

**Development of Tourism Accommodation in grounds of former Bank of Ireland, Lismore**

**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.

The proposed development involves the development of tourism accommodation (glamping pods) in the grounds of the former Bank of Ireland site Lismore and subsequent regeneration of the former bank building.

**2. Screening Assessment**

**Table 1. Characteristics of proposed development**

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| Is the size and design of the proposed works significant ? | No the site is approximately 0.2 ha in area and will involve 5 glamping pods. |
| Use of natural resources in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity ? | Proposed works involve construction of tourism accommodation in the form of glamping pods within the grounds to the SW of the Former Bank of Ireland building on New Street. |
| Will the works produce waste ? | Construction waste during building works.  Foul water and grey water from the tourism accommodation will discharge to existing network. Lismore WWT capacity has a PE of 3000. |
| Will the works create a significant amount of pollution or nuisance ? | Traffic management will cause a small scale and temporary inconvenience on West St /New St. during construction works. |
| 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**

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| Environmental sensitivity of project in relation to existing and approved land use. | The former Bank of Ireland is a protected structure and the site is part of Lismore Architectural Conservation Area. The site is outside but adjacent to the boundary of the Archaeological site of Lismore Historic Town. A number of trees grow in the grounds of the site. |
| Relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground. | Lismore has a good cover of trees around the town. |
| Absorption capacity of the natural environment including wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones and the marine environment, mountain and forest area. | The self-contained nature of the works will avoid impacts on the natural environment. There is no direct connectivity between the site and the River Blackwater.  Lismore WWT capacity has a PE of 3000 and has tertiary treatment. |
| Potential of works to impact directly or indirectly on sites designated for nature conservation (NHA/SAC/SPA) | There is no direct connectivity between the site and the River Blackwater SAC and thus no potential for significant effects on the conservation objectives of the River Blackwater SAC. AA screening has been carried out and has concluded no potential for significant effects. |
| Potential for impacts directly or indirectly on Habitats or Species listed on Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive | AA screening has been carried out and has concluded no potential for significant effects. |
| Potential for impacts directly or indirectly on Species listed on Annex IV of the Habitats Directive | Bats may forage on trees within the grounds of the former Bank of Ireland. A bat survey will be required prior to works on the building. |
| Potential for impacts on breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act ? | A bat survey will be required prior to works on the building. |
| Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any listed ACA in the City Development Plan ? | Yes within Lismore Town ACSA |
| Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structure or recorded monuments and places of Archaeological Interest | Yes the former Bank of Ireland is a protected structure and the site is outside but adjacent to the boundary of the Archaeological site of Lismore Historic Town. |
| Potential to impact directly or indirectly on  Listed or scenic views or protected landscape in the County Development Plan ? | No |
| 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. | None arising. |
| Potential to impact on densely populated areas. | The works will benefit local population and visitors to the area by providing tourism accommodation in the town which is inadequate for a heritage town. |

**Table 3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts**

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| Human Beings | Traffic will cause a small scale temporary impact for local residents. |
| Flora and Fauna | The works will require loss of existing trees on the site. |
| Soils and Geology | No protected geological heritage sites will be impacted. |
| Water | No direct connectivity between the site and the River Blackwater. Foul water and grey water from the tourism accommodation will discharge to existing network |
| Air & Climate | The works will not cause significant effects to air quality or climate conditions. |
| Noise & Vibration | Works will cause a temporary impact for local residents but will be temporary and short term in nature. |
| Landscape | The proposed development is located in the centre of Lismore. There will be loss of green cover to built development in an area of 0.2 ha. including loss of ornamental trees. |
| Material Assets | Works will be subject to and regulated by a waste management plan. |
| Cultural Heritage | Impacts on the Protected Structure, Architectural Conservation Area and Historic Town will need to be assessed. |
| Interaction of Foregoing | Key impacts relate to Cultural Heritage and tree loss. |

**Table 4. Discussion of Potential Impacts**

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| Will a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed works ? | No contained at site of former Bank of Ireland <0.2 ha. |
| Will a large population be impacted as a result of the proposed works ? | No, site is in a low population area. Works will cause a temporary impact for road users but will be temporary in nature. |
| 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 short term and temporary in nature |
| 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 ? | Impacts on the Protected Structure, Architectural Conservation Area and Historic Town will need to be assessed. |
| Will the effects continue for a long time ? | No significant effects arising. |
| Will the effects be permanent rather than temporary ? | No significant effects arising. |
| Will the impacts be irreversible? | No significant effects arising. |
| Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects ? | No significant effects arising. |

**3..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 concluded that given the architectural and archaeological interest of Lismore Town, Architectural and Archaeological Assessments are required along with a landscaping plan to mitigate for loss of tree and green cover from the site. A bat survey will be required prior to proposals for regeneration of the Bank of Ireland building. AA screening has concluded no potential for significant effects on the River Blackwater SAC. Given the small scale and self contained nature of the works it is concluded that an EIAR is not required for the proposed development.