

Screening for Appropriate Assessment for Site at Sommerville, Dundrum Road, Dublin 14



Brian Keeley B.Sc. (Hons)

Malgorzata Wilkowska MSc.

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1. Statement of Authority	3
1.2. National commitments to floral and faunal protection	3
2. Methodology	5
3. Identification of NATURA 2000 sites potentially affected	9
3.1. Description of the proposed project	9
3.2. Receiving environment	12
3.3. Assessment of potential impacts affecting Natura 2000 sites	16
3.4. Summary of findings leading to potential for adverse effects	31
References	33

1. Introduction

This report, which contains information to undertake a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), has been prepared by Wildlife Surveys Ltd. on behalf of the applicant – Eircom Ltd. It provides information on, and assesses the potential for, the proposed development to impact on the Natura 2000 network (or European sites).

The proposed development (approximately 0.78 ha in area) will consist of demolition of existing structures and construction of 2 apartment blocks along with landscaping works.

1.1. Statement of Authority

Wildlife Surveys Ireland Ltd. undertake ecological assessments for all possible requirements including Environmental Impact Assessment, Natura Impact Statements, Biodiversity Studies, County Council Maintenance works amongst others.

Brian Keeley is a Science graduate of University College Dublin and has been an ecological consultant for 23 years and has been undertaking ecological surveys for 32 years. Brian specialises in vertebrate studies including bats and ground mammals and birds and has undertaken work throughout Ireland for private individuals, organisations, developers, county councils and state authorities.

Malgorzata (Goska) Wilkowska is a graduate of Adam Mickiewicz University and undertook further studies to acquire a Masters in Science in Poznan, Poland in Environmental Biology and an Environmental Protection and Shaping Postgraduate Course in Wroclaw University. Goska specialises in habitat and botanical assessment and has worked with Westmeath County Council in producing the Biodiversity Action Plan 2014 - 2020 and has undertaken surveys for road projects in addition to extensive ecological work for the Irish Wildlife Trust and Nature's PATCH Network.

1.2. National commitments to floral and faunal protection

All of the countries of the European Union have committed to a strict system of protection and regulation of the natural environment. This has a consequence for all planning decisions and options and there is a responsibility on planning authorities to assess the implications of development on species rare or threatened in the national and EU context in addition to worldwide commitments under such agreements as CITES.

Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the process of Natura Impact Statement (NIS) are undertaken to ensure that all of the potential predictable impacts of any proposed changes or developments are documented and evaluated. This is in order that there is a cumulative account of the direct and indirect impacts of development on the site itself and on the biodiversity of sites with national and EU protection.

Biodiversity is a relatively recently derived term to enshrine the concept that there is an enormous diversity to biological life on the planet that interacts in measurable and immeasurable ways and that introduces an inter-dependency of species. This includes many aspects of human agriculture and environment and the protection of biological diversity is an indirect measure to protect the biotic (and abiotic) factors that contribute to human health and environment. The level of impact varies from negligible to severe and from brief or short term to permanent and may only be identifiable when all events or proposals within an immediate area are considered.

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to safeguard the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. The geographical areas of particular importance to these species and habitats have been selected as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special

Protection Areas (SPA) which are collectively referred to (in Ireland) as European sites. Together, these sites comprise the pan-European Natura 2000 network of protected areas. The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the associated Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) are transposed into Irish legislation by Part XAB of the 'Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the 2000 Act) and the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011.

The Regulations were further amended in 2015 by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 355 of 2015). As a consequence, all of the following are to be treated as a functioning unit: Wildlife Act 1976, Wildlife (Amendment) Acts of 2000, 2010 and 2012, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Restrictions of the Use of Poison Bait) Regulations 2010, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations of 2013 and 2015. Subsequent amendment to the Regulations have been undertaken in 2021. The Regulations discussed in this document are to be understood as the Regulations as amended and inclusive of all inclusive measures.

The European Communities (Birds And Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 require member states to designate areas of their territory that are important for certain listed habitats and species of mammals, amphibian, reptiles, birds, invertebrates and plants. These areas are known as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or (in the case of birds) Special Protection Areas (SPA). SACs and SPAs in combination are referred to as the Natura 2000 network of protected sites.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage have responsibility for all protected sites and species as the competent national authority for the conservation of protected sites. The term decided upon as a measure of the protection afforded protected species is that they are maintained within 'favourable conservation status'.

The definitions for "favourable conservation status" of a habitat and of species differ slightly in text but not in sentiment and they are given below:

- The favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:
- its natural range, and 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.
- The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved 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 (NPWS, 2019).

Screening for appropriate assessment is intended to be an initial examination. It identifies the potential for effects on the conservation objectives of European sites, if any, which would arise from a proposed plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects (i.e. likely significant effects).

Significant effects on a European site are those which would negatively undermine the conservation objectives supporting the favourable conservation condition of the Qualifying Interest (QI) habitats and/or the QI/Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species of a European site(s). The Screening for EIA and AA is carried out in the context of development control under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

If the conclusions at the end of screening are that there is no likelihood of significant effects occurring on any European sites as a result of the proposed plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, then there is no requirement to undertake an Appropriate Assessment

If the conclusions at the end of screening are that significant effects cannot be excluded, then Appropriate Assessment is required before permission can be granted. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be required in order for the project to proceed.

A “Natura Impact Statement” means a report comprising the scientific examination of a plan or project and the relevant European Site or European Sites, to identify and characterise any possible implications of the plan or project individually or in combination with other plans or projects in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites, and any further information including, but not limited to, any plans, maps or drawings, scientific information or data required to enable the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment.

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated for conservation under national legislation and are of national importance and may serve to protect sites or species that are not of European concern. They may provide a greater level of protection for a site that does not qualify as a SAC or SPA.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and AA provide sufficient information for the Planning Authorities to determine whether the proposed development will or won't have significant negative impacts upon a protected site (NHA or SAC / SPA).

2. Methodology

The Screening Assessment was carried out in accordance with the following methodologies and guidelines:

1. 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (Oxford Brookes, 2001). See below the flow chart explaining the process in Figures 2.1 and 2.2.
2. 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities' (DOEHLG 2009).
3. 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (CIEEM, 2018).
4. OPR Guidance (PN01) Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (March 2021)
5. 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 (2021/C 437/01).

Following the Oxford Brookes guidance, screening involves these four steps:

1. determining whether the project or plan is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site; (in the absence of mitigation measures proposed specifically for the protection of a Natura 2000 site)
2. describing the project or plan and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the Natura 2000 site;

3. identifying the potential effects on the Natura 2000 site;
4. assessing the significance of any effects on the Natura 2000 site.

Flow chart of the Article 6(3) and (4) procedure (from MN2000) in relation to the stages of the guidance

CONSIDERATION OF A PLAN OR PROJECT (PP) AFFECTING A NATURA 2000 SITE

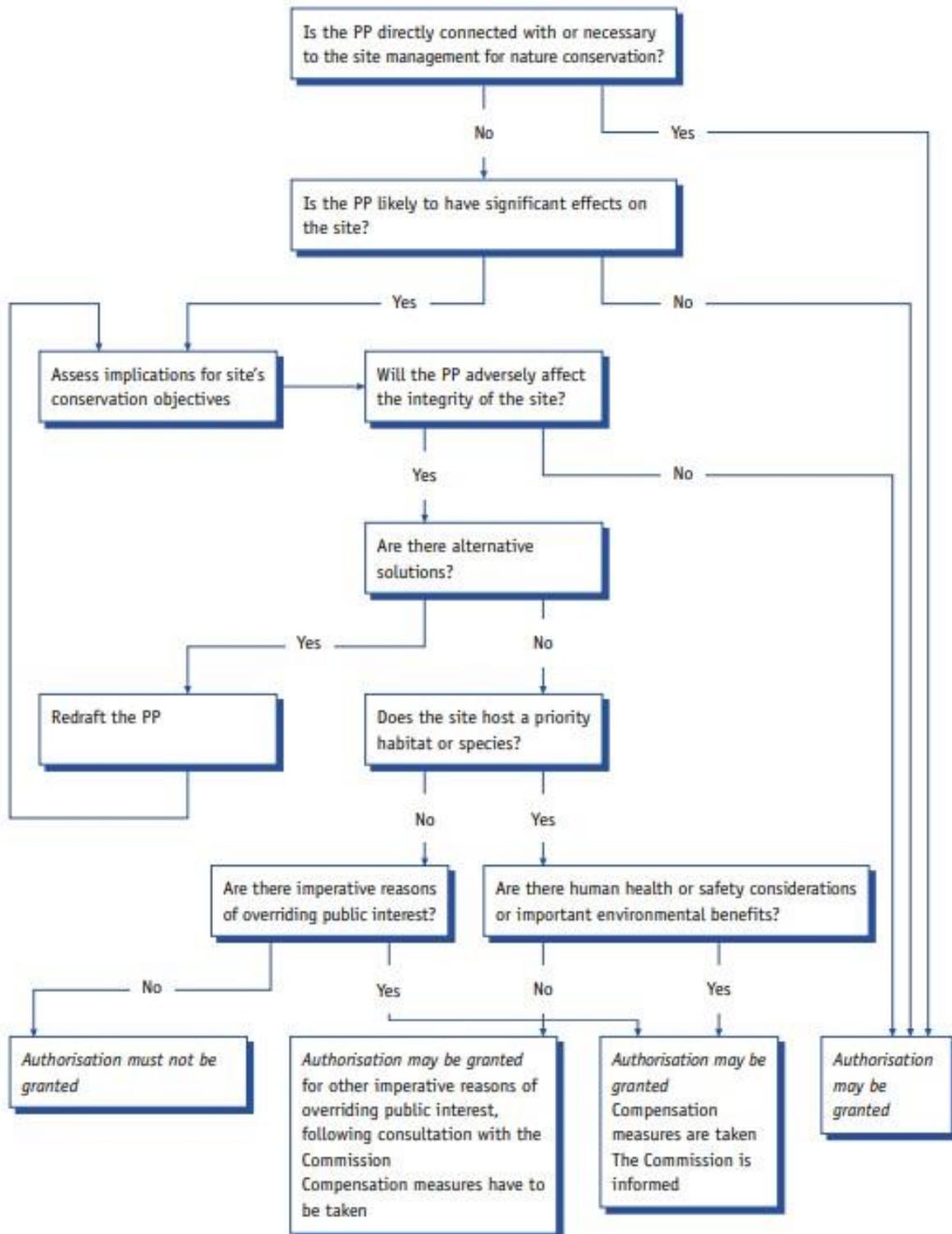


Figure 2.1. Flow chart indicating the steps required to consider for Appropriate Assessment Screening

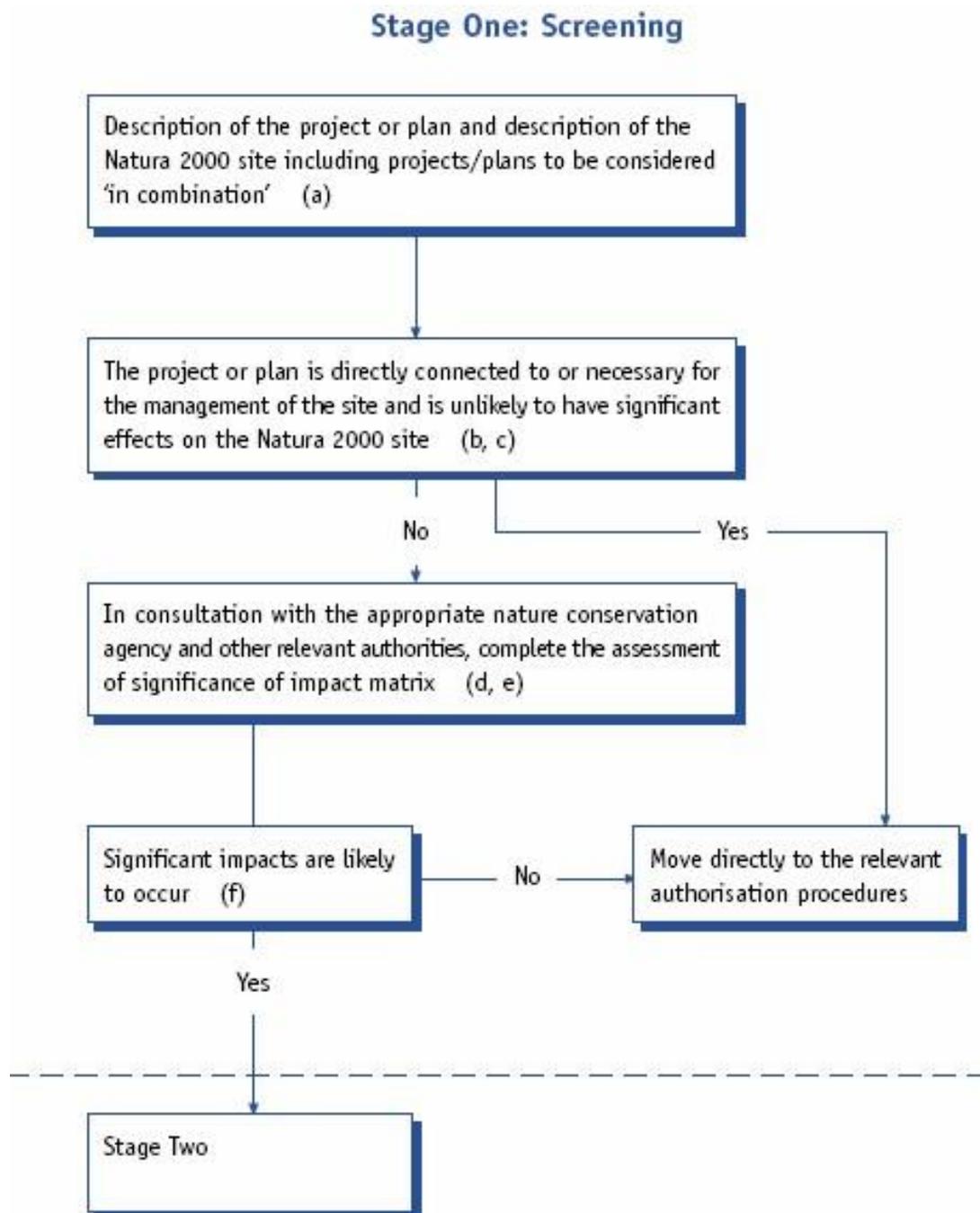


Figure 2.2. Flow chart indicating the steps required to consider for Appropriate Assessment Screening

The desktop data sources informing this assessment are as follows (accessed on the 29th October 2021):

1. Online data available on European sites and protected habitats/species as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie, including conservation objectives

documents. The most recently available Natura 2000 GIS boundary data were SAC_ITM_2019_12 and SPA_ITM_2019_12.

2. Online data available on protected species from www.biodiversityireland.ie (National Biodiversity Data Centre – NBDC).
3. Information on the surface water network and surface water quality in the area from www.epa.ie (Environmental Protection Agency).
4. Information on groundwater resources and groundwater quality in the area from www.epa.ie (Environmental Protection Agency) and www.gsi.ie (Geological Survey Ireland).
5. Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography from www.osi.ie.
6. Information on the location, nature and design of the proposed development supplied by the applicant's design team.
7. Ecological surveys of the proposed development site carried out by Wildlife Surveys Ltd. in 2020 and 2021.

Ecological surveys (baseline surveys) were carried out to inform the assessment of likely significant effect on Natura 2000 sites.

General botanical and habitat walkover survey was conducted on 06-08-2020, which is within the optimum period for undertaking botanical and habitat surveys. The second botanical and habitat survey was carried out on 31-10-2021, which is outside the optimum period for detailed botanical surveys but still suitable for general habitat and tree surveys. The timing of this survey was appropriate according to Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. (CIEEM, 2018)

Habitats were assessed and evaluated according to their occurrence as protected habitats under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and for their capacity to support rare, threatened and endangered species. Botanical species were assessed in accordance with their occurrence on the Flora Protection Order (2015) and The Irish Red Data Book (Curtis & McGough, 1988).

The site was examined on 06-06-2020, 09-09-2020 and 31-10-2021 to provide information on the potential for ground mammals. All treelines and shrubs were examined for mammal evidence. For badgers, the evidence sought includes paw prints, dung pits, latrines and the burrows dug by badgers for their underground homes: setts. There is no potential for otters within the site. Otter "holts" are sometimes associated with tree roots but may even be abandoned badger setts. Given the relatively isolated nature of this site, it was considered unlikely to serve as an otter shelter. Nonetheless, all signs of otters were sought including paw prints and spraints. Other mammal species protected by the Wildlife Act were considered but not specifically surveyed by specialised means (pine marten, Irish hare, pygmy shrew, red squirrel) ; however, given the fact that the site is surrounded by very busy roads, is devoid of waterbodies, woodland, wetlands, the likelihood of their presence in this area is limited with the exception of bats, which are dealt with below and hedgehogs. Hedgehog is a potential species but is not a species relevant to Annex II of the Habitats Directive or to Natura 2000 site designation.

The site was examined by means of a dedicated bat survey on two occasions. The first bat survey was undertaken on 9-09-2020 with the aid of an Echometer 3 (EM3) handheld "real time expansion" (a term used by the manufacturer to explain that the equipment records all signals across the ultrasonic range and then speeds up the signal to create a real-time equivalent of the sounds produced by any bats encountered) bat detector and a Songmeter Mini (Mini) ultrasonic all-weather recorder. The Mini

records all ultrasound from a set start time (in this case, 30 minutes before sunset) up to and beyond sunrise.

The EM3 was held for the entire active survey while the Mini was positioned on the perimeter of the building for the survey period, being re-located to a small shed for several nights subsequent to the active survey (from 18th to 22nd September 2020). The Mini recorded from 30 minutes prior to sunset up to thirty minutes after sunrise and gives a background to the activity across an entire night. An examination of available information from Bat Conservation Ireland, previous data from the site and survey results from other areas of Dundrum was undertaken to compile a list of most likely species in addition to the evaluation of the habitat and known distributions of Irish species.

The bat survey periods were suited to bat activity in 2020. The survey was undertaken at a time of year when bat activity is high within the mating season of Irish bat species. Weather conditions are typically mild and dry in Dublin and bat activity is present in areas with suitable feeding or roosts. The bat surveys were undertaken with reference to the following bat survey guidelines: Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016, 3rd edition) and Kelleher, C. & Marnell, F. (2006) Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 25. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin, Ireland.

All trees were assessed for their potential as roosts and visually inspected from ground level for any obvious features suitable as roost entry / exit points. All buildings were examined for the presence of bats. This included an external search for bat droppings, staining, obvious access points.

Data on the bird fauna of the site was gathered during the visits to the site on 06-08-2020, 09-09-2020 and 31-10-2021. Bird surveying involved aural identification and visual identification of the birds encountered within the nesting period and towards the end of this period to determine the breeding species of this area. This was based on casual visual observations, birdsong, young birds (nestlings or fledglings) and if obvious, nests. Nests were not exposed to ensure that birds were not placed at risk. The entire site was walked covering all treelines walls and shrubbery.

3. Identification of Natura 2000 sites potentially affected

3.1. Description of the proposed project

The site of the proposed development at Dundrum computer centre, Sommerville Road, Dublin comprises a building with hard surface access routes and some green area. The site is fenced. The area of the proposed development is approximately 0.78 ha. It is surrounded by other buildings and busy urban roads. (See Figure 3.1.)

The proposed development will consist of:

- Demolition of all structures on the site and site clearance works.
- The construction of 2 no. apartment blocks (Blocks A and B) providing 111 no. apartments in total (comprising 3 no. studios, 51 no. one bedroom units, 46 no. 2 bedroom / 4 person units and 11 no. 2 bedroom / 3 person units. Block A (Western block, fronting Dundrum Road) comprises a 6-storey block (5 levels over lower ground level / semi-basement) stepping down to the east to 4-storeys in height. Block B (Eastern block, towards the rear (east) of the site) is of part 2-, and part 3-storey height. The proposed development has a total gross floor area of 10,291 sq.m and provides; internal communal ancillary residential services / amenities to include a post room at lower ground floor level within Block A; a shared amenity / lounge (17.5 sq.m) and a storage room (11.8 sq.m) at second floor level within Block B.

- A semi-basement / lower ground floor level is provided in Block A that will be accessed via a vehicular ramped access/egress onto/off Sommerville Road to the north. This semi-basement provides two refuse stores; 39 no. car parking spaces (of which 10 no. spaces are fitted for Electric Vehicles and including 3 no. car club spaces); secure bicycle parking / storage in the form of 82 no. double stacked bicycle storage spaces providing 164 no. residents cycle parking spaces; 2 no. cargo bike storage areas; 3 no. motorcycle spaces; plant room (75 sq.m) and an ESB substation/switch room.
- At ground / surface level provision is made for 2 no. disabled car parking spaces (both fitted for Electric Vehicles) together with 56 no. short stay bicycle storage spaces in the form of 28 no. Sheffield stands and a further 3 no. Sheffield stands providing 6 no. long stay bicycle spaces plus 2 no cargo storage bike spaces. An enclosed bin store is also provided at surface level to the north of Block B.
- Communal Outdoor Amenity space is provided for residents in the form of rooftop terraces located at 2nd floor level within Block A and B, respectively (totalling 361 sq.m in area), and communal courtyard spaces at ground floor level between blocks (totalling 1,418 sq.m in area).
- Private amenity spaces are proposed in the form of patios / terraces at lower ground and ground floor levels with balconies serving apartments at the upper levels.
- Hard and soft landscaping works are proposed at ground floor level which includes the provision of footpaths; fire tender access and an informal play area for children.
- Provision of 4 no. rooftop telecommunications antennae (Block A) and an associated base station / cabinet that will be located within a designated comms room (approximately 13.6 sq.m) that is situated at lower ground floor level within Block A.

All foul effluent generated from the proposed development from the upper floors of all proposed block apartments shall be collected in separate foul pipes and flow under gravity via a new 225mm diameter uPVC sewer. This sewer will connect into the existing 225mm diameter foul public sewer at Larchfield. For the Lower Ground Floor level, all foul effluent shall be collected in pipe of 150mm in diameter flowing under gravity to the existing 225mm diameter foul public sewer at Larchfield.

The drainage network for the development will be in accordance with Part H of the Building Regulations and to the requirements and specifications of Irish Water.

A Pre-Connection Enquiry for 120No. residential units scheme has been submitted to Irish Water and Confirmation of Feasibility Letter has been received. Irish Water noted that no upgrades are required to the Irish Water Infrastructure.

Although the proposed building will generate a larger volume of effluent than the existing, the proposed building will incorporate a storm water attenuation system which will restrict the volume of stormwater entering the public drainage network during periods of extreme rainfall. The overall result will be that while the foul component of the effluent from the new building will be greater than the existing the percentage of storm water will be greatly reduced giving an overall net benefit in terms of reducing the hydraulic pressure placed on the Local Authorities public system.

The second aspect is the policy of the Local Authority is to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, SuDS, for all new applications. The aim of including SuDs systems is to enhance the overall water quality prior to ultimate discharge. The proposed landscaping treatment developed by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds incorporates a large percentage of soft landscaping measures, such as grasscrete pavement solutions, large area of planting/grass and the opportunity to form local soakaways adjacent to hardstanding areas.

It is proposed to use a range of SuDS devices for the scheme they are listed below:

- Green roof technology to the flat roof to cater for the initial interception storage.
- Local 'water butts' to retain storm water for re-use as part of the developments landscaping maintenance regime,
- Low water usage appliances, to restrict potable water demand,
- Attenuation tank with flow control device, sized to contain a 1-in-100-year storm event and increased by 20% for predicted climate change to limit discharge from the site during extreme rainfall events,
- Tree pits to drain local hardstanding areas.



Figure 3.1. Proposed development site (top, outlined in red, indicative) and proposed development (bottom, outlined in red).

3.2. Receiving environment

3.2.1 Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment recommends an assessment of European sites within a Zone of Influence (Zoi) of 15km. This distance is a guidance only and a zone of influence of a proposed development is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. This should be established on a case by-case basis using the Source- Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km). The OPR Guidance (PN01) on Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (March 2021) states: "The identification of European sites within a 15 km zone has become common practice in screening projects for AA. However, this approach is not based on the S-P-R model and should not be used for projects. Few projects have a zone of influence this large, but some more complex projects may require a greater zone of investigation".

"Instead the zone of influence of a project should be considered using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model. This should avoid lengthy descriptions of European sites, regardless of whether they are relevant to the proposed development, and a lack of focus on the relevant European sites and issues of importance". The Zone of Influence may be determined by connectivity to the proposed development in terms of:

1. Nature, scale, timing and duration of works and possible impacts, nature and size of excavations, storage of materials, flat/sloping sites;
2. Distance and nature of pathways (dilution and dispersion; intervening 'buffer' lands, roads etc.); and
3. Sensitivity and location of ecological features.

The potential for source pathway receptor connectivity is firstly identified and detailed information is then provided on sites with connectivity. Spatial boundary data on the Natura 2000 network was extracted from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) on the 20th January 2022.

Sixteen NATURA 2000 sites were identified within the Influence Zone of the proposed development site. The proposed development site is not located within or immediately adjacent to any European site (see Table 3.1. and Figure 3.2).

Potential hydrological connections were identified in the area surrounding the site. River Slang is situated approximately 65 m away from the site. It enters River Dodder approx. 1.2 km downstream. River Dodder flows into River Liffey (further 4.9 km downstream). Because River Liffey enters Dublin Bay (2.7 km below this point), the Slang River is hydrologically connected with the following marine / island Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, North Bull Island SPA, Dalkey Islands SPA, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, Howth Head SAC, Baldoyle Bay SAC, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Bray Head SAC. Due to both distance (at least approx. 8.8 km along the watercourses) from the site and location and nature of the project (a housing project as noted above within an area with no streams connecting to the River Slang to the opposite side of a busy road (the R117) that would intercept any accidental spillages during construction or the entry of materials during operation (were they to occur) , it is not envisaged that this would form a pathway between the development and the Natura 2000 sites (see Figure 3.3). Consequently, there are no pathways between the proposed development site and any Natura 2000 sites.

**Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of
Dundrum computer centre,
Sommerville Road, Dublin**

- Proposed development site
- ▨ Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- 15 km zone

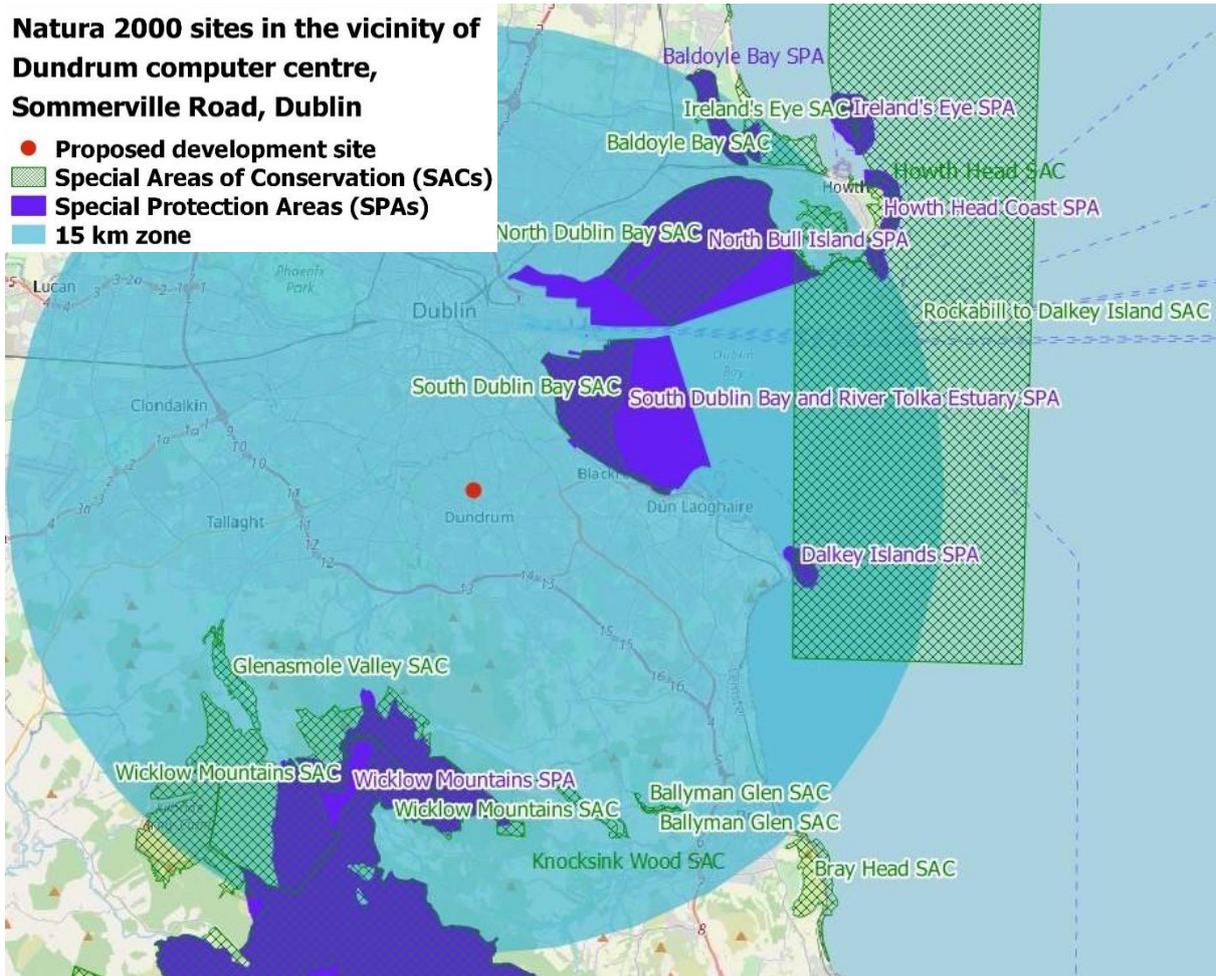


Figure 3.2. Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of the proposed development.

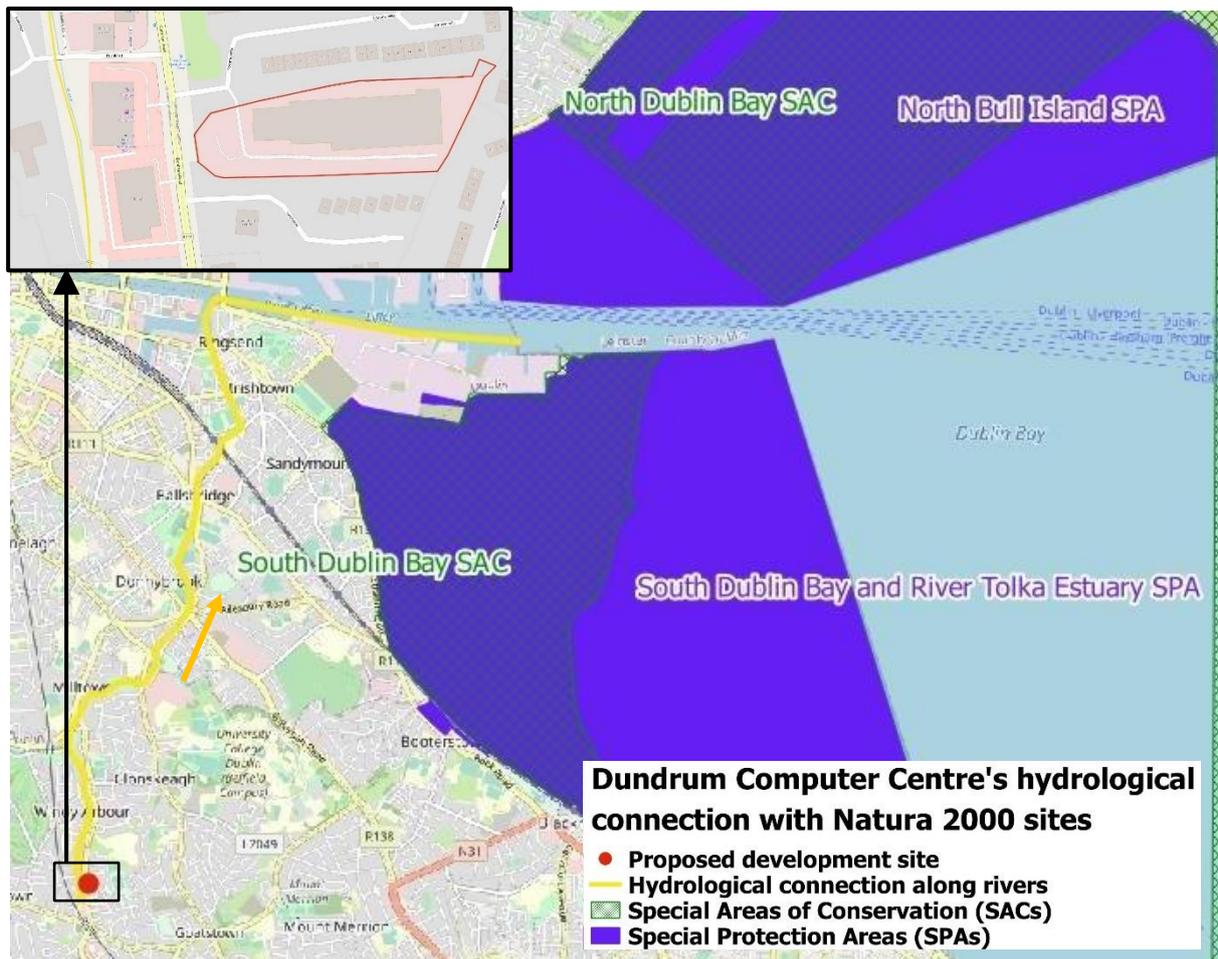


Figure 3.3. The proposed development site in Dundrum in the context of the hydrological connection between River Slang and Natura 2000 sites within Dublin Bay. Yellow arrow indicates flow direction.

3.2.2 Habitats

The following habitat types (following Fossitt 2000) were identified within the proposed development site (see Figure 3.4 below for habitat map):

Habitat Name	Habitat Code (Fossitt 2000)
Buildings and artificial surfaces	BL3
Dry meadows and grassy verges	GS2
Amenity grassland	GA2
Treelines	WL2
Scrub	WS1
Ornamental / Non-native shrub	WS3

No Annex I habitats were recorded within the proposed development site.

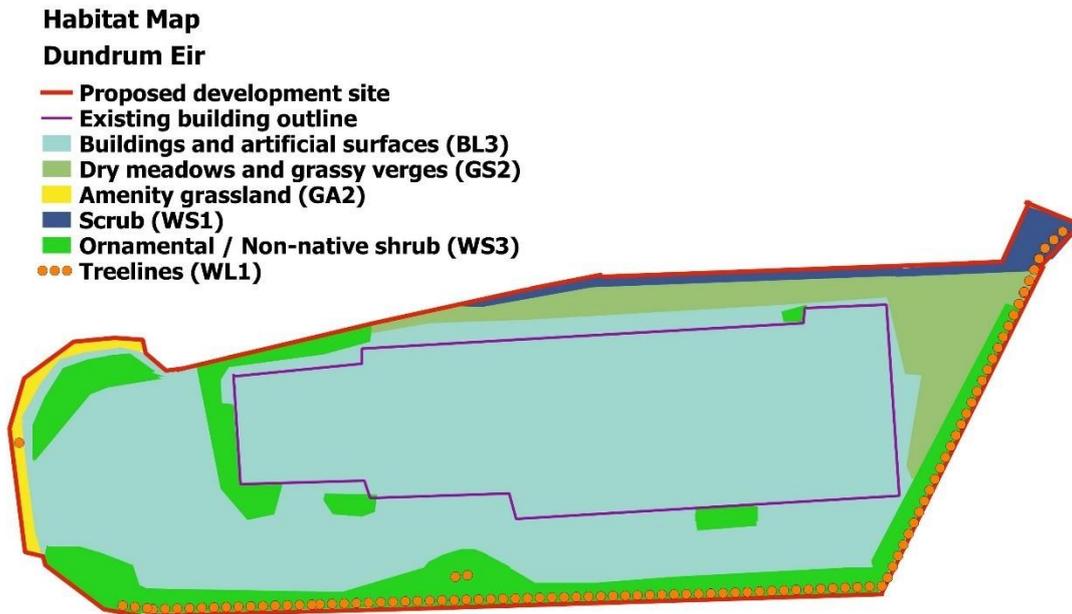


Figure 3.4. Habitat map of the proposed development site in Dundrum.

3.2.3 Flora and fauna species

The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) database search did not return any records of protected and/or rare plant species, within c. 2km of the proposed development site.

Furthermore, the NBDC database search did not return any records of any non-native invasive species listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

All bat species within the site are within Annex IV of the Habitats Directive and do not feature as Qualifying Interests for any Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence of the site. There is no potential for Brent geese to forage or roost on site. It is possible that more mobile species, may commute across the site, flying through, or over the site, while moving from one area of local resource to another. Such species are adept at navigating around our cities and would be expected to rapidly habituate to the presence of new structures in their environment.

No non-native invasive species listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended, were recorded during the habitat surveys within the proposed development site.

None of the observed bird species are Qualifying Interests for Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.

3.2.4 Hydrology

The proposed development site is located within the Liffey and Dublin Bay catchment and Dodder sub-catchment. There are no waterbodies within or adjacent to the proposed development site. River Slang is situated approximately 65 m away from the site (See section 3.2.1 above).

According to EPA online maps, the water quality of the surface and coastal water is as follows:

- River Slang – no data available
- River Dodder - is classified as 'Moderate' quality status at the EPA's nearest monitoring station at Milltown Br (Dundrum Rd Br).
- Dublin Bay coastal water quality is classified as 'Unpolluted'.

3.2.5 Hydrogeology

Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) and EPA data indicate that the site is underlain by a "locally important aquifer – bedrock which is moderately productive only in local zones". The Groundwater Body (GWB) underlying the proposed site is the Dublin GWB which is a "poorly productive bedrock".

The site is located in an area of "Low Vulnerability" with regards to the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities.

Dublin GWB WFD is currently classified as having "Good" status. The European sites within the Zone of Influence designated for groundwater dependent habitats/species, and which occur within the same GWB as the proposed site are:

- South Dublin Bay SAC (000210),
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)
- North Dublin Bay SAC (000206),
- North Bull Island SPA (004006),
- Howth Head SAC (000202),
- Howth Head Coast SPA (004113), • Baldoyle Bay SAC (000199), • Baldoyle Bay SPA (004016).

3.2.6 Soils and geology

According to the soil maps provided by EPA, soils are dominated by Made Ground. The Made Ground may be a combination of reworked/imported material.

3.2.7 Air Quality

The existing air quality is a result of the air quality of the Dundrum area of Dublin city with contributions to the existing air quality from emissions from staff and visitor car exhausts and the operation of the existing eircom station.

3.3. Assessment of potential impacts affecting Natura 2000 sites

This section identifies all the potential impacts associated with the proposed development, examines whether there are any European sites within the Zol of effects from the proposed development, and assesses whether there is any risk of the proposed development resulting in a significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

In assessing the potential for the proposed development to result in a significant effect on any European sites, any measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the project on European sites are not taken into account.

The impact assessment is based on the 'source-pathway-receptor' conceptual model process used to provide a systematic and auditable approach to understanding the potential for effects to arise, the spatial extents of the effect-receptor interactions, impact pathways, and potential impact significance. The conceptual 'source-pathway-receptor' model is effective in the identification of potential effects and the means by which these can manifest themselves on the receiving environment and its sensitive receptors. The term 'source' describes the origin of potential effects

(e.g. construction activities) and the term 'pathway' describes the means (e.g. through air, water, or ground) by which the effect reaches the receiving sensitive 'receptor' (e.g. terrestrial habitats, archaeology and human receptors). If the source, pathway or receptor is absent, no linkage exists and thus there will be no potential for an impact to manifest.

3.3.1 Habitat loss and fragmentation

The proposed development does not overlap with the boundary of any European site. Therefore, there are no European sites at risk of direct habitat loss impacts.

The proposed development does not traverse any European Designated sites. Therefore, there is no potential for habitat fragmentation to occur.

No fauna species being a Qualifying Interest for Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence was identified during surveys within the proposed development site.

Considering the above and the significant distance between the proposed development site and European sites, it can be concluded that the proposed development site does not support populations of any fauna species linked with the QI populations of any European site.

The proposed development will not result in habitat loss or habitat fragmentation within any European site. Therefore, there is no potential for any in-combination effects to occur in that regard.

3.3.2 Habitat degradation as a result of hydrological impacts

Surface water

Engineering Services Report, prepared by CS Consulting Group, states there is an existing 300mm diameter uPVC storm water sewer on Dundrum Road which flows west toward Slang River. As part of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS), an analysis of the drainage network surrounding the subject has not indicated any hydraulic issue.

In accordance with the requirements of DLRCC Drainage Division all new developments are to incorporate the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, (SuDs). The SuDs principles require a two-fold approach to address storm water management on new developments.

The outfall into the public system will be onto the existing 300mm diameter uPVC stormwater on Dundrum Road and the last public manhole shall be constructed in accordance with Local Authority's requirements and the storm water flow will be restricted by the use of a flow control device to limit the flow to the public system.

The second aspect is the policy of the Local Authority is to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, SuDS, for all new applications. The aim of including SuDs systems is to enhance the overall water quality prior to ultimate discharge. The proposed landscaping treatment developed by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds incorporates a large percentage of soft landscaping measures, such as grasscrete pavement solutions, large area of planting/grass and the opportunity to form local soakaways adjacent to hardstanding areas. It is proposed to use a range of SuDS devices for the scheme as listed below:

- Green roof technology to the flat roof to cater for the initial interception storage.
- Local 'water butts' to retain storm water for re-use as part of the developments landscaping maintenance regime,
- Low water usage appliances, to restrict potable water demand,

- Attenuation tank with flow control device, sized to contain a 1-in-100-year storm event and increased by 20% for predicted climate change to limit discharge from the site during extreme rainfall events,
- Tree pits to drain local hardstanding areas.

The SUDS features associated with the proposed development are not included within the design to avoid or reduce any potential harmful effects to any European sites. It is an objective of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study, and the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022, to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) within new developments.

Therefore, there is no possibility of the proposed development having negative impact on any Natura 2000 site within Dublin Bay and Irish Sea as a result of surface water run-off or discharges.

Foul water

Engineering Services Report, prepared by CS Consulting Group, states that as part of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS), an analysis of the drainage network surrounding the subject has not indicated any hydraulic issue.

All foul effluent generated from the proposed development from the upper floors of all proposed block apartments shall be collected in separate foul pipes and flow under gravity via a new 225mm diameter uPVC sewer. This sewer will connect into the existing 225mm diameter foul public sewer at Larchfield.

For the Lower Ground Floor level, all foul effluent shall be collected in pipe of 150mm in diameter flowing under gravity to the existing 225mm diameter foul public sewer at Larchfield.

The drainage network for the development will be in accordance with Part H of the Building Regulations and to the requirements and specifications of Irish Water.

A Pre-Connection Enquiry for 120No. residential units scheme has been submitted to Irish Water and they have received a Confirmation of Feasibility Letter. Irish Water noted that no upgrades are required to the Irish Water Infrastructure.

Although the proposed building will generate a larger volume of effluent than the existing, the proposed building will incorporate a storm water attenuation system which will restrict the volume of stormwater entering the public drainage network during periods of extreme rainfall. The overall result will be that while the foul component of the effluent from the new building will be greater than the existing the percentage of storm water will be greatly reduced giving an overall net benefit in terms of reducing the hydraulic pressure placed on the Local Authorities public system.

The foul sewerage will ultimately discharge to the Ringsend WWTP. The Liffey Estuary Lower and Dublin Bay are currently classified by the EPA as being of "Unpolluted" water quality status. The pollution load of future foul water discharges to Dublin Bay is likely to decrease in the long-term because An Bord Pleanála granted planning permission for an upgrade to the Ringsend WWTP in April 2019, which will increase capacity at the plant. Furthermore, there is a commitment in the National Development Plan 2018-2027 to invest in and progress the Greater Dublin Drainage Project which will involve the provision of a new regional wastewater treatment plant. This will augment the waste water treatment capacity currently provided by Ringsend WWTP across the Greater Dublin Area. It is also an objective of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study, and all development plans within the catchment of Ringsend WWTP, to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) within new developments, as mentioned earlier in this section.

Considering the above, it is concluded that the proposed development will not have negative impact on the water quality within Natura 2000 sites and will not adversely affect habitat and species within these sites as a result of foul discharges.

Cumulative effects

Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a location. The zone of influence of the Proposed Development and other projects which could potentially lead to cumulative effects is the geographical area over which it alone or in combination with other projects could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. This was established using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework.

The Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031 (Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, 2019) includes a range of policy objectives relevant to the protection of European sites and the protection of water quality in Dublin Bay, to which the relevant planning authorities must have regard to in the preparation and adoption of their development plans.

The proposed development site lies within the administrative area of Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council (DLRCC). Plans and developments within this area must comply with the following policy objectives of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022 relevant to the protection of European sites and the protection of water quality in Dublin Bay:

- Policy LHB19: Protection of Natural Heritage and the Environment
It is Council policy to protect and conserve the environment including, in particular, the natural heritage of the County and to conserve and manage Nationally and Internationally important and EU designated sites-such as Special Protection Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, proposed Natural Heritage Areas and Ramsar sites-as well as nondesignated areas of high nature conservation value which serve as ‘Stepping Stones’ for the purposes of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
- Policy LHB20: Habitats Directive
It is Council policy to ensure the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines.
- Policy LHB22: Designated Sites
It is Council policy to protect and preserve areas designated as proposed Natural Heritage Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, and Special Protection Areas. It is Council policy to promote the maintenance and as appropriate, delivery of ‘favourable’ conservation status of habitats and species within these areas.

Plans and developments within the other local authority areas which could influence conditions in Dublin Bay via rivers and other surface water features, also must comply with the policies and objectives relevant to the protection of European sites and water quality.

There is potential for “in-combination” effects on water quality in Dublin Bay from any other projects carried out within the region which could influence conditions in Dublin Bay via rivers and other surface water features. An evaluation of planning applications within the area was undertaken by a map search on the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council website.

Small scale householder applications / permissions have been excluded and only large-scale redevelopments that would result in a significant change of the status quo have been considered. The physical separation between the sites was considered and whether or not they are intrinsically linked to determine the likelihood for in-combination effects.

- South Dublin Bay SAC (000210),
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)
- North Dublin Bay SAC (000206),
- North Bull Island SPA (004006),
- Howth Head SAC (000202),
- Howth Head Coast SPA (004113), • Baldoyle Bay SAC (000199), • Baldoyle Bay SPA (004016).

These sites are designated for a number of water-dependant species and habitats.

As the Engineering Services Report states, the outfall into the public system will be onto the existing 300mm diameter uPVC stormwater on Dundrum Road and the last public manhole shall be constructed in accordance with Local Authority's requirements and the storm water flow will be restricted by the use of a flow control device to limit the flow to the public system. Furthermore, SuDs measures will be introduced.

As a result, no downstream impacts will result to infrastructure or environmental assets, including public amenities and European protected sites.

Therefore, there is no possibility of the proposed development undermining the conservation objectives of any of the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of any European sites, either alone or in combination with any other plans or projects, as a result of hydrogeological effects.

3.3.4 Habitat degradation as a result of introducing or spreading non-native invasive species

The proposed development site does not support any non-native invasive species which could be accidentally spread or introduced to habitats within European sites. No invasive plant species which are listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, and therefor subject to restrictions in Irish Law, were recorded within the proposed development site.

3.3.5 Disturbance and displacement impacts

Construction-related disturbance and displacement of fauna species could potentially occur within the vicinity of the proposed development. For mammal species such as otter, disturbance effects would not be expected to extend beyond 150m. For birds, disturbance effects would not be expected to extend beyond a distance of c.300m, as noise levels associated with general construction activities would attenuate to close to background levels at that distance. There are no European sites within the disturbance Zol; the next nearest European site to the proposed development is c. 3.3 km away. The proposed development site was not found to support populations of any species associated with European sites. Therefore, the proposed development will not result in the disturbance/displacement of the QI/SCI species of any European site.

As the proposed development will not result in the disturbance/displacement during the construction phase of the qualifying/special conservation interest species of any European site, there is no potential for any in combination effects to occur in that regard.

3.3.6 Habitat degradation as a result of contaminated land

As there is no contamination across the site and the site is suitable for this development, there is no potential for contaminated soil to be accidentally spread or introduced to habitats within European sites.

3.3.7 Habitat degradation as a result of air pollution impacts

The greatest potential impact on air quality during the construction phase of the proposed development is from construction dust emissions and the potential for nuisance dust. While construction dust tends to be deposited within 350m of a construction site, the majority of the deposition occurs within the first 50m. The nearest European site to the proposed development is c. 3.3 km away. Therefore, the proposed development will not result in the habitat degradation as a result of air pollution impacts on any of the European sites.

There is no potential, during the operational phase, for impacts on air quality which could in turn lead to habitat degradation effects in nearby European sites.

Table 3.1. Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of the site and their qualifying interests.

#	Site Name and Code	Distance	Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Connections (Source – Pathway – Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
1.	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024	3.3 km	Birds A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004024.pdf	None.	No

#	Site Name and Code	Distance	Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Connections (Source – Pathway – Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
			Habitats Wetlands			
2.	South Dublin Bay SAC 000210	3.4 km	Habitats 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 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000210.pdf	None.	No
3.	Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122	7 km	Habitats 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) 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	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002122.pdf	None.	No

#	Site Name and Code	Distance	Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Connections (Source – Pathway – Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
			<p>6230 Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)*</p> <p>7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</p> <p>8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) 8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</p> <p>8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</p> <p>91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles</p> <p>Species</p> <p>1355 Otter (Lutra lutra)</p>			
4.	Wicklow Mountains SPA 004040	7.3 km	<p>Birds</p> <p>A098 Merlin (Falco columbarius)</p> <p>A103 Peregrine (Falco peregrinus)</p>	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004040.pdf	None.	No

#	Site Name and Code	Distance	Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Connections (Source – Pathway – Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
5.	North Dublin Bay SAC 000206	8.1 km	<p>Habitats</p> <p>1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</p> <p>1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines</p> <p>1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</p> <p>1330 Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)</p> <p>1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi)</p> <p>2110 Embryonic shifting dunes</p> <p>2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with</p> <p>Ammophila arenaria (white dunes)</p> <p>2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*</p> <p>2190 Humid dune slacks</p> <p>Species</p> <p>1395</p> <p>Petalwort (Petalophyllum ralfsii)</p>	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000206.pdf	None.	No
6.	North Bull Island SPA 004006	8.1 km	<p>Birds</p> <p>A160 Curlew (Numenius arquata)</p> <p>A149 Dunlin (Calidris alpina)</p> <p>A157 Bar-tailed</p> <p>Godwit (Limosa lapponica) A162</p> <p>Redshank (Tringa totanus)</p>	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004006.pdf	None.	No

#	Site Name and Code	Distance	Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Connections (Source – Pathway – Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
			A179 Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) A144 Sanderling (Calidris alba) A156 Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) A143 Knot (Calidris canutus) A169 Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) A054 Pintail (Anas acuta) A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) A048 Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) A052 Teal (Anas crecca) A141 Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) A056 Shoveler (Anas clypeata) A130 Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) A140 Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) Habitats Wetlands			

#	Site Name and Code	Distance	Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Connections (Source – Pathway – Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
7.	Glenasmole Valley SAC 001209	9.2 km	Habitats 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (FestucoBrometalia) (* important orchid sites) 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001209.pdf	None.	No
8.	Knocksink Wood SAC 000725	9.6 km	Habitats 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000725.pdf	None.	No
9.	Dalkey Islands SPA 004172	10.2 km	Birds A194 Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) A193 Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) A192 Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii)	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004172.pdf	None.	No

#	Site Name and Code	Distance	Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Connections (Source – Pathway – Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
10.	Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000	10.3 km	Habitats 1170 Reefs Species 1351 Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO003000.pdf	None.	No
11.	Ballyman Glen SAC 000713	11.2 km	Habitats 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)* 7230 Alkaline fens	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000713.pdf	None.	No
12.	Howth Head SAC 000202	12.7 km	Habitats 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts 4030 European dry heaths	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000202.pdf	None.	No
13.	Baldoyle Bay SAC 000199	13.5 km	Habitats 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000199.pdf	None.	No

#	Site Name and Code	Distance	Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Connections (Source – Pathway – Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
14.	Baldoyle Bay SPA 004016	13.5 km	Birds A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) Habitats Wetlands	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004016.pdf	None.	No
15.	Howth Head Coast SPA 004113	14.7 km	Birds A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004113.pdf	None.	No
16.	Bray Head SAC 000714	15.2 km	Habitats 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts 4030 European dry heaths	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000714.pdf	None.	No

3.4. Summary of findings leading to potential for adverse effects

3.4.1 Assessment of potential direct impacts affecting the Natura 2000 sites

The proposed development site is not located within or directly adjacent to any designated Natura 2000 sites. It will not give rise to any direct loss, fragmentation or disturbance of Annex I habitats or Annex II species (or their supporting habitats), which may be listed as Qualifying Interests of Natura 2000 Sites.

3.4.2 Assessment of potential indirect impacts affecting the Natura 2000 sites

The proposed development site lies away from any surface water body. There is no significant risk of flooding affecting the proposed development site or flooding of the site drainage network impacting adjoining properties. Rainwater falling on the site will be drained in part into the groundwater system via soakaways on site and direct infiltration in green spaces. The remainder will enter the existing stormwater on Dundrum Road after passing through SuDS features and an attenuation tank. The foul sewerage will ultimately discharge to the Ringsend WWTP which discharges to Irish sea at Dublin Bay. Therefore, it will enter in the vicinity of a water dependant Natura 2000 site.

The proposed surface water drainage system is designed to comply with the 'Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS) Regional Drainage Policies Technical Document – Volume 2, New Developments, 2005' and the 'Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works, V6.0 2005'. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be incorporated fully into the development, in order to improve the quality of the surface water discharging from the site and reduce the runoff volume and rate. The surface water drainage design is in accordance with the Local Authority requirements. The SuDS measures will be implemented as an additional measure to protect watercourses and enhance quality of life in the new development. These measures are not intended as mitigation measures and they are not required to screen out negative impacts of the proposed development on Natura 2000 sites.

Proposed Foul Drainage System for this development has been designed in accordance with the relevant requirements of the Irish Water Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure.

Therefore, there is no potential for contamination of surface water features and no mitigation is required to protect Designated Sites from any potential impacts.

3.4.3 Assessment of potential cumulative impacts affecting the Natura 2000 sites

Cumulative impacts or effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human induced, small-scale alterations. Cumulative impacts can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects (Bowers Marriott, 1997). As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the proposed works, other relevant projects and plans in the region were considered at this stage. This step aims to identify at this stage any possible significant in-combination or cumulative effects/impacts of the proposed development with other such plans and projects on the Natura 2000 sites.

From a review of the publicly available planning files for proposed projects or development near the proposed development (most recent assessment January 7th 2022), there are a number of known plans or projects similar to the proposed, i.e. construction of dwellings within the Dundrum area. It is not envisaged that interaction with these could give rise to cumulative impacts affecting Natura 2000 sites. Furthermore, any development within the study area which is subject to Planning Permission and

which would have the potential for adverse effects on a designated Natura 2000 site will be required to have its own Screening Assessment to inform the Appropriate Assessment process.

3.4.4 Summary of findings leading to potential for adverse effects

According to NPWS (2010), the Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise can either identify that an Appropriate Assessment is not required or that significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain (i.e. the project must either proceed to Stage 2 (AA) or be rejected).

The proposed development site at Sommerville, Dundrum is not located within or directly adjacent to any Natura 2000 site. No source – pathway – receptor connection was identified between the proposed development site and any Designated Site. The Appropriate Assessment screening process considered potential impacts which may arise during the installation and operational phases of the changes being considered. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the activities, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation between Natura 2000 designations in the wider study area, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests or the conservation objectives of any designated Natura 2000 site.

It is concluded that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site. **Consequently, the proposed development does not require an Appropriate Assessment; there is, therefore, no requirement to progress to Stage 2: Natura Impact Statement (NIS).**

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