

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT AS
REGARDS A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT BUVINDA HOUSE
BUVINDA HOUSE, DUBLIN ROAD, NAVAN, CO MEATH
DECEMBER 2022



Prepared December 2022 by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meath Co. Council are proposing an extension to Meath County Council civic headquarters to include a Council Chamber and Councillors areas, additional office space to facilitate future increase in staff numbers, including meeting rooms and training room. The extension will be designed to optimise natural daylight and ventilation of the internal environment, creating a pleasant and healthy working environment. It will comprise a carbon sequestering mass timber structure with green roofs for water attenuation. A new courtyard garden will soften the image of the ensemble from the road and town beyond, whilst supporting biodiversity and offering bio-retention features to attenuate rainwater run-off.

The objective of Directive 2011/92/EU (as Amended) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the Environmental Impact Assessment, or EIA, Directive) is to ensure that projects that are likely to have a significant effect on the environment are adequately assessed before they are approved. In accordance with the Precautionary Principle, the proposed project requires screening for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in order to determine if the proposed project requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

In June of 2022, FERS Ltd were commissioned to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment screening report of the proposed development.

The purpose of this document is to determine if EIA is required for the proposed development as set out in the mandatory and discretionary provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended). The proposed project is not of type listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) and as such the mandatory preparation of an EIAR is not required (while the development does comprise urban development, it does not 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). Nevertheless, a 'sub-threshold' EIAR may be required, if it is determined that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. Significant effects may arise due to the nature of the project, its scale or extent and its location in relation to the characteristics of the receiving area, particularly sensitive environments.

This EIA screening report, having assessed the proposed development under the environmental impact criteria outlined in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), considers that the proposed development does not have the potential for significant negative effects on the environment. Accordingly, it is concluded that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not deemed to be required in this case.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This EIA Screening report provides an assessment of a proposed development at Buvinda House, Dublin Road, Navan, Co. Meath as regards the criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have a significant impact on the environment, as set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended (the 2001 Regulations). This assessment is intended to assist the Competent Authority in the carrying out of its determination as to whether Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for the proposed development. This Report includes the information specified under Schedule 7A of the 2001 Regulations, as amended, being the information to be provided by the applicant for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for environmental impact assessment. This assessment has also afforded due regard to the criteria listed in Annex IIA and Annex III of Directive 2014/52/EU.

This assessment has also afforded due regard to the document “Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment” (2018)¹.

1.2 Structure of this Report

This Report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides an overview of the relevant legislation, guidelines, criteria, and methodology of Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Section 3 describes the site location and planning context of the application site including an overview of the planning history and planning policy context of the site;
- Sections 4 and 5 provide an assessment of the proposed development against relevant criteria, having regard to Schedule 7A;
- Section 6 provides a summary as the non-requirement for a sub-threshold EIAR to accompany the subject planning application;
- Section 7 lays out the conclusion of the EIA screening report.

¹ Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

1.3 FERS Company Background

FERS Ltd has been undertaking ecological surveys and research since the company's formation in 2005 by Dr Patrick Moran and Dr Kevin Black. Dr Moran, the principal ecologist with FERS, holds a 1st class honours degree in Environmental Biology (UCD), a Ph.D. in Ecology (UCD), a Diploma in EIA and SEA management (UCD), a M.Sc. in GIS (University of Ulster, Coleraine) and an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law (King's Inns). Patrick has in excess of 20 years of experience in carrying out ecological surveys on both an academic and a professional basis. Dr Emma Reeves, a Senior Ecologist with FERS Ltd. holds a 1st class honours degree in Botany (UCD), and a Ph.D. in Botany (UCD). Emma has in excess of 15 years of experience in carrying out ecological surveys on both an academic and a professional basis. Ciaran Byrne a Senior Ecologist with FERS holds a first-class honours degree in Environmental Management (DIT) and a M.Sc. in Applied Science/Ecological Assessment (UCC). Ciaran has in excess of 10 years of experience in carrying out ecological surveys on both an academic and a professional basis.

FERS client list includes National Parks and Wildlife Service, An Bord Pleanála, Coillte, Teagasc, numerous County Councils, the Heritage Council, University College Dublin, the Environmental Protection Agency, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Public Works.

2 Overview of EIA screening

2.1 Legislation

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening is the term used to describe the process for determining whether a proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment and if it requires an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) by reference to the type and scale of the proposed development and the significance or the environmental sensitivity of the receiving environment.

Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU details the requirements for the screening of projects for Environmental Impact Assessment. In this regard, recital (27) of Directive 2014/52/EU states that:

‘...The screening procedure should ensure that an environmental impact assessment is only required for projects likely to have significant effects on the environment...’

Section 172 (1)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as Amended), details that EIAR will be required where a proposed development would be of a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) but does not equal or exceed the relevant threshold specified in that part, and it is concluded, determined or decided by the competent body *‘...that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment...’*.

Schedule 5 of Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as Amended) indicates the categories of development and thresholds for activities that require the submission of an EIAR. The proposed development is sub-threshold, and EIAR is not mandatory.

Article 103(3) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as Amended) indicates the criteria for determining whether a proposed development would or would not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment, has been substituted by article 67 of European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (European EIA Regulations) to read as follows:

‘103. (1) (a) Where a planning application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR, the planning authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at the least, the nature, size, or location of the development.’

(b) Where the planning authority concludes, based on such preliminary examination, that—

(i) there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall conclude that an EIA is not required,

(ii) there is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall, by notice in writing served on the applicant, require the applicant to submit to the authority the information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination unless the applicant has already provided such information, or

(iii) there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall—

(I) conclude that the development would be likely to have such effects, and

(II) by notice in writing served on the applicant, require the applicant to submit to the authority an EIAR and to comply with the requirements of article 105.

(1A) (a) Where an applicant is submitting to the planning authority the information specified in Schedule 7A, the information shall be accompanied by any further relevant information on the characteristics of the proposed development and its likely significant effects on the environment, including, where relevant, information on how the available results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to European Union legislation other than the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive have been taken into account.

(b) Where an applicant is submitting to the planning authority the information specified in Schedule 7A, the information may be accompanied by a description of the features, if any, of the proposed development and the measures, if any, envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment of the development.

(1B) (a) Where a planning application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR but is accompanied by the information specified in Schedule 7A and sub-article (1A), or where an applicant submits to the planning authority such information pursuant to a requirement issued under sub-article (1)(b)(ii), the planning authority shall carry out an examination of, at the least, the nature, size, or location of the development for the purposes of a screening determination.

(b) The planning authority shall make a screening determination and—

(i) if such determination is that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall determine that an EIA is not required, or

(ii) if such determination is that there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall—

(I) determine that the development would be likely to have such effects, and

(II) by notice in writing served on the applicant, require the applicant to submit to the authority an EIAR and to comply with the requirements of article 105.

2.2 Information required for purposes of Screening Sub-threshold Development for EIA

Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended sets out information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for environmental impact assessment. A summary of this information is provided in Section 6.

Schedule 7A provides 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, as referenced under Schedule 7(A)(4), sets out the criteria for determining whether development listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 should be subject to EIA.

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.*

2.3 Other Relevant Guidelines

This Screening Report has been prepared having regard to the following guidance documents:

- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency, 2022;
- 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, 2017 (Draft EPA Guidelines).
- 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).

3 Site location and Planning Context

3.1 Proposed Development - summary

The proposed project entails an extension to Meath County Council civic headquarters to include a Council Chamber and Councillors areas, additional office space to facilitate future increase in staff numbers, including meeting rooms and training room. The current proposal comprises a 3-storey (approx. floor area 3300m²), located to the west of the existing building where parking is currently located, outside of the zone of archaeological interest.

The proposed development comprises urban development (site area 1.54 Ha). Urban development is listed in Part (2) of Schedule 5 (10(b)iv) as “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. (In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.). The proposed development is not of this scale and is sub threshold.

The approximate location of the project area is indicated in Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 4.

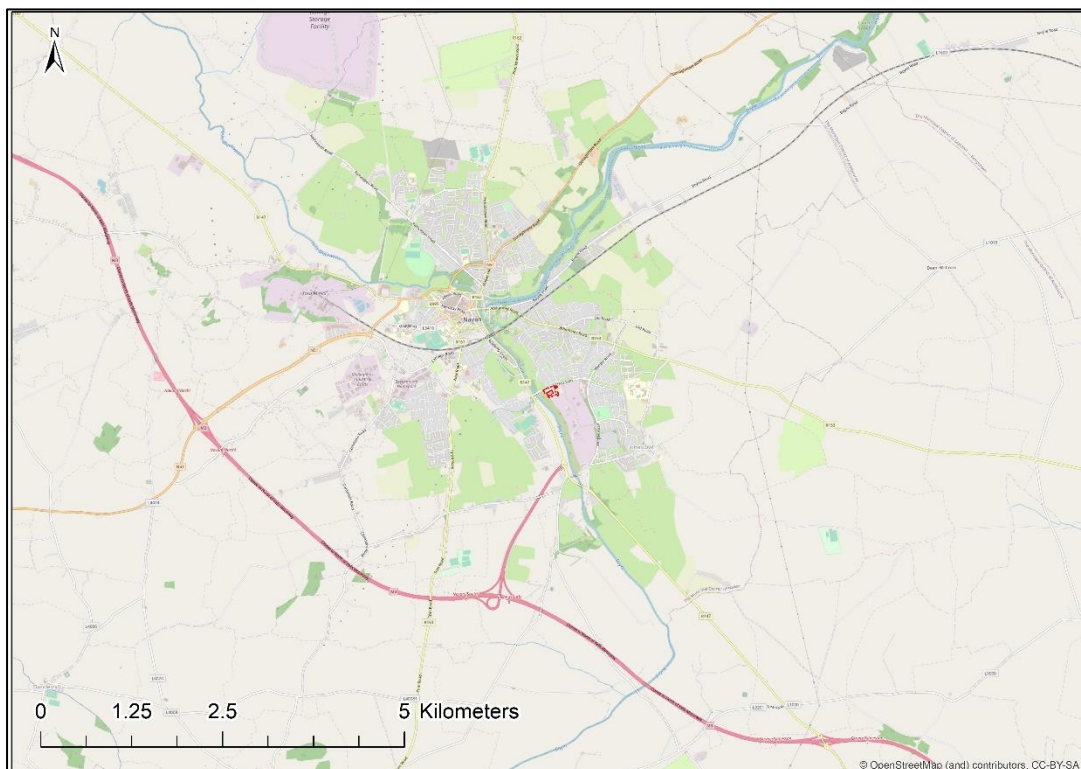


Figure 1: Approximate location of development site (1:50,000)

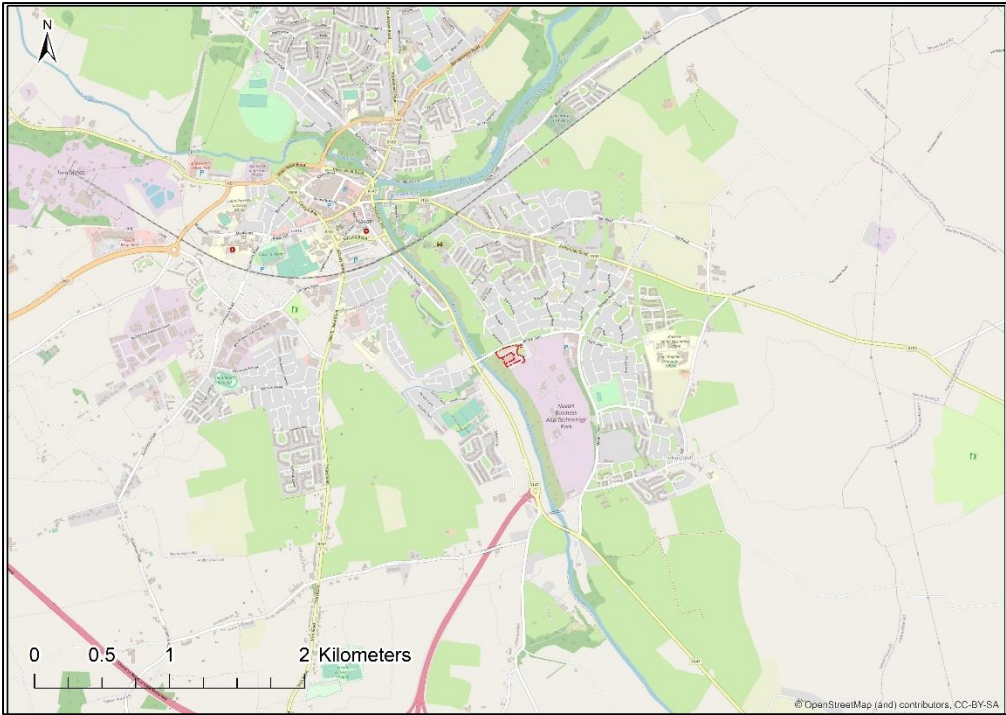


Figure 2: Approximate location of development site (1:25,000)



Figure 3: Approximate location of development site (1:5,000)



Figure 4: Approximate location of development site relative to *environs* (1:2,000)

3.2 Planning History

A review of the National Planning Application Database indicates that there are no pending planning permissions associated with the application site. Of note, a query of the EIA Portal indicates that there are no projects requiring EIAR within the vicinity of the proposed application site as regards cumulative impacts (see Figure 6).

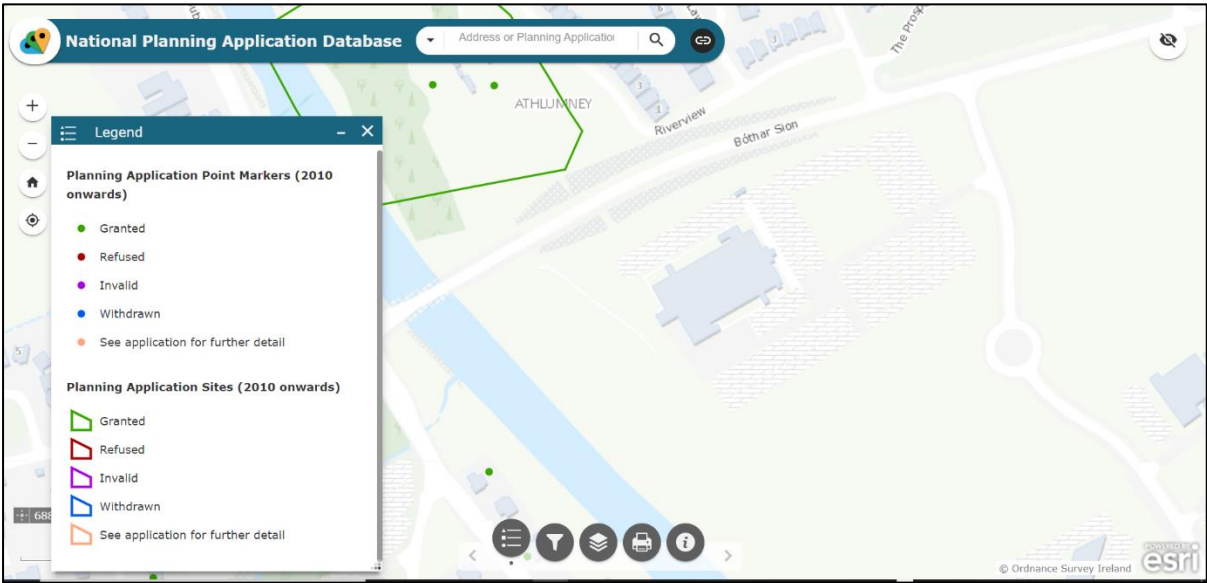


Figure 5: Screenshot from NPAD

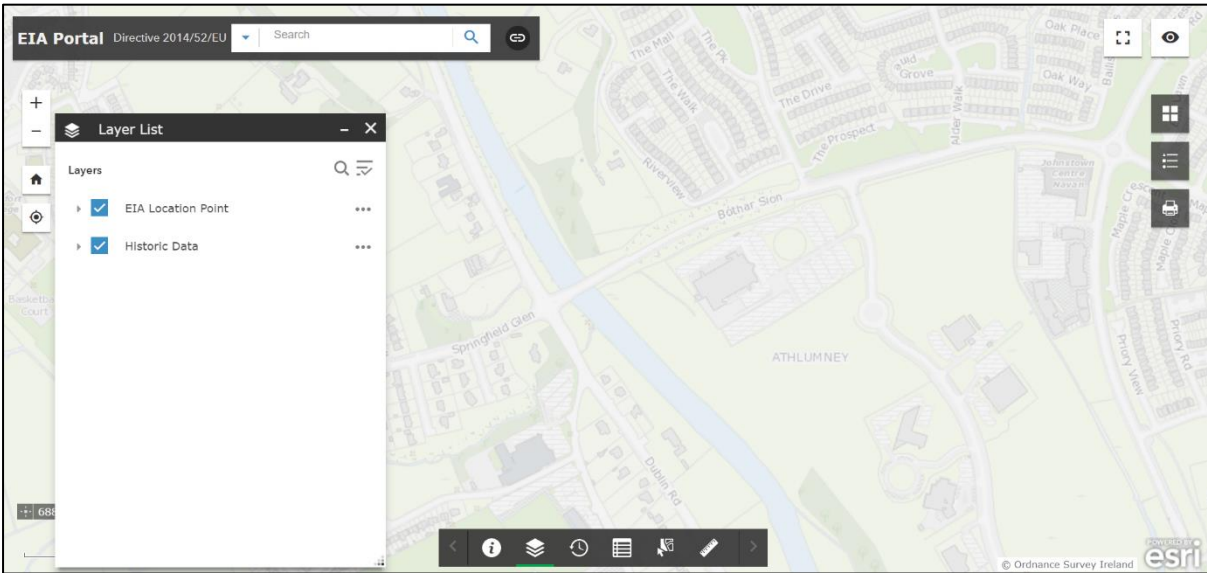


Figure 6: Excerpt from EIA portal indicating no projects requiring EIA in the vicinity of the proposed development

3.3 Overall Planning Context

The relevant statutory plans as relate to the application site are:

- Meath Co, Development Plan 2021 - 2027.

3.3.1 *Meath County Development Plan*

The Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 is the over-arching strategic framework document for the proper planning and sustainable development, in spatial, economic, social and environmental terms of the entire functional area of County Meath. This Plan sets out the long-term vision for the development of the County up to 2027, while protecting and enhancing its environment through employing the principles of sustainable development in the policies and objectives set out therein.

It is assumed that the proposed development is in compliance with all aspects of the current Meath Development Plan, and the proposed development is subject to EIA screening and Appropriate Assessment screening in order to ensure compliance with the over-all aims of the plan.

4 Assessment of proposed development for significant likely effects – screening of the proposed development

Schedule 7A requires the applicant to provide the following information.

- 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.'

4.1 Description of the proposed development

The proposed project entails an extension to Meath County Council civic headquarters to include a Council Chamber and Councillors areas, additional office space to facilitate future increase in staff numbers, including meeting rooms and training room. The current proposal comprises a 3-storey (approx. floor area 3300m²), located to the west of the existing building where parking is currently located, outside of the zone of archaeological interest.

The approximate location of the project area is indicated in Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9 and Figure 10. An excerpt of the proposed development layout from the Architect's Plans is illustrated in Figure 11.



Figure 7: Approximate location of development site (1:50,000)

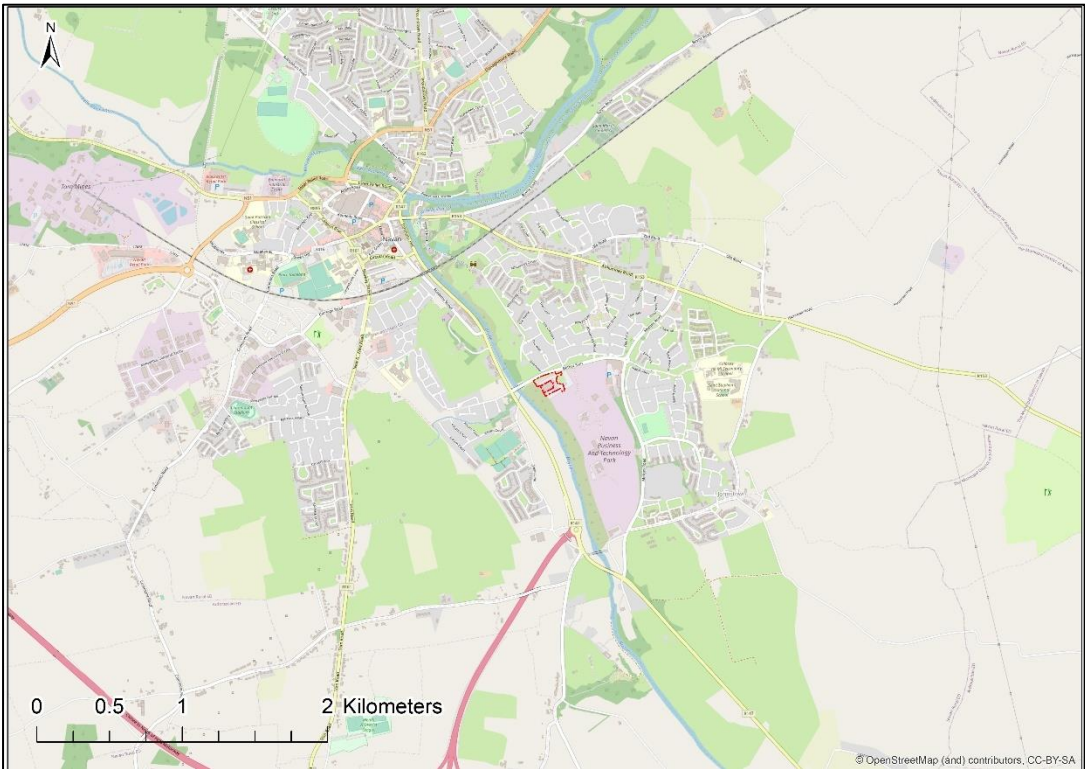


Figure 8: Approximate location of development site (1:25,000)

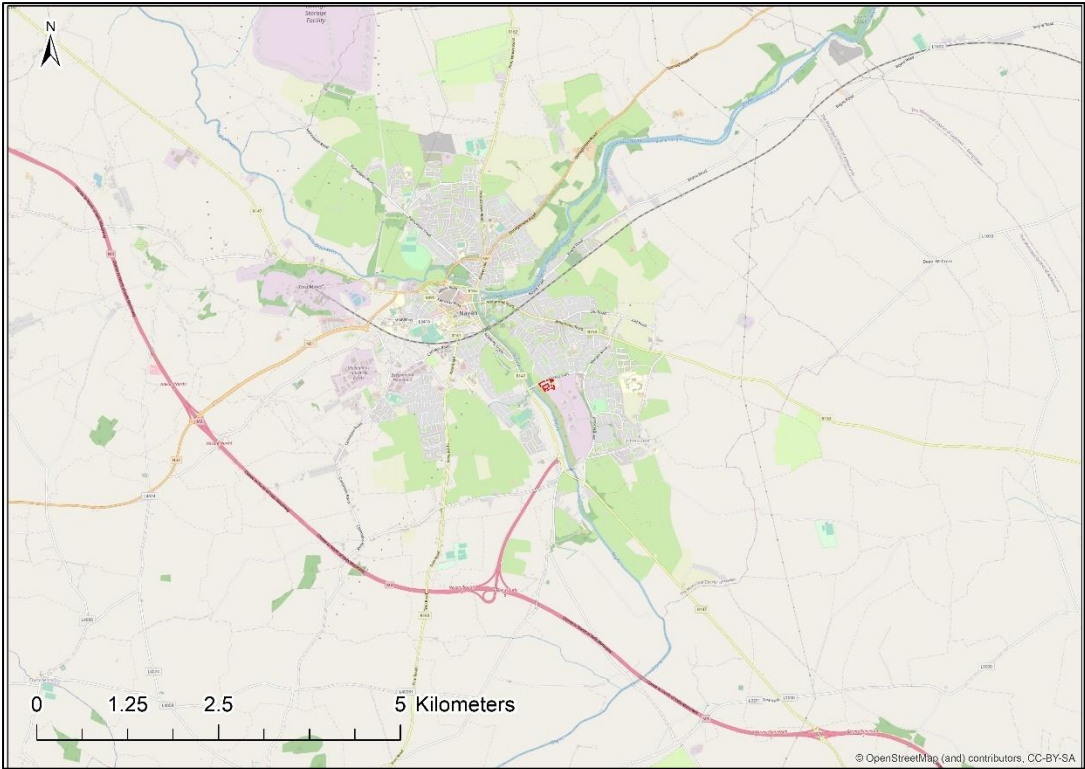


Figure 9: Approximate location of development site (1:5,000)



Figure 10: Approximate location of development site relative to *environs* (1:2,000)

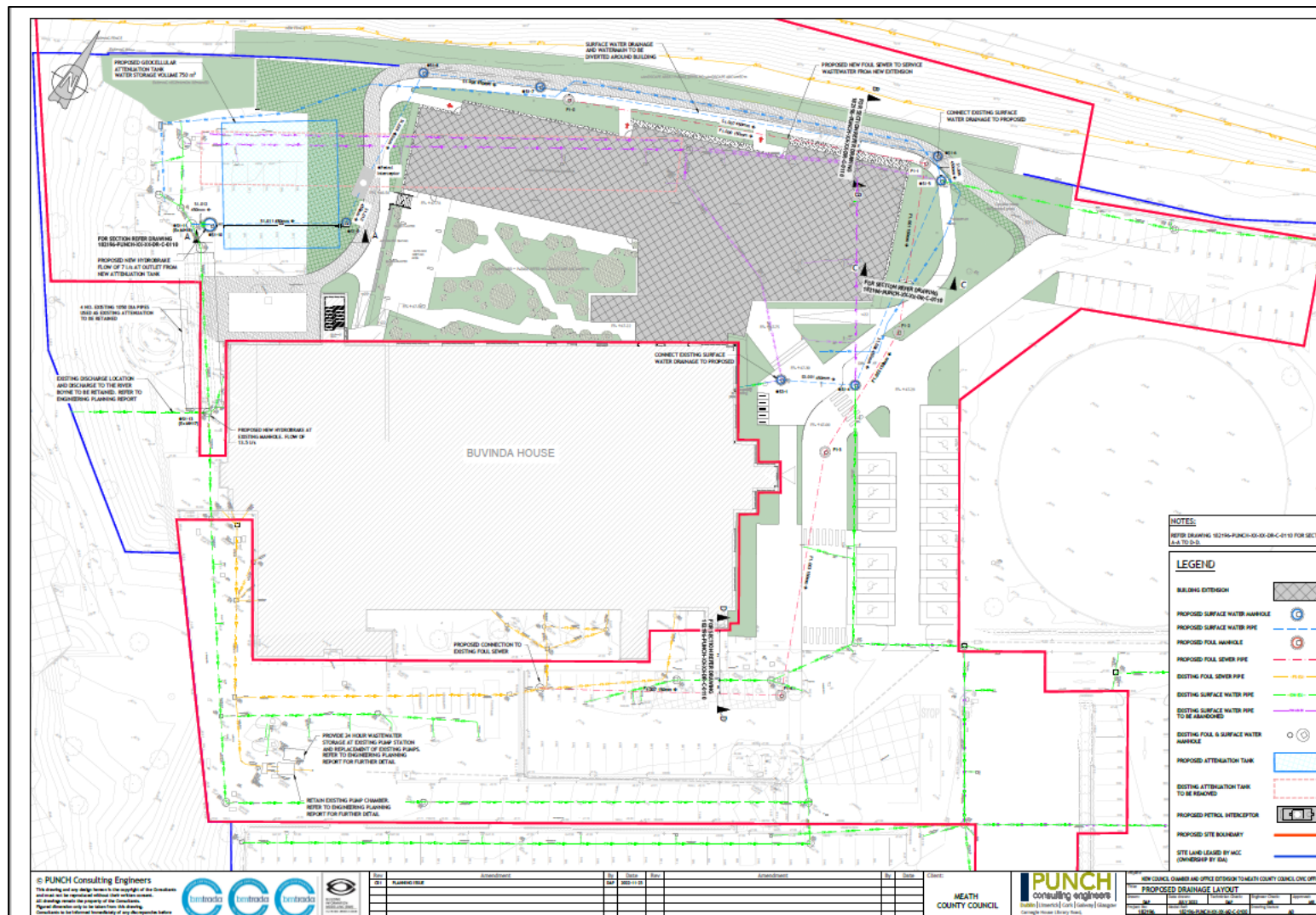


Figure 11: Excerpt from Engineer's drawings indicating proposed layout

4.2 Description of the Physical Characteristics of the proposed development

4.2.1 *Characteristics of Demolition phase*

The location is an existing development comprising the headquarters of Meath County Council. Site clearance will involve the removal of car park surface and existing surface water infrastructure and other redundant services to accommodate the new proposed building extension and infrastructure upgrade works.

It is noted that the proposed development consists of the construction of an extension and the associated site landscaping and ancillary development.

4.2.2 *Characteristics of the construction phase*

The precise construction methodology and therefore the programme of the construction activities will be dictated by the Contractor. An outline of the construction phase is presented in the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

- Building Structure
 - Construction of piles
 - Construction of the foundations – RC pads and strip footings
 - Construction of rising elements – glulam columns and beams.
 - Construction of cross laminated timber floors
- Envelope / Cladding:
 - Commencement of envelope works when structure has been constructed
- The timber frame will also act as the envelope for the structure, and terracotta cladding will follow completion of the rising elements.
- Mechanical & Electrical Fit-Out:
 - First fix will commence from ground floor level upwards;
 - This will be followed by the second fix and final connections.
- Fit-Out:
 - Initial installation of stud work when cladding completed and floor is weather tight;
 - Installation of equipment and associated connection to services;
 - Completion of finishes.

Commissioning

- The final commissioning period will commence during fit-out.

4.2.3 *Main characteristics of the proposed development (sourced from CEMP)*

The proposed development will consist of an extension to the existing Buvinda House, which is currently being used as Meath County Councils local government office. The extension to Buvinda House is proposed to the north-east of the building, which is currently a paved area for car parking for Meath County Council.

The construction programme for the works will take an estimated 18 months. The site will be accessed off the existing access road to the IDA business & Technology Park, via the Bóthar Sion Road. It is anticipated that construction working hours will be stipulated in the planning conditions attached to the planning grant. Any working hours outside the normal construction working hours will be agreed with Meath County Council. It is anticipated that at the peak of construction there will be a workforce varying in a range of approximately 100 people employed depending on phasing and stage of construction.

These measures are required to be adhered to in order to complete the works in an appropriate manner at the proposed extension to the existing Buvinda House located on the outskirts of Navan, Co. Meath. The design of the project has considered environmental issues and this is enhanced by the works proposals. The key site targets / objectives are as follows:

- 1) Ensure construction works and activities are completed in accordance with any planning conditions for the development.
- 2) Ensure construction works and activities have minimal impact/disturbance to the local community and businesses.
- 3) Adopt a sustainable approach to construction and, ensure sustainable sources for materials supply where possible.
- 4) Correct fuel storage and refuelling procedures to be followed.
- 5) Air and noise pollution prevention to be implemented.
- 6) Good waste management and housekeeping to be implemented.
- 7) Provide adequate environmental training and awareness for all project personnel

The Main Contractor will be required to prepare a detailed construction management plan for the project, taking into account the requirements of this Construction Environmental Management Plan.

4.3 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present and approved developments, and as far as is practicable from reasonably foreseeable development(s), together with the project. Section 6.12 of the EPA *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* (Draft 2017) states:

'The Directive requires that the EIAR describes the cumulation of effects. Cumulative effects may arise from:

- The interaction between the various impacts within a single project;*
- The interaction between all of the different existing and/or approved projects in the same area as the proposed project.'*

With respect to Screening, the European Union *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening* (2017) notes that *'the characteristics of Projects, which must be considered having regard, in particular, to the size and design of the whole Project, the cumulation with other existing and/or approved Projects, the use of natural resources, the production of waste, pollution and nuisances, and the risk of major accidents and/or disasters and the risks posed to human health...'*

Given the location of the proposed development, and the current zoning of the land, the primary impact foreseen is an impact on ground and/or surface water quality. The primary concern, therefore, regards the potential for impacts on water quality and quantity, in particular as regards runoff. This potential impact is addressed comprehensively in the Engineering Planning Report as prepared by Punch.

4.4 Location of the proposed development, with particular regard to environmental sensitivities of the geographical area

4.4.1 *Location Relative to Natura 2000 sites*

The proposed development is located in an environmentally sensitive location, proximate to the River Boyne, the primary constituent of the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Protection Area (SPA). Drone imagery of the application site illustrating the proximity of the River Boyne is presented in Figure 12. Maps indicating the location of Buvinda House relative to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC/SPA are provided in Figure 13 and Figure 14. A query of the OSI Geohive online resource (Figure 15) indicates that there is no apparent surface drainage network connecting the Buvinda House site and the River Boyne. A query of the EPA online mapping resource indicates that the groundwater is considered “At Risk” (see Figure 16)



Figure 12: Setting of Buvinda House proximate to the River Boyne



Figure 13: Location of River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC relative to Buvinda House



Figure 14: Location of River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA relative to the Buvinda House

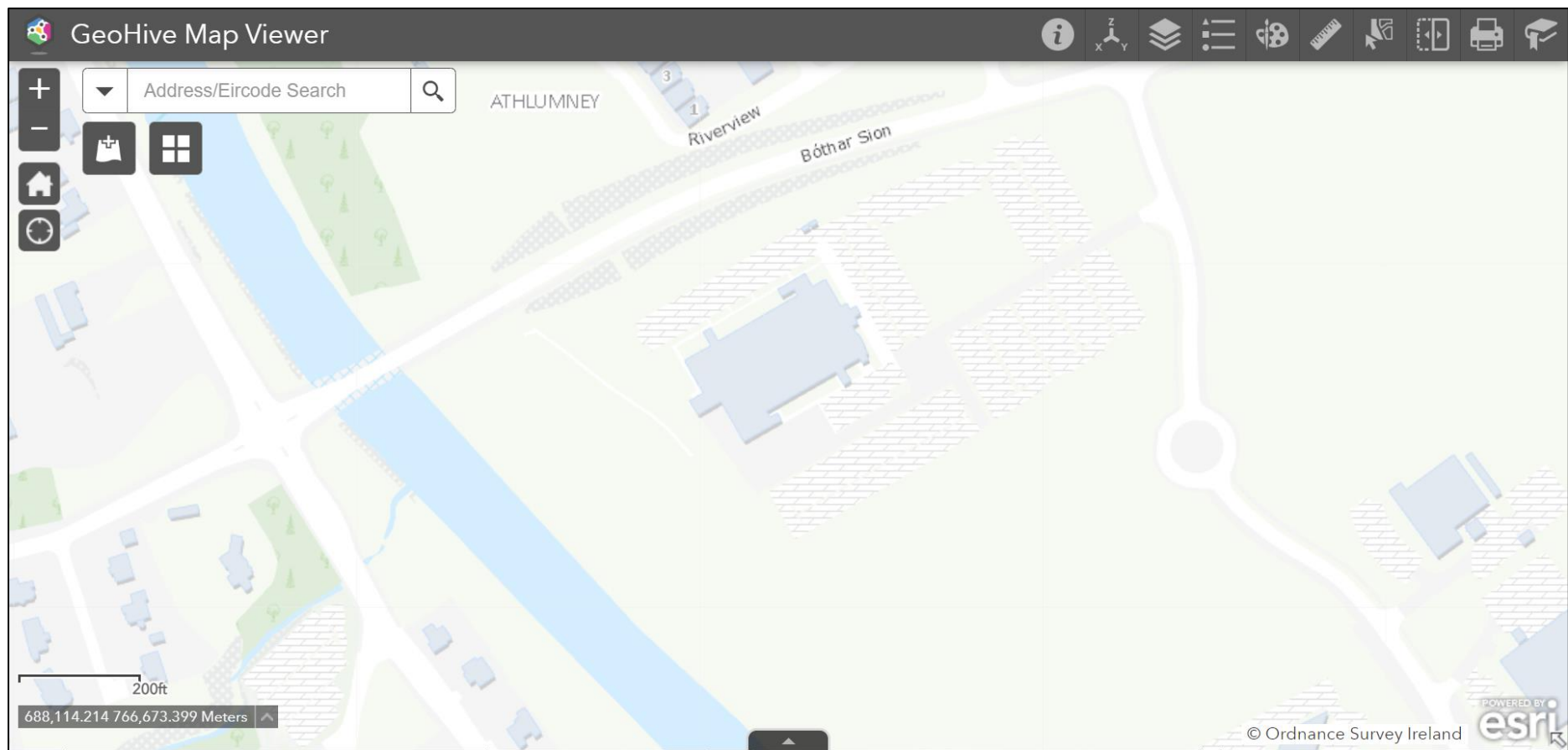


Figure 15: Excerpt from OSI Geohive indicating absence of any drainage network between Buvinda House and the River Boyne

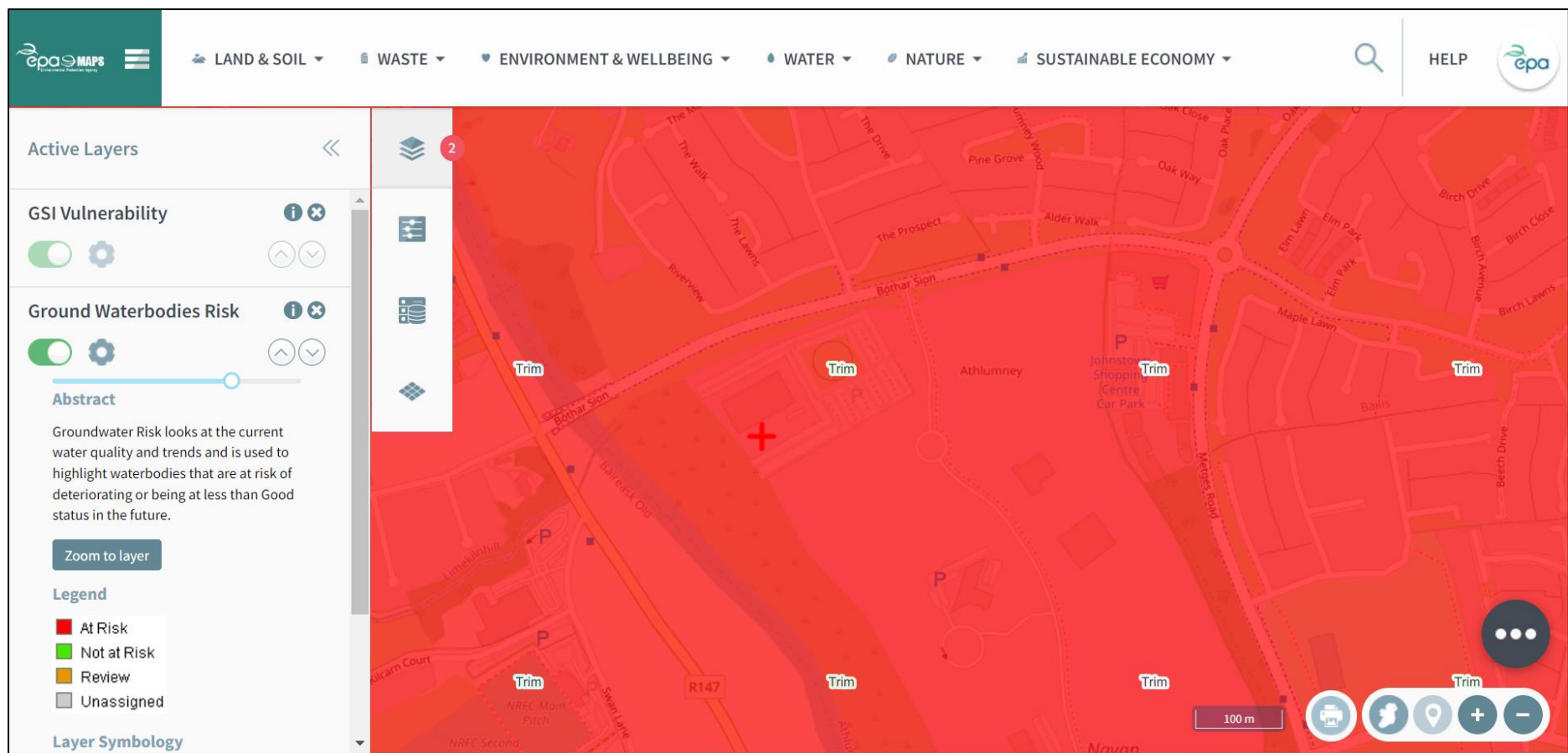


Figure 16: Excerpt from EPA online mapping resource indicating Ground Waterbodies projected risk for the proposed development site

4.4.2 *Other sensitive/Designated conservation sites*

There are no areas designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within 5 km of the proposed development. There is one area designated as proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) within 5 km of the proposed application area:

- Boyne Woods pNHA

A map indicating the location of this site relative to Buvinda House is provided in Figure 17.

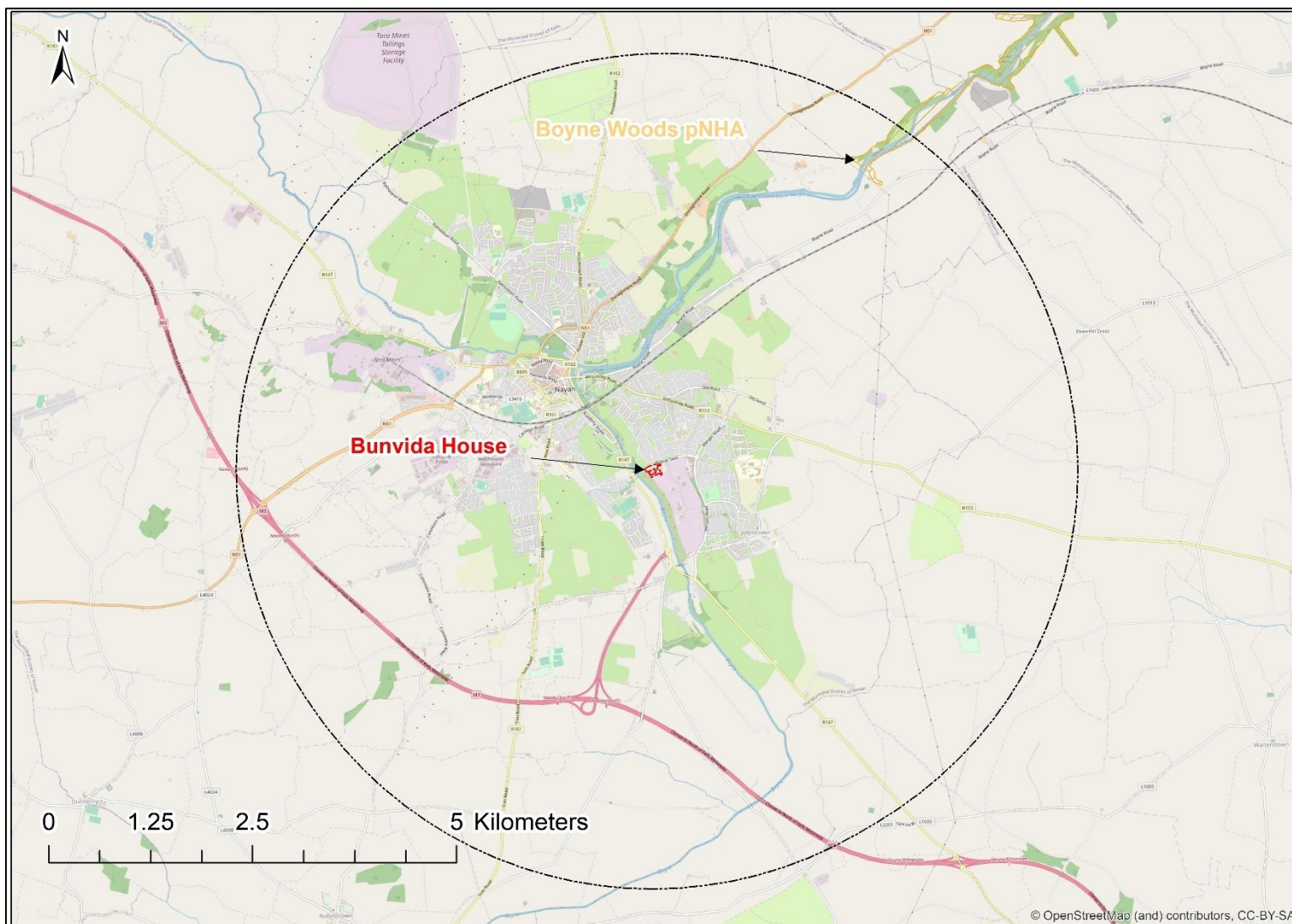


Figure 17: pNHAs within 5 km of the Bunvinda House

4.4.3 Ecological Features

Field surveys of vegetation were carried out during May and June 2020 and May and June 2022 by Dr Patrick Moran, within the optimal timeframe for such surveys. The vast majority of the site comprises the habitat BL3 – Built Land and Artificial Surfaces. Associated with the car park are numerous areas of amenity grassland (GA2) and planted screening (comprising numerous species such as *Buxus* sp and *Betula Carpinus*). The primary area to be impacted upon by the proposed building extension is illustrated in Figure 18.

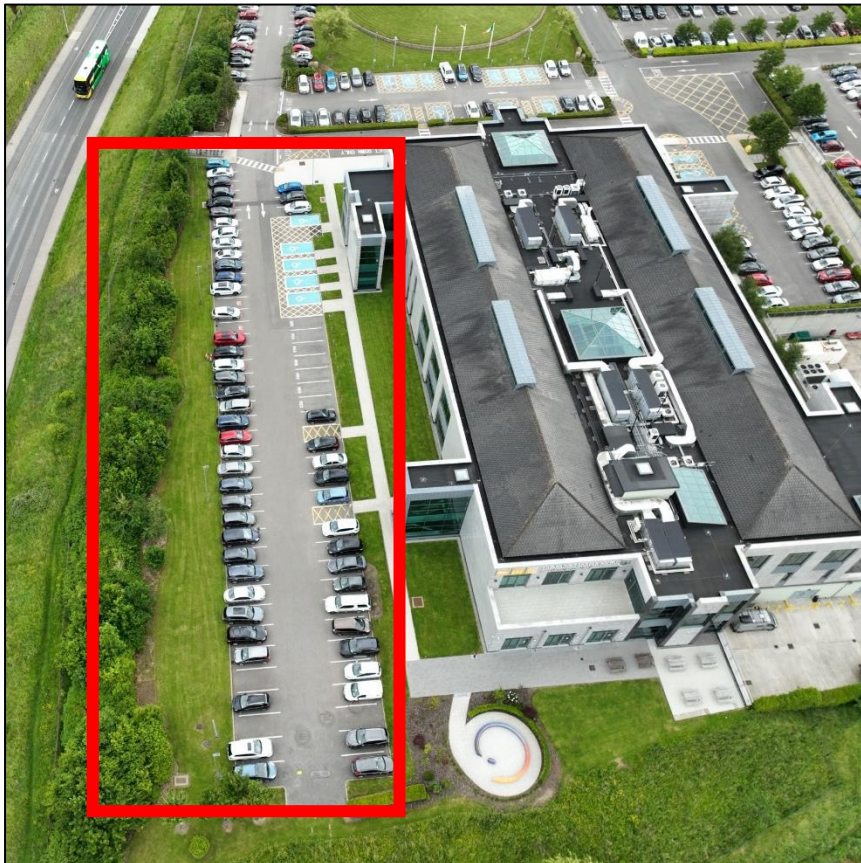


Figure 18: Primary area to be impacted upon by the proposed extension (outlined in red)

4.4.4 Hydrology, Soils and Geology

The proposed development site is located in an area in which the Ground Waterbodies Risk is considered “At Risk” (see Figure 19). It is noted, however, that there is no surface water drainage network connecting the Buvinda House site and the River.

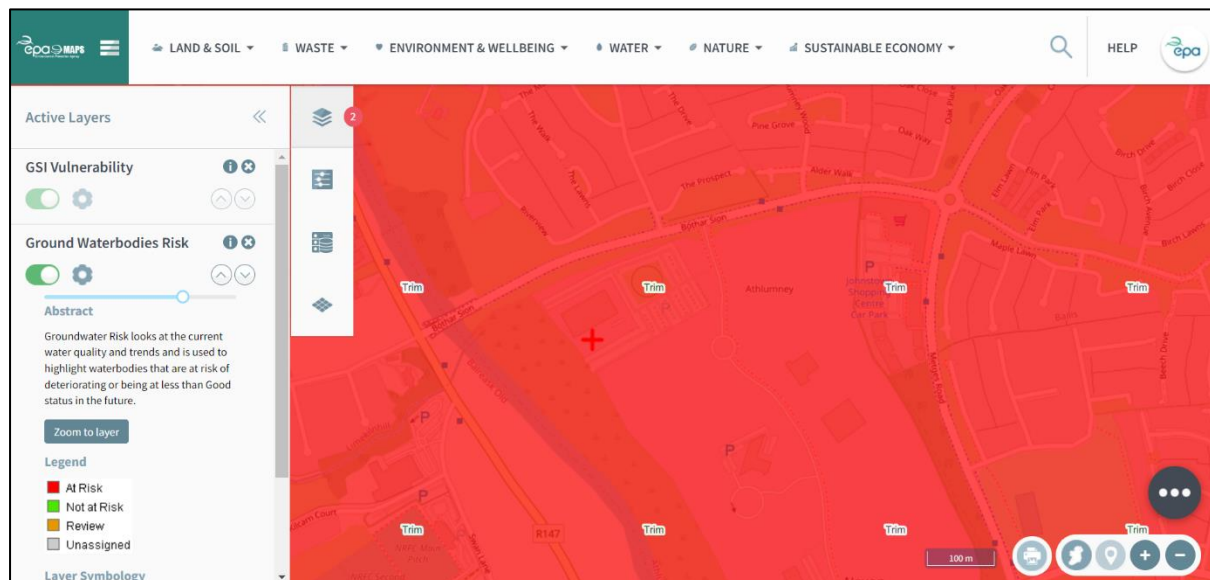


Figure 19: Ground Waterbodies Risk

A query of the EPA online mapping resource indicates that the vicinity of Buvinda House there are no:

- Industrial Emissions Licensed Facilities (IEL);
- Integrated Pollution Control Licensed Facilities; or
- Section 4 Discharges.

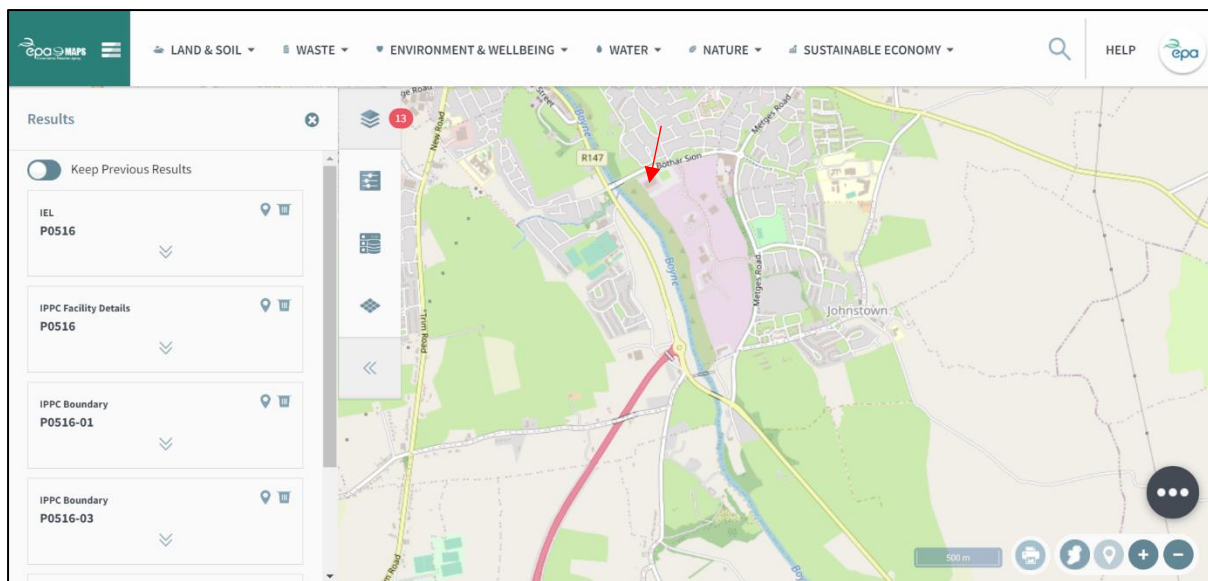


Figure 20: Excerpt from online EPA database indicating locations of licensed facilities in vicinity of Buvinda House (red arrow)

4.4.5 Architecture, Archaeology and Cultural heritage

A detailed Archaeological assessment of the project has been undertaken by Niall Roycroft. While there are no protected structures or structures that are included within the NIAH survey located within the footprint of the proposed extension, there are several within the footprint of the Buvinda House site (see Figure 21). The Archaeological report states:

“...The presumed archaeological impact of the Buvinda House project is considered to be minimal. Many of the services can be accommodated within the 0.70m (minimum) deep soils that overlie any archaeological remains. However, where works – particularly the deep services - are predicted to go down below 0.70m in areas outside the previous quarry pit, then these will require archaeological monitoring...”

With the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures and subject to necessary approvals from the Department, there will be no potential construction or operational phase as it is anticipated that issues of archaeological and cultural heritage interest will have been resolved prior to or during the construction phase.

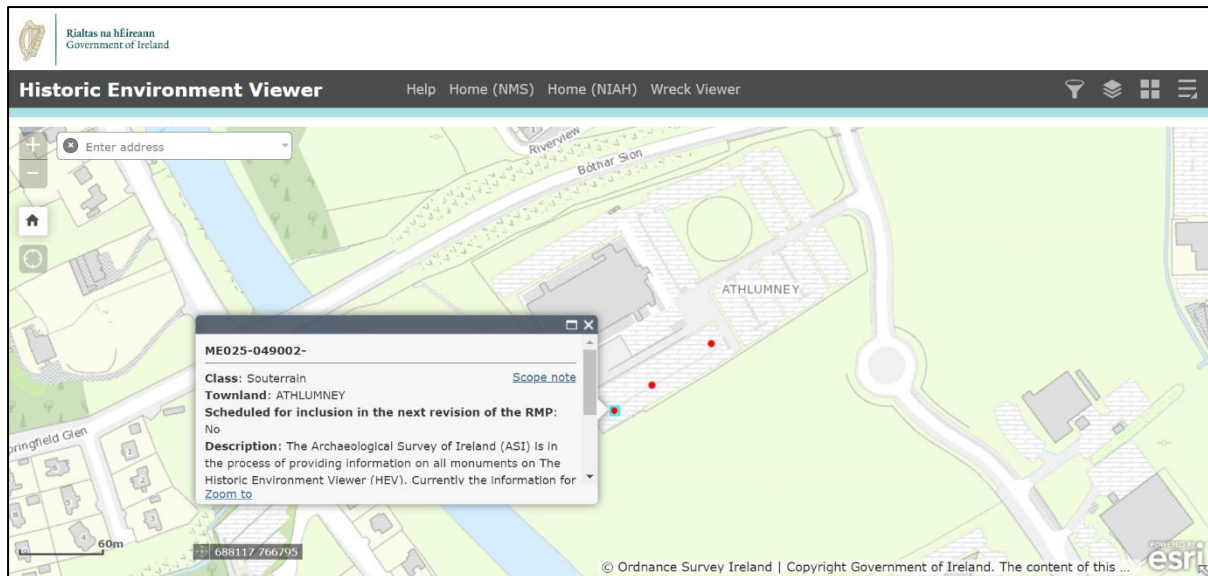


Figure 21: Excerpt from NIAH online mapping resource

5 Description of the Aspects of the Environment together with a Description of any likely Significant Effects

5.1 Landscape Character

The landscape character of the proposed application site will not be appreciably altered – the proposed development is located within the footprint of the Buvinda House site. The proposed development will, therefore, have no significant impact on the Landscape Character.

5.2 Ecological Impacts

There will be negligible impact on habitats other than built land and artificial surfaces. There is potential for negative impacts associated with impacts on water quality. With the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures as identified in the comprehensive plans for drainage etc., there will be no significant negative impact as regards the local ecological resource. There will be removal and reinstatement of a small area of immature trees/shrubbery, but these are of low ecological significance.

5.3 Water Quality

The primary source of any impacts concerns contamination of ground or surface water associated with the proposed development and in combination with the existing development.

Given the implementation of suitable mitigation measures, there will be no significant impact of the proposed development on water quality, including cumulative impacts.

5.4 Air Quality

Owing 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.

5.5 Noise and Vibration

Owing to the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is assumed that the noise and vibrations associated with the construction will be comparable with a large domestic build. The increased noise related to traffic increases will be non-perceptible and temporary in nature.

5.6 Architecture, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

No significant negative impacts are foreseen.

6 Assessment of Proposed Development for Significant Likely Effects assessed against Schedule 7 and Annex III criteria

The type and characteristics of the potential environmental impacts outlined in this assessment are summarised by reference to the criteria outlined under Schedule 7(3) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3. A more comprehensive detailing of the proposed development is given in the Construction Environmental Management Plan as prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers.

Table 1: Location of the proposed development

Criteria	Assessment
The existing and proposed land use	<p><i>The overall site area is 1.54 Ha, the vast majority of which is Built Land and Artificial Surfaces and associated amenity grassland. It is an existing developed site consisting of office buildings, car parking, and landscaped areas. The site is generally flat, with a dropped level area located to the rear (south west) of the building. This area is accessible via a ramp. There are also sloping levels towards the Bóthar Sion Road and the River Boyne.</i></p> <p><i>The site is currently developed and consists of infrastructure associated with the existing Meath County Council (MCC) building.</i></p> <p><i>The construction phase of the proposed development will be almost entirely confined to areas already comprised of the habitat BL3, with minimal impact on any other parts of the Buvinda House site.</i></p> <p><i>As such, no potential significant adverse impacts are envisaged.</i></p>
The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) resources in the area.	<p><i>The site comprises primarily the habitat BL3. The proposed development is largely within the existing BL3 footprint and there will be minimal impact on other habitats.</i></p> <p><i>There will be no significant impacts as regards flora, fauna or habitats occurring – although an area of small trees and shrubs will be removed, these will be replanted</i></p>

Criteria	Assessment
	<p><i>and owing to the location and area, these are of limited ecological importance. The arboricultural impact assessment indicates that the trees present are of B2 rating or less.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed development has been subject to Natura Impact Assessment which finds that that it can be determined with scientific accuracy and precision that having implemented mitigation measures, there will be no adverse impact of the proposed development on the integrity of any of the relevant Natura 2000 sites identified.</i></p> <p><i>A detailed assessment of the impacts related to Storm-water drainage, SuDS and treatment of Foul Water is incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan as prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers to ensure no negative impacts.</i></p>
<p>The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to:</p> <p>Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths,</p> <p>Costal zones and the marine environment,</p> <p>Mountain and forest areas,</p> <p>Nature reserves and parks,</p> <p>Areas classified or protected under legislation</p> <p>Areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded</p> <p>(Annex III – 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>Densely populated areas,</p> <p>Landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.</p>	<p><i>The proposed development site is the existing Buvinda House site. Given the implementation of all mitigation measures, there will be no negative impacts associated with the proposed development on the natural environment.</i></p> <p><i>The overall site does contain sites of Archaeological Significance. A detailed Archaeological assessment has been prepared indicating minimal potential for impact.</i></p> <p><i>During the construction phase of the development, there is always some potential to impact upon archaeological materials not yet discovered. In this instance, works will be undertaken in accordance with and subject to approval from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</i></p> <p><i>With the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures and subject to necessary approvals from the Department, potential construction phase impacts of the proposal on archaeology and heritage would be neutral.</i></p> <p><i>It is considered that the receiving environment has sufficient capacity to absorb the proposed development and no significant likely effects are envisaged.</i></p>

Table 2: Characteristics of the proposed development

Criteria	Assessment
The size of the proposed development	<i>The proposed development is sub-threshold for an EIA, located on an overall site of approximately 1.54 Ha, comprising a 3-storey extension (approx. floor area 3300m²),. Further details (elevations, etc.) of the proposed development are outlined within the planning application.</i>
Cumulative impacts with other proposed development	<p><i>In accordance with the European Union Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening (2017) and paying particular regard to any proposed developments in the immediate vicinity requiring EIAR, existing and/or approved projects have been taken into consideration.</i></p> <p><i>No existing and/or approved projects requiring EIAR have been identified.</i></p> <p><i>The primary impact identified is the potential for changes in water quality quantity discharging to ground owing to increased run-off from roof and hard-standing areas. A detailed water management plan has been designed to prevent any such changes and is presented in the Engineering Planning Report as prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers. There are no IEL or IPC licenced facilities within the immediate vicinity</i></p>
The nature of any associated demolition works	<i>Minimal demolition beyond groundworks and enabling works will take place</i>
The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity.	<p><i>Excavation will be required to facilitate the proposed development and the majority of extracted material is likely to be utilised on site.</i></p> <p><i>The construction phase of the proposed development will use standard materials sourced off site. These are secondary impacts associated with off-site activities, such as quarrying, which are the subject of separate consenting procedures, which consider the impacts arising at those locations.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>

Criteria	Assessment
The production of waste	<p><i>Any waste produced as part of the proposed development during the construction phase will be stored and disposed in a sustainable manner and in accordance with all relevant environmental guidance and policy documents.</i></p> <p><i>No potential significant impacts are envisaged on the site or in the vicinity of the site as a result of the production of any waste associated with the proposed development.</i></p> <p><i>A Sustainability and Energy Statement for the project has been prepared by Delap and Waller.</i></p>
Pollution and nuisances	<p><i>Potential impacts of the proposed development relating to pollution and nuisances include air, water and soil pollution and noise.</i></p> <p><i>Pollution impacts could potentially occur through the creation of dust and spillage of materials from the construction phase, and emissions from additional traffic and the heating of buildings during operation phase. The traffic emissions could also potentially have an indirect impact on climate (in terms of climate change).</i></p> <p><i>The proposed development is not of a scale expected to cause any likely significant impact on ambient air quality.</i></p> <p><i>The existing noise environment is characterised by traffic and bird-song.</i></p> <p><i>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 must be addressed in any traffic management plan.</i></p> <p><i>Contamination and pollution to water bodies, which in turn could also affect biodiversity, and in particular geographically sensitive sites in the surrounding area, are potential impacts of the proposed development</i></p>

Criteria	Assessment
	<p><i>associated with ground and construction works. The detailed assessment of impacts on water in the Engineering Planning Report establishes that there is no risk of the proposed development having an impact on ground and/or surface water quality.</i></p> <p><i>The implementation of construction management and mitigation measures will provide further protection to receiving soil and water environments to ensure no significant impacts</i></p> <p><i>Subject to the implementation of the CEMP, and conditions attached to any grant of planning permission, it is envisaged that any likely environmental impacts would be appropriately avoided and mitigated.</i></p>
<p>The risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used.</p> <p>(Annex III - 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.)</p>	<p><i>The proposed development is a typical development, utilising established building materials and technologies typical of the nature and scale of such development. No potential significant impacts are envisaged as a result of the materials or technologies used.</i></p> <p><i>The risk of accidents/major disasters is similar for other developments of this scale and nature.</i></p>
<p>Annex III - The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)</p>	<p><i>Potential impacts of the proposed development which may be relevant to human health relate to factors previously detailed, such as noise, water and air pollution.</i></p> <p><i>Pollution impacts could potentially occur through the creation of dust and spillage of materials from the construction phase, and emissions from additional traffic and the heating of buildings during operation phase.</i></p> <p><i>The scale of the proposed development is not expected to cause any likely significant impact on ambient air quality. Dust levels are likely to increase in localised areas during construction, but these increases will be short-term and insignificant due to appropriate management and mitigation measures to be employed on site through the implementation of appropriate CEMP.</i></p>

Criteria	Assessment
	<p><i>The existing noise environment is characterised by traffic and bird-song.</i></p> <p><i>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 and CEMP. Similarly, increased traffic movements during the operational phase are not expected to have a significant adverse impact.</i></p> <p><i>Contamination and pollution to water bodies, which in turn could also affect aquatic habitats and biodiversity are potential impacts of the proposed development associated with ground/construction works and operation. The implementation of construction management measures and mitigation measures will ensure that the impacts are not significant.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the potential impact of spillage of potentially polluting materials during construction and/or operation will be minimised and mitigated by appropriate management measures to be incorporated on site during construction.</i></p> <p><i>Subject to the implementation of the CEMP, and conditions attached to any grant of planning permission, it is envisaged that any likely environmental impacts would be appropriately avoided and mitigated.</i></p>

Table 3: Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Criteria	Assessment
Magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population)	<i>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 having implemented the appropriate mitigation measures.</i>
The nature of the impact	<i>The nature of any impacts is expected to be of a magnitude that would not be significant, adverse, or permanent having implemented relevant mitigation measures.</i>
The trans frontier/transboundary nature of the impact	<i>The proposed development will not give rise to any impacts that are trans frontier or transboundary in nature.</i>
The magnitude (intensity) and complexity of the impact	<i>The potential impacts are not considered to be complex in nature or of a magnitude/intensity/scale to be of significance.</i>
The probability of the impact	<i>Having regard to the nature and extent of the impacts identified, no significant adverse impacts with a high probability of occurring have been identified.</i>
The expected onset, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the impact	<i>Having regard to the nature and extent of the impacts identified, no significant adverse impacts with a high frequency of occurrence have been identified.</i>

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, having regard to the criteria specified in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as Amended); the context and character of the site and the receiving environment; the nature, extent, form, and character of the proposed development; this Environmental Impact Assessment Screening concludes that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report of the proposed development is not required.

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- www.epa.ie – official website of the Environmental Protection Agency.