000208
- Royal Canal pNHA 002103
- Santry Demesne pNHA 001208
- Sluice River March pNHA 001763
- South Dublin Bay pNHA 000210

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 land owners 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 (Amended) Act, 2000* and requires consultation with NPWS if any development impacts on a pNHA.

Natura 2000 Site Conservation Objectives:

Detailed site management plans are available for many of the Natura 2000 sites identified as outlined in the reference list, and generic conservation objectives are identified for those remaining. The conservation objectives for each of the Natura 2000 sites outlined above are summarised below in **Table 2.1**. This report has examined the generic and detailed conservation objectives for each Natura 2000 site and the attributes and targets for each conservation objective and has not identified any potential risk of significant impact on any of these targets.

Hydrological Links to Natura 2000 sites:

There are no Natura 2000 sites located either within or directly adjacent to the proposed development. There are no direct hydrological links (via drainage ditches or watercourses) from the site to any Natura 2000 site. Surface waters from the wider site environs ultimately drain to the Malahide Estuary which is designated as an SAC and a SPA.

Table 2.1. Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the location of the proposed development at St. Michael's House.

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
000205	Malahide Estuary SAC	2km NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1320) Spartina swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1320) Spartina swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes)

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004025	Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA	2km NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] • Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] • Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [wintering] <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> • [wintering] <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> • [wintering] <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • [wintering] <i>Anas acuta</i> • [wintering] <i>Bucephala clangula</i> • [wintering] <i>Mergus serrator</i> • [wintering] <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> • [wintering] <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • [wintering] <i>Calidris canutus</i> • [wintering] <i>Limosa limosa</i> • [wintering] <i>Limosa lapponica</i> • [wintering] <i>Tringa tetanus</i> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat in Malahide Estuary SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.</p>

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004015	Rogerstown Estuary SPA	5.8km NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [wintering] <i>Anser anser</i> • [wintering] <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> • [wintering] <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • [wintering] <i>Anas clypeata</i> • [wintering] <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> • [wintering] <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> • [wintering] <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • [wintering] <i>Calidris canutus</i> • [wintering] <i>Limosa limosa</i> • [wintering] <i>Tringa totanus</i> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitat in Rogerstown Estuary SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.</p>

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
000208	Rogerstown Estuary SAC	6km NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1130) Estuaries • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1130) Estuaries • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*
000199	Baldoyle Bay SAC	6.5km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004016	Baldoyle Bay SPA	6.5km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [wintering] <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> • [wintering] <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • [wintering] <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> • [wintering] <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • [wintering] <i>Limosa lapponica</i> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat in Baldoyle Bay SPA</p>

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	9.1km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1210) Annual vegetation of drift lines • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1320) <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1395) Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2110) Embryonic shifting dunes • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) • (2190) Humid dune slacks 	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1210) Annual vegetation of drift lines • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1320) <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1395) Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2110) Embryonic shifting dunes • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) • (2190) Humid dune slacks

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004006	North Bull Island SPA	9.1km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) • Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) • Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) • Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) • Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) • Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>) • Wetlands & Waterbirds 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> [wintering] • <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> [wintering] • <i>Anas crecca</i> [wintering] • <i>Anas acuta</i> [wintering] • <i>Anas clypeata</i> [wintering] • <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> [wintering] • <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> [wintering] • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> [wintering] • <i>Calidris canutus</i> [wintering] • <i>Calidris alba</i> [wintering] • <i>Calidris alpina</i> [wintering] • <i>Limosa limosa</i> [wintering] • <i>Limosa lapponica</i> [wintering] • <i>Numenius arquata</i> [wintering] • <i>Tringa totanus</i> [wintering] • <i>Arenaria interpres</i> [wintering] • <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> [wintering] • Wetlands

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	9.8km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>), • Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>), • Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>), • Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), • Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>), • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>), • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>), • Knot (<i>Calidris canuta</i>), • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>), • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>), • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>), • Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>), • Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>), • Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), • Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>), • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>), • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>), • Knot (<i>Calidris canuta</i>), • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>), • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>), • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitat in South Dublin and the River Tolka Estuary SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.</p>
003000	Rockabill to Dalkey Islands SAC	10.1km E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1170) Reefs • (1351) Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat and the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1170) Reefs • (1351) Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004117	Ireland's Eye SPA	11.2km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] • Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] • Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] 	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [breeding] <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> • [breeding] <i>Larus argentatus</i> • [breeding] <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> • [breeding] <i>Uria aalge</i> • [breeding] <i>Alca torda</i>
002193	Ireland's Eye SAC	11.4km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]
000202	Howth Head SAC	12.1km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] • European dry heaths [4030] 	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] • European dry heaths [4030]
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	12.6km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed development	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004113	Howth Head Coast SPA	13.2km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] 	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [breeding] <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>
000204	Lambay Island SAC	13.2km NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1230) Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • (1170) Reefs • (1364) <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> • (1265) <i>Phoca vitulina</i> 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat and the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1230) Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • (1170) Reefs • (1364) <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> • (1265) <i>Phoca vitulina</i>
004069	Lambay Island SPA	13.2km NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] • Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] • Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] ^ • Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] ^ • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] • Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] • Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] • Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] • Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] • Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] ^ • Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] ^ • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] • Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] • Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] • Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204]

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

The potential impacts of the proposed development at St. Michael’s House on nearby Natura 2000 sites are assessed using the following factors:

- size and scale;
- land-take;
- distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;
- likely connectivity/pathways from the proposed development to Natura 2000 sites;
- resource requirements (water abstraction etc.);
- emissions (disposal to land, water or air);
- excavation requirements;
- transportation requirements;
- duration/timing 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; and
- key relationships that define the function of the site.

<p>Brief description of the project or plan</p>	<p>The development of the lands at St. Michael’s House will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent landtake; • Removal of semi-mature trees; • Construction activities (e.g. runoff and other pollution, increase of suspended solids, alteration of hydraulic conditions, noise and dust emissions, lighting, movement of vehicles, presence of construction personnel); • Occupation once completed
<p>Brief description of the Natura 2000 sites</p>	<p>There are no Natura 2000 sites within the proposed development. The Natura 2000 sites occurring within a 15km radius of the site are as described above in Table 2.1.</p>
<p>Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 sites</p>	<p>As the proposed development sits within the framework of the Fingal County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, which has been subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment, there are no cumulative elements expected which are likely to give rise to impacts on Natura 2000 sites.</p>
<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or</p>	<p>The proposed development is not within any Natura 2000 site, therefore there will be no direct impacts arising from the project</p>

<p>projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.; • other 	<p>regarding size and scale or land-take.</p> <p>The proposed development is within 2km of the Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code: 000205) and the Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA (Site Code: 004025).</p> <p>There are no potential ecological or direct hydrological links via drains or streams from the site to any Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>Surface waters from the wider environs of the site ultimately drain via the local network to the Malahide Estuary. Surface waters from the buildings and hard standings will drain to soakways within the site.</p> <p>There are no requirements to abstract water from any Natura 2000 site for the proposed development. The development will be served from the existing watermains which runs along Swords Road.</p> <p>In terms of waste water the development will connect to the existing foul network which runs along Swords Road.</p> <p>Due to the location of the proposed development at distance from any Natura 2000 site, there are no impacts to Natura 2000 sites expected from the construction, operation, or occupation of any element of the proposed development.</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>There are no significant changes expected to any Natura 2000 site relating to habitat or species reduction, changes to key indicators of conservation value, or to climate change as a result of the proposed development.</p>
<p>Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site • interference with key relationships that define the function of the site 	<p>There are no potential impacts identified on any Natura 2000 sites that could interfere with the key structures and functions of the sites.</p>
<p>Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss • Fragmentation 	<p>There will be no significant impacts to Natura 2000 sites relating to loss, fragmentation, disruption or disturbance from the proposed development.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption • Disturbance • Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.) 	
<p>Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.</p>	<p>There will be no significant adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts from the proposed development on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.</p>

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 to pose likely significant effects on European sites within the study area and its environs.

These included:

- The Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023.
- Several local planning applications.

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.

In addition, the proposed development of St. Michael’s House 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.

SECTION 4 CONCLUSIONS

This report for screening has evaluated the proposed building of a care facility at St. Michael’s House, Swords to determine whether or not significant negative impacts on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites are likely to arise by virtue of its construction and subsequent occupation and use.

It is concluded that there will be no negative impacts on the qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the proposed development.

This report finds that the proposed development will not, either individually or cumulatively in combination with the other identified plans and projects, adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

Based on the information provided above, and by applying the precautionary principle, it was determined that it was possible to rule out likely significant impacts on any Natura 2000 site and therefore it was not deemed necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

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