



Development of office accommodation at 3&4 Great George's Street, Waterford

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

1. Introduction

The EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended aims to determine the likely significant effects of a project on the environment. EIA Screening determines whether an EIA is required for a specified project. Projects requiring mandatory EIA are listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. In the case of development which is under these thresholds, planning authorities are required under Article 103 of the 2001 Regulations, (as amended) to request an EIAR where it considers that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Under Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), the proposed development is sub-threshold for EIA. The proposed development is being screened as per Schedule 7 of the regulations to determine if there is likely to be significant effects on the environment. Screening involves appraisal of impacts from the proposed development according to three main criteria:-

1. Characteristics of the proposed development
2. Location of proposed development
3. Characteristics of potential impacts.

Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), outlines the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by a proposed development. These are: human beings, flora and fauna, soil and geology, water, air & climate, landscape, material assets, cultural heritage and the inter-relationships between the range of environmental criteria. EIA screening involves assessment of these criteria to determine if the proposed development is likely to significantly affect the environment.

Waterford City & County Council intend to develop office accommodation at No's 3&4, Great George's Street, Waterford, the site of the former parochial houses of the Cathedral Parish. The project is financially co-supported by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and forms part of the Waterford City Centre Regeneration Design Strategy. The proposal is to develop high end office accommodation in the city centre. The works will sensitively and appropriately repurpose and bring back into use two of the city's finest

Georgian town houses which have remained vacant for over a decade. The development seeks to support and augment the continued regeneration of the city centre.

The site is described in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as follows “This house, built as one of a pair, is an attractive and substantial composition of balanced Georgian proportions that has been well maintained to present an early aspect, retaining important original salient features and materials throughout. The house is distinguished by the attractive doorcase, and it is possible that the interior also incorporates early surviving schemes of significance. The house, together with the second in the pair (22502584/WD-5632-16-1606), is an important and prominent feature of the streetscape, contributing to the sophisticated and historic character of Great George’s Street.” The NIAH rates the building as being of regional importance.

2. Screening Assessment

Table 1. Characteristics of proposed development

Is the size and design of the proposed works significant ?	The works will be self contained within 3-4 Great George’s St.
Use of natural resources in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity ?	The site is within the built environment of Waterford City with no physical or hydrological connectivity with the River Suir SAC.
Will the works produce waste ?	Construction and demolition waste associated with the regeneration of the 2 buildings.
Will the works create a significant amount of pollution or nuisance ?	Development works will be self contained on the site.
Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the project including those caused by Climate Change in accordance with scientific knowledge ?	Works will be governed by a health and safety statement. Providing best practice is followed the risk of accidents which are significant in scale is considered low.
Risks to human health (water contamination , air pollution)	Works will be governed by a health and safety statement. Providing best practice is followed the risk to human health is considered low.
Potential for cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects?	Low risk of significant effects
Potential for combination of above factors to have significant effects	Low risk of significant effects

Table 2. Location of Proposed Development

Environmental sensitivity of project in relation to existing and approved land use.	3 and 4 Great George’s St. are protected structures and works are informed by an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment and Archaeological Assessment. No physical
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	or hydrological connectivity with the River Suir SAC.
Relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground.	No physical or hydrological connectivity with the River Suir SAC.
Absorption capacity of the natural environment including wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones and the marine environment, mountain and forest area.	The site is within the built environment of Waterford City with no physical or hydrological connectivity with the River Suir SAC.
Potential of works to impact directly or indirectly on sites designated for nature conservation (NHA/SAC/SPA)	AA Screening concluded no potential for significant effects on the River Suir SAC.
Potential for impacts directly or indirectly on Habitats or Species listed on Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive	AA Screening concluded no potential for significant effects on the River Suir SAC
Potential for impacts directly or indirectly on Species listed on Annex IV of the Habitats Directive	The site was subject to EcIA and found no bats roosting in the buildings or outbuildings on site or other adjacent structures. Some potential for temporary roosts in crevices of stone walls. Precautionary working methodology is advised for realignment and repairs of stone wall and to reduce and minimise lighting as pipistrelles recorded feeding in the garden area.
Potential for impacts on breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act ?	The site was subject to EcIA and found feral pigeons roosting and nesting and a herring gull nesting.
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any listed ACA in the City Development Plan ?	3 and 4 Great George's St are protected structures and within an ACA. The works will sensitively and appropriately repurpose and bring back into use two of the city's finest Georgian town houses which have remained vacant for over a decade. The development seeks to support and augment the continued regeneration of the city centre. The NIAH describes the buildings as important and prominent features of the streetscape, contributing to the sophisticated and historic character of Great George's Street.
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structure or recorded monuments and places of Archaeological Interest	Works are informed by an Archaeological Assessment.
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on	No protected views affected.

listed or scenic views or protected landscape in the City County Development Plan ?	
Potential to impact on areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure.	No
Potential to impact on densely populated areas.	Development works will be self contained on the site. The regeneration of the building is a positive development bringing a significant site back into maximum reuse.

Table 3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Human Beings	No significant effects anticipated.
Flora and Fauna	No physical or hydrological connectivity with the River Suir SAC. Feral pigeons and a herring gull were recorded nesting in the building.
Soils and Geology	No significant effects anticipated.
Water	No physical or hydrological connectivity with the River Suir SAC.
Air & Climate	No significant effects anticipated.
Noise & Vibration	Temporary noise impacts during site works .
Landscape	No protected views impacted.
Material Assets	The works will sensitively and appropriately repurpose and bring back into use two of the city's finest Georgian town houses which have remained vacant for over a decade. The development seeks to support and augment the continued regeneration of the city centre.
Cultural Heritage	The works will sensitively and appropriately repurpose and bring back into use two of the city's finest Georgian town houses which have remained vacant for over a decade. The development seeks to support and augment the continued regeneration of the city centre.
Interaction of Foregoing	Key issues are impacts on the protected structure and localised ecology. An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment report have been completed for the proposal.

Table 4. Discussion of Potential Impacts

Will a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed works ?	The works will be self contained within 3-4 Great George’s St.
Will a large population be impacted as a result of the proposed works ?	Development works will be self contained on the site. The development seeks to support and augment the continued regeneration of the city centre.
Are any trans-frontier impacts likely to arise from proposed works?	No
Is the magnitude of impacts associated with the proposed works considered significant ?	No
Is the intensity and complexity of impacts associated with the proposed works considered significant ?	No
Is there a high probability that the effects will occur ?	No significant effects anticipated.
Will the effects continue for a long time ?	No significant effects anticipated.
Will the effects be permanent rather than temporary ?	No significant effects anticipated.
Will the impacts be irreversible?	No significant effects anticipated.
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects ?	No significant effects anticipated following implementation of mitigation measures contained in the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, Archaeological Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment reports.

4. Conclusion

The DoEHLG Guidance Document “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development” notes that *“The greater the number of different aspects of the environment which are likely to be affected and the greater the links between the effects, the more likely it is that an EIS should be carried out. Where complexity of impacts is deemed to apply in the case of a specific sub-threshold development proposal, there should be a predisposition towards the preparation of an EIS”*.

In consideration of the above involving appraisal of characteristics and location of proposed development and characteristics of potential impacts it is considered the key impacts are; impacts on the protected structure and local ecology which have been addressed through the preparation of an Architectural Impact Assessment, Archaeological Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment. Following implementation of mitigation measures contained in the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, Archaeological Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment reports it is concluded that an EIAR is not required for the proposed development.