

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Proposed Residential
Development at Cairns
Road, Co. Sligo





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1.

INTRODUCTION

MKO has been appointed by Novot Holdings Ltd., (the applicant) to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report (EIASR) for a proposed residential development of 74 no. units on lands at Cairns Road, Co. Sligo.

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening exercise was undertaken 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)* (the Act) and in Schedule 5 of the *Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended)* (the Regulations). Certain projects, listed in Schedule 5 of the regulations, due to their always having the potential for significant environmental effects, require mandatory EIA. Others, also listed in the Schedule 5 of the regulations, contain threshold levels and for projects that fall below these thresholds it is the decision of the competent authority to decide if an EIA and the associated Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is required.

Whether a 'sub-threshold' development should be subject to EIA is determined by the likelihood that the development would result in significant environmental effects. Significant effects may arise due to the nature of the development, its scale or extent and its location in relation to the characteristics of the receiving area, particularly sensitive environments.

This EIA Screening Report will accompany the application for the proposed development under the Strategic Housing Provisions of the *Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act, 2016*. The application for the proposed development is accompanied by a **Natura Impact Statement (NIS)**, **Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR)**, and **Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EcIA)** prepared by MKO alongside a **Planning Report** also prepared by MKO. The findings of these reports and the desk study carried out as part of this EIA Screening exercise are referenced where appropriate in this Screening Report.

This report documents the methodology employed to complete the EIA screening exercise, having regard to the relevant legislation and guidance documents.

This EIA Screening Report has cognisance to the global goals set out at COP26, which took place in November 2021. The 4 no. goals set at COP26 are:

- Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach
- Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats
- Mobilise finance
- Work together to deliver

In order to work toward the achievement of the goals set out at COP26, each country involved is committed to bring forward national plans setting out how much they would reduce their emissions – known as Nationally Determined Contributions. As a result, The Climate Action Plan 2021 (CAP 2021) was published on the 4th of November 2021 by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. The CAP sets out roadmap for Ireland to become a climate neutral economy and resilient society by 2050. The CAP sets out an ambitious course of action over the coming years to address the impacts which climate may have on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources. The CAP 2021 outlines that the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere must be dramatically reduced and balanced by the amount removed by our land, forestry, or technology in order for Ireland to become a climate neutral economy and resilient society by 2050.

Chapter 1 of the CAP 2019 describes the nature of the challenge which Ireland faces over the coming years; specifically, the plan sets out growing evidence of the warming of the global climate system with global average temperatures having increased by more than 1 °C since pre-industrial times. These changes are predicted to result in extensive direct and indirect harm to Irish society, as well as to other

countries more exposed and less able to withstand the associated impacts. Adverse impacts associated with global climate change are forecasted to include:

- Rising sea-levels threatening habitable land and particularly coastal infrastructure;
- Extreme weather, including more intense storms and rainfall affecting our land, coastline and seas;
- Further pressure on our water resources and food production systems with associated impacts on fluvial and coastal ecosystems;
- Increased chance and scale of river and coastal flooding;
- Greater political and security instability;
- Displacement of population and climate refugees;
- Heightened risk of the arrival of new pests and diseases;
- Poorer water quality;
- Changes in the distribution and time of lifecycle events of plant and animal species on land and in the oceans; and
- Acknowledgement that the pollutants associated with climate change are also damaging to human health.

The overall ambition of CAP is to put Ireland on a more sustainable path, cutting emissions, creating a cleaner, greener economy and society, and protecting us from the devastating consequences of climate change.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Site Context

The subject site is located approximately 3km south of Sligo Town, in the Townland of Carns (see Figure 1). The subject site is accessible from the eastern boundary via the Cairns Road (L3602), with pedestrian/cycle access via the existing residential developments; The Oaks, Hilltop Park, and Ard Cairn, located to the north of the subject site itself. From the access point to The Oaks development, the site has footpath connectivity to Sligo Town, with a designated cycle path commencing at the junction between Cairns Road and the Pearse Road (N287). The area is predominantly residential in nature, with the Hawthorns Residential Development and the Carraroe Retail Park located adjacent to the west site, though not directly connected to the site itself at present.



Figure 1. Indicative Site Location (Source: MyPlan.ie. Edited by MKO)

2.2 Site Description

The subject site is located approximately 1.6km to the Garvoge River and Lough Gill. The subject site extends to 2.1hectares. An indicative site boundary is illustrated in Figure 2. The levels on site vary from a high of (81m MOD) to a low (75mOD). The difference in levels is approximately 6 metres across the site. The highest part of the site is to the east while the lowest area on site is the southwest section of the site. The site is considered an infill site in a suburban location with built residential development on all sides.



Figure 2. Site Boundary (Source: Google Earth. Edited by MKO)

2.2.1 Ecology

With regard to ecological designated sites, the subject site is located within the proximity of the following;

- Lough Gill pNHA (Site Code 001976) – approximately 1.6km east
- Lough Gill SAC (Site Code 001976) – approximately 1.6km east
- Cummeen Strand SPA (Site Code 004035) – approximately 2.3km north
- Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) pNHA (Site Code 000627) – approximately 2.3km north
- Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC (Site Code 000627) – approximately 2.3km north

Figure 3 illustrates the location of the subject site with regard to the ecological designated sites outlined above. The proposed development will not impact upon any of the sites as listed above. Please refer to the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, Ecological Impact Assessment, and Natura Impact Statement prepared by MKO for more details.

2.2.2 Flooding

A review of Floodinfo.ie outlines that there the subject site is not located on or directly proximate to a flood zone area. There are also no recorded past flooding events on/near to the subject site. The proposed development will not impact or be impacted upon by any recognised flood zone/potential flooding.

2.2.3 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

There are no archaeological sites or sites of cultural heritage on the subject site. Within a 500metre radius of the subject site are the following sites recorded by the National Monuments Service;

- SL014-226 – Ringfort – c. 100metres north
- SL014-230 – Ringfort – c. 150metres south-east
- SL014-225 – Ringfort – c. 240metres north-west

The proposed development will not have any direct impact on any of the sites listed above.



Figure 3. Ecological Designations within proximity of the site (Source: MyPlan.ie. Edited by MKO)

2.2.4 Landscape Character

The subject site is located within a landscape character area that is located between the Urban landscape of Sligo Town and an area that is considered a ‘Normal Rural Landscape’. Normal Rural Landscapes as per the *Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023* are areas

“Which generally have the capacity to absorb a wide range of new development forms – these are largely farming areas and cover most of the County”.

The proposed development will not have an impact on any protected or scenic views and is not proposed to have a negative impact on the overall character of the surrounding landscape. Please refer to the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment prepared by MKO for more details.

2.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development description as per the public notices is as follows:

We, Novot Holdings Ltd., intend to apply for permission for development on a site which extends to c. 2.1ha on lands located on the Cairns Road, Sligo, Co. Sligo.

The development will consist of:

1) Construction of 74 no. residential units comprising:

- 5 no. 1-bed own-door apartments,*
- 19 no. 2-bed own-door apartments,*
- 8 no. 3-bed terrace houses,*
- 14 no. 3-bed semi-detached houses,*
- 2 no. 4-bed terrace houses,*
- 26 no. 4-bed semi-detached houses.*

2) Provision of all associated surface water and foul drainage services and connections with all associated site works and ancillary services.

3) Pedestrian, cycle, and vehicular access/egress with Cairns Road, and pedestrian and cycle access/egress with the adjoining Ardcairn residential estate.

4) Provision of public open space, communal open space, private open space, site landscaping, public lighting, refuse storage, resident and visitor car parking including electric vehicle charging points, bicycle parking, boundary treatments, and all associated site development works.

5) Demolition of existing bungalow dwellinghouse and outbuildings located to the north-east of the development site.

6) This application is accompanied with a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

3. EIA SCREENING METHODOLOGY

3.1 Legislative Context

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 and as amended in turn by Directive 2014/52/EU.

The consolidated European Union Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the 'EIA Directive'), was transposed into Irish planning legislation by the *Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2018* and the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2018* (the 'Regulations'). The EIA Directive was amended by *Directive 2014/52/EU* which has been transposed into Irish law with the recent *European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018* (S.I. No. 296 of 2018). Most of the provisions of the new regulations come into operation on the 1st of September 2018 with a number of other provisions coming into operation on the 1st of January 2019.

The new legislation requires screening to be undertaken to determine whether or not specified public or private developments are likely to have significant effects on the environment and, as such, require EIA to be carried out prior to a decision on a development consent application being made.

3.2 Screening for Mandatory EIA

The proposed development falls within the category of an 'Infrastructure Project' within Schedule 5 (10) (b) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), which provides that a mandatory EIA must be carried out for the following projects:

- “(i) Construction of more than 500 dwellings*
- “(ii) Construction of a car-park providing more than 400 spaces, other than a car-park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development.*
- “(iii) Construction of a shopping centre with a gross floor space exceeding 10,000 square metres.*
- “(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.*

(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 for 74 no. residential units, on an overall site area of 2.1ha. The proposed development does not trigger a requirement for a mandatory EIA because:

- The number of accommodation units, at 74 units, falls significantly below the threshold of 500 dwellings: and
- The site area of 2.1ha falls below the area threshold for sites in an urban area.

3.3 Sub Threshold Projects Requiring EIAR

Development which is below the threshold of requiring an EIAR as set out in Schedule 5 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001* (as amended) may still require an EIAR.

Class 15 of Schedule 5 provides for EIA for developments under the relevant threshold, where the works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This states the following:

“Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.”

The proposed development has been assessed against Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations, 2001*, as amended, and the Annex III criteria of the amended directive (Directive 2014/52/EU).

The criteria are listed under three broad headings:

- Characteristics of projects;
- Location of Projects; and
- Types and characteristics of the potential impact.

Each of the above groupings includes a number of criteria for consideration. The criteria to be reviewed are discussed in more detail, with reference to the proposed development below in Section 4. The screening questions are based on the criteria listed under each grouped heading in Annex III of the EIAR Directives.

4.

EIA SCREENING EXERCISE

Table 1 below, provides screening statement of the proposed development against the Annex III criteria of 2014/52/EU.

Table 1: Screening Statement with reference to Annex III EU Directive 2014/52/EU

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts
1. Characteristics of proposed development		
The characteristics of the proposed development, in particular:		
The size and design of the whole project	The construction works are confined to an area of 2.1ha. A Construction Management Plan (CMP) will be in place for the construction phase. Once measures are implemented no significant negative impacts are likely.	The proposed development is located in the Sligo Town and Environs in the Outer Suburbs of Sligo Town, a semi-urban area served by amenities and connections to the city centre. The size and design of the project is in keeping with the outer suburban scale of the surrounding environment and no significant negative impacts are likely.
Cumulation with other existing and / or proposed development	A review of the recent planning applications on the Sligo County Council online planning portal and the most recent SHD schemes on the An Bord Pleanála website indicate that there are currently no active planning applications within the vicinity of the subject site.	There will be active on-site management to mitigate any loss of residential amenity to private housing that could occur. With measures in place no significant negative impacts are likely.
The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	Energy, including electricity and fuels, will be required during the construction phase. The construction process will include use of various raw materials. No out of the ordinary use of natural resources are likely during the construction process. No significant negative impacts are likely.	No out of the ordinary use of natural resources are likely during the operation phase. No significant negative impacts are likely.
The production of waste	The construction process will result in the levelling of some land, removal of loose spoil and will include	Operational waste generated will be domestic waste from the residential units and commercial waste from the retail /

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts
	<p>general construction waste production, which is not out of the ordinary. All waste arising as a result of construction will be disposed of and managed in compliance with the provisions of the Construction (Waste) Management Plan (CMP) to be prepared and lodged with the formal application.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>commercial units. All domestic and commercial waste will be disposed of by a licensed waste contractor, in accordance with an Operational Waste Management Plan.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>
<p>Pollution and nuisances</p>	<p>The construction process has the potential to cause nuisance related to noise, dust and vibration impacts. The CMP will detail measures to mitigate likely impacts. The proposed development will be subject to normal conditions related to construction working hours to protect the residential amenity of the area.</p> <p>With measures in place no significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>Standard dust and noise prevention measures will be employed. As such, pollution and nuisances are not considered to likely have the potential to cause significant effects on the environment.</p>
<p>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>There are no major accidents or disasters foreseen, subject to strict compliance with building regulations and environmental controls.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>There are no major accidents or disasters foreseen, subject to compliance with building and fire regulations.</p> <p>With measures in place no significant negative impacts are likely.</p>
<p>The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).</p>	<p>The CMP will detail measures to mitigate any likely impacts associated with noise, dust or pollution from the construction process.</p> <p>With measures in place no significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>The proposed development will be connected to public water and sewer infrastructure. No emissions other than from heating units are anticipated.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>
<p>2. Location of proposed development The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, with particular regard to</p>		

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts
The existing and approved land use	The proposed development will result in the construction on land zoned for 'Residential R2 – low/medium-density residential areas), and for 'Strategic Land Reserve SLR' development use under the extant Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023.	The completed development will provide for residential, and ancillary, uses in an existing suburban environment, within the suburbs of Sligo Town. The proposed use is compatible with the existing land use and is consistent with the pertinent zoning objectives for the land. No significant negative impacts are likely.
The relative abundance, availability quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;	Improved Agricultural Grassland (GA1) is the dominant habitat within the development site. A derelict cottage lies in the south-eastern corner of the proposed development site, surrounded by gravel and classified as Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3). Further details of the habit are provided in the enclosed Ecological Impact Assessment Report. No significant negative impacts are likely.	The proposed operational phase will not have any out of the ordinary impact on natural resources. No significant negative impacts are likely.
The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying attention to the following areas: (a) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths; (b) coastal zones and the marine environment; (c) mountain and forest areas, (d) nature reserves and parks, (e) areas classified or protected under national legislation, Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC, (f) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in Union legislation and	There are no natural environments likely to be impacted by the construction of the proposed development. There are no areas classified or protected under national legislation or Natura 2000 sites located on the site. It is not likely that the surrounding natural areas and Natura 2000 sites will be negatively impacted by the construction of the proposed development. Mitigation to ensure this is the case will be set out within the CMP once prepared.	Proposed use is compatible with the geographical area. The high-quality architectural design will contribute to the urban landscape. No significant negative impacts are likely. An Ecological Impact Assessment Report has been prepared by MKO in respect of the proposed development, it concludes: <i>“Potential negative effects on water quality and downstream ecological receptors and designated sites have been mitigated through a constraint led design process. With the implementation of best practice measures there will be no impact on water quality. Therefore, following an extremely precautionary principle a pathway for impact on designated sites was identified in the form of potential groundwater</i>

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts
<p>relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure, (g) densely populated areas, (h) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance</p>		<p><i>pollution. This pathway has been robustly blocked and no potential for residual effects remains.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed development will not contribute to any effect on the hydrological regime in the area or to any water pollution effects.</i></p> <p><i>In the review of the projects that was undertaken, no connection, that could potentially result in additional or cumulative impacts was identified. Neither was any potential for different (new) impacts resulting from the combination of the various projects and plans in association with the proposed housing development.</i></p> <p><i>Taking the above information into consideration and having regard to the precautionary principle, it is considered that the proposed development will not result in the loss of habitats or species of high ecological significance and will not have any significant effects on the ecology of the wider area.</i></p> <p><i>Provided that the development is constructed in accordance with the design and best practice that is described within this application, significant effects on biodiversity are not anticipated at any geographic scale.”</i></p> <p>The Natura Impact Statement was prepared by MKO on the conclusion of the AASR. The NIS was carried out in accordance with the European Commission guidance document Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly</p>

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts
		<p>affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001), European Communities (2018) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission and the Department of the Environment’s Guidance on the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (December 2009, amended February 2010). Natura Impact Statement.</p> <p>The conclusion of the NIS is as follows:</p> <p><i>“This NIS has provided an assessment of all potential direct or indirect adverse effects on European Sites.</i></p> <p><i>Where the potential for any adverse effect on any European Site has been identified, the pathway by which any such effect may occur has been robustly blocked through the use of avoidance, appropriate design and mitigation measures as set out within this report and its appendices. The measures ensure that the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development does not adversely affect the integrity of European sites.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, it can be objectively concluded that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.”</i></p>

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts
<p>3. Type and Characteristics of potential impacts The likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:</p>		
<p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</p>	<p>The net developable area (2.1ha) is not overly extensive in the context of the suburban area. The proposed uses are consistent with land in such a location. The works during the construction phase may have a minor impact on the immediate area, which is largely residential. With measures in place no significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>The site is located in the outer suburbs of Sligo Town on the Cairns Road. The proposed site is located in the Electoral District of Sligo which had a population of 38804 in the 2016 Census. The proposed development will provide accommodation for 74 no. residential units. The proposed density of development is appropriate, given the level of services, amenities, infrastructure and public transport available in the area. No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>
<p>The nature of the impact</p>	<p>The construction impacts have potential to cause nuisance associated with noise, dust and traffic. The CMP will put in place measures to avoid, reduce or mitigate impacts. With measures in place, no significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>The operational phase will result in the development of 74 no. residential units. The nature of the use is appropriate to the suburban location and proximity to existing facilities in Sligo Town and its Environs. No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>
<p>The transboundary nature of the impact</p>	<p>There are no construction phase transboundary impacts.</p>	<p>There are no operational phase transboundary impacts</p>
<p>The intensity and complexity of the impact</p>	<p>The intensity and complexity of the construction phase is in keeping with modern construction projects. No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>The operational phase of the development is moderate in scale and will be actively managed. No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>
<p>The probability of the impact</p>	<p>Some level of construction impact is highly probable. However, these will be mitigated by the CMP.</p>	<p>The operational phase of the development is moderate in scale and will be actively managed. No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>
<p>The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the construction phase will commence within approximately 6 months of planning approval; they will be short-term, over a</p>	<p>The development will be occupied all year round and impacts will be irreversible.</p>

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts
	<p>period of a number of months and restricted by planning conditions in terms of the hours of operation. No permanent negative impacts are anticipated as a result of the construction phase of the project.</p>	
<p>The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and / or approved projects</p>	<p>There are no current planning applications or construction projects taking place within immediate proximity to the proposed site.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>Active on-site management of the facility will mitigate any negative cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>The possibility of effectively reducing the impact</p>	<p>The CMP, to be prepared ahead of the formal planning application, will avoid, reduce or mitigate construction impacts related to noise, dust and traffic.</p>	<p>The design and landscaping of the proposed development has avoided, reduced or mitigated significant negative impacts in relation to overlooking; impact on daylight of adjacent properties and wind impacts on pedestrians, as detailed in associated reports to accompany the application.</p>

4.1 Other Consideration of Significant Likely Effects

It is considered appropriate to briefly assess the proposed development under the sections required when submitting an EIAR since Directive 2014/52/EU. This approach will assist in identifying any possible significant effects on the environment that have not previously been identified.

4.1.1 Population and Human Health

There may be possible short-term nuisances to human beings from noise, dust and vibration. These are not likely to be at a scale or significance that would warrant the completion of a sub threshold EIAR. Noise and dust or pollution will be subject to standard mitigation measures as per typical construction projects.

The proposed residential scheme will increase the stock of high-quality housing in an accessible location in the outer suburbs of Sligo Town on the Cairns Road. This increased supply of housing will help meet the growing housing needs of Sligo.

There are no operational impacts that would be likely to cause significant effects on the environment in terms of population and human health. The proposed development has been designed to ensure the protection of the residential amenity of adjoining and adjacent residential properties.

4.1.2 Biodiversity

The potential for impacts on European Sites (SACs and SPAs) is fully assessed in the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) prepared by MKO that accompanies this application.

The NIS concludes:

“This NIS has provided an assessment of all potential direct or indirect adverse effects on European Sites.

Where the potential for any adverse effect on any European Site has been identified, the pathway by which any such effect may occur has been robustly blocked through the use of avoidance, appropriate design and mitigation measures as set out within this report and its appendices. The measures ensure that the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development does not adversely affect the integrity of European sites.

Therefore, it can be objectively concluded that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.”

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) has been prepared by MKO in respect of the proposed development, it concludes:

“Potential negative effects on water quality and downstream ecological receptors and designated sites have been mitigated through a constraint led design process. With the implementation of best practice measures there will be no impact on water quality. Therefore, following an extremely precautionary principle a pathway for impact on designated sites was identified in the form of potential groundwater pollution. This pathway has been robustly blocked and no potential for residual effects remains.

The proposed development will not contribute to any effect on the hydrological regime in the area or to any water pollution effects.

In the review of the projects that was undertaken, no connection, that could potentially result in additional or cumulative impacts was identified. Neither was any potential for different (new) impacts resulting from the combination of the various projects and plans in association with the proposed housing development.

Taking the above information into consideration and having regard to the precautionary principle, it is considered that the proposed development will not result in the loss of habitats or species of high ecological significance and will not have any significant effects on the ecology of the wider area.

Provided that the development is constructed in accordance with the design and best practice that is described within this application, significant effects on biodiversity are not anticipated at any geographic scale.”

4.2 Geology and Soils

The CMP will detail measures to mitigate against potential impacts that may arise during the construction phase. Implementation of the measures to be outlined in the CMP will ensure that the potential impacts of the proposed development on soils and the geological environment do not occur during the construction phase. All excavated soil will be stored on site and reused for landscaping or transported off site to a designated waste facility.

It is not likely that there will be any significant effects on the environment with regard to soils and/or geology.

4.3 Water

Although no watercourses were identified within the site, a potential pathway for indirect effects on the marine/surface water dependent Qualifying Interests of Lough Gill SAC and Cummeen Strand/Drumccliff Bay (Sligo Bay) was identified in the form of deterioration of water quality resulting from pollution, associated with the construction and operational phases of the development. Best practice environmental control measures have been incorporated in the design of the development and are described in the NIS.

The operational phase of the proposed project will result in the production of foul waters/sewage. If not adequately treated, there is potential for indirect impacts on water quality. The foul drainage for the entire development will be collected throughout the site in the foul pipe network and will then discharge by gravity to the existing foul network in the adjoining Ardcairn estate at the north-western boundary of the proposed site

The storm water drainage system has been designed to cater for the developments hardstanding areas (including roofs, footways, roadways and car parking). The proposed storm network will discharge surface water run-off to two separate proposed soakaways, one located in the central amenity area and the other located within the northern public pocket park. It is proposed that all storm water generated by the site will gravity flow to the each of the proposed soakaways via a Class 1 Klargestor Bypass separator or similar. For the soakaway located within the central amenity area it is proposed to use a Class 1 Klargestor NSBE015 Bypass separator or similar. For the soakaway located within the northern public pocket park it is proposed to use a Class 1 Klargestor NSBP004 Bypass separator or similar.

No significant residual impacts on water quality are anticipated given the proposed treatment measures for foul and storm waters proposed.

4.4 Air & Climate

The proposed development is not expected to cause any likely significant impact on ambient air quality.

There may be a minor localised increase in dust levels and degradation of air quality during certain parts of the construction process. These increases will be short-term and will remain insignificant due to appropriate management and mitigation measures to be employed on site through the implementation of the CMP.

No emissions other than from heating units are anticipated. There are no adverse impacts on ambient air quality predicted as a result of the Operation Phase of the proposed development.

It is considered that there will be no negative impact on the climate that would be likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

4.5 Landscape

The Proposed Development is not located within sensitive categorizations such as ‘Normal Rural Landscape’ or ‘Sensitive Rural Landscape’, and instead is sited within an urban setting. The site is however, surrounded by Scenic Routes, Visually Vulnerable Areas and Archaeological elements in the landscape. A visual appraisal of the likely visibility of the Proposed Development from the designated scenic routes within the LVIA study area indicated that the subject site will comprise very limited or no visibility from these routes due to the screening provided by existing residential settlements, vegetation and intervening distance and topography. The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment submitted with this application concludes

“Overall, the Proposed Development was considered to comprise a Medium visual effect as it will be seen and will alter the view from sensitive visual receptors, mainly along Cairns Road and in proximity to the site itself. However, it was deemed not impactful to the key scenic sensitivities of the landscape and the wider landscape character.”

4.6 Material Assets

The land on which the site is situated is a material asset. It has been zoned as ‘Residential R2 – low/medium-density residential areas), and for ‘Strategic Land Reserve SLR’ development uses through the appropriate development planning process, and as such, the use of this material asset in a manner compatible with the zoning designation, is entirely appropriate. There will be a significant positive impact on land use.

4.7 Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage

There are no Protected Structures or Recorded Monuments of significance on the application site. There are no likely significant impacts in Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage.

4.8 Interaction of the Foregoing

It is considered that any of the relatively minor impacts identified above would not in themselves be considered significant nor would they cumulatively result in a likely significant effect on the environment. Directive 2014/52/EU requires assessment of impact on climate change under each of the EIA/EIAR chapter headings. It is considered that there are no likely significant effects on the environment in terms of each of the chapter headings, individually or cumulatively.



5.

CONCLUSION

The proposed project is not a development for which an EIA is mandatory. In terms of scale, the proposed housing development falls significantly below, (74 no. units proposed compared to 500 dwelling threshold) the threshold set out in Class10(b)(i) in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Regulations.

An EIA Screening exercise was carried out to determine the potential for the proposed development to have significant environmental effects or not. The screening exercise has been completed in this report and the methodology used has been informed by the available guidance, legislation and directives. This exercise has also been informed by a desk study and site visit of the site, **Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, Natura Impact Statement, Ecological Impact Assessment, Planning Report**, and other relevant technical reports on the proposed development.

The nature or characteristics of the proposed development are not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment. The project will have a long-term positive impact on Human Beings, with regard to the provision of additional housing in Sligo County and the Sligo Town and Environs area.

An **Appropriate Assessment Screening Report** and **Natura Impact Statement** have been prepared by MKO. The NIS concludes as follows:

This NIS has provided an assessment of all potential direct or indirect adverse effects on European Sites.

Where the potential for any adverse effect on any European Site has been identified, the pathway by which any such effect may occur has been robustly blocked through the use of avoidance, appropriate design and mitigation measures as set out within this report and its appendices. The measures ensure that the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development does not adversely affect the integrity of European sites.

Therefore, it can be objectively concluded that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.”

The EcIA also concludes that:

“Potential negative effects on water quality and downstream ecological receptors and designated sites have been mitigated through a constraint led design process. With the implementation of best practice measures there will be no impact on water quality. Therefore, following an extremely precautionary principle a pathway for impact on designated sites was identified in the form of potential groundwater pollution. This pathway has been robustly blocked and no potential for residual effects remains.

The proposed development will not contribute to any effect on the hydrological regime in the area or to any water pollution effects.

In the review of the projects that was undertaken, no connection, that could potentially result in additional or cumulative impacts was identified. Neither was any potential for different (new) impacts resulting from the combination of the various projects and plans in association with the proposed housing development.

Taking the above information into consideration and having regard to the precautionary principle, it is considered that the proposed development will not result in the loss of habitats or species of high ecological significance and will not have any significant effects on the ecology of the wider area.

Provided that the development is constructed in accordance with the design and best practice that is described within this application, significant effects on biodiversity are not anticipated at any geographic scale.”



The overall conclusion and recommendation of this screening exercise is that there is no requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed project.



APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX 2

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