

**Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for residential infill  
development at Skenagun Castledermot, Athy, Co. Kildare**

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**REPORT FOR KILDARE CO. COUNCIL MARCH 2024**

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# **Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for residential infill development at Skenagun Castledermot, Athy, Co. Kildare**

**Mary O'Connor Environmental Scientist 18/03/2022**

## **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 EIS where it considers that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Screening involves appraisal of impacts from the proposed development according to three main criteria:

1. Characteristics of the project
2. Location of proposed project
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.

### **Sources Used**

Plans and specifications for the proposed development including the Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment for Proposed residential infill development at Skenagun, Castledermot, Athy Co. Kildare (2024)

Bedrock, soil, subsoil, surface water and ground water maps from the Geological Survey of Ireland web mapping service ([www.gsi.ie/mapping.htm](http://www.gsi.ie/mapping.htm)),

National Biodiversity Data Centre (<http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/>),

Environmental Protection Agency web viewer (<http://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>)

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, and details of permitted or proposed developments from the local authority's online planning records.

### **Statement of Authority**

The assessment is carried out by Mary O'Connor, who has a PhD. in plant ecology and over 20 years professional experience as an ecologist/environmental scientist. She has worked for public and private sector clients and has several years' experience of ecological/environmental assessment and input into Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Report

## 2. Project Description The proposed development comprises of the following works:

The site is in a rural setting, fronting onto a public road, in the Townland of Skenagun Castledermot, Athy Co. Kildare. It includes the garden of an old cottage which contains scrub and dry meadow habitat), and a treeline and hedgerow boundaries. The old semi-detached stone cottage is still extant on site and it is proposed to extend this cottage as part of the proposed development.

The broader surroundings are rural farmland.

### Geology and soils

The Site is underlain by the Tullow Pluton an area of the Leinster Granite.

**Soils and subsoils** Soils in this area are predominantly Grey Brown Podzolics with Associated Gleys. The Site is well drained.

**Hydrology** There are no rivers, streams or drainage ditches within or adjacent to the proposed development site. The closest watercourse on the EPA Rivers Database is the River Lerr, a minor tributary of the River Barrow which is located approx. 250 east of the Site. The River Barrow flows south through counties Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford, and meets the coast at Waterford Harbour approx. 100 km downstream.

Under the Water Framework Directive status assessments, the River Lerr is of Moderate status (Q value 3) just downstream of the proposed development site (EPA Q Value Data 2023).

### Habitats of the proposed Development Site

The habitats of the development site are Comprise buildings and artificial surfaces, some relict gardens, boundary treelines/hedgerows and an area of dry meadow where mowing has not taken place over a few years, there is also scrub and is surrounded by concrete block walls.

### Ecological Value

The modified through past use as a dwelling house and associated garden but the a small area of trees/scrub/dry meadow which have a low local ecological value.

### Overall Ecological Value

The location of the proposed is in a highly modified area which is of low habitat and species diversity and of low ecological interest.

No annexed habitats or species of conservation interest occur within the footprint of the development.

The proposed redevelopment is located at *circa* 250m from nearest SAC (the River Lerr) which is included in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, THE AA Screening for this development, found that although near to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (250m), it is considered that there is no direct or indirect hydrological connection between the subject site and this SAC and impact to any European Site i.e. SAC or SPA was screened out in the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Document included with this application, which concluded no significant impact to any European Site as a result of this work.

## **Description of the proposed development**

### **Project Description**

The project entails an extension to an existing cottage and also the construction of a new 3 bed house on a site at Skenagun, Castledermot, Athy, Co Kildare.

The proposed site outline, site location and architectural plans are demonstrated in Figure Appendix 1.

### **Drainage**

A Civil Engineering Services Report has been prepared by Hays Higgins Partnership to accompany this planning application. It outlines the following drainage strategy for the proposed development:

#### **'Surface Water Drainage**

*Local Authorities require that all developments must include a sustainable urban drainage system, SuDS. There are no surface water sewers in the public area accessible to this site. Permeable paving will be used in the parking areas. A soakaway system is to be used to deal with the surface from the developed site. A soakaway in the rear gardens will be provided for each dwelling. A gravity feed surface water system will fall to the soakaways. The permeable paving will allow natural infiltration within the parking areas. The roof areas will be served by the soakways. The main surface sewers in the proposed development are to consist of 150mm diameter uPVC pipes. Given there is no surface water line currently serving the site the surface run-off is naturally infiltrating, we will be maintaining this approach. The site investigation (contained in Appendix D) noted the site is not suitable for a soakaway however given the current surface run-off to the green areas this will be maintained. The soakways are designed with a low infiltration rate and oversized slightly to accommodate limited infiltration. To alleviate any possible risk of flood the storage is designed for a 1 in 100 year storm (+30%). A 30% increase in runoff due to global warming is included. All possible SuDS mechanisms have been explored, refer to the justification matrix for SuDS in Appendix E. The surface water drains have been designed in accordance with BS EN 752, Code of Practice for Drainage Outside Buildings. Details of the proposed surface water drainage system are shown in Hayes Higgins Partnership drawing within Appendix A and calculations within Appendix B.*

#### **Foul Water Drainage**

*The foul drainage system has been designed in accordance with Irish Water Code of Practice and Standard Details for Wastewater, BS 8301:1985, Code of Practice for Building Drainage and the current Building Regulations and Irish Water Code of Practice. The foul drainage system for the development is a gravity feed system falling to an existing foul manhole. The development will not result in a significant increase in foul discharge from the site on the public sewer and we do not anticipate any capacity problems. The main foul sewers in the proposed development are to consist of 100mm diameter uPVC pipes with fall to be chosen throughout to minimise the risk of blockages and to aid maintenance. A Pre-Connection Enquiry form was submitted to Irish Water and A Confirmation of Feasibility received. Refer to appendix C. Irish Water have confirmed the development is feasible without upgrade by Irish Water. 'The drainage plans are demonstrated in Figures 9 & 10.*

Flood Risk Assessment

A flood-risk assessment was also undertaken by Hays Higgins Partnership which found the following:

*‘A flood risk assessment was undertaken to identify possible sources of flooding and the risk posed to the development, and separately the risk posed to surrounding areas as a result of the development. www.floodinfo.ie was reviewed and the site has not been subjected to previous flooding from the information contained. The site is situated far enough away from the sea not to be subjected to coastal or fluvial. The adjacent public sewers are running down the slope away from the site and have sufficient invert to alleviate the risk. It is intended that all surface water run off generated by the 1in100 year storm will be dealt with via the permeable paving and soakway. Due to all of these factors the risk of flooding is minimal. ‘*

### Location and Layout

See Site Location, Layout and Architectural Drawing attached in **Appendix 1**.

### 3. Screening Assessment

**Table 1.** Characteristics of proposed development

Is the size and design of the proposed works significant?	No
Potential for impacts from project in cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	No
Use of natural resources in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity?	No
Will the works produce waste?	No
Will the works create a significant amount of pollution or nuisance?	No
Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the project including those caused by Climate Change in accordance with scientific knowledge?	No
Risks to human health (water contamination, air pollution)	No
Potential for cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects?	No

**Table 2.** Location of Proposed Development

Environmental Sensitivity of project in relation to existing and approved land use.	No impact envisaged
Relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in	Development will not impact on site regenerative capacity for natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in

the area and its underground	the area and its underground
Absorption capacity of the natural environment including wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones and the marine environment, mountain and forest area	Not Applicable
Potential of works to impact directly or indirectly on sites designated for nature conservation (NHA/SAC/SPA)	A detailed Screening for Appropriate Assessment is included with this application found that having considered the particulars of the proposed development, it was concluded there is no risk of direct or indirect impacts on any Natura 2000 sites. Also it was found that on the basis of objective scientific information following screening, that the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.
Potential for impacts directly or indirectly on Habitats or Species listed on Annex I, II and IV of the Habitats Directive	None (no annexed habitat or species occurs within the proposed development site)
Potential for impacts on breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act?	None
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any listed ACA in the County Development Plan?	None
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structure or recorded monuments and places of Archaeological Interest	None
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on listed or scenic views or protected landscape in the County Development Plan?	None
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
Potential to impact on densely populated areas.	None

**Table 3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts**

Human Beings	No impacts are identified
Flora and Fauna	No habitat loss will be incurred by the proposed development

Soils and Geology	No impact on existing soil characteristics by the proposed development
Water	The development will not result in a significant increase in foul discharge from the site on the public sewer and capacity problems are not anticipated.
Air and Climate	No impact on air quality by the proposed development
Noise and Vibration	Noise and Vibration levels will be restricted during the works, no potential impacts following construction
Landscape	The site is within the site of an old existing rural cottage and the proposed development will not have a negative impact on the existing landscape, there will be no additional landtake as a result of works.
Material Assets	The proposed development will not have any significant impact on material assets including public utilities and natural resources
Cultural Heritage	None
Interaction of Foregoing	No significant effects likely to arise associated with the characteristics of the potential impacts.

**Table 4.** Discussion of Potential Impacts

Will a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed works?	No
Will a large population be impacted as a result of the proposed works?	No
Are any trans-frontier impacts likely to arise from proposed works?	No
Is the intensity and complexity of impacts associated with the proposed works considered significant?	No
Is there a high probability that the impacts will occur?	Conservation led design will provide safeguards in relation to potential impacts ensuring low probability that impacts will occur
What is the expected onset, duration, frequency	Conservation led design will provide safeguards

and reversibility of the impact?	in relation to potential impacts ensuring low probability that impacts will occur
Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects?	It is considered that no significant cumulative effects will arise
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects?	The proposed plan aims to reduce effects of any potential impact

#### **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 5 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 and having regard to Annex III criteria of the EIA Directive it is concluded that an EIAR is not required for the proposed development for residential infill development at Skenagun Castledermot, Athy, Co. Kildare.



# Appendix 1. Layout and Site Location



