



**ENVIROPLAN CONSULTING
LIMITED**

July' 24

Title

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

Development Description

"It is proposed to construct 4 no. new housing units at Moylough. 2 no. 3 bed X 2-storey terrace units and 2 no. 2 bed apartment units. It is proposed to demolish the existing structure with the exception of the street front (North) façade. Moylough is 5 km northwest of Mountbellew and 50 km from Galway. It is located on the N63 national secondary road and is also served by the R328 and R364 regional roads. This proposal represents an ideal infill opportunity within the village confines of the 50 kph speed limit zones whilst the land benefits from direct access onto the R360"

Location

Moylough, Galway

Applicants

Galway County Council

Prepared by:

*Colette Casey (B.Sc (Hons)) in partnership
with James O' Donnell (BA, MRUP, Dip APM)*

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Note: The scope of this report is to provide the necessary information to the competent authority, to assess whether the proposed development alone and in combination with other projects, could have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in the area in view of the sites conservation objectives, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and does not purport to be an ecological assessment of the subject site.

1 INTRODUCTION

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Colette Casey (B.Sc (Hons)) in partnership with James O'Donnell, Planning Consultant (MA, MRUP, Dip APM) on behalf of Galway County Council who are applying for planning permission *“to construct 4 no. new housing units at Moylough. 2 no. 3 bed X 2-storey terrace units and 2 no. 2 bed apartment units. It is proposed to demolish the existing structure with the exception of the street front (North) façade. Moylough is 5 km northwest of Mountbellew and 50 km from Galway. It is located on the N63 national secondary road and is also served by the R328 and R364 regional roads. This proposal represents an ideal infill opportunity within the village confines of the 50 kph speed limit zones whilst the land benefits from direct access onto the R360”* At Moylough, Galway

Colette Casey is an experienced and qualified Consultant Ecologist. She has obtained a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science (BSc Hons) at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She has been involved in the completion of numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports (AASR's), Natura Impact statements (NIS's), Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP's) and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening. Colette has conducted Hen Harrier, Wintering Bird, Otter and Bat Surveys in the Republic of Ireland. She is an active member of Birdwatch Ireland, Bat conservation Ireland. She is a registered member of CIEEM and has been licensed by National Parks and Wildlife Services.

James O' Donnell is a qualified Town Planner and Project Manager with over 25 years planning experience in both the public and private sector in the west of Ireland, including 6 years experience as a local authority planning officer. James has particular experience in the project management and delivery of a wide range of complex planning applications requiring environmental and ecological assessment, in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and EIA Directives.

The site for the proposed development lies 2.77 kilometres south from the Shankill West Bog SAC which has been designated under the EU Habitats Directive, and so it is necessary that the potential impacts of the proposed works be assessed by the competent authority, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This report provides the information necessary for the competent authority to complete an Appropriate Assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed works on sites of European importance in the area. This report has also had regard to the provisions of the March 2021 publication entitled *“OPR Practice Note PN01- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.”*

Table 1.1: Step One: Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics

Brief description of the project plan	<i>"It is proposed to construct 4 no. new housing units at Moylough. 2 no. 3 bed X 2-storey terrace units and 2 no. 2 bed apartment units. It is proposed to demolish the existing structure with the exception of the street front (North) façade. Moylough is 5 km northwest of Mountbellew and 50 km from Galway. It is located on the N63 national secondary road and is also served by the R328 and R364 regional roads. This proposal represents an ideal infill opportunity within the village confines of the 50 kph speed limit zones whilst the land benefits from direct access onto the R360"</i>
Brief description of site characteristics	The proposed development is located along the southern edge of main street/ N63 within the settlement of Moylough. The proposed development includes alterations to 3 no. buildings. The site is surrounded by residential and commercial developments and can be described as an infill and part brownfield site (owning to the existing buildings onsite).

1.1 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

1.1.1 EU Nature Conservation Legislation and Natura 2000 Sites.

There are three main types of designation for nature conservation in Ireland: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). NHAs are designated under the Irish Wildlife Act 1976 (amended 2000). SACs and SPAs are designated under European legislation, the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed into Irish law in the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 as amended in 1998 and 2005) and the EU Birds Directive 79/409/EEC, respectively. These European designated sites (SACs and SPAs) are also known as Natura 2000 sites. This means that they are part of the Natura 2000 Network, a network of important ecological sites across the European Union.

Sites are designated based on the presence of certain 'Qualifying Features', i.e., the habitats listed under Annex I and the species listed under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

Once a site is designated as a SAC and publicly advertised it is legally protected and becomes a proposed candidate SAC (pcSAC). A three-month period follows during which landowners may lodge an objection to the designation. Details of each proposed SAC are then given to the EU Commission, and thereafter the site is called a "candidate SAC". Once the sites are approved by the commission, they are formally designated by the Minister.

1.1.2 Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites

Due to the proximity of the proposed development site to a candidate Special Area of Conservation, also known as a Natura 2000 site, an Appropriate Assessment may be required under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Article 6(3) and (4), Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Such assessments are required where it is identified that a proposed plan or project could have significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Directive, state the following;

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 subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives... 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....'

6.4 'If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest... the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected...'

2 METHODOLOGY

The screening exercise will be conducted in line with the recommendations and protocol set out in the Guidance from the Commission (EC, 2021). This protocol involves a four-stage process to complete an Appropriate Assessment. At each stage, the findings of certain issues and tests will determine whether the next stage in the process is required.

2.1.1 Appropriate Assessment Stages

The four stages in the Appropriate Assessment process are outlined below:

Stage 1: Screening

This step consists of examining the likely potential impacts of a project or plan, alone or in combination with other projects, upon a Natura 2000 site or sites, and considers whether these impacts may be considered significant. If no significant impacts are foreseen, then a 'finding of no significant effects' (FONSE) statement is issued to the appropriate authority, and the process is complete. If the effects are considered significant or their significance is unknown, then the process moves on to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

Where the screening process has identified potential impacts which are considered significant or unknown, this process examines these potential impacts in detail, in relation to the conservation interests of the Natura 2000 site or sites. Mitigation measures may be suggested to reduce the likelihood or severity of these impacts. If the impacts are still considered to be significant or unknown after this stage is complete, then alternative solutions must be considered (Stage 3).

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If the potential impacts are still considered to be significant or unknown after the Appropriate Assessment stage, then alternative ways of implementing the project are considered at this stage. If no alternative solutions are possible, then it is considered whether the project or plan may go ahead regardless, if imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) are found.

Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

If significant negative impacts on the Natura 2000 site are unavoidable, and no alternative solutions may be found, then this stage involves the consideration of whether the project or plan may go ahead despite these effects, for 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI).

The results of a Stage 1 (Screening) Exercise are detailed in **Section 3** of this report.

3 STAGE 1: SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN OR PROJECT

“It is proposed to construct 4 no. new housing units at Moylough. 2 no. 3 bed X 2-storey terrace units and 2 no. 2 bed apartment units. It is proposed to demolish the existing structure with the exception of the street front (North) façade. Moylough is 5 km northwest of Mountbellew and 50 km from Galway. It is located on the N63 national secondary road and is also served by the R328 and R364 regional roads. This proposal represents an ideal infill opportunity within the village confines of the 50 kph speed limit zones whilst the land benefits from direct access onto the R360”

A Site Layout Plan is included as **Appendix A** to this report.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.2.1 Site Location in Relation to Natura 2000 Sites

The proposed site lies at Moylough, Galway (Grid Ref: Easting: 162366.09, Northing: 248767.70). The site for the proposed development lies approximately 2.77km south from Shankill West Bog SAC (Site Code: 000326). (See **Figure 3.2** below).

All Natura 2000 sites within a 15km buffer of the proposed development are listed in **Table 3.1** and **Figure 3.3**.

Table 3.1: Step Two: Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor Model and Compilation of information on QI and Conservation Objectives

European Site (Code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest	Distance from the proposed development (km)	Receptor/Connection	Screen In – Yes/No
Shankill West Bog SAC Site Code: 000326	QIs – 3 Habitats http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000326.pdf	2.77km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Carrownagappul Bog SAC Site Code: 001242	QIs – 3 Habitats http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001242.pdf	3.59km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Derrinlough (Cloonkeenleananode) Bog SAC Site Code: 002197	QIs – 1 Habitat http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002197.pdf	3.92km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Curraghleanagh Bog SAC Site Code: 002350	QIs – 3 Habitats http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002350.pdf	6.03km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Lough Corrib SAC Site Code: 000297	QIs – 15 Habitats and 9 Species http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000297.pdf	6.42km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No

	f			
Lough Lurleen Bog/Glenamaddy Turlough SAC Site code: 000301	QIs – 5 Habitats https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000301.pdf	9.36km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Levally Lough SAC Site Code: 000295	QIs – 5 Habitats http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000295.pdf	9.81km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Camderry Bog SAC Site Code: 002347	QI's -3 Habitats http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002347.pdf	10.05km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Lisnageeragh Bog and Ballinastack Turlough SAC Site Code: 000296	QI's 4 Habitats http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000296.pdf	13.31km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Monivea Bog SAC Site Code: 002352	QIs – 3 Habitats http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002352.pdf	14.84 km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site.	No

The application site is surrounded by existing buildings, there is minimal vegetation on site and no identifiable ecological corridors. There is a significant intervening distance between the application site and the Shankill West Bog SAC and there is an absence of hydrological/ecological corridors which removes any potential pathways/connectors. Given there is no identifiable connector receptor pathways, together with the proposed connection to the existing sewer no impacts are predicted on the Shankill West Bog SAC or any Natura 2000 site.



Figure 3.1: Site Location (Red 'X')

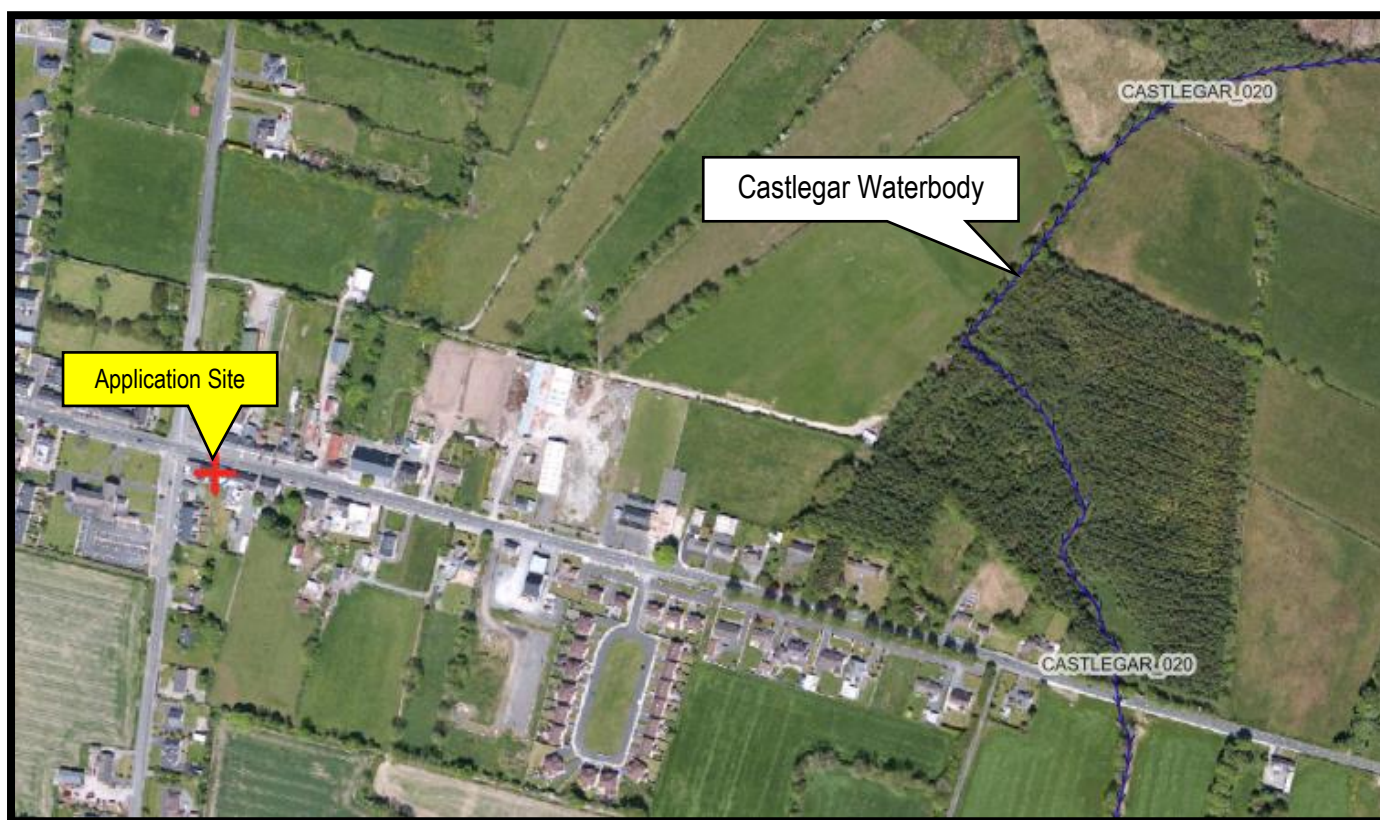


Figure 3.2- Site in relation to Castlegar Waterbody

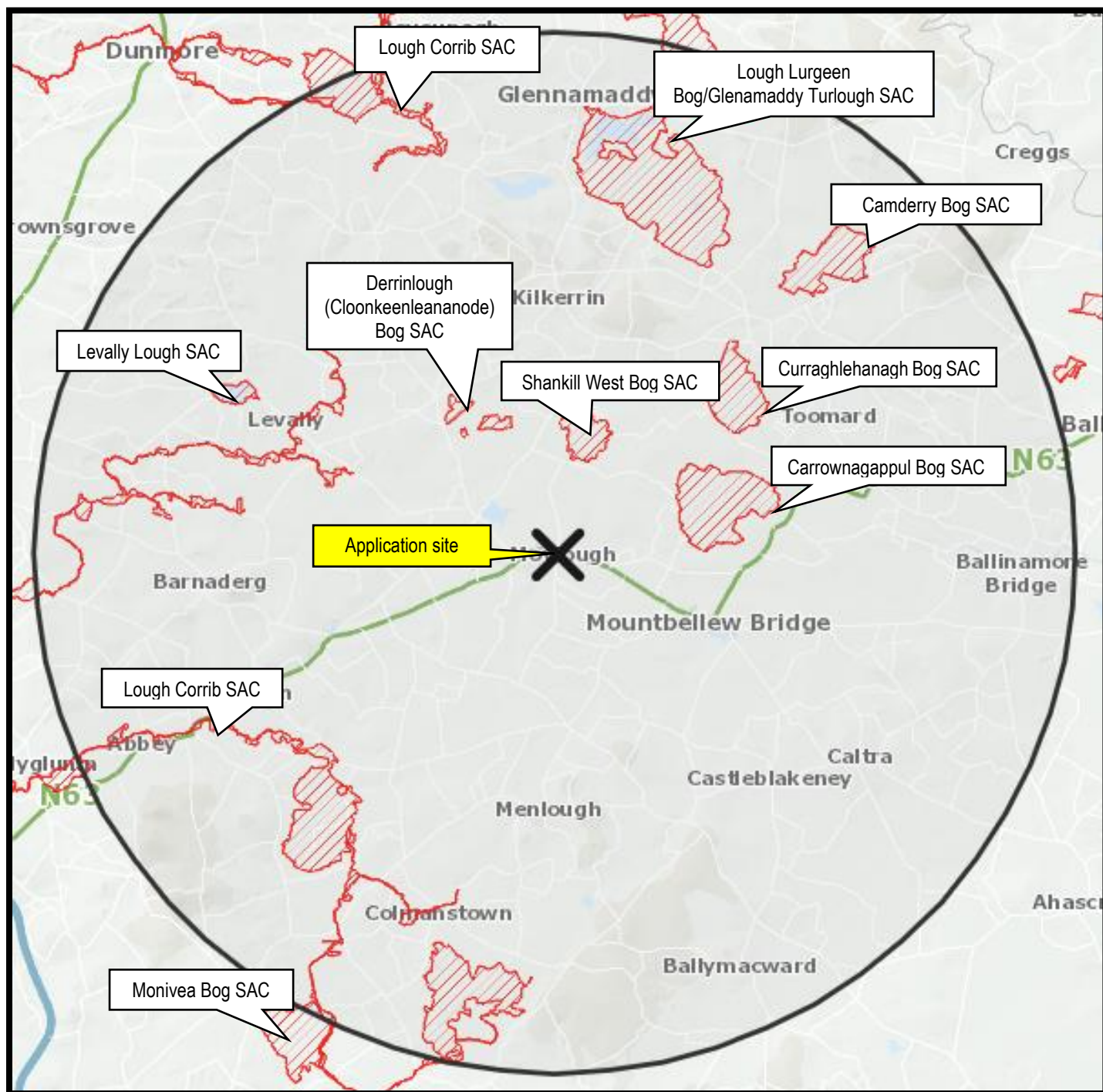


Figure 3.3 15km Buffer Surrounding Site

4 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES WHICH MAY BE AFFECTED

4.1 QUALIFYING FEATURES

4.1.1 Habitats

Natura 2000 sites are designated on the presence of certain habitats and species which are afforded protection under the Habitats Directives. These habitats and species are regarded as 'qualifying features' of the Natura 2000 sites. The following section provides details on the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 sites in question – Shankill West Bog SAC Natura 2000 sites. The NPWS site synopses for the designated sites are given as **Appendix B** to this report.

Table 4.1 Shankill West Bog SAC Habitat Information

Habitat code	Habitat name	Cover (ha)	Representativity ¹
7110	Active raised bogs	13.31	A
7120	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	10.06	B
7150	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion	0.6591	B

4.1.2 Potential Pressures and Threats to the Natura 2000 Sites

The European Nature Information System (EUNIS) website contains data on all Natura 2000 sites, including details of the main threats to and pressures on their qualifying features. Potential threats to and pressures on the qualifying features of the Shankill West Bog SAC Natura 2000 sites are listed in **Tables 4.2**.

Table 4.2 Potential Pressures and Threats to the Shankill West Bog SAC Natura 2000 Site

Activity	Location	Intensity	Influence
Cultivation	Inside	Moderate	Negative
Water abstractions from groundwater	Inside	Low	Negative
Burning down	Inside	Low	Negative
Mechanical removal of peat	Inside	Low	Negative
Intensive cattle grazing	Inside	Low	Negative
Fertilisation	Inside	Low	Negative

¹ The degree of representativity gives a measure of 'how typical' a habitat type is. If need be, this assessment should likewise consider the representativity of the habitat type concerned on the site in question, either for a group of habitat types or for a particular combination of different habitat types. If the field data, namely quantitative data, for the comparison do not exist or if measurement of the criterion is not feasible, the 'best expert judgment' may be used to rank the habitat type. The following ranking system should be used: A : excellent representativity B : good representativity C : significant representativity

Conservation Objectives of the Natura 2000 Sites

Once a site has been designated as a Natura site, a management plan should be put together for the site which sets out the Conservation Objectives for the site. Every effort should then be made to ensure that these objectives are fulfilled, in order to prevent potential impacts to the qualifying features of the site and maintain as far as possible their favourable conservation status.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain at favourable conservation status sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when: population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives for Shankill West Bog SAC have been published. Qualifying interests and objectives (bulleted) are listed below.

7110-Active raised bogs

- Restore the area of active raised bog to 23.4ha, subject to natural processes
- Restore the distribution and variability of active raised bog across the SAC
- No decline in extent of high bog subject to the conservation requirements of the SAC and maintenance of active raised bog.
- Restore appropriate water levels throughout each site
- Restore, where possible, appropriate high bog topography, flow directions and slopes
- Restore adequate transitional areas to support/protect the raised bog ecosystem and the services it provides
- Restore 11.7ha of central ecotone/active flush/soaks/bog woodland as appropriate
- Restore adequate cover of high quality microtopographical features
- Restore adequate cover of bog moss (Sphagnum) species to ensure peatforming capacity
- Restore, where appropriate, typical active raised bog flora
- Restore, where appropriate, typical active raised bog fauna
- Maintain features of local distinctiveness, subject to natural processes
- Negative physical features absent or insignificant
- Native negative indicator species at insignificant levels
- Non-native invasive species at insignificant levels and not more than 1% cover
- Air quality surrounding the bogs close to natural reference conditions. The total nitrogen deposition should not exceed 5kg N/ha/y

- Water quality on the high bog and in transitional areas close to natural reference conditions

Predicted Impacts- No impacts are predicted on this qualifying interest. This is due to the lack of identifiable hydrological/ecological receptor/connector pathways, the distance and intervening built-up environment between the application site and the European site, together with the proposed connection to the existing sewer.

7120-Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration

- The long-term aim for Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration is that its peat-forming capability is re-established; therefore, the conservation objective for this habitat is inherently linked to that of Active raised bogs (7110) and a separate conservation objective has not been set in Shankill West Bog SAC

Predicted Impacts- No impacts are predicted on this qualifying interest. This is due to the lack of identifiable hydrological/ecological receptor/connector pathways, the distance and intervening built-up environment between the application site and the European site, together with the proposed connection to the existing sewer.

7150-Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion

- Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion is an integral part of good quality Active raised bogs (7110) and thus a separate conservation objective has not been set for the habitat in Shankill West Bog SAC

Predicted Impacts- No impacts are predicted on this qualifying interest. This is due to the lack of identifiable hydrological/ecological receptor/connector pathways, the distance and intervening built-up environment between the application site and the European site, together with the proposed connection to the existing sewer.

5 SOILS, GEOLOGY & HYDROGEOLOGY

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) website was consulted for available geological / hydrological information. The site is underlain by Limestone till.

The groundwater vulnerability within the is rated Extreme (E) throughout the site. Vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease at which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities.

Table 5.1 Details information gleaned from catchments.ie on the water status of the Suck South groundwater waterbody. This concludes that the Suck South ground waterbody is of good status.

Suck South Groundwater Waterbody Information	
Name	Suck South
Code	IE_SH_G_225
WFD Catchments	26B Upper Shannon 26C Upper Shannon 26D Upper Shannon 26E Upper Shannon 26G Upper Shannon 29 Galway Bay South East 30 Corrib
Longitude	53.4359069
Latitude	-8.3846698
Cycle 1 RBD	Shannon
Local Authority	Galway County Council
Waterbody Category	Groundwater
WFD Risk	Not at risk
Protected Area	N/A
High Status Objective	No
Heavily Modified	N/A
Artificial	N/A
Area (km ²)	N/A
Length (km)	N/A
Transboundary	No
Canal	No
GW 2016-2021 Overall Groundwater Status	Good

6 OTHER PLANS AND PROJECTS IN THE AREA

It is a requirement of the Appropriate Assessment process to consider the 'in combination' effects of the proposed development with other plans and projects in the area. **Table 6.1** below gives details of the other plans and projects in the area which may be affecting the Lough Corrib SAC Natura 2000 site.

Table 6.1: Other Plans and Projects Affecting the Natura 2000 Site

Name of Plan or Project	Key policies/issues/objectives directly related to the relevant Natura 2000 sites	Potential cumulative or in-combination effects on the relevant Natura 2000 sites
Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029	Designated Sites, Habitats and Species Policies and Objectives, Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policies and Objectives, Natural Water Systems Policies	Positive Impact
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 - 2021	The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland, issued in April 2018, sets out a number of objectives and measures for all national water bodies which aim: (1) to prevent the deterioration of water bodies and to protect, enhance and restore them with the aim of achieving at least good status and (2) to achieve compliance with the requirements for designated protected areas.	Positive impact
NPWS Conservation Management Plans	Site-Specific Conservation objectives have been published for Shankill West Bog SAC and its aims and objectives are outlined from Page 11 to 12 above.	Positive impacts
Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Corporate Plan 2021-2025	Goals: To protect, manage and conserve Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources and to maximize their sustainability and natural biodiversity. To play a leadership role in achieving our climate action and biodiversity goals	Positive impact
Planning Applications in the area	A search was carried out on Galway City Council's online planning query system. It was ascertained that there has been ten other local planning application granted within a 300m radius of the site in the past 5 years, which are listed below: PI Ref no –19428- consisting of the construction of a two storey extension to existing creche building (gross floor area of extension 74 sq.m) and all associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 74 sqm PI Ref no – 19909- consisting of the change of use of existing garden to outdoor play/open space ancillary to existing crèche (c.920 sq.m), the construction of an uncontrolled level grade pedestrian crossing, footpath and pedestrian gateway to provide access from the existing crèche to proposed outdoor play/open space and all associated site works PI Ref no – 2460772 - to construct a terraced unit consisting of four town houses and all associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 371.84 sqm *New application with no decision PI Ref no – 211213- Permission for development at Moylough National School to include (a) 2 classroom extension to existing school building (b) retention of extension	Neutral Impact

	to rear of existing school building (c) provision of temporary classroom in adjacent warehouse (d) provision of temporary vehicular 'drop-off' area in adjacent yard including new vehicular access onto N63 (gross floor space proposed 152sqm; retention 19sqm) PI Ref no – 2360380 - and completion of cold store extension and stand-alone storage shed and ancillary works and to construct an Off Licence within an existing forecourt shop PI Ref no – 20166 - Permission is sought for the development which will consist of a) elevation alterations to block of houses type C1, No. 31-34, type A, No. 41-43, Type A1, No 46-48, type C, No 26-29, type C2, No. 36-39, semi-detached type B, No. 44-45 and detached houses type D, No. 30, 35, 40. b) Removal of chimneys from elevations to all house types. c) Removal of concrete barges from elevations to all house types. d) Removal of roof lights from elevations to all house types e) all with a revised numbering scheme. This development previously received permission under Planning Reference No 19/112 PI Ref no – 2360472- for the construction of a housing development of 24 No. houses comprising of 2 No. 1 bed terraced houses, 2 No. 1 bed semi-detached houses, 4 No. 2 bed terraced houses, 10 No. 2 bed semi-detached houses, & 6 No. 3 bed terraced houses, access onto the N63 roadway via entrance & access permitted under PI. Ref. 18/1133, connection to public water and wastewater services, provision of communal open space areas, private open space, parking, footpaths, public lighting, soft and hard landscaping, boundary treatments and all associated site development works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 2,056 sqm PI Ref no – 181133 - Permission consisting of (i) retention of site development works carried out under previous planning reference No. 04/4807, (ii) construction of 19 No. dwelling houses consisting of 3 No. detached houses, 8 No. semi-detached house and 8 No. terraced houses (gross floor area proposed c. 2,372sqm) along with all ancillary site services and works. Gross floor space of proposed works 2,372sqm. PI Ref no – 191768- for change of use of part of commercial public house for use as extension to existing private dwelling house & all associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 131.95 sqm (area for change of use) PI Ref no – 211841 Permission for (a) change of use of the existing O'Malley's, Anthony's & Shelly's commercial units to residential, (b) remedial works to change 3 no commercial units & overhead apartments to 4 no townhouses, (c) works to include minor changes to front elevations, single & two storey extension to rear elevations, subdivision of rear yard into 4 no private gardens serving the proposed townhouses with storage sheds to rear gardens, (d) connection to existing services. Gross floor space of proposed works: 413 sqm. Gross floor space of any demolition: 64 sqm PI Ref no – 191357 - Permission for the following works at Anthony's, O'Malley's & Shelly's, Moylough. 1. Change of Use from Bar to Café at Anthony's 2. Extension to rear ground floor of Anthony's 3. Elevational changes to Anthony's to include new shopfront 4. External seating area to rear of Anthony's with refuse area serving Anthony's & O'Malley's. 5. Amendment to floor plan and rear elevation of O'Malley's as permitted under PI. Ref: 16/1319 6. Extension to rear ground floor at Shelly's incorporating refuse & storage area. 7. Reconfiguration & extension to existing first floor residential space to provide 3no apartments (in lieu of 2no existing) incorporating new stair access to rear courtyard 8. Demolition of existing storage shed to provide new access road to rear yard containing 4 no parking spaces & communal amenity area. Gross floor space of proposed works: 465.30 sqm	
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7 SCREENING MATRIX FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT IN LINE WITH EU COMMISSION GUIDANCE

Having established the extent of the proposed project and the details of the Natura 2000 sites, a screening assessment for possible impacts can be generated. This section follows the format of the Screening Matrix provided in Annex 2 of the following document;

“Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites- Methodology guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission, 2001”.

Table 7.1: Step Three: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objective of a European site taking into account the size/scale of the project under the following headings:	
Impacts:	Possible significance of Impacts (Duration/Magnitude)
Construction Phase (Examples) - Vegetation Clearance - Demolition - Surface water runoff from excavation/infill - Dust, noise, vibration - Lighting disturbance - Impact on groundwater - Storage of excavation/construction materials - Access to site - Pests	No impacts are predicted on the Shankill West Bog SAC or the Natura 2000 network during the construction phase of the proposed development. No impacts are predicted on this qualifying interest. This is due to the lack of identifiable hydrological/ecological receptor/connector pathways, the distance and intervening built-up environment between the application site and the European site, together with the proposed connection to the existing sewer.
Operation Phase (Examples) - Direct emissions to air and water - Surface water runoff containing contaminant/sediment - Lighting Disturbance - Noise/vibration - Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage/abstraction - Presence of people, vehicles and activities - Physical presence of structures (collision risks) - Potential for accidents/incidents	The proposed development will connect to the existing public sewer, via the existing connections in place to the buildings on site. Surface water runoff will ultimately discharge to the existing storm sewer. No impacts are predicted due to these systems and the proposed connections to the existing sewers.
In combination/ other:	No likely significant in-combination effects are identified.
Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include: - Reduction/fragmentation of habitat - Disturbance to QI species - Habitat/species fragmentation - Reduction/fragmentation in species density - Changes in key indicators of conservation status value - Changes to areas of sensitivity/threats to QI	No impacts are predicted on the Shankill West Bog SAC or the Natura 2000 network due to the proposed development. The application site has minimal vegetation of site and consist of buildings, sheds and an infill area, it has a low ecological value. There is no identifiable connector receptor pathways between the application site and the Shankill West Bog SAC.

Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site	
Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?	
☐ Yes ☒ No	

The findings of the screening matrix are summarised in **Table 7.2** below.

Table 7.2 Stage 1 - Screening Matrix for the Proposed Development

Brief Description of the Project or Plan
Location: The proposed site lies in Moylough, Co. Galway(Grid Ref: Easting: 162366.09, Northing : 248767.70). Distance from Designated Site: The site for the proposed development lies 2.77km south of the Shankill West Bog SAC. Brief Description of the Project- <i>"to construct 4 no. new housing units at Moylough. 2 no. 3 bed X 2-storey terrace units and 2 no. 2 bed apartment units. It is proposed to demolish the existing structure with the exception of the street front (North) façade. Moylough is 5 km northwest of Mountbellew and 50 km from Galway. It is located on the N63 national secondary road and is also served by the R328 and R364 regional roads. This proposal represents an ideal infill opportunity within the village confines of the 50 kph speed limit zones whilst the land benefits from direct access onto the R360"</i> A Site Layout Plan for the proposed development is included as Appendix A to this report.
Brief Description of the Natura 2000 Site
Site Designation Status: The Shankill West Bog SAC is designated under EU Habitats Directive. Qualifying Features The Shankill West Bog SAC is of conservation significance due to the presence of three habitats listed under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. Qualifying Habitats <u>Shankill West Bog SAC</u> [7110] Active raised bog [7120] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7150] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> (EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC). Habitats and Species of Interest Full details of the sites are found in the Shankill West Bog SAC Site Synopses included as Appendix B to this report. Unit Size: Shankill West Bog SAC: 135.07ha
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
Describe the individual elements of the project likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.
No impacts are predicted on this qualifying interest. This is due to the lack of identifiable hydrological/ecological receptor/connector pathways, the distance and intervening built-up environment between the application site and the European site, together with the proposed connection to the existing sewer.

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of the following;

- Size and Scale

The application site comprises an overall area of **0.04ha**, the proposed development floor space is **266sqm**. At this size and scale, and due to the fact that the works will be located entirely outside the designated area, it is not expected that the development will have any significant impact (direct, indirect or secondary in nature) on the Natura 2000 site in this regard.

- Land-Take

The proposed works will be entirely located outside the designated site and so there will be no impacts in this regard.

Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site

The site for the proposed development lies 2.77 kilometers south from the Shankill West Bog SAC, there is no identifiable hydrologically or ecological connector receptor pathways. No impacts are predicted Shankill West Bog SAC or the Natura 2000 network.

- Resource Requirements

It is not expected that the proposed development will have any significant impact (direct, indirect or secondary in nature) on the designated sites in this regard.

- Emissions

The proposed development will connect to the existing public sewer, via the existing connections in place to the buildings on site.

Surface water runoff will ultimately discharge to the existing storm sewer.

No impacts are predicted due to these systems and the proposed connections to the existing sewers.

- Excavation Requirements

No impacts are expected on the Natura 2000 site in this regard.

- Transportation Requirements

During the construction phase of the proposed development, there will be a slight increase in the volume of traffic in the area for a short time. It is not expected that this slight increase will result in direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

The construction phase of the proposed development will last approximately 24-48 months. It is expected that the proposed development will remain in use for at least 100 years. Neither the operation nor the eventual decommissioning of the proposed development is likely to result in direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.

Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of the following;

- Reduction of Habitat

There will be no changes in this respect.

- Disturbance to Key Species

There will be no changes in this respect.

- Habitat or Species Fragmentation

There will be no changes in this respect.

- Reduction in species density

There will be no changes in this respect.

- Changes in key indicators of conservation value

There will be no changes in this respect.

- Climate change

There will be no changes in this respect.
Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of the following;
- Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the site No impacts are predicted on the Shankill West Bog SAC or the Natura 2000 network due to the proposed development.
Provide Indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of the following;
- Loss No loss is expected - Fragmentation No fragmentation is expected. - Disruption No disruption is predicted - Disturbance No disturbance is predicted - Change to key elements of the site No change to key elements of the site are expected
Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.
No impacts are predicted on this qualifying interest. This is due to the lack of identifiable hydrological/ecological receptor/connector pathways, the distance and intervening built-up environment between the application site and the European site, together with the proposed connection to the existing sewer.

8 CONCLUSIONS

“It is proposed to construct 4 no. new housing units at Moylough. 2 no. 3 bed X 2-storey terrace units and 2 no. 2 bed apartment units. It is proposed to demolish the existing structure with the exception of the street front (North) façade. Moylough is 5 km northwest of Mountbellew and 50 km from Galway. It is located on the N63 national secondary road and is also served by the R328 and R364 regional roads. This proposal represents an ideal infill opportunity within the village confines of the 50 kph speed limit zones whilst the land benefits from direct access onto the R360” at Moylough, Galway

A Site Layout Plan for the proposed development is included as **Appendix A** to this report. The screening exercise examined impacts on the Shankill West Bog SAC Natura 2000 site.

The proposed development will connect to the existing public sewer, via the existing connections in place to the buildings on site.

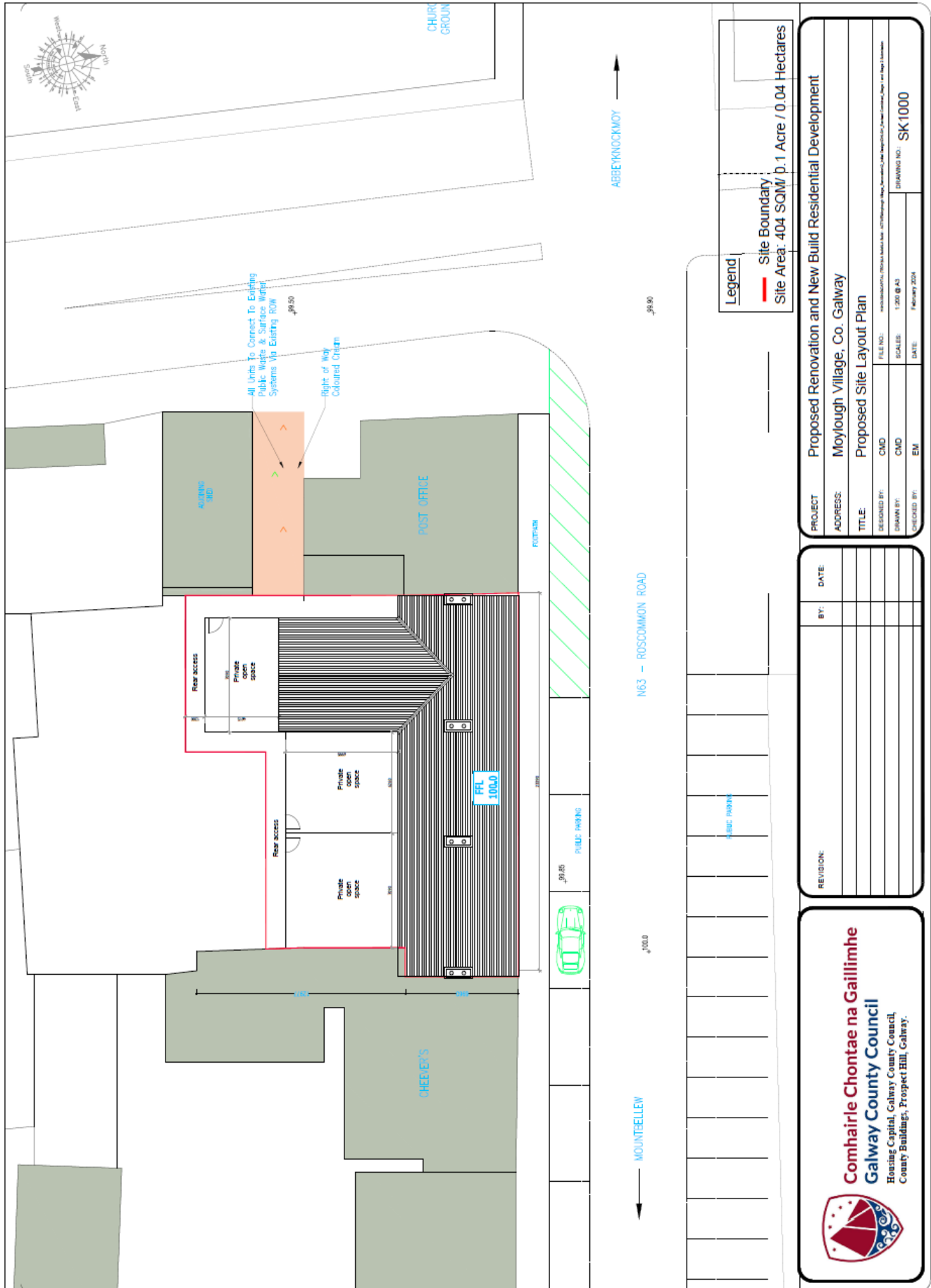
Surface water runoff will ultimately discharge to the existing storm sewer.

No impacts are predicted due to these systems and the proposed connections to the existing sewers.

The site for the proposed development lies 2.77 kilometers south from Shankill West Bog SAC, there is no identifiable hydrologically or ecological connector receptor pathways. No impacts are predicted on Shankill West Bog SAC or the Natura 2000 network. There are no impacts predicted due to the significant distance between the application site and the built-up urban intervening environment, this along with there being no identifiable connector receptor pathways, no impacts are predicted.

Therefore, the conclusion of this screening exercise is that no significant impacts/effects are expected on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the surrounding Natura 2000 sites, as a result of the proposed development in question, alone or in combination with the other plans and projects in the area. This report is therefore issued as a ‘Finding of No Significant Effects’ (FONSE) statement, in accordance with the EU Commission’s methodological guidance (EC, 2001)

APPENDIX A-Site Layout Plan



APPENDIX B

NPWS Site Synopses for Shankill West Bog SAC

Site Name: Shankill West Bog SAC

Site Code: 000326

Shankill West Bog is a small, raised bog with unusual topography and a largely intact dome, situated about 7 km north-west of Mount Bellew Bridge, in Co. Galway. A large proportion of the central dome of this bog comprises good quality raised bog habitat, i.e. a wet area with a good pool-and-hummock system.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[7110] Raised Bog (Active)*

[7120] Degraded Raised Bog

[7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation

Active raised bog comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peatforming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (*Sphagnum spp.*) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, Sphagnum lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded raised bog corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration. The Rhynchosporion habitat occurs in wet depressions, pool edges and erosion channels where the vegetation includes White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and/or Brown Beak-sedge (*R. fusca*), and at least some of the following associated species, Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), sundews (*Drosera spp.*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*).

The wettest areas of bog, which contain actively growing raised bog habitat, occur in the central and south-eastern portions of the high bog dome, and these areas are surrounded by areas of drier, degraded raised bog vegetation. The active bog is characterised by large, often interconnecting, pools with a rich and healthy community of bog mosses, separated by low rises with Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and abundant bog moss carpets. It is in the wettest areas of the bog that the Rhynchosporion vegetation is best developed. The quaking lawns are dominated by *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and support White Beaked-sedge, Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Bog Asphodel. Many of the bog pools are colonised by species such as *Sphagnum auriculatum*, sundews and Bog-sedge (*Carex limosa*). A small flushed area, with mineral enriched water, occurs within the pool/hummock system, indicated by the presence of the moss *Aulacomnium palustre*, amongst others. An old, largely infilled drain carries surplus water from this area.

The degraded bog habitat is typically dominated by vascular plant species typical of raised bog such as Carnation Sedge, Deergrass, Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Heather, Bog Asphodel and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*). In some of the wetter areas of degraded raised bogs there can be well-developed hummocks of rarer *Sphagnum*

species such as *S. fuscum* and *S. imbricatum*. Along the margins of the high bog dome a few rather dry flushes dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) occur.

Although most the site margins are not subject to intensive peat-cutting at present, the edges of the high bog dome continue to experience slow drying-out due to past peat cutting. In the south-eastern corner of the site a network of drains has been inserted on the high bog recently and this has resulted in damage to the hydrology of this corner of the site.

Shankill West Bog is one of the best examples of a relatively small raised bog site in the country and contains good examples of the Annex 1 habitats active raised bog, degraded raised bog and depressions on peat substrates (*Rhynchosporion*). It is of particular interest because of the presence of unusual topographical features.