Proposed Development at Fortlawn, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Brady Shipman Martin

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Environmental Assessment **Built Environment**

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Contents

1 Introduction 1

1.1 Background 1
1.2 Expertise and Qualifications 1
1.3 Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment 2

2 Methodology 3

2.1 Guidelines 3
2.2 Baseline data collection and field visits 3

3 Description of the proposed development 4

3.1 Site Location 4
3.2 Development Description 5
3.3 Water Infrastructure 8
3.3.1 Surface Water Drainage 8
3.3.2 Foul Water Drainage 8
3.3.3 Water Supply 9
3.3.4 Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment 9

4 Screening for Appropriate Assessment 10

4.1 Background 10
4.2 Potential Zone of Influence (ZoI) 10
4.2.1 European Sites 11
4.2.2 Other designated areas (other than European sites) 14
4.2.3 Watercourses, and pathways to European sites 16

5 Potential impacts from the proposed works including in-combination effects 17

5.1 European sites and habitats with links to European sites 17
5.1.1 Potential impacts during the construction phase 17
5.1.2 Potential impacts during the operational phase 19
5.2 Summary of potential impacts of the proposed development 34

6 Mitigation specific to European sites 34

7 In-combination effects 35

8 Screening conclusion 37

9 References 38

Appendix I: Background 39

Stages in the assessment 39

Appendix II Conservation Objectives of European sites 41

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Fingal County Council (FCC) proposes to develop new housing at Fortlawn Avenue and Fortlawn Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

The development is proposed at two infill sites at Fortlawn Avenue and Fortlawn Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15; site A to the north and site B to the south (see Section 3.1). The proposed development will principally comprise of the demolition of 4 no. existing residential dwellings, and the construction of 21 no. new residential dwellings across the two sites.

The overall site area is 7189m² (0.72Ha) with a net development area of (0.48Ha). Site A is bound by: Residential boundary walls to the east and west; Cul-de-sacs on Fortlawn Park and Avenue to the north; Cul-de-sacs on Fortlawn Park and Avenue, and public open space to the south. Site B is bound by: Residential boundary walls to the east; Cul-de-sacs on Fortlawn Park and Avenue, and public open space to the north; Public open space to the west and south.

The Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029 contains policies and objectives relevant to Screening for Appropriate Assessment. The plan states (at Section 14.3.2, Objective DMSO1) that FCC must "*[e]nsure that all plans and projects in the County which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a European site or sites are subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment.*"

Brady Shipman Martin was appointed by the applicant to prepare a report to assist Fingal County Council, the competent authority, to undertake a screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment (AA). The purpose of the screening exercise is to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on European sites, taking into account their conservation objectives.

This document constitutes the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report ("AA Screening Report") prepared for this purpose.

A comprehensive study undertaken and the potential for significant effects on European sites, both as a result of the proposed works and in-combination with other plans and projects, is appraised in this report.

1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

This report has been prepared by Sadye Goldfarb, Ecologist and Environmental Consultant at Brady Shipman Martin. She holds a bachelor's degree (Hons.) in Environmental Science from the University of Vermont and a master's degree in Biodiversity and Conservation from Trinity College Dublin. Sadye is experienced in drafting and reviewing AA Screening Reports, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Reports, Ecological Impact Assessment Reports and Biodiversity Statements. She is a Qualifying Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

A technical review of this document has been completed by Senior Ecologist and Associate, Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM. Matthew is a highly experienced and qualified ecologist, with a master's degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 20 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental

Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King's Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

1.3 Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment

European sites make up a network of sites designated for nature conservation under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the "Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the "Birds Directive"). The requirements for Appropriate Assessment are set out under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)[1] (the "Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations") and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (the "Planning Acts").

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). As defined in section 177R of the Planning Acts "European site" means:

(a) a candidate site of Community importance,
(b) a site of Community importance,
(ba) a candidate special area of conservation,
(c) a special area of conservation,
(d) a candidate special protection area and
(e) a special protection area.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

> *"(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."*

The first test is to establish whether, in relation to a particular plan or project, appropriate assessment is required. Sections 177U of the Planning Acts require that the AA screening test must be applied to the proposed development, as follows:

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site;
- An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

The proposed development is not required for the management of any European Site and this AA Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Birds Directive, the Habitats Directive, the Planning Acts, the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations and all other relevant legislation.

[1] SI No. 477 of 2011

2 Methodology

2.1 Guidelines

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine,* September 2018, updated in September 2019 (V1.1), further updated in April 2022 (V1.2) and September 2024 (V1.3);
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (2010a). *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities;*
- DoEHLG (2010b). *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10: Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities;*
- European Commission (2021). *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites- Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;*
- European Commission (2018). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;*
- Directorate – General for Environment (European Commission), (2021). *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive*;
- National Roads Authority (NRA)[2] (2009). *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes;*
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021). *Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management;*
- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) (2021). *Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority.*

2.2 Baseline data collection and field visits

A desk-based assessment was undertaken in November and December 2024, updated in June 2025 and again in October 2025, of the site at Fortlawn and in the wider area. The appraisal focused on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) in the designations for European sites.

An assessment of habitat suitability for species with links to European sites was undertaken, in order to appraise the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites.

An examination of available information from Bat Conservation Ireland (BCI) and previous data from neighbouring sites was also undertaken to compile a list of most likely species in the overall area in addition to the evaluation of the habitat for bats. There are no bat species listed as Qualifying Interests in any European sites within the Zone of Influence. However, Article 12 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to take *requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of animal species listed in Annex IV(a) in their natural range*.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre was used to evaluate the site location and surrounding area for rare/protected and invasive plant species.

[2] Now Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

A specialist tree survey has been carried out by Charles McCorkell, Arboricultural Consultant. The Arboriculture Report is presented separately.

The site was visited by Matthew Hague of Brady Shipman Martin on 9 June 2025.

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
  - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (www.NPWS.ie);
  - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) (www.biodiversityireland.ie);
  - BirdWatch Ireland (www.birdwatchireland.ie);
  - Bat Conservation Ireland (www.batconservationireland.org).
- Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial imagery, including www.geohive.ie;
- Photographs taken at the site;
- Information on local watercourses from www.catchments.ie;
- Information on water quality in the area (www.epa.ie);
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area (www.gsi.ie);
- Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, August 2019);
- Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024);
- Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029;

The report takes full account of the design of the proposed development and a detailed examination of all relevant elements of the proposed development was undertaken.

3 Description of the proposed development

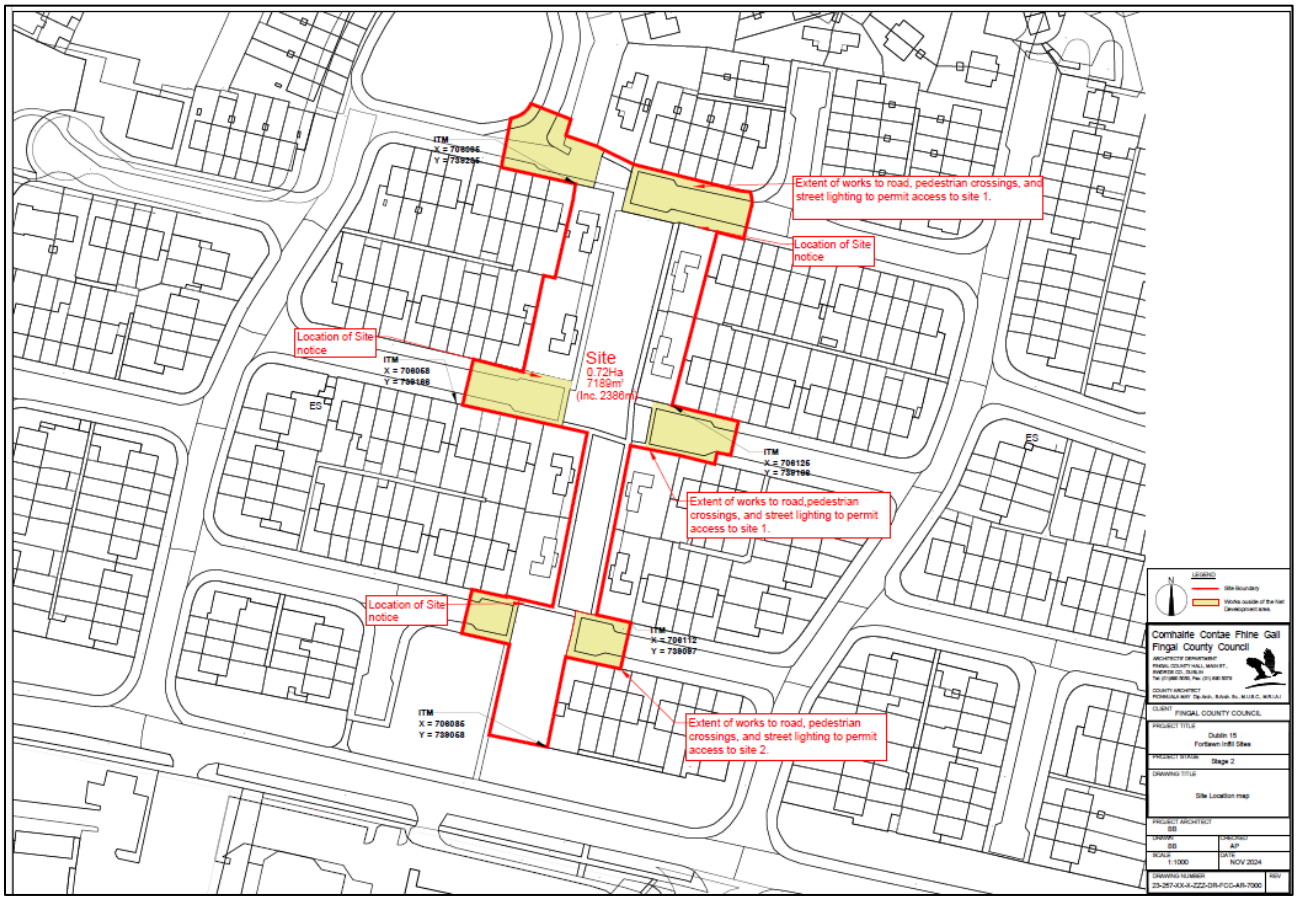
3.1 Site Location

The proposed development site is located at Fortlawn Avenue and Fortlawn Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, and is divided into two separate sites. Site A is generally bound by: residential boundary walls to the east and west; culs-de-sac on Fortlawn Park and Avenue to the north; culs-de-sac on Fortlawn Park and Avenue, and public open space to the south. Site B is generally bound by: residential boundary walls to the east; cul-de-sacs on Fortlawn Park and Avenue, and public open space to the north; public open space to the west and south. There is existing residential development adjoining almost all sides of the proposed development.

At present the subject site is comprised of buildings and artificial surfaces, amenity grassland, and flower beds and borders. Under the Fingal County Development Plan 2023 - 2029, the site is zoned as *'RS – Residential': Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity'* and *'OS - Open Space': Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities.* The surrounding area is also largely zoned as residential with pockets of open space & amenity.

Refer to **Figure 3.1.**

Figure 3.1 - The site of the proposed development at Fortlawn, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 (Fingal County Council Architect's Department, 2025).



3.2 Development Description

The two sites include: 6 no. cul-de-sacs and parts of the roads on Fortlawn Park and Fortlawn Avenue for alterations to the road and footpath layouts, the green open space centrally located between site A and site B, mains water, foul and surface water connection works.

The proposed works on Site A comprise of: Demolition of 4 no. detached, 3-bedroom, two-storey houses at no.'s 23A and 46A Fortlawn Avenue, and no.'s 63A & 81A Fortlawn Park, Blanchardstown, D15; Construction of 7 no terraced houses in one block comprising 1 no. 4-bedroom house (1 & 2- storeys) and 6 no. 3-bedroom houses (2-storeys) and associated boundary treatments, private open space, hard & soft landscaping, paved driveways, and bin and bicycle storage to mid-terrace units; Construction of 12 no. apartments in one block (2-storeys) comprising 6 no. 1-bedroom apartments (3 no. to each floor) and 6 no. 2-bedroom apartments (3 no. to each floor), with 3 no. shared entrances, stairs and plant areas, terraces and balconies and associated boundary treatments, communal open space with hard & soft landscaping (250m²), communal waste bin storage, communal and visitor bicycle storage, hard & soft landscaping to building perimeter, off street parking for 12 no. vehicles (incl. 2 no. disabled bays and 2 no. EV charging bays) and 2 no. motorcycle parking bays.

The proposed works on Site B comprise of: Construction of two no semi-detached houses,1 no. 4- bedroom house (1 & 2-storeys) and 1 no. 3-bedroom house (2-storeys) and associated boundary treatments, private open space, hard & soft landscaping, and paved driveways.

The development will also include the following: Demolition of 6 no. cul-de-sacs on Fortlawn Park and Fortlawn Avenue; New roads and pedestrian footpaths to provide access to Site A and Site B, linking Fortlawn Park and

Fortlawn Avenue in 3 no. locations with associated works including speed ramps, raised table pedestrian crossings, public lighting, street trees, hard & soft landscaping, improvements to existing open space creating areas of incidental play; and all associated site development, water, drainage and utility connection works, above and below ground.

Refer to **Figure 3.2**.

Figure 3.2 - Proposed site layout for the proposed development at Fortlawn, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 (Fingal County Council Architect's Department, 2025).

3.3 Water Infrastructure

3.3.1 Surface Water Drainage

As detailed in the Engineering report prepared by McMahon Associates (2025), the proposed drainage strategy will be designed to ensure surface water is captured and controlled on site and ensure the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on Flood Risk on and offsite.

The surface water strategy will follow the principle of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), whereby surface water is collected at source and the rate, volume and quality of runoff controlled and improved.

In accordance with the hierarchy for discharging surface water, infiltration testing has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of BRE Digest 365 and results showed low infiltration therefore this cannot be implemented.

The next preferred means of discharging surface water is to a watercourse. The sites are not located close to any watercourse or ditches; therefore, the sites will discharge to the existing storm manholes.

Site A:

The existing runoff rate from the site is 7.73 l/s (the sum of brownfield and greenfield runoff rates). As noted in the Engineering report "i*n order to make a betterment, surface water from each unit will be restricted via a 15mm orifice. As per the SuDS manual, orifices as small as 15mm can be provided to restrict runoff when utilising storage under pervious surfaces (provided that the opening is well protected from material that could potentially cause a blockage). Units 1-6 discharges at 0.6 l/s and Unit 7 discharges at a rate of 0.7 l/s, culminating in an overall restriction of 4.3 l/s. This is therefore a betterment to the current runoff rate*".

Site B:

As noted in the Engineering report "*A flow control device restricted to below 1.0 l/s or an orifice smaller than 15mm is not practical and may cause blockages, therefore, surface water from each unit will be restricted via a 15mm orifice. Discharge from the site will therefore have an overall restriction of 1.6 l/s*".

3.3.2 Foul Water Drainage

As part of the development, the foul water drainage network for the proposed dwellings will be separated from the surface water sewers, and will comply with the latest "Technical Guidance Document H - Drainage and Waste Water Disposal".

Site A North: A proposed uPVC 150mm diameter foul gravity sewer will collect the wastewater via soil vent pipes and inspection chambers from the proposed dwellings and discharge into the existing 225mm diameter PVC foul sewer to the northwest of the site.

Site A South: A proposed uPVC 150mm diameter foul gravity sewer will collect the wastewater via soil vent pipes and inspection chambers from the proposed dwellings and discharge into the existing 225mm diameter PVC foul sewer to the southeast of the site. 10No. of the apartments will discharge to the new foul sewer and 2No. of the apartments will discharge direct to the existing foul sewer.

Site B: A proposed uPVC 150mm diameter foul gravity sewer will collect the wastewater via soil vent pipes and inspection chambers from the proposed dwellings and discharge into the existing 225mm diameter PVC foul sewer to the northeast of the site.

All Sites: The pipes will be designed with a roughness coefficient (ks) of 0.15mm and designed to achieve a minimum self-cleansing velocity of 0.75m/s when flowing half full. All drainage pipes will need to be supported off firm bearing. This may require all soft material to be excavated underneath the pipe runs and backfilled

with stone. The depth of this will vary depending on location and invert level of pipe. A geotextile membrane should also be incorporated into the drainage trenches and also to the hardstanding areas.

A pre-connection enquiry (PCE) was submitted to Uisce Eireann and their response stated the wastewater connections were feasible without infrastructure upgrade.

3.3.3 Water Supply

Site A North:

As the existing 150mm watermain runs through the proposed private boundaries (as per Uisce Eireann mapping), it will be diverted via a new 150mm watermain in which 5No. of the units will be connected to. 2No. of the units will connect to the existing 150mm diameter watermain which is to be confirmed by Uisce Eireann's approval. These watermains will provide water to the dwellings via boundary box meters; each dwelling will have their own as per Uisce Eireann requirements.

Site A South:

A new 100mm diameter watermain is proposed to connect to the existing 100mm diameter watermain southwest of the site boundary; to be confirmed by Uisce Eireann's approval. Water to the dwellings will be provided via boundary box meters; each dwelling will have their own as per Uisce Eireann requirements.

Site B:

2No. individual connections to the existing 150mm diameter watermain located within the site boundary to the north is proposed subject to Uisce Eireann approval. Water to the dwellings will be provided via boundary box meters; each dwelling will have their own as per Uisce Eireann requirements.

Each meter will be connected to a 25mm diameter flexible pipe which will provide water to the dwellings.

3 no. new fire hydrants will be provided and located within the footpath at a minimum 6m distance from all properties to ensure each dwelling is within 46m of a fire hydrant as per Uisce Eireann Code of Practice Requirements. Uisce Eireann to advise if additional boundary box meters are required to allow monitoring of nighttime flows to new properties.

A pre-connection enquiry (PCE) was submitted to Uisce Eireann, and their response stated the water connections were feasible without infrastructure upgrade, but that Site A might require a contribution fee related to the network improvement works that would be requested at a connection application stage.

3.3.4 Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment

As set out in the Engineering Report prepared by McMahon Associates and submitted separately, a Flood Risk Assessment was completed in April 2023 for the Fingal County Development Plan. That study assessed the fluvial and coastal flood risk and the identified flood zones do not affect the Fortlawn sites. The proposed development site is situated just outside the pluvial flood mapping prepared by the OPW. Historic flood mapping recorded a previous flood event within c.630m of the site in 2000 and 2002; since then, action has been taken to clean the culvert that flooded. In 2005, a report confirmed remedial works (including piped drains) was carried out. As there have been no further recorded flooding events here following the remedial works, the site is not considered to be at risk of pluvial flooding.

There was another historic flood event 1km recorded; severe flooding of road along this location in 2002 due to high river levels and surface water drainage backup; since a protective berm was constructed in 2004 and no further flooding events have taken place here since therefore, the site is not considered to be at risk of pluvial or fluvial flooding.

Given the extensive modelling completed in the area and referenced in the county development plans, and that there is no historical flooding at the site identified on the OPW website, the flood risk for the site is therefore considered to be minimal and the site appropriate for residential development.

4 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

4.1 Background

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the proposed development on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

In accordance with sections 177U of the Planning Acts, screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out:

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site;
- An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

Screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation, and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

In addition to the foregoing, the OPR's Practice Note "*Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*", dated March 2021 – also details a number of key concepts relevant to AA Screening, including "*Best Scientific Knowledge/Information in the Field*" (pg.5), stating:

> *"The screening determination must be based on scientific information relevant to the likely effects on the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. The information should be up-to-date and based on the best available techniques and methods to estimate the presence and extent of effects. This is because if there is any scientific uncertainty as to the absence of significant effects, the project must be screened in for appropriate assessment.*
>
> *In the vast majority of cases the information provided by the applicant (including the project description) and publicly available information in relation to the European sites in question and information published by the NPWS, the EPA and others in relation to such sites, should provide a sufficient level of objective scientific information to allow the planning authority to make an informed decision on screening."*

Following screening therefore, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment under section 177V of the Planning Acts for the purposes of compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

4.2 Potential Zone of Influence (ZoI)

This assessment is based on the source-pathway-receptor model, which dictates that, for an effect to occur, there must be a 'source' (such as a construction site); a 'receptor' (such as a designated site for nature

conservation); and a 'pathway' between the two (such as a watercourse that links the construction site to the designated site). A construction site or completed development may also create a barrier to movement, for example, by preventing the migration of fauna along a river corridor, or by obstructing the migration of birds.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. In 2010, DoEHLG stated that (pp. 31 – 32):

> *"The approach to screening is likely to differ somewhat for plans and projects, depending on scale and on the likely effects, but the following should be included:*
>
> 1. *Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area*
> 2. *Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects*
> 3. *Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in mind the precautionary principle. In the cases of sites with water dependent habitats or species, and a plan or project that could affect water quality or quantity, for example, it may be necessary to consider the full extent of the upstream and/or downstream catchment."*

The 2021 Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) guidelines, *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, state that the Zone of Influence *"should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)"* (p. 8).

Therefore, considering the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, and in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model, the potential Zone of Influence for the proposed development is:

- Any site to which there is a pathway from the proposed development site during either the construction or operational phase of the development as defined in the following sections.

4.2.1 European Sites

The site of the proposed development is not under any designation for nature conservation. There are no European sites within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site in Fortlawn.

The nearest sites are as follows (see also **Figure 4.1**):

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
  - Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (site code 001398), c. 6.2km to the south west;
  - South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c. 14.2km to the south;
  - Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code 001209), c. 14.9km to the south;
  - North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c. 15.2km to the east;
  - Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205), c. 15.5km to the north east;

- Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code 002122), c. 17.2km to the south;
- Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c. 17.4km to the east;
- Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site code 000208), c. 18.3km to the north east;

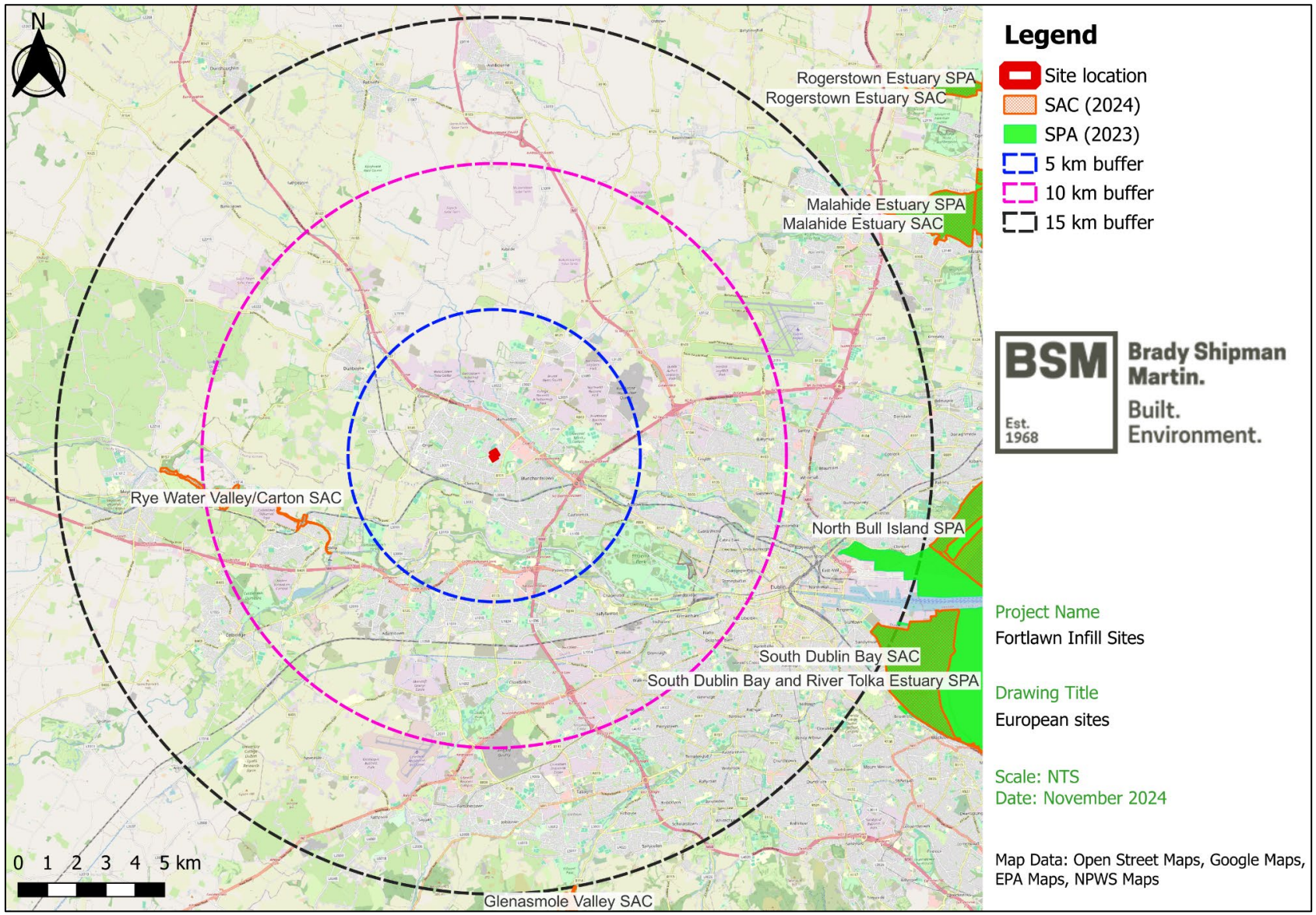
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)

- North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c. 12.2km to the east;
- South Dublin Bay and Rover Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004063), c. 14.2km to the south-east;
- Malahide Estuary SPA (site code 004025), c. 15.5km to the north east;
- Northwest Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236), c. 17.7km to the east;
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016), c. 17.9km to the east;
- Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040), c. 18.4km to the south;
- Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015), c. 18.9km to the north east.

Note that the above-listed distances are linear (i.e. 'as the crow flies').

The Conservation Objectives of these sites are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the QIs / SCIs in question. Where specific conservation objectives have been set out by the NPWS, 'favourable conservation condition' is defined in respect of specific attributes and targets for the habitat or species in question. For further information, refer to Appendix II.

Figure 4.1 - European sites within potential zone of influence of the proposed site. 5, 10 and 15km radii are shown for scale.



4.2.2 Other designated areas (other than European sites)

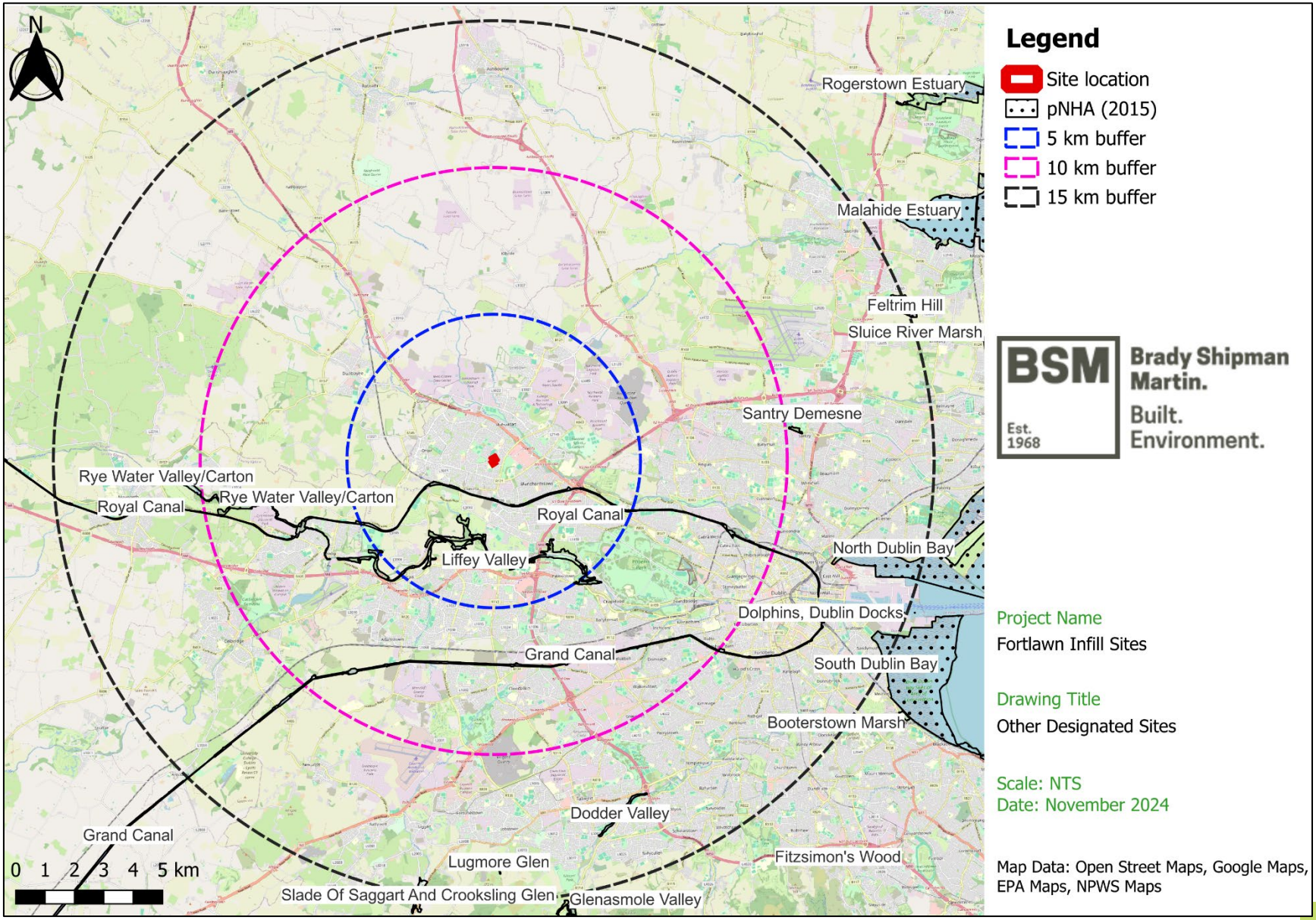
Designated Sites other than European sites (i.e. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)) are included in this assessment in order to address their potential to act as supporting sites for the European sites. There are no NHAs within the Zone of Influence, the nearest being Hodgestown Bog NHA, some 27.1km away. The pNHAs within the Zone of Influence include:

- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA)
  - Royal Canal pNHA (site code 002103), c. 1.2km to the south;
  - Liffey Valley pNHA (site code 000128), c. 2.1km to the south;
  - Rye Water Valley/Carton pNHA (site code 000395), c. 7.2km to the south-west;
  - Grand Canal pNHA (site code 002104), c. 6.8km to the west;
  - Santry Demesne pNHA (site code 000178), c. 9.9km to the east;
  - North Dublin Bay pNHA (site code 000206), c. 12.0km to the east;
  - Dodder Valley pNHA (site code 000991), c. 12.3km to the south-east;
  - Lugmore Glen pNHA (site code 001212), c. 13.3km to the south;
  - South Dublin Bay pNHA (site code 000210), c. 14.2km to the south-east;
  - Slade of Saggart And Crooksling Glen pNHA (site code 000211), c. 14.3km to the south;
  - Feltrim Hill pNHA (site code 001208), c. 14.5km to the north-east;
  - Glenasmole Valley pNHA (site code 001209), c. 14.9km to the south.

Note that above distances are as crow flies (i.e. linear distances). No impacts are expected on any pNHA in the zone of influence.

Figure 4.2 illustrates all of the pNHA within the potential Zone of Influence (including those which overlap with European sites).

Figure 4.2 - pNHA sites within potential zone of influence of the proposed site. 5, 10 and 15km radii are shown for scale.



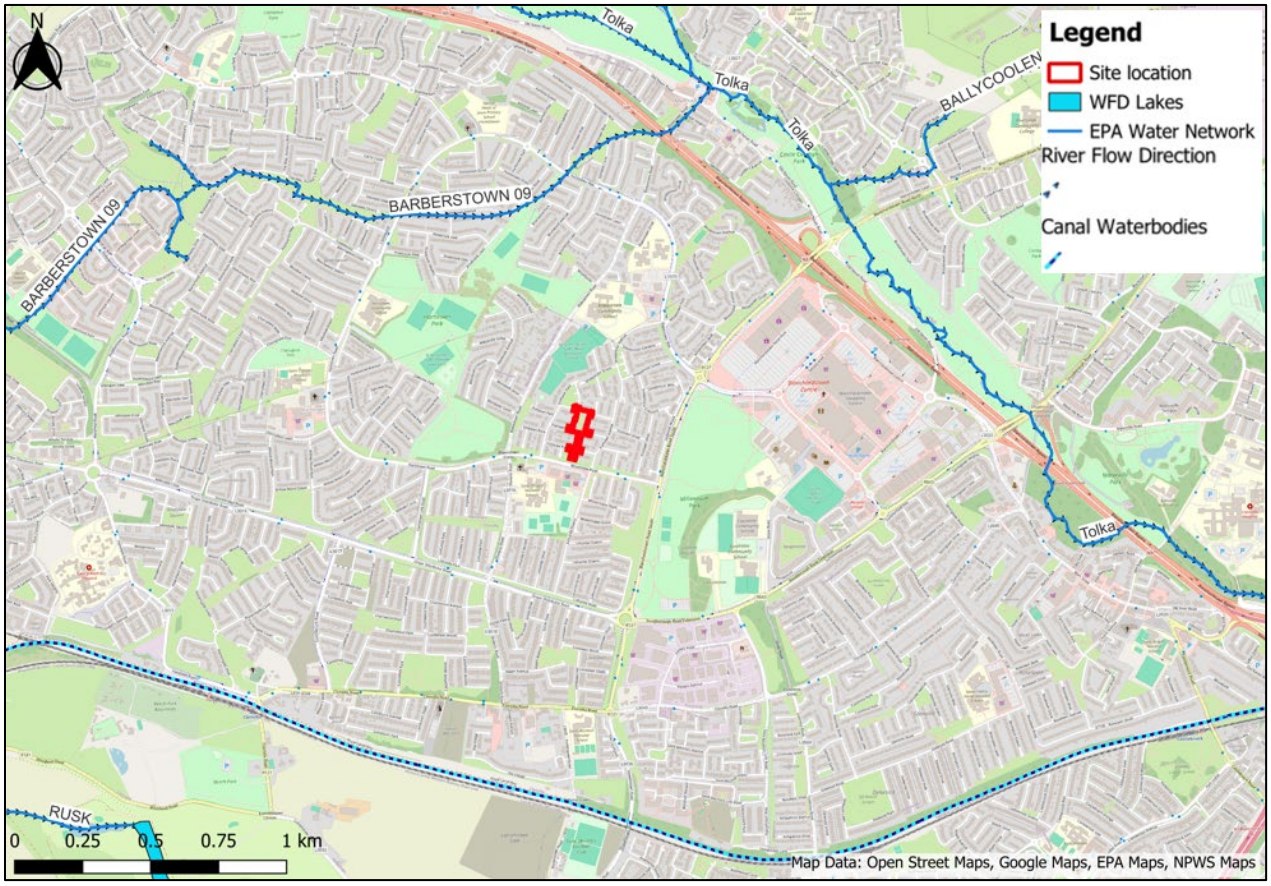
4.2.3 Watercourses, and pathways to European sites

A review of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) web-tool indicates that there are no surface water features present on the site or in the immediate vicinity. The nearest mapped watercourses are the Barberstown 09 c.750m (linear distance) to the north and apparently substantially culverted, and the Tolka River c.1.2km to the north-east. The Royal Canal Main Line is c.1.2km (linear distance) to the north.

There is no surface water pathway to any watercourse from the subject site. Refer to **Figure 4.3**.

The proposed development site is located within the Liffey and Dublin Bay catchment (9) and Tolka_030 river sub-basin. As per the WFD 2016-2021 status, the Barberstown 09 (IE_EA_09T010800) is of 'Poor' status and is 'At risk' for river waterbodies risk, the Royal Canal Main Line (Liffey and Dublin Bay) (IE_09_AWB_RCMLE) is 'Good, and 'At risk', and the Tolka River (IE_EA_09T011000) is 'Poor' and 'At risk'.

Figure 4.3 - EPA waterbodies in the vicinity of the proposed development site.



5 Potential impacts from the proposed works including in-combination effects

5.1 European sites and habitats with links to European sites

The proposed development site is comprised almost entirely of buildings and artificial surfaces, amenity grassland, and flower beds and borders, with some hedgerows and trees present along perimeters and within the greenspace in Site A. 39 no. trees were recorded in the arboricultural survey completed on 5th November 2024, and to facilitate the proposed development, 28 trees, 2 shrubs and 4 ornamental hedgerows of low quality and 4 trees of poor quality are required to be removed.

The proposed development site is not under any wildlife or conservation designation. The NPWS and NBDC databases were consulted with regard to rare species (Curtis & McGough, 1988) and species protected under the Flora Protection Order (2022). There are no records of any rare or threatened plant species protected under the *Flora Protection Order* (2022) within the 2km grid square that covers the site (Square O03U). The 2km grid square takes in a significantly wider area than the subject site, and the presence of a species in the grid square is *not necessarily indicative of its presence on the subject site*. The third schedule invasive plants noted within the 2km grid square include American Skunk-cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) which are not known to be present on or near the site.

No rare habitats or habitats of any ecological value (i.e. International, National or County Importance, or Local Importance) are present, and there are no Key Ecological Receptors at the proposed development site.

Badgers, otters (protected under Article 12 of the Habitats Directive), amphibians or reptiles are not likely to be present within the proposed development area. The site, in its current state, is of some limited local value for nesting birds. None of the trees have significance for roosting bats and the existing buildings are of no more than low suitability for roosting bats. Nevertheless, as bats are very small and highly mobile creatures, as a precautionary measure, prior to demolition a bat survey shall be undertaken by a suitably experienced bat specialist.

There is no habitat on the site suitable for use, even on a very occasional basis, by any overwintering birds, such as pale-bellied Brent goose, or any other protected bird species listed as a Special Conservation Interest (SCI) in any European site within the Zone of Influence.

None of the habitats or features present on the site are Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests in any European site within the Zone of Influence and none of these Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests (see column 2 in Table 5.1 in Section 5.1.2) are present on the site. There is no evidence of any habitats or species with links to European sites and no 'reservoir' type habitats (habitats which have the potential to support Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest species in any European site) are present.

Overall, the site of the proposed development is of no more than **Local (lower Value) importance**, at most, as defined by the ecological resource valuations presented in the National Roads Authority/Transport Infrastructure Ireland *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes* (NRA/TII, 2009 (Rev. 2)).

5.1.1 Potential impacts during the construction phase

The proposed development comprises a local authority infill residential development project. There is no possibility of any of the QIs or SCIs of the European Sites in the potential Zone of Influence ever occurring at the proposed development site.

All site clearance and construction activities pose a potential risk to water as surface / ground water arising at the site may contain contaminants. The main contaminants arising from construction activities may include suspended solids, hydrocarbons and concrete / cement products. If not properly managed, such pollutants could pose a temporary risk to surface water quality in the local surface water network during construction.

Considering the distance to the nearest mapped watercourses, and the lack of a realistic pathway, polluted surface water will not be emitted directly to any surface water body. There is a possibility that contaminated surface water from the site could enter the municipal surface water drainage network and be indirectly discharged to surface waters (e.g. during extreme rainfall events and / or high tides), thereby creating an indirect hydrological pathway linking the proposed development site with European Sites downstream. Even in the event of such an emission, considering the high dilution factor and the potential receiving watercourses, and the distances to the nearest European Sites, it is not remotely likely that perceptible ecological effects could arise in this way.

Despite the presence of indirect pathways, the risk of contamination of any watercourses or groundwater is extremely low, and even in the event of a pollution incident significant enough to impact upon surface water quality on the site, it is reasonable to assume that this would not be perceptible in any European sites, for the following reasons:

- There is a significant distance between the site of the proposed development and the nearest European sites and there is no direct pathway between the proposed development site and the European site, other than potentially via the surface water drainage network;
- Any pollution from site clearance and construction works would be minimal in quantity and if it entered local drainage network it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters any watercourse. A significant level of dilution and mixing of surface water would occur in any event and the pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters;
- In addition, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period. There is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development, given the nature and scale of the proposed development and its location in the centre of a busy town away from the European sites.

The proposed site clearance and construction works may be expected to involve noisy activities, dust-generating activities, construction traffic and machinery, and the generation of waste material for off-site disposal. Typical environmental effects are predicted, including elevated levels of noise, emissions of dust, and direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions. Generally speaking, these effects will be short-term in duration, reversible and localised. Existing vegetation of limited ecological value will also be cleared under the scope of the proposed works.

In terms of groundwater, hydrology and ecology, there are no SACs or groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE) receptors downgradient or in close proximity to the site. Therefore, without an environmental receptor being present, the risk is considered to be low. Therefore, the development does not pose a risk to any highly sensitive groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems.

There are no designated sites – national or European – at the site of the proposed development or in the immediate vicinity. Considering the distance of the proposed development from the nearest European Sites in the potential Zone of Influence, and the absence of any associated QIs or SCIs, there is no likelihood of direct effects on any European Site arising as a result of the proposed development.

There is no possibility of any other potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any European site during the site clearance and construction phase. For example, there will be no land-take from any European site and there will be no resource requirements such as water abstraction. Similarly, there will be no emissions to air

from construction vehicles that could remotely impact any European site. Dust, noise and vibration arising during demolition will similarly be entirely remote from any European site.

There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the proposed works, no predicted impact on *ex-situ* species and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

Construction-related impacts as a result of the proposed works, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.

Significant effects arising as a result of the proposed construction works on European sites (or on proposed Natural Heritage Areas), can therefore be excluded.

5.1.2 Potential impacts during the operational phase

During the operational phase, typical environmental aspects and effects associated with the presence and operation of residential development are also predicted, including potable water consumption, foul water loading to the municipal network, and direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions. Operational phase effects are expected to be permanent in duration. The site is zoned for residential development.

As per the Engineering Report prepared by McMahon Associates (2025), Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and Nature Based Systems (NBS) for managing stormwater for the proposed development will be in accordance with the Fingal County Council Green Blue Infrastructure for Development Guidance Note. The proposed surface water drainage network will provide the surface water attenuation via the drainage stone layer of the permeable paving. The surface water will infiltrate through various additional SuDS components prior to reaching the attenuation systems such as permeable paving, rainwater butts and raingardens, acting as source control and surface water treatment before entering the existing storm line. Additionally, rainwater butts will be provided for each roof (houses only) which will collect and treat runoff before discharging to the filter drain (within the permeable paving) via an overflow pipe if the water is not utilised by the homeowner/tenant for e.g. plant watering. To the front of the houses and apartments, raingardens will be provided to collect roof runoff which will collect same and filter through the filter bed (treating the runoff), then onto the filter drain prior to entering the main sewer line.

Even in the total absence of any SuDS measures there would be no impacts on any European sites. The significant distances to European sites and the natural characteristics of the receiving waters ensure rapid mixing of water such that there is no possibility of any appreciable effect on water quality in European sites in any event.

According to the Engineering Report and in accordance with the requirements of the OPW 2009 publication "*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*", the proposed development site is situated just outside the scope of OPW's pluvial flood mapping. A residential development on the subject site is appropriate.

Significant effects related to surface water management or flooding, arising as a result of the operation of the proposed development, on European sites (or on proposed Natural Heritage Areas), can therefore be excluded.

As per the Engineering Report prepared by McMahon Associates (2025), the proposed foul drainage network for the site will comprise a series of 150mm and 225mm pipes where applicable. A pre-connection enquiry (PCE) was submitted to Uisce Eireann, and their response stated the wastewater connections were feasible without infrastructure upgrade.

Significant effects related to foul water management, arising as a result of the operation of the proposed development, on European sites (or on proposed Natural Heritage Areas), can therefore be excluded.

There is no possibility of any other potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any European site once the proposed development is operational. There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the operation of the proposed development, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

Significant effects arising as a result of the operation of the proposed development, on European sites (or on proposed Natural Heritage Areas), can therefore be excluded.

Full details of the potential impacts of the proposed works on European sites are presented in **Table 5.1.**

Table 5.1 - Potential impacts on designated sites in the potential Zone of Influence

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (site code 001398), c. 6.2km to the south-west	▪ [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) ▪ [1014] *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) ▪ [1016] *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 December 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SAC. It is approximately 6.2km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	No
South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c. 14.2km to the south	▪ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide The following habitats are listed as Qualifying Interests on the NPWS website, but are not included in the Conservation Objectives document: ▪ (1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines ▪ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand ▪ 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes) According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 August 2013), for	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SAC. It is approximately 14.2km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.		
Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code 001209), c. 14.9km to the south	■ [6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites) ■ [6410] *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) ■ [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) * indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 10 December 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SAC. It is approximately 14.9km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	No
North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c. 15.2km to the east	■ [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ [1210] Annual vegetation of drift lines ■ [1310] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SAC. It is approximately 15.2km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	■ [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) ■ [2110] Embryonic shifting dunes ■ [2120] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) ■ [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) ■ [2190] Humid dune slacks ■ [1395] *Petalophyllum ralfsii* (Petalwort) According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 6 November 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.		
Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205), c. 15.5km to the north east	■ [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ [1310] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ [1320] Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*) ■ [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) ■ [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SAC. It is approximately 15.5km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	■ [2120] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) ■ [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 May 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.		
Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code 002122), c. 17.2km to the south	■ [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) ■ [3130] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or *Isoeto-Nanojuncetea* ■ [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds ■ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* ■ [4030] European dry heaths ■ [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths ■ [6130] Calaminarian grasslands of the *Violetalia calaminariae*	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SAC. It is approximately 17.2km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	■ [6230] Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) ■ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) ■ [8110] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*) ■ [8210] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation ■ [8220] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation ■ [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles ■ [1355] *Lutra lutra* (Otter) * indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 31 July 2017), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.		
Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c.	■ [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ [1310] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SAC. It is approximately 17.4km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitat or species,	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
17.4km to the east	▪ [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) ▪ [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 19 November 2012), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.	fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	
Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site code 000208), c. 18.3km to the north east	▪ [1130] Estuaries ▪ [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ▪ [1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand ▪ [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) ▪ [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) ▪ [2120] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) ▪ [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 14 August 2013), for each of the listed	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SAC. It is approximately 18.3km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.		
		Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c. 12.2km to the east	▪ [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) ▪ [A048] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) ▪ [A052] Teal (*Anas crecca*) ▪ [A054] Pintail (*Anas acuta*) ▪ [A056] Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) ▪ [A130] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) ▪ [A140] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) ▪ [A141] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) ▪ [A143] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) ▪ [A144] Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) ▪ [A149] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) ▪ [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) ▪ [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) ▪ [A160] Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) ▪ [A162] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) ▪ [A169] Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) ▪ [A179] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SPA. It is approximately 12.2km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	▪ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds According to this SPA's Site-Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9 March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.		
South Dublin Bay and Rover Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004063), c. 14.2km to the south-east	▪ [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) ▪ [A130] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) ▪ [A137] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A137] ▪ [A141] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) ▪ [A143] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) ▪ [A144] Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) ▪ [A149] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) ▪ [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) ▪ [A162] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) ▪ [A179] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) ▪ [A192] Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) ▪ [A193] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SPA. It is approximately 22.2km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	■ [A194] Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) ■ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds According to this SPA's Site-Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9 March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.		
Malahide Estuary SPA (site code 004025), c. 15.5km to the north east	■ [A005] Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) ■ [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) ■ [A048] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) ■ [A054] Pintail (*Anas acuta*) ■ [A067] Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) ■ [A069] Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) ■ [A130] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) ■ [A140] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) ■ [A141] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) ■ [A143] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) ■ [A149] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) ■ [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SPA. It is approximately 15.5km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	▪ [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) ▪ [A162] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) ▪ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds According to this SPA's Site-Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 16 August 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.		
Northwest Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236), c. 17.7km to the east	▪ [A001] Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*) ▪ [A003] Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*) ▪ [A009] Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) ▪ [A013] Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) ▪ [A017] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) ▪ [A018] Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*) ▪ [A065] Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) ▪ [A177] Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) ▪ [A179] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) ▪ [A182] Common Gull (*Larus canus*)	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SPA. It is approximately 17.7km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	■ [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) ■ [A184] Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) ■ [A187] Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) ■ [A188] Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) ■ [A192] Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) ■ [A193] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) ■ [A194] Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) ■ [A195] Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*) ■ [A199] Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) ■ [A200] Razorbill (*Alca torda*) ■ [A204] Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) According to this SPA's Site-Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 19 September 2023), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.		
Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016), c. 17.9km to the east	■ [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) ■ [A048] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) ■ [A137] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SPA. It is approximately 17.9km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
	▪ [A140] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) ▪ [A141] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) ▪ [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) ▪ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds According to this SPA's Site-Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 February 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.		
Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040), c. 18.4km to the south	▪ [A098] Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) ▪ [A103] Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) According to this SPA's Site-Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 16 July 2024), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SPA. It is approximately 18.4km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.	No
Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015), c.	▪ [A043] Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) ▪ [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) ▪ [A048] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development site and this SPA. It is approximately 18.9km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or	No

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source – Pathway – Receptor link	Likely significant effect?
18.9km to the north east	▪ [A056] Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) ▪ [A130] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) ▪ [A137] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) ▪ [A141] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola)* ▪ [A143] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) ▪ [A149] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpina*) ▪ [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) ▪ [A162] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) ▪ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds According to this SPA's Site-Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 20 May 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.	disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.	

5.2 Summary of potential impacts of the proposed development

There will be no land-take from any European site and there will be no resource requirements such as water abstraction. Similarly, there will be no emissions to air from construction vehicles that could remotely impact any European site. Dust, noise and vibration arising during construction will similarly be entirely remote from any European site.

There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the construction or operation of the proposed development, no predicted impact on *ex-situ* species and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

There will also be no significant effects on any European sites as a result of:

- Habitat loss and/or fragmentation;
- Land-take;
- Resource requirements such as water abstraction;
- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Noise pollution / vibration impacts;
- Light pollution;
- Emissions to air (including dust);
- Emissions to water.

Additionally, for the reasons outlined in this report for the European sites, no impacts on any other designated sites including proposed Natural Heritage Areas, will occur.

6 Mitigation specific to European sites

This screening assessment is consistent with the judgment of the European Court in Case C-323/17, People Over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte (Judgment of the Court (Seventh Chamber) of 12 April 2018) and the recent case-law of the High Court, including Heather Hill Management Company CLG v An Bord Pleanála [2019] IEHC 450 and Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála [2020] IEHC 39.

It is also consistent with the judgment in Eco Advocacy CLG v An Bord Pleanála [2021] IEHC 265. In that case, Humphreys J confirmed the core legal principle, being that regard should not be had to mitigation measures at AA screening stage. Humphreys J decided in that case that clarification was required from the CJEU on the matter (as it related to the consideration of SUDs and whether these represented mitigation measures).

The CJEU, in its ruling on this case dated 15 June 2023 clarified issues defining mitigation in the context of European sites[3]. It confirmed that Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43 *must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project for a site, account may be taken of the features of that plan or project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site, where those features have been incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site.*

In relation to European sites, there will be no impacts capable of giving rise to any likely significant effects as a result of the proposed development. SuDS measures will be incorporated into the design of the proposed

[3] https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=274644&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=21723482

development as standard features. SuDS features are highly effective and are required to be included in developments where appropriate. These standard measures are considered best practice in construction and, therefore reasonable scientific doubt concerning their effectiveness can be ruled out.

As set out in this report, it is certain that likely significant effects on European sites as a result of both the construction and operation of the proposed development can be excluded. Even if no SuDS measures were to be incorporated into the design there could be no impacts on European sites.

No mitigation is necessary or proposed for the protection of European sites.

7 In-combination effects

It is a requirement of Section 177U of the Planning Acts that when considering whether a plan or project will have a significant effect on a European site the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other plans and projects. The assessment should consider plans and projects that are completed, approved but uncompleted, or proposed (but not yet approved).[4] If there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site alone, then these effects must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

The following sources were consulted to identify relevant other plans or projects:

- EIA Portal (www.housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com – accessed October 2025);
- Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 (FCC, 2023);
- Fingal County Council Planning Application Search (https://www.fingal.ie/view-or-search-planning-applications -- accessed October 2025);
- An Board Pleanála database (www.pleanala.ie – accessed October 2025).

Permitted and proposed projects in the immediate vicinity of the site were considered in terms of the potential for in-combination effects. There are no developments planned, permitted or under construction that will give rise to any significant effects on European sites in combination with the proposed development. This includes projects that are currently under construction, have recently been granted planning permission or are awaiting a decision:

- LRD0001/S3, Lands at Site A (White Car Park), Blanchardstown Town Centre, Coolmine, Dublin 15.- Permission was granted in May 2023. The development consists of a ten year planning permission for a Large-scale Residential Development (LRD). The application site has an area of c. 6.62ha and relates to a portion of the existing surface car park (known as the White Car Park) for Retail Park 2, a section of Road G and Road E (including the associated roundabout junction), a section of Road C and Road D (including the associated roundabout junction), a section of Blanchardstown Road South, and associated verges and footpaths. The application site is bound by Blanchardstown Road South to the northwest, Retail Park 2 and existing surface parking to the north/north-east, Road G to the south/south east, and Road E to the east. The proposed Large-scale Residential Development comprises the construction of a mixed use development, consisting of 971 no. apartments (comprising 117 no. studio apartments, 368 no. 1 bed apartments, 422 no. 2 bed apartments, and 64 no. 3 bed apartments) in 7 no. buildings (Blocks A, B, C, D, E, F, and G) ranging from 1 no. to 16 no. storeys in height, over a basement level (below 6 no. of the blocks), and provision of a Mobility Hub, with 7 no. levels. The development includes 7 no. commercial units (for Class 1- Shop, or Class 2- Office /

[4] *Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, September 2021)*

Professional Services, or Class 11 Gym, or Restaurant / Café use, including ancillary takeaway use) in Blocks A, C, G and the Mobility Hub, 1 no. Community Facility and 1 no. Place of Worship in the Mobility Hub, 1 no. Childcare Facility in Block A, and ancillary resident amenity floorspace to serve the residential units (in Blocks A, B, D, E and F).

- FW22A/0147, townland of Clonsilla, Dublin 15, and is partially occupied by buildings formerly, associated with St. Joseph's Hospital. The site is bounded to the south-west by Park Heights road, to the north-west by Park Crescent road, to the north-east by Hansfield – Permission has been granted for A residential development comprised of 181 no. apartments and duplex units, together with a childcare facility, on a site measuring c. 3.6 Ha which is part of Zone 5 "Hospital" of the Hansfield Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Scheme 2006. The application site is in the townland of Clonsilla, Dublin 15, and is partially occupied by buildings formerly associated with St. Joseph's Hospital. The site is bounded to the south-west by Park Heights Road, to the north-west by Park Crescent road, to the north-east by Hansfield Wood Lawn estate, and to the east and south by St Joseph's Hospital. The proposed development includes for the demolition of existing buildings on site (c. 2, 791 sq.m total) and the construction of 181 no. apartments and duplex units, together with a childcare facility, in 8 no. three to six storey blocks. The proposed development is located on lands within the boundaries of Hansfield Strategic Development Zone {SDZ) as defined by Statutory Instrument No. 273 of 2001. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report, which also constitutes an Environmental Impact Statement for the purposes of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2022, has been prepared in respect of the proposed development.
- FW22A/0047, Site B (Library Car Park) and Site C (Blue Car Park), At Road C, and Road D, Blanchardstown Town Centre, Coolmine, Dublin 15 – Permission has been granted for a proposed mixed use development consisting of the construction of 352 no apartments (comprising 44 no. studios, 132 no 1 bed apartments, 155 no. 2 bed apartments, and 21 no. 3 bed apartments) and ancillary resident amenity floor space, 5 no commercial units(for class 1- shop, or class 2- office/professional services or class 11, Gym or restaurant/Café use including ancillary takeaway use), and 1 no. community facility, in six no buildings (Blocks A,B,C,D,J, and K), ranging from 5no. to 13 no. storeys in height. The development includes for an extension of the existing multi storey car park from 4 no. levels to 6 no levels and associated alterations to the existing multi storey carpark to facilitate the development. Blocks J and K are proposed on the Library Car Park (site B) and Blocks A, B, C and D are located on the Blue Car Park site (Site C). The construction of 2 no. additional levels, with a total of 458 no. additional car parking spaces (increasing from 4 no. levels to 6 no. levels), is proposed on the existing multi storey car park (located in the Blue Car Park) to provide replacement car parking for the surface car parking to be removed from the application site and associated car parking provision for Blocks A, B, C, D, J and K. The proposals include a new entrance, reconfiguration of parking spaces and internal circulation routes, reconfiguration of cores and associated alterations to the existing multi storey car park. The proposal also includes new walls and elevations treatment to the south and east elevations of the existing multi storey car park to facilitate the adjacent residential blocks. 2 no. surface parking spaces are provided adjacent to Block A, 4 no. surface parking spaces are provided adjacent to Block K and 109 no. car parking spaces are also provided in an under croft floor level within Blocks J and K to serve the residential units within those blocks. Provision of telecommunications infrastructure at roof level comprising of 6 no 0.3m microwave link dishes enclosed within GRP radio friendly shrouds, mounted on 3 no. steel support poles (2m in height above the lift shaft overrun) together with all associated equipment. The proposal includes road, pedestrian and cycle upgrades cycle upgrades and associated alterations to the road infrastructure within the application site boundary. The proposal includes vehicular accesses, a loading bay, and new road infrastructure he adjacent to Block J and K up to the site boundary. The proposed development includes public open space, landscaping and public

realm improvements, cycle parking, 2 no, ESB Substations and associated switch rooms, bin stores and plant rooms, green roofs and PV panels at roof level. The associated site and infrastructural works include site clearance and excavation, provision of utilities and associated civil works, foul and sun drainage and public lighting, along with all ancillary works.

- ABP-313892-22 – Bus Connects Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme
- ABP-314232-22 – DART+ West Railway Order - Dublin City to Maynooth and M3 Parkway

The Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 has a series of objectives intended to protect and enhance the natural environment. For example, the Plan contains significant objectives to protect and enhance green infrastructure within the county. It also includes policies for to protect water bodies and watercourses, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains, within the County from inappropriate development.

Furthermore, the zoning, policies and objectives set out in the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 are intended to protect the environment while encouraging development in appropriate areas. The proposed development complies with these objectives in the context of nature conservation.

The proposed development will not impact on the flow of water through the area, nor increase potential flood impacts. It is in compliance with all of the relevant Plan objectives.

A number of other plans were considered when assessing in-combination effects, but it was determined that there would be no in-combination effects with these:

- The National Planning Framework (Project Ireland 2040);
- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019 – 2031 (The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly);
- Climate Action Plan 2025 (Government of Ireland);
- Fingal County Council Fingal Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029;
- 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030.

None of these plans grant development consent so do not in themselves generate a specific adverse effect that can be assessed along with the proposed development for the purposes of the in-combination assessment.

Considering the nature and scale of the proposed development, the localised and insignificant nature of the environmental effects predicted to occur as a result of the proposed development, and the nature of existing, permitted and proposed development in its environs, it is considered that significant in combination effects on European sites are not likely to occur.

8 Screening conclusion

In view of best scientific knowledge this report concludes that the proposed residential development at Fortlawn Avenue and Fortlawn Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, individually or in combination with another plan or project, **will not have a significant effect on any European sites.** This conclusion was reached without considering or taking into account mitigation measures or measures intended to avoid or reduce any impact on European sites.

It is considered that this report provides sufficient relevant information to allow the Competent Authority (Fingal County Council) to carry out an AA Screening under Section 177U of the Planning Acts and reach a determination that the proposed development will not have any likely significant effects on European sites under in light of their conservation objectives.

9 References

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Appendix I: Background

The European[5] network is a Europe-wide network of ecologically important sites (SPAs and cSACs – also known as 'European Sites' or 'Natura 2000 sites') that have been designated for protection under either the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) or the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna).

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is *"to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the treaty applies".* Any actions taken must be designed to *"maintain or restore, at a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest".* Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, an assessment is required where a plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site but may give rise to significant effects upon a European site.

In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs), candidate SPAs (cSPAs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process and treated the same as SACs and SPAs.

Article 6 (paragraphs (3) and (4)) of the Habitats Directive states that:

> (3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.
>
> (4) If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.
>
> Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish law by means of the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2021* (hereafter referred to as the *Birds and Habitats Regulations*)[6] and by the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended.

In Ireland, the statutory agency responsible for the designated areas is NPWS.

Stages in the assessment

European Commission guidance (2021)[7] sets out the principles on how to undertake decision making in applying the Habitats Directive. The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise three distinct stages":

[5] The EU Habitats Directive, Article 3.1, states "*A Coherent European ecological network of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC shall be set up under the title Natura 2000*"
[6] SI No. 477 of 2011 and subsequent amendments
[7] *Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, September 2021)*

Stage one: screening. The first part of the procedure consists of a pre-assessment stage ('screening') to ascertain whether the plan or project is directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of a Natura 2000 site, and, if this is not the case, then whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the site (7) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) in view of the site's conservation objectives. Stage one is governed by the first part of the first sentence of Article 6(3).

Stage two: the appropriate assessment. If likely significant effects cannot be excluded, the next stage of the procedure involves assessing the impact of the plan or project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) against the site's conservation objectives, and ascertaining whether it will affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, taking into account any mitigation measures. It will be for the competent authorities to decide whether or not to approve the plan or project in light of the findings of the appropriate assessment. Stage two is governed by the second part of the first sentence and the second sentence of Article 6(3)..

Stage three: derogation from Article 6(3) under certain conditions. The third stage of the procedure governed by Article 6(4). It only comes into play if, despite a negative assessment, the developer considers that the plan or project should still be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. This is only possible if there are no alternative solutions, the imperative reasons of overriding public interest are duly justified, and if suitable compensatory measures are adopted to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.

Appendix II Conservation Objectives of European sites

The conservation objectives for a European Site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to 'favourable conservation status' (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below[8]:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- its natural range and the area it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined (i).

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

The 2019 Guidance from the European Commission[9] indicates that the general objective of achieving FCS for all habitat types and species listed in Annexes I and II to the Habitats Directive needs to be translated into site-level conservation objectives.

The European Commission guidance recommends that screening should fulfil the following steps:

1. ascertaining whether the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site;
2. identifying the relevant elements of the plan or project and their likely impacts;
3. identifying which (if any) Natura 2000 sites may be affected, considering the potential effects of the plan or project alone or in combination with other plans or projects;
4. assessing whether likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 site can be ruled out, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

[8] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01992L0043-20130701
[9] Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2019)

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