

# Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

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The Sadderly, Old Chruch Street, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick

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Prepared for: TA Group



Beo Ecology



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Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Statement of Authority .....	1
1.2	Information Consulted for this Report.....	1
2	EIA Legislative Context.....	3
2.1	Sub-Threshold Assessment .....	3
2.2	Guidance .....	5
3	Description of Proposed Development.....	6
3.1	Existing Environment.....	6
3.2	Designated Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Site .....	8
3.3	Surface Water.....	8
3.4	Flooding .....	8
3.5	Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology .....	9
3.6	Cumulative Assessment .....	14
3.6.1	Conclusion .....	15
4	EIA Screening Assessment.....	16
4.1	Characteristic of the Proposed Development .....	16
4.2	Location of the Proposed Development.....	18
4.3	Characteristics of the Potential Impacts .....	20
5	Conclusion.....	23
	Appendix A -Site Layout.....	24
	Figure 1-1: Site Location of Development Works .....	2
	Figure 3-1: European Sites within the Zol of the Proposed Works .....	10
	Figure 3-2: NHAs/pNHAs within the Zol of the Proposed Works .....	11
	Figure 3-3 Surface Water within Proximity of the Proposed Works .....	12
	Figure 3-4: CFRAM Map for the Proposed Works area.....	13
	Figure 4-1: Landscape Character Assessment (Limerick County Development Plan 2022-2028).....	19
	Table 3-1: Surface Water Status within by Study Area.....	8
	Table 3-2: Programmes, Plans and Projects within the vicinity of the Proposed Development.....	14
	Table 4-1: Characteristics of the Proposed Development.....	16
	Table 4-2: Location of the Proposed Development.....	18
	Table 4-3: Significance of Impacts in the Context of EIA Headings.....	20
	Table 4-4: Characteristic of Potential Impacts .....	22
	Image 3-1: View of the building from the front (east). .....	7
	Image 3-2: View of the building form the north.....	7
	Image 3-3: Waste material dumped at the rear of the house. ....	7
	Image 3-4: Example of scrub vegetation to the rear of the building .....	7

# 1 Introduction

Beo Ecology has been commissioned by TA Group to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening for the proposed construction of one residential house at The Saddlery, Old Church Street, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick. The location of the proposed works is presented in **Figure 1-1**. See **Appendix A** for site location and site layout drawings.

## 1.1 Statement of Authority

Sheila Murphy trading as Beo Ecology holds a B.Sc. (Hons) in Environmental Science, and M.Sc. in Biodiversity and Conservation, she has over 12 years' experience in her field. She has extensive experience in the area of Screening of Appropriate Assessments and EIA Screenings, along with report writing for a range of projects including road developments, wastewater treatment plants and one-off housing developments. She is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).

## 1.2 Information Consulted for this Report

A desk study was undertaken as part of this assessment. This has been informed by the following sources of data;

- Information on the location, nature and design of the proposed project as provided by the client;
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage online land-use mapping (<https://www.myplan.ie/zoning-map-viewer/>);
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage EIA Portal (<https://housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d7d5a3d48f104ecbb206e7e5f84b71f1>);
- Office of Public Works (OPW) National Flood Hazard Mapping website ([www.floodmaps.ie](http://www.floodmaps.ie));
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) geoportal mapping tool (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>);
- EPA Catchments interactive online mapping and data (<https://www.catchments.ie/>);
- All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (<https://airomaps.geohive.ie/ESM/>);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service protected site and species information and data (<https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>);
- National Biodiversity Data Centre ([www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie));
- Geohive online environmental sensitivity mapping tool (<https://airomaps.geohive.ie/ESM/>);
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography ([www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie));
- Geological Survey Ireland online mapping and data (<https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/Pages/default.aspx>); and,
- Limerick County Development Plan 2022-2028.

EIA Screening Report – Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick



Figure 1-1: Site Location of Development Works

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## 2 EIA Legislative Context

The primary objective of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2014/52/EU is to ensure that projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment are subject to an assessment of those impacts.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements derive from Council Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directives 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC and 2009/31/EC) and as codified and replaced by Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU).

In determining the requirement for EIA, the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended differentiates between projects where an EIA is mandatory as listed within Schedule 5 Part 1 and those for which an EIA may be required, listed within Schedule 5, Part 2.

The requirements of the EIA Directives apply only in relation to projects listed in Annex I and II of the Directive 2011/92/EU. That is clear from Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Directive which provides that *“before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Those projects are defined in Article 4”*.

Article 4 provides that projects listed in Annex I shall be subject to a mandatory EIA, and that projects listed in Annex II shall be subject to a determination as to whether EIA is required, either by way of a case-by-case examination (screening) or subject to thresholds or criteria set by national law.

### 2.1 Sub-Threshold Assessment

Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, sets out the information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for environmental impact assessment. Information is as follows:

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, and*
  - 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 proposed development on the environment resulting from—*
  - a. *the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and 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.’*

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 refers to criteria for determining whether a development listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and as a result subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Schedule 7 criteria is as follows:

1. *Characteristics of proposed development*

*The characteristics of proposed development, in particular—*

- a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development,*
- b) cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment,*
- c) the nature of any associated demolition works,*
- d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity,*
- e) the production of waste,*
- f) pollution and nuisances,*
- g) 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, and*
- h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).*

## **2. Location of proposed development**

*The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to—*

- a) the existing and approved land use,*
- b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,*
- c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:*
  - (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;*
  - (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;*
  - (iii) mountain and forest areas;*
  - (iv) nature reserves and parks;*
  - (v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;*
  - (vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;*
  - (vii) densely populated areas;*
  - (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.*

## **3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts**

*The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(I) to (V) of the definition of ‘environmental impact assessment report’ in section 171A of the Act, 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 development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment, and*
- (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact’.*

## 2.2 Guidance

The EIA Screening has been prepared with regards to the following guidance documents:

- EC (2000). Communication from the Commission on the Precautionary Principle. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg;
- Environmental Impact Assessment - Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála (August 2018);
- Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency, (Draft EPA Guidelines), 2017;
- European Commission guidance documents on the implementation of the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU), as follows:
  - Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening, European Commission, 2017.
  - Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Scoping, European Commission, 2017 (not considered relevant at Screening Stage).
  - Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, European Commission, 2017 (not considered relevant at Screening Stage).
- Circular Letter PL 1/2017, Implementation of Directive 2014/52/EU on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive), Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, May 2017;
- Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements, EPA, Draft, September 2015;
- Guidance on EIA Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU), European Commission, 2017
- EIA, Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2003;
- Key Issues Consultation Paper - Transposition of 2014 EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) in the Land Use Planning and EPA Licencing Systems, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, May 2017;
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2009; and
- The Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2023, as amended and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2023, as amended.



### 3 Description of Proposed Development

Limerick Housing Department acquired a derelict building located at Old Church Street, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick. It is proposed to demolish the existing building and replace with three bedroom two-storey building. The initial phase of the works will include demolition of the existing building, followed by vegetation/waste clearance to the rear of the building and the construction of a retaining/boundary wall. This will then be followed by standard building construction works.

The works will consist of the following:

- The building works will require demolition of the existing building. All waste material will be carried off site to a suitable licensed waste facility. There will be no stock piling of demolished material on-site due to the site size restraints.
- The ground to the rear of the house is heavily vegetation with ivy ground cover and immature young sycamores, along with dumped waste material. It is proposed to remove the material using a mini-digger and by hand. It will be removed by hand at approximately 4m from the site boundary due to access reasons.
- It is proposed that once initial onsite clearance works are completed, a proposed retaining/boundary wall will be erected along the existing site boundary. This will require the excavation of a foundation approximately 700m wide and 300-450mm in depth. This will be carried out by a mini digger.
- Excavated material will be stored to the east of the site during the wall construction i.e. the street area to the east/footprint of the propose building.
- Strip foundations are to be excavated and concrete foundations consisting of a semi-dry concrete mix will be poured. Works will be carried out in the dry.
- The residential building will be connected to the public sewer connection, which serves Abbeyfeale i.e. Abbeyfeale Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- A soakaway will be constructed to the western end of the site, this will manage surface water from the site during the operational phase, allowing it to infiltrate into the ground.
- The total ground floor area of the new build will be 35m<sup>2</sup>.
- It is proposed the timeline of the works will take 10 months to complete.
- Minimal material will be stored on site due to the site size and location. It is proposed to close the road in front of the building and utilise this area as a temporary compound during the demolition phase of the works, and the majority of the building construction phase.
- Building materials will be delivered to site as and when they are required.

#### 3.1 Existing Environment

An ecological site walkover was conducted on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 by Ecologist Sheila Murphy BSc. MSc. MCIEEM. The habitats identified on site were classified in accordance with “*A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*” (Fossitt, 2000).<sup>1</sup>

The site consists of a significantly dilapidated and derelict building (BL3). The front of the building looks onto an urban streetscape. The north of the site borders a carpark, with elements of re-colonising ground (ED3) immediately adjoining the northern wall, with species such as willowherb (*Epiplobium sp.*), nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), sycamore seedlings (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum sp.*). The rear of the building consists of a narrow strip which at the time of surveying supported dense ivy and bramble growth, along with immature sycamore trees. The area also contains a significant amount of waste dumping. The boundary of the site borders dense ivy (*Hedera helix*) growth, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) scrub (WS1) and mature sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) treeline (WL2). The ground beyond the boundary is level for approximately 4m after which there is a slope of 15m towards the river. This bankside area is densely vegetated

<sup>1</sup> [A Guide to Habitats in Ireland \(Fossitt, 2000\)](#). Alphanumeric codes for habitat classification are provided in accordance with ‘*A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*’ (Fossitt, 2000)

supporting mature treeline and scrub. The works will not be going beyond the delineated boundary. See **Image 3-1** to **Image 3-4** of the site location.



*Image 3-1: View of the building from the front (east).*



*Image 3-2: View of the building from the north.*



*Image 3-3: Waste material dumped at the rear of the house.*



*Image 3-4: Example of scrub vegetation to the rear of the building.*

### 3.2 Designated Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Site

A Zone of Influence for a project is established on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors within vicinity of the proposed development. The Zol takes into account the potential for connectivity to ecological receptors through the Source- Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model.

In this case, given the size, scale and nature of this project and the proposed construction methodology it is considered for the purpose of this screening exercise that the Zol is the zone immediately surrounding the proposed development works and any hydrologically or hydrogeologically connected European Sites downstream of the works, where distances would be dependent on the qualifying interests of the site. For the purposes of this report, the Zol includes European Sites supporting downstream hydrological connectivity and those located within the same WFD surface water sub-catchment (e.g. Feale\_SC\_020) as the proposed works.

Two European sites were identified within the project's Zol; Lower River Shannon SAC (site code: 002165) and Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills & Mount Eagle SPA (site code: 004161). See **Figure 3-1** for site location and Zol.

There is one Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Lough Gay Bog NHA located within the Zol of the proposed works. There are no proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs). There is one additional NHAs located downstream of the proposed works in the Feale\_SC\_030 WFD sub-catchment, Mount Eagle Bogs NHA and Knockatarriv/Knockariddera Bogs NHA. See **Figure 3-2** of NHAs and pNHAs.

### 3.3 Surface Water

The EPA online mapping data (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>) was consulted for the water quality status of waterbodies identified within the study area. The Feale (IE\_SH\_23F010310) watercourse is located approximately 240m west of the proposed works location. The waterbody flows northwards into the Shannon Estuary south of Ballybunion town. See **Table 3-1** below of the Feale River water status.

**Table 3-1: Surface Water Status within by Study Area**

Waterbody	WFD River Waterbody Risk Status	EPA Latest River Q Values	River Waterbody WFD Status 2013-2018
Feale (IE_SH_23F010310)	Not at Risk	Station: FEALE - Bridge in Abbeyfeale (R16): Q4 Good	Good

### 3.4 Flooding

A search of the Office of Public Works (OPW) National Flood Hazard Mapping website ([www.floodmaps.ie](http://www.floodmaps.ie)) was performed to obtain information on the flood history in the vicinity of the study area. One past recurring flood event was recorded approximately 470m south of the proposed works, however neither are located within the immediate vicinity of the proposed works.

The Flood Info database ([www.floodinfo.ie](http://www.floodinfo.ie)) was also consulted to identify Predictive Flood Risk Areas (PFRA) mapped as part of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme for the study area. **Figure 3-4** below provides the mapped area for the Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) ranging from 1-1000-, 1-100- and 1-10-year, flooding probability.

### 3.5 Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) online<sup>2</sup> database was consulted for available edaphic, geological and hydrological information of the site and its environs.

- The underlying bedrock of the proposed works is the Central Clare Group which consists of sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.
- The groundwater vulnerability of the site is a combination of moderate vulnerability. No karst features are located in the vicinity of the proposed works.
- The EPA online database was searched for available information of the groundwater bodies and vulnerability.<sup>3</sup> The study site is located within the Abbeyfeale Groundwater Body (IE\_SH\_G\_001).
- The Water Framework Directive (WFD) ground waterbody risk classifies this groundwater body as not at risk.
- The WFD ground waterbody status 2013-2018 states the water body has a “Good” status.
- The site overlays a *Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones (LI)*.

Groundwater and surface water interactions<sup>4</sup> of Abbeyfeale Groundwater Body (IE\_SH\_G\_001) is described as follows; *“Shallow groundwater flow paths are short (30-300 m), with groundwater discharging to the streams and small springs. Artesian conditions and deep inflow levels indicate that there are lower parts of the aquifer that are confined by low permeability layers in the rock succession. Confined flow path lengths may be considerable. Local flow directions are determined by local topography and drainage patterns. Overall, groundwater flow is to the west.*

*Due to the shallow groundwater flow in this aquifer the groundwater and surface waters are closely linked. The streams crossing the aquifer are gaining.”*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228>

<sup>3</sup> <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> Accessed: July 2023

<sup>4</sup> [Abbeyfeale Groundwater Description](#)

# EIA Screening Report – Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick

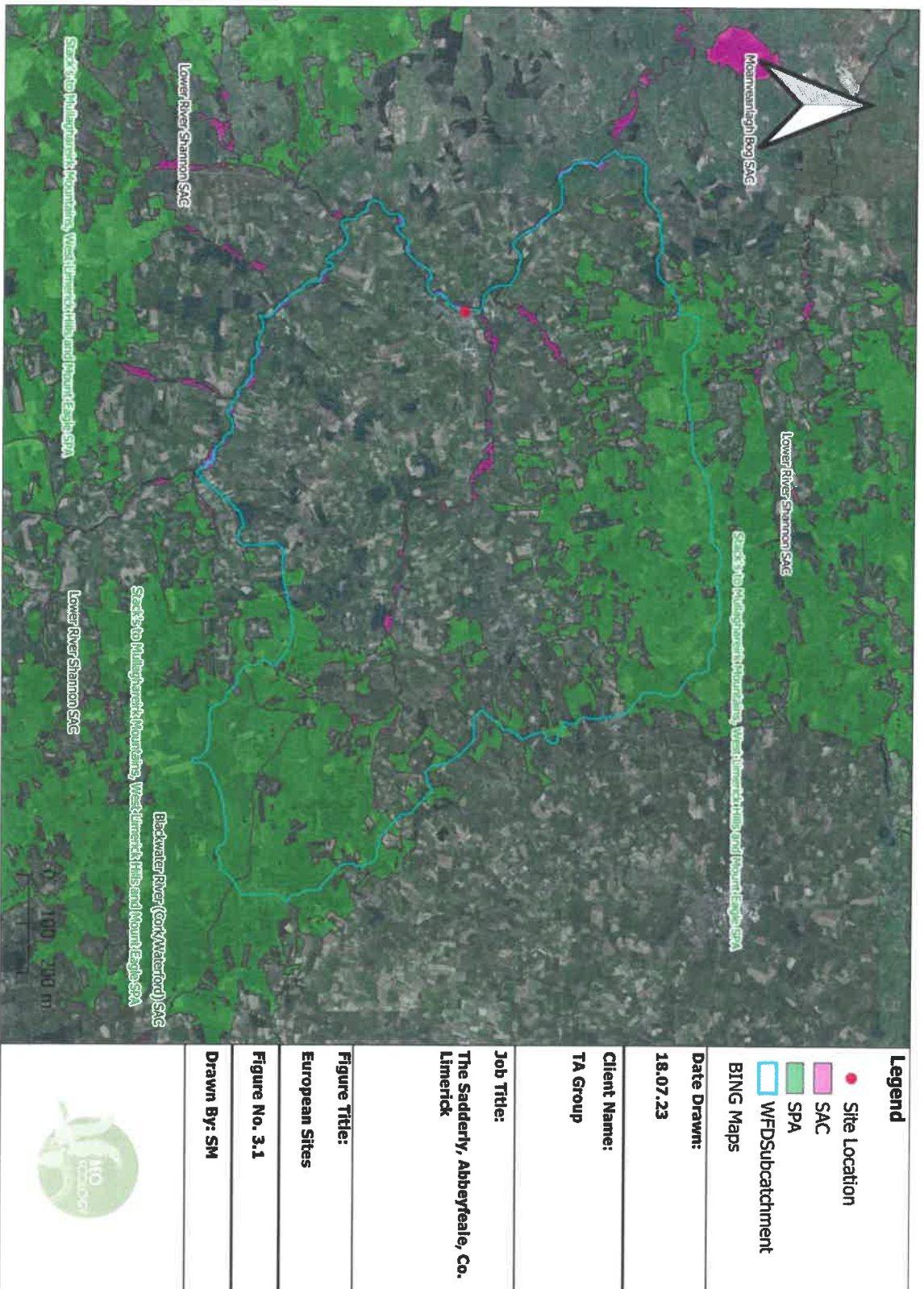


Figure 3-1: European Sites within the ZOI of the Proposed Works

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<b>Legend</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Site Location</li> <li>■ SAC</li> <li>■ SPA</li> <li>□ WFDS Subcatchment</li> <li>□ BING Maps</li> </ul>
<b>Date Drawn:</b>	18.07.23
<b>Client Name:</b>	The Saddlerly, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick
<b>TA Group</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Figure Title:</b>	European Sites
<b>Figure No.</b>	3.1
<b>Drawn By:</b>	SM



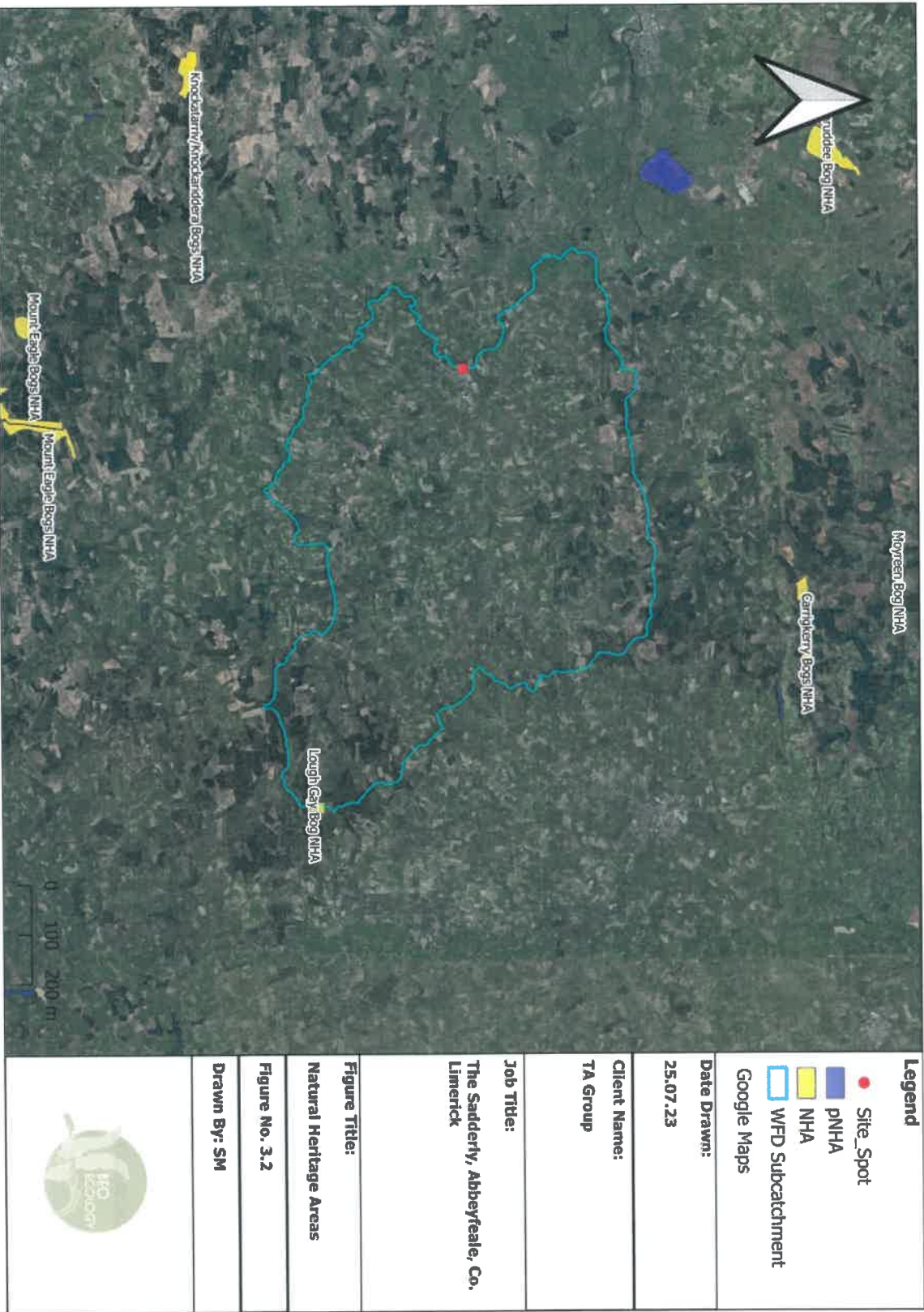


Figure 3-2: NHAs/PNHAs within the ZoI of the Proposed Works

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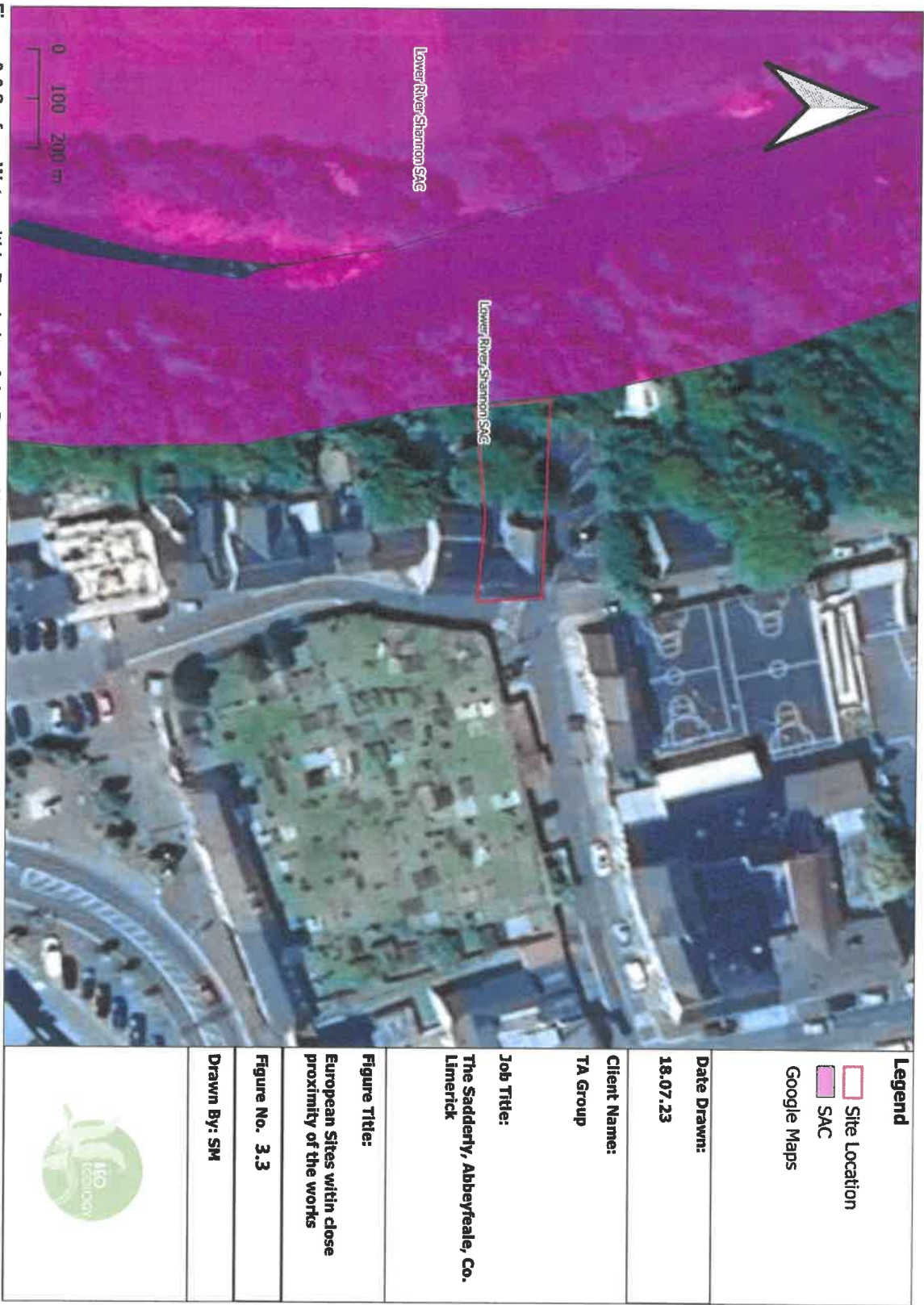


Figure 3-3 Surface Water within Proximity of the Proposed Works

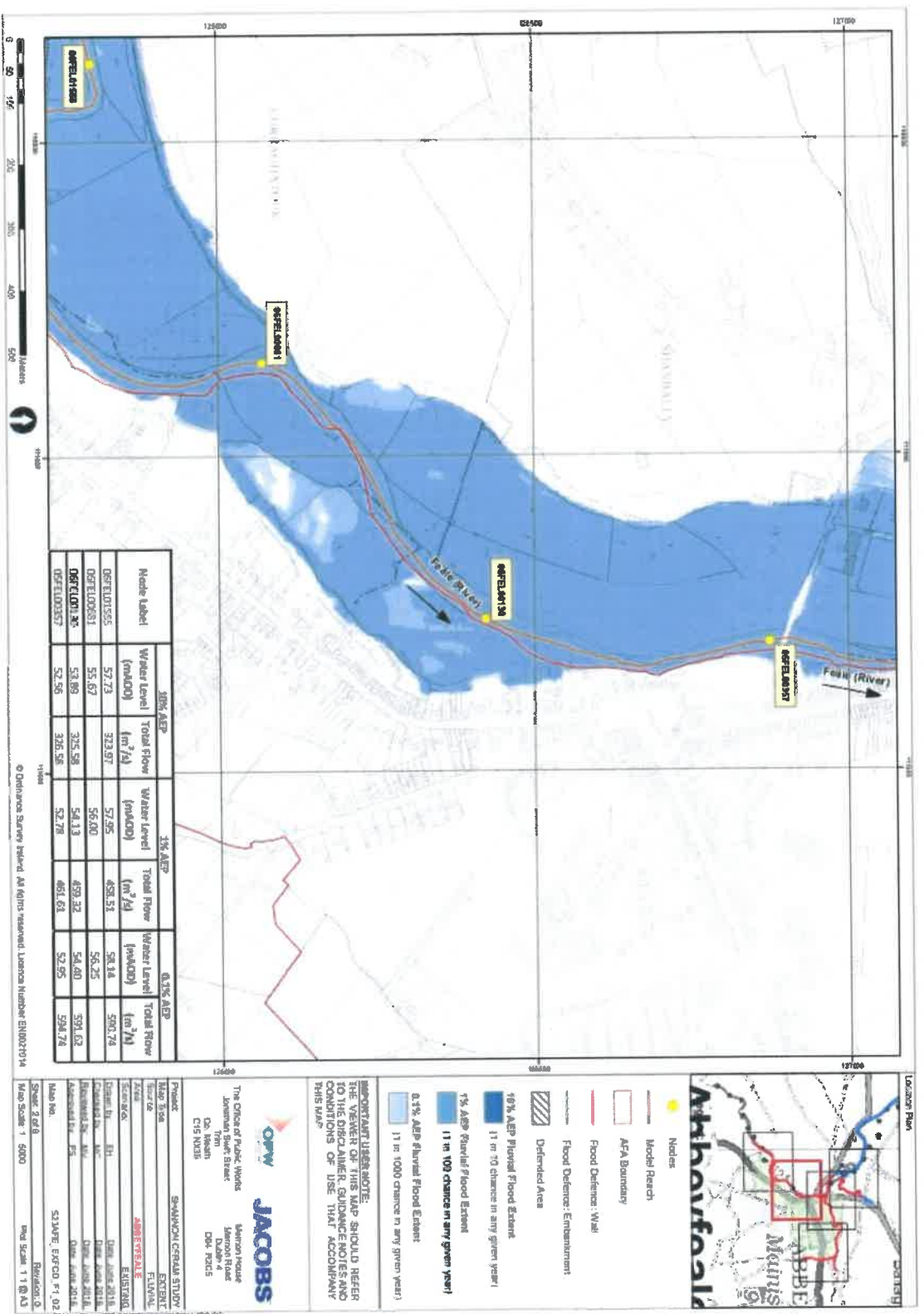


Figure 3-4: CFRAM Map for the Proposed Works area

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### 3.6 Cumulative Assessment

The proposed development was considered in combination with other plans and projects that could hypothetically result in cumulative effects on the receiving environment. **Table 3-2** below outlines plans and projects within the vicinity and areas which have potential to contribute to cumulative impacts in association with the proposed development.

**Table 3-2: Programmes, Plans and Projects within the vicinity of the Proposed Development**

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Potential for In-combination Effects
<p><b>Limerick County Development Plan 2022 - 2028</b></p>	<p>A number of strategies, policies and objectives are set out in the <b>Limerick County Development Plan 2022-2028</b> with the aim of protection of the counties natural heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>A number of policies and objectives provide for the protection of the integrity of sites designated under European and National legislation and ecological works. Such policies highlight the council’s policy to support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites.</p> <p><b>Environmental, Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure</b>  <b>Policy EH P1: Protection of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity</b> It is a policy of the Council to: a) Protect and conserve Limerick’s natural heritage and biodiversity, in particular, areas designated as part of the European Sites Natura 2000 network, such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservations (SACs), in accordance with relevant EU Directives and national legislation and guidelines. b) Maintain the conservation value of all Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) for the benefit of existing and future generations.</p> <p><b>Objective EH O1: Designated Sites and Habitats Directive</b> It is an objective of the Council to ensure that projects/plans likely to have significant effects on European Sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) are subject to an appropriate assessment and will not be permitted under the Plan unless they comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. The Council, will through the planning enforcement process where applicable, seek to restore the ecological functions of designated sites, where they have been damaged through inappropriate development.</p> <p><b>Objective EH O3: Ecological Impact Assessment</b> It is an objective of the Council to require all developments where there are species of conservation concern, to submit an ecological assessment of the effects of the development on the site and nearby designated sites, suggesting appropriate mitigation measures and establishing, in particular, the presence or absence of the following species: Otter, badger, bats, lamprey and protected plant species such as the Triangular Club Rush, Opposite Leaved Pond Weed and Flora Protection Order Species generally.</p> <p>In addition, a number of policies and objectives are present for the creation of housing within the county.</p> <p><b>Housing Policy HO P1: Implementation of the Housing Strategy, including the Housing Need Demands Assessment</b> It is a policy of the Council to facilitate the implementation and delivery of the Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2022 – 2028, to meet the increasing projected population, changing household size and housing needs, including social and affordable housing requirements of Limerick over the lifetime of the Plan.</p>

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Potential for In-combination Effects
<p><b>River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027</b></p>	<p>The adherence and implementation of this plan within the Development Plan area will ensure that European sites are protected, and that Appropriate Assessment is undertaken for all plans, projects or programmes that have the potential for significant effects to European sites.</p> <p>The implementation of the RBMP seeks compliance with the environmental objectives set under the plan, which will be documented for each water body. This includes compliance with the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations S.I. No. 272 of 2009 (as amended). The implementation of the RBMP and achievement or maintenance of environmental objectives which will be set for the receiving water bodies will have a positive impact on water dependent habitats and species within European sites.</p>
<p><b>Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025 The Inland Fisheries Act 2010</b></p>	<p>The implementation and compliance with key environmental issues and objectives of this corporate plan will result in positive in-combination effects to European sites. The implementation of this corporate plan will have a positive impact for biodiversity of inland fisheries and ecosystems. It will not contribute to in-combination or cumulative impacts with the proposed development.</p>
<p><b>Local Planning Applications<sup>5</sup></b></p>	<p>Adherence to the policies and objectives of <i>Limerick County Development Plan 2022-2028</i> ensure that local planning applications and subsequent grant of planning comply with the core strategy of proper planning and sustainability and with the requirements of relevant EU Directives and environmental considerations, there is no potential for adverse in-combination effects on European Sites.</p>

### 3.6.1 Conclusion

Provided adherence to the overarching policies and objectives of the plans and programmes and best practice and mitigation measures\* are implemented for individual projects, the potential for ongoing environmental effects and associated potential cumulative effects with the currently proposed development is low (\*for plans/projects permitted via full Appropriate Assessment or Environmental Impact Assessment).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.eplanning.ie/LimerickCC/searchtypes> Search: November 2022

## 4 EIA Screening Assessment

### 4.1 Characteristic of the Proposed Development

A description of the project’s likely impacts on the environment are presented in **Table 4-1** below, as per criteria outlined in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 600/2001).

**Table 4-1: Characteristics of the Proposed Development**

Screening Questions	Comment
Could the scale of the proposed works be considered significant?	The application site comprises 162m <sup>2</sup> and will consist of the construction of three bedroom two-storey building. The scale of the works is not considered significant.
Considered cumulatively with other adjacent proposed developments would the size of the proposed works be considered significant?	No. The proposed works have been assessed cumulatively with other adjacent proposed development (see <b>Section 3.6</b> ) and it has been concluded that there are no projects within the zone of influence of the proposed development which could potentially lead to cumulative impacts, provided adherence to the overarching policies and objectives of the plans and programmes and best practice and mitigation measures are implemented for individual projects.
Is the nature of the proposed works significant?	The proposed works are not considered significant and will be carried out in-line with existing construction methodologies and health and safety regulations.  No. The construction phase of the development works will not require the use of a significant quantity of natural resources.
Will the proposed works utilise a significant quantity of natural resources, including soil, land, water and biodiversity?	The construction phase of the proposed development will use standard materials including aggregate, cement, etc. There are secondary impacts associated with off-site activities, such as quarrying, which are the subject of separate consenting procedures in considering the impacts arising at those off-site locations. No adverse significant impacts are expected to occur on the site or in the vicinity of the site through the use of resources owing to the scale of the development.
Will the proposed works produce a significant quantity of waste?	There will be a limited volume of waste produced as a result of the development works.  During construction, solid waste will be generated. However, volumes requiring off-site management will not be significant. On site materials that cannot be used for construction and reinstatement will be disposed of in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance including the Waste Management Acts (1996, as amended) and Waste Management Permit Regulations.  No potential significant impacts are envisaged within the site or in the vicinity of the site as a result of the production of any waste associated with the proposed development.

Screening Questions	Comment
<p>Will the proposed works create a significant amount or type of pollution or nuisance?</p>	<p>During any construction project, there is potential for water, noise, air and traffic pollution. However, the relatively small scale of the project and the application of standard best practice construction methods during construction will readily eliminate the risk of such impacts arising. Therefore, the proposed development works will not cause significant pollution or nuisance during the construction and operational phase.</p> <p>Noise impacts may occur due to construction activities on a temporary basis, and through operation activities, such as changes in traffic levels. The temporary nature of noise impacts associated with construction activity are not expected to be significant and can be appropriately controlled through planning conditions. Similarly, increased traffic movements during the operational phase are not expected to have a significant adverse impact.</p>
<p>Will there be a risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used?</p>	<p>The project is of a scale that is not likely to result in a major accident or disaster. The proposed development works is a typical residential development, utilising established building materials and technologies typical of the nature and scale of such development. The proposed works and construction methods to be used are well established and will be subject to contractor's safety statements and risk assessments.</p> <p>No potential significant impacts are envisaged as a result of the materials or technologies used.</p>
<p>Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment?</p>	<p>Given that there is no potential for significant effects for the development works, there are no factors (which when combined) would result in the development works, due to its characteristics, having a significant effect on the environment.</p>

## Conclusion

It is concluded that the proposed completion of construction works will not have significant effect on the surrounding receiving environment due to the modest scale and the nature of the proposed works.

## 4.2 Location of the Proposed Development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development works with regards to the criteria outlined in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 600/2001) are outlined in

Table 4-2 below.

Table 4-2: Location of the Proposed Development

Screening Questions	Comment
<p>The existing land use</p>	<p>The application area comprises 162m<sup>2</sup> located in the town of Abbeyfeale. The proposed works will consist of the construction of three bedroom two-storey residential building.</p> <p>The land use is currently classified as built and artificial surfaces (BL3), recolonising bare ground (ED1) and scrub (WS1) development under Fossitt’s habitat classification system<sup>6</sup>.</p> <p>The site is zoned under “Existing Residential” as per the Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2014 – 2020, extended until 2024.<sup>7</sup></p>
<p>The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area (including soil, land and water) in the area.</p>	<p>The project does not involve the significant use of natural resources. The land use is currently classified as built and artificial surfaces (BL3), recolonising bare ground (ED1) and scrub (WS1).</p> <p>The proposed development works will not have a significant effect on the abundance, quality or regenerative capacity of soil, land and or water within the vicinity of the proposed development works.</p> <p>The proposed development works have been subject to a Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report. On the basis of objective scientific information, it finds that the proposed development works, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site.</p>
<p>The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</li> <li>ii. coastal zones and the marine environment;</li> <li>iii. (mountain and forest areas;</li> <li>iv. nature reserves and parks;</li> <li>v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;</li> <li>vi. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the</li> </ul>	<p>The proposed development works are located in Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick at an existing residential street. The site comprises primarily of built and artificial surfaces and amenity grassland within an urban environment.</p> <p>There are two European sites within the proposed works Zol; Lower River Shannon SAC and Stack’s to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills &amp; Mount Eagle SPA. There is one Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Lough Gay Bog NHA located within the Zol of the proposed works. There are no proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs). There is one additional NHAs located downstream of the proposed works in the Feale_SC_030 WFD sub-catchment, Mount Eagle Bogs NHA.</p> <p>The Feale (IE_SH_23F010310) watercourse is located approximately 20m west of the proposed works location, however due to the existing barriers on site in the form of vegetation, the nature of the</p>

<sup>6</sup> Alphanumeric codes for habitat classification are provided in accordance with ‘A Guide to Habitats in Ireland’ (Fossitt, 2000)

<sup>7</sup> [Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan](#)

Screening Questions	Comment
<p>environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;</p> <p>vii. densely populated areas;</p> <p>viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.</p>	<p>works and proposed project description/methodology it is not anticipated for the proposed works to give rise to impacts to European sites.</p> <p>The proposed development works have been subject to a Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report. On the basis of objective scientific information, it finds that the proposed development works, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site.</p> <p>The proposed development works has potential to positively impact the Abbeyfeale area with the provision of housing and housing requirements for the area.</p> <p>The site is in Landscape Character Area No. 9 – Shannon Coastal Zone as per the Limerick County Development Plan 2022-2028. See Figure 4-1 below. There are no sites of archaeological significance within close proximity of the proposed works.</p>

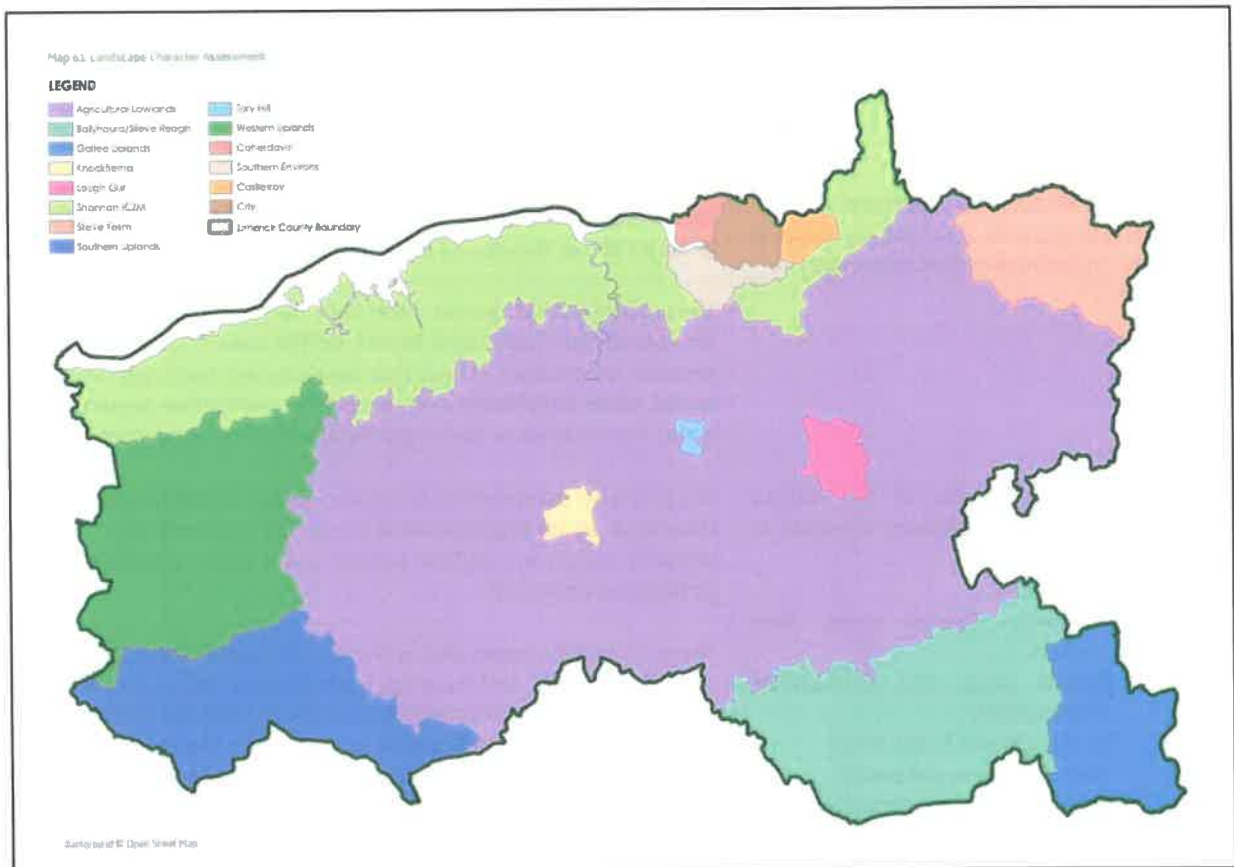


Figure 4-1: Landscape Character Assessment (Limerick County Development Plan 2022-2028)

### 4.3 Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

The proposed development works are considered in the context of potential impacts. The topic areas which may potentially be impacted upon are outlined below with reference to Section 171A of the Act (as amended by the EIA Regulations). The assessment draws on the results of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA). See **Table 4-3** for significant of impacts according to theme as per EIA and for the characteristics of potential impacts.

**Table 4-3: Significance of Impacts in the Context of EIA Headings.**

Screening Questions	Comment
Population and Human Health	<p>The population of Abbeyfeale settlement area as per the 2016 census was 2023, an increase from the 2011 census by 16, an overall 0.8% population increase within the area. The preliminary 2022 population census shows an overall increase in population across the country.<sup>8</sup> This proposed development works will provide additional housing requirements to meet the growing needs of the county, therefore a positive social and economic impact to Abbeyfeale.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>There are two European sites within the proposed works Zol; Lower River Shannon SAC and Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills &amp; Mount Eagle SPA. Lower River Shannon SAC is located adjacent to the works. The European sites will not be impacted by the proposed development works, as set out in the Screening for Appropriate Assessment report prepared for this application. One Natural Heritage Areas are located within the Zol of the proposed works. See <b>Figure 3.2</b>.</p>
Land, Soils and Geology	<p>As per <b>Section 3.5</b> above, the works area is located within the Abbeyfeale Groundwater Body (IE_SH_G_001) and the groundwater vulnerability of the site is primarily classified as an area of "Moderate", the bedrock consists of Central Clare Group.</p> <p>The development will be carried out in accordance with construction methods and environmental management systems. Areas of excavation will be limited and backfilled where required. There will be no significant negative impact on lands, soils and geology associated with the development.</p>
Water	<p>The Feale (IE_SH_23F010310) watercourse is located approximately 20m west of the proposed works location, however due to existing barriers on site in the form of vegetated areas and the project description and methodology, it is not anticipated for the proposed works to give rise to impacts to European sites.</p> <p>Wastewater generated during the project operational phase is transferred off-site via the Abbeyfeale public wastewater system and treated in the Abbeyfeale Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP). Storm water will be directed to an onsite soakaway system.</p> <p>There will be no negative impacts associated with the proposed works on the natural environment and or habitats listed.</p>
Air, Climate and Noise	<p>Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, there are no significant impacts foreseen as regards air quality. There will be no significant negative impact associated with the development.</p>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpr/censusofpopulation2022-preliminaryresults/>

## EIA Screening Report – Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick

Screening Questions	Comment
	<p>Plant and equipment utilised during construction and as part of the operational phase will use fossil fuels, but the potential air, climate and noise impacts associated with this is immaterial due to the short-term scale of the works. Similarly, increased traffic movements during the operational phase are not expected to have a significant adverse impact.</p> <p>Noise impacts may occur due to construction activities on a temporary basis, and through operation activities, such as changes in traffic levels. The temporary nature of noise impacts associated with construction activity are not expected to be significant and can be appropriately controlled through planning conditions.</p>
Landscape and Visual	<p>The site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) No. 6 - Shannon Coastal Zone. Landscape Assessment Study of County Limerick (Limerick County Development Plan 2022-2028), states development shall be encouraged within existing settlements in this LCA.</p>
Cultural Heritage	<p>The Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (extended 2024), states that <i>“There are 61 Protected Structures within the LAP boundary and an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) extends along Main Street and parts of Bridge Street and Church Street, taking in the town centre. Thirty-two of these protected structures are also listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. There are two recorded archaeological monuments within the LAP zoned area and one located on the northern LAP boundary within the townland of Knockbrack.”</i></p> <p>The closest structure of archaeological importance which supports a zone of notification is Abbeyfeale graveyard (LI042-012002-) and church (LI042-012001-). These sites are located approximately 5m east of the proposed works location. It is recommended that an archaeologist remains on site for the proposed demolition works associated with the project, with regards potential architectural impacts and best practice measures.</p>
Material Assets	<p>There is potential for temporary minor impacts related to traffic inconvenience in the area during the construction works.</p>



Table 4-4: Characteristic of Potential Impacts

Screening Questions	Comment
The extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population).	<p>It is not anticipated that a large geographical area will be impacted by the proposed works. Potential environmental impacts during the construction and operational phase of the proposed development will be localised to the application site. It is expected that the proposed development will not have any significant environmental impact beyond the application site boundaries.</p> <p>The development works take place within The Sadderly, Old Church St., Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick. The development of additional housing within this area has potential to have a positive impact on the on-going economic and social development of the town and region.</p>
Outline the nature of the impact.	<p>The proposed development works is expected to have a minor, localised, and temporary negative effect on the receiving environment primarily during the construction phase. This is associated with disruption to local residents and commuters from noise and additional traffic. Thereafter, there is expected a permanent positive effect during the operational phase of the development.</p>
The transboundary nature of the impact.	<p>There are no transboundary or trans-frontier impacts associated with the proposed development.</p>
The intensity and complexity of the impact.	<p>The potential construction impacts are not considered to be significantly complex or intense due to the nature of the development.</p>
The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.	<p>The proposed development works will result in minor construction phase impacts that will be temporary in nature. The proposed development will result in the construction of one residential house which is estimated to have lifespan of 50 years plus.</p> <p>It is expected that the implementation of the proposed project will result in permanent positive impacts by providing additional housing needs and requirements to the town. No significant impacts have been identified as a result of the proposed development.</p>
Outline the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects	<p>See Section 3.6 for the assessment of cumulative impacts with other plans and projects.</p>
Outline the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	<p>The design of the project has been optimised to ensure that environmental impacts are minimised as much as possible.</p> <p>The proposed development works have been subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment, on the basis of objective scientific information, it finds that the proposed development works, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site.</p>

## 5 Conclusion

It is concluded that impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development are not considered to be significant in the context of Directive 2014/52/EU nor Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2017*, as amended.

Based on the findings of this report, the context and character of the site and the receiving environment, as well as the nature, extent, form, and character of the proposed development, the proposed development works are not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment and consequently do not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report as prescribed under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

## Appendix A -Site Layout





NO.	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE

**TAGROUP**  
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 tcampbell@tagroup.ie  
 www.tagroup.ie

**Limerick City & County Council**  
 CLIENT:  
 Limerick County Council  
 Housing Department

**SITE:**  
 Old Church Street Abbeyfeale,  
 Co. Limerick.

**PROPOSAL:**  
 The Saddlery, Old Church Street  
 Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick.  
 Re-development

TITLE			
Site Layout Plan			
SCALE 1:100	DATE: 06.09.2023	DRAWN: RW	CHECKED: TC
DRAWING NO: DD-10-02	Site Layout Plan		REVISION:

