

2022

# Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report



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## Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Swords Cultural Quarter at Mainstreet & North Street, Swords Co. Dublin

### Document Control Sheet

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening exercise has been prepared in support of an application for planning permission for the provision of a new civic and cultural centre and public realm, to accommodate a library, gallery, exhibition spaces, a black box theatre, study areas, meeting rooms, artist studio, administrative offices, café and theatre bar, and ancillary facilities. The purpose of this exercise is to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required for consideration of the proposed development by the competent authority, which in this case is Fingal County Council.

EIA requirements are derived from legislation set by the European Union in the form of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. Most pertinent to the screening stage of the EIA process, are **Annexes I and II** of the EU Directive which comprise a list of project categories with the potential to have significant effects on the environment. Annexes I and II are broadly transposed into Irish Legislation by the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018, in **Schedule 5 Parts 1 and 2**.

This EIA Screening exercise first provides a description of the proposed development under the criteria defined in **Schedule 7A** of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2018*, further described in section 3.

The project description for the proposed development is as follows:

***The proposed development relates to an application for permission for a Civic and Cultural Building, public realm works, demolition works and all associated site works at a site located in the middle of Swords town centre, on the junction of North Street, Seatown Road, Main Street and Bridge Street adjacent to Swords Castle, and Fingal County Offices.***

***The proposed development will comprise of public realm upgrade works and the construction of the proposed Swords Civic and Cultural Building, located on the existing Fingal County Council car park site at Seatown Road and St. Michaels House Centre, ranging in height from 2-4 storeys. The proposed Swords Civic and Cultural Building will include for:***

- ***A 165-no. seated theatre with associated control/ sound rooms & light lobbies***
- ***Dressing rooms and rehearsal spaces***
- ***An art gallery***
- ***Café/theatre bar***
- ***Exhibition spaces***
- ***Workshop and study areas***
- ***Meeting rooms***
- ***Public library***
- ***Offices***
- ***Storage rooms, toilets and other ancillary uses.***

***The proposed development will consist of minor external works to the southern entrance of the Swords District Court House (Protected Structure).***

An initial screening appraisal was then carried out for this activity against the relevant categories in **Schedule 5 Parts 1 and 2** of the regulations, further described in section 4.

In the event where a full EIAR is deemed not necessary, the screening process is continued, and characteristics of the proposed development are considered in further detail against the relevant criteria defined by **Schedule 7** of the regulations, summarised as follows:

1. Characteristics of proposed development – size, cumulative effects, natural resources etc.
2. Location of proposed development – environmental sensitivity of the areas likely to be affected by the development.
3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts – likely significant effects on the environment.

## 2 EIA Screening Methodology

### 2.1 Legislative Requirement for EIA

Screening is the initial stage in the EIA process and determines whether or not the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, as such, require EIA to be carried out prior to a decision for a development consent application being made.

EIA requirements are derived from legislation set by the European Union in the form of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, collectively titled: '*on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*'. These directives set out the principles for the environmental impact assessment of projects by introducing minimum requirements regarding:

- The type of projects subject to assessment
- The main obligations of developers
- The content of the assessment
- The participation of competent authorities

Most pertinent to the screening stage of the EIA process, are **Annexes I** and **II** of the EU Directive which comprise a list of project categories with the potential to have significant effects on the environment. **Annexes I** and **II** are broadly transposed into Irish Legislation by the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018*, in **Schedule 5 Parts 1** and **2**, with national thresholds added to many of the **Part 2** classes of development.

### 2.2 Project Categorisation

Once the proposed development is described and the principle activities are defined, the first step in the screening process can be undertaken. This involves assigning the development to a category listed in either **Parts 1** or **2** of schedule 5 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018*:

- **Part 1 Activities** – consists of activities which have significant effects on the environment. Proposed developments which exceed the relevant thresholds in Part 1 are subject to a mandatory EIA. Part 1 sub-threshold developments require screening in cases where the same class of development is not listed in Part 2 with a lower mandatory threshold.
- **Part 2 Activities** – do not necessarily have significant effects on the environment in every case; Proposed developments which exceed the relevant thresholds in Part 2, as defined by the Irish State are subject to a mandatory EIA. For all sub-threshold developments listed in Schedule 5, Part 2, where no EIAR is submitted or EIA determination requested, a screening determination is required to be undertaken by the competent authority **unless**, on preliminary examination it can be concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.

Corresponding developments automatically require EIA if no threshold is given or if they exceed a given threshold. Developments which correspond to Part 2 project types but are below the given threshold must be subject to a screening exercise to determine whether they require EIA or not.

### 2.3 Project Screening Determination

In cases where a project is deemed eligible for a mandatory EIA, a sub-threshold EIA or an exemption the EIA screening process is concluded, and suitable recommendations are made in order to progress the project further.

In the event where a given project is deemed to be **below** the relevant **Part 2** thresholds, further screening is required and characteristics of the proposed development are considered in further detail against the relevant criteria outlined in **Schedule 7** of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2018*.

This exercise is carried out for the project in **section 4**.

### 2.4 Determination of the EIA Requirement for Sub-Threshold Projects

If the initial project screening determination did not confirm the requirement or the exemption of an EIA, the proposed development is subject to further screening to determine if a significant risk to the environment is posed. **Schedule 7** of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018* outlines specific criteria for the determination of EIA requirements for sub-threshold projects. The screening process involves the appraisal of impacts from the proposed development according to three main criteria:

#### 1. Characteristics of the project

- a. size and design of the whole of the proposed development
- b. cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development
- c. nature of any associated demolition works
- d. use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity
- e. production of waste
- f. pollution and nuisances
- g. the risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change
- h. the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)

#### 2. Location of proposed project

- a. the existing and approved land use,
- b. relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
- c. absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
  - (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths

- (ii) *coastal zones and the marine environment*
- (iii) *mountain and forest areas*
- (iv) *nature reserves and parks*
- (v) *areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive*
- (vi) *areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;*
- (vii) *densely populated areas;*
- (viii) *landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.*

### 3. Characteristics of potential impacts

- a. *magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),*
- b. *nature of the impact,*
- c. *transboundary nature of the impact,*
- d. *intensity and complexity of the impact,*
- e. *probability of the impact,*
- f. *expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,*
- g. *cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment*
- h. *possibility of effectively reducing the impact.*

These criteria are assessed for the proposed development in **section 5**.

## 2.5 Information to be Provided for the Purposes of Sub-Threshold Projects

In cases where an application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR, but where there is “significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development”, Article 299B(1)(b)(ii)(II) of the Planning Regulations requires that the planning authority must satisfy itself that the Applicant has provided the information specified in **Schedule 7A** of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2018*.

This schedule outlines specific information to be provided by the applicant pertaining to the project to be provided by the applicant for the purposes of screening sub-threshold projects to the competent authority’s satisfaction. This includes:

### 1. Description of the proposed development (Outlined in Section 3)

- a. *description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works.*

*b. description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.*

**2. Description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development** (Criteria incorporated into **Tables 5.1 - 5.3**)

**3. Description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from:**

*a. expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant.*

*b. use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.*

(Criteria incorporated into **Tables 5.1 - 5.3**)

## 3 Description of the Proposed Development

### 3.1 Site Description

The proposed development site is located towards the centre of Swords town centre in Co. Dublin, includes the existing Fingal County Council car park site at Seatown Road, and spans a total of three public roadways, Main Street, North Street and Seatown Road (ITM Coordinates: 718286, 746997). The site is bounded to the west by Swords Castle, a public park and several commercial units towards the southwest. Land use to the south predominantly consists of commercial units and bars/restaurants; The Fingal County Council office building is located to the east and a secondary school along with a mixture of commercial and residential units lie to the North and East. The development will comprise of public realm upgrade works and the construction of the proposed Swords Civic and Cultural Building, located on the existing Fingal County Council car park site at Seatown Road and St. Michaels House Centre.

The site itself consists of lands adjacent to the aforementioned public roads which include several vacant residential and commercial buildings, along with areas of green space. The total extent of the site covers an area of ca. 15,760m<sup>2</sup> (1.58ha).

The site layout is detailed in the following drawings which accompany this application as follows:

- **SCQ-ZZ-L00-DR-ODT-AR-20100** – GA Proposed Level 00 Floor Plan
- **SCQ-ZZ-L01-DR-ODT-AR-20101** – GA Proposed Level 01 Floor Plan
- **SCQ-ZZ-L02-DR-ODT-AR-20102** – GA Proposed Level 02 Floor Plan
- **SCQ-ZZ-L03-DR-ODT-AR-20103** – GA Proposed Level 03 Floor Plan
- **SCQ-ZZ-R01-DR-ODT-AR-20105** – GA Proposed Roof Plan
- **SCQ-ZZ-L01-DR-ODT-AR-20106** – GA Proposed Level 01 Theatre Balcony Floor Plan
- **SCQ-ZZ-ZZZ-DR-ODT-AR-20300** – GA Long Sections
- **SCQ-ZZ-ZZZ-DR-ODT-AR-20301** – GA Cross Sections
- **SCQ-CC-ZZZ-DR-ODT-AR-20200** – GA Proposed West + South East Elevations
- **SCQ-CC-ZZZ-DR-ODT-AR-20201** – GA Proposed North + North East Elevations

### 3.2 Project Description

Demolition works to the following structures:

- Demolition of the four no. terraced houses addressing North Street to the north of the district courthouse (currently vacant).
- Demolition of the single storey structure facing North Street within the curtilage of the community park.
- Demolition of the single storey day care facility on the North side of Seatown Road (currently vacant).
- Demolition of the single storey security hut facing Seatown Road within the curtilage of

the Fingal County Council car park.

OHSS, a specialist asbestos management contractor have carried out an asbestos survey to HSG264 requirements for the purposes of identifying asbestos containing materials (ACM) in the premises(s) prior to planned demolition.

Asbestos was found to be present in the following form:

- **Asbestos cement slates:** Asbestos was found to be present in the form of cement slates present to the roof of units 1-4 and as soaker slates on the roof of St Michael's House.
- **Vinyl floor tiles & associated bitumen adhesive:** Asbestos was found to be present within the vinyl floor tiles and associated bitumen adhesive present on the floor of the ground floor shop in unit 2.

Prior to demolition of the above noted buildings asbestos containing materials must be removed and disposed of by a competent contractor.

Provision of a new 4-storey building on the site of the Fingal County Council car park that encircles the Swords & Balbriggan District Courthouse (protected structure ref. No. 350) and an overall g.i.a. of approx. 5700 m<sup>2</sup>. The building is to comprise:

- A library, gallery, local archive and workroom storage areas, plant areas, and facility management spaces.
- At ground floor a café / theatre bar, informal exhibition area, art gallery, living room, makerspace, foyer/reception/box office, black box theatre, gallery project room/workshop, book sorting area, supporting areas and plant areas.
- At first floor library facilities for children and young adults, knowledge and i.t. classroom, meeting rooms, staff facilities, and supporting areas.
- At second floor library facilities for adults, a quiet study space, a library meeting room and open office area, administration spaces, rehearsal and multi-purpose room, and supporting areas.
- At third floor Local Studies & Archives area for public access and storage facilities at the building corner between main street and north street, plant areas to the north side of the building, with a green roof to the seatown road side.

Modifications to the public realm, provision of a new green area along the east of the castle walls, incorporation of a public square with high quality paved surface along North Street between the Cultural Centre and the castle, inclusion of additional crossing points to Seatown Road and Bridge Street, the widening of the west footpath on main street, and the inclusion of new trees and planting.

Surface level car parking (6 no. Disabled spaces, 2 of which are designated for use by the courthouse), bicycle parking, and common delivery area.

All associated site development works (including drainage works and lighting) and building signage.

### 3.3 Environmental Setting

#### 3.3.1 Population

The site is located within the Swords electoral district, a densely settled urban area, with a population density ranging from of 1,227 per km<sup>2</sup> to 7,127 per km<sup>2</sup>.

#### 3.3.2 Hydrology & Topography

The proposed development site is located within the Eastern Basin District; the Ward\_040 sub basin; Nanny-Delvin Hydrometric Area; Hydrometric Area No. 08; Nanny-Delvin Catchment; Broadmeadow\_SC\_010 Sub Catchment.

The principle hydrological feature within the vicinity of the site is the Ward River which runs in a S-N direction ca. 118m west of the site boundary, merging with the Broadmeadow River ca. 1.26km north of the site.

The site forms a catchment with the Ward River, with an area of higher ground located to the east of the site directing the course of incident run-off throughout the site in a north-westerly direction towards the river. The highest elevation at the site, 15.97mOD was measured at the site boundary to the east of the site and the lowest elevation of the site, 13.29mOD was measured at the site boundary to the north, indicating a fall of 2.68m in a north-westerly direction.

#### 3.3.3 Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology

Subsurface soils and subsoils consist of imported made ground underlain by a limestone glacial till. The Geological Survey maps show the area to be underlain by the Malahide Formation an argillaceous bioclastic limestone, shale formation. This rock formation is classed as a "locally important aquifer".

The hydrogeological setting at the site is described as low permeability subsoil. No groundwater source protection zones or protected hydrological features such as holy wells or springs are located within proposed boundary of the site. There are no source protection areas within the vicinity of the site.

#### 3.3.4 Designated Areas

There are no designated areas (SPAs, SACs or NHAs) detected within the site boundary according to the National Parks and Wildlife Services site maps There nearest designated areas to the site boundary include Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code: 000205) located ca.

1km NE of the site and Malahide Estuary SPA (Site Code: 004025) located ca. 1.1km NE of the site.

### 3.3.5 Flood Risk

OPW Flood maps do not indicate a risk of fluvial, coastal or groundwater flooding within the boundary of the subject site. Fluvial flood extents (river and estuary combined) – 0.1% & 1% AEP were noted ca. 10m W of the most western site boundary (at Bridge Street). Fluvial flood extents (river and estuary combined) – 10% AEP were noted ca. 25m W of the most western site boundary (at Bridge Street). Coastal flood extents – 0.1%, 0.5% & 10% AEP were noted ca. 1.1km NE of the site.

### 3.3.6 Cultural Heritage

There is a protected structure – Swords & Balbriggan District Courthouse (Ref No. 350) located within the site boundary.

There is a National Monument – Swords Castle (DU011-034001) located adjacent to the site boundary. An unclassified Mill is located ca. 73m SW of the site.

### 3.3.7 Landscape

The landscape surrounding the proposed site is predominantly urban with an area of open parklands to the west of the site. The site itself consists of lands adjacent to the aforementioned public roads which include several vacant residential and commercial buildings, along with areas of green space. The site consists of a ~2.68m fall from southeast to northwest.

### 3.3.8 Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna

The AA screening report which accompanies this application identified eighteen designated sites within 15 km of the proposed development. All 18 of these sites were eliminated during stage 1 of the screening process on the basis of there being no hydrological connectivity between the proposed development and the designated area.

A Bat Survey Report was completed in August 2021 by *O'Donnell Environmental* within the zone of influence of the proposed redevelopment site. All bat species and their roosting sites are strictly protected under both national and international law (Wildlife Act (1976); EU Habitats Directive). Optimal roosting locations are generally absent in the study area, and no roosts were identified within the proposed site boundary during the survey conducted. This report makes reference to a previous record of bat roosting within the 'Knights and Squires Chamber' of Swords Castle, which lies adjacent to the proposed site boundary to the east. The following potential impacts were noted in this report:

- 1. Loss of potential roosting sites:** the demolition of man-made structures including St Michaels House, buildings at 21 North Road, a building at 17/17a North Road will be required to facilitate the proposed redevelopment, and some limited tree felling will occur. This report identifies and describes trees with 'low' and 'negligible' potential to

support roosting bats. It is possible that some of these features will be used at least occasionally by bats and their value to bats may increase over time. Their removal represents a loss of roosting opportunities to bats.

2. **Disturbance due to illumination:** Inappropriate or excessive illumination of tree lines or hedgerows at night can cause disturbance to roosting commuting and foraging bats.
3. **Disturbance due to noise:** Construction can result in noise, vibration and air emissions through the presence of people and, the use of heavy machinery for example. Of particular relevance to bats is the use of generators at night which create noise and vibration and are often left running at night.
4. **Potential impact significance:** In the absence of mitigation measures, the above potential impacts would be expected to result in a permanent, 'slight' negative impact on bat ecology at a local scale.

### 3.3.9 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

An Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment was completed by *Rubicon Heritage* and accompanies the planning submission for this project. The archaeological assessment of the proposed Swords Cultural Quarter development identified 23 sites of archaeological, and/or cultural heritage significance within the study area. These comprise three recorded monuments (RMPs), one of which — Swords Castle, is also a Protected Structure and a National Monument, six protected structures (PS), which are also listed in the NIAH, one other structure listed in the NIAH, four areas of archaeological potential (AAP), two townland boundaries (TB) and seven unregistered cultural heritage sites (UCH).

It is expected that most impacts will occur as a result of construction groundworks associated with the development of the Swords Civic & Cultural Centre and the re-profiling works associated with the installation of the Public Realm & Civic Space infrastructure.

The results of a programme of archaeological test trenching at the site of the SCC Building, AAP (CH015), revealed localised pockets of surviving archaeological remains across the site. Garden soils containing medieval pottery were identified in the east and northern half of the site, which sealed a series of medieval features consisting of a metalled surface, a limestone drain and an undated mortared stone wall. In the centre-east area of the site, a possible linear boundary ditch, a very compact metalled surface and a number of pits and furrows were identified with many producing medieval pottery. A series of furrows were also evident in the north of the site, but no diagnostic material was recovered. However, a similar furrow in the south of the site did produce a sherd of medieval pottery. The development groundworks will impact on the sub-surface remains of this site.

Impacts will also occur during the groundworks phase associated with the development of the Public Realm & Civic Space. The likely significant impacts associated with the reprofiling of the existing streetscape relate to the historic town of Swords (CH002), an AAP at Bridge Street (CH016) and the site of a former water pump UCH (CH017) located at the junction of North Street and Seatown Road. Impacts may also occur during the soft and hard landscaping proposals adjacent to Swords Castle and at the entrance to Swords Park, associated with

AAPs (CH013 and CH014) and a number of 19th century UCH sites, consisting of the remnants of former early 19th century structures along North Street (CH018 and CH019). It should also be noted that the remaining extant structures to the east of Swords Castle (Nos. 17 and 17A) and the single-story structure within swords park (CH020) are scheduled for demolition.

The results of an architectural survey of the single-storey structure (CH020) located at the entrance to Swords Park, revealed that the structure most likely consists of an early nineteenth century building that has been altered and reconstructed in modern times. The building is in a ruinous condition supported internally by a single leaf of concrete blocks. Original masonry fabric, consisting of roughly dressed limestone, is present at the front and side (north) elevations. However, the upper portion of the side (north) elevation and almost the entire rear elevation appears to have been reconstructed. The side (south) elevation is no longer extant having been replaced by a modern concrete block wall. The southwestern corner has also been replaced with modern concrete blocks. The incorporation of high-quality building materials (dressed limestone blocks and finely tooled limestone quoins) indicate that considerable effort and expense was put into the design and construction of the original structure. Attributing a purpose/ function to this building is somewhat problematic due to its unusual street façade, and simplistic layout. The absence for evidence of a door opening to the front façade, suggests the structure may have served as an outbuilding (either as a store or to house animals) possibly associated with the two-storey building located to the south of this structure as depicted on historic photographs of Swords town

The proposed SCC Building will impact on the setting of the National Monument. Views towards the proposed SCC Building from within the National Monument are currently unobstructed, with just the corner of Fingal County Hall visible to the southeast. Upon completion, the upper stories of the SCC Building will be visible from within the internal space of the Castle. However, this impact is considered to be moderate, as the building has been carefully designed to lessen the visual impact by reducing the overall height by approximately 1 m and incorporating a brise soleil feature across the exterior.

Views from the SCC development site (currently the Fingal Executive Car park) towards the National Monument are partially obstructed by the last remaining structures on North Street, (Nos. 17 and 17A), although the Chapel, the Curtain Walls, the East Tower and the walls of the Great Hall still dominate. The removal of the remaining buildings will create a clear sightline towards the National Monument from the SCC building allowing the full enjoyment of the monument and add an amenity value to Swords Town that is not currently present.

Further positive impacts will be created from the upper floors of SCC Building. Members of the public will be able to enjoy unobstructed views of the Castle from the second floor and the second-floor balcony. The balcony will also provide views of St Columba's Round Tower, RMP DU011-034005, views which are not currently available from any public buildings at the north-eastern extent of the town.

### 3.3.10 Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment was completed by *JCA Architects* and accompanies the planning submission for this project. The historic significance of Swords Castle and Swords District Courthouse is presented in this report, summarised in the paragraphs below.

*“The significance of Swords Castle has been assessed in detail as part of the Swords Castle Conservation Plan, and this Plan has been adopted by Fingal County Council. Swords Castle is unquestionably of National significance. It is the best surviving Episcopal Manor (Bishop’s Palace) in Ireland, setting it apart in terms of significance from surviving contemporary defensive Norman Castles. The following extracts from the Conservation Plan provide a summary assessment of the site’s significance: The significance of the Swords Castle complex is multi-layered and relates to aspects of its architecture, history, and archaeology. The environment within the walls of the Castle and its relationship to the urban and administrative centre of Swords is also of cultural significance. It is a complex site representing at least 500 years of development, redesign, alteration, re-use and adaptation. It reflects the changing fortunes and lives of Dublin’s Archbishops and later owners and the architectural fashions of their times.”*

*“Swords District Court House is a building of Regional significance. Designed by a known engineer, who was also responsible for the larger and more elaborate Balbriggan Court House, Swords Court House is a relatively standard late- 1830s -early 1840’s petty and quarter sessions Court House. It was intended as a small landmark public building informed by classical architectural principles, and it retains this original character, though its surroundings have altered over time and its present context is at some remove from the administrative centre of the town. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage ascribes categories of architectural and artistic special interest to the building, but does not provide an assessment of its significance. Despite a damaging fire in 1998, the building generally retains its original external materials, historic architectural expression and character.”*

*“The other buildings on North Street referred to as part of this report have been included in order to provide a more complete picture of the existing streetscape surrounding the Castle and the Courthouse. None of the buildings or structures are included on the Record of Protected Structures or the NIAH. All have been significantly altered (or, in the case of the Gate Piers, relocated and reconstructed), and are of Local significance only, with no particular known architectural, historic or cultural importance.”*

The report concluded that the architectural context of this site is the product of a number of building phases. The proposed Swords Cultural Centre will introduce a new density of use in order to maximise the site’s potential for the provision of a range of cultural and educational resources, so is a building of greater scale and height than those previously on the site, but it has been designed with sensitivity to the overall historic context and with consideration for the relationships of each of the proposed elements to existing historic structures. The design intent is to reform the western edge of North Street, in line with the street edge shown on historic maps while revealing and resetting the Castle wall on the eastern edge.

### 3.3.11 Landscape and Visual Impact

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment report, completed by *Dermot Foley Landscape Architects*, and an Arboricultural Report, completed by *Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy* is included in the submission of this planning application. Landscape and visual impacts identified by these reports include the following:

- The proposal requires the removal of a total of 21 trees: 8no. trees of moderate quality and value (Category B); 11no. trees and one group of self-seeded trees of low quality and value (Category C), and 2no. trees of poor quality (Category U). The trees for removal are located within the existing council carpark on Seatown Road, Swords Community Park, North Street and Main Street. Trees to be removed in the carpark area 4no. *Carpinus betulus* (Fastigate hornbeam).
- Site hoarding, construction traffic, ground disturbance and temporary structures required for construction will have a negative, moderate and short-term impact.
- Given the urban existing character of the site, the proposed landscape design will likely have a positive, moderate and permanent impact.
- Where the landscape is not maintained appropriately in accordance with horticultural best practice there may be a negative, moderate and permanent impact.
- Seventeen key views were chosen to illustrate the visual impact of the Proposed Development and are included within the Photomontage Report produced by Digital Dimensions. The Photomontage Report includes a view location plan showing the points the views were taken from. Slight to moderate, negative visual impacts are anticipated.

## 3.4 Environmental Management Measures

The construction and operational phases of the proposed development will consist of similar nuisance-generating activities in terms of plant and vehicle movements; hence the following mitigation measures shall apply to both the construction phase and the operational phase.

### 3.4.1 Noise

A preliminary risk assessment was carried out for the proposed site location in accordance with the Air Quality Monitoring and Noise Control Unit's Good Practice Guide for Construction and Demolition, produced by the London Authorities Noise Action Forum, July 2016. This assessment took into account factors relating to the proximity of the site to sensitive receptors and rated the level of nuisance anticipated with scheduled work practices.

Following the completion of this risk assessment, the proposed development was determined to be a **high-risk** site based on the densely settled setting. This section outlines suitable measures to minimise nuisance noise and dust emissions in order to minimise any impact of the proposed developments on surrounding receptors.

Marked variation of noise levels from those experienced as part of everyday life in an area can result in extreme disruption. Noise emanating from the project during the construction phase has the potential to impact off-site receptors.

The proposed development will be obliged to comply with BS 5228 “Noise Control on Construction and open sites Part 1”. The appointed contractor shall implement the following measures to eliminate or reduce noise levels where possible:

- All site staff shall be briefed on noise mitigation measures and the application of best practicable means to be employed to control noise.
- All staff should be briefed on the complaint’s procedure, the mitigation requirement and their responsibilities to register and escalate complaints received.
- Good quality site hoarding to be erected to maximise the reduction in noise levels.
- Contact details of the contractor and site manager shall be displayed to the public, together with the permitted operating hours.
- Material and plant loading and unloading shall only take place during normal working hours.
- Ensure that each item of plant and equipment complies with the noise limits quoted in the relevant European Commission Directive 2000/14/EC.
- Fit all plant and equipment with appropriate mufflers or silencers.
- Use all plant and equipment only for the tasks for which it has been designed.
- Locate movable plant away from noise sensitive receptors.
- Ensure at least 4 days’ notice is given to Fingal County Council Planning Department when applying for extensions to normal working hours. No out of hours work to be undertaken unless permission to do so has been granted.

### 3.4.2 Dust and Air Quality

Dust prevention measures will be put in place for any particulate pollution. The extent of dust generation under construction activities been carried out is dependent on environmental factors such as rainfall, wind speed and wind direction. The most likely sources of dust generation at this site include soil stripping and excavation of foundations for the new build warehousing units and the sawing of concrete during demolition and construction phases of the project.

Control Measures are outlined as follows:

- Soil will not be exposed until a replacing capping layer is almost ready to be placed. This is to ensure that soil is left exposed for the minimum amount of time possible.
- Material stockpiles will be strategically placed to reduce wind exposure. Materials will be ordered on an “as needed” basis to reduce excessive storage.
- All trucks will be required to use the truck wheel wash prior to exit from the site.
- A manned power washer shall be put in place to assist the wheel wash system.
- Appropriate dust suppression will be employed to prevent fugitive emissions affecting those occupying neighbouring properties or pathways.

- Restrict vehicle speeds to 15 kmph on-site as high vehicle speeds cause dust to rise.
- Covers are to be provided over soil stockpiles when high wind and dry weather are encountered if required.
- All consignments containing material with the potential to cause air pollution being transported by skips, lorries, trucks or tippers shall be covered during transit on and off site.
- Street and footpath cleaning shall be undertaken during the demolition and ground works phase to minimise dust emissions.
- No materials shall be burned on-site.

### 3.4.3 Surface Water Run Off

The main pollutants with the potential to impact site water are silt, fuel/oil, concrete and chemicals. There are a number of steps outlined below to eliminate contamination of site surface water runoff. The below recommendations are advised with reference to the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board recommendations for protection of adjacent water courses during the construction phase:

- Harmful materials such as fuels, oils, greases, paints and hydraulic fluids must be stored in bunded compounds well away from storm water drains and gullies. Refuelling of machinery should be carried out using drip trays.
- Runoff from machine service and concrete mixing areas must not enter storm water drains and gullies leading off-site.
- Stockpile areas for sands and gravel should be kept to minimum size, well away from storm water drains and gullies leading off-site.

### 3.4.4 Asbestos

An asbestos demolition survey report was carried out by specialist contractor *OHSS*. Prior to demolition of the building or structure asbestos containing materials must be removed and disposed of by a competent contractor. Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) removal will form part of a construction project and will require careful coordination to be carried out safely. Following removal of the asbestos containing materials a site clearance for reoccupation certificate must be obtained from a competent independent analyst prior to demolition of the structure in accordance with Regulation 15 (10) of the Safety Health and Welfare at Work (Exposure to Asbestos) Regulations 2006-2010

### 3.4.5 Bat Population

A Bat Survey Report was completed in August 2021 by O'Donnell Environmental recommended the following mitigation measures to ensure maximum protection to local bat populations:

#### **Loss of roosting sites:**

- Derogation license will be sought from NPWS in relation to works potentially affecting bat roosting with the 'Knights and Squires Chamber'.

- Removal of manmade structures and trees identified as having ‘low’ or ‘moderate’ suitability for roosting bats will take place when bats are active and within the months of May to October inclusive.
- A bat licensed Ecologist will be present to supervise removal/felling works.
- In the event that bat(s) are found to be present during works, works will be stopped and may only proceed with a roost derogation license issued by NPWS.
- Arboricultural advice will be sought regarding the protection of trees which are to be retained. At a minimum, appropriate root protection zones will be established prior to commencement of works using a robust barrier to prevent access by machinery during the construction phase.

***Disturbance due to illumination:***

- During construction if night-time lighting is required for health, safety or security reasons, lighting units will not be installed within 10m of existing treelines, watercourses or other sensitive ecological features outlined herein and lighting shall be directed away from such ecologically sensitive features.
- The Site Ecologist will be consulted on the placement of temporary lighting.
- In order to reduce the ecological disturbance of light spillage during the operational phase, the light sources used for public lighting (including subsequent replacements) have been specified as follows:
  - LEDs will be used, as these emit minimal ultra-violet light.
  - White and blue component will be avoided by using luminaires with a wavelength of less than 2,700 kelvin.
  - Wavelength of luminaires will peak higher than 550nm.

**3.4.6 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage**

The Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment, completed by Rubicon Heritage has recommended the following mitigation measures to minimise impacts on archaeological and cultural heritage receptors:

- A programme of archaeological excavation shall be carried out at the site of the proposed SCC Building (CH015) in advance of construction, to fully investigate and record the medieval and post-medieval features identified during archaeological monitoring undertaken in 2019 and archaeological test trenching in 2022. This should be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under license and in accordance with the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.
- A comprehensive programme of archaeological monitoring should be carried out to encompass the proposed Public Realm and Civic Space works adjacent to Swords Castle (within AAPs CH013 and CH014), including enabling, demolition, conservation/ stabilisation works and the soft and hard landscaping proposals (green space, paths, seating and planting) extending around the castle perimeter. This shall be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under Ministerial Consent in accordance with the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.

- Should any sub-surface archaeological features be identified during this process, it is recommended that they are preserved in situ and protected from any intrusive groundworks.
  - Preservation in situ will comprise of cleaning back and surveying the identified remains followed by strategic environmental sampling, prior to applying a protective covering comprised of successive layers of terram/ other geotextile layer and sand.
- A detailed architectural survey will be undertaken of Nos. 17 and 17A prior to demolition to fully record the wall fabric. The removal of renders or other works to determine the nature and composition of the wall fabric will be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced contractor under the direction of a conservation architect and archaeologist.
- A programme of conservation/ stabilisation works will be undertaken at the exposed section of the curtain wall of Swords Castle to the rear of Nos. 17 and 17A. The extent, form and detail of the required works will be designed and undertaken by a suitably qualified structural engineer. Any detailed proposals for such works will be agreed in advance with the Conservation and Heritage Officers within Fingal County Council and the National Monuments Service (DoHLGH).
- A comprehensive programme of archaeological monitoring shall be carried out to encompass all remaining groundwork elements associated with the Public Realm and Civic Space along North Street, Seatown Road, Bridge Street and Main Street, including (but not limited to) all enabling, and demolition works as well as construction groundworks and the landscaping proposals at County Hall. This should be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under license and in accordance with the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.
  - Where possible, every reasonable effort should be made to preserve *in situ* or reduce the impact on any identified archaeological material. Where preservation *in situ* cannot be achieved, either in whole or in part, then a programme of full archaeological excavation should be implemented to ensure the preservation by record of the portion of the site that will be directly impacted upon.
  - If significant archaeological material is encountered during the course of archaeological monitoring, then resolution of any such significant material will be determined in consultation with the Fingal County Heritage Officer and the National Monuments Service (DoHLGH).
- Written reports will be prepared detailing the results of all stages of archaeological work.

### 3.4.7 Architectural Heritage

The Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, completed by *JCA Architects* has recommended the following mitigation measures to minimise impacts on architectural heritage receptors:

- The mitigation of visual impacts to the Court House and Swords Castle has been integral to the design of the development.
- Mitigation against the impact of the scale of the new development is provided by the use of setbacks and changes in parapet line and materials of construction in the new building elements, which visually subdivide the elevations into a series of separate elements more appropriate to the surrounding streetscapes.
- All new elements have been designed in a contemporary manner and will allow the existing historic building to be easily read within the new development.
- While the proposed materials for the new building do not attempt to reproduce any architectural details of the historic buildings, allowing the historic Court House to retain its own character and significance, the massing of the west elevation of the North Block mimics the proportions of the courthouse's central section to allow the two to read as a pair.
- The historic building elements immediately adjoining the site will be protected during demolition works. Method statements for this protection have been prepared by the conservation architect and accompany this application.
- Protection or Conservation repair work to historic fabric to be retained should be carried out by specialist contractors with relevant experience of working with historic buildings.
- It is noted that Bernadette Goslin's 1987 Swords Heritage Project's Architectural Inventory of Swords (Irish Architectural Archive) shows the buildings to be demolished located on the Eastern side of North Street in very poor condition or undergoing very substantial internal works at that time. It is unlikely that there remains significant historic building fabric that would be apparent from external or internal visual inspection here. However, the enabling works period does offer an opportunity for archaeological supervision of demolition and site clearance during which earlier fabric or remains of structures on the site could be identified. It is recommended that the structures proposed for demolition are fully assessed for underlying significance and properly recorded as part of an archaeological brief to record and monitor the demolition of these structures as part of enabling works.

### 3.4.8 Visual Impact

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment report, completed by *Dermot Foley Landscape Architects* has recommended the following mitigation measures to minimise the projects visual impact:

#### **Construction Phase:**

- Retention of Category B trees as outlined in Arborist Report by *Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy*.
- Installation of a root protection barrier as specified in Arborist report.
- Installation of extensive tree, hedge, groundcover and lawn areas in accordance the drawings provided within the Landscape Plan prepared by *Dermot Foley Landscape Architects*.

- Construct the proposed landscape design as shown on drawing 2001 *Landscape Plan* by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects so that the site develops in character and integrates into the surrounding urban environment.
- Install the tree planting shown on drawing 2001 *Landscape Plan* by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects so that the tree planting matures to integrate the proposed development into the existing green character associated with parkland to the west and north-west of the site.
- Plant tree species and sizes as per the proposed landscape plan in order to maintain views of the castle
- Plant grass mix and low-level herbaceous mix shown on drawing 2001 *Landscape Plan* by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects

#### **Operational Phase:**

- Maintain all vegetation in accordance with the Design Rationale by *Dermot Foley Landscape Architects*, included separately as part of this planning submission.
- Install replacement planting for any plants that fail during the maintenance and defects liability period.
- Site to be monitored regularly for signs of invasive species.
- Maintain and manage all proposed vegetation to ensure the creation and definition of a new sequence of spaces, integrated into the surrounding context.
- Site to be monitored regularly for signs of invasive species.
- Maintain and manage proposed tree planting to ensure that it matures in planting to ensure that it matures to match existing trees proximate to site.

### **3.5 Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **3.5.1 Construction Project Manager**

The Construction Project Manager/Site Manger will have the overall responsibility of ensuring the measures outlined in the Project CMP/EOP are adhered to for the duration of the construction phase. The primary responsibilities of the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger are as follows:

- Promotion of awareness of environmental issues associated with each project phase/site rules.
- Facilitate environmental audits and site visits.
- Monitor the impact of construction/operational traffic on local traffic conditions.
- Monitor the impact of construction/operational traffic on local road conditions.
- Awareness and implementation of relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidance notes as stated in the CMP/EOP.
- Conduct regular site inspections to facilitate the timely identification of environmental risks or incidents.
- Ensure all construction activities are carried out with minimal risk to the environment.

- Report environmental incidents in a timely manner to the project environmental consultant and the relevant authorities.

### 3.5.2 Project Environmental Consultant

The main contractor will nominate a suitably qualified person/organisation as the Project Environmental Consultant, prior to construction works taking place. The primary responsibilities of the Project Environmental Consultant are as follows:

- Quality assurance of the Project CMP/EOP.
- Update of the Project CMP/EOP as required paying particular attention to site-specific environmental hazards or changes in legislation.
- Ensuring compliance of Project CMP/EOP with the conditions of the Planning Permission.
- Provide expertise to the Construction Project Manager/Site Manager on environmental concerns.
- Conduct the various specialist environmental monitoring tasks outlined in **section 3.4**.
- Prompt response to environmental issues if they arise.

### 3.5.3 Project Ecologist

The main contractor will nominate a suitably qualified person/organisation as the Project Ecologist, prior to construction works taking place. The primary responsibilities of the Project Ecologist are as follows:

- Provide expertise to the Construction Project Manager/Site Manager on ecological concerns.
- Conduct the various specialist ecological monitoring tasks outlined in **section 3.4**.
- Prompt response to ecological issues if they arise.

### 3.5.4 Resident Engineer

Typically, the Resident Engineer's primary role involves assurance that the construction work of a project is carried out according to the quality, time and cost requirements of the contract. A significant degree of cross-over can usually be anticipated between the roles of a Resident Engineer, a Construction Project Manager and an Environmental Consultant. With respect to the Project CMP, the Resident Engineer is expected to play a crucial role in the Traffic Management Plan along with the following responsibilities:

- Performing or coordinating site inductions.
- Monitoring the performance of subcontractors.
- Monitoring the performance of the traffic management plan.
- Managing and supervising less experienced site engineers and operatives.
- Ensuring that work activities have been carried out in accordance with the plans, specifications and industry standards.

- Ensuring that tests and inspections are performed.
- Liaising with construction management to remove any hazards associated with work activities.
- Ensuring that delivered materials meet specifications and established quality standards.
- Initiating and maintaining records, back-charge procedures, progress reports etc.

### 3.6 Awareness and Training

#### 3.6.1 Environmental Induction

The key environmental topics outlined in **section 3.4** will be summarised and integrated into the general site induction. Site-specific concerns and best work practices will be outlined to all contractors and sub-contractors due to carry out work at the site. As a minimum this will include:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Construction Project Manager; the Environmental Consultant, Project Ecologist and the Resident Engineer; along with the responsibilities of contractors/sub-contractors themselves.
- Incident and complaints procedure.
- Outline of the EOP structure.
- Site specific environmental concerns.
- Best work practices

#### 3.6.2 Toolbox Talks

Daily toolbox talks will be conducted by the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger as standard practice. It is the duty of the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger to liaise with the Project Environmental Consultant, Project Ecologist and Resident Engineer to assess site operations for environmental concerns particularly as the project advances and new activities commence. Appropriate mitigation measures will be devised and communicated to the relevant personnel prior to the commencement of any such activities.

### 3.7 Environmental/Ecological Incidents and Complaints Procedure

The Construction Project Manager/Site Manger will maintain a register of environmental and ecological incidents which will document the nature, scale and severity of any environmental incident or complaint which arises as a result of site activities. In the event of an environmental incident the following steps must be followed:

- The Project Environmental Consultant / Project Ecologist is notified immediately.
- The Project Environmental Consultant / Project Ecologist will liaise with the competent authority if necessary.
- The details of the incident will be recorded on an Environmental/Ecological Incident Form which will record the following details:
  - Cause of the incident
  - Extent of the Incident

- Immediate actions
- Remedial measures
- Recommendations made to avoid reoccurrence
  
- If the incident has impacted on an ecologically sensitive receptor (SPA, SAC, NHA) an ecological specialist will be consulted.
- The Project Environmental Consultant, Project Ecologist and Construction Project Manager will fully cooperate with any investigations conducted by the competent authority.

## 4 Initial EIA Screening

### 4.1 Project Categorisation

A detailed description of the proposed development is outlined in **section 3.1**. In terms of the different categories of development listed in **Schedule 5** of the of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2018*, there are two aspects of the project which are relevant to the thresholds outlined in **Part 1** and **2** of Regulations:

1. Demolition of several buildings on North Street and Seatown Road.
2. Construction of a new 4-storey building on the site of the Fingal County Council carpark.
3. Modification of the public realm including provision of a new green area and incorporation of a public square with a high quality paved surface.
4. Surface level carpark.

#### 4.1.1 Part 1 Activities

Considering the categories listed in Part 1 of the Regulations, the subject development does not correspond to any activity which requires a mandatory EIA.

Based on these criteria, the proposed activity is below the Part 1 thresholds, hence a mandatory EIA is **not required** for the project based on this category.

#### 4.1.2 Part 2 Activities

Considering the categories listed in Part 2 of the Regulations, the subject development most relates to category 10. (b) “Infrastructure Projects”.

**Category 10. (b):** *‘Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks. Project thresholds as follows:*

- i. *Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.*
- ii. *Construction of a car-park providing more than 400 spaces, other than the a car-park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development.*
- iii. *Construction of a shopping centre with a gross floor space exceeding 10,000 square metres.*
- iv. *Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district\*, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.*

**\* In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use**

In relation to the threshold set in **Category 10 (b)**, the proposed development in not residential in nature; does not consist of a car-park unrelated to the primary purpose of the development; and is not classed as a shopping centre, hence thresholds set in Category 10 (i), (ii), and (iii)

will not be exceeded by the proposed development. In relation to the threshold set in category 10 (iv), the proposed development would be classified as a “business district” as defined by the regulations however the total area of the proposed development is defined as 1.68ha, which is below the lowest possible threshold set of 2ha.

As a result, EIA is **not required** for the project based on this category.

## 4.2 Project Screening Determination

Based on a review of the relevant categories listed in **Schedule 5, Part 1 and 2** of Regulations the proposed development is not deemed eligible for a mandatory EIA, a sub-threshold EIA or an exemption.

The proposed development is to be delivered by the Local Authority under **Part 8** (Provisions with respect to specified development by, or on behalf of, or in partnership with local authorities) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.

Certain developments by planning authorities prescribed under **Section 179** (Local authority own development) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended that are not listed in **Part 1 of Schedule 5** and that do not meet or exceed a stated threshold for EIA of a class of development listed in **Part 2 of Schedule 5** (i.e. where requirement for EIA is not mandatory) are subject to a Preliminary Examination in accordance with Article 120 of the PDR 2001 for the requirement, or not, for ‘sub-threshold’ EIA.

The Preliminary Examination must consider, at least, the nature, size or location of the proposed development. Therefore, the proposed development is subject to further screening under the relevant criteria outlined in **Schedule 7** of the regulations. This exercise is outlined in **section 5** of this report.

## 5 EIA Screening

Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018* outlines specific criteria for the determination of EIA requirements for sub-threshold projects, summarised in **section 2.4** of this report. Specific aspects of the project are screened against these criteria in **Tables 5.1 to 5.3** below.

### 5.1 Characteristics of Proposed Development

Table 5.1. Section 7 Criteria to determine the characteristics of the proposed development

Section 7 Criteria	Information
(a) size and design of the whole of the proposed development	<p>The proposed development site covers an area of 1.58ha. A description of the project and of the construction methodology is provided in <b>section 3</b> of this report.</p> <p>The proposed location of the site is within a densely settled urban area, with a population density ranging from of 1,227 per km<sup>2</sup> to 7,127 per km<sup>2</sup>. Access to the site will be from North Street.</p> <p>The existing single or double-storey vacant units will be replaced by a 4-storey building. This visual impact posed by this change is offset by the presence of the castle walls to the west and the 3/4-storey council building to the southeast.</p> <p>The size and design of the project is not likely to cause significant negative effects on the environment.</p>
(b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	<p>A review of existing and previous planning applications under consideration by Fingal County Councils indicates that developments locally are mainly of a minor nature, consisting primarily of one-off residential units. There was also the occasional application noted for medium sized commercial developments and industrial installations.</p> <p>It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant negative effects on the environment.</p>
(c) nature of any associated demolition works	<p>OHSS, a specialist asbestos management contractor have carried out an asbestos survey to HSG264 requirements for the purposes of identifying asbestos containing materials (ACM) in the premises(s) prior to planned demolition.</p> <p>The proposed demolition are localised and minor in nature. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated.</p>
(d) use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	<p>The project does not include the extensive use of natural resources.</p>

<p><b>(e) production of waste</b></p>	<p>No negative impacts arising from the use of land or soil are anticipated</p>
	<p>It is not anticipated that significant quantities of waste will be generated as a result of site activities other than that typical of restaurants/café's both of which are minor in nature at this site.</p>
<p><b>(f) pollution and nuisances</b></p>	<p>Potential noise, light, air quality and water pollution impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>The release of suspended solids into the watercourse may occur during periods of rainfall, as surface water runoff from the site enters the watercourse.</p> <p>The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of soil, water courses and groundwater bodies.</p> <p>Dust, Noise and Vibration will be generated from HGV traffic entering and exiting the site and by 360° excavators and dozers during soil extraction. Baseline environmental survey's will be conducted for each of these parameters and these will be monitored during the operation of the facility at a frequency to be agreed by the local authority.</p> <p>Disturbance to commuting and foraging bats as a result of the proposed works is expected to be minimal given the general absence of foraging and commuting habitat and high level of anthropogenic disturbance which currently occurs. Overall, the proposed scheme is likely to result in a permanent, 'imperceptible', negative effect on bat ecology at a local scale.</p> <p>Overall significant negative impacts to archaeological and cultural receptors are anticipated to be slight to moderate in nature. Slight to Moderate positive impacts are anticipated on the Swords Castle National Monument and Court House.</p> <p>Overall significant negative impacts to architectural receptors are anticipated to be slight to moderate in nature. Slight to Moderate positive impacts are anticipated on the Swords Castle National Monument and Court House.</p> <p>Significant negative effects on the environment are not likely to arise due to pollution or nuisance due to the nature and scale of the project and the mitigation measures proposed.</p>
<p><b>(g) risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge</b></p>	<p>Standard construction practices will be employed throughout the construction phase and the conditions set out in the project Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be adhered to.</p> <p>A review of PFRA and CFRAM maps for the area confirms that the site is outside lands at risk from pluvial, fluvial or coastal flooding.</p>

**(h) risks to human health  
(e.g. due to water  
contamination or air pollution)**

The site drainage system will be designed to control the flow of incident run-off in an effort to imitate the natural greenfield run-off rate of the site.

The development will not be at risk from flooding and will not lead to flooding elsewhere.

The potential impacts due to risk of accidents and/or disasters are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development including standard procedures that will be applied.

Asbestos is a known human carcinogen (cancer causing agent) that was used extensively in Ireland up to 2000 when it was finally banned from use. Asbestos fibres may cause fatal lung disease when inhaled. These diseases are not sudden and may take many years to develop from the first exposures. **Prior to demolition of the building or structure asbestos containing materials will be removed and disposed of by a competent contractor.**

Other risks to human health posed by the project are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development including standard procedures that will be applied to avoid effects.

## 5.2 Location of the Proposed Development

Table 5.2. Section 7 Criteria to determine the characteristics of the site environs

Section 7 Criteria	Information
<b>(a) existing and approved land use</b>	The existing use of the land consists of public roadways, a car-park and several vacant buildings.
<b>(b) relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground</b>	<p>The Ward River runs in a S-N direction ca. 118m west of the site boundary and currently has a 'Poor WFD status' according to EPA Maps. Construction &amp; Demolition activities are not deemed to pose a risk to this nearest water receptor, provided the mitigation measures outlined in the project CEMP are adhered to.</p> <p>The site overlies a locally important aquifer with a GW vulnerability classed as 'High'.</p> <p>General housekeeping and measures to prevent nuisances at the site will be outlined in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the Environmental Operation Plan (EOP).</p> <p>Following the implementation of the above measures, impacts to soil, land and biodiversity are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development.</p>
<b>(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</b>	

<p><b>i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths</b></p>	<p>The proposed development is not located close to wetlands, coastal zones, mountains and forest areas, nature reserves or parks.</p>
<p><b>ii. coastal zones and the marine environment</b></p>	<p>The proposed development site is not hydrologically connected to the marine environment.</p>
<p><b>iii. mountain and forest areas</b></p>	<p>The proposed development site is not within or directly connected to any mountain or forest areas.</p>
<p><b>iv. nature reserves and parks</b></p>	<p>The proposed development is not within or directly connected to any nature reserves or parks.</p>
<p><b>v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive</b></p>	<p>The AA screening report which accompanies this application identified eighteen designated sites within 15 km of the proposed development. All 8 of these sites were eliminated during stage 1 of the screening process on the basis of there being no hydrological connectivity between the proposed development and the designated area. This report concluded the nature and scale of the proposed activities at this site posed no significant impacts upon the Natura 2000 site identified hence flora, fauna and biodiversity is not anticipated to be affected.</p> <p>A bat survey report which accompanies this application notes the disturbance to commuting and foraging bats as a result of the proposed works is expected to be minimal given the general absence of foraging and commuting habitat and high level of anthropogenic disturbance which currently occurs.</p>
<p><b>vi. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure</b></p>	<p>The site is not located within such an area.</p>
<p><b>vii. densely populated areas</b></p>	<p>The site is located within the Swords electoral district, a densely settled urban area, with a population density ranging from of 1,227 per km<sup>2</sup> to 7,127 per km<sup>2</sup> measured in the 2016 Census The majority of settle directly adjacent to the proposed development are commercial in nature with the exception of land use to the south where settlement is predominantly residential.</p> <p>The measures pertaining to dust and noise, outlined in the Project CEMP are expected to minimise negative impacts to the local residents.</p>
<p><b>viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance</b></p>	<p>There is a protected structure – Swords &amp; Balbriggan District Courthouse (Ref No. 350) located within the site boundary.</p> <p>There is a National Monument – Swords Castle (DU011-034001) located adjacent to the site boundary. An unclassified Mill is located ca. 73m SW of the site. The archaeological assessment of the proposed Swords Cultural Quarter development identified 23 sites</p>

	<p>of archaeological, and/or cultural heritage significance within the study area. These comprise three recorded monuments (RMPs), one of which — Swords Castle, is also a Protected Structure and a National Monument, six protected structures (PS), which are also listed in the NIAH, one other structure listed in the NIAH, four areas of archaeological potential (AAP), two townland boundaries (TB) and seven unregistered cultural heritage sites (UCH).</p> <p>The proposal requires the removal of a total of 21 trees: 8no. trees of moderate quality and value (Category B); 11no. trees and one group of self-seeded trees of low quality and value (Category C), and 2no. trees of poor quality (Category U). The trees for removal are located within the existing council carpark on Seatown Road, Swords Community Park, North Street and Main Street. Trees to be removed in the carpark area 4no. <i>Carpinus betulus</i> (Fastigate hornbeam).</p> <p>Site hoarding, construction traffic, ground disturbance and temporary structures required for construction will have a negative, moderate and short-term impact.</p> <p>Given the urban existing character of the site, the proposed landscape design will likely have a positive, moderate and permanent impact.</p> <p>Where the landscape is not maintained appropriately in accordance with horticultural best practice there may be a negative, moderate and permanent impact.</p> <p>Seventeen key views were chosen to illustrate the visual impact of the Proposed Development and are included within the Photomontage Report produced by Digital Dimensions. The Photomontage Report includes a view location plan showing the points the views were taken from. Slight to moderate, negative visual impacts are anticipated.</p>
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### 5.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Table 5.3. Section 7 Criteria to determine the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed development

Section 7 Criteria	Information
<p>(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),</p> <p>(b) nature of the impact</p>	<p>The site is located in a densely populated area and is not in close proximity to any environmentally sensitive receptors. Some slight impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed activity however the extent of these is anticipated to be localised hence significant impacts are not envisaged.</p>

<p><b>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</b></p>	<p>Potential impacts identified to the local population included noise, dust and traffic. Given the mitigation measures proposed, the systems and practices in place and the low population density within the surrounding environs, impacts to human health are anticipated to be slight.</p>
<p><b>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b></p>	<p>The release of suspended solids into a watercourse are unlikely to occur during periods of rainfall due to the distance of the nearest water receptor.</p> <p>The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of water courses and groundwater bodies.</p> <p>Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been carried out for the proposed development in order to address the potential impact on Natura 2000 sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). This assessment addresses the potential impact the project may have on the Qualifying interest (habitats and species) and Special Conservation Interests (Birds) of the designated sites and the conservation objectives for same. The AA Screening Report recommended that AA is not required in respect of the Project. There are no impacts and effects to Natura 2000 sites predicted to occur as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>Disturbance to commuting and foraging bats as a result of the proposed works is expected to be minimal given the general absence of foraging and commuting habitat and high level of anthropogenic disturbance which currently occurs. Overall, the proposed scheme is likely to result in a permanent, 'imperceptible', negative effect on bat ecology at a local scale.</p> <p>Overall, the residual effects from an ecological perspective are not anticipated to be significant and impacts to biodiversity, flora and fauna is anticipated to be slight.</p>
<p><b>iii. Land and Soil</b></p>	<p>The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of soil both on-site and at neighbouring sites.</p> <p>This risk is mitigated by a rigorous waste acceptance procedure, highly trained members of staff and good housekeeping practices.</p>
<p><b>iv. Air &amp; Climate</b></p>	<p>None identified or likely.</p>
<p><b>v. Material Assets, landscape and cultural heritage including architectural aspects</b></p>	<p>The development does not require any acquisition of privately owned lands, any loss of land / property used by the community or any demolition of valuable property.</p> <p>The development will not give rise to a revaluation of or change in the development potential of adjoining lands / properties.</p> <p>A primary aim of the proposed development is to enhance and accentuate the existing cultural heritage represented by the above structures, replacing vacant, non-descript buildings and car-parking spaces with public amenities. Overall significant negative impacts to archaeological and cultural receptors are anticipated to be slight to moderate. In some cases Impacts to visual, historical, cultural or archaeological features are anticipated to be enhanced by the</p>

	<p>proposed development particularly in relation to Swords Castle National Monument and the Town Court House.</p> <p>It is not considered that any elements of the development proposals will cause any direct or visual impacts with respect to previously recorded and/or extant archaeological monuments or architectural heritage features.</p> <p>The proposal requires the removal of a total of 21 trees: 8no. trees of moderate quality and value (Category B); 11no. trees and one group of self-seeded trees of low quality and value (Category C), and 2no. trees of poor quality (Category U). The trees for removal are located within the existing council carpark on Seatown Road, Swords Community Park, North Street and Main Street. Trees to be removed in the carpark area 4no. <i>Carpinus betulus</i> (Fastigiata hornbeam).</p> <p>Site hoarding, construction traffic, ground disturbance and temporary structures required for construction will have a negative, moderate and short-term impact.</p> <p>Given the urban existing character of the site, the proposed landscape design will likely have a positive, moderate and permanent impact.</p> <p>Where the landscape is not maintained appropriately in accordance with horticultural best practice there may be a negative, moderate and permanent impact.</p> <p>Seventeen key views were chosen to illustrate the visual impact of the Proposed Development and are included within the Photomontage Report produced by Digital Dimensions. The Photomontage Report includes a view location plan showing the points the views were taken from. Slight to moderate, negative visual impacts are anticipated.</p>
<p><b>vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics</b></p>	<p>Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats were considered.</p> <p>Mitigation measures implemented are expected to reduce the residual impacts associated with such to slight/negligible.</p>
<p><b>(c) transboundary nature of the impact</b></p>	<p>There are no transboundary impacts associated with this project.</p>
<p><b>(d) intensity and complexity of the impact</b></p>	
<p><b>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</b></p>	<p>Impacts during construction stage anticipated to be slight and temporary in nature and will have a low intensity type impact.</p>
<p><b>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b></p>	<p>Impacts during operation stage anticipated to be slight and long-term (8 years) in nature and will have a low intensity type impact.</p>
<p><b>iii. Land and Soil</b></p>	
<p><b>iv. Air &amp; Climate</b></p>	<p>None identified or likely.</p>
<p><b>v. Material Assets, landscape &amp; cultural heritage including architectural aspects</b></p>	<p>None identified or likely.</p>

<b>vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics</b>	Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats were considered.  Mitigation measures implemented are expected to reduce the residual impacts associated with such to slight/negligible.
<b>(e) Probability of the impact</b>	
<b>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</b>	Negative impacts associated with the construction stage are certain and temporary.  Negative impacts associated with the operation stage are possible, but unlikely and long-term.
<b>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	Impacts during construction stage are possible, but unlikely.  Impacts during operation stage are possible, but unlikely.
<b>iii. Land and Soil</b>	Impacts during construction stage are possible, but unlikely.  Impacts during operation stage are possible, but unlikely.
<b>iv. Air &amp; Climate</b>	No significant impact identified or likely.
<b>v. Material Assets, landscape &amp; cultural heritage including architectural aspects</b>	Negative impacts associated with the construction stage are certain and temporary.  While some slight to moderate impacts are anticipated the proposed development is anticipated to have an overall slight to moderate positive impact on the existing landscape and cultural heritage of the area.
<b>vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics</b>	None identified or likely.
<b>(f) Expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact</b>	
<b>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</b>	Construction & Demolition stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Effects associated with the operational phase are anticipated to be long-term.
<b>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	Construction & Demolition stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Operational phase impacts on Flora, Fauna, surface water, groundwater and biodiversity are anticipated to be slight and long-term.
<b>iii. Land and Soil</b>	Construction & Demolition stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Operational phase impacts on Flora, Fauna, surface water, groundwater and biodiversity are anticipated to be slight and long-term.
<b>iv. Air &amp; Climate</b>	Construction & Demolition stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. No impacts identified by operational stage.
<b>v. Material Assets, landscape &amp; cultural heritage including architectural aspects</b>	The potential impacts during the development will be associated with the Construction & Demolition stage. Overall positive impacts identified by operational stage.

<p><b>vi. interrelationship between the environmental topics</b></p>	<p>Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats are anticipated to be long-term but unlikely.</p>
<p><b>(g) cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment</b></p>	<p>It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant effects on the environment.</p>
<p><b>(h) possibility of effectively reducing the impact</b></p>	<p><b>Environmental receptors – highly likely:</b> Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and an Environmental Operating Plan (EOP) will be submitted by the main contractor to the local authority for approval and will include the following features designed to ensure maximum protection for the environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any excavations and/or vegetation removal will minimised during construction and/or maintenance works.</li> <li>○ Excavated material will not be stored immediately adjacent to watercourses.</li> <li>○ Disturbance to natural drainage features should be avoided during the construction and/or maintenance.</li> <li>○ Construction machinery should be restricted to public and or site roads. As a general rule machinery should not be allowed to access, park or travel over areas outside the footprint of proposed development.</li> <li>○ Suitable prevention measures should be put in place at all times to prevent the release of sediment to drainage waters associated with construction areas and migration to adjacent watercourses to reduce erosion and silt-laden runoff, create, where possible, natural vegetation buffers and divert runoff from exposed areas, control the volume and velocity of runoff, and convey that runoff away from watercourses.</li> <li>○ Where necessary drainage waters from construction areas should be managed through a series of treatment stages that may include swales, check dams and detention ponds along with other pollution control measures such as silt fences and silt mats.</li> <li>○ Where vegetation removal associated with treelines, hedgerows, individual mature trees, scrub or woodland is required, this shall only be undertaken outside the breeding bird season, between March and August inclusive.</li> <li>○ Where extensive areas of ground are to be exposed during route construction or maintenance dust suppression should be undertaken during periods of dry weather.</li> </ul>

- All chemical substances required during construction and/or maintenance works will be stored in sealed containers.
- Any refuelling or lubrication of machinery will not be undertaken within 50m of a watercourse
- Spill kits will be required on site during construction and/or maintenance works.
- Ensure non-native, invasive species do not occur at construction/maintenance areas, or if occurring, are not spread as a results of works. The NRA Guidance on invasive species, outlined above will be adhered to as well as the preparation and implementation of a site specific Invasive Species Management and Control Plan.
- Disseminate information on sensitive ecological receptors, such as sensitive habitats, breeding birds etc. occurring adjacent to or in the wider area. This information will aim to educate recreational users on the conservation status and sensitivities of such receptors to encourage responsible usage of the area.

**Ecological receptors – highly likely:** A Bat Survey Report was completed in August 2021 by O'Donnell Environmental recommended the following mitigation measures to ensure maximum protection to local bat populations:

***Loss of roosting sites:***

- Derogation license will be sought from NPWS in relation to works potentially affecting bat roosting with the 'Knights and Squires Chamber'.
- Removal of manmade structures and trees identified as having 'low' or 'moderate' suitability for roosting bats will take place when bats are active and within the months of May to October inclusive.
- A bat licensed Ecologist will be present to supervise removal/felling works.
- In the event that bat(s) are found to be present during works, works will be stopped and may only proceed with a roost derogation license issued by NPWS.
- Arboricultural advice will be sought regarding the protection of trees which are to be retained. At a minimum, appropriate root protection zones will be established prior to commencement of works using a robust barrier to prevent access by machinery during the construction phase.

***Disturbance due to illumination:***

- During construction if night-time lighting is required for health, safety or security reasons, lighting units will not be installed within 10m of existing treelines, watercourses or other sensitive ecological features outlined herein and lighting shall be directed away from such ecologically sensitive features.
- The Site Ecologist will be consulted on the placement of temporary lighting.

- In order to reduce the ecological disturbance of light spillage during the operational phase, the light sources used for public lighting (including subsequent replacements) have been specified as follows:
  - LEDs will be used, as these emit minimal ultra-violet light.
  - White and blue component will be avoided by using luminaires with a wavelength of less than 2,700 kelvin.
  - Wavelength of luminaires will peak higher than 550nm

**Archaeological receptors – highly likely:** The Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment, completed by Rubicon Heritage has recommended the following mitigation measures to minimise impacts on archaeological and cultural heritage receptors:

- A programme of archaeological excavation shall be carried out at the site of the proposed SCC Building (CH015) in advance of construction, to fully investigate and record the medieval and post-medieval features identified during archaeological monitoring undertaken in 2019 and archaeological test trenching in 2022. This should be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under license and in accordance with the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.
- A comprehensive programme of archaeological monitoring should be carried out to encompass the proposed Public Realm and Civic Space works adjacent to Swords Castle (within AAPs CH013 and CH014), including enabling, demolition, conservation/ stabilisation works and the soft and hard landscaping proposals (green space, paths, seating and planting) extending around the castle perimeter. This shall be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under Ministerial Consent in accordance with the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.
- Should any sub-surface archaeological features be identified during this process, it is recommended that they are preserved in situ and protected from any intrusive groundworks.
- Preservation in situ will comprise of cleaning back and surveying the identified remains followed by strategic environmental sampling, prior to applying a protective covering comprised of successive layers of terram/ other geotextile layer and sand.
- A detailed architectural survey will be undertaken of Nos. 17 and 17A prior to demolition to fully record the wall fabric. The removal of renders or other works to determine the nature and composition of the wall fabric will be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced contractor under the direction of a conservation architect and archaeologist.
- A programme of conservation/ stabilisation works will be undertaken at the exposed section of the curtain wall of Swords Castle to the rear of Nos. 17 and 17A. The extent,

form and detail of the required works will be designed and undertaken by a suitably qualified structural engineer. Any detailed proposals for such works will be agreed in advance with the Conservation and Heritage Officers within Fingal County Council and the National Monuments Service (DoHLLGH).

- o A comprehensive programme of archaeological monitoring shall be carried out to encompass all remaining groundwork elements associated with the Public Realm and Civic Space along North Street, Seatown Road, Bridge Street and Main Street, including (but not limited to) all enabling, and demolition works as well as construction groundworks and the landscaping proposals at County Hall. This should be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under license and in accordance with the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.
- o Where possible, every reasonable effort should be made to preserve in situ or reduce the impact on any identified archaeological material. Where preservation in situ cannot be achieved, either in whole or in part, then a programme of full archaeological excavation should be implemented to ensure the preservation by record of the portion of the site that will be directly impacted upon.
- o If significant archaeological material is encountered during the course of archaeological monitoring, then resolution of any such significant material will be determined in consultation with the Fingal County Heritage Officer and the National Monuments Service (DoHLLGH).
- o Written reports will be prepared detailing the results of all stages of archaeological work

**Architectural receptors – highly likely:** The Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, completed by *JCA Architects* has recommended the following mitigation measures to minimise impacts on architectural heritage receptors:

- o The mitigation of visual impacts to the Court House and Swords Castle has been integral to the design of the development.
- o Mitigation against the impact of the scale of the new development is provided by the use of setbacks and changes in parapet line and materials of construction in the new building elements, which visually subdivide the elevations into a series of separate elements more appropriate to the surrounding streetscapes.
- o All new elements have been designed in a contemporary manner and will allow the existing historic building to be easily read within the new development.
- o While the proposed materials for the new building do not attempt to reproduce any architectural details of the historic buildings, allowing the historic Court House to retain its own character and significance, the massing of the west elevation of the North Block mimics the proportions of the

courthouse's central section to allow the two to read as a pair.

- The historic building elements immediately adjoining the site will be protected during demolition works. Method statements for this protection have been prepared by the conservation architect and accompany this application.
- Protection or Conservation repair work to historic fabric to be retained should be carried out by specialist contractors with relevant experience of working with historic buildings.
- It is noted that Bernadette Goslin's 1987 Swords Heritage Project's Architectural Inventory of Swords (Irish Architectural Archive) shows the buildings to be demolished located on the Eastern side of North Street in very poor condition or undergoing very substantial internal works at that time. It is unlikely that there remains significant historic building fabric that would be apparent from external or internal visual inspection here. However, the enabling works period does offer an opportunity for archaeological supervision of demolition and site clearance during which earlier fabric or remains of structures on the site could be identified. It is recommended that the structures proposed for demolition are fully assessed for underlying significance and properly recorded as part of an archaeological brief to record and monitor the demolition of these structures as part of enabling works.

**Visual Impact Measure – highly likely:** The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment report, completed by *Dermot Foley Landscape Architects* has recommended the following mitigation measures to minimise the projects visual impact:

**Construction Phase:**

- Retention of Category B trees as outlined in Arborist Report by *Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy*.
- Installation of a root protection barrier as specified in Arborist report.
- Installation of extensive tree, hedge, groundcover and lawn areas in accordance the drawings provided within the Landscape Plan prepared by *Dermot Foley Landscape Architects*.
- Construct the proposed landscape design as shown on drawing 2001 *Landscape Plan* by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects so that the site develops in character and integrates into the surrounding urban environment.
- Install the tree planting shown on drawing 2001 *Landscape Plan* by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects so that the tree planting matures to integrate the proposed development into the existing green character associated with parkland to the west and north-west of the site.
- Plant tree species and sizes as per the proposed landscape plan in order to maintain views of the castle

- Plant grass mix and low-level herbaceous mix shown on drawing 2001 Landscape Plan by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects

**Operational Phase:**

- Maintain all vegetation in accordance with the Design Rationale by *Dermot Foley Landscape Architects*, included separately as part of this planning submission.
- Install replacement planting for any plants that fail during the maintenance and defects liability period.
- Site to be monitored regularly for signs of invasive species.
- Maintain and manage all proposed vegetation to ensure the creation and definition of a new sequence of spaces, integrated into the surrounding context.
- Site to be monitored regularly for signs of invasive species.
- Maintain and manage proposed tree planting to ensure that it matures in planting to ensure that it matures to match existing trees proximate to site.

## 6 Conclusions

The construction, demolition and operation of the proposed development does not trigger any thresholds for mandatory EIA/EIAR as set in EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended and transposed into Irish Law by the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2018*.

This EIA Screening Assessment has determined that the characteristics of the proposed development are considered not significant, detailed as follows:

- the scale and nature of the proposed development which is confined to an area 1.68 ha in size.
- the characteristics and sensitivities of the receiving environment in which no sensitive receptors are identified within the immediate vicinity of the site.
- the mitigation measures that will be implemented as part of the construction & demolition phase in the form of CEMP and, detailed in **Table 5.3**.
- the best practice procedures to be implemented at the site during the operational phase in accordance with EPA Best Practice Guidelines, listed in **Table 5.1**.

Given the scale and nature of the proposed development the overall risk posed to the environment is considered to be **low** with no significant impacts anticipated following the implementation of suitable mitigation measures associated with standard construction practices.

The information provided in this EIA Screening Report can be used by the competent planning authority, to assess whether an EIA is required for the proposed development relating to the proposed development as no significant effects are anticipated.

The overall conclusion for this screening exercise is that having considered the appropriate statutory criteria, Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for the proposed development.

