

STATEMENT OF SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

OF A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

AT MARKET SQUARE/PREACHING HOUSE LANE, BALLYCONNELL,

CO CAVAN

FOR CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

In Line with the Requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive



Prepared for

Cavan County Council

Prepared by

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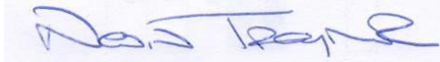
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This report refers, within the limitations stated, to the condition of the site at the time of the report. No warranty is given as to the possibility of future changes in the condition of the site. The report as presented is based on the information sources as detailed in this report, and hence maybe subject to review in the future if more information is obtained or scientific understanding changes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	Background	4
1.2	Legislative Background	4
2.0	METHODOLOGY	6
2.1	Stages of Appropriate Assessment	6
2.2	Guidance	7
2.3	Data Sources	7
3.0	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	8
3.1	Site Location and Surrounding Environment	9
3.2	Habitats within the Site	10
3.3	Water Features and Quality	10
4.0	IDENTIFICATION OF NATURA 2000 SITES	12
4.1	Description of Natura Sites Potentially Significantly Affected	12
4.2	Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites	14
4.3	Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites	15
5.0	IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS & ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	16
5.1	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects	16
5.2	Assessment of Potential In-Combination Effects	19
6.0	CONCLUSION	20
7.0	REFERENCES	21
APPENDIX A	FINDING OF NO SIGNIFIICANT EFFECTS REPORT	22

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been prepared to support a Planning Application for the Proposed Development (described in Section 3 below). This report contains information required for the competent authority to undertake screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in respect of the construction of a development at Market Square/ Preaching House Lane, Ballyconnell, Co Cavan, (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development) to determine whether it is likely individually or in combination with other plans and projects to have a significant effect on any European sites, in light of best scientific knowledge.

Having regard to the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended (the "Planning Acts") (section 177U), the purpose of a screening exercise under section 177U of the PDA 2000 is to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

If it cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site then it is necessary to carry out a Stage 2 appropriate assessment under section 177V of the Planning Acts.

When screening the project, there are two possible outcomes:

- the project poses no potential for a likely significant effect and as such requires no further assessment.
- the project has potential to have likely significant effect (or this is uncertain) unless mitigation measures are applied, and therefore an AA of the project is necessary.

This report has been prepared by Traynor Environmental Ltd to enable Cavan County Council to carry out AA screening in relation to the Proposed Development. The report was compiled by Nevin Traynor (B.Sc. Environmental Science & Technology (Sligo IT, 1999) who has 24 years' experience in Environmental Impact Assessment and has completed numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements for various development types.

1.2. Legislative Background - The Habitats and Birds Directives

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish Law inter alia by the Part XAB of the Planning Acts (section 177U and 177V) govern the requirement to carry out appropriate assessment screening and appropriate assessment, where required, per Section 1.1 above.

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the European Union (EU). Under the Habitats Directive, Member States are obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which contain habitats or species considered important for protection and conservation in an EU context.

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds), transposed into Irish law by the Bird and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, as amended, is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats in the EU. Among other things, the Birds Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

SACs designated under the Habitats Directive and SPAs, designated under the Birds Directive, form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000. The Habitats Directive sets out a unified system for the protection and management of SACs and SPAs. These sites are also referred to as European sites.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the requirement for an assessment of proposed plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites.

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement to screen all plans and projects and to carry out an appropriate assessment if required (Appropriate Assessment (AA)). Article 6(4) establishes requirements in cases of imperative reasons of overriding public interest:

Article 6(3): "Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. Considering the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."

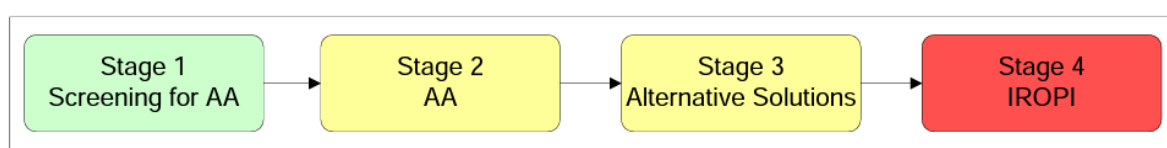
2.0 METHODOLOGY

The Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2002, 2018, 2021 see Section 2.1 below) promotes a four-stage process to complete the AA and outlines the issues and tests at 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. Stages 1 and 2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of Article 6(3) or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

2.1 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

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 (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Overview of Screening and Appropriate Assessment (OPR, 2021).



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

- **Stage 1: Screening.** The first stage of the AA process is to determine the likelihood of significant effects of the Proposed Development, this address:
 - whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the 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: Appropriate Assessment.** The second stage of the AA requires the competent authority to determine whether the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site, having regard to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure and function. (Figure 1). The applicant must provide a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to the competent authority to inform the AA, which is a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive of the implications of a proposed development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for one or more than one European site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. It must include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify and classify any implications for one or more than one European site in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. The competent authority must consult with the public in relation to any plan or project that requires AA. If the competent authority determines that the plan or project would have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, 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.

To ensure that the Proposed Development complies fully with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and all relevant Irish transposing legislation, Traynor Environmental Ltd compiled this report to enable Cavan County Council to carry out AA screening in relation to the Proposed Development to determine whether the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with another plan or project will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site.

2.2 Guidance

This report has been compiled in accordance with guidance contained in the following documents:

- 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 NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001); hereafter referred to as the EC Article 6 Guidance Document.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2000); hereafter referred to as MN2000.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018).
- Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive (EC, 2021).
- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021).
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021).

2.3 Data Sources

Sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites, and the environment within which they are located, are listed below:

- The following mapping and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data sources, as required:
 - National Parks & Wildlife (NPWS) protected site boundary data.
 - Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) mapping and aerial photography.
 - OSI/Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rivers and streams, and catchments.
 - Open Street Maps.
 - Google Earth and Bing aerial photography 1995-2024.
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including:
 - Natura 2000 - Standard Data Form.
 - Conservation Objectives.
 - Site Synopses.
- National Biodiversity Data Centre records.
 - Online database of rare, threatened, and protected species.
 - Publicly accessible biodiversity datasets.
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2019); and
- Relevant Development Plans.
 - Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Cavan County Council proposes to carry out the following works at Market Square/Preaching House Lane, Ballyconnell, Co Cavan. The proposal is for the following:

- Demolition of existing derelict house and associated sheds and development of a new community, space and gardens and realignment/widening of Preaching House Lane(L-50532);
- Site development works, including landscaping, kerbing, drainage, site services above and below ground.

Figure 1: Site Location Map



Proposed Landscape Masterplan



Figure 2: Site Layout plan



Photomontages from the Landscape Masterplan



Surface Water

Clean Surface water from the roof and yard will be connected to the existing public surface water drainage network.

Wastewater Management

All wastewater from the proposed development will be connected into the existing public sewer.

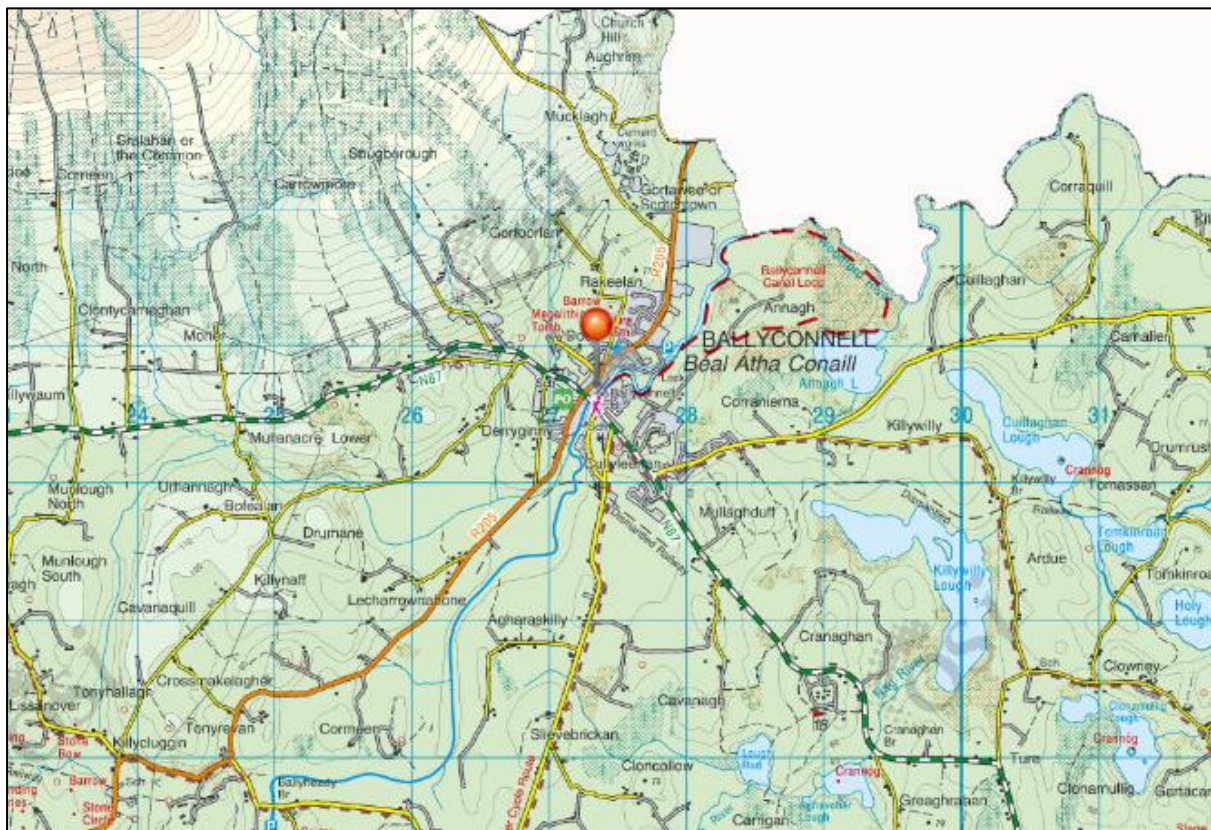
3.1 Site Location and Surrounding Environment

The site in question is approximately 0.029ha and it is located on the north eastern outskirts of Ballyconnell town, approximately 0.4km east of the town centre. The site is located in the townland of Doon. The site will be accessed via Preaching House Lane that is just north of the Main street Ballyconnell R205.

The land use surrounding the site is mixed. To the east and west of the site, are the urban and sub-urban areas of Ballyconnell and the dominant habitats associated with these residential and commercial areas include buildings and artificial surfaces, along with amenity grasslands and gardens west of the site. Beyond Ballyconnell, agriculture is the primary land-use and the dominant habitats associated with these areas include improved and semi-improved agricultural grasslands, along with wet grasslands, hedgerows and treelines.

The main soil types on site are Dinantian Pure Bedded Limestones (DPBL) whilst the quaternary sediments are fill derived from Silicified Limestone and cherts (TlSCh) (source: EPA.ie).

Figure 3 – Site Location Map (Site Pinned)



3.2 Habitats within the Site

To the south and east of the site, the urban fabric of Ballyconnell (residential, industrial areas) is dominant. Other habitats surrounding the site include hedgerows, treelines, amenity grasslands and scrub. Site location maps are shown in Figures 2 and 3, whilst an aerial photograph of the site and its surrounding habitats is shown in Figure 4.

- **Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)** – this are the dominant habitat on the site due to the existing derelict buildings;
- **Amenity Grasslands (GA2)** – Some small areas of amenity grassland habitats in the west of the site;
- **Scrub (WS1)** – There are pockets of scrub occurring throughout the site. The dominant species in the scrub include bramble (*Rubus Fruticosus*) and Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*). The main area of scrub occurs to the rear or north of the site.
- **Treelines and hedgerows (WL2 & WL1)** – The natural boundaries of the application site to the west and north consist of treelines and partial hedgerow. The main species in these features include Willow (*Salix sp.*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
- **Scattered trees (WD5)** – There are some areas of scattered immature trees within the site, mostly in the area from the middle of the site and grading into the north western area. The dominant species here is Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Willow (*Salix sp.*).

The application site itself does not lie within nor is it adjacent to any area that has been designated for nature conservation purposes. All proposed development works within the application site will take place on areas of low biodiversity value. No protected mammal species were recorded. It is not considered likely that any bird species nests within the building. Given the condition of the building, habitation by bats is considered unlikely. However, this should be confirmed by a bat specialist prior to demolition. No qualifying interests of the nearest SACs or SPAs would occur on this site.

3.3 Water Features and Quality

The application site lies within the Erne Hydrometric Area (36) and Catchment (36), the Woodford [Cavan]_SC_010 Sub-Catchment and the Woodford River sub-basin. There are no watercourses within or adjacent to the application site. The Woodford River (Cavan) is located 100m southeast of the site. The Woodford River flows in a north easterly direction through Ballyconnell. The river flows along the border with Northern Ireland for 15km where it flows into the river Erne.

The EPA have classified the ecological status of the River Erne as Good.

The application site is within the Newtown-Ballyconnell (IEGBNI_NW_G_031) Ground Waterbody and the EPA describe the overall status of this waterbody as good. This groundwater body is considered to be *Not At Risk*. Groundwater vulnerability throughout the site is classed as 'L' Low.

3.4 Protected Species

An examination of the website of the National Biodiversity Data Centre revealed that there are records for the presence of a number of protected species from within the relevant 1km square (H2718) of this proposed application. These species are the Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and a number of bat species [(Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Lesser Noctule (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto*), Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)] which are fully protected under the Irish Wildlife Acts. A custom polygon that was generated for the site revealed that these records do not pertain to within the application site itself.

4.0 Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

4.1 Description of Natura Sites Potentially Significantly Affected

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, a list of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development have been identified and described according to their site synopsis, qualifying interests, and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its zone of interest were also considered. The zone of impact may be determined by an assessment of the connectivity between the application site and the designated areas by virtue of hydrological connectivity, atmospheric emissions, flight paths, ecological corridors etc.

For significant effects to arise, there must be a potential impact facilitated by having a *source*, i.e., the proposed development and activities arising out of its construction or operation, a *receptor*, i.e., the European site and its qualifying interests and a subsequent *pathway* or *connectivity* between the source and receptor, e.g., a water course. The likelihood for significant effects on the European site will largely depend on the characteristics of the source (e.g., nature and scale of the construction works), the characteristics of the existing pathway and the characteristics of the receptor, e.g., the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests (habitats or species) to changes in water quality.

There are three Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km of this proposed development. Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC 000007 is, at its closest point, 1.7m southeast of the proposed development site. There are many other areas of this SAC at slightly further distances away from this site. The Lough Oughter SPA 004049 is located approximately 9.4km south of the site (at its closest point). Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC 000584 is located 12.5km north west. The qualifying interests of the Lough Oughter SAC / SPA and Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands, the reasons for designation, are listed below. A full description of all these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

Figure 4. Showing European sites and NHAs/pNHAs within the wider Potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development.

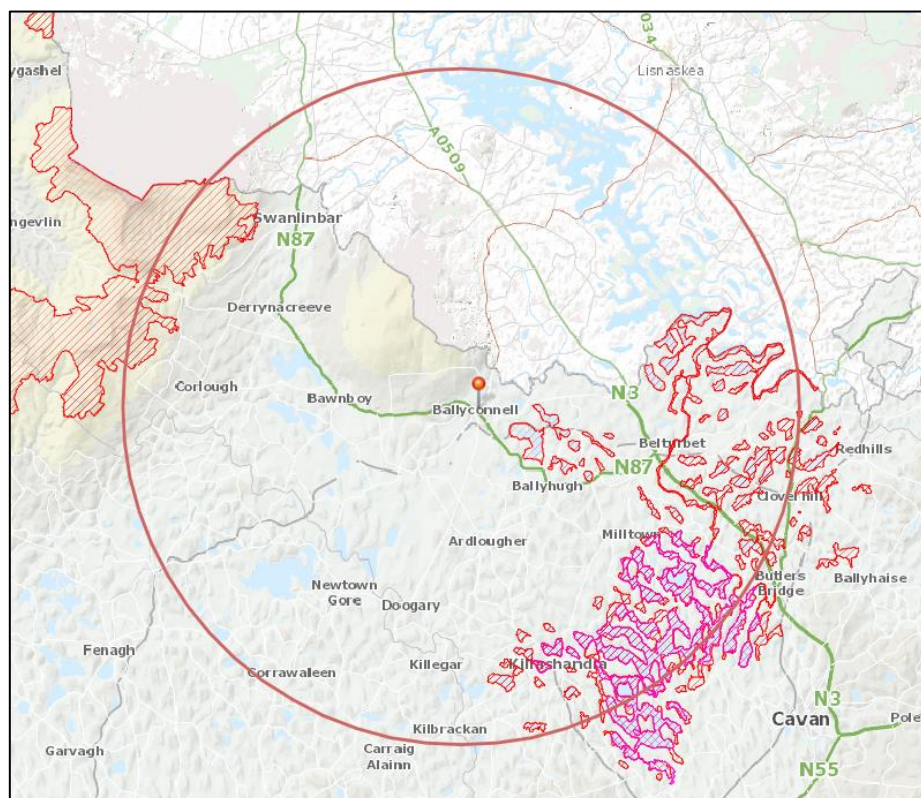


Table 2 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km of the Proposed Site

Site Name & Code	Distance from Site	Qualifying Interests	Screened In / Out
Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC 000007	1.7m south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation Bog woodland Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> 	<p>Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during construction or operation can be ruled out.</p>
Lough Oughter SPA 004049	9.4km south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) Wetlands & Waterbirds 	<p>Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during construction or operation can be ruled out.</p>
Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC 000584	12.5km north west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> European dry heaths Alpine and Boreal heaths Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) Blanket bogs (* if active bog) Transition mires and quaking bogs Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) 	<p>Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during construction or operation can be ruled out.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) • Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation • <i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i> (Slender Green Feather-moss) 	
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4.2 Site Synopsis

Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs (SAC Site Code 000007)

Lough Oughter and its associated loughs occupy much of the lowland drumlin belt in north and central Cavan between Upper Lough Erne, Killeshandra and Cavan town. The site is a maze of waterways, islands, small lakes, and peninsulas including some 90 inter-drumlin lakes and 14 basins in the course of the Erne River. The area lies on Silurian and Ordovician strata with Carboniferous limestone immediately surrounding.

This site is a candidate Special Area of Conservation for natural eutrophic lakes and bog woodland, two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and for the otter, a species listed on Annex II of the same Directive. The site also contains areas of dry woodland, marsh, reedbed and wet pasture.

The Lough Oughter area contains important examples of two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and supports a population of the Annex II species, otter. The site as a whole is the best inland example of a flooded drumlin landscape in Ireland and has many rich and varied biological communities. Nowhere else in the country does such an intimate mixture of land and water occur over a comparable area, and many of the species of wetland plants, some considered quite commonplace in Lough Oughter and its associated loughs, are infrequent elsewhere.

Lough Oughter SPA 004049

Lough Oughter and its associated loughs occupy much of the lowland drumlin belt in north and central Co. Cavan between Belturbet, Killashandra and Cavan town. This area comprises a maze of waterways, islands, small lakes and peninsulas. Lough Oughter, the largest lake in the site, is relatively shallow (maximum depth of 10 m) and considered to be a naturally eutrophic system. Its main inflowing rivers are the River Erne and the Annalee River, whilst the main outflow is the River Erne, which connects the lake to Upper Lough Erne and Lower Lough Erne to the north.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Great Crested Grebe, Whooper Swan, and Wigeon. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC 000584

This site follows a series of shale uplands in the counties of Cavan and Leitrim, including to the north, Cuilcagh Mountain on the border with Northern Ireland, Benbrack, Bencroy, and to the south, Slieve Anierin, rising above Lough Allen. It links the following pre-existing Areas of Scientific Interest: Bellavally Mountain, Cuilcagh Mountain and Lough Cratty Bog, Moneenteriff Cliffs and Levenakilla Bog. The site is of special interest because of its geology, physiography and upland flora and fauna.

4.3 Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites

A concurrent GIS analysis of the proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) in terms of their role in supporting the species using Natura 2000 sites was undertaken along with GIS investigation of European sites. It was assumed that these supporting roles mainly related to mobile fauna such as mammals and birds which may use pNHAs and NHAs as "stepping stones" between Natura 2000 sites.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were considered during the preparation of this AA Screening report.

5.0 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS & ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Proposed Development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites considered in the assessment and therefore potential impacts must be identified and considered.

5.1. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

The Proposed Development is located at Market Square/Preaching House Lane, Ballyconnell, Co Cavan. A review of aerial photography, Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) mapping and OSI Geographical Information System (GIS) data for rivers and streams indicates that there are no notable surface water features onsite and no direct hydrological pathways to offsite surface water bodies.

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence.

The consideration of all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the Proposed Development are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Identification of all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, considering the size and scale of the project.	
Impacts:	Significance of Impacts:
<p>Construction/Demolition phase e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surface water runoff from soil excavation - Dust, Noise, Vibration - Lighting disturbance - Impact on groundwater/dewatering - Storage of excavated/construction materials - Access to site 	<p>None</p> <p>The application site has no hydrological or ecological connectivity to any Natura 2000 site. The construction and operation of the proposed development will have no significant effect upon the Natura 2000 sites identified. There are no individual elements of the proposed project that are likely to give rise to negative impacts on these sites. There is a sufficient distance between the application site and all Natura 2000 sites to ensure that potential direct and indirect impacts will be avoided. There will be no impacts upon the Qualifying Interests of any designated site.</p>
<p>Operational phase e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct emission to air and water - Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment - Lighting disturbance - Noise/vibration - Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction - Presence of people, vehicles, and activities - Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks) - Potential for accidents or incidents 	<p>There is no real likelihood of any significant effects on European Sites in the wider catchment area.</p> <p>The development is located at a distance of removal such that there will be no disturbance to qualifying interest species in any European sites.</p> <p>There will be no emissions from the application site to any designated site during the construction or operation phase of the project. There are no surface water features within the application site and there is no hydrological connectivity between the application site and any designated area. Wastewater from the site will be directed to the public foul sewer. Clean surface water from the application site will be directed to the public system.</p>

Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include:	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area - Disturbance to QI species - Habitat or species fragmentation - Reduction or fragmentation in species density - Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water quality etc.) - Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI - Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site - Climate change 	<p>Land-take: There will be no land-take from any designated site. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site. There will be no loss of undesignated habitats of biodiversity value.</p> <p>Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site: There are three Natura 2000 sites within 15km of this proposed development. The closest of these is the Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC 000007 1.7m south east of the application site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the application site and this SPA/SAC, or any other SPA/SPA within 15km of the site.</p> <p>Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.): No resources will be taken from any Natura 2000 site and there are no resource requirements that will impact upon any designated site.</p> <p>Emissions:</p> <p>Excavation requirements: Construction waste and excavated material from the construction will be used on site. Any remaining waste will be disposed of in a responsible manner in a licensed facility away from any designated sites. The projects identified in the surrounding area are also small scale and were subject to their own AA processes.</p> <p>Transportation requirements: No access to any areas of any designated site will be required during any phase of project.</p> <p>In-Combination / Cumulative Impacts: The proposed application was considered in combination with other developments or proposed developments in the greater Ballyconnell area and potential cumulative impacts were considered. Any individual application that has the potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site will be subject to Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The construction and operation of the proposed development will have no impacts when considered in combination with other plans and projects that have been screened for Appropriate Assessment or where mitigation measures have been included as part of Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement).</p>

	<p>Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc: Construction will take approximately 6 months. The Proposed Development site is not located adjacent or within a European site, therefore there is no risk of habitat loss or fragmentation or any effects on QI habitats or species directly or ex-situ.</p> <p>The proposed development lies outside the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 3.3. There will be no reduction of designated habitat area or interference with any protected habitat within any SAC or SPA. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site. There will be no loss or fragmentation or disturbance to any of the riparian habitats along any watercourse. There will be no loss of habitats defined as Qualifying Interests for any designated site.</p>
<p>Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?</p>	
<p>No</p>	<p>N/A</p>

On the basis of the information supplied, which is considered adequate to undertake a screening determination and having regard to:

- the nature and scale of the proposed development,
- the intervening land uses and distance from European sites,
- the lack of direct connections with regard to the Source-Pathway-Receptor model,

It may be concluded that the proposed development, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on the above listed European sites or any other European site, in view of the said sites' conservation objectives.

5.2 Assessment of Potential In-Combination Effects

In-combination effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. In-combination effects 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. As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the Proposed Development, other relevant plans and projects in the area must also be considered at this stage. This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination effects of the Proposed Development with other such plans and projects on European sites. A review of the National Planning Application Database was undertaken. The Cavan County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce, or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any, in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the proposed development area and surrounding townlands in which the proposed development site is located, would be avoided. There are no predicted in-combination effects given that it is predicted that the Proposed Development will have no significant effect on any European site.

6.0 Appropriate Assessment Conclusion

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence. There are no predicted effects on any European sites given:

The distance between the Proposed Development and the closest European Site, is approximately 1.7m southeast.

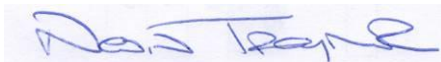
- The lack of connectivity between the Proposed Development and any hydrological pathways between the Proposed Development site and any watercourses that lead to any European sites.
- There are no predicted emissions to air, water, or the environment during the construction or operational phases of the proposed finished product storage unit that would result in significant effects.

It has been objectively concluded by Traynor Environmental Ltd that:

- The Proposed Development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the European sites considered in this assessment.
- The Proposed Development is unlikely to either directly or indirectly significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the European sites considered in this assessment.
- The Proposed Development, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the European sites considered in this assessment in view of their conservation objectives.
- It is possible to conclude that significant effects can be excluded at the screening stage.

It can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

An appropriate assessment is not, therefore, required. A finding of no significant effects report is presented in Appendix A in accordance with the EU Commission's methodological guidance (European Commission, 2002).



Nevin Traynor BSc. Env, H.Dip I.T

For Traynor Environmental Ltd

7.0 REFERENCES

Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government (2010) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (as amended February 2010).

European Commission (2000) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission Environment DG (2002) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, Brussels.

European Commission (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC: Clarification of the concepts of alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interests, compensatory measures, overall coherence, and opinion of the Commission. European Commission, Brussels.

European Commission (2018) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission (2021) Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Brussels 28.9.21.

European Commission (2021) Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive, Brussels 12.10.21.

NPWS (2019) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

NPWS (2022) National Parks and Wildlife Service Metadata available online at <https://www.npws.ie/maps-anddata>
Office-of-the-Planning-Regulator (2021) Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management OPR Practice Note PN01. March 2021

STATEMENT OF SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

COMPLETED BY

TRAYNOR ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

APPENDIX A – FINDING OF NO SIGNIFIICANT EFFECTS REPORT



Finding of no Significant Effects Matrix

Name of project or plan

Proposed Development at Market Square/Preaching House Lane, Ballyconnell, Co Cavan.

Name and location of the Natura 2000 site(s)

There are two Natura 2000 sites within 15km of this proposed development. The closest of these is Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC 000007 1.7m east. There is no hydrological connectivity between the application site and this SPA/SAC, or any other SPA/SPA within 15km of the site.

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence.

Description of the project or plan

Notice is hereby given that Cavan County Council proposes to carry out the following works at Market Square/Preaching House Lane, Ballyconnell, Co Cavan

The proposal is for the following:

- Demolition of existing derelict house and associated sheds and development of a new community, space and gardens and realignment/widening of Preaching House Lane(L-50532);
- Site development works, including landscaping, kerbing, drainage, site services above and below ground.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site(s)

No

Are there other projects or plans that together with the projects or plan being assessed could affect the site. A review of the National Planning Application Database was undertaken. The first stage of this review confirmed that there were no data outages in the area where the Proposed Development is located. The database was then queried for developments granted planning permission within 500m of the Proposed Development within the last three years.

There are no predicted in-combination effects given that the reasons discussed above and given that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any adverse effects on any European sites.

The Cavan County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce, or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any, in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the proposed development area and surrounding townlands in which the proposed development site is located, would be avoided.

The listed development has been granted permission with conditions relating to sustainable development by the consenting authority in compliance with the relevant Local Authority Development Plan and in compliance with the Local Authority requirement for regard to the Habitats Directive. There are no predicted in-combination effects given that it is predicted that the Proposed development will have no effect on any European site.

The Assessment of Significance of Effects

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site. A review of aerial photography, Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) mapping and OSI Geographical Information System (GIS) data for rivers and streams indicates that there are no watercourses within the proposed development site. This was confirmed during fieldwork on habitat assessment in May 2024. There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant. There are no predicted effects on any European sites given:

- The lack of connectivity between the Proposed Development and any hydrological pathways between the Proposed Development site and any watercourses that lead to any European sites.
- There are no predicted emissions to air, water, or the environment during the construction or operational phases of the proposed finished product storage unit that would result in significant effects.

List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address.

The requirement for Appropriate Assessment Screening was determined by discussions with Cavan County Council.

Response to consultation

N/A.

Data Collected to Carry out the Assessment.**Who carried out the assessment:**

Traynor Environmental Ltd

Sources of data:

NPWS database of designated sites at www.npws.ie

National Biodiversity Data Centre database <http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie>

Level of assessment completed:

Desktop Assessment and Fieldwork for AA screening assessment.

Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed:

Cavan County Council Planning web portal.

Overall Conclusions

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence. There are no predicted effects on any European sites given:

The distance between the Proposed Development and the closest European Site, is approximately 1.7m southeast.

- The lack of connectivity between the Proposed Development and any hydrological pathways between the Proposed Development site and any watercourses that lead to any European sites.
- There are no predicted emissions to air, water, or the environment during the construction or operational phases of the proposed finished product storage unit that would result in significant effects.

It has been objectively concluded by Traynor Environmental Ltd that:

- The Proposed Development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the European sites considered in this assessment.
- The Proposed Development is unlikely to either directly or indirectly significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the European sites considered in this assessment.
- The Proposed Development, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the European sites considered in this assessment in view of their conservation objectives.
- It is possible to conclude that significant effects can be excluded at the screening stage.

An appropriate assessment is not, therefore, required. A finding of no significant effects report is presented in Appendix A in accordance with the EU Commission's methodological guidance (European Commission, 2002).

It can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site. Therefore, this proposed project does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment Process.