



Proposed Large-Scale Residential Development at Belgard Square East,
Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Midsal Homes Limited

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

DNV was commissioned by Midsal Homes Limited to prepare an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report for a Proposed Large-Scale Residential Development at Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, hereafter referred to as 'Proposed Development' or 'Site', when referring to the application Site area. This report contains information to enable the Competent Authority to undertake Stage 1 AA Screening in respect of the Proposed Development.

1.2 Quality Assurance and Competence

All surveying and reporting have been conducted by qualified and experienced ecologists and environmental consultants. KM and CRK undertook the bat survey on Site. SOB conducted the remaining ecological surveys and desk studies and also authored this report.

KM is an Ecologist with a wealth of experience in desktop research, report writing, and QGIS mapping, as well as practical field and laboratory experience. Field experience includes bat surveys, freshwater macroinvertebrate surveys, and trail camera set-up and analysis. KM has prepared several Municipal District Summaries and Stage I AA Reports.

CRK is an Ecologist with a M.Sc. in Biodiversity and Conservation from Trinity College Dublin. CRK's experience as an ecologist is broad both variety of ecological reports and literature, and field surveys conducted. CRK has experience in surveying habitats, birds, plants, bats, mammals and invasive species, with some experience in assessing welfare conditions of animals using behavioural repertoires as indicators. CRK's experience in ecological report writing extends from Research associated literature reviews to AA screening reports and Municipal District Summary reports.

SOB has a B.A. in Zoology from Trinity College Dublin and a M.Sc. Hons. in Wildlife Conservation and Management from University College Dublin, and has experience in desktop research, report writing, and literature scoping-review, as well as practical field and laboratory experience (Pollinator surveying, sampling and identification, habitat surveying, invasive species surveying, etc.). SOB has prepared Stage I and Stage II AA Reports, Invasive Species Surveys, Ecology Statements, Ecological Impacts Assessments (EclAs), and Biodiversity Chapters of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs).

1.3 Description of Proposed Development

1.3.1 Site Location

The Site of the Proposed Development, as seen in Figure 1, is approximately 1.19 hectares (ha), and is located within an established mixed-use area at Belgard Road, Tallaght, Co. Dublin. The main area of the Site is currently a vacant lot and is bounded on the east by the Belgard Road, on the north by Old Blessington Road, on the south by McDonalds and on the west by Belgard Square East. The surrounding environment is predominantly urban in nature.

1.3.2 Proposed Development Description

Midsal Homes Limited intends to apply for permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) at a site of approximately 1.19 Ha at Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24. The main development site (approximately 0.91 Ha) is generally bound: to the north by Old Blessington Road; to the east by Belgard Road (R113); to the south by McDonald's Restaurant property (D24 HW74); and to the west by Belgard Square East. The site also includes parts of the carriageways and verges of Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road (approximately 0.28 Ha) for the provision of landscaping, 2 No. pedestrian crossings, accesses/junctions, minor road and footpath works, cycle infrastructure and water services infrastructure.

The Proposed Development principally comprises: the demolition and removal of existing boundary walls and railings on the main development site's eastern, western and northern sides; and the construction of a mixed-use development in 2 No. blocks (Block A to the south and Block B to the north) with a gross floor area of 23,540 sq m (excluding basement of 275 sq m) and ranging in height from 1 No. to 7 No. storeys (with mezzanine level) over basement.

The development includes a total of 199 No. residential dwellings (6 No. studios, 47 No. 1-bed, 98 No. 2-bed and 48 No. 3-bed) in the 2 No. blocks, with Block A comprising 49 No. 'senior living' apartment units and Block B comprising 150 No. 'standard' apartment units. The development also includes 2,123 sq m of non-residential floor space, with the following uses proposed: 4 No. retail units (totalling 331 sq m); 4 No. class 1 / class 2 commercial units (totalling 387 sq m); a bicycle sales and repair shop (81 sq m); an off-licence (64 sq m); a bar (151 sq m); a café (87 sq m); a medical centre (210 sq m); a dental practice (72 sq m); a pharmacy (195 sq m); a beauty/health salon (195 sq m); and a crèche (350 sq m) with external play area.

The development also comprises: an undercroft car park accessed via a new entrance/exit at Belgard Square East which provides 58 No. car parking spaces; a gated service lane to the south of Block A, with entrances/exits off Belgard Square East and Belgard Road; 2 No. pedestrian/cycle crossings, at Belgard Square East and Belgard Road; continuation of the northbound cycle lane from Belgard Road onto Old Blessington Road; alteration to the median and northbound right turn at Belgard Road onto Abberley Square; cycle parking; internal communal amenity spaces for the senior living units; hard and soft landscaping, including public open space, communal amenity space and incidental spaces; private amenity spaces (as balconies and terraces facing all directions); boundary treatments; 2 No. sub-stations; plant/operational rooms; bin stores; public lighting; blue roofs; rooftop PV arrays; lift overruns and rooftop opening vents atop both blocks; 4 No. 0.3 m diameter microwave link dishes mounted on 2 No. steel support poles affixed to the Block B lift overrun, all enclosed in radio-friendly GRP shrouds; and all associated works above and below ground.

The proposed Site layout can be seen in Figure 2 below.

1.3.3 Drainage and Water Supply

1.3.3.1 Surface water

As outlined in the Engineering Services Report (Torque Consulting Engineers, 2025) accompanying this application, surface water drainage from the Proposed Development will be separated from the foul water drainage. The Proposed Development has integrated blue roofs, permeable paving, tree pits and raised planters, and interception storage into the design to comply with the South Dublin County Development Plan requirement to incorporate more Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into new developments.

It is proposed that blue roofs will cover the majority of the total roof area of the buildings with roof areas greater than 6,000m². The blue roofs will function as attenuation storage and assist in slowing stormwater flows, increasing evaporation, and treating the stormwater on the Site of the Proposed Development. It is proposed the outfalls from the blue roofs will be connected to the newly constructed surface water drainage system serving the Site, which will discharge via gravity to the existing surface water sewer system along Belgard Square East immediately west of the Site of the Proposed Development. It is also proposed a silt trap will be constructed in the surface water network prior to the outfall to reduce any pollutants from being discharged into the existing sewer network.

More than 1,000m² of permeable paving is also proposed, with approximately 10% of the total surface area within the Proposed Development to consist of this SuDS measure. This permeable surface will allow the surface water to pass into the porous material below, with some of the water percolating back into the ground at the source. Any remaining surface water flow will be slowed and partially treated by the coarse bedding material.

It is also proposed to include tree pits and raised planted beds within the communal podium area and the ground floor communal area of the Proposed Development to help retain surface water run-off from impermeable surfaces, and will also contribute to public amenity and biodiversity.

The design intention of the Proposed Development is to utilise as many SuDS features as practicable and pragmatically feasible and to allow for partial infiltration within the design:

- Maximising roof area with blue roof systems.
- Permeable paving and grassed areas, where possible (linked to the surface water network).
- Where not possible, footpaths and grassed areas will drain via a stone media layer enroute to the surface water network to remove sediments and pollutants and provide interceptions volumes.
- Attenuation within the blue roofs to reduce flows to green field rates.
- A silt trap will be constructed at the outfall of the network to reduce pollutants and sediment entering the public sewer system.

During extreme rainfall storm events, surface water discharge from the Site will be limited to greenfield run-off rates.

1.3.3.2 Foul Drainage

As outlined in the Engineering Services Report (Torque Consulting Engineers, 2025) accompanying this application, there is an existing foul water sewer network along Belgard Square East adjacent to the Site. It is proposed to drain foul water from the upper floors of the Proposed Development apartment blocks separately via gravity to the lower ground floor level, where this foul water will discharge to the foul water drainage system. The foul sewer from these new buildings will connect via a newly constructed pipe network within the Site boundary to the existing public drainage system along Belgard Square East.

It is estimated the average flow rate will be 2.75 litres/second, with an estimated peak flow of 16.51 litres/second.

The foul water from the Site will be transported via this existing system to Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP).

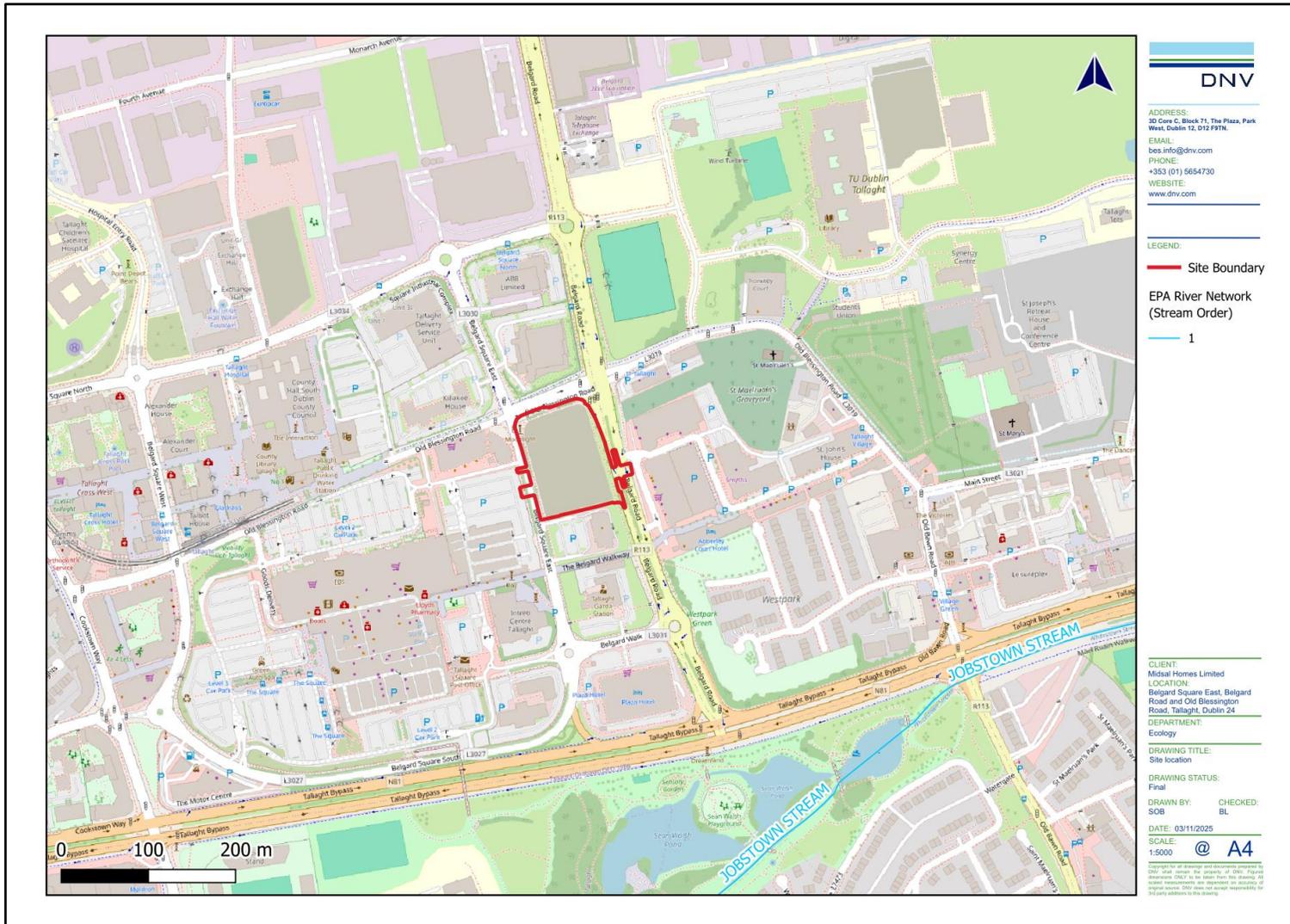


FIGURE 1. SITE LOCATION.

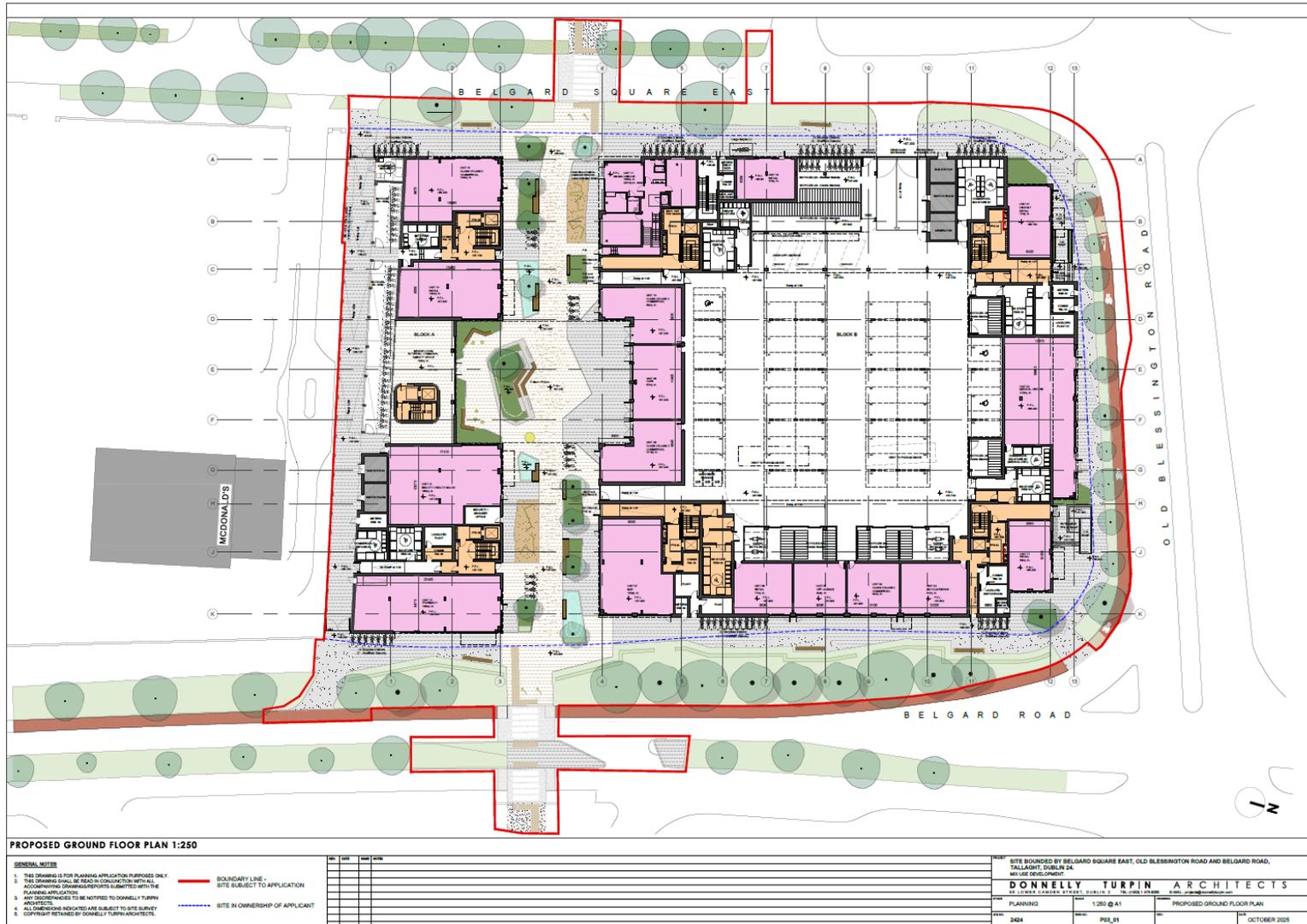


FIGURE 2. PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT. DWG No. 2424_P03_01 (DONNELLY TURPIN ARCHITECTS, 2025).

2 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Legislative Background

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) seeks to protect birds of special importance by the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law through the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011).

It is the responsibility of each Member State to designate SPAs and SACs, both of which will form part of the Natura 2000 Network, a network of protected sites throughout the European Community. These designated sites are referred to as “Natura 2000 sites” or “European sites”. SACs are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats (including priority types which are in danger of disappearance) and Annex II species (other than birds). SPAs are selected for the conservation of Annex I birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats. The annexed habitats and species for which each site is selected correspond to the Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the sites; from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived.

An AA is a required assessment to determine the likelihood of significant effects, based on best scientific knowledge, of any plans or projects on European sites. A screening for AA determines whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site, in view of its conservation objectives.

This AA Screening has been undertaken to determine the potential for significant effects on relevant European sites. The purpose of this assessment is to determine, the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the Proposed Development in the context of the conservation objectives of such sites.

2.1.1 Legislative Context

The obligations in relation to AA have been implemented in Ireland under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and the Planning and Development Act 2024. While the 2024 Act has been signed into law, the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) will continue to apply until repealed and the new provisions commenced by way of Ministerial Order. The phased commencement of the new Planning and Development Act is expected to take place up to early 2026.

The obligations in relation to AA covered within both Acts are summarised below:

- The competent authority must carry out screening for AA for all relevant plans and projects, to determine whether the plan or project, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on any European site;
- Where potential for likely significant effects cannot be ruled out, either as a result of the plan or project alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, or where uncertainty exists, the competent authority must determine that an AA is required. In this case, a more detailed examination of the relevant European sites shall be carried out, and a Natura Impact Statement must be prepared.

For further details on both the 2000 Act (as amended) and the 2024 Act, please refer to irishstatutebook.ie.

2.1.1.1 Other relevant context

According to the ruling delivered in open court in Luxembourg on 15th June 2023 regarding the interpretation of Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43, the Article 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”.

As such, standardised embedded mitigation (such as the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in large-scale residential developments), that are incorporated into the design of a proposal or project and which may result

in a reduction of effects impacting European sites, but where the primary reason of the embedded mitigation is not to protect a European site, are permitted for consideration during the undertaking of AA.

2.2 Policy Context

2.2.1 South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

Policies and objectives of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 that are of relevance to this Screening Report are outlined below:

- **Policy NCBH3:** Conserve and protect Natura 2000 Sites and achieve and maintain favourable conservation status for habitats and species that are considered to be at risk through the protection of the Natura 2000 network from any plans or projects that are likely to have a significant effect on their coherence or integrity.
- **NCBH3 Objective 1:** To prevent development and activities that would adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site located within or adjacent to the County and promote the favourable conservation status of the habitats and species integral to these sites.
- **NCBH3 Objective 2:** To ensure that plans, including land use plans, will only be adopted, if they either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant adverse effect on a European Site, or where such a plan is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), South Dublin County Council will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will South Dublin County Council adopt the plan, incorporating any necessary mitigation measures. A plan which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be adopted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.
- **NCBH3 Objective 3:** To ensure that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant adverse effect on a European Site, or where such a development proposal is likely or might have such a significant adverse effect (either alone or in combination), the planning authority will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the development proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will the planning authority agree to the development and impose appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions. A development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.

2.2.2 South Dublin County Biodiversity Action Plan 2020 – 2026

South Dublin County Biodiversity Action Plan 2020 – 2026 is set out to protect and improve biodiversity through specific actions:

- Collate ecological data and survey and map the County, to provide an evidence base for informed biodiversity decision-making and to form the basis for a Green Infrastructure network, key projects to include:
 - i. Map the distribution of the habitats and species in the County.
 - ii. Map and manage the spread of non-native invasive species.
 - iii. Survey and monitor biodiversity at identified pollinator sites.
 - iv. Survey and map wetlands in the County.
 - v. Map the tree canopy cover in the County and quantify its carbon capture.
 - vi. Map the County's hedgerow network and identify key Green Infrastructure links.

- Develop a Biodiversity Communications Strategy, to celebrate and promote the enjoyment and protection of nature in South Dublin County, promoting engagement with national initiatives and events such as Biodiversity Week, Tree Week, Heritage Week, Pure Mile etc.
- Support rural and urban communities to undertake local biodiversity projects, training, and citizen science, encouraging appropriate initiatives that protect biodiversity while benefiting local economies.
- Quantify and promote the economic benefits (the natural capital) provided by the County's ecological landscapes (ecosystem services).
- Devise and implement good governance strategies to ensure the smooth integration of national and EU biodiversity legislation and policy requirements into all Council plans, projects, and services.
- Develop and implement best practice biodiversity protection guidelines and maintenance plans for the County's habitats and species, for use on Council lands and as guidance to assist local communities, developers, businesses, farming community, schools, etc.
- In the preparation process for the SDCC Development Plan, innovative approaches to promote strategic biodiversity policies and objectives will be developed.
- Coordinate with the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024 to identify impacts on biodiversity arising from climate change, targeting and implementing necessary measures to assist biodiversity adapt to changing conditions.

2.3 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

This AA Screening Report (the 'Screening Report') has been prepared by DNV. It considers whether the Proposed Development is likely to have a significant effect on a European site and whether a Stage 2 AA is required.

The AA process is a four-stage process. Each stage requires different considerations, assessments and tests to ultimately arrive at the relevant conclusion for each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

The four stages of an AA, can be summarised as follows:

- **Stage 1: Screening.** The Screening for AA considers whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of a European site, or whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of its conservation objectives.
- **Stage 2: NIS.** Where Stage 1 determines that significant effects are likely, uncertain or unknown, the preparation of a NIS is required. The NIS must include a scientific examination of evidence and data to classify potential impacts on any European site(s) in view of their conservation objectives in the absence of mitigation. The NIS will identify appropriate mitigation to remove the potential for likely significant adverse effects on any European site(s). If the competent authority determines that the plan or project would have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site(s) despite mitigation, it can only grant consent after proceeding through stages 3 and 4.
- **Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions.** If the outcome of Stage 2 is negative i.e., adverse impacts to the sites cannot be scientifically ruled out, despite mitigation, the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned. This stage examines alternative solutions to the proposal.
- **Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.** The final stage is the main derogation process examining whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project to adversely affect a European site, where no less damaging solution exists.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation, and compensatory measures. First the project should aim to avoid any negative effects on European sites by identifying possible effects early in the planning stage and designing the project to avoid such effects. Second, mitigation measures should be applied, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the project is still likely to result in adverse effects, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, a refusal for planning permission may be recommended. In this case, the project will generally only be considered where no alternative solutions are identified and the project is required for IROPI, or, in the case of priority habitats, considerations of health or safety,



or beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or to other IROPI. Then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effects.

3 AA SCREENING METHODOLOGY

3.1 Guidance

This Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities.* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities.* Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- *Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle* (European Commission, 2000);
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission, 2019);
- *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* Brussels, 28.9.2021 C (European Commission, 2021); and
- *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, OPR Practice Note PN01, Office of the Planning Regulator March 2021.*

3.2 Screening Steps

Screening for AA involves the following steps:

- Establish whether the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary for the management of a European site;
- Description of the baseline existing environment at the Site of the Proposed Development;
- Identification of relevant European site(s) potentially affected;
- Identification and description of potential effects on the relevant European site(s);
- Assessment of the likely significance of the effects identified on the relevant European site(s);
- Description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination with the Proposed Development have the potential for having significant effects on the European site; and
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

It should be noted that any targeted ecological mitigation measures and/or measures intended or included for the purposes of avoiding adverse effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development on any European site **have not been considered** as part of this Screening Report.

3.3 Desk Study

A desktop study was carried out in October 2025 to collate and review available information, datasets and documentation sources relevant for the completion of this Screening Report. The desktop study relied on the following sources:

- Information on the network of European Sites, boundaries, QIs and conservation objectives, obtained from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at www.npws.ie;
- Text summaries of the relevant European sites taken from the respective Standard Data Forms (available at <https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/>) and Site Synopses (available at www.npws.ie);

- Information on waterbodies, catchment areas and hydrological connections obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at www.gis.epa.ie;
- Information on bedrock, groundwater, aquifers and their statuses, obtained from Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) at www.gsi.ie;
- Satellite imagery and mapping obtained from various sources and dates including Google, Digital Globe, Bing and Ordnance Survey Ireland; and
- Information on the existence of permitted developments, or developments awaiting decision, in the vicinity of the Proposed Development from the National Planning Application Database and South Dublin County Council.

For a complete list of the documents consulted as part of this assessment, see *Section 6 References*.

3.4 Field surveys

A Site visit was undertaken on the 11th of October 2021, with a ground truthing survey undertaken on the 16th of September 2024, to assess the Site for potential connectivity to any European sites, and for the presence of habitats and species designated as QI/SCIs of any European sites to inform this Report. The Site was walked by an ecologist, and any occurrence or sign of protected species or habitat were noted. Additionally, any invasive species, particularly those on the third schedule which could spread during the construction or operational phases and affect the integrity of European sites were also recorded, if and where present.

3.5 Identification of Relevant European sites

The Zone of Influence (ZOI) for a project is the area over which ecological features may be affected by changes as a result of a development and associated activities. This is likely to extend beyond the development site, for example where there are ecological or hydrological links beyond the site boundaries (CIEEM, 2018). Furthermore, ZOI in relation to European sites is described as follows in the 'OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management' (OPR, 2021):

"The 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)."

Thus, to identify the European sites that potentially lie within the ZOI of the Proposed Development, a Source-Path-Receptor (S-P-R) method was adopted, as described in OPR PN01 (OPR 2021). This note was published to provide guidance on screening for AA during the planning process, and although it focuses on the approach a planning authority should take in screening for AA, the methodology is also readily applied in the preparation of Screening Reports such as this.

The relevant European sites were identified based on the following:

- Identification of potential sources of effects based on the Proposed Development description and details, including changes to potentially suitable ex-situ habitats at the Site (i.e., habitats utilised by SCI bird species outside of their designated SPAs);
- Use of up-to-date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments – downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) and the EPA website (www.epa.ie) to identify European sites which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development; and
- Identification of potential pathways between the Site of the Proposed Development and any European sites within the ZOI of any of the identified sources of impacts.
 - The catchment data were used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development and any European sites.

- Groundwater, soils, and bedrock information used to establish or discount potential hydrogeological connectivity between the Proposed Development and any European sites.
- Air and land connectivity assessed based on Proposed Development details and proximity to European sites.
- Consideration of potential indirect pathways, e.g., impacts to flight paths, *ex-situ* habitats, etc.
- Defining the likely ZOI based on the identified sources of effects and potential pathways between the Proposed Development and any European sites.

3.6 Assessment of Significant Effects

The conservation objectives of the European sites identified to lie within the ZOI were reviewed and assessed in order to establish whether the construction and operation of the Proposed Development have the potential to have a negative impact on any of the QIs and/or conservation objectives listed for the site.

The assessment framework is taken from the best practice guidelines issued by the European Commission, i.e., “*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*”.

The potential for significant effects that may arise from the Proposed Development was considered through the use of key indicators:

- Habitat loss or alteration.
- Habitat/species fragmentation.
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species.
- Changes in population density.
- Changes in water quality and resource.

In addition, information pertaining to the conservation objectives of the European sites, the ecology of the designated habitats and species and known or perceived sensitivities of the habitats and species were considered.

3.7 Limitations

No limitations were encountered which would prevent robust conclusions from being drawn as to the potential impacts of the Proposed Development and therefore the likely significant effects on the European Site, in view of the Site’s conservation objectives.

4 STAGE 1 SCREENING ASSESSMENT

4.1 Management of European Sites

The Proposed Development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European sites.

4.2 Existing Environment

4.2.1 Desk Study Results

The Site of the Proposed Development is approximately 0.91 Ha, located within a retail estate on Belgard Road, Tallaght, Co. Dublin. The Site is currently a vacant lot and is bounded on the east by the Belgard Road, on the north by Old Blessington Road, and the southern and western boundaries are abutted by retail units. The surrounding environment is predominantly urban in nature.

4.2.1.1 Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology

The Site of the Proposed Development is within the Liffey and Dublin Bay catchment (EU Code: 09) and Dodder_SC_010 sub-catchment (EU Code: 09_16). The closest watercourse to the Site is the Jobstown Stream (EU Code: IE_EA_09D010620), also referred to as the Dodder_040, a 2nd order tributary of the River Dodder, 410 m southeast of the Site, which flows into the River Dodder almost 2km to the east of the Site, and ultimately into Dublin Bay (EU Code: IE_EA_090_0000).

The status of the River Dodder was designated as Moderate by the EPA in 2022 (station code: RS09D010620), with this station located 4.8km northeast of the Proposed Development, downstream of the Site. The River Dodder is classified as *At Risk* of not meeting its Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives (EPA, 2025).

The Site is situated on the Dublin groundwater body, which is currently under review as to whether it will meet WFD objectives. The aquifer type within the Site boundary is a Locally Important Aquifer (LI) aquifer on bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones. The groundwater rock units underlying the aquifer are classified as Dinantian Upper Impure Limestones (GSI, 2025). The level of vulnerability of the Site to groundwater contamination via human activities is Moderate.

The soil is classified as Urban, and the subsoil is made ground (Made) (EPA, 2025).

The Waterbody Status for river, groundwater and coastal water bodies relevant to the Site as recorded by the EPA (2025) in accordance with European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI no. 722/2003), Part IV of the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and Part IV of the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010, are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1. WFD RISK AND WATER BODY STATUS.

Waterbody Name	Water body; EU code	Location from Site	Distance from Site	WFD water body status (2016-2021)	WFD 3 rd cycle Risk Status	Hydraulic Connection to the Site
Surface Water Bodies						
Jobstown Stream / River Dodder	IE_EA_09D010620	Southeast	410m	Moderate	At risk	Potential hydrological connection via surface water discharge to the local drainage network.
Coastal Water Bodies						

Waterbody Name	Water body; EU code	Location from Site	Distance from Site	WFD water body status (2016-2021)	WFD 3 rd cycle Risk Status	Hydraulic Connection to the Site
Dublin Bay	IE_EA_090_0000	East	11.3km	Good	Not at risk	Potential hydrological connection via surface water discharge to the local drainage network.
Groundwater Bodies						
Dublin	IE_EA_G_008	N/A	N/A	Good	Review	Underlying groundwater-body

4.2.2 Relevant Field Survey results

4.2.2.1 Habitats & Flora

The predominant habitat recorded at the Site of the Proposed Development is Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3), as the Site is comprised of hardstanding and modern walls along the perimeter of the Site. Areas of Belgard Road to the east and Belgard Square East to the west of the Site are also included within the boundary of the Proposed Development.

The northern half of the Site, along with a section in the southeast, has become Recolonising Bare Ground (ED3) habitat. The margins of the Site, particularly along the south, east and north boundaries, are comprised of Scrub (WS1) habitat, with managed Hedgerow (WL1) habitat along the east boundary of the Site, which combines with areas of scrub habitat within the main area of the Site.

Amenity Grassland (improved) (GA2) habitat was observed along the pathways of Belgard Square East, Old Blessington Road and Belgard Road bounding the Site of the Proposed Development with street planting of early mature to semi-mature trees creating a mosaic of Scattered Trees and Parkland (WD5) habitat with this grassland.

No rare or protected flora were observed at the Site during the surveys.

While two medium impact invasive species were observed on Site, no invasive floral species listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations (S.I. 477 of 2011) were recorded at the Site.

No QI habitats were encountered on or within proximity to the Site of the Proposed Development.

4.2.2.2 Fauna

No QI or SCI species associated with any European sites were encountered on Site, nor were suitable habitats for these species recorded on Site.

4.3 Identification of Relevant European Sites

4.3.1 Potential Sources of Impacts

The Proposed Development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European sites. However, the following elements of the Proposed Development were identified and assessed for their potential to cause likely significant effects on European sites.

Construction Phase (Estimated duration: 24-28 months)

- Uncontrolled releases of silt, sediments and/or other pollutants to air due to earthworks.

- Surface water run-off containing silt, sediments and/or other pollutants into nearby waterbodies.
- Surface water run-off containing silt, sediments and/or other pollutants into the local groundwater.
- Waste generation during the Construction Phase comprising soils, construction and demolition wastes.
- Spread of invasive plant species as a result of construction activity.
- Increased noise, dust and/or vibrations as a result of construction activity.
- Increased dust and air emissions from construction traffic.
- Increased lighting in the vicinity as a result of construction activity.

Operational Phase (*Estimated duration: Indefinite*)

- Surface water drainage from the Site of the Proposed Development.
- Increased lighting in the vicinity emitted from the Proposed Development; and
- Increased human presence in the vicinity as a result of the Proposed Development.

4.3.2 Potential Pathways to European Sites

For the above listed potential sources of effects to have the potential to cause likely significant effects on any European site, a pathway between the source of potential effects (i.e., the Site of the Proposed Development) and the receptor is required. Potential impact pathways are discussed in the following sections in the context of the identified impact sources as identified in section 4.3.1.

4.3.2.1 Direct Pathways

4.3.2.1.1 Hydrological pathways

There are no drainage ditches or surface waterbodies within or immediately adjacent to the Site. As the Site lies within the Dodder sub-catchment, it is likely the local surface water sewer network surrounding the Site discharges to the Jobstown Stream, 410m southeast of the Site, which flows into the River Dodder, and subsequently the Liffey Estuary and Dublin Bay. As such, there is a potential, weak hydrological pathway via surface water run-off to South Dublin Bay SAC (000210), South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024), North Dublin Bay SAC (000206), North Bull Island SPA (004006), and the North-west Irish Sea SPA (004236).

The hydrological pathway to these downstream European sites is over 15km along the Jobstown Stream and the River Dodder, prior to discharging into the River Liffey estuary and subsequently Dublin Bay, over which any potential pollutants that may enter Dublin Bay via drainage from the Site would become diluted to indiscernible levels. Therefore, this hydrological pathway to these downstream European sites is considered insignificant. This also rules out any potential impacts to the European sites along the east coast within the Irish Sea beyond Dublin Bay due to distance and dilution within this significant marine buffer.

During the Operational Phase of the Proposed Development, surface water discharge from the Site will discharge to the local surface water network via a newly constructed connection, which would then also ultimately reach these European sites within Dublin Bay. However, as outlined in section 1.3.3.1 above, in addition to the 15km downstream distance over which dilution of any potential pollutants will occur, a number of SuDS measures are proposed on the Site of the Proposed Development, which is currently a brownfield site. These embedded SuDS measures included as part of the design of the Proposed Development, including blue roofs, permeable paving, and green areas, will attenuate and treat surface water discharge prior to entering the local sewer network at a reduced greenfield rate. As such, this potential hydrological pathway to downstream European sites in Dublin Bay during the Operational Phase is considered insignificant.

4.3.2.1.2 Hydrogeological pathways

Potential discharges to ground could potentially migrate vertically downward to the underlying bedrock aquifer and laterally within the aquifer to the downgradient receiving surface waterbodies, i.e., the Jobstown Stream and River Dodder, contributing to the hydrological pathway to Dublin Bay downstream of the Site. However, no direct hydrogeological pathways to any designated sites exist due to the considerable distance and intervening watercourses between the Proposed Development and the nearest European sites within Dublin Bay.

4.3.2.1.3 Air and land pathways

No air or land pathways from the Proposed Development to any European sites were identified, as the distance between the Site and the nearest European site (South Dublin Bay SAC (000210) and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024) approx. 11.3km northeast) is deemed sufficient to exclude any potential for impacts from increases in noise, lighting and/or dust or other airborne pollutants.

4.3.2.1.3.1 Invasive Plant Species

No third schedule invasive plant species have been identified at the Site and as such, no pathway exists.

4.3.2.2 Indirect Pathways

4.3.2.2.1 Hydrological pathways

The Site will also be connected to the public foul water sewer network, which will be discharged to Dublin Bay from Ringsend WwTP. As such, there is a weak hydrological link between the Site and South Dublin Bay SAC (000210), North Dublin Bay SAC (000206), South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024), North Bull Island SPA (004006) and North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236) via discharges from Ringsend WwTP during the Operational Phase. However, the potential for foul waters generated at the Site of the Proposed Development to reach these European sites within Dublin Bay and cause significant effects, during the Operational Phase, is negligible due to the following:

- The ongoing upgrade works to Ringsend WwTP which will increase the capacity of the facility from 1.6 million Population Equivalent (PE) to 2.4 million PE (see section 4.4.1.3 below for more details).
- It is considered that effects on marine biodiversity and the European sites within Dublin Bay from the current operation of Ringsend WwTP are unlikely (see section 4.4.1.3 for more details).
- The main area of dispersal of the treated effluent from Ringsend WwTP is in the Tolka Basin and around North Bull Island. South Dublin Bay is unaffected by the effluent from the plant (Irish Water, 2018).
- The increase of the PE load at the facility as a result of the Proposed Development, assuming each PE unit was not previously supported by the WwTP, is considered to be an insignificant increase in terms of the overall scale of the facility. The increased load does not have the capacity to alter the effluent released from the WwTP to such an extent as to result in likely significant effects on European sites in Dublin Bay.

4.3.2.2.2 Air and land pathways

No significant indirect pathways via land or air (e.g., disruptions to migratory paths) were identified.

4.3.2.2.3 Likelihood of Collision Impacts

From a review of available literature on the subject, bird collisions with man-made structures are common and well documented¹ with migratory passerine species the most prevalent collision victims². Bird collision with buildings is generally associated with reflective material such as windows or large surfaces of glass which create a mirror and appear to show the continuation of the sky or surrounding landscape, an effect that can be exacerbated by lighting.

In addition, the physical location of buildings and structures can influence the likelihood of bird collisions, with structures placed on or near areas regularly used by large numbers of feeding, breeding, or roosting birds, or on

¹ Banks, R.C (1979). Human related mortality of birds in the United States. U.S. Fish Wildl. Serv. Spec. Sci. Rep. Wildl. 215. 16 pp.
Jenkins, A., Smallie, J.J. and Diamond, M. (2010). Avian collisions with power lines: A global review of causes and mitigation with a South African perspective. Bird Conservation International, 20(03), 263 – 278.
Klem, D. (1990). Collisions between birds and windows: mortality and prevention. Journal of Field Ornithology, 61, 120–128.
Erickson, W.P., Johnson, G.D. and Young, P.D. (2005). A Summary and Comparison of Bird Mortality from Anthropogenic Causes with an Emphasis on Collisions. USDA Forest Service Gen. Tech. Rep. PSW-GTR-191. 2005.
Erickson, W. P., G. D. Johnson, M. D. Strickland, D. P. Young, Jr., K. J. Sernka, and R. E. Good. (2001). Avian collisions with wind turbines: A summary of existing studies and comparisons to other sources of avian collision mortality in the United States. National Wind Coordinating Committee, c/o RESOLVE, Inc., Washington, D.C.
² Bing G.-C., Choi C.-Y., Nam H.-Y., Park J.-G., Hong G.-P., Sung J.-K., Chae H.-Y & Choi Y.-B. (2012). Causes of mortality in birds at stopover islands. Korean J. Ornithol., 19, 23–31.
Longcore, T. Rich, C., Mineau, P., MacDonald, B., Bert, D.G., Sullivan, L.M., Mutrie, E., et al. (2013). Avian mortality at communication towers in the United States and Canada: which species, how many, and where? Biological Conservation, 158, 410-419.

local flight path, such as those located between important foraging and roosting areas, can present a higher risk of collision.

The Site in itself is not deemed to represent *ex-situ* feeding/roosting habitat for any such species, as the Site is comprised of a hardstanding and limited scrub.

4.3.2.2.4 Building Appearance

Whilst the design of the facades of the dwellings do include windows, no large surfaces of glass are proposed. Rather the overall façades of the proposed buildings are well broken up, with a varied material composition interspersing any reflective areas. These architectural design features provide important visible cues as to the presence and extent of the proposed structures to any commuting/foraging bird species should they be in the vicinity of the Site. This overall visual heterogeneity of the building façades will be sufficient to further ensure that the risk of bird collisions as a result of the Proposed Development is negligible. These architectural design features are part of the overall design of the Proposed Development and are not considered to represent specific mitigation measures to prevent collisions, however, they will contribute to the overall effect in this regard. It is noted that birds are not deemed to be at any particular risk of collisions with the proposed buildings at the Site.

As such, based on the physical appearance of the proposed structures and the nature of their location, it is deemed that birds including any 'at-risk' species, do not have the potential to be impacted by the Proposed Development in terms of collisions and the risk is therefore deemed to be **imperceptible** in the absence of any mitigation.

4.3.2.2.5 Building Height

With respect to SCI birds for SPAs within the zone of influence of the Proposed Development which regularly use or travel over inland areas (i.e. light bellied brent goose, gull species, duck species and a number of waders such as oystercatcher, godwit species or curlew) in Dublin City, they navigate the urban environment with built structures daily.

To put some context on some of their avoidance capabilities, in a different setting and for use in collision risk modelling for onshore wind turbines, an avoidance rate of 99.5% is applied for large gull species and an avoidance rate of 99.2% is applied for small gull species (Furness, 2019), which essentially means that 99.5% and 99.2% of gull flights, respectively, will avoid collision with a moving turbine. For curlew the avoidance rate applied is 98% (SNH, 2018).

The risk of collision is even less with a static, clearly detectable building. The proposed buildings consist of glazing, broken up with with a varied material composition interspersing any reflective areas. While the presence of the Proposed Development might alter flight patterns of bird species slightly to avoid the proposed building structures the risk of collision is extremely low.

The Proposed Development entails the construction of residential buildings ranging in height of up to 7 storeys, and as such, the risk of migrating birds colliding with the structure due to its height is deemed to be negligible (Migrating species tend to commute far above this with Swans and Geese flying up to 2500ft (ca.750m) during migration along Irish Coasts (Irish Aviation Authority, 2020)).

It is considered that birds that fly over the Site to commute between feeding grounds at various locations would fly lower than this, however, once the proposed structures are made of visible materials i.e., not entirely comprised of reflective materials such as glass, the birds would simply fly around or over them.

4.3.3 Relevant European sites

European sites relative to the Proposed Development discussed in the context of potential S-P-R connections are shown in Table 2 and Figure 3.

TABLE 2. EUROPEAN SITES CONSIDERED WITH THE SOURCE-PATHWAY-RECEPTOR (S-P-R) METHOD TO ESTABLISH NOTABLE LINKS BETWEEN THE SOURCES OF EFFECTS ARISING FROM THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, AND ANY RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES. THOSE SITES WITH NOTABLE S-P-R LINKS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN (IF ANY).

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (*= priority habitats) ³	Potential Pathways
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)		
North Dublin Bay SAC (000206) Linear Distance to Proposed Development: approx. 15.8km NE	Habitats 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand 1320 <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) 2190 Humid dune slacks Species 1395 <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort)	Weak potential hydrological pathway, deemed insignificant. No other potential pathways identified.
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210) Linear Distance to Proposed Development: approx. 11.3km NE	Habitats 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes	
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)		
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024) Linear Distance to Proposed Development: approx. 11.3km NE	SCI Birds A005 Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) A069 Red-Breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) A169 Ruddy Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) A176 Mediterranean Gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>) A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)	Weak potential hydrological pathway, deemed insignificant. No <i>ex-situ</i> habitat on Site. No other potential pathways identified.

³ The Standard Natura Data Forms are accurate to the 2020 update for the Conservation Objectives published in 2013 and 2015. The full species list included in this table is as per the 2020 Standard Data Form. Conservation Objectives are not yet available for the newly added habitats/species but are assumed, for the purposes of assessment, to follow the same format as for other feature habitats/species.

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (*= priority habitats) ³	Potential Pathways
	A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) A999 Wetland and Waterbirds	
North Bull Island SPA (004006) Linear Distance to Proposed Development: approx. 15.8km NE	SCI Birds A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) A053 Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) A069 Red-Breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) A147 Curlew Sandpiper (<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>) A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) A151 Ruff (<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>) A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) A161 Spotted Redshank (<i>Tringa erythropus</i>) A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) A164 Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>) A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) A222 Short-Eared Owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>) A999 Wetland and Waterbirds	
North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236) Linear Distance to Proposed Development: approx. 15.8km NE	SCI Birds A065 Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) A001 Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) A003 Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) A009 Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) A013 Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) A018 Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) A177 Little Gull (<i>Larus minutus</i>) A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) A187 Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>) A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) A204 Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) A200 Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) A199 Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>)	

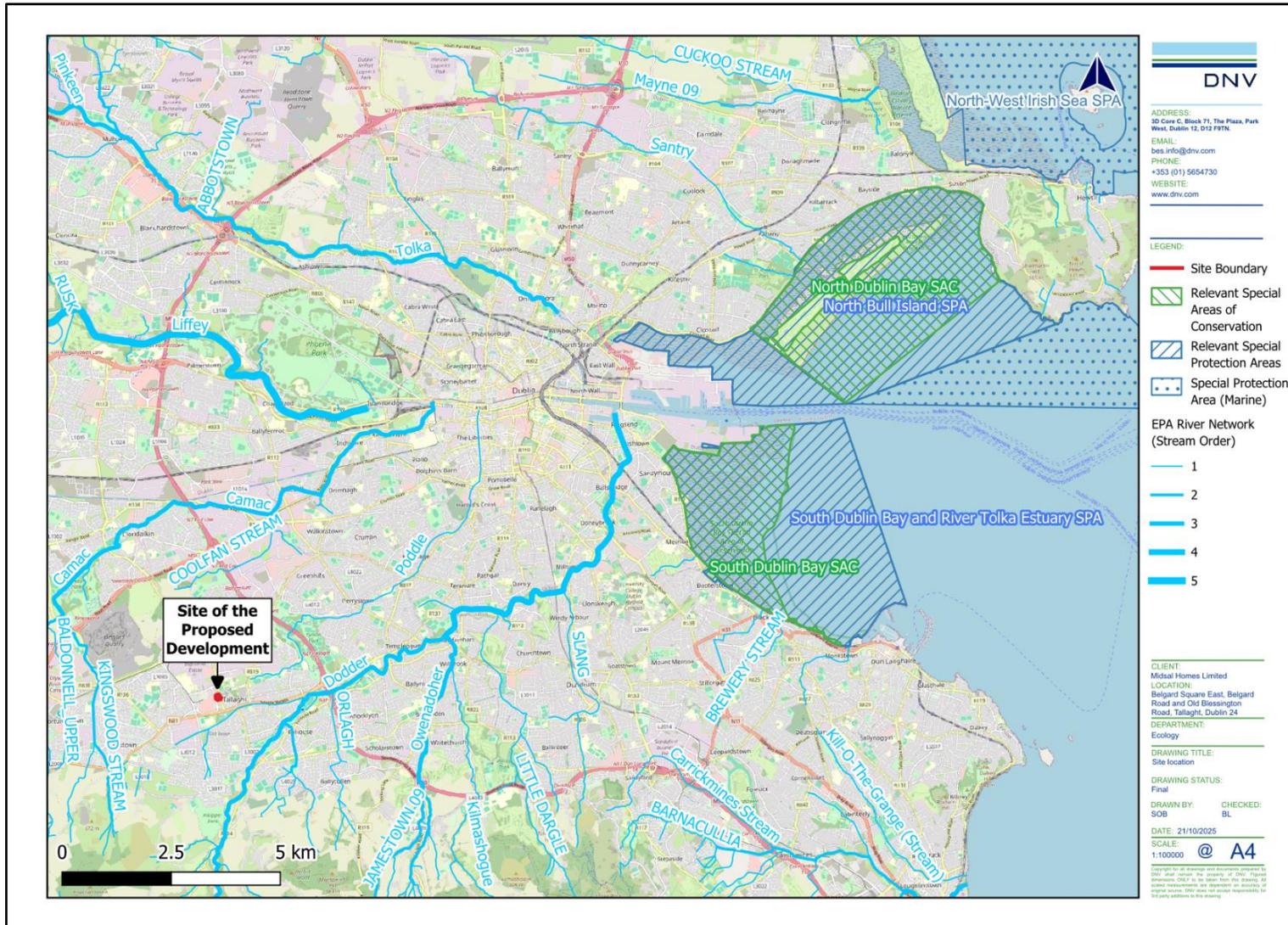


FIGURE 3. LOCATION OF EUROPEAN SITES RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

4.4 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

As stated in the preceding section, no S-P-R links of note between the Proposed Development and any European sites were identified, and therefore no further assessment is required to assess the potential for significant impacts from the Proposed Development alone.

4.4.1 Potential for In-combination Effects

Although the Proposed Development is not considered to have the capacity to cause significant effects on any European sites alone, it is important to consider the potential for cumulative effects with other plans and/or projects. The following sections outline existing granted or pending planning permissions in the vicinity of the Proposed Development and assess the potential for adverse in-combination effects on any European sites.

4.4.1.1 Existing Planning Permissions

A search of planning applications located within a 500m of the Site of the Proposed Development was conducted using online planning resources such as the National Planning Application Database (NPAD) (MyPlan.ie) and South Dublin County Council Planning Map. Any planning applications listed as granted or decision pending from within the last five years were assessed for their potential to act in-combination with the Proposed Development and cause likely significant effects on the relevant European sites. Long-term developments granted outside of this time period were also considered where applicable.

It is noted that the majority of the few developments within the vicinity of the Site of the Proposed Development are applications granted for small scale extensions and alterations to existing permitted developments as well as larger applications for residential and mixed-use residential areas. The larger developments in the vicinity of the Proposed Development are outlined in Table 3.

TABLE 3. GRANTED AND PENDING DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS WITHIN 500 M OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT. LOCATION AND DISTANCE GIVEN IS RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

Planning Reference	Planning Authority	Status	Location
ABP-303306-18	An Bord Pleanála	Grant Permission with Conditions	210m N
Development Description 438 no. apartments and 403 no. student bedspaces and amenity and staff facilities, crèche, 6 retail/commercial units, parking, public plaza and associated site works.			
Potential for In-combination effects No potential for in-combination effects. The AA Screening Report for this project concluded there would be no potential for significant impacts to any European sites. As such, and accounting for the lack of potential impacts from the Proposed Development, it is determined there is no potential for in-combination effects between the Proposed Development and this development.			
ABP-316828/ ABP-317070-23	An Bord Pleanála	Grant Permission with Conditions	Immediately north of the Site
Development Description Tallaght/Clondalkin to City Centre BusConnect Core Bus Corridor Scheme.			
Potential for In-combination effects No potential for in-combination effects. The NIS Report for this project includes a suite of mitigation measures to ensure it will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites. As such, and accounting for the lack of potential impacts from the Proposed Development, it is determined there is no potential for in-combination effects between the Proposed Development and this development.			
ABP-305763-19	An Bord Pleanála	Grant Permission with Conditions	335m N
Development Description The development will consist of the demolition of the existing industrial buildings on site (4,800 sq m) and the construction of 2 No. blocks comprising 328 No. apartments (93 No. 1 bed, 222 No. 2 bed and 13 No. 3 bed),			

ancillary residential support facilities and commercial floorspace measuring 31,147 sq m gross floor space above a single basement level measuring 5,861 sq m. Block A is a part-5 to part-7 No. storey building (13,710 sq m) over basement block comprising 149 No. apartments with office space (222 sq m). Block B is a part-6 to part-9 No. storey (17,437 sq m) over basement block comprising 179 No. apartments, 2 No. double-height Class 1/2 commercial/retail units (as set out in Schedule 2, Part 4, Article 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)) (354 sq m), café/restaurant (313 sq m), creche (360 sq m), internal residents amenity area (644 sq m) at ground floor including reception (37.7 sq m), residents lounge (91.3 sq m), private dining area (52.6 sq m), co-working space (45.5 sq m), games room (47.3 sq m), gym (80 sq m) and communal lounge (220 sq m) at 6th floor level. The development also consists of the provision of a landscaped courtyard; public plaza at the corner of Airton and Belgard Road; pedestrian access from Airton Road to the Technological University campus; balconies; landscaped roof terrace at 6th floor level (7th Storey) of Block B (671 sq m); 184 No. car parking spaces at basement level including 14 No. club car spaces, 10 No. disabled parking spaces and 4 No. crèche parking spaces; 727 No. basement and surface bicycle parking spaces; 4 No. motorbike parking spaces; bin storage; boundary treatments; green roofs; hard and soft landscaping; plant; lighting; Vodafone cabin sub-station; ESB sub-stations, switch rooms and generators; and all other associated site works above and below ground.

Potential for In-combination effects

No potential for in-combination effects. The AA Screening Report for this project concluded there would be no potential for significant impacts to any European sites. As such, and accounting for the lack of potential impacts from the Proposed Development, it is determined there is no potential for in-combination effects between the Proposed Development and this development.

LRD24A/0004W	South Dublin County Council	Grant Permission	335m N
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Development Description

Mabelground Limited intend to apply for retention permission for development (Large-scale Residential Development (LRD)) comprising amendments to a permitted Strategic Housing Development (SHD) as granted under ABP Reg. Ref. ABP-305763-19 at this c. 1.19 Ha. site at the corner of Airton Road and Belgard Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 HD35. Retention permission is sought for the following modifications: The amalgamation of 2 No. retail/commercial units (178.5 sq m and 175.4 sq m) to create one larger unit, and the relocation of the ESB substation and switch room from the southern boundary into the retail/commercial floorspace (total retail/commercial unit floorspace is 310 sq m); shell and core provided to the permitted creche (fit-out subject to tenant requirements); modifications to the height of the scheme including a minor increase to the finished floor levels, minor adjustment to the parapet heights including a slight increase of one section of roof by 125mm in Block B, minor increase in the height of the roof level amenity space by 500mm, and increase in the height of a staircore by 2.3 metres at roof level; revised roof design layout including an amended PV panel layout, increased green roof provision from 2,490 sq m to 2,576 sq m (increase of 86 sq m), reduction in plant, and provision of railings to the roof terrace amenity space; removal of the second private terrace accessed from bedroom No. 3 of Unit No. AG.105; removal of en-suite bathrooms from Unit Nos. B1.302, B1.303, B1.307, B2.301, B2.302, B2.303, B2.307, B3.301, B3.302, B3.307, B4.301, B4.302, B4.307, B5.301, B5.302 and B5.307; removal of stairs leading from the surface level courtyard to the basement; modifications to the landscaping strategy for fire safety including the addition of ventilation for the basement and adjustments to the landscaping layout at surface level; elevational changes including amendments to the material finishes, and provision of additional fire escapes on the western elevation; minor internal design changes including the provision of a metering room in lieu of 9 sq m of creche floor area, reconfiguration of staircores, reconfiguration of the refuse store, bicycle parking and disabled parking at basement level, and the provision of an attenuation tank at basement level; and all associated development works above and below ground.

Potential for In-combination effects

No potential for in-combination effects. The AA Screening Report for the parent permission for this project concluded there would be no potential for significant impacts to any European sites and these amendments are not considered significant enough to alter this finding. As such, and accounting for the lack of potential impacts from the Proposed Development, it is determined there is no potential for in-combination effects between the Proposed Development and this development.

LRD24A/0005W	South Dublin County Council	Grant Permission	335m N
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Development Description

Mabelground Limited intend to apply for permission for development (Large-scale Residential Development (LRD)) comprising amendments to a permitted Strategic Housing Development (SHD) as granted under ABP Reg. Ref. ABP-305763-19 at this c. 1.2 Ha. site at the corner of Airton Road and Belgard Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 HD35. The proposed amendments comprise revisions to the permitted site entrance from Airton Road to the north including the provision of a new island and dish kerbs.

Potential for In-combination effects

No potential for in-combination effects. The AA Screening Report for the parent permission for this project concluded there would be no potential for significant impacts to any European sites and these amendments are not considered significant enough to alter this finding. As such, and accounting for the lack of potential impacts from the Proposed Development, it is determined there is no potential for in-combination effects between the Proposed Development and this development.

SHD3ABP-308398-20	An Bord Pleanála	Grant Permission	450m NW
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Development Description

Mabelground Limited intend to apply for permission for development (Large-scale Residential Development (LRD)) comprising amendments to a permitted Strategic Housing Development (SHD) as granted under ABP Reg. Ref. ABP-305763-19 at this c. 1.2 Ha. site at the corner of Airton Road and Belgard Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 HD35. The proposed amendments comprise revisions to the permitted site entrance from Airton Road to the north including the provision of a new island and dish kerbs.

Potential for In-combination effects

No potential for in-combination effects. The AA Screening Report for this project concluded there would be no potential for significant impacts to any European sites. As such, and accounting for the lack of potential impacts from the Proposed Development, it is determined there is no potential for in-combination effects between the Proposed Development and this development.

SD23A/0231	South Dublin County Council	Grant Permission	135m S
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Development Description

Located on a section of Belgard Square South. The development includes the closure of the slip road from Belgard Square South onto the N81. This development is proposed to accommodate the increase in the volume of buses in the area as a result of the changes proposed under BusConnects. The volume of buses is set to increase from 22 to 49 buses per hour. It forms part of Government efforts to improve public transport and address climate change nationally, supporting national strategies such as the National Development Plan 2021 - 2030 and the Climate Action Plan 2023. The layover facility will be comprised of bus parking for 10 buses and welfare facilities for drivers. The development consists of two separate parking areas with 7 bus bays in the south layover and 3 in the layby to the north of Belgard Square South. There will be one entrance point into the layover area located on the southern side of Belgard Square South. This layover area will have 2 egress points with a right turn ban in place. There will be a layby located on the northern side of Belgard Square South, across from the layover area. The layover area includes a bus driver welfare facility comprising of two toilet units. The proposed Development includes the closure of the hard shoulder on the northern side of the N81 to accommodate the realignment of the cycle track along the N81. The proposed development includes all the associated works to facilitate the bus layover and welfare facility. This includes drainage works, utility diversions, public lighting, fencing and landscaping. The overall area of the site is approximately 0.7 ha.

Potential for In-combination effects

No potential for in-combination effects. The AA Screening Report for this project concluded there would be no potential for significant impacts to any European sites. As such, and accounting for the lack of potential impacts from the Proposed Development, it is determined there is no potential for in-combination effects between the Proposed Development and this development.

4.4.1.2 Relevant Policies and Plans

The local policies and plans detailed in section 2.2 above were reviewed and considered for possible in-combination effects with the Proposed Development. Each of these plans has undergone AA, and where potential for likely significant effects has been identified (e.g., in the case of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 – 2028), an NIS has been prepared which identifies appropriate mitigation. As

such, it is considered that the plans and policies listed will not result in in-combination effects with the Proposed Development. The South Dublin County Biodiversity Action Plan 2020 – 2026 has directly addressed the protection of European sites and biodiversity through specific objectives. The above-listed plans are not being relied upon to rule out potential significant effects on European sites.

4.4.1.3 Operation of Ringsend WwTP

This section addresses in more detail the general issue of potential in-combination effects with Ringsend WwTP arising from the Operational Phase of the Proposed Development and other Developments, including future developments.

In summary, the impact of the Proposed Development and any future development has already been appropriately considered and assessed as part of the application process for the existing planning permissions pertaining to Ringsend WwTP.

The 2012 Ringsend WwTP application for planning permission (Ref. PL.29N.YA0010) was for a PE of 2.4 million and was predicated on the findings of the 2005 Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS). The GSDSDS set out the drainage requirements for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) up to 2031. The GSDSDS relied on the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) in order to estimate the future projected population increases for the GDA. The studies indicated a predicted growth in population from 1.2 million in 2002 to just over 2 million in 2031 for the GDA region.

In June 2018 Irish Water applied for and subsequently received planning permission in 2019 for upgrade works to the Ringsend WwTP facility. The first phase of upgrade works to Ringsend WwTP was completed in December 2021, which increased the capacity of the plant by 400,000 P.E. These works, together with the future works permitted will ultimately increase the capacity of the facility from 1.6 million P.E. to 2.4 million P.E. by 2025 (Irish Water website: <https://www.water.ie/projects/local-projects/ringsend/>).

Therefore, both the initially permitted 2012 upgrade and the permitted 2019 revised upgrade (Ref. ABP-301798-18) for Ringsend WwTP take account of population growth up to 2.4 million PE. Both applications were subject to EIA and therefore accompanied by an EIAR and accompanied by an AA screening report and an NIS.

Notwithstanding the above, on an individual basis, the Operational Phase of the Proposed Development will have an imperceptible effect on the habitats/species/qualifying interests listed within the relevant European sites specifically South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024), North Bull Island SPA (004006), and North Dublin Bay SAC (000206), in terms of flows, relative to the total amount of waste water currently being received at Ringsend WwTP.

Under the heading of *"Potential impact – Discharge of treated effluent, impacts on water quality, effects on qualifying interests"*, the NIS (Irish Water, 2018b) for the Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant 2019 revised upgrade provides as follows:

*"In the operational phase, the proposed upgrade of the Ringsend WWTP Component will result in an increase in the plant capacity and also an improvement in the final effluent quality. This will result in a reduction in the licensed parameters discharged into the receiving water, with significantly reduced quantities in respect of ammonia and phosphorous."*⁴

This NIS goes on to state as follows:

*"Overall no significant adverse effects are foreseen and indeed, a slight positive effect is possible. Effects of discharge during the operational phase of the project from the upgrade project will therefore have an imperceptible impact on habitats listed within these European sites."*⁵

In respect of this issue, the NIS concludes as follows:

*"Thus, there is no potential for in-combination impacts of any other plan and project with the Ringsend WWTP Component of the proposed Upgrade Project."*⁶

⁴ Section 4.5.1 at page 32

⁵ Section 4.5.1 at page 33

⁶ Section 4.5.1 at page 34

The EIAR for the ongoing upgrade at Ringsend WwTP (Irish Water, 2018a) also details the lack of any significant impacts to European sites observed as a result of the current stormwater overflow discharge levels at the WwTP. During storm events, once the capacities of the holding tanks are surpassed, the WwTP releases overflow via an outfall at Pigeon House Rd into the lower Liffey estuary.

The EIAR carried out in relation to said upgrade concluded that in the 'do nothing' scenario, i.e., wherein the upgrade is not carried out; the current existing levels of nutrient input to Dublin Bay as a result of stormwater overflow from the WwTP, are not deemed to pose significant threats to the integrity of European sites located within or adjacent to Dublin Bay, or any of their Conservation Objectives regardless of said upgrade.

The EIAR report acknowledges that under the do-nothing scenario *"the areas in the Tolka Estuary and North Bull Island channel will continue to be affected by the cumulative nutrient loads from the river Liffey and Tolka and the effluent from the Ringsend WWTP"*, which could result in a decline in biodiversity and the deterioration of the biological status of Dublin Bay (Irish Water, 2018a). Nevertheless, these negative impacts of nutrient over-enrichment are considered *"unlikely"*. This is because historical data suggests that pollution in Dublin Bay has had little or no effect on the composition and richness of the benthic macroinvertebrate fauna. The EIAR notes that *"although a localised decline could occur, it is not envisaged to be to a scale that could pose a threat to the shellfish, fish, bird or marine mammal populations that occur in the area."* Furthermore, the EIAR notes that significant impacts on waterbird populations foraging on invertebrates in Dublin Bay due to nutrient over-enrichment are *"unlikely"* to occur. What is important to note is that the do-nothing scenario predicts that nutrient and suspended solid loads from the WwTP will *"continue at the same levels and the impact of these loadings should maintain the same level of effects on marine biodiversity"* and that *"if the status quo is maintained there will be little or no change in the majority of the intertidal faunal assemblages found in Dublin Bay which would likely continue to be relatively diverse and rich across the bay."*

Therefore, it can be concluded that likely significant effects on marine biodiversity and the European sites within Dublin Bay from the *current* operation of Ringsend WwTP are unlikely. Importantly, this conclusion is not dependent upon any future works to be undertaken at Ringsend. Thus, in the absence of any upgrading works, significant in-combination effects to European sites in this regard **are not deemed likely to arise**, and therefore likely significant effects involving foul waters produced by the Proposed Development also do not have the potential to occur.

It is therefore concluded that there is **no possibility for any significant in-combination effects** to European sites involving the Proposed Development.

TABLE 4. SUMMARY OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON EUROPEAN SITES AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

Site	Habitat Loss / Alteration	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Disturbance and/or Displacement of Species	Changes in Population Density	Changes in Water Quality and/or Resource	In-combination effects	Stage 2 AA Required
SAC							
North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)	No	No	No	None	None	None	NO
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)	No	No	No	None	None	None	NO
SPA							
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)	No	No	No	None	None	None	NO
North Bull Island SPA (004006)	No	No	No	None	None	None	NO
North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236)	No	No	No	None	None	None	NO

5 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING CONCLUSION

The Proposed Development on lands at Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, has been assessed considering:

- The nature, size and location of the Proposed Development and possible impacts arising from the Construction and/or Operational Phase.
- The QIs/SCIs and conservation objectives of the European sites.
- The potential for in-combination effects arising from other plans and projects.

In carrying out this AA screening, ecology specific mitigation measures have not been accounted for. Standard best practice construction measures which could have the effect of mitigating any effects on any European Sites have similarly not been considered.

In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that the possibility **may be excluded** that the Proposed Development will have a significant effect on any of the European sites listed below:

- North Dublin Bay SAC (000206).
- South Dublin Bay SAC (000210).
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024).
- North Bull Island SPA (004006).
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236).

In carrying out this AA screening, mitigation measures have not been taken into account. Standard best practice construction measures which could have the effect of mitigating any effects on any European Sites have similarly not been taken into account.

On the basis of the screening exercise carried out above, it can be concluded, on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available and objective information, that the possibility of any significant effects on the above-listed European sites, whether arising from the project itself or in combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded in light of the above listed European sites' conservation objectives. Thus, there is no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process; and the preparation of an NIS is not required.

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