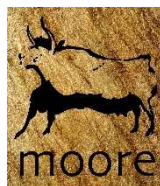


# Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening

## Cregboy Burial Ground

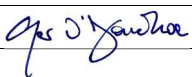
Prepared by: Moore Group – Environmental Services

1 November 2022



On behalf of Galway County Council

<b>Project Proponent</b>	Galway County Council
<b>Project</b>	Cregboy Burial Ground
<b>Title</b>	Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening Cregboy Burial Ground

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## Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
EEC	European Economic Community
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographical Information System
LAP	Local Area Plan
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
pNHA	proposed Natural Heritage Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage System
WFD	Water Framework Directive

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. General Introduction

This report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been prepared to support an application under Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 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) on the potential development of a new Burial Ground at Cregboy, Claregalway, Co. Galway (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 – 2021 (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; and
- 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 Moore Group - Environmental Services to enable Galway County Council to carry out AA screening in relation to the Proposed Development. The report was compiled by Ger O'Donohoe (B.Sc. Applied Aquatic Sciences (GMIT, 1993) & M.Sc. Environmental Sciences (TCD, 1999)) who has 27 years' experience in environmental impact assessment and has completed numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements on terrestrial and aquatic habitats for various development types.

## 1.2. Legislative Background - The Habitats and Birds Directives

Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish Law inter alia by the Part XAB of the Planning Acts (in particular section 177U and 177V) which governs 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 a 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, and the Wildlife Act 1976, 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. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

## 2. 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).

**Stage 1 Screening:** This stage examines the likely effects of a project either alone or in combination with other projects upon a Natura 2000 site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant. In order to screen out a project, it must 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.

**Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment:** In this stage, there is a consideration of the impact of the project with a view to ascertain whether there will be any adverse effect on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are predicted impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts is considered.

**Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions:** This stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

**Stage 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain:** Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the sites will be necessary.

To ensure that the Proposed Development complies fully with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and all relevant Irish transposing legislation, Moore Group compiled this report to enable Fingal 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.

### 2.1. 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 rev.)(soon to be superseded by EC Guidance in prep.).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- 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).

## 2.2. 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;
  - Digital Elevation Model over Europe (EU-DEM);
  - Google Earth and Bing aerial photography 1995-2022;
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from [www.npws.ie](http://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;
  - Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028



### 3. Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development consists of the development of a burial ground with 261 no. double plot spaces, on site car parking and a new entrance road at Cregboy, Claregalway, Co. Galway.

The site is located c. 2km south west of Claregalway Church in the townland of Cregboy. The site covers approximately 1.2 acres and forms part of a larger overall agricultural holding. The ground is generally flat and is currently used for grazing. The site lies adjacent to a materials depot owned and operated by Roads Section of Galway County Council.

The burial ground is proposed to be accessed with a new entrance road from a public right of way off the L-7103. The public right of way serves a number of private dwellings and commercial businesses. The roads section of Galway County Council do not have an objection to taking in charge this road subject to planning permission for the development. The proposed new entrance will be approximately 200m from the L-7103.

The site is currently used for grazing horses and it is understood has always been used for agricultural purposes. There are no previous planning applications on this site.

A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) was prepared by IE Consulting in October 2022. The purpose of the SSFRA is to assess the potential flood risk to the site of the proposed burial ground development and to assess the impact that the development as proposed may or may not have on the hydrological regime of the area.

There are no significant hydrological features mapped within or in the general vicinity of the site of the proposed burial ground development.

In consideration of the findings of the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and analysis the following conclusions are made in respect of the site of the proposed burial ground development:

- A Site Specific Flood Risk (SSFRA) assessment, appropriate to the type and scale of development proposed, and in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines – DoEHLG-2009' has been undertaken.
- The site of the proposed burial ground development has been screened, scoped and assessed for flood risk in accordance with the above guidelines.
- The assessment and analysis undertaken as part of the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment indicates that the site of the proposed burial ground development is not susceptible to predictive, indicative, historic or anecdotal fluvial, pluvial or groundwater flooding.
- Two minor areas of indicative extreme pluvial flood zones are mapped adjacent to the site.
- An overland flow routing analysis indicates that the site is not at significant risk of pluvial flooding.
- The site of the proposed burial ground development falls within Flood Zone 'C'.

- The development as proposed is not expected to result in an adverse impact to the existing hydrological regime of the area or increase flood risk elsewhere.
- In consideration of the findings of the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment it is considered that the development as proposed is appropriate from a flood risk perspective.

Figure 1 shows the Proposed Development location and Figure 2 shows a detailed view of the Proposed Development boundary on recent aerial photography. Figure 3 shows the layout of the Proposed Development.

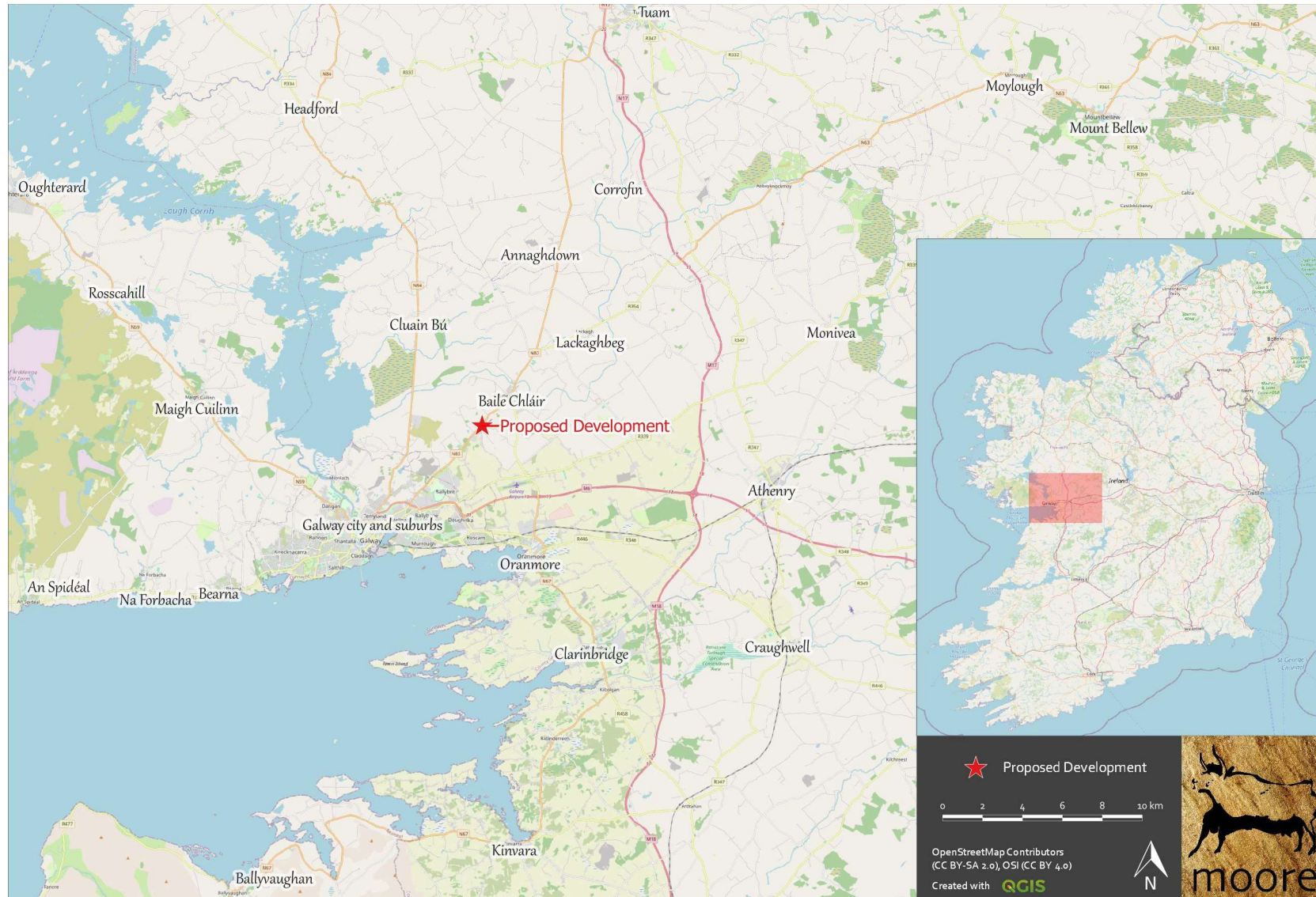


Figure 1. Showing the Proposed Development location at Cregboy, Claregalway, Co. Galway.



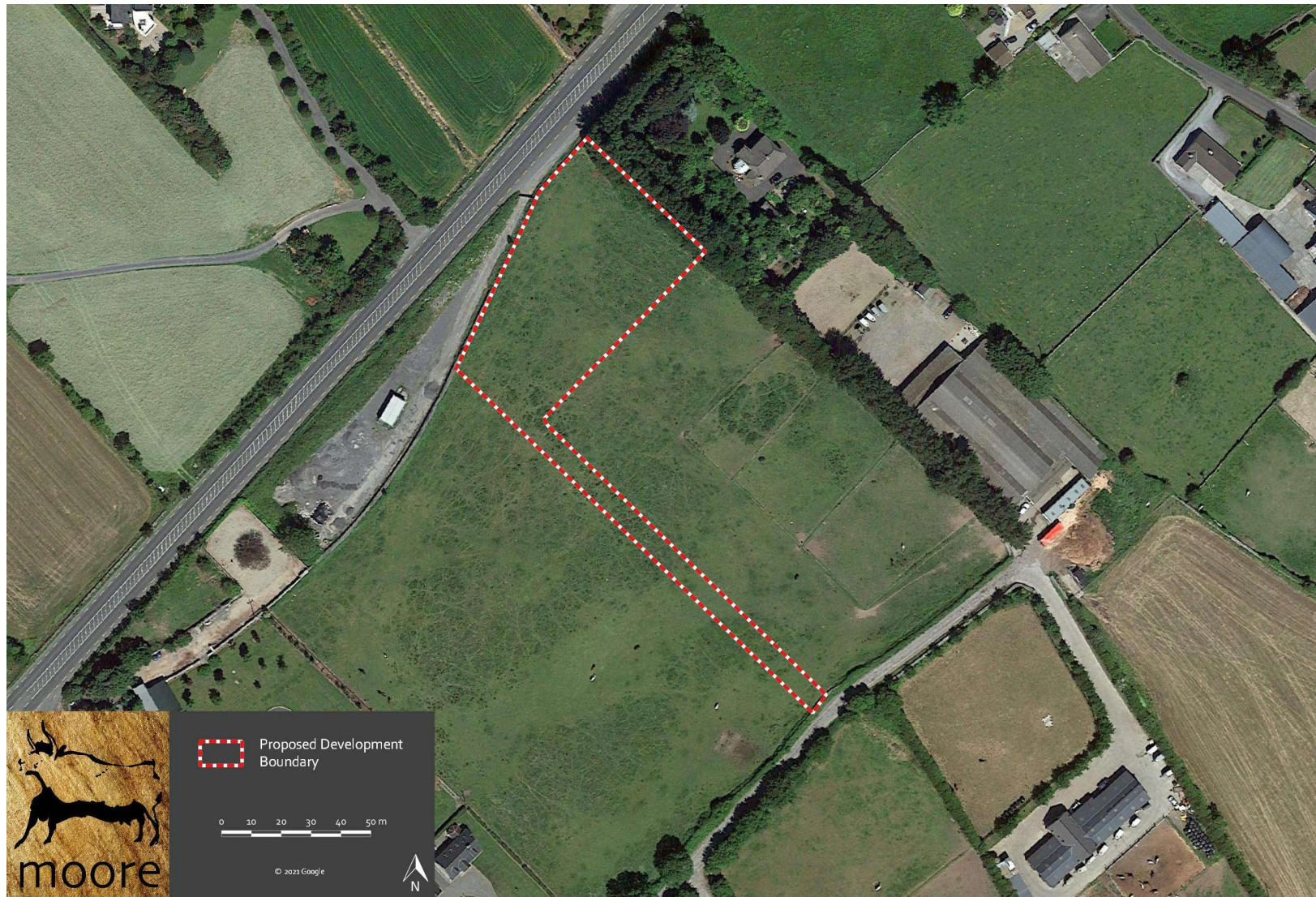


Figure 2. Showing the Proposed Development boundary on recent aerial photography.





## 4. Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

### 4.1. Description of Natura Sites Potentially Affected

A Zone of Influence (Zoi) of a proposed development is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. In accordance with the OPR Practice Note, PN01, the Zoi should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source- Pathway-Receptor framework.

The European Commission's "Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Methodological Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC" published 28 September 2021 states at section 3.1.3:

*Identifying the Natura 2000 sites that may be affected should be done by taking into consideration all aspects of the plan or project that could have potential effects on any Natura 2000 sites located within the zone of influence of the plan or project. This should take into account all of the designating features (species, habitat types) that are significantly present on the sites and their conservation objectives. In particular, it should identify:*

- *any Natura 2000 sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the plan or project in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;*
- *any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of influence of the plan or project Natura 2000 sites located in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the project, including as regards the use of natural resources (e.g. water) and various types of waste, discharge or emissions of substances or energy;*
- *Natura 2000 sites in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) which host fauna that can move to the project area and then suffer mortality or other impacts (e.g. loss of feeding areas, reduction of home range);*
- *Natura 2000 sites whose connectivity or ecological continuity can be affected by the plan or project.*

*The range of Natura 2000 sites to be assessed, i.e. the zone in which impacts from the plan or project may arise, will depend on the nature of the plan or project and the distance at which effects may occur. For Natura 2000 sites located downstream along rivers or wetlands fed by aquifers, it may be that a plan or project can affect water flows, fish migration and so forth, even at a great distance. Emissions of pollutants may also have effects over a long distance. Some projects or plans that do not directly affect Natura 2000 sites may still have a significant impact on them if they cause a barrier effect or prevent ecological linkages. This may happen, for example, when plans affect features of the landscape that connect Natura 2000 sites or that may obstruct the*

*movements of species or disrupt the continuity of a fluvial or woodland ecosystem. To determine the possible effects of the plan or project on Natura 2000 sites, it is necessary to identify not only the relevant sites but also the habitats and species that are significantly present within them, as well as the site objectives.*

The Zone of Influence may be determined by considering the Proposed Development's potential connectivity with European sites, in terms of:

- Nature, scale, timing and duration of all aspects of the proposed works and possible impacts, including the nature and size of excavations, storage of materials, flat/sloping sites;
- Distance and nature of potential pathways (dilution and dispersion; intervening 'buffer' lands, roads etc.); and
- Location of ecological features and their sensitivity to the possible impacts.

The potential for source pathway receptor connectivity is firstly identified through GIS interrogation and detailed information is then provided on sites with connectivity. European sites that are located within a potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development are listed in Table 1 and presented in Figures 4 and 5, below. Spatial boundary data on the Natura 2000 network was extracted from the NPWS website ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)) on 1 November 2022. This data was interrogated using GIS analysis to provide mapping, distances, locations and pathways to all sites of conservation concern including pNHAs, NHA and European sites.

*Table 1 European Sites located within the potential Zone of Influence<sup>1</sup> of the Proposed Development.*

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km) <sup>2</sup>
000297	Lough Corrib SAC	2.13
004042	Lough Corrib SPA	3.97

The nearest European sites to the Proposed Development are associated with Lough Corrib, The Lough Corrib SAC 2.13km to the north, and the Lough Corrib SPA 3.97km to the northwest.

The Proposed Development is located within a field of improved grazed grassland in Cregboy, approximately 2km southwest of Claregalway village. 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.

The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the European sites in the vicinity of the Proposed Development are provided in Table 2 below.

<sup>1</sup> All European sites potentially connected irrespective of the nature or scale of the Proposed Development.

<sup>2</sup> Distances indicated are the closest geographical distance between the Proposed Development and the European site boundary, as made available by the NPWS. Connectivity along hydrological pathways may be significantly greater.



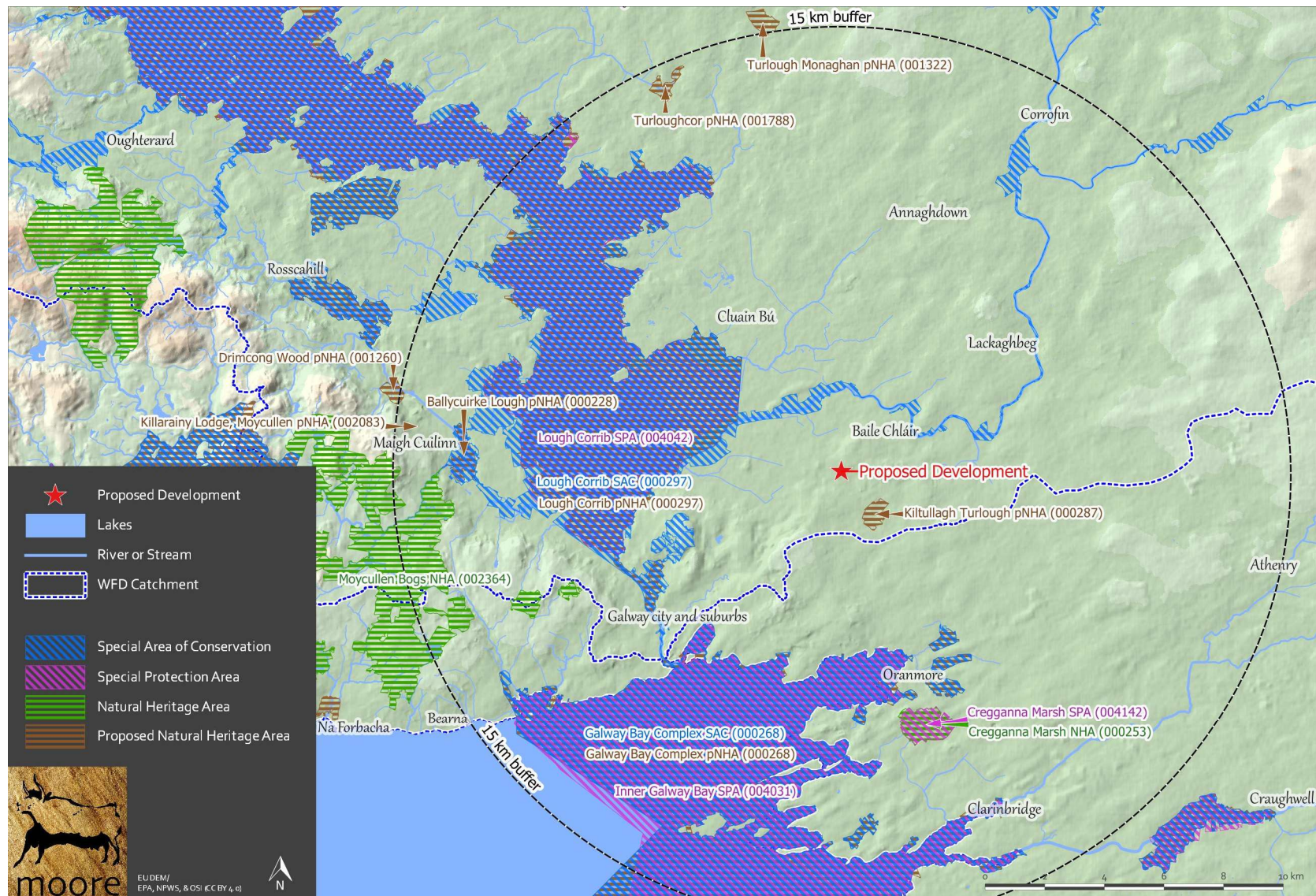


Figure 4. Showing European sites and NHAs/pNHAs within the wider Potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development.



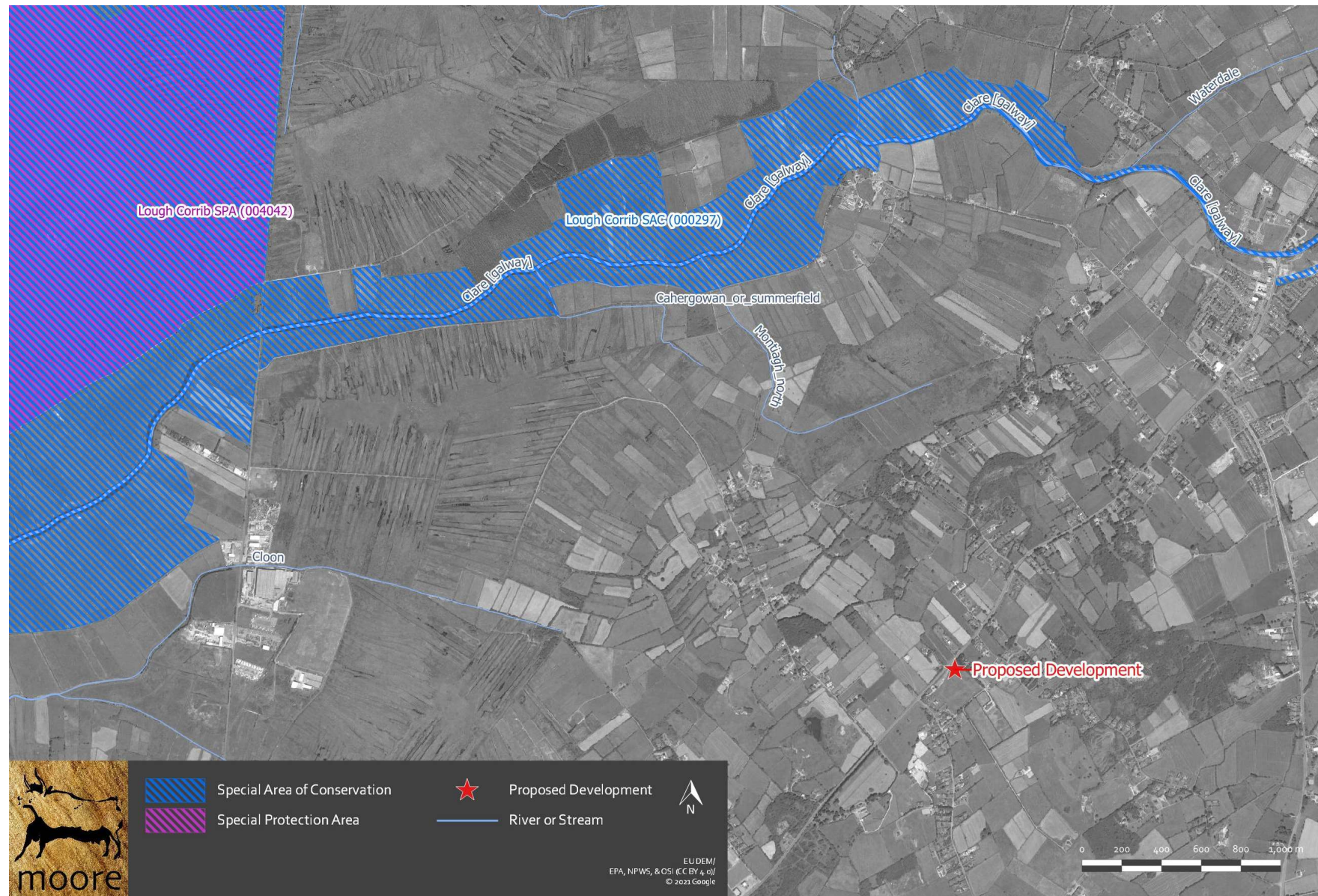


Figure 5. Detailed view of European sites in the nearer Potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development.

Table 2 Identification of relevant European sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information QIs and conservation objectives.

European site name & Site code	Location Relative to the Proposed Development Site	Connectivity – Source-Pathway-Receptor	Considered further in Screening – Y/N
<p><b>Lough Corrib SAC (000297)</b></p> <p>1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>  1092 White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>  1095 Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>  1096 Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>  1106 Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>  1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>  1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>  1393 Slender Green Feather-moss <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>  1833 Slender Naiad <i>Najas flexilis</i>  3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>)  3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea  3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp.  3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation  6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)  6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)  7110 Active raised bogs*  7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration  7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion  7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion davallianae*  7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*  7230 Alkaline fens  8240 Limestone pavements*  91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles  91D0 Bog woodland*</p> <p>NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.</p>	2.13km to the north of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats or species of this site.	N
<p><b>Lough Corrib SPA (004042)</b></p> <p>A051 Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>  A056 Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>  A059 Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>  A061 Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>  A065 Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i>  A082 Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i></p>	3.97km to the northwest of the Proposed Development	No Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to bird species	N

European site name & Site code	Location Relative to the Proposed Development Site	Connectivity – Source-Pathway-Receptor	Considered further in Screening – Y/N
A125 Coot <i>Fulica atra</i> A140 Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> A182 Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i> A193 Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> A194 Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>  NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Lough Corrib SPA [004042]. First Order Site specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.		or wetland habitat.	

## 4.2. 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 ecological corridors or “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 taken into account in the decision process and during the preparation of this AA Screening report.

There are no other areas of conservation concern that would be affected by the Proposed Development.

The NHAs and pNHAs identified in Figure 4 are located outside the Zone of Influence. There are no areas of supporting habitat that will be affected by the Proposed Development.

## 5. 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 within a field of improved grassland in Cregboy, approximately 2km southwest of Claregalway village. 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 there are no notable surface water features onsite and no direct hydrological pathways to offsite surface water bodies.

There is no connectivity to the Clare River, Lough Corrib or 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.*

<b>Identification 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 project.</b>	
<b>Impacts:</b>	<b>Significance of Impacts:</b>
<b>Construction phase e.g.</b>  Vegetation clearance  Demolition  Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping (including borrow pits)  Dust, noise, vibration  Lighting disturbance  Impact on groundwater/dewatering  Storage of excavated/construction materials  Access to site  Pests	None  The Proposed Development site is located within the boundary of a field of improved grassland.  There is no real likelihood of any significant effects on European Sites in the wider catchment area.
<b>Operational phase e.g.</b>  Direct emission to air and water  Surface water runoff containing	All surface water runoff, once the facility is operational, will be contained on site and discharged to onsite soakaways.  The assessment and analysis undertaken as part of the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment indicates that the

contaminant or sediment	site of the proposed burial ground development is not susceptible to predictive, indicative, historic or anecdotal fluvial, pluvial or groundwater flooding.
Lighting disturbance	
Noise/vibration	There is no real likelihood of any significant effects on European Sites in the wider catchment area.
Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction	
Presence of people, vehicles and activities	The facility is located at a distance of removal such that there will be no disturbance to qualifying interest species in any European sites.
Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks)	
Potential for accidents or incidents	
<b>Describe any likely changes to the European site:</b>	
<b>Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include:</b>	None
Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area	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.
Disturbance to QI species	
Habitat or species fragmentation	The Proposed Development site is located within the boundary of the Permitted Development, which has been cleared and prepared for development.
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	
<b>Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?</b>	
No	None

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 first stage of this review confirmed that there were no data gaps 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, these are presented in Table 4 below.

*Table 4. Planning applications granted permission in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.*

Planning Ref.	Description of development	Comments
18746	for construction of (a) two storey and three storey rear extensions to the existing dwelling (b) single storey extension to the side of the existing dwelling (c) renovations of the existing dwelling (d) associated changes to all elevations (e) all associated building and site works. Gross floor space of proposed works 293sqm.	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
1994	of a domestic shed, incorporating games room, personal gym area, storage area and fuel store, and associated services. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 56.1 sqm	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
201493	for development consisting of the construction of a dwelling house, waste water treatment plant and polishing filter, garage and all associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 199 sqm	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
20748	of dwelling house, domestic garage and store, septic tank and tertiary treatment system and associated site works on revised site boundaries. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 250 sqm	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
21710	to construct a serviced dwelling house and domestic garage. Gross floor space of proposed works: House: 254.4 sqm, Garage: 45 sqm	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.

There are no predicted in-combination effects given that the reasons discussed in the 'Comments' column of Table 4 above and given that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any adverse effects on any European sites.

The Galway 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 developments have been granted permission in most cases 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. The development cannot have received planning permission without having met the consenting authority requirement in this regard. There are no predicted in-combination effects given that it is predicted that the Proposed Development will have no effect on any European site.

Any new applications for the Proposed Development area will be assessed on a case by case basis *initially* by Galway County Council which will determine the requirement for AA Screening as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

## 6. 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 any European Sites, approximately 2.1km;
- The lack of connectivity between the Proposed Development and any hydrological pathways; there are no watercourses within the Proposed Development boundary and there is no connectivity 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 that would result in significant effects.
- The assessment and analysis undertaken as part of the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment indicates that the site of the proposed burial ground development is not susceptible to predictive, indicative, historic or anecdotal fluvial, pluvial or groundwater flooding.

It has been objectively concluded by Moore Group Environmental Services that:



1. The Proposed Development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the European sites considered in this assessment.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

## 7. References

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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-and-data>

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