

# EIA Screening Report

Wonderful Barn, Barnhall, Leixlip, Co. Kildare

31 May 2024



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

This report has been prepared by MacCabe Durney Barnes on behalf of Kildare County Council, to support it in undertaking a screening determination for Environmental Impact Assessment in respect of a Part 8 development consisting of an area of land measuring 19.8 HA located at The Wonderful Barn, Barnhall, Leixlip, Co. Kildare. The Part 8 process is being pursued by Kildare County Council who are the Competent Authority (CA) responsible for formal screening and scoping decisions.

This report has been prepared in respect of the proposed Part 8 development consisting of the refurbishment of the Wonderful Barn for use as a venue space, the refurbishment of adjacent structures including the Barnhall House for use for meeting rooms and exhibition space; the use of the former stables for community workshop, gallery space, with an extensions for use as a cafe, toilets, kitchens and workshop; the landscaping of the surrounding parkland, reinstatement of historic landscape, redevelopment of allotments, and; the provision of cycle and pedestrian connections, and provision of car and bicycle parking and required services. .

This document has been prepared in order to assist Kildare County Council in the determination of the proposed works at the subject site.

## 1.2 Legislation and Guidance

The EIA Screening Report has had regard to the following:

- Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended
- Directive 2014/52/EU of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU
- The European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018)
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency, 2022
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening, European Commission, 2017
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment August 2018
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development 2003
- Circular Letter: PL 05/2018 27th August 2018 Transposition into Planning Law of Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the EIA Directive) and Revised Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment.

- Circular Letter: PL 10/2018 22 November 2018 Public notification of timeframe for application to An Bord Pleanála for screening determination in respect of local authority or State authority development
- Office of the Planning Regulator (May 2021) Environmental Impact Assessment Screening- Practice Note

### 1.3 Methodology

The EIA screening assesses the proposed scheme with reference to the relevant EIA legislation including the EIA Directive, and Planning and Development Regulations. The methodology has particular regard to the '3-Step' assessment process set out in the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Practice Note PN02 (June 2021). Regard is also had to European and National guidance documents.

Where the local 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 prepare, or cause to be prepared, the information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination, 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) prepare, or cause to be prepared, an EIAR in respect of the development.

### 1.4 Data Sources

The information is obtained from review of several online databases and public sources including:

- Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) online dataset - <https://www.gsi.ie>
- Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029
- Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020 – 2023 (Extended to 2026)
- An Bord Pleanála Planning Applications
- EPA - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>
- GeoHive – <http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html>.
- Office of Public Works (OPW) - <http://www.floodinfo.ie/map/floodmaps>

In addition to the above the following project specific reports were utilised to inform this report:

- Appropriate Assessment Screening (AA) prepared by NM Ecology
- Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) including bat survey results prepared by NM Ecology

- Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared by Aecom
- Conservation Report prepared by Howley Hayes Cooney

## 2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

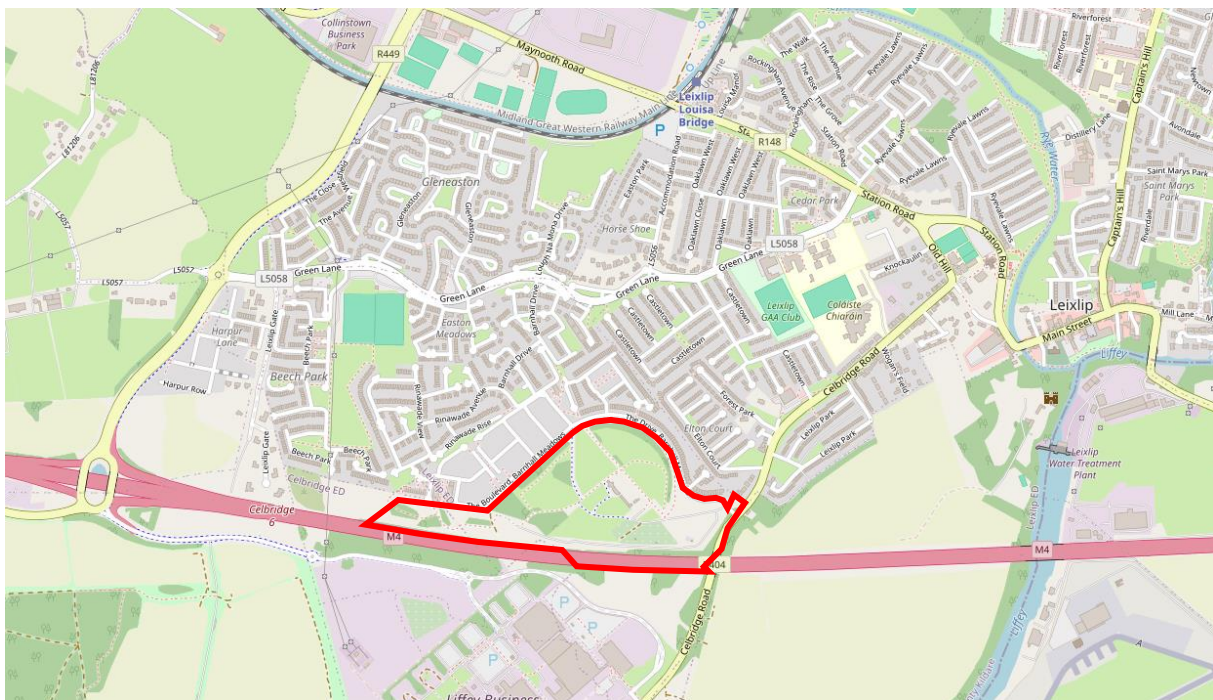
### 2.1 Site Context

The site is known as The Wonderful Barn complex and is located in Barnhall to the south of Leixlip. The M4 motorway is to the south and the Celbridge Road (R4040) is to the east. The Wonderful Barn is located outside of the CSO boundary for the settlement of Leixlip Town in the 2022 Census.

The lands immediately surrounding the subject site to the north and to the west consists of recently built houses. There are semidetached houses facing the Wonderful Barn complex. The area to the north of the site is suburban in nature. The site is served by the Barnhall Meadows Road to the east which comes off of the Celbridge Road which passes the subject site to its east. The M4 is located to the south of the site. The Liffey Business Park is on the other side of the M4 motorway. The Leixlip GAA is located to c. 600 metres to the northwest of the site.

Population data was extracted from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Census of Population 2016 and 2022. The site forms part of the Electoral Division Leixlip where the population in 2016 was 15,576 persons and this rose to 16,755 persons in 2022. It is prudent to note that the ED boundary's have been altered for the 2022 census. A portion of the subject site is outside of the Leixlip ED and is within the Celbridge ED. The population in 2016 was 15,653 persons and this number rose to 16,066 persons in 2022.

The Part 8 process is being pursued by Kildare County Council, who are the competent authority (CA) responsible for formal screening and scoping decisions.



**Figure 1 Site Location (Source: OpenStreetMap)**

## 2.2 Site Description

The site totals c. 19.8 ha in area. The site consists of the Wonderful Barn, Barnhall House, Stables, a walled garden and the surrounding parkland. There are pigeon houses at the corners of the walled courtyard consisting of a conical design similar to the Wonderful Barn. The structures on the site are unused. According to a report by Howley Hayes Cooney there has been extensive fire damage at the Barnhall House. Some repair works have been completed but it requires significant works to its interior. The Wonderful Barn received structural repair works in 2005 and further masonry repair works have been completed.

To the south of the Barnhall House are the Wonderful Barn Allotments and the parkland contains paved paths and dense semi mature trees. There is a path across the subject site from the Barnhall Meadows Road to the east of the site that runs along the southern edge of the subject site on a route called the Barnhall Meadows Boulevard and exits the parkland at the Barnhall Meadows Road to the west of the site. The boundary consists of a row of semi mature trees. A low stone boundary wall has been installed recently along boundary in front of the semi mature trees from the West to the east installed as part of the recent housing development abutting the subject site.





**Plate 1: Aerial view of the Wonderful Barn Complex and Parkland** (Source: Google Maps)



**Plate 3: Wonderful Barn**



**Plate 2: Wonderful Barn & Barnhall House**



**Plate 4: Walled Garden**



**Plate 5: Walled Garden**



**Plate 6: Dovecote**

## 2.3 Environmental Sensitivities of the Site

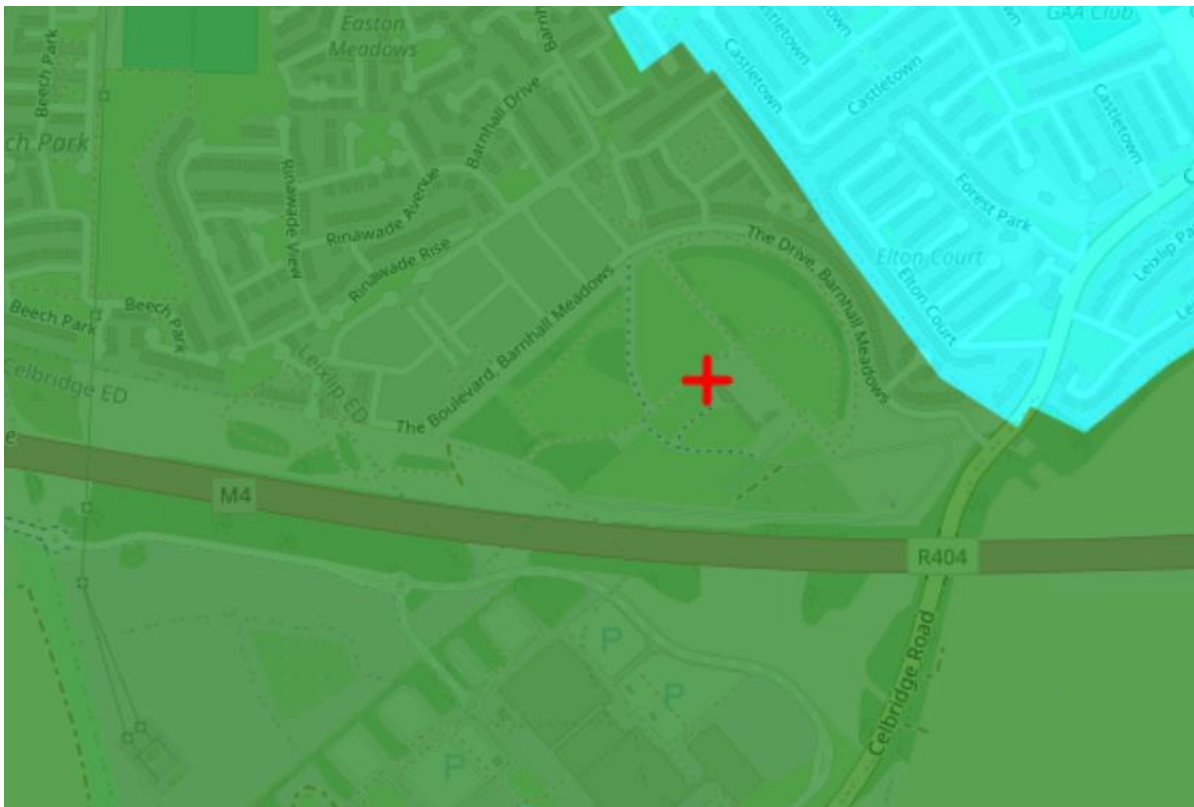
The information set out below was derived from the data available within the EPA Mapping Tool, the Kildare County Council Planning Application Portal, and the relevant local statutory planning documentation, including the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

### 2.3.1 Bedrock

According to Geological Survey Ireland, the site is located on the 'Lucan Formation', which consists of Dark Limestone & Shale.

### 2.3.2 Soils and Hydrogeology

The EPA mapping tool indicate that the subsoil at the subject site is Limestone till (Carboniferous) and the soils are fine loamy drifts.



**Figure 2: Subsoils in the context of the Subject site** (Source: EPA Mapping)

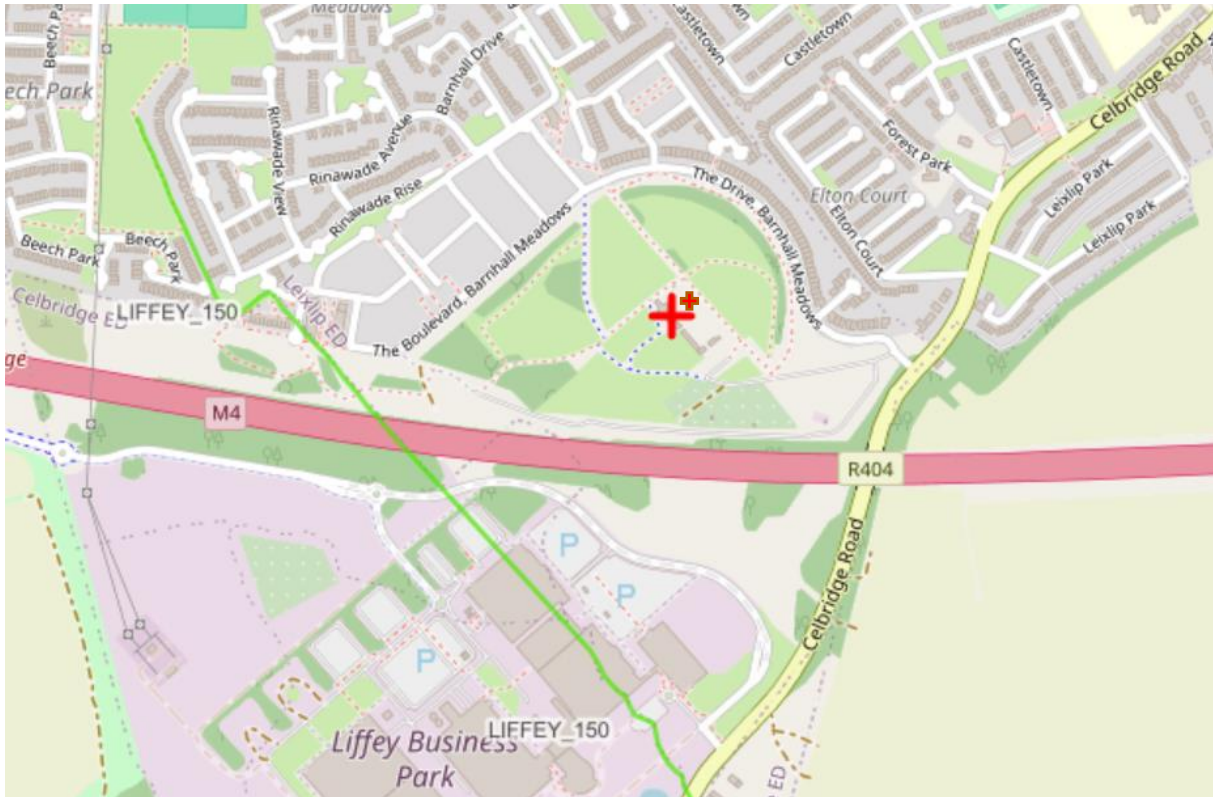
### 2.3.3 Hydrology

According to EPA Maps there is a culverted stream running underneath the subject site flowing from north to south underneath the western half of subject site. It is known as Kilmacredock Upper (EPA Code 09K41). The stream begins to the south of the Leixlip GAA to the rear of the properties on Rinawade Lawns. It continues underneath the Liffey Business Park and enters the River Liffey. The Kilmacredock Upper stream [IE\_EA\_09L011900] has a WFD risk status "Good" under the latest status report.

The closest major watercourse is the River Liffey which is c. 650 m to the southeast of the site. The Rye Water is located approximately 1.1 km to the north of the site. The River Liffey is currently of “Poor” status (Water Framework Directive Status Assessments 2016-2021), and the Rye Water is of “Moderate” status.

Flood maps do not indicate any flooding designations.

The Groundwater WFD status for the waterbody [IE\_EA\_G\_008] is “Good” under the latest status report.



**Figure 3: River Waterbodies Risk in the context of the subject site** (Source: EPA Maps)

### 2.3.4 Aquifer and Groundwater

The site is located over “Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones” [LI].

The GSI vulnerability is defined as “Moderate” [M].

Subsoil Permeability is classified as “Low” [L].



Figure 4: Aquifers in the vicinity of the Site (Source: EPA Maps)

### 2.3.5 Ground Water Vulnerability

The EPA Mapping Tool shows that the groundwater vulnerability at the subject site is of “Moderate” vulnerability.



Figure 5: Ground Water Vulnerability (Source: EPA Maps)

### 2.3.6 Radon

About 1 in 20 homes in this area is likely to have high radon levels.



**Figure 6: Radon Levels in the Context of the Subject Site (Source: EPA Maps)**

### 2.3.7 Air quality & noise

The site falls within Air Quality Index Region where the Index indicates that the air quality is "Good". According to EPA Maps, the site is situated in Region 3 Large Towns.

The site is located proximate to the M4 motorway. The motorway is to the southern boundary of the site. The noise emanating from the motorway has detrimental impacts to the amenity space in the southern portion of the site.

### 2.3.8 Designated sites

The nearest Natura 2000 sites are as follows:

**Table 1: European Sites in the Context of the Subject Site**

| European Site  | Distance | Reason for Designation  |
|--|----------|---|
| Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area |          |   |
| Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [1398]                       | 1 km     | <p><u>Qualifying Interests:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]</li> <li>• Vertigo angustior (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</li> <li>• Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]</li> </ul> |

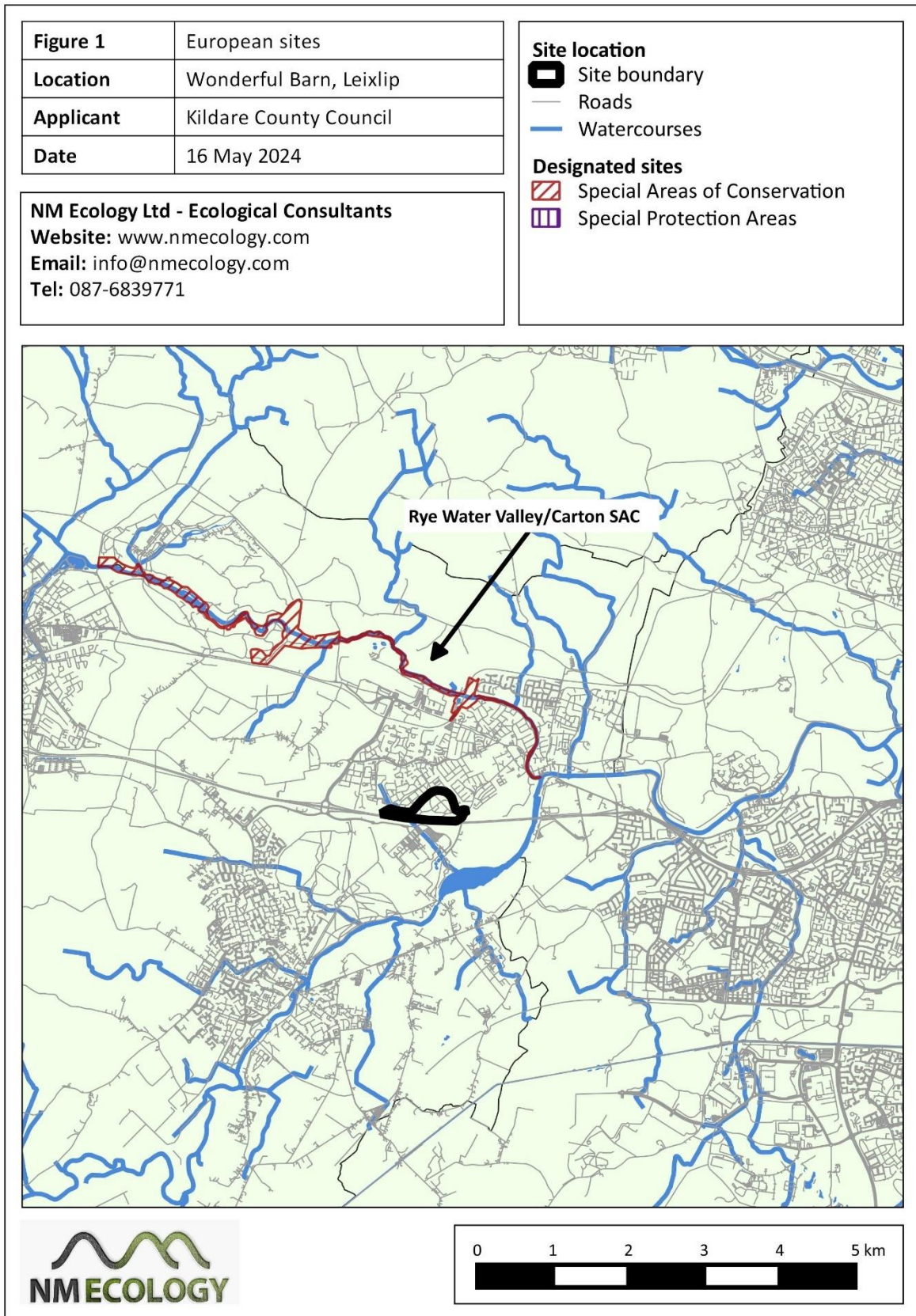


Figure 7 European sites in the context of the subject site (Source: NM Ecology)

### 2.3.9 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA)

The site is located c. 800 metres to the south of the Royal Canal pNHA (Sitecode 2103) and the Rye Water Valley/Cartron pNHA (Sitecode 1398) is located c. 900 metres to the northeast of the subject site. This pNHA is also an SAC. The Liffey Valley pNHA (Sitecode 128) is located c. 1.3km to the east of the subject site along the River Liffey, downstream from the Wonderful Barn Complex, and the Grand Canal pNHA (2014) 3.4km to the south.



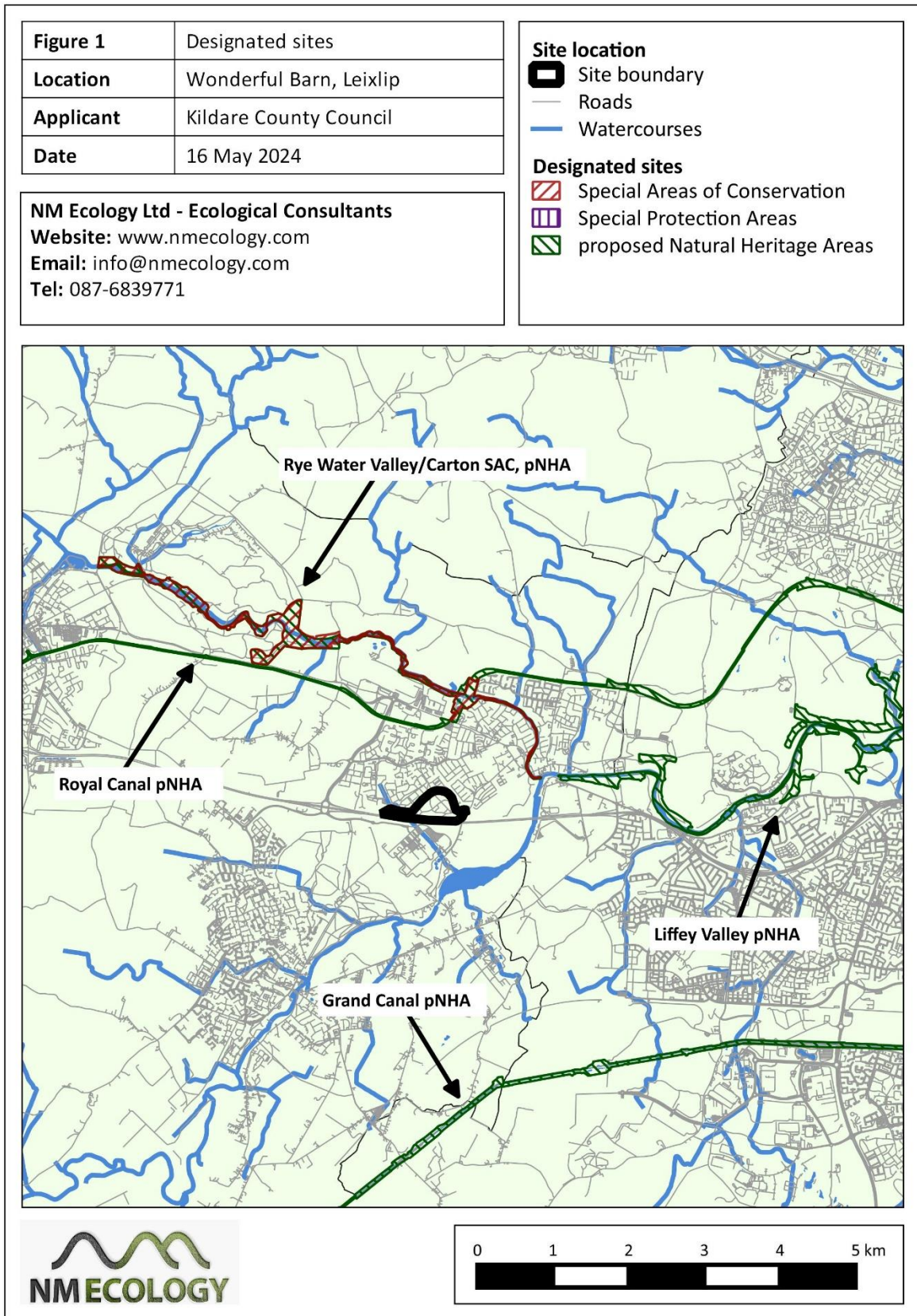
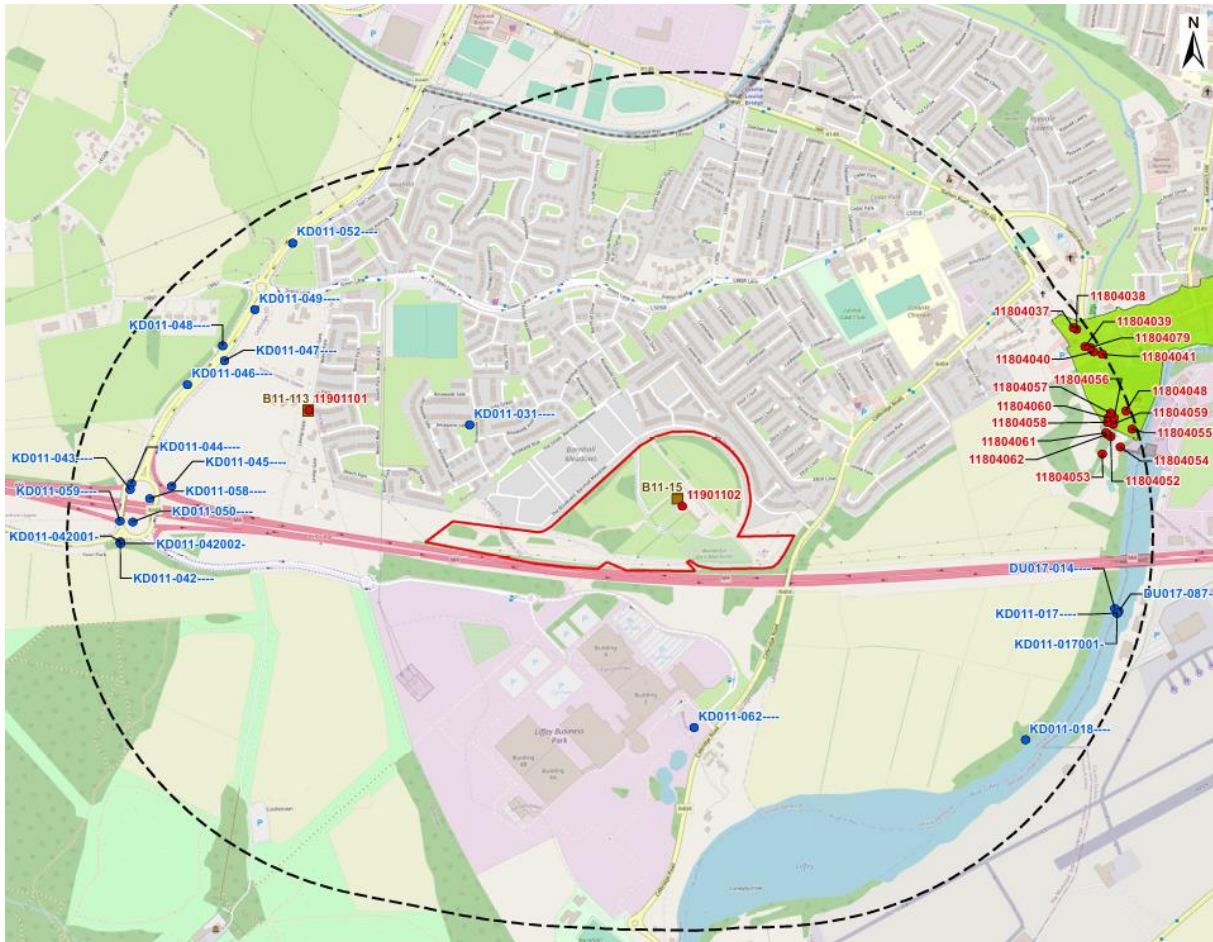


Figure 8: Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (Source: NM Ecology)

### 2.3.10 Archaeology

There are no recorded monuments within the site or proximate to the subject site. According to the National Monument Services the nearest monument to the subject site is c. 350m to the north of the site and this is identified as a redundant record. There are no other records relevant to the subject site.



**Figure 9 NMS and NIAH structures in the context of the subject site (Source: Aecom)**

### 2.3.11 Architectural Heritage

There is one structure on the subject site that is on the Kildare County Council Record of Protected Structures (RPS). It is the Wonderful Barn Complex (RPS Ref. No. B11-15). The protected structure listing consists of the Wonderful Barn and its associated structures. The Wonderful Barn, according to the National inventory of Architectural Heritage, (NIAH) is a freestanding single-bay five-stage grain store, dated 1743 that is now disused. According to a report by Howley Hayes Cooney, the Barnhall House predates the Wonderful Barn. The report gives the following description of the significance of the Barnhall House:

*“As originally built Barnhall House was an impressive strong farmhouse designed without much serious architectural pretension, and certainly with little of the fine detailing found in the barn and pigeon houses. The formal architectural quality of the building has been compromised by the subsequent alterations to*

*the building, which detract significantly from its character and importance. These unfortunate interventions can, none the less, be quite easily reversed and as a mid-eighteenth century dwelling at the core of this interesting farmstead, this house retains a strong cultural significance. This significance would be greatly further enhanced if, after further opening up and investigation, the structure proved to pre-date the barn, having been constructed in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The considerable wealth and large estate of the late Speaker Connolly's clearly demanded large barns to store the harvested produce. His large house also required great long vistas, with eyecatchers of an appropriate scale to terminate them. The barn was clearly intended to be seen from the park around the house, and was no mere product of function alone, as it provides a much needed vertical element in a county renowned for its flatness. During the early eighteenth century Ireland and England led the world in the new style of landscape design widely referred to as the 'natural style.' Castletown was one of the first great landscapes in Ireland to be laid out in this fashion and like the magnificent Connolly's Folly, that closes the vista on the northern access of the house, the Wonderful Barn is a very significant part of this design. Based on the historical, architectural, designed landscape and social importance of the place, the Wonderful Barn complex is most certainly a place of national significance and possibly an historic place of international significance."*

There are no other structures relevant on the RPS or according to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).

### 2.3.12 Zoning at the subject site

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023- 2029 applies as does the Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023 (extended to March 2026). The site is zoned "Open Space and Amenity" in the LAP.

The adjacent the lands that encircle the Wonderful Barn are zoned "New Residential". The lands have also been designated as a Key Development Area (KDA). The vision for the KDA was to extend the urban area of Leixlip through new residential development and open space and amenity. It also aims to provide links to the cultural heritage of the Wonderful Barn. This has been delivered recently.

The proposed development consists of the refurbishment of the Wonderful Barn for use as a venue space, the refurbishment of adjacent structures including the Barnhall House for use as meeting rooms and exhibition space accommodation, refurbishment and extension of the stables for use as a café, the landscaping of the surrounding parkland, and the reinstatement of historic landscape, redevelopment of allotments, provision of cycle and pedestrian connections and parking.

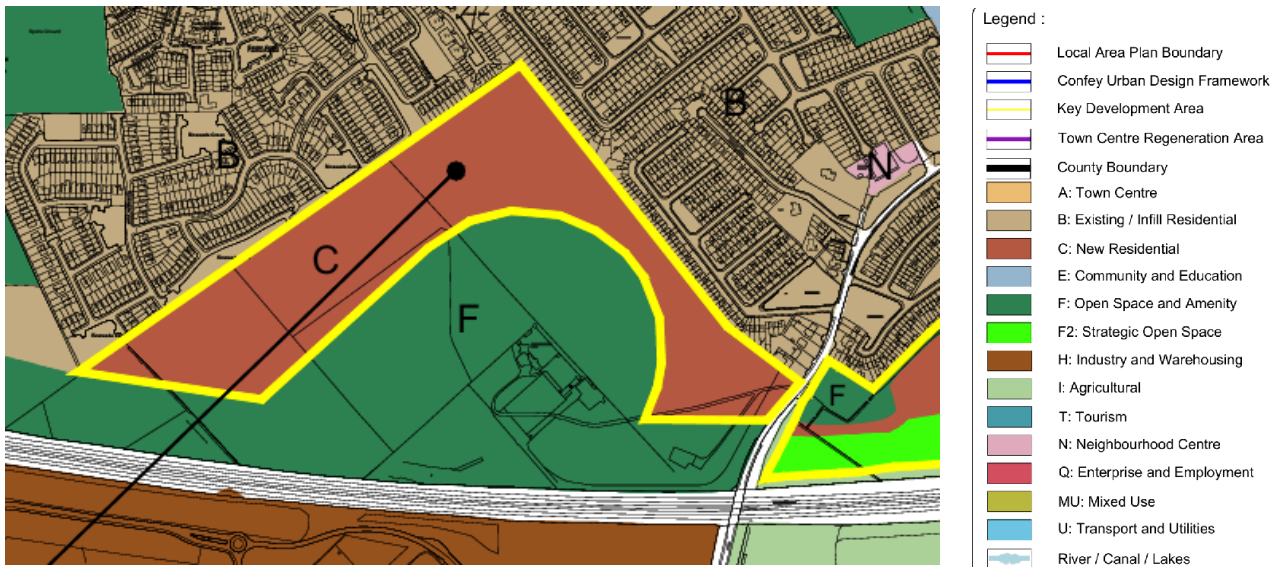


Figure 10: Zoning on subject lands (Source: Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023)

### 2.3.13 Ecological nature in the Vicinity of site

A preliminary assessment by NM Ecology was undertaken in March 2024 and the assessment indicates the following habitats are on the subject lands:

- GA2 Amenity Grassland
- GS2 Dry meadows and grassy verges
- GS4 Wet Grassland
- WD1 (Mixed) broadleaved woodland
- BC2 Horticultural land
- WL1 Hedgerows
- WL2 Treelines

#### 2.3.13.1 Bats

A bat activity survey was carried out to determine whether the trees and other habitats were of importance for foraging or commuting bats.

A small roost of 1 – 2 common pipistrelle bats was recorded in Barnhall House, likely a day roost during mid-summer months and a mating roost in autumn. It appears that the bats roost between roof timbers in the attic of the structure (fresh droppings were recorded in the area), and emerge from the south-eastern side of the building. No roosting bats were recorded in any other structures. Overall, the roost in Barnhall House is of Local importance. The surrounding parkland represents a foraging / commuting habitat of Local importance.

The low number of roosting bats is surprising given the age and suitability of the buildings. The reason is almost certainly due to a series of fires at the structures: Barnhall House was subject to a major fire approx. 10 years ago, and there has been a series of small fires throughout the stables. It is likely that

the buildings previously supported larger numbers of roosting bats, but that the fire killed them or caused them to move elsewhere. If the buildings are renovated and protected in the future, it is expected that larger numbers of bats will roost there in the future.

### 2.3.13.2 Summary of Identification of Important Ecological Features

Table 3 provides a summary of all ecological features of identified within the site, including their importance and legal / conservation status.

**Table 2: Important ecological Features within the Site (Source: NM Ecology)**

| Ecological feature                                  | Importance | Legal status | Important feature? |
|---|------------|--------------|--------------------|
| <b>Designated sites</b>                             | N.A.       | -            | No                 |
| <b>Broadleaved Woodland (WD1)</b>                   | Local      | -            | Yes                |
| <b>Treelines (WL2)</b>                              | Local      | -            | Yes                |
| <b>Hedgerows (WL1)</b>                              | Local      | -            | Yes                |
| <b>Amenity grassland (GA2)</b>                      | Negligible | -            | No                 |
| <b>Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)</b>          | Local      | -            | Yes                |
| <b>Wet grassland (GS4) and other wetlands</b>       | Local      | -            | Yes                |
| <b>Horticultural land (BC2)</b>                     | Negligible | -            | No                 |
| <b>Rare / protected flora</b>                       | N.A.       | -            | No                 |
| <b>Invasive plant species</b>                       | N.A.       | -            | No                 |
| <b>Small mammals (hedgehog, stoat, pygmy shrew)</b> | Local      | WA           | Yes                |
| <b>All other terrestrial mammals</b>                | Negligible | -            | No                 |
| <b>Bats</b>   | Local      | HR, WA       | Yes                |
| <b>Birds (including nesting habitat)</b>            | Local      | WA           | Yes                |
| <b>Fish and aquatic fauna</b>                       | N.A.       | -            | No                 |
| <b>Reptiles and amphibians</b>                      | Local      | WA           | Yes                |
| <b>Invertebrates</b>                                | Negligible | -            | No                 |

\* HR – European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended); WA - protected under Section 19 or 20 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended)

In summary, the important ecological features identified in this assessment are woodlands (broadleaved woodland, treelines, hedgerows), semi-natural grasslands (dry meadow and wet grassland), small mammals, bats, birds and amphibians. Potential impacts on these features are considered in Section 5.

All other ecological features discussed in Section 4 are considered to be of Negligible ecological importance, so they are not listed as Important Ecological Features.

#### 2.3.14 Trees

There are lines of planted trees at a number of locations within the Site. Some are visible on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Maps (created in 1829 – 1841), which means that they have been present at this location for at least 180 years.

Of particular note is a line of very large beech trees *Fagus sylvatica* to the north-east of Barnhall (arranged in a north-west to south-east orientation), which may once have been the formal approach to the buildings.

Separately, a treeline has been planted along the side of the M4 motorway, including at the location of the pedestrian / cycle bridge connecting to Castletown Estate. Trees include abundant field maple *Acer campestre*, frequent sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and occasional Italian alder *Alnus cordata*. The shrub layer is dominated by hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble, with some occasional hazel *Corylus avellana*.

There are also two treelines dominated by ash in the south-western corner of the Site.

The network of treelines and hedgerows (see below) are of considerable age, and provide habitat for a range of biodiversity, so they are of Local importance.

#### 2.3.15 Birds

A survey was carried out on the subject site for birds. There are no Special Protection Areas in the surrounding area, so there is no risk that any associated bird species would be affected by the development.

A range of common countryside birds were observed during the surveys, including buzzard, rook, magpie, jackdaw, woodpigeon, blackbird, robin, wren, chaffinch, bullfinch, great tit, blue tit and coal tit. Many of these species are likely to nest within the parklands.

Swallows and house martins were observed around the Site, and swallow nests were observed within the Wonderful Barn and stables. Swift were seen overhead during the first bat survey, but no birds were observed landing on the buildings. This species is known to nest at Castletown House and in Leixlip town.

The derelict buildings were searched for signs of barn owl, but none were found. As noted previously, the series of fires at these structures are likely to have reduced their suitability for this species.

Great spotted woodpecker are known to breed within the Castletown Estate and appear to be spreading in the surrounding area. They are expected to colonise the Site as the woodland matures.

Overall, the Site is of Local importance for birds.

### 2.3.16 Other Site Environmental Sensitives

The proposed development includes the refurbishment of the Wonderful Barn which is a protected structure. The proposed works will be sensitive to the architectural heritage of the protected structure and associated structures on the complex. The proposed works will help to preserve the architectural heritage through adaptive reuse of the structures and improve the visitor experience to the general public.

## 3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1 Summary of Proposed Development

The proposed redevelopment of the Wonderful Barn aims to restore the existing structures on the site, including one house, one barn (two dovecotes, a walled garden and two adjacent courtyards containing two stable buildings (all protected structures – RPS no. B11-15). The proposed works will protect and enhance the architectural heritage and amenity of the site and provide an integrated public amenity park and tourism destination at the Wonderful Barn and associated lands, informed by a detailed conservation plan. The project is aimed at fostering community engagement, provision of diverse recreational and cultural amenities and to attract tourism to the site.

The proposed redevelopment includes:

#### **A) Conservation-led restoration and reuse of the existing building complex including:**

- The barn (corkscrew-shaped conical tower), reuse of ground floor as community/cultural space, reuse of upper floors within confines of limited access for other use. Conversion of existing 'potato house' to toilets / first floor add-on general storage area.
- The house, including demolition of small quantum of existing fabric to reinstate integrity of protected structures, provision of improved access at rear of the house for community reuse,
- Reuse of existing stable buildings to facilitate re-use as cafe and multipurpose community/meeting rooms, other community activities, including events, classes, and gatherings. Provision of a 115sqm extension to former stable buildings to provide a commercial kitchen and café with a southern outlook into the historic walled working vegetable garden amenity including external vents.
- Dedicated space within Barnhall House to highlight the context of the structure's past, key historic events, architectural features.
- Restoration of both dovecotes (conical towers) and adjacent courtyards.
- Walled garden restoration, including small scale intervention to facilitate proposed cafe, relocation of existing temporary roadway to be outside of the garden,
- provision of security, including CCTV.
- exterior lighting to the Barn to highlight the structure.

#### **B) Upgrade works at existing site entrance from R404 including.**

- Provision of new carpark with 65 no. of carparking spaces and 28 no. of bike parking spaces and 4 bus parking spaces.
- Accommodation works to provide access to existing Uisce Eireann water services pumphouse, to include landscape screening works.



### C) Redevelopment of existing parkland to include

- Redevelopment of the current 55 no. allotments to realign the plots within the restored historical landscape axes and provide new and improved facilities for the local allotment users.
- Provision of a new 174sqm building to the East of the existing building complex which will provide a storage facility to replace an existing container on site, new toilets, kitchenette, and workshop facilities for the local allotment user group as well as short term workplace facilities for the KCC Parks Department. Provision of water and power outlet market facilities adjacent to the new building to accommodate weekly / monthly local markets.
- Installation of children’s play-area, fitness stations, sport areas and other ancillary open space facilities. Upgrade of existing/ addition of new combined footpath/cycle-paths throughout the site with associated new street furniture, seating, and public lighting throughout the parkland., new wayfinding and signage throughout the parkland, facilities for existing park user groups, eg dog walking facilities.
- The proposed internal route will link to the Celbridge/Backweston to Leixlip cycle route proposed (by others) to the south via the Kildare Innovation Campus (formerly the Hewlett Packard site) and via the M4 pedestrian/cycle overpass. The proposed internal route within the Wonderful Barn site allows for future connections to planned cycle infrastructure improvements along the R404 Celbridge Road towards Leixlip Town Centre, to be delivered by Kildare County Council.
- Protection and reinstatement of the axial views within the site boundary between Castletown House and the Wonderful Barn and undergrounding of overhead cables.
- Protection and reinstatement of the integrity of the historic landscape including the Southern and South-Western formal tree lined avenues and forecourt to Barnhall House, formal planting of the walled garden, formal planting of the historic orchard to the Northwest of the building complex and an historic tree line and hedgerow to the Northern boundary of the courtyards.
- Improve overall park accessibility for residents of all ages and abilities throughout the park.
- soft and hard landscaping, including sustainable landscaping practices to enhance biodiversity and environmental sustainability. New conservation-led woodland planting and motorway screening planting.
- Sensitive design and mitigation measures to minimize environmental impact on native habitat preservation.

### D) Other works

- Realignment and improvements to pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to site including all necessary infrastructure works required to integrate the site with a proposed M4 Cycle/Walkway bridge.
- Proposed noise barrier to protect the site from adjacent motorway noise nuisance.
- Provision of all utilities, necessary services, drainage works and associated site works.



Figure 11: Site Layout Plan (Source: Metropolitan Workshop)

## 4. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

### 4.1 Guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) has issued guidance on EIA screening in the form of the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening- Practice Note, May 2021 which aids planning authorities as the Competent Authority (CA) in this area.



Figure 12: Extract from OPR EIA Screening Guidance Note

This report has had regard to the OPR guidance and methodology.

The proposed application is a project for the purpose of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under Stage1 stage (a) of the OPR guidance.

### 4.2 Sub-threshold Development

A list of the types or classes of development that require EIA or screening for EIA is provided in Part 1 and Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. 'Sub-threshold development' comprises development of a type that is included in Part 2 of Schedule 5, but which does not equal or exceed a quantity, area or other limit (the threshold).

The OPR practice note indicates that urban development would include public realm works. The development may be considered an urban development and would fall to be considered under Class 10 (b) (iv) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations.

10. Infrastructure projects

(b) (i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.

(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.**

("business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)

The OPR guidance also defines 'business district', 'built up area' and 'elsewhere' for the purposes of the Regulations. The site is not located within a 'business district' with reference to the OPR's guidance note.

The question arises as to whether the site is located in a 'built up area' which is defined in the Guidance note as "...a 'city' or 'town' or an adjoining developed area. An adjoining developed area can be taken to mean contiguous suburbs." Leixlip is a town within the definition of section 10 (3) of the Local Government Act 2001. The site falls outside the former town commission boundary of the town. The lands are adjoining an existing suburban area, which falls within boundary of the town. While the lands are adjoining, they are not currently developed. Therefore, the lands are not considered to fall within the definition of a 'built-up area'. The 10 ha threshold would not therefore apply.

The OPR guidance note indicates that 'elsewhere' may be taken to mean "...any area outside of the above [city, town or built up area]...". The subject site would fall within the definition of 'elsewhere' and the 20 ha threshold would apply. In relation to the proposed development, the subject site is 19.8 ha which is below the threshold. Therefore, a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Report would not be required for the development.

However, a sub-threshold assessment should be undertaken and under Step 1(c) of the OPR guidance a preliminary examination is required under Step 2.

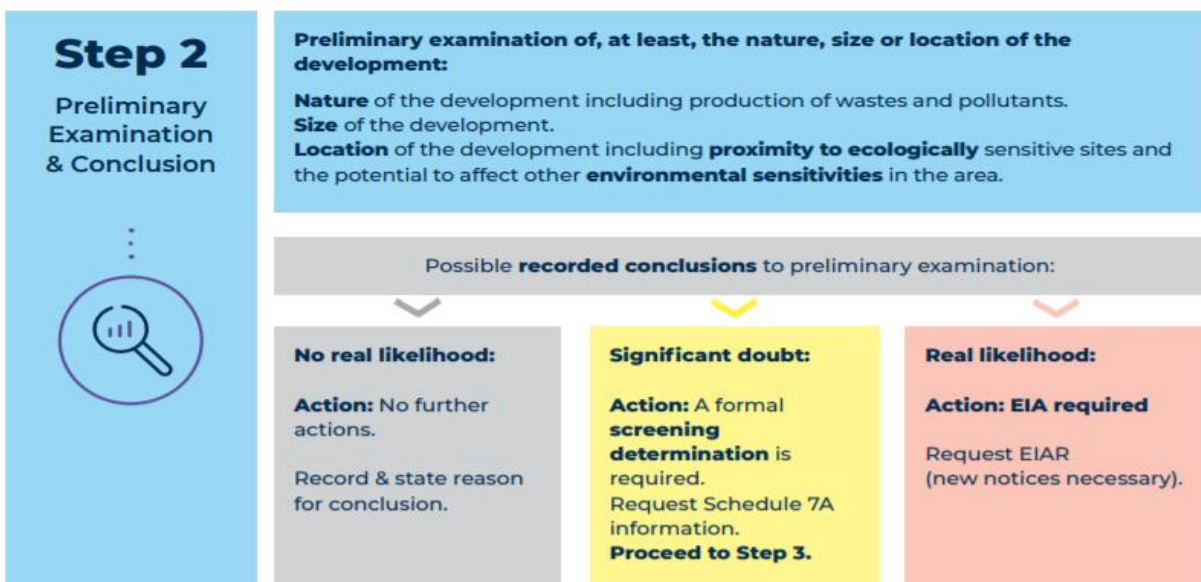


Figure 13: Extract from OPR EIA Screening Guidance Note

### 4.3 Preliminary Examination considerations

Preliminary examinations must consider at least the following:

- The nature of the development including the production of wastes and pollutants;
- The size of the development; or
- The location of the development including the potential to impact on certain ecologically sensitive sites and the potential to affect other environmentally sensitive sites in the area.

The OPR guidance states a number of questions to assist the preliminary examination.

This overlaps with the submitted Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report and consideration of hydrological and other connections to European sites.

### 4.4 Nature of the development:

#### ***i) Is the nature of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?***

The nature of the development is consistent with and does not detract from the objectives of the Kildare County Development Plan and the Leixlip Local Area Plan. The proposal is to regenerate the Wonderful Barn and the adjoining structures and parkland to bring them back into use and to improve the quality and amenity of the lands. This is aligned with the zoning objectives of the lands.

Therefore, the proposed development is consistent with the zoning objectives on site. The proposal is to bring the derelict structures back into use therefore the proposed development is not exceptional in the context of the existing urban environment.

#### ***ii) Will the development result in the production of any significant waste, or result in significant emissions or pollutants?***

The proposed development will involve the refurbishment of existing structures including the Barnhall House and the stable building. This will give rise to waste during the clearing of debris from the fire damaged properties and during the construction works. During the construction phase, any waste generated from the proposed development will be dealt with in the appropriate manner in accordance with the appropriate standards and best practice methodology. During the operational phase, the proposed allotment building and the café extension will produce packaging waste etc.

The proposed development by its nature will not cause any significant waste, emissions, or pollutants during operation.

#### ***iii) Is the size of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?***

The size of the development is not exceptional in the context of the existing environment. The development will result in the refurbishment of existing structures and the provision of community space and amenity space. The development involves the refurbishment of existing derelict and unused heritage structures; therefore, the proposed development is not considered exceptional in the Barnhall area.

**iv) Are there cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted projects?**

There have not been any recent planning applications on the subject site. Two recent planning consents abutting the site are of note. A Strategic Housing Development (SHD) by Ardstone was granted and has commenced construction immediately adjacent the subject site (ABP. Ref. No. 300606). The SHD encircles the Wonderful Barn Complex and consists of 450 units. It was granted by An Bord Pleanála on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The attenuation area of the SHD is located within the red line boundary for the subject site. There is also an attenuation area to the east of the Wonderful Barn complex at the entrance. The SHD application included boundary treatment and landscaping works at the boundary of the Wonderful Barn Complex. This can be seen in the figure below.



**Figure 14 Site Layout Plan for SHD (Source: MCORM Architecture)**

Lands to the south of the M4 motorway were subject to a planning application for development at the Kildare Innovation Campus (Ref. No. 2360047). A pedestrian and cycle route connecting the campus to the Castletown estate and the Wonderful Barn was proposed as part of this application. The planning application was granted permission on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024. The pedestrian and cycling bridge will connect the Wonderful Barn to the lands to the south of the Innovation Campus. The table below shows relevant recent planning applications in the surrounding areas. It is noted, cumulative effects have the potential to negatively impact the environment. The potential effects have been considered during the design for the proposed development.



Figure 15: Kildare Innovation Campus Site Location

Figure 16 Planning History

| Ref.            | Applicant              | Address   | Description  | Decision | Decision Date |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|--|----------|---------------|
| <b>16282</b>    | Kilross Properties Ltd | Townland of Easton, Off Greenlane, Leixlip, Col. Kildare. | Construction of 170 no. houses and two apartment blocks  | Granted  | 26 May 2017   |
| <b>18300606</b> | Ardstone Homes Ltd     | Barnhall, Leixlip   | Construction of 450 residential units, childcare facility, new roundabout on the Celbridge Road and associated road alignment to facilitate vehicular access | Granted  | 13 April 2018 |

|                 |   |   |   |          |                  |
|-----------------|---|---|---|----------|------------------|
| <b>20307223</b> | ES Leixlip Greenfields Ltd                                    | Leixlip Gate, Kilmacredock, Leixlip   | Demolition of existing buildings, construction of 239 no. residential units and creche.   | Granted  | 10 October 2020  |
| <b>2360047</b>  | The Davy Platform IC for and on behalf of the Liffey Sub-Fund | Kildare Innovation Campus (KIC), Barnhall Meadows, Leixlip                      | Demolition of existing buildings and construction of data centre buildings and deep tech buildings. The proposal included the construction of a pedestrian and cycle bridge across the M4 motorway connecting the innovation campus to the Castletown and the Wonderful Barn. | Granted  | 22 January 2024  |
| <b>23513</b>    | Glenveagh Homes Ltd   | Leixlip Demesne, Leixlip  | LRD for 237 no. units, and creche   | Granted  | 18 December 2023 |
| <b>2360485</b>  | Cairn Homes   | “Leixlip Gate”, in the townlands of Kilmacredock Upper and Castletown,, Leixlip | LRD for 229 no units, creche, and amendments to a previously consented road at Harpur Lane  | Appealed | 01 May 2024      |
| <b>20108</b>    | Avoca Homes Ltd   | North of Louisa Park, Station Road, Leixlip                                     | Construction of 50 apartments and a creche  | Granted  | 14 April 2022    |
| <b>21732</b>    | Liffey Bridge Homes Ltd                                       | In the townland of Collinstown, junction of R449 and Green Lane, Leixlip        | Construction of 65 units  | Granted  | 20 December 2021 |



## 4.5 Location

***i) Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or does it have the potential to impact on an ecologically sensitive site or location?***

The Site is not located within or adjacent to any European sites. Potential indirect impacts were considered using the source-pathway-receptor model. The subject site is located within parklands. The proposal includes improvements to the parklands. A bat survey was carried out on site in August and in September in 2022. Barnhall House and the stables are highly suitable for bats. Due to extensive fire damage only one or two common pipistrelle bats were recorded in Barnhall House. It was the only structure in which bats were identified.

The Kilmacredock Upper stream is culverted underneath the subject site. It flows into the River Liffey. The River Liffey pNHA is located 1.4 km to the east, downstream of the site. River Liffey continues and enters into Dublin Bay c. 22 km to the east of the subject site. The South Dublin Bay SAC and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA are located at this point.

The Rye Water river is culverted c. 1km to the east of the subject site. This is at the end of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. It flows into the River Liffey. There is no interaction with the subject site and the Rye Water River.

The Royal Canal pNHA is located c. 850 metres to the north. It does not have any interaction with the subject site.

The SuDS features that are considered suitable based on the site layout for the wider area as follows:

- Permeable Paving
- Infiltration Basins
- Swales
- Oil Separators

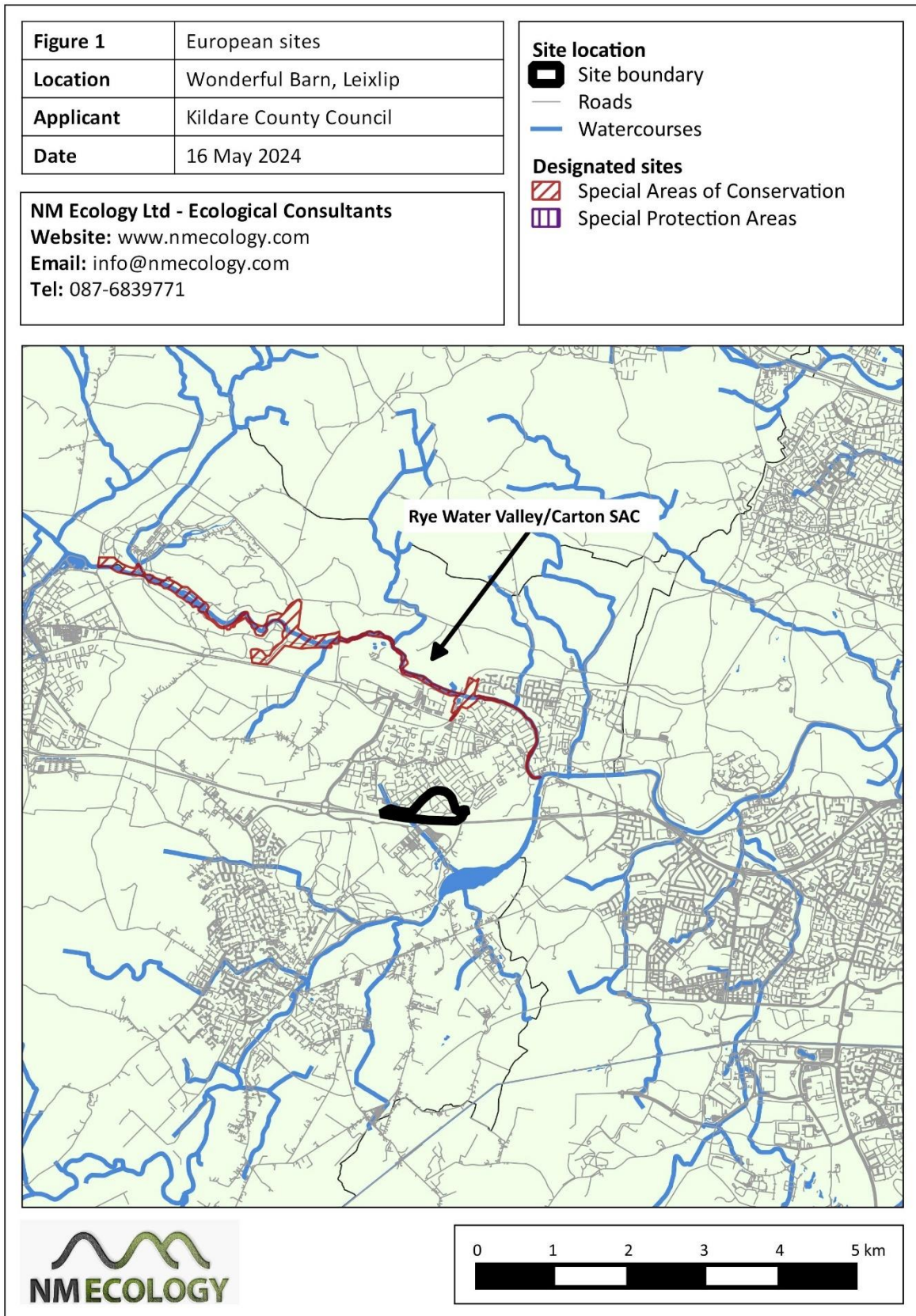


Figure 17: European Sites located in the context of the site (Source: Figure 2 AA Screening Report)

**ii) Does the proposed development have the potential to affect other significant environmental sensitivities in the area?**

The works consist of the repair and regeneration of the Wonderful Barn which is a protected structure and the associated structures including a historic walled garden, house, and stables for adaptive reuse. The buildings are derelict and unused. The proposal will improve the visitor experience to the Wonderful Barn complex and the associated parklands.

Site surveys have also uncovered the remains of previous structures on the subject site. According to the Archaeological Impact Assessment these are two dovecotes, a fowl house and well. These are proposed to be on display for visitors.

The proposal includes the clearance of debris and damaged components within the fire damaged Barnhall house and derelict stables and other structures on the site. The proposal involves the repair and regeneration of the structures on site which will produce builders rubble.

The site currently consists of unused and derelict structures. The proposal includes an adaptive reuse of these structures and improvements to the surrounding parklands.

#### **4.6 Preliminary Examination Conclusion**

Following the preliminary examination, it is concluded that there are doubts regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development owing to the biodiversity and natural heritage impacts and cumulative effects. It is recommended that the assessment proceeds to proceed to a Step 3 assessment as per the OPR Guidelines.

## 5. SCREENING DETERMINATION - SCHEDULE 7 ASSESSMENT AND SCHEDULE 7A INFORMATION

Where the requirement to carry out EIA is not excluded at preliminary examination stage, because there is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, the planning authority must carry out a screening determination.

In making its screening determination, the competent authority must have regard to:

- Schedule 7 criteria,
- Schedule 7A information,
- Any further relevant information on the characteristics of the development and its likely significant effects on the environment submitted by the applicant,
- Any mitigation measures proposed by the applicant,
- The available results, where relevant, of preliminary verifications or assessments carried out under other relevant EU environmental legislation, including information submitted by the applicant on how the results of such assessments have been taken into account, and
- The likely significant effects on certain sensitive ecological sites


|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Formal Screening Determination</p>  | <p><b>Screening Exercise:</b><br/><b>Is the proposal likely to have significant effects on the environment?</b></p> <p>In making the determination, the planning authority must have regard to Schedule 7 criteria, Schedule 7A information, results of other relevant EU assessments, the location of sensitive ecological sites, or heritage or conservation designations. Mitigation measures may be considered.</p> <p><b>Screening Determination:</b> Recorded outcomes to screening determination must state main reasons and considerations, with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Schedule 7 of the Regulations and mitigation if relevant.</p> |
|--|---|

Figure 18: Extract from OPR EIA Screening Guidance Note

### 5.1 Schedule 7 criteria for determining whether development should be subject to an environmental impact assessment

The 'Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities Regarding Sub-Threshold Development', groups criteria for deciding whether or not a proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment under three headings which correspond to the updated Schedule 7.

**Schedule 7 criteria for determining whether development listed in part 2 of Schedule 5 should be subject to an environmental impact assessment.**

- Characteristics of the proposed development.
- Location of the proposed development.
- Characteristics of potential impacts.

### 5.1.1 Characteristics of proposed development

OPR guidance –“If relevant, briefly describe the characteristics of the development (i.e. the nature and extent):

**(a) the size of the proposed development**

The proposed works at the site include the removal of debris from the derelict and fire damaged Barnhall House and the stables and the refurbishment of the Wonderful Barn converting it into a venue space and the provision of community space and a landscaped parkland on a site of 19.8 ha. The proposed development provides an appropriate and compatible form of development within the context on lands.

The size and design of the proposed development is not likely to cause significant effects on the environment and has been cognisant of the surrounding environment and existing buildings and aims to bring the existing structures back into use.

**(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,**

Section 4.4 (iv) of this report identifies relevant applications for the assessment of cumulative effects. Together, with the proposed development at the subject site and the other permitted development in the vicinity of the site are not likely to give rise to significant effects. The proposed pedestrian bridge over the M4, which has been permitted as part of the P.A Reg.Ref: 2360047 has the potential to introduce more pedestrians and cyclists into the area who may travel to and across the subject site. However, this activity is not likely to give rise to any significant adverse effects upon the environment. The SHD has been completed. In arriving to this conclusion, other permitted development has been taken into account.

**(c) the nature of any associated demolition works,**

The proposed development does not include demolition works but does include extensive refurbishment works to the Wonderful Barn, Barnhall House, and the stable building. All works will be undertaken in accordance with best practice protocols to ensure no impacts on the environment as a result of the proposed development.

**(d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity**

The nature of the proposed use and scale of the development is such that its development would not result in a significant use of natural resources. The proposed development makes efficient use of lands

by bringing the existing unused structures back into use. There will be no use of natural resources at the site given the nature of works proposed.

The scale and quantity of construction materials used will not be such that would impose significant effects on the environment. The development will generate water demands during the construction and operational phases of the development.

During construction the contractor will be required to implement standard measures during the construction phase.

The operation of the scheme would not use such a quantity of water to cause concern in relation to significant effects on the environment. Storm water from roofs and hard surfaces will be directed to soakaways, and other hard surfaces will be permeable, allowing rainwater to soak to ground. The potential impact of climate change has been considered in the design of the surface drainage network and storage system.

The use of natural resources in relation to the proposed development is not likely to cause significant effects on the environment. The overall environmental impact under these headings is considered to be low. In addition, the AA Screening report accompanying this application concludes that there clearly no likelihood of direct or indirect impacts of any European sites.

**(e) the production of waste,**

All inert material and non-hazardous waste will be disposed of from the site in accordance with the categorisation of waste and in accordance with the relevant licencing and regulatory requirements. Normal builders waste (rubble, excess building materials) will be generated during the construction phase. Foul water will be collected within a gravity drainage network and directed towards the existing public sewer system on site.

**(f) pollution and nuisances,**

It is not considered that the refurbishment of the existing structures on site would give rise to pollution and nuisances. Noise, vibration, lighting, and dust arising from construction activities and construction traffic have the potential for pollution or nuisance. Any risk of surface water pollution can be avoided by adherence to best practice construction and environmental management during the construction phase which will ensure that the development would not result in pollution of groundwater or surface water. Dust nuisance during construction can be controlled by a dust minimisation plan.

No operational impacts in this regard are anticipated. The proposed development is for the refurbishment of derelict and unused structures. Accordingly, there are no significant expected residues or emissions. Significant negative effects on the environment are not likely to arise due to pollution or nuisance.

**(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**

Standard construction practices will be employed throughout the construction phase. The nearest SEVESO site is the IR2 Intel Ireland plant located in Collinstown Industrial Park, Collinstown, Leixlip, Co. Kildare, c. 1.5 km to the northwest of the subject site. This is an Upper tier Seveso site. There are no

technologies or substances to be used in the development which may cause concern for having likely significant effects on the environment. There is no significant risk of accidents or disasters.

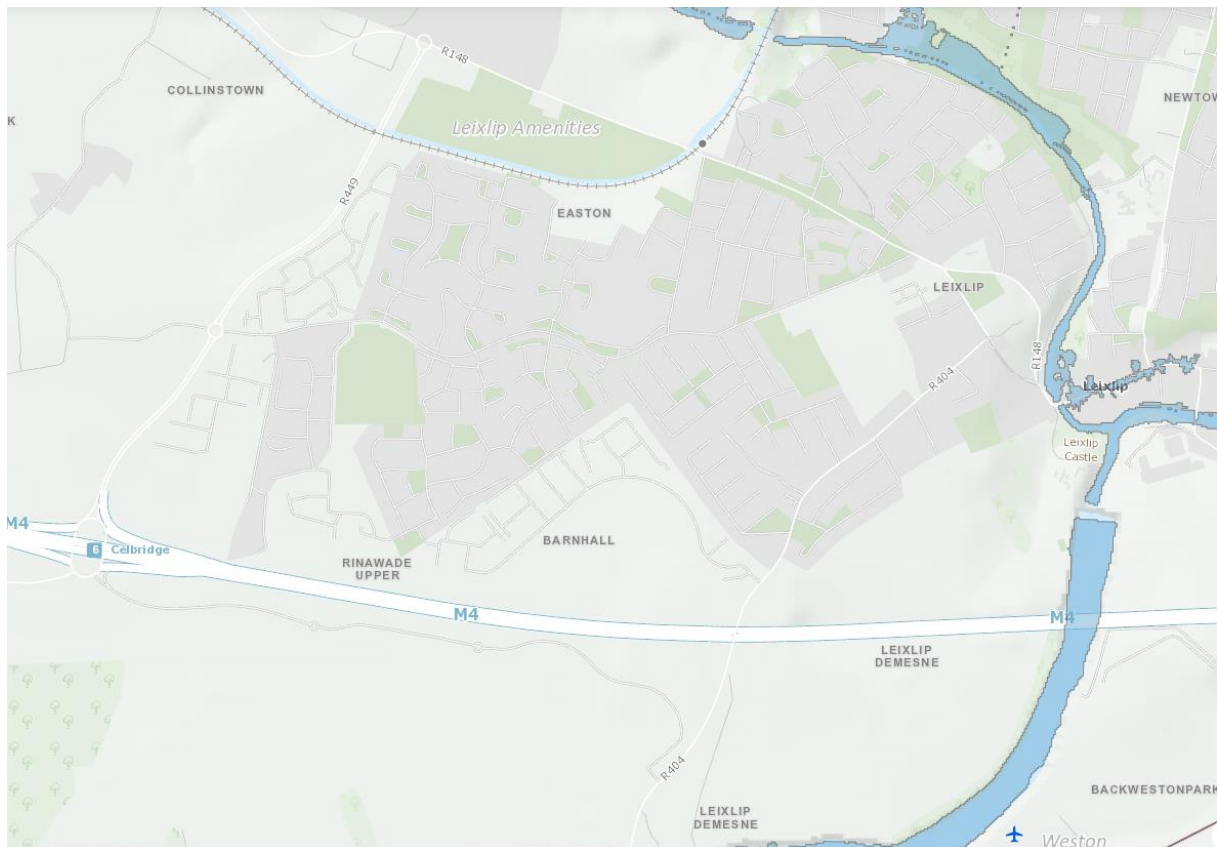
The site is not prone to fluvial flood risk. While there is a risk of pluvial flooding, this can be mitigated through an effective surface water and SuDS strategy which should be supplemented with a drainage maintenance inspection checklist which should be regularly updated by the management agency.

The proposal is not of such a location or scale that it would impact upon the absorption capacity of this aspect. Designated European Sites are considered below.

The proposal includes the following SuDS measures:

The SuDS features that are considered suitable based on the site layout for the wider area as follows:

- Permeable Paving
- Infiltration Basins
- Swales
- Oil Separators



**Figure 19: Extract from floodinfo.ie showing extent of river and fluvial risks (source: OPW)**

***(h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).***

The nature of the proposed development and the engineering provisions will not lead to the likelihood of any risk to human health. Any risk arising from construction will be localised and temporary in nature. The proposed development is of standard construction method and of appropriate scale and does not

require the use of particular substances or use of technologies which of themselves are likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. There are no Seveso / COMAH sites in the immediate vicinity of this location. The nearest SEVESO site is c. 1.5 km. Foul water will discharge to the public sewer. Surface water will discharge to the public sewer following attenuation. With appropriate mitigation during construction there will be no risk of contamination of any watercourses or groundwater. There is no risk to human health within the meaning of the Directive..

### 5.1.2 Location of Proposed Development

#### **(a) the existing and approved land use,**

The land use surrounding the site consists of residential. A recently completed residential development encircles the site from the west to the north and to the east which was developed under a granted SHD from 2018. Some of the boundary works on the Wonderful Barn complex lands were undertaken as part of the SHD development.

Under the Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023 (extended) the site is zoned for Open Space and Amenity. In determining the zoning of the subject site, the Planning Authority will have thoroughly assessed the nature of the site as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Appropriate Assessment for the Leixlip LAP to ascertain its capacity to accommodate such development and merit a zoning as designated.

There are no apparent characteristics or elements of the design of the scheme that are likely to cause significant effects on the environment. The addition of this development is not considered to have a significant impact on the environmental sensitivities of the area.

#### **(b) the relative abundance, availability, quality, and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,**

The nature of the proposed development is such that the natural resources used in its development are limited and there would be minimal ongoing use of natural resources from the proposed use of the site. The subject lands are well serviced by infrastructure and public transport via the Leixlip Park and Elton Court bus stop on the Celbridge Road. In relation to biodiversity on the site, the preliminary Ecological Appraisal concluded that the only important ecological features are woodlands (broadleaved woodland, treelines, hedgerows), semi-natural grasslands (dry meadow and wet grassland), small mammals, bats, birds and amphibians. All other ecological features discussed in the preliminary Ecological Appraisal are considered to be of negligible ecological importance. Impacts on nesting birds can be avoided using best practice mitigation. No rare plants have been recorded during any of the site visits undertaken.

The nature of the proposed development will generate demand for water, but this will be by the short stay accommodation and the café and given the scale of this development is not considered significant.

In addition, during construction all appropriate best practice construction methods and measures are being employed at the subject site. The construction of the project will be managed and carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced nominated contractor who will ensure that best practice measures



are used in terms of the subject site and its environs to ensure the safeguarding of natural resources (such as soil, land and water).

**c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:**

**(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;**

The closest watercourse is the culverted stream underneath the site known as Kilmacredock Upper. The next closest watercourse is the Rye Water river. Both watercourses empty into the River Liffey. Following the application of mitigation measures, the proposed development is not likely to give rise to significant effects on wetlands, riparian areas, and river mouth.

**(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;**

The proposal is not of such a location or scale that it would impact upon the absorption capacity of this aspect.

**(iii) mountain and forest areas;**

The proposal is not of such a location or scale that it would impact upon the absorption capacity of this aspect. There are semi-mature trees and hedgerow habitats on the site, but these would not be categorised as a forest area.

**(iv) nature reserves and parks;**

The proposal is a parkland. The proposed works consists of improving the amenity value of the parkland and refurbishing the existing derelict and unused structures on site back into use. The proposal is not of such scale that it would negatively impact upon the absorption capacity of this aspect.

**(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive;**

The following site was identified as being within 15 K of the application site.

- Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [1398] 1 km northeast

The AA Screening Report prepared by NM Ecology concludes the following:

*“Having considered the particulars of the proposed development, we conclude that this application meets the first conclusion, because there is no likelihood of significant impacts on any European sites. This is based on three key conclusions:*

- *The Site is not within or adjacent to any European sites, so there is no risk of direct effects*
- *There are no surface water (or other) pathways linking the Site to any European sites, so there is no risk of indirect effects*
- *There are no SPAs in the vicinity of the Site*

*Appropriate Assessment Screening must consider the potential implications of a project both in isolation and in combination with other plans and projects in the surrounding area. An 'in-combination effect' can occur when a project will have a perceptible but non-significant residual effect on a European site (when considered in isolation), that subsequently becomes significant when the additive effects of other plans and projects are considered. However, as the proposed development poses no risk of impacts on European sites in isolation, the risk of in-combination effects can also be ruled out.*

*Therefore, with regard to Article 42 (7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, it can be concluded that the proposed development will not be likely to have a significant effect on any European sites. On this basis, the assessment can conclude at Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process, and it is not necessary to proceed to Stage 2.*

*In accordance with the OPR 2021 guidance, we note that no mitigation measures have been considered when reaching this conclusion."*

***(vi) 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;***

This does not apply.

***(vii) densely populated areas;***

Leixlip is a relatively densely population area. The subject development will provide amenities to serve the town, and will not in itself increase the density of population.

***(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance***

The National Monuments Service Archaeological Survey Database does not indicate any specific designations to this site or in the immediate vicinity.

The subject site does include one protected structure which is the Wonderful Barn and the NIAH database indicates one of the structures adjacent the Wonderful Barn as being of architectural merit. The proposed development includes the refurbishment of the Wonderful Barn and to convert it into a venue space. The proposal also includes the refurbishment of the derelict and unused structures on the

site including the repair of the extensive fire damage caused to the Barnhall House. The proposal also includes upgrades to the amenity of the parkland surrounding the Wonderful Barn. The proposal will have a positive impact on the architectural and archaeological heritage of the Wonderful Barn complex.

The accompanying Archaeological Impact Assessment states that there is potential for accidental damage to occur during works. However, impacts can be mitigated for.

Having regard to the proposed scheme and following the implementation of mitigation measures, it is considered that the proposed project will not have a significant negative impact on landscapes and sites of historical, heritage, cultural or archaeological significance.

### 5.1.3 Types and characteristics of Potential Impacts

The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development relate to those criteria set out in paragraph (b)(i)(l) to (v) of 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,
- h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

The OPR's Practice Note on EIA Screening considers what are **likely significant effects**. Refer to Box 1 below.

### Box 1: Likely Significant Effects

**1. Are the effects identified likely to occur?**

This refers to the effects that are expected to occur, those that can be reasonably foreseen as normal consequences of project construction and operation, including where relevant associated demolition, remediation and/or restoration.

**2. Are the effects, which are likely to occur, significant?**

EPA draft guidelines define a *'significant effect'* as an effect, which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment. The same draft guidelines provide useful definitions in relation to quality of effects, significance of effects, context of effects, probability of effects and duration and frequency of effects.

**3. Will identified likely significant effects impact the environment?**

Likely significant effects should cover the direct and indirect, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the project.

The factors of the environment to be described and assessed are:

- **population and human health;**
- **biodiversity, with particular attention to protected species and habitats;**
- **land, soil, water, air and climate;**
- **material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape; and**
- **the interaction between the factors.**

The following table summarises the likelihood of effects on the environmental factors listed in the box above, having regard to the analysis set out in sections 2 and 4 of this assessment.

## Screening Considerations

| Aspect              | Phase | Potential Effect  | Extent | Probability | Significance of Effect | Quality of Effect | Duration   |
|---------------------|-------|---|--------|-------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| <b>Landscape</b>    | C     | The refurbishment of all structures on site including the Wonderful Barn and it's associated structures, the refurbishment of the walled garden   | Local  | Likely      | Moderate               | Positive          | Permanent  |
|                     | O     | Provision of amenity space, including an upgraded walled garden, and coffee shop  | Local  | Likely      | Moderate               | Positive          | Permanent  |
| <b>Visual</b>       | C     | Perceived negative changes due to emergence of plant and machinery and site clearance works   | Local  | Likely      | Moderate               | Negative          | Short Term |
|                     | O     | Changes to the unused and derelict nature of the site by refurbishing the structures on the complex   | Local  | Likely      | Moderate               | Positive          | Permanent  |
| <b>Biodiversity</b> | C     | Bats have been identified within the Barnhall House. These will need to be removed and provided with temporary alternative roost space during the renovation works. There are potential changes to the biodiversity during the landscaping and planting of the parkland   | Local  | Likely      | Moderate               | Negative          | Short term |
|                     | O     | The attic space of Barnhall House will be reserved as a dedicated roost space for bats. The existing access point at the eastern corner of the building will be retained. Additional dedicated roost spaces will also be provided in the stables if possible. It will incorporate a combination of open space for brown long-eared bats and crevices suitable for pipistrelles and Myotis species. 10 no. crevice-style bat boxes will also be installed on mature trees throughout the parkland to provide roosting opportunities away from the buildings. The planting of the parkland will enhance biodiversity. | Local  | Likely      | Moderate               | Positive          | Permanent  |

## EIA Screening Report – Wonderful Barn

|  |   |  |       |            |                 |          |                   |
|--|---|--|-------|------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------|
| <b>Land &amp; Soil</b>                   | C | Potential contamination due to accidental spillage.  | Local | Not Likely | Imperceptible   | Neutral  | Brief             |
|  | O | Refurbishment of the protected structure and associated structures on site   | Local | Likely     | Moderate        | Positive | Permanent         |
| <b>Human Health</b>                      | C | None Predicted   | -     | -          | -               | -        | -                 |
|  | O | None predicted   | -     | -          | -               | -        | -                 |
| <b>Water</b>                             | C | Accidental pollution events occurring to nearby stream or the groundwater table  | Local | Not Likely | Imperceptible   | Neutral  | Brief - Temporary |
|  | O | Discharge of treated attenuated surface water to existing surface water network.   | Local | Likely     | Imperceptible   | Neutral  | Permanent         |
|  |   | Discharge of foul and wastewater to existing wastewater network  | Local | Likely     | Imperceptible   | Neutral  | Permanent         |
| <b>Air Quality &amp; Climate</b>         | C | Reduction of air quality as a result of construction traffic and HGVs, and emissions from construction and plant machinery                       | Local | Likely     | Not significant | Neutral  | Temporary         |
|  | O | None predicted   | -     | -          | -               | -        | -                 |
| <b>Noise</b>                             | C | Increase in noise as a result of construction activity, and operation of plant and machinery.  | Local | Likely     | Slight          | Negative | Temporary         |
|  | O | Increase in noise level as a result of vehicular movements in and out of the complex from visitors.  | Local | Likely     | Imperceptible   | Neutral  | Permanent         |
|  |   | Construction of a noise barrier along the southern boundary of the site to reduce noise from the M4 Motorway in the amenity space                | Local | Likely     | Moderate        | Positive | Permanent         |
| <b>Cultural Heritage: Built Heritage</b> | C | Refurbishment of existing structures onsite including the Wonderful Barn which is a protected structure  | Local | Likely     | Moderate        | Positive | Permanent         |
|  | O | Derelict and unused heritage buildings will be brought back into use   | Local | Likely     | Moderate        | Positive | Permanent         |
| <b>Cultural Heritage: Archaeology</b>    | C | The proposal includes the regeneration of the buildings on site and the installation of SuDS features. There is the potential for archaeological | Local | Likely     | Moderate        | Positive | Permanent         |

EIA Screening Report – Wonderful Barn

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|   |   |       |        |          |          |           |  |
|---|---|-------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|--|
|   | remains to be damaged during the construction works. Mitigation measures indicated in the Archaeological Impact Assessment include archaeological testing and the monitoring of groundworks by a qualified archaeologist. |       |        |          |          |           |  |
| O | The proposal will provide for a visitor experience showcasing the archaeological heritage of the subject site including the remains of a previous house on the subject site   | Local | Likely | Moderate | Positive | Permanent |  |

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**I. Interaction of Effects**

There is potential for interaction of effects during the construction phase in relation to soil, water and biodiversity, built heritage. The negative impacts arise from potential risk of pollution, dust and noise. However, best practice construction measures will be put in place during the construction phase and these measures will continue to be employed in the completion and construction of the remaining elements of the proposed development which will ensure that there are no significant effects on the environment. Section 5.4 of this report outlines mitigation measures in respect of the proposed development.

**II. Cumulative effects**

It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant effects on the environment. No significant adverse effects have been identified, no measures are recommended to avoid or prevent such impacts.

**III. Transboundary effects**

Owing to the scale, nature, and location of the development there will be no transboundary effects. No mitigating measures are required.

**IV. Residual Effects**

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that there are no residual effects, as a result of the works at the subject site.

**5.2 Schedule 7A 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***

Response

Refer to Section 5.1.1 of this report.

***(b) a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.***

Response

Refer to Section 5.1.2 of this report.

**2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.**

Response

Refer to Section 5.1.3 of this report.



**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,**

Response

The development will include mitigation measures that will ensure there is no likely significant effects on the environment. Waste and emissions arising during the operational phase are not considered to be significant within the meaning of the Directive.

**(b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.**

Response

Refer to 5.1.1. of this report.

**4. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.**

Response

Please refer to section 5.1 of this report.

### **5.3 Any further relevant information**

Response

The Part 8 is accompanied by a suite of documentation to support the conclusions included in this report, this includes an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

A suite of architectural, engineering and landscape drawings and reports also accompanies the documentation detailing the proposed development.

### **5.4 Any mitigation measures**

- Bats sensitive lighting techniques will be incorporated into the public lighting. A bat roosting survey of the existing buildings will be undertaken prior to renovation works. Bats have been identified within the Barnhall House. These will need to be removed and provided with temporary alternative roost space during the renovation works. The attic space of Barnhall House will be reserved as a dedicated roost space for bats. The existing access point at the eastern corner of the building will be retained. Additional dedicated roost spaces will also be provided in the stables if possible. It will incorporate a combination of open space for brown long-eared bats and crevices suitable for pipistrelles and Myotis species. 10 no. crevice-style bat boxes will also be installed on mature trees throughout the parkland to provide roosting opportunities away from the buildings.
- Building renovation works will commence between September and February outside of the nesting season. A minimum of 10 swift nest boxes will be installed on the north-eastern sides of Barnhall House and the north-eastern end of the stables building.

- Mitigation measures indicated in the Archaeological Impact Assessment, including archaeological testing and the monitoring of groundworks by a qualified archaeologist.
- Works to the protected structure will be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation measures with the final recommendations of the Conservation Architect.
- Appropriate SUDs measures will be implemented to avoid any risk of flooding.
- Construction of noise barrier along the southern boundary of the site to reduce the incursion of noise from the M4 Motorway within the amenity space within the southern portion of the amenity space.

## 5.5 Available Results under other EU Environmental Legislation

Other relevant EU environmental legislation may include:

- SEA Directive [2001/42/EC]
- Birds and Habitats Directives [79/409/EEC, 2009/147/EC & 92/43/EEC]
- Water Framework Directive [2000/60/EC]
- Marine Strategy Framework Directive
- Ambient Air Quality Directive and Heavy Metals in the Ambient Air Directive
- Industrial Emissions Directive
- Seveso Directive
- Trans-European Networks in Transport, Energy and Telecommunication
- EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC

**Table 3: EU Legislation**

| Directive   | Results   |
|---|---|
| SEA Directive [2001/42/EC]  | <p>The proposed development is located on lands which have been zoned under the Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023 (extended).</p> <p>These have been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. The SEA for the LAP indicates that appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented, including the implementation of SuDS and the phasing of development. The subject proposal takes these into account.</p>   |
| Birds and Habitats Directives [79/409/EEC, 2009/147/EC & 92/43/EEC] | <p>An appropriate assessment (AA) screening report accompanies this part 8 submission. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) was also completed. The AA concludes that <i>"Having considered the particulars of the proposed development, we conclude that this application meets the first conclusion, because there is no likelihood of significant impacts on any European sites. This is based on three key conclusions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Site is not within or adjacent to any European sites, so there is no risk of direct effects</li> </ul> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no surface water (or other) pathways linking the Site to any European sites, so there is no risk of indirect effects</li> <li>• There are no SPAs in the vicinity of the Site</li> </ul> <p><i>Appropriate Assessment Screening must consider the potential implications of a project both in isolation and in combination with other plans and projects in the surrounding area. An ‘in-combination effect’ can occur when a project will have a perceptible but non-significant residual effect on a European site (when considered in isolation), that subsequently becomes significant when the additive effects of other plans and projects are considered. However, as the proposed development poses no risk of impacts on European sites in isolation, the risk of in-combination effects can also be ruled out.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, with regard to Article 42 (7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, it can be concluded that the proposed development will not be likely to have a significant effect on any European sites. On this basis, the assessment can conclude at Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process, and it is not necessary to proceed to Stage 2.</i></p> <p><i>In accordance with the OPR 2021 guidance, we note that no mitigation measures have been considered when reaching this conclusion.”</i></p> <p>The EclA identifies a number of measures to minimize impacts on wildlife.</p> |
| Water Framework Directive [2000/60/EC]                                      | The main surface water feature in the area is the River Liffey. It is assigned under the Water Framework Directive status assessments 2016 – 2021, with status of ‘Good’. With mitigation, there is no likely significant effects on the status.   |
| Marine Strategy Framework Directive   | The site is located c. 20 km from the MSFD assessment area. There is no likely impact given the distance.  |
| Ambient Air Quality Directive and Heavy Metals in the Ambient Air Directive | n/a to proposed development  |
| Industrial Emissions Directive  | n/a to proposed development  |
| Seveso Directive  | The nearest Seveso site is the IR2 Intel Ireland plant located in Collinstown Industrial Park, Collinstown, Leixlip, Co. Kildare, c. 1.5 km to the north west of the subject site. This is an Upper tier Seveso site. There are no technologies or substances to be used in the development which may cause concern for having likely significant effects on the environment. There is no significant risk of accidents or disasters.  |
| Trans-European Networks in Transport, Energy and Telecommunication          | n/a to proposed development  |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC | A flood risk assessment has been undertaken |
|--------------------------------|---|

## 5.6 Likely significant effects on certain sensitive ecological sites

Sensitive areas include:

***i) a European site,***

Response

An appropriate assessment (AA) screening report accompanies this application. An appropriate assessment (AA) screening report accompanies this part 8 submission. The AA concludes that there will be no potentially significant effects on a designated European site and that a Stage 2 NIS is not required.

***ii) an area which is the subject of a notice under Section 16(2)(b) of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 (No. 38 of 2000),***

Response

It is not subject to a notice under Section 16(2)b of the Wildlife Act 2000.

***iii) an area designated as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) under Section 18 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000),***

Response

The Royal Canal is to the north and the Rye Water river is to the east. Both are proposed NHA's. due to the lack of connectivity, distance and the proposed mitigation measures direct effects on the Grand Canal are highly unlikely.

***iv) land established or recognised as a nature reserve within the meaning of Section 15 or 16 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (No. 39 of 1976),***

Response

No likely significant effects on a nature reserve have been identified.

***v) land designated as a refuge for flora or as a refuge for fauna under Section 17 of the Wildlife Act 1976,***

Response

No likely significant effects on a refuge for flora or a refuge for fauna have been identified.

***vi) a place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation, conservation or protection of which is an objective of a development plan or local area plan, draft development plan or draft local area plan, or proposed variation of a development plan, for the area in which the development is proposed,***

Response

A preliminary Ecological Impact Assessment was performed by NM Ecology in August 2023 and did not identify any likely significant effect on a place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation, conservation or protection of which is an objective of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

***vii) a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA).***

Refer above.

## 6. SCREENING CONCLUSION

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development which is below the thresholds set out in Class 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 5, the criteria in Schedule 7, the information provided in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and the following:

- The scale, nature and location of the proposed impacts
- The potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures
- The results of the any other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment

It is considered that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and it is concluded that an environmental impact assessment report is not required.



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