



# EIA SCREENING REPORT

Tuam Station House, Vicar Street, Tuam, County  
Galway

Prepared for Galway County Council

MEC Ltd.

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# 1 Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Project Background .....	1
1.2	Legislative Background.....	1
1.2.1	Project Type and thresholds .....	2
1.3	Screening.....	5
1.3.1	Changes to the EIA Screening Process .....	5
1.4	Approach to this EIA Screening .....	7
1.5	Statement of Authority .....	7
2	Description of the Proposed Development.....	8
2.1	Site Description.....	8
2.2	Project Description .....	8
2.2.1	The scope of works shall include:.....	8
2.2.2	Lighting .....	9
2.2.3	Duration of works .....	9
2.3	Receiving Environment .....	10
2.3.1	Introduction.....	10
2.3.2	Population and Human health.....	10
2.3.3	Fauna and Flora.....	11
2.3.4	Water resources.....	13
2.3.5	Soil and Geology.....	15
2.3.6	Landscape.....	17
2.3.7	Cultural Heritage.....	17
2.3.8	Air and Climatic factors .....	18
2.3.9	Material Assets.....	19
2.4	Mitigation measures .....	19
2.4.1	Approach to works.....	19
2.4.2	Measures to Minimise Impacts to Water Resources .....	20
2.4.3	Biodiversity .....	20
3	EIA Screening .....	21
3.1	Environmental Factors to be considered in the EIA Screening.....	21
3.2	Impact Assessment.....	21
3.3	Projects for the Cumulative Assessment .....	22
3.3.1	Assessment of effects.....	23
3.3.2	Type and Characteristics of the Potential Impacts.....	26

3.3.3	Identification of the Relevant Assessments Available .....	30
3.3.4	Results of Relevant Available Assessments.....	30
4	Conclusion.....	34
4.1	Screening Determination .....	34
	References.....	35
	Photographic record .....	36

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

Minogue Environmental Consulting Ltd was engaged by Galway County Council (GCC) to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for a proposed refurbishment of the former Tuam Station House, Vicar Street, Tuam, Co. Galway. Figure 1.1. shows the project location and boundary over aerial imagery.

FIGURE 1-1 PROJECT LOCATION AND BOUNDARY



## 1.2 Legislative Background

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a procedure undertaken by a competent authority pursuant to its obligations under the EIA Directive the terms of European Directives on the assessment of the impacts of certain public and private projects on the environment. In accordance with the provisions of Part X of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), an EIA shall be

carried out in respect of an application for development which is specified in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, (as amended) ([“the 2001 Regulations”]). A mandatory EIA is required for developments which fall within the classes of development prescribed in remit of Schedule 5.

In addition, an EIA of “sub-threshold” development EIA may be required, if the competent Planning Authority determines that the proposed development would be likely to have significant impacts on the environment. Schedule 7 of the Regulations details the criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant impacts on the environment considering the characteristics of the proposed development, its location and characteristics of potential impacts.

Thus, Article 93 of, and Schedule 5 to, Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (“the 2000 Regulations”) sets out the classes of development for which a planning application must be accompanied by an environmental impact assessment report (EIAR). Part 1 and Part 2 Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 prescribes the categories of, and thresholds for, prescribed development requiring EIA.

### 1.2.1 Project Type and thresholds

Schedule 5 Part 1 of the 2001 Regulations is aligned with Annex I of the EIA Directive and identifies those developments for which EIA and the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is mandatory. This schedule lists a range of development activities including major infrastructure projects such as airports, motorways or power stations. The project does not fall within any of the classes of prescribed development contained in Part 1 of Schedule 5.

Schedule 5 Part 2 of the 2001 Regulations is aligned with Annex II of the EIA Directive and lists the type of development that may require an EIA. This depends on site area, and quantum of development in relation to thresholds listed and therefore if there is potential for likely significant environmental effects.

Article 1(2) of the EIA Directive defines ‘project’ as:

- ‘the execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes,
- other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources.’

The jurisprudence of the Court provides a broad interpretation of the concept of ‘project’, which was reaffirmed in several cases<sup>1</sup>.

Paragraph 10(b) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 contains the following prescribed development:

“b) (i) Construction of more than 500 dwellings

(ii) Construction of a car-park providing more than 400 spaces, other than a car-park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development.

(iii) Construction of a shopping centre with a gross floor space exceeding 10,000 square metres.

(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> [Focus on Environmental Impact Assessment \(EIA\)](#)

(In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)”.

In this regard, the relevant category for the project would be “urban development” listed in Schedule 5 Part 2, 10b, iv. European Commission (2024) guidance provides information on the interpretation of definitions of project categories and details potential project types that would meet the definition of ‘urban development’. These are as follows:

(b) Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks

To this end, the interpretation of this project category could take account of, *inter alia*, the following:

(i) Projects with similar characteristics to car parks and shopping centres could be considered to fall under Annex II (10)(b). This could be the case, for example, of bus garages or train depots, which are not explicitly mentioned in the EIA Directive, but have similar characteristics to car parks.

(ii) Construction projects such as housing developments, hospitals, universities, sports stadiums, cinemas, theatres, concert halls and other cultural centres could also be assumed to fall within this category. The underlying principle is that all these project categories are of an urban nature and that they may cause similar types of environmental impact.

(iii) Projects to which the terms ‘urban’ and ‘infrastructure’ can relate, such as the construction of sewerage and water supply networks as well as telecommunications/wireless communication deployment, could also be included in this category<sup>2</sup>.

- Projects with similar characteristics to shopping centres and car parks, such as bus garages, train depots;
- Construction projects such as housing development; concert halls; cultural venues;
- Projects to which the term ‘urban’ and ‘infrastructure’ may relate such as construction of sewerage and water supply networks.

In interpreting the scope of Annex II (10)(b) urban development, the ‘wide scope and broad purpose’ of the EIA Directive<sup>7</sup> should be borne in mind; this is reflected in recent case law<sup>3</sup> and as such this project can be considered as sub threshold ‘urban development’.

In summary, the project does not correspond to ‘urban development’ project definition following European Commission guidance, nor does it meet the threshold for EIA in this project category for Business districts, being an area of 1.69 ha with a mandatory EIA threshold of 2ha in this category.

In relation to criteria applied for mandatory EIA development as listed in Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993, the project does not meet the criteria for EIA given the scale, and nature of the proposed works, relating to the refurbishment of an existing building, demolition of two minor extensions and change of use from vacancy to community use. In light of this, the project does not meet the criteria for such works under the Roads Act 1993, as amended.

In relation to criteria applied for mandatory EIA development as listed in Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993, as amended, the project should be screened to determine whether the project falls within the

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/678985>

<sup>3</sup> Carvill v. Dublin City Council [2021] IEHC 544

scope of or exceeds the thresholds set out in the legislation. For avoidance of doubt, the following categories are subject to EIA under S.I. No. 279/2019 - European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 that amend Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993.

**TABLE 1-1 SCHEDULE 50 (1) OF THE ROADS ACT, 1993 AMENDED UNDER SI 279/2019.**

<b>50. (1)</b>	<b>(a) A road development that is proposed that comprises any of the following shall be subject to an environmental impact assessment:</b>
	(i) the construction of a motorway;
	(ii) the construction of a busway;
	(iii) the construction of a service area;
	(iv) any prescribed type of road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.
	<b>(b) If An Bord Pleanála considers that any road development proposed (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment it shall direct that the development be subject to an environmental impact assessment.</b>

In summary, the project does correspond to ‘urban development’ project definition following European Commission guidance, it does not meet the threshold for EIA in this project category for Business districts, being an area of 0.25 ha whilst mandatory EIA threshold is 2ha in this category.

The project does not meet the criteria for mandatory EIA given the scale, and nature of the proposed works, relating to refurbishment of existing building. In light of this, the project does not meet the criteria for such works under the Roads Act 1993, as amended.

The process of determining whether an assessment is required for a project listed in Annex II is called screening. However, notwithstanding that the project is “sub threshold”, as set out in the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment* (August 2018), screening is the initial stage in the EIA process and determines whether or not specified public or private developments are likely to have significant effects on the environment and, as such, require EIA to be carried out prior to a decision on a development consent application being made.

One of key amendments introduced by the 2014 EIA Directive includes strengthening of the procedures for screening, particularly through the introduction of new information requirements to be provided by the developer (Annex IIA, and transposed into Irish law by Schedule 7A to the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended) and revised selection criteria to be used by the competent authority in making a determination (Annex III of Directive, Schedule 7 to the 2001 Regulations).



According to European Commission Guidance (2017<sup>4</sup>)

*“Screening has to implement the Directive’s overall aim, i.e. to determine if a Project listed in Annex II is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, therefore, be made subject to a requirement for Development Consent and an assessment, with regards to its effects on the environment. At the same time, Screening should ensure that an EIA is carried out only for those Projects for which it is thought that a significant impact on the environment is possible, thereby ensuring a more efficient use of both public and private resources. Hence, Screening has to strike the right balance between the above two objectives.”*

According to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (2018):

*“For all sub-threshold developments listed in Schedule 5 Part 2, where no EIAR is submitted or EIA determination requested, a screening determination is required to be undertaken by the competent authority unless, on preliminary examination it can be concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. This is initiated by the competent authority following the receipt of a planning application or appeal*

*A preliminary examination is undertaken, based on professional expertise and experience, and having regard to the ‘Source – Pathway – Target’ model, where appropriate. The examination should have regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 to the 2001 Regulations.*

*Where, based on a preliminary examination of the information submitted with the application and any other supplementary information received, the competent authority concludes that, having considered the nature, size and location of the proposed development, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment, this should be recorded with reasons for this conclusion stated, and no EIA required or formal determination made. The recording of the competent authority’s view should be brief and concise, but adequate to inform the public. In many cases this considered view will be included in the planner’s/inspector’s report on the planning application and this may be cross-referenced in the competent authority’s decision. Normally, this will be published at the time of the decision of the competent authority.”*

For the avoidance of doubt, Sections 5 to 7 of this report, provides an assessment of the project against Schedule 7 criteria of the EIA regulation to which sub threshold development is required to be assessed. This provides for assessment of Characteristics of the Project, Location of the Project, Type and Characteristics of the Potential Impacts. Appendix A provides the EIA Screening Template from the Office of the Planning Regulator Practice Note PN2 (2021).

## 1.3 Screening

### 1.3.1 Changes to the EIA Screening Process

The EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) has brought a number of changes to the EIA process with a strengthening of the Screening process as follows:

Article 4 (4) of this Directive introduces a new Annex IIA to be used in the case of a request for a screening determination for Annex II projects. This is information to be provided by the developer on the projects listed in Annex II (see below):

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<sup>4</sup> Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU). European Commission 2017. Page 23.

Annex II: Information to be provided by the developer on the projects listed in Annex II:

**1. A description of the project, including in particular:**

- (a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole project and, where relevant, of demolition works (*Section 2 Description of the proposed project*);
- (b) a description of the location of the project, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected (*Section 2.3 Receiving Environment*)

**2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project (*Section 2.3 Receiving Environment*)**

**3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the project on the environment resulting from:**

- (a) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant (*Section 3 EIA Screening*) ;
- (b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity (*Section 3 EIA Screening*)

**4. The criteria of Annex III shall be taken into account, where relevant, when compiling the information in accordance with points 1 to 3 (*Section 3 EIA Screening*)**

Article 4(4) specifies that the developer may provide a description of any features of the project and/or mitigation measures to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment. It should be noted that this does NOT include compensation measures.

Article 4(5) Determination of Screening

The competent authority shall make its determination, on the basis of information provided by the developer in accordance with paragraph 4 taking into account, where relevant, the results of preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to Union legislation other than this Directive.

The determination shall be made available to the public and:

- (a) where it is decided that an environmental impact assessment is required, state the main reasons for requiring such assessment with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III; or
- (b) where it is decided that an environmental impact assessment is not required, state the main reasons for not requiring such assessment with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III, and, where proposed by the developer, state any features of the project and/or measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

The EIA Screening prepared here will inform the competent authority, in this instance Galway County Council, the EIA Screening Determination please see Section 4 of this Report for the EIA Screening Determination as proposed.

## 1.4 Approach to this EIA Screening

This EIA Screening report has been prepared and informed by the following guidance and guidelines:

- Practice Note on EIA – Office of Planning Regulator, 2021
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018;
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU), European Commission, 2017.
- Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive, 2015.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2003;
- Guidance on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements Environmental Protection Agency 2002.

## 1.5 Statement of Authority

This report has been prepared by Ruth Minogue, MCIEEM. Ruth has been a practicing environmental consultant for 25 years and has specialised in the area of environmental assessment including Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. She holds an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law (2017, Kings Inn) as well as ongoing CPD through professional institutes including the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, the Irish Landscape Institute and completion of course on Nature Based Solutions for Water and Land management at Cranfield University.

Additional inputs were provided by Eilis Vaughan MSc, who provided the Geographical Information Systems analysis and mapping outputs. Site visits were carried out in February 2025 to inform the assessment process. Technical reports relied upon include Bat and Swift Preliminary Inspection Report prepared by Eire Ecology, 2025 and Building Conservation Assessment Report prepared by ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals.

## 2 Description of the Proposed Development

### 2.1 Site Description

The project is located in the town centre of Tuam. Given the urban character of the project site, the dominant habitat on site is BL3, Built Land and Artificial Surfaces.

### 2.2 Project Description

Permission is being sought at Tuam Station House, Vicar Street, in the Townland of Vicarschoral Land, Tuam, for:

change of use from former commercial uses to office and event space. Demolition of internal and external elements to provide new office space and welfare facilities, and new glazed connecting walkway. New single storey extension to accommodate an event space and new two storey extension to facilitate a podcast room at ground floor and canteen at first floor level, with new fully accessible entrance area. New hard and soft landscaping and all ancillary site works. The proposed development will include work to Recorded Protected Structure No. 52 and to a building listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage No. 30331045

#### 2.2.1 The scope of works shall include:

- Change of use from former commercial uses to office and event space.
- Demolition of existing contemporary single storey extensions to station house at southeast and northwest gable elevations (circa 57.5 m<sup>2</sup>)
- Demolition of contemporary masonry corridor to platform elevation of station house, circa 91 m<sup>2</sup>.
- Demolition of contemporary internal elements to facilitate the construction of new reception area, offices, plant room, stores, toilet facilities, and ancillary accommodation.
- Demolition of existing contemporary, masonry-built site boundary wall.
- Construct new single storey extension to northwest gable of station house building to accommodate an event space circa 50 m<sup>2</sup>.
- Construct new two storey extension to southeast gable of station house to accommodate a podcast room at ground floor level, and canteen at first floor level with accessible stairs and lift in lobby area circa 116 m<sup>2</sup>.
- Construct new glazed connecting corridor to platform elevation to replace the contemporary masonry corridor.
- Repair and or replacement of existing timber sash windows and replacement of contemporary main entrance double door with new timber double door.
- Repair and replacement of existing suspended timber floor.
- Repair and or replacement of timber roof structure to main station house roof.
- Replacement of damaged slates to main roof to match existing as far as practicable and retention and reinstatement of existing slates.
- Repair and or replacement of existing cast iron rainwater goods to match.

- Repair of projecting timber fascia and soffits and carved timber brackets throughout.
- Repair of existing brick chimney stacks, reinstatement of lead flashing, and installation of new traditional style chimney pots.
- Thermal upgrade works within the station building using vapour diffusible or breathable materials to suit historic fabric.
- New mechanical and electrical services to be installed in such a way as to preserve and protect historic fabric as far as practicable.
- Repair and or replacement of timber roof structure to lean-to platform canopy.
- Replacement of existing corrugated iron roof sheet to existing lean-to platform canopy in accordance with conservation architects' recommendation.
- Repair of existing wrought iron pedestrian bridge, stairs and balustrade.
- Repair of cast-iron water tank and repointing of cut limestone base, and renovation of existing historic doors and ironmongery with the inclusion of ventilation openings.
- Undertake all necessary repair works to metal water tank to limit further fabric degradation.
- New surface finishes to railway platform to replace existing tarmacadam with retention of existing interlocking limestone blocks to platform edge.
- New hard and soft landscaping to include public seating, pedestrian avenue, planting beds, and all associated site works.
- New building mounted and free-standing signage and external public lighting.

### 2.2.2 Lighting

Any lighting provided to the building envelope will be low level and downward facing. Only lighting proposed at this project, is low level bollards to the front of the building and emergency bulkheads over exit doors. These can be limited to a max. output of 3000K if necessary.

### 2.2.3 Duration of works

The duration of the works will be in the region of 14 – 18 months.

## 2.3 Receiving Environment

### 2.3.1 Introduction

Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, outline the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by a proposed development. These are:

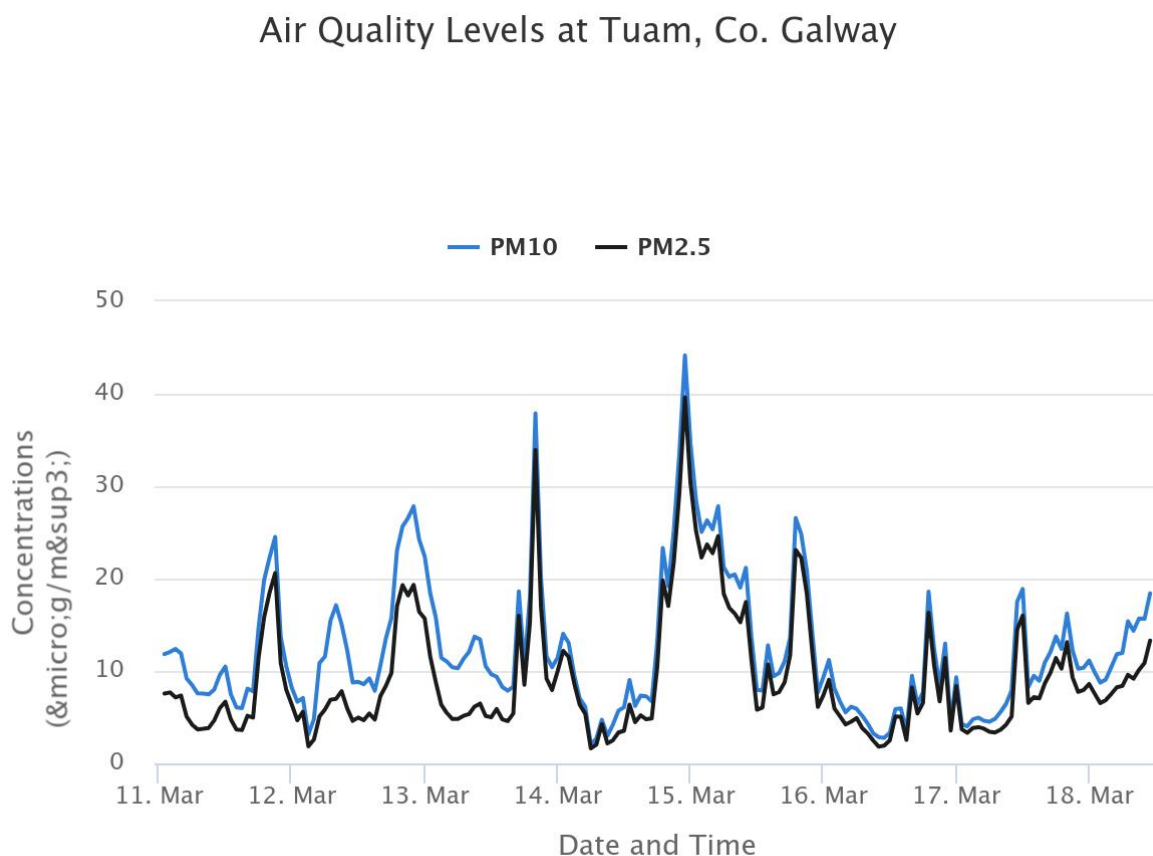
- Population and human health
- Biodiversity
- Land and soil
- Water
- Air and climate
- Material assets
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape

Figures 2.2 onwards present baseline maps for the project site and surrounding area.

### 2.3.2 Population and Human health.

The population of Tuam based on the 2022 Census was 9,647, reflecting a 1.6% increase in population between the 2016 and 2022 Census. The population density is 1,544/km<sup>2</sup>. Tuam is a key town in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032. Air quality can affect human health adversely but is overall good quality in Tuam and monitoring of particulate matter is undertaken at Tuam. Figure 2.1 shows the PM10 and PM2.5 monitoring from 11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

FIGURE 2-1 AIR QUALITY DATA GALWAY TOWN



### 2.3.3 Fauna and Flora

There are no European sites within or directly adjacent to the boundaries of the proposed development site. The nearest SAC is the Lough Corrib SAC, located approximately 2.18km west of the project site. The Clare River is located approximately 2km north of the site and connects hydrologically into the Lough Corrib SAC.

The nearest Special Protection Areas is located 18.97km west, the Lough Corrib SPA. There are no habitats are present within the project site which mobiles species of conservation interest rely. The nearest natural heritage area/proposed natural heritage area is Knockavanny Turlough approximately 4km northeast of Tuam town.

Please see Figures 2.3 for habitats in and around the project plus Figures 2.4 to 2.5 for designated sites within 15km of the project site.

The habitats on the project site are built land and artificial surfaces, however, the presence of the former railway line provides a wider ecological corridor across the landscape. The wider landscape supports improved grassland, scrub and woodland.

#### 2.3.3.1 Protected species

A preliminary swift and bat survey report has been prepared by Eire Ecology<sup>5</sup> and this identified a bat roost in the southern extension attic of the building, the droppings indicated it is a small bat roost. No evidence of swift use was confirmed but cannot be ruled out; therefore, mitigation measures for additional ecological surveys for bats and swifts in the relevant season are recommended and provided in Section 2.4. Table 2.1 presents the record of protected species based on the 1km tetrad from Biodiversity Ireland.

TABLE 2-1 PROTECTED SPECIES RECORDED WITHIN 1KM GRID M4351 (NBDC, ACCESSED 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025)

Species Name	Count	Date of record	Designation
<b>Lesser Noctule (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>)</b>	4	15/08/2012	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
<b>Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)</b>	2	18/08/2005	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

Finally, the NBDC database identified no invasive species listed on the Third Schedule and subject to restriction under Regulations 49 and 50 SI 477 of 2011. Stands of butterfly bush, *Buddleia* spp are present adjacent to the railway line.

<sup>5</sup> Bat and Swift Preliminary Inspection Report Tuam Train Station, Co Galway, Eire Ecology 2025

FIGURE 2-2 EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN 5, 10 AND 15KM BUFFER OF THE PROJECT SITE, SACs ONLY. NO SPAS.

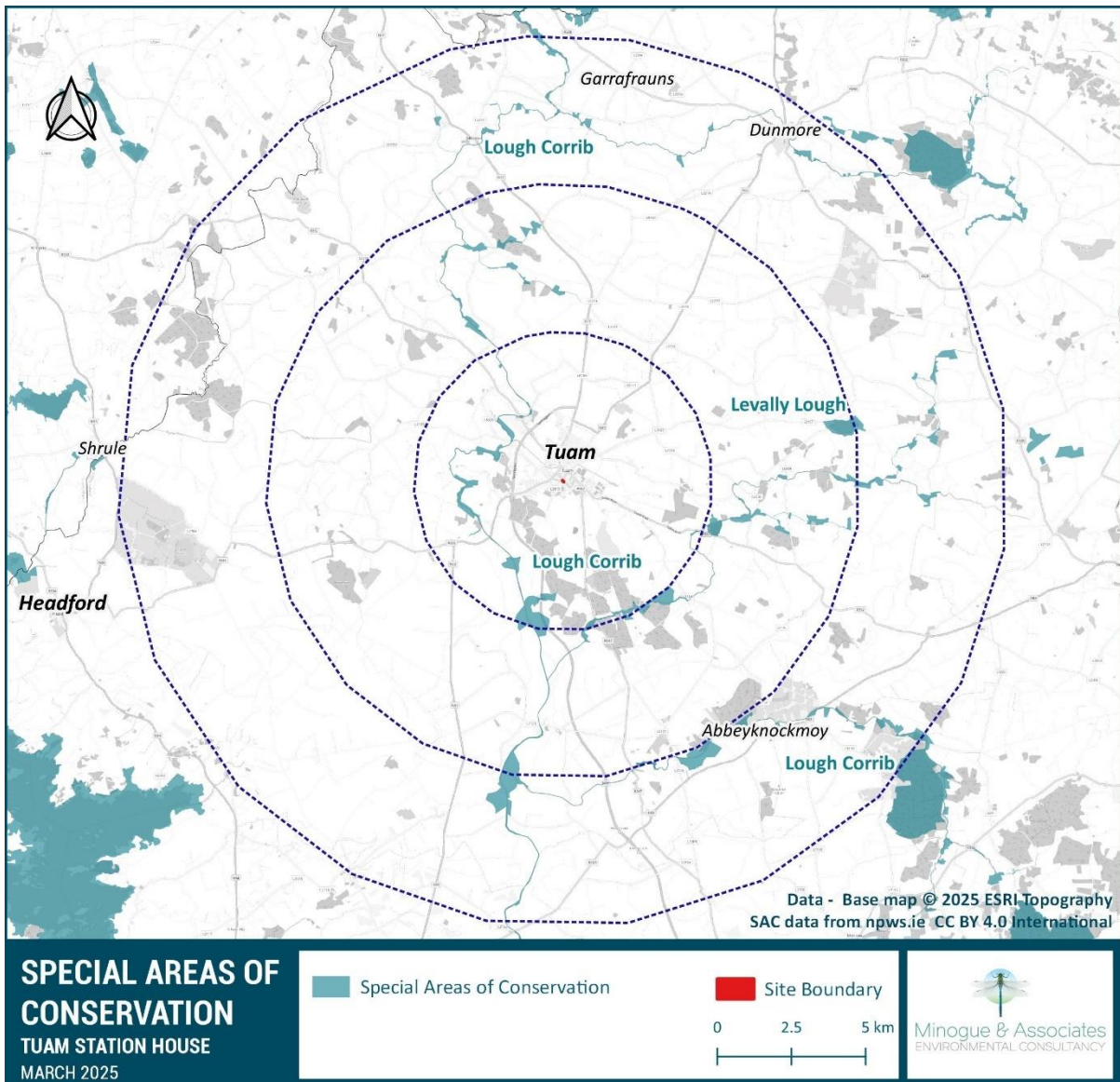
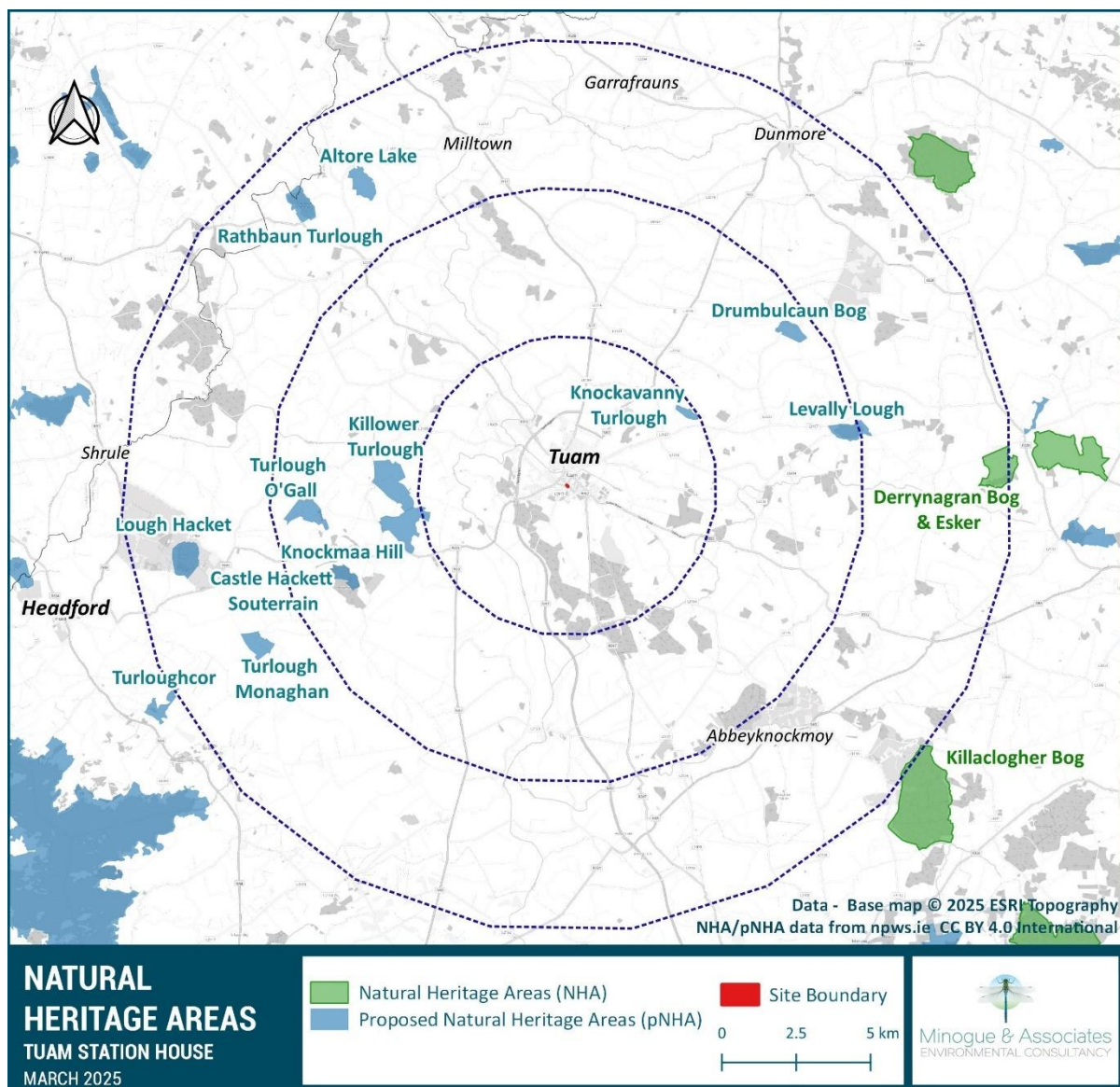




FIGURE 2-3 NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS AND PROPOSED NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS



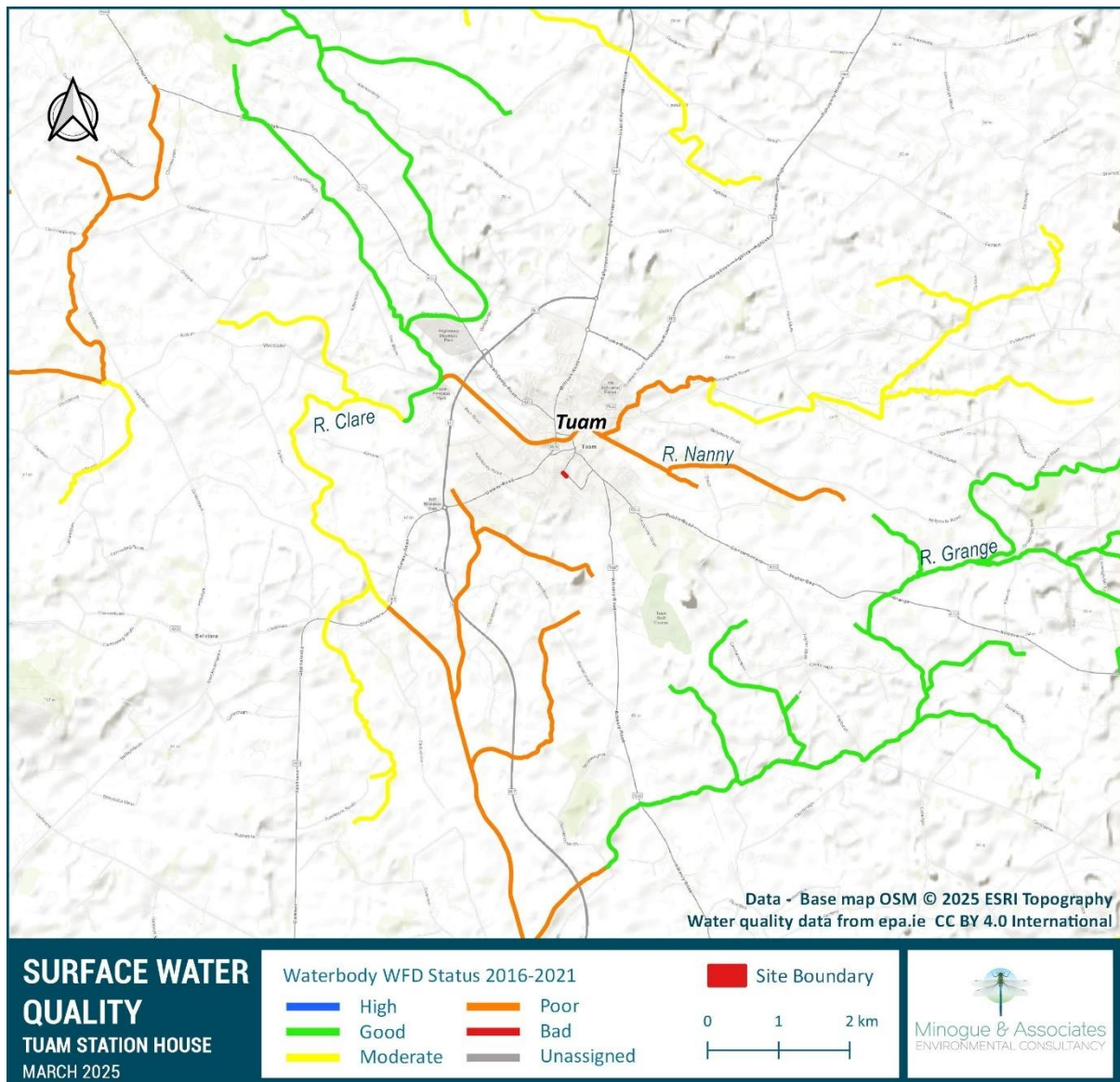
### 2.3.4 Water resources

Tuam is located within the Corrib catchment (O30), with its hydrology primarily influenced by the River Nanny and its tributaries. The project site is located within the Clare -Galway subcatchment (SC 030). The River Nanny flows eastward through the town toward Weir Bridge, where it joins the River Clare. The Clare River flows in a meandering north-south direction west of Tuam and eventually discharges into Lough Corrib, approximately 30km downstream to the southwest. Another significant watercourse, the Killelaun (Suileen), a tributary of the River Clare, drains portions of Tuam's southern environs. The nearest surface water monitoring locations are at the Nanny River, north of the project site approximately 570m as the crow flies, and water quality is assigned a Q Value of 2 (poor quality) in the most recent EPA monitoring survey carried out (station code: RS14B050490) the river was assigned a Q Value of 3 (poor status); this waterbody is at risk of not meeting the Water Framework Directive objectives by 2027.

Soil and geology within the plan area are made soils associated with the urban landuse and the underlying geology comprises limestone. Groundwater vulnerability within the plan area is moderate.

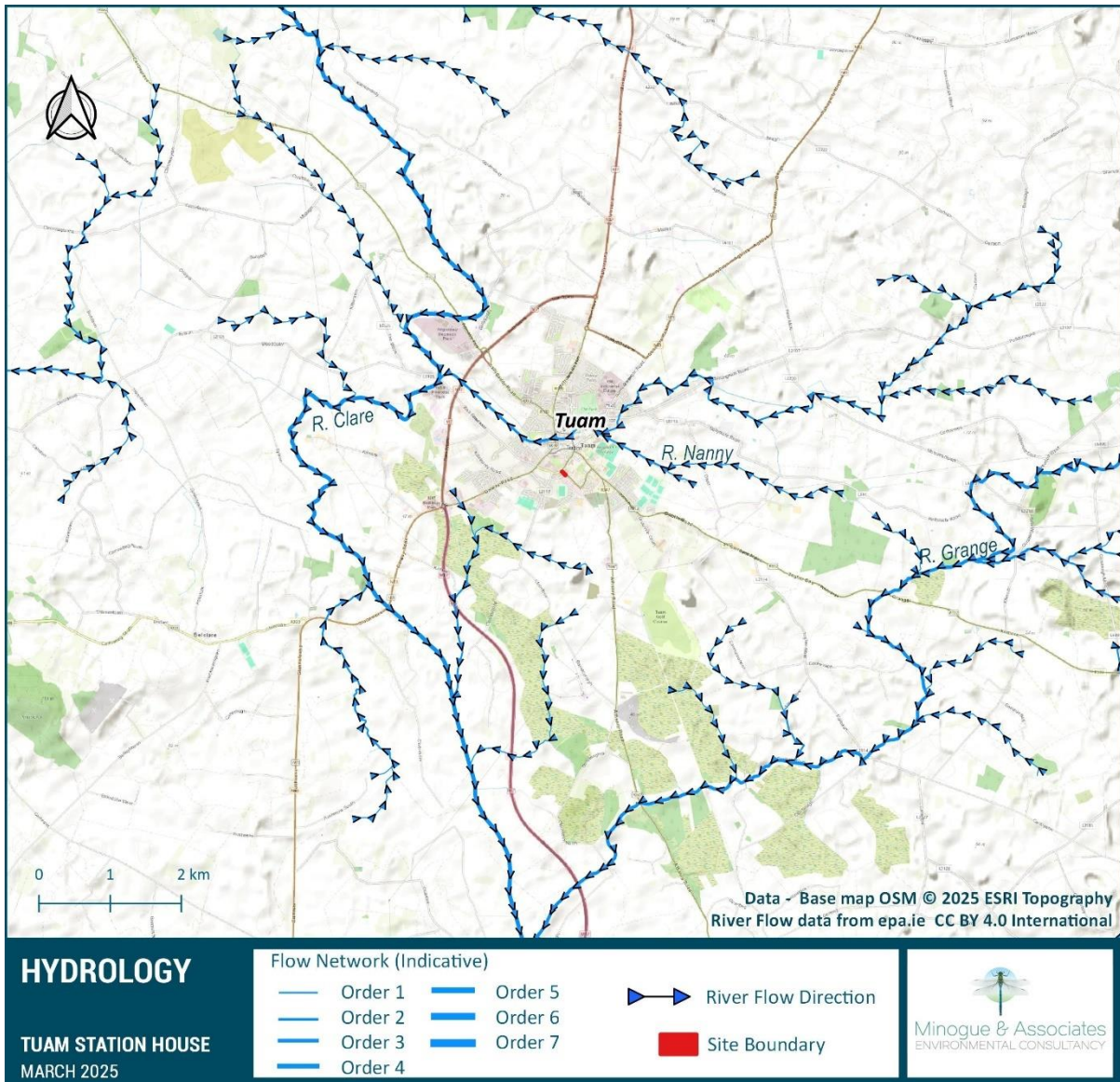
The project area is located within the Clare-Corrib groundwater body (IE\_WE\_G\_0020) and is not at risk of not meeting the Water Framework Directive objectives for 2027 <sup>6</sup>.

FIGURE 2-4 SURFACE WATER QUALITY AND PLAN AREA



<sup>6</sup> EPA Maps accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025

FIGURE 2-5 HYDROLOGY AND PROJECT AREA



### 2.3.5 Soil and Geology

Soil and geology within the is classified as 'urban' (Irish Soil Information System). A review of historic maps from 1st Edition 6" and 2nd Edition 25" identify the station as present on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS map. The underlying bedrock comprises limestone. Please see figures below.

FIGURE 2-6 BEDROCK GEOLOGY AND PROJECT AREA

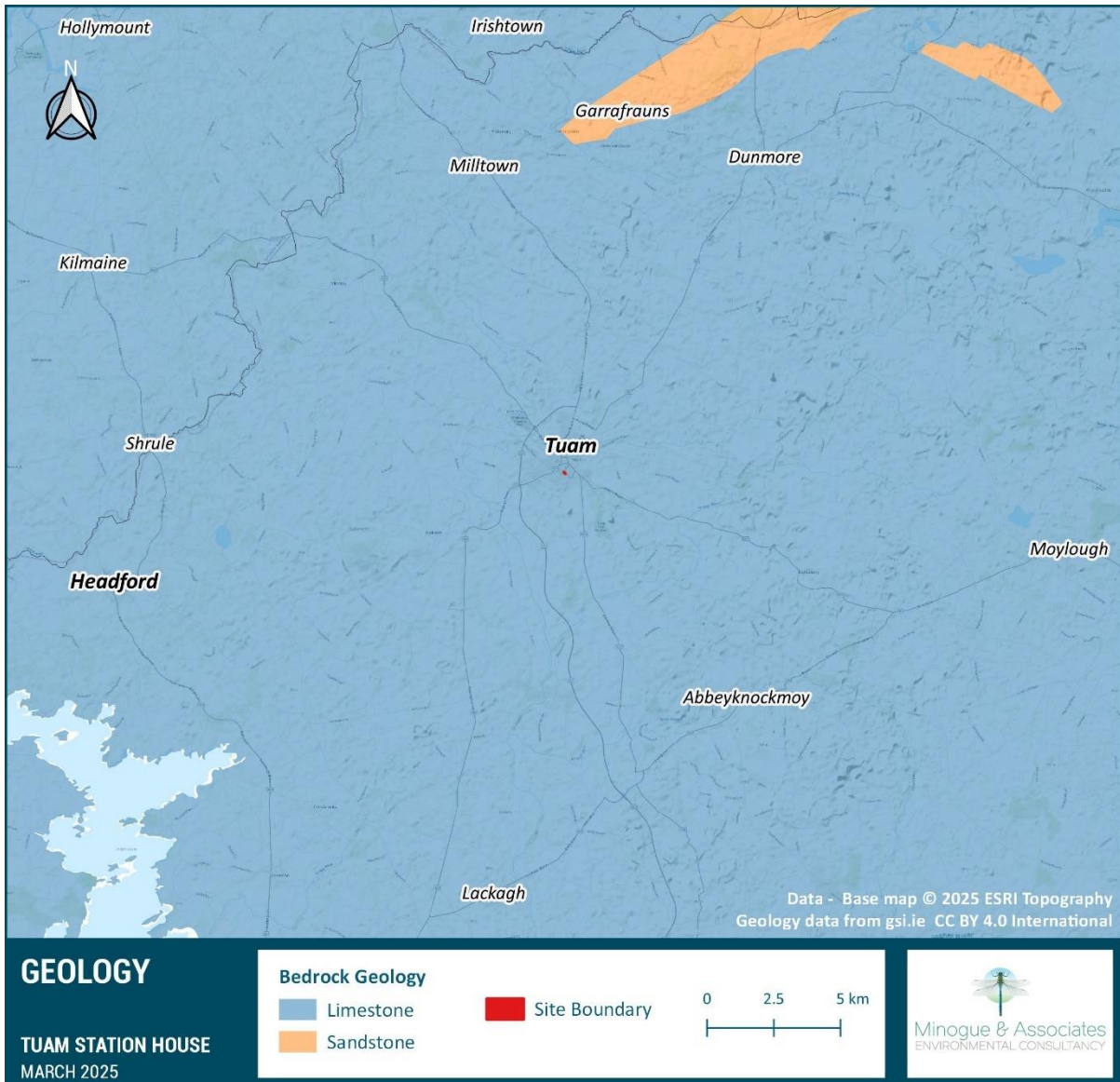
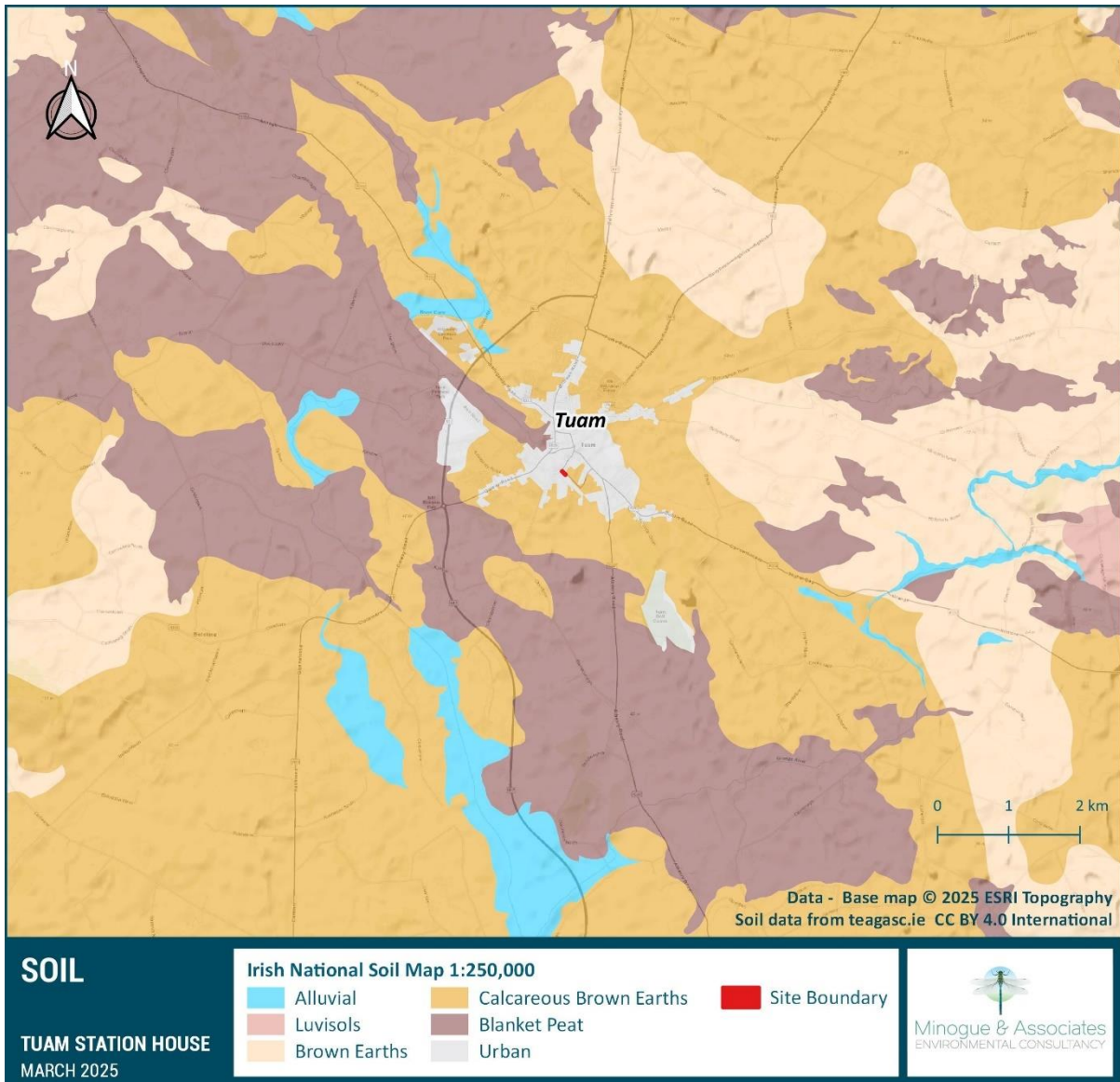


FIGURE 2-7 SOIL TYPE AND PLAN AREA



### 2.3.6 Landscape

The project area is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area. The wider setting of Tuam town is situated within the landscape character area (LCA): Urban Environs LCA prepared as part of the Galway CDP 2022 -2028.

### 2.3.7 Cultural Heritage

A building conservation assessment report was prepared by ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals. The building is a protected structure (RPS 30331045 in the Galway CDP 2022-2028) and is listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Works are identified that are emergency works including the chimney stacks, roof, rainwater goods and floors whilst much of the original historic fabric of the building remained and can be repaired and retained. As the building is a protected structure, works within the property and its curtilage will require permission under Part IV

of the Planning Act 2000. For further information please see ACP report that is provided under separate cover<sup>7</sup>.

In order to preserve areas of architectural value, the Tuam Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) has been designated. The Station House falls just outside of the ACA however, it's contribution to the cultural and architectural quality of Tuam is significant. Figure 2.8 below presents information on NIAH and sites and monuments records at and adjacent to the project boundary.

**FIGURE 2-8 SITES LISTED ON THE NATIONAL INVENTORY OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA**



### 2.3.8 Air and Climatic factors

The Galway County Climate Action Plan 2024 -2029 provides, on a statutory basis, actions grouped around the following themes to address climate action, adapt to climate change and mitigate the effects of climate change. The refurbishment and reuse of the building as part of this project embeds carbon within the existing structure and is an example of adaptive reuse. This contributes to the local

<sup>7</sup> Building Conservation Assessment Report, Tuam Railway Station, ACP 2025

circular economy as well as the cultural heritage of the building and contribute to the goal relating to the Build Environment: Energy and Built Environment: *Transform to low-carbon, resilient and sustainable energy and buildings, enhancing the wellbeing of our community*

### 2.3.9 Material Assets

Tuam receives water supply from the Tuam Regional Water Supply Scheme that is being extended to Loughrea and is under construction. This will provide water supply to over 6,000 residents<sup>8</sup>.

The town is served by the wastewater treatment plant, that has been upgraded and modernised several elements of the wastewater treatment process at the plant. This includes upgrades to the Weir Rd Pumping Station as well as the inlet works, sludge treatment and aeration systems at the WWTP to ensure compliance with the Wastewater Treatment Regulation and improve.

The latest annual environmental report (2023, Uisce Éireann<sup>9</sup>) states the wastewater treatment plant is designed for a population equivalent of 24,834 and will not exceed capacity in the next three years. Section 2.1.3 of the report states:

*“WWTP discharge was not compliant with the ELV's set in the wastewater discharge licence for the following: Ammonia-Total (as N) mg/l, orthoPhosphate (as P) - unspecified mg/l.*

*The ambient monitoring results do not meet the required EQS at the upstream and the downstream monitoring locations. The EQS relates to the Oxygenation and Nutrient Conditions set out in the Surface Water Regulations 2009. Based on ambient monitoring results a deterioration in Ammonia, BOD, Ortho-Phosphate, concentrations downstream of the effluent discharge is noted. A deterioration in water quality has been identified, however it is not known if it or is not caused by the WWTP. Other causes of deterioration in water quality in the area are unknown. The discharge from the wastewater treatment plant does not have an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Directive status”.*

A Strategic Flood Risk assessment was undertaken as part of the Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029 preparation, this states<sup>10</sup>:

*“The most significant source of flood risk within the Plan area is from fluvial (from rivers/streams, including from the River Nanny and its tributaries) however there are other sources of flooding present including those from groundwater, pluvial (from rainwater) and surface drainage systems.”*

## 2.4 Mitigation measures

The following measures relate to biodiversity, flora and fauna, water resources. The mitigation measures outlined in the following sections aim to ensure that all potential negative impacts associated with the project are avoided or minimised to an imperceptible level.

### 2.4.1 Approach to works

1. Construction compounds – their location will be determined upon detailed design and contractor appointment.
2. Potential machinery: standard machinery as for most construction projects.

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<sup>8</sup> [Tuam Regional Water Supply Scheme | Projects and Plans | Uisce Éireann](#)

<sup>9</sup> [D0031-01\\_2023\\_AER.pdf](#)

<sup>10</sup> Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Tuam LAP 2023-2029.

The contract documents shall include for the following:

- The Contractor shall establish and implement, during the execution and completion of the Works, an Environmental Operating Plan consistent with and analogous to the NRA “Guidelines for the Creation, Implementation and Maintenance of an Environmental Operating Plan”.

#### 2.4.2 Measures to Minimise Impacts to Water Resources

All wastewater generated during the construction phase will be directed to the Uisce Eireann sewer network and then to the existing Uisce Eireann Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The renovation of the building will require wastewater and water supply to be connected to the main services as described in Section 2.3.9 Material Assets.

#### 2.4.3 Biodiversity

As recommended in the Eire Ecology report, bat surveys and swift surveys will be undertaken over the summer season to confirm usage of the building by bats and swifts.



## 3 EIA Screening

### 3.1 Environmental Factors to be considered in the EIA Screening

This Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report assesses whether this proposed development requires “full” Environmental Impact Assessment. The legislation requires screening to be undertaken to determine whether specified public or private developments are likely to have significant effects on the environment and, as such, require EIA to be carried out prior to a decision on a development consent application being made. As described in Section 1.2.1 this project does not meet the criteria or categories for mandatory EIA nor correspond to development of over 2 hectares in a business district for urban development, nor corresponds to Roads Development under the Roads Act 1993, as amended.

As further referenced above, the 2014 EIA Directive introduces a new Annex IIA (which is transposed into Irish planning law as Schedule 7A to the 2001 Regulations) to be used by competent authorities carrying out EIA screening determinations. Schedule 7A requires that the following information be provided by a developer in respect of projects listed in Annex II:

1. *A description of the proposed development , including in particular:*
  - a) *a description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works.*
  - b) *a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.*
2. *A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.*
3. *A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the project on the environment resulting from:*
  - a) *the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant.*
  - b) *the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.*
4. *The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.*

### 3.2 Impact Assessment

Having considered the above environmental factors, the aim of the next section is to address likely impacts on the environment by the implementation of the proposed development. Whether an EIA would be deemed relevant to the scale of the project and the environment will then be determined. The following sections presents the EIA Screening Report based on the criteria contained in Schedule 7a and are grouped under the following headings.

1. Planning Applications within the past five years – Table 3.1
2. Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Table 3.2
3. Location of the Proposed Development - Table 3.3 and
4. Characteristics of Potential Impact Tables 3.4 and 3.5

The screening process assesses the most significant potential impacts in relation to the themes outlined below in Table 4.3. These are considered as follows:

The likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in points 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:

- (a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (b) the nature of the impact;
- (c) the transboundary nature of the impact;
- (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;
- (e) the probability of the impact;
- (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;
- (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects;
- (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

### 3.3 Projects for the Cumulative Assessment

The proposed development was considered in combination with other projects in the area that could result in cumulative effects on the environment. The online planning system myplan.ie was consulted on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 for the subject lands and immediate surrounds. Please see Table 3.1 below.

**TABLE 3-1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS APPROVED IN THE PAST THREE YEARS IN PROJECT AREA**

Planning reference and address	Summary of application	Planning
<b>21 251 Tirboy Tuam</b>	for a) floodlighting to existing GAA Grounds to include 4 No. lighting columns with light fittings to provide a minimum 500lux lighting scheme b) New access stairs and platform lifts to the existing stand/seated terrace c) To retain existing toilet block adjacent to existing seated terrace d) Construct new 2.4m high boundary walls to part of existing boundary to form revised boundaries to previously approved permission Reference 19/768 at Tuam Stadium, Tirboy Td, Tuam. Gross floor space of proposed works: 56 sqm. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 60 sqm	permission
<b>22 60977 Vicars Choral Lands , Vicars Choral Lands , Tuam</b>	for retention of extension consisting of outdoor and indoor storage areas roofed children's play area and permission for extension to creche and permission for construction of extension and change of opening hours.Gross floor space of work to	Permission

Planning reference and address	Summary of application	Planning
	be retained 95.00sqm and gross floor space of proposed works 12sqm	
<b>303420 ABP Townparks 2nd div. Tuam, Co Galway</b>	Construction of metal security fencing and gateways around Mart complex. Retention of wall, with upper fence and signage at the new main entrance (at Church view).	permission

The project however will not have the potential to combine with other land use activities to result in likely significant effects to qualifying habitats or species of the European sites or other environmental parameters. This is due to the planning applications above relating to existing landuse activities such on lands zoned for same under the Tuam LAP 2023 -2029 and the relatively minor nature, scale of the projects.

### 3.3.1 Assessment of effects

The aim of the next section is to address likely impacts on the environment by the implementation of the proposed development. A brief overview of the sensitivities and impacts will be highlighted. Whether an EIA would be deemed relevant to the scale of the project and the environment will then be determined. The following sections present the EIA Screening based on the criteria contained in Schedule 7a and are grouped under the following headings:

1. Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Table 3.2
2. Location of the Proposed Development - Table 3.3 and
3. Characteristics of Potential Impact - Tables 3.2 and 3.3

TABLE 3.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Screening Question	Response
<b>1. Characteristics of projects</b>	
<b>The characteristics of projects must be considered, with particular regard to:</b>	
<b>(a) the size and design of the whole project</b>	<p>The project relates to the refurbishment of the former railway house at Tuam. The project is located within a well established urban environment with existing levels of human presence and associated noise, artificial lighting and traffic.</p> <p>No works such as increased lighting or vegetation removal are proposed in relation to the former railway line which functions as a wider ecological corridor.</p> <p>Of itself the project is not identified as giving rise to significant negative environmental effects due to scale, nature and size of the proposed development. The proposals in and of themselves are consistent with the objectives of the Tuam Local Area Plan</p>

Screening Question	Response
	2023 -2029, and landuse zoning that is town centre use. The project site is 0.25ha.
<b>(b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects;</b>	The proposed development was considered in combination with other projects in the area that could result in cumulative effects on the environment. Please see Table 3.1 for information on these projects. No significant environmental effects are identified from interaction or in combination with other existing or approved projects.
<b>(c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;</b>	<p>Due to the scale and nature of the project, small volumes of natural resources will be used during the refurbishment process. Natural resources will not be used from the surrounding environment.</p> <p>Given the above approaches the project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment.</p>
<b>(d) the production of waste;</b>	<p>Yes, but not significant. Demolition waste from the demolition of the two modern extensions will be managed to be separated to appropriate waste streams for local reuse or for disposal during to suitably licensed facilities in the region.</p> <p>Likely significant effects on the environment are not identified.</p>
<b>(e) pollution and nuisances;</b>	<p>The project is not expected to result in any likely significant adverse effects on the environment and are identified as contributing positively to a number of factors in particular human beings and cultural heritage.</p> <p>At detailed design the phasing of works will be confirmed and the application of the mitigation measures as shown in Section 2.4 will provide appropriate and sufficient protection given the project's location within an established urban area. Given the above approaches, the project does not pose significant risk of pollution or nuisances.</p>
<b>(f) the risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge;</b>	<p>The risks of major accidents are not considered to be significant subject to standard construction practices being followed through the construction phases. The project will include proper site management, maintenance and operation of all machinery and works associated with the construction phase, on site safety and training.</p> <p>Given the above approaches, the project does not pose significant risk of major accidents and/or disaster.</p>
<b>(g) the risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).</b>	As above, significant risks to human health are not identified for this proposal. Positive effects are identified in relation to Population and Human Health and cultural heritage due to the

Screening Question	Response
	augmentation of street infrastructure for public use. Given the above approaches the project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment
<b>Will the proposed development create a significant amount of nuisance during its construction or operation?</b>	It is not anticipated that significant noise levels will arise during construction (they will be temporary and restricted to machinery) and operational noise is not identified as being significant. Given the above approaches the project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment

**Conclusion:** No significant effects likely to arise associated with the characteristics of the proposed development.

**Rationale:** The works associated with the project site are minor in scale and nature, construction activities are localised and minor; with the application of standard construction practice guidance no significant adverse effects are identified.

TABLE 3.3 . LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Screening Question	Response
<b>The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by projects must be considered, with particular regard to:</b>  <b>(a) the existing and approved land use;</b>	The project as summarised in Section 2.1 to 2.2 relates to the refurbishment of the Tuam Railway Station house. Given the overall approach and measures as presented in Section 2 of this report, the project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment. The existing landuse is urban, is zoned town centre and the project enhances rather than detracts from the urban landuse given it will reuse a currently vacant and derelict building.
<b>(b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground</b>	The works will not impact the natural resources in the area. The works do not result in likely significant effects on the environment.
<b>(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</b>  <b>(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</b>  <b>(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;</b>	The project relates to refurbishment of an existing building and does not increase the footprint of the building. No impacts on wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones, marine environment, mountain, forest areas, nature reserves and parks are identified given the project location within the urban town of Tuam.  A screening statement for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared by MEC Ltd and it was found that no likely significant

Screening Question	Response
<p>(iii) mountain and forest areas;</p> <p>(iv) nature reserves and parks;</p> <p>(v) areas classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;</p>	<p>effects on the conservation management objectives of European Sites.</p> <p>Given the above approaches the project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment.</p>
<p>(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;</p>	<p>There are no direct or indirect effects identified for the project and potential risks to the surface waters in the town centre.</p> <p>There are no potential impacts identified for water quality or alterations to hydrological streams. The project does not result in likely significant effects on water resources in the environment.</p> <p>Measures included in the overall project and as outlined above are not identified as generating additional pressure on the groundwater quality or surface water quality. Given the above approaches the project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment.</p>
<p>(vii) densely populated areas;</p>	<p>The project site is adjacent to an established urban area and given its size, type and scale, no negative effects are identified in relation to this criterion with positive effects identified for EIA topics in line with refurbishment of an existing building with minor extension to same.</p>
<p>(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance</p>	<p>Given the above approaches the project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment, no such effects are identified.</p>

**Conclusion: No significant effects likely to arise associated with the location of the proposed development.**

**Rationale:** The project in and of itself is designed to undertake works to renovate the building and extend the lifetime of the building. The works as proposed in this development are considered to result in negligible environmental effects given the above approach the potential construction related effects is reduced to minimal effects.

The screening process assesses the most significant potential impacts in relation to the themes outlined below in Table 3.4 below. These are considered as follows:

### 3.3.2 Type and Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

The likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in points 1 and 2 of the Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:

- (a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (b) the nature of the impact;
- (c) the transboundary nature of the impact;
- (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;
- (e) the probability of the impact;
- (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;
- (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects;
- (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

**TABLE 3-4. LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

<b>Environmental Topic</b>	<b>Potential Impact</b>
<b>Human Beings</b>	The project does not result in likely significant negative effects on the environment in relation to Human beings due to the scale, location, type of project and approach to construction. Post construction positive effects are identified for number of topics including human beings, and cultural heritage.
<b>Flora and Fauna</b>	The project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment in relation to Flora and Fauna. No additional light spill or illumination is identified as an impact on these bat species. The survey for bats and swifts in the summer will inform any subsequent actions in terms of mitigation depending on presence/ absence of same and measures can be accommodated based on best practice to avoid significant effects on these species.
<b>Soil and Geology</b>	The project does not result in likely significant effects on soil and geology due to the scale, size, type and location of the project and the approach to construction.
<b>Water</b>	No instream works proposed and no alteration to existing drainage or surface water is proposed.. The construction approach will reduce the risk of any construction related activities on the water resources. The project does not result in likely significant effects on water resources in the environment.
<b>Air Quality and climate</b>	Emissions during works phase will be minimized through best practice and will be temporary in duration and nature. The project does not result in likely significant negative effects on the air quality and climate.
<b>Noise and Vibration</b>	Noise during the construction phase may result in temporary and relate only to the construction elements of the works. The project does not result in likely significant effects on the environment.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	The project is located within the town centre of Tuam. The project seeks to enhance and contribute to the setting and context of the architectural heritage of the town. Given the scale, type and duration of the project

Environmental Topic	Potential Impact
	no significant negative effects on this parameter are identified. Positive effects are identified.
<b>Landscape</b>	The area will retain its urban design and character, with measures relating to the addressing the current poor condition of the building that is of regional significance as well as promoting reuse of the building. No significant negative effects identified.
<b>Interrelationship between above parameters</b>	The key interrelationship arises between human beings and cultural heritage. Given the approach outlined in Section 2, the project does not result in significant negative effects on the environment and is expected to enhance the wellbeing of the community in the longer-term and enhance these topics.

**Conclusion: No significant effects likely to arise associated with the potential impacts on environmental parameters.**

**Rationale:** Localised and temporary negligible impacts are identified associated with construction. The nature of the receiving environment and the proposed development, together with the effective implementation of the standard construction measures means that there is no real likelihood of significant negative effects on the environment. The project by refurbishing and reusing an existing landmark building will contribute positively to the urban character and cultural heritage of the town.



TABLE 3.5. LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Characteristics of potential impacts	
The potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under Tables 3.3. and 3.2 above, and having regard in particular to:	
(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	Minor to negligible temporary impacts is identified primarily at construction stage  The geographic area of the proposed works are confined to the immediate project site, accordingly, there is no significant impact associated with the operational phase of the development.
(b) the nature of the impact;	Impacts are identified as temporary as they relate to the construction stage and sufficient and detailed measures as shown in Section 2.
(c) the transboundary nature of the impact;	There are no transboundary impacts identified for the proposed project.
(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;	Given the scale, size and nature of the project no significant effects are identified.
(e) the probability of the impact;	There is low probability of impacts given the approach to construction, the location, scale and type of development proposals. .
(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;	Impacts identified for topics are not significant and will be temporary in nature, as they relate to construction phase. The operational impacts are positive across a number of topics as they seek to reuse the existing building, extending its lifespan and providing uses to the wider community of the town. . .
(g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects;	The project was considered in combination with other projects in the area that could result in cumulative effects on the environment. Please see Table 3.1 for information on these projects. No significant environmental effects are identified from interaction or in combination with other existing or approved projects. The proposed works have been assessed cumulatively within this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report and concludes that potential cumulative effects are not identified.

**Conclusion:** No significant effects likely to arise associated with the characteristics of the potential impacts.

**Rationale:** Minor, localised and temporary impacts are identified associated with the construction phase of this project. Positive, long term impacts are identified relating to human beings, cultural

heritage in particular. The scale, nature, design and location of the project is not identified as giving rise to significant negative effects across the EIA topics.

### 3.3.3 Identification of the Relevant Assessments Available

In consideration of a recent high court case (Waltham Abbey Residents Association v. An Bord Pleanala & ORS), the following statement was made:

“The kind of assessments that should be brought together in the statement under 299B(1)(b)(ii)(II)(C) include those under the following directives:

- (i) directive 92/43/EEC, the habitats directive: see EC EIA, Guidance on Screening, 2017, p. 44;
- (ii) directive 2000/60/EC, the water framework directive: see EC EIA, Guidance on Screening, 2017, p. 44;
- (iii) directive 2001/42/EC, the SEA directive: see EC EIA, Guidance on Screening, 2017, p. 44;
- (iv) directive 2002/49/EC, regarding environmental noise;
- (v) directive 2008/50/EC, the clean air for Europe directive;
- (vi) directive 2007/60/EC, regarding the assessment and management of flood risks; as well of course as
- (vii) any other relevant provision of EU law.”

For this EIA Screening Report, the following sources are pertinent:

- (i) Galway County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028 and Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029
- (ii) Natura Impact Report for the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, Tuam LAP 2023-2029 and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, and Tuam LAP 2023-2029.
- (iv) Irish Water Annual Environmental Report 2023 for Tuam Wastewater Treatment Plant
- (v) Relevant Planning applications

### 3.3.4 Results of Relevant Available Assessments

#### 3.3.4.1 Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, SEA ER and NIR

The plan is consistent with the following objectives in the Galway CDP 2022-2028 and the Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029 as shown in Table 3.2 below.

**TABLE 3-2 OBJECTIVES FROM GALWAY CDP 2022-2028 AND TUAM LOCAL AREA PLAN 2023-2029**

Objective/Policy	Text
<b>NHB 7:</b>	Require mitigating measures in certain cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected. These measures may, in association with other specified requirements, include establishment of wildlife areas/corridors/parks, hedgerow, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas. With regard to residential development, in certain cases, these measures may be carried out in conjunction with the provision of open space and/or play areas

Objective/Policy	Text
NHB 9:.	Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stone walls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Assessments shall be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and where development is likely to result in significant adverse effects on bat populations or activity in the area, development will be prohibited or require mitigation and/or compensatory measures, as appropriate. The impact of lighting on bats and their roosts and the lighting up of objects of cultural heritage must be adequately assessed in relation to new developments and the upgrading of existing lighting systems
<b>Tuam Local Area Plan 2023 -2029</b>	
<b>TKT 3 Environmental Assessment</b>	To require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the plan area to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompany this LAP.
<b>TKT 11 Community Facilities</b>	Promote the sustainable development of community facilities on suitable lands with a high level of access to the local community, including education, community, civic, public institutional, recreational, cultural and other complementary uses as appropriate.
<b>TKT 27 Architectural Heritage</b>	Ensure the protection and conservation of the architectural heritage in the Plan area in particular by implementing the relevant legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to architectural heritage and policy guidance contained within the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004/2011 and the published Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht and National Disability Authority's advice series titled Access: Improving the Accessibility to Historic Buildings and Places 2011 (or any superseding document). Policy Objective AH2 'Protected Structures' (refer to current County Development Plan) ensures the protection and sympathetic enhancement of structures included on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, together with the integrity of their character and setting
<b>TKT 45 European Sites</b>	Protect European sites that form part of the European Sites network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011) (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010 (and any updated/superseding guidance). A plan or project (e.g., proposed development) within the plan area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:

Objective/Policy	Text
	<p>1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any European Sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects);</p> <p>Or</p> <p>2. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions, and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of European Sites;</p> <p>Or</p> <p>3. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of European Sites</p>
<p><b>TKT 52 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses</b></p>	<p>Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in the riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.</p> <p>To contribute towards protection and improvement of the status of surface and ground waters in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Applications for development under the Plan must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not adversely affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive, individually as a result of the proposed development or cumulatively, in combination with other developments</p>

The landuse zoning in the Tuam LAP for the project area is Town Centre.

*Objective LU 1 – Town Centre/Commercial (C1) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)*

*Promote the sustainable development of the Town Centre as an intensive, well connected, high quality, well-landscaped, human-scaled and accessible environment, with an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial, service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses as appropriate, that provides a range of retail services, facilities and amenities to the local community and visitors to the town. The town centre and associated main streets shall remain the primary focus for retail and service activity within Tuam.*

The project is consistent with these landuse zonings and above policy provisions. The Galway CDP 2022-2028 and SEA ER and Tuam LAP 2023 -2029 do not identify additional environmental effects

with this landuse zoning, nor specific mitigation measures beyond those already in the Galway CDP 2022-2028.

The Natura Impact Report of the Galway CDP 2022 -2028 and Tuam LAP 2023 -2029 does not recommend additional mitigation measures in relation to the above.

The Annual Environmental Report for Tuam Wastewater Treatment Plant was summarised in Section 2.3.9 and concludes that

*“the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant does not have an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Directive status”.*

#### 3.3.4.2 Water Framework Directive

The nearest surface water monitoring locations are at the Nanny River, north of the project site and water quality is assigned a Q Value of 2 (poor quality) in the most recent EPA monitoring survey carried out (station code: RS14B050490) the river was assigned a Q Value of 3 (poor status); this waterbody is at risk of not meeting the Water Framework Directive objectives by 2027.

Soil and geology within the plan area are made soils associated with the urban landuse and the underlying geology comprises limestone. Groundwater vulnerability within the plan area is moderate. The project area is located within the Clare-Corrib groundwater body (IE\_WE\_G\_0020) and is not at risk of not meeting the Water Framework Directive objectives for 2027

## 4 Conclusion

### 4.1 Screening Determination

Article 4(5) of the EIA Directive states:

*The competent authority shall make its determination, on the basis of information provided by the developer in accordance with paragraph 4 taking into account, where relevant, the results of preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to Union legislation other than this Directive.*

*The determination shall be made available to the public and:*

*(a) where it is decided that an environmental impact assessment is required, state the main reasons for requiring such assessment with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III; or*

*(b) where it is decided that an environmental impact assessment is not required, state the main reasons for not requiring such assessment with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III, and, where proposed by the developer, state any features of the project and/or measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.*

As established in the preceding Section 1.2.1 of this report (EIA Project Type and Thresholds), given the nature and scale of the project, ie refurbishment of existing building and demolition of modern extensions with associated works, that form the project at Tuam, County Galway, the proposals do not correspond to any project type, nor do they meet the thresholds and criteria for the most appropriate potential project type of 'urban development' as set out in the EIA Directive and Schedule 5 of the 2011 Regulations.

The EIA Screening Report has provided an overview assessment of the Proposed Development against the Schedule 7a criteria of 2011 Regulations for the avoidance of doubt.

Sections 2 and 3 examined the nature of the development including the size and location of the development, and the types and characteristics of likely potential effects. Construction works are anticipated to result in temporary negative effects on certain parameters, whilst the operation phase will result in long term positive effects via refurbishment of a significant building of architectural merit and use for community, office, event space. The approach to construction will include best practice standard construction measures.

Given the scale and nature of the project and taking account of all available information, the overall probability of impacts on the receiving environment arising from the proposed development is considered to be negligible with positive effects identified for a number of EIA topics primarily human beings and cultural heritage.

The information provided in this EIA Screening Report can be used by the competent authority Galway County Council to conclude and determine that an EIA is not required for the proposed project as there will be no significant negative effects.

The overall conclusion for this screening appraisal is that having considered the appropriate criteria, Environmental Impact Assessment for the project is not required.

## References

Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (2018)

Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU). European Commission 2017.

OPR Practice Note PN02 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (2021)

Galway County Development Plan 2022 2028

Natura Impact Report for the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

Irish Water Annual Environmental Report 2023 for Tuam Wastewater Treatment Plant

Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive, 2015.

EU and Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects - Guidance on Screening, 2017.

Government of Ireland EIA Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding sub-threshold development, 2003.

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, 2018.

Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, EPA 2022

## Photographic record

Plate 1: front of station house



Plate 2: rear of station house showing platform and former railway line





Plate 3: modern extension proposed for demolition



Plate 4: modern extension proposed for demolition

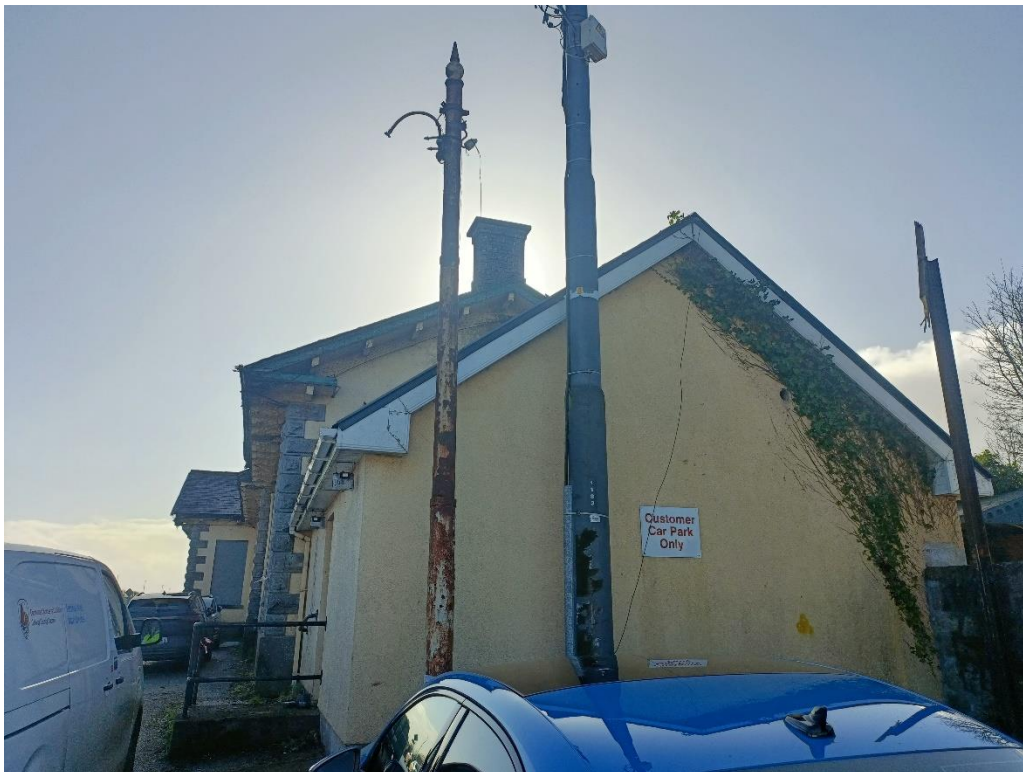


Plate 5: railway track at station

