

Development of a new Community, Enterprise and Tourism Hub

Screening for Appropriate Assessment



Report for Cooney Architects & Cavan County Council

January 2024



Street frontage of premises under assessment

Note

Works, plans, methodologies, materials, and infrastructural requirements are based on the client’s brief, draft plans, and drawings provided to Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants as of January 2024.

Statement of Authority

This Natura Impact Statement has been carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced professional of Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants. This was Billy Flynn BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CEnv.

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1 Introduction

Flynn Furney has been commissioned by Cooney Architects and Cavan County Council to carry out a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report for proposed works at a site in Belturbet. It is proposed that a Community, Enterprise and Tourism Hub is developed here. Further details are provided in Section 1.6 of this report.

This screening exercise aims to determine whether the proposed project may have the potential to impact the conservation objectives and overall integrity of any Natura 2000 sites significantly or indeterminately. This assessment is based upon desk research and fieldwork carried out by suitably qualified ecologists.

This report has been completed to provide information regarding the ecological status of the proposed site of works. This report has also been completed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6[3] Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening of the proposed development. The legislation and methodology for this are detailed in the following sections.

1.1 Relevant Legislation and Overall Screening Methodology

The methodology for this screening statement is set out in a document prepared for the Environment DG of the European Commission entitled 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (European Commission, 2019, amended 2021). This report and any contributory fieldwork were carried out in accordance with guidelines given by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009, amended 2010).

The process is given in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and is commonly referred to as 'Appropriate Assessments' (which in fact refers to Stage 2 in the sequence under the Habitats Directive Article 6 assessment). Article 6 of the Habitats Directive sets out provisions which govern the conservation and management of Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the (Natura2000) site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

Article 6(4) of the same directive states:

“If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

It is the responsibility of the proponent of the plan or project to provide the relevant information (ecological surveys, research, analysis etc.) for submission to the ‘competent national authority’. Having satisfied itself that the information is complete and objective, the competent authority will use this information to screen the project, i.e. to determine if an AA is required and to carry out the AA, if one is deemed necessary. The competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. The appropriate assessment process has four stages. Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further. The four stages are:

1. Screening to determine if an appropriate assessment is required.
2. Appropriate assessment
3. Consideration of alternative solutions
4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Stage 1: Screening

This is to determine if an appropriate assessment is required. Screening is the technique applied to determine whether a particular plan would be likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site and would thus warrant an Appropriate Assessment. The key indicator that will determine if an Appropriate Assessment is required is the determination of whether the development is likely to have significant environmental effects on a Natura 2000 site or not.

Stage 2. Appropriate Assessment

This step is required if the screening report indicates that the development is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Stage 2 assesses the impact of a plan or project on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to the site's structure, function and conservation objectives. Where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of these impacts is also required.

Stage 3. Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If it is concluded that, subsequent to the implementation of measures, a plan or project will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan or project can proceed.

Stage 4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist for the implementation of a plan or project, an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura 2000 site will be necessary.

1.2 Case Law

The European Court of Justice has made a number of relevant rulings in relation to when an Appropriate Assessment is required and its purpose: *“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site is to be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects”* and that the plan or project may only be authorised *“where no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects”*.

A list of relevant rulings is provided below:

Table 1: Case law relevant to the AA Screening for the Proposed Development

Case	Ruling
People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)	The ruling of the CJEU in this case requires that any conclusion of ‘no Likely Significant Effect’ on a European site must be made prior to any consideration of measures to avoid or reduce harm to the European site. The determination of Likely Significant Effects should not, in the opinion of the CJEU, constitute an attempt at detailed technical analyses. This should be conducted as part of the AA.
Waddenzee (C-127/02)	The ruling in this case clarified that AA must be conducted using best scientific knowledge, and that there must be no reasonable scientific doubt in the conclusions drawn. The Waddenzee ruling also provided clarity on the definition of ‘significant effect’, which would be any effect from a plan or project which is likely to undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
Holohan and Others v An Bord Pleanála (C-461/17)	The conclusions of the Court in this case was that consideration must be given during AA to: effects on qualifying habitats and/or species of a SAC or SPA, even when occurring outside of the boundary of a European site, if these are relevant to the site meeting its conservation objectives; and, effects on non-qualifying habitats and/or species on which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend and which could result in adverse effects on the integrity of the European site.
T.C Briels and Others v Minister van Infrastructuur en Milieu (C-521/12)	The ruling of the CJEU in this case determined that compensatory measures cannot be used to support a conclusion of no adverse effect on site integrity.

1.3 Guidance Documents

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents on Appropriate Assessment, where relevant:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001 and updates April 2015 and September 2021). The guidance within this document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive;
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2018); and
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000). · OPR (2021) Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Practice Note PN01. Office of the Planning Regulator. March 2021.

1.4 Statement of Authority

Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants have over 20 years of experience in ecological surveying and management. We have detailed knowledge on the principles and implementation of both Irish and European environmental legislation. We have worked closely with statutory bodies including the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Waterways Ireland on habitat management and protection projects. Other expertise includes Ecological Impact Assessment, Habitat and Floral Surveys, Bird Surveying, Bat Surveying, Fish and Waterways surveys.

1.5 The Proposed Site of Project

The proposed site of works is in Belturbet, Co. Cavan. The works are proposed to take place in the townland of Kilconny on Butler Street, Belturbet at the former Dinkin's Bakery Premises.



Fig. 1. Proposed location and extent of works indicated by red rectangle. Base mapping from www.maps.apple.com

1.6 Project Objectives and Description of Works

The project under assessment has been designed to create a new Community, Enterprise and Tourism Hub for Belturbet.

The works include partial demolition works and partial retention, refurbishment and extension works to the existing building on Butler Street, partial retention, and extension works at ground, first floor and to the rear to the existing building on Patrick Street and a new multi-purpose building at rear of buildings on Butler Street and Patrick Street.

The proposed development will consist of:

Existing Dinkins Bakery Building:

- Demolition of rear extensions
- refurbishment and upgrade works to original two storey structure
- new build two storey extension

All above to provide community, youth, enterprise multi-purpose spaces and ancillary facilities.

New Multi-Purpose Building:

- New build single storey multi-purpose space

Existing Building at Patrick Street:

Partial retention of walls to existing two storey building, extension at ground, first floor and to the rear, demolition of roof structure, new build two storey extension, all to provide community, enter- prise, meeting, offices, multi-purpose spaces and ancillary facilities, new internal and external signage.

Site Works will include:

Site development works, archway access from Butler Street and Patrick Street, works to existing boundaries, hard and soft landscaping, external multi use spaces, lighting, bin storage, bicycle parking, and all associated site services above and below ground.

1.7 Methodologies

This screening report was informed by a desk study of all relevant environmental information and also included a review of the ecological field survey data recorded during survey in January 2024. The screening then incorporated the following steps (broadly based on EC [2000]) to:

- Determine if the proposed works are directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site;
- Describe the proposed works;
- Describe the baseline environment;
- List 'Relevant' European sites which are those sites potentially connected to the proposed works by source-pathway-receptor linkages; and
- Conclude if linkages to 'Relevant' sites have the potential to give rise to Likely Significant Effects (LSE).

1.8 The Source-Pathway-Receptor Model

The standard 'source-pathway-receptor' conceptual model is a standard tool in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur. An example of this model is provided below:

- Source (s); – e.g. Piling;
- Pathway (s); e.g. Vibration; and
- Receptor (s); e.g. Underground otter resting site at risk of collapse

The model evaluates the receptors as the qualifying interests (QIs) for which individual European sites are designated, with reference to the latest conservation objectives from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website, or substitute detailed objectives from other European sites where only generic objectives are available.

European sites are at risk of significant effects as a result of the proposed works where a source-pathway-receptor link exists between any elements of the proposed works and the European site. In order for an impact to occur there must be a risk enabled by having a 'source' (e.g. proposed works), a 'receptor' (e.g. a SAC/SPA or their QI habitats/species), and a pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g. a watercourse which connects the impact source at a site of proposed works to a SAC/SPA). The risk of the impact does not automatically mean it will occur, nor that it will be significant. However, identification of the risk does mean that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental impact occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk, and the characteristics of the receptor.

1.9 The Precautionary Principle

The Precautionary Principle has been defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2005) as: "When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm [to the environment] that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm. The judgement of plausibility should be grounded in scientific analysis". Reasoned application of the 'Precautionary Principle' is fundamental to the Screening Stage (and AA). The precautionary principle is referenced in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). It relates to an approach to risk management whereby if there is the possibility that a given policy or action might cause harm to the public or the environment and if there is still no scientific consensus on the issue, the policy or action in question should not be pursued.

The precautionary principle prevails where ‘reasonable scientific doubt’ cannot be ruled out. Known threats to QIs of relevant sites are analysed to avoid overlooking subtle or far-field effect pathways. The duration of potential effects is a key consideration, in particular because the European Court of Justice has recently ruled—albeit in specific reference to priority habitats—those effects to site integrity must be “lasting”.

1.10 Zones of Influence and Potential Impacts or Effects

The proposed works have the potential to result in a number of direct and indirect effects. These are set out in Table 2, which identifies the “zones of influence” for each effect (i.e. the area over which effects may occur).

Table 2: Potential impacts, effects and their zone of influence

Potential Impact and Effect	Description	Zone of Influence
Land-take resulting in habitat loss or degradation.	The permanent loss of the habitat present in the footprint of the development and access routes.	Lands within the proposed footprint of works and access routes.
Changes in water quality and quantity/distribution resulting in habitat loss or degradation.	Reduction in the quality of retained habitat or loss of habitat from surrounding areas as a result of surface water pollution.	Changes in surface water quality, as a result of works, associated with the proposed development within water courses, water bodies and or wetlands adjacent to or hydrologically connected with the of the proposed development site.
Noise & vibration resulting in disturbance to species during construction and operation of the facility.	Direct impact on feature species reducing their ability to forage or breed.	Generally assessed within 500m of the proposed works (e.g. for wintering birds), but can be significantly lower (e.g. 150 m for Otter underground sites, or further.

1.11 Ecological Survey and Habitats

An ecological field survey of the proposed development site was carried out in January 2024. Habitat survey and mapping followed the Heritage Council’s Best Practice Guidance (Smith et al. 2011). Habitats were classified according to the Heritage Councils Scheme (Fossitt, 2000). These are described below and shown graphically in Appendix B:

1.11.1 Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)

Much of the area under survey would conform to this habitat type, being already developed as a dwelling and a commercial premises and storage. This is a typically species-poor habitat type as it is highly modified and relatively few plant species would occur here. Plants such as Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*) and Ivy-leaved Toad-flax (*Cymbalaria muralis*).

1.11.2 Recolonising Bare Ground (ED3)

Much of the outdoor areas of the property would conform to this habitat type. This is also a species-poor habitat which contains species such as Prickly Sow Thistle (*Sonchus asper*), Willow-herb (*Epilobium* sp.) and Mosses.

1.11.3 Flowerbeds and Borders (BC4)

A small proportion of the outdoor area of the property was previously devoted to flowerbeds. These contain some non-native species such as Pyracantha and Rose but have also been overtaken by native species that include Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and grasses.



Fig. 2. A portion of the rear of the premises showing both a former flowerbed and recolonising bare ground with a number of plants.

Significance of Habitats and Flora

There are no Annex I habitats which occur within or surrounding the proposed study area. No rare, threatened, or protected species of plants as per the Red Data List (Wyse Jackson et al., 2016) were found. No species listed in the Flora Protection Order (2022) were found to be growing within the site. No such species were recorded within the area of works.

1.12 Stakeholders and Consultation

Table 3: Summary of Consultations

Stakeholder	Nature of Consultation	Outcome
Cavan County Council & Cooney Architects (the client)	Telephone and email consultation: Scope and scale of project discussed. Necessity for an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report agreed.	This report generated and submitted to Cavan County Council.
National Parks and Wildlife Service	Pre-consultation not possible due to lack of NPWS staff in county and unavailability of staff in region.	This report to be supplied to NPWS if requested.

2 Designated Sites Ecological Assessment

2.1 Desktop Study

A desktop study was carried out as part of the screening process. This included a review of available literature on the site and its immediate environs. Sources of information included the National Parks and Wildlife Service and National Biodiversity Data Centre databases on protected sites and species.

2.2 Designated Sites

Sites designated for the conservation of nature in Ireland include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Natural Heritage Areas (NHA); and
- proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA).

SPAs and SACs form the Natura 2000 network of sites. It is these sites that are of relevance to the screening process for Appropriate Assessment.

SPAs and SACs are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. SPAs and SACs are designated under EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended.

All Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km of the proposed development site or otherwise relevant were considered during the desktop study stage of this screening assessment in order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests / Special Conservation Interests and Conservation Objectives. This stage of the process is used to determine whether any of the designated sites may be 'screened out'. That is, that they can be regarded as not being relevant to the process, having no potential to be significantly affected or impacted upon.

2.3 Natura Designated Sites Relevant to the Proposed Works

Designated sites as described above were considered during the screening process for their potential to have significant effects upon their qualifying interests, special qualifying interests or conservation objectives. The site synopses and conservation objectives of the sites were also examined during this stage of the survey.

All designated sites of possible relevance were considered during the screening process for their potential to have significant effects upon their qualifying interests or special qualifying interests or conservation objectives. The site synopses and conservation objectives of the sites (as available) were also examined during this stage of the survey. These sites are given in the table below. The table also gives distance from the proposed site of works and the outcome of the screening. These sites are:

- Slieve Beagh SAC (NI) (UK0016622)
- Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnakea SPA (NI) (UK9020302)
- Slieve Beagh SPA (ROI) (004167)
- Magheraveely Marl Loughs SAC (NI) (UK0016621)
- Kilrooskey Lough Cluster SAC (001786)
- Lough Oughter And Associated Loughs SAC (000007)

Table 4: Distances from the proposed development site to the nearest designated sites (See also Appendix B)

Site Code	Site Name	Distance To (km)	Screening Criteria
	Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)		
00007	Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC	0.17	No potential pathways for impacts. No hydrological connections exist between the Natura 2000 site and the proposed work location. However, the proximity of this SAC to the site of proposed works requires further consideration in this process.
	Special Protection Areas (SPAs)		

Site Code	Site Name	Distance To (km)	Screening Criteria
004049	Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SPA	3.8	No potential pathways for impacts. No hydrological connections exist between the Natura 2000 site and the proposed work location, and the designated site is located upstream of the proposed work. Distance between site and proposed work location contribute to the lack of likely impact.

Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC is within 0.17 km of the proposed works. However, there is no hydrological or any other connection to this designated site. The lack of any hydrological or other connection to this designated site would therefore make it extremely unlikely that the proposed development could impact upon this designated site. There is thus no pathway for impacts and therefore no complete source-pathway-receptor chain. This site may thus be screened out of this assessment and not considered further.

No risk to the conservation objectives of any other Natura 2000 designated sites (i.e. beyond a 3.8 km buffer) is considered likely due to one or more of the following:

- Lack of connectivity between the works areas and the designated areas
- Distance between the designated areas and the works area and/or;
- No significant change to chemical or physiological condition of any designated site as a result of the proposed development

These other sites are therefore not considered further in this screening exercise. The following section, (Section 3) comprises the screening assessment and statement.

3 Article 6(3) Screening Assessment

This section of the report focuses solely on the potential for the proposed works to impact on Natura 2000 sites and their conservation objectives. The potential for effects to these Natura 2000 sites is considered further below.

3.1 Article 6(3) Assessment Criteria

Description of the individual elements of the project likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

None of the individual elements of the proposed development as planned are likely to give rise to significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, given: the absence of any qualifying interests of the SAC within the zone of influence of the works, the small scale of works and the nature of same.

Description of any Likely Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts of the Project on the Natura 2000 Site.

Any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the proposed development, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects, on any Natura 2000 sites by virtue of the following criteria: size and scale, land take, distance from the Natura 2000 site or key feature thereof, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the works are detailed in the table below.

Table 6: Assessment of Likely Impacts

ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY IMPACTS	
Size and scale	The proposed works will be carried out within a total area comprising only c.0.05 hectares. However, a smaller fraction of this surface area will be working area, given that some of the land has been developed here previously. As such, there will be no impact on any Natura 2000 sites owing to the size or scale of the proposed works.
Land-take	No work will take place within the boundary of any Natura 2000 site. As such land-take is nil.
Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;	The nearest Natura 2000 site is Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC. It is within c. 0.17 km of the proposed works. However, there is no hydrological or other connectivity between this Natura site and the proposed site of works.

Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.);	No materials for construction will be sourced from within any Natura 2000 site. No water will be abstracted from any designated site.
Emissions (disposal to land, water or air);	There will be no additional emissions to land, air or water reasonably predicted. No emissions may be predicted that could have any likely significant effects upon the conservation objectives of the SAC.
Excavation requirements;	No excavation or extraction requirement exists within the boundary of any designated site or in areas with hydrological connectivity to any designated site.
Transportation requirements;	Site has existing access via both Butler Street Belturbet and Patrick Street. No other means of access will be required during any phase of the project that would impact upon any Natura 2000 site.
Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.;	Duration of works are not known at time of writing. Owing to the limited size and scale of the project it is unlikely to take more than 12 months.
Timing of works	Not known at time of writing. However given the scale and nature of the proposed development, no impacts on any species or habitats may be predicted as a result of the proposed timing of works.
Cumulative or In-combination Impacts with other Projects and Plans	<p>A desktop planning application search, using publicly available data from Cavan County Council's ePlan database and MyPlan.ie's National Planning Application database was undertaken. The online database for planning projects in County Cavan was reviewed (eplanning.ie). A number of projects in Belturbet were reviewed. By far the greater majority of these were small-scale residential projects (e.g. 24/60013 and 24/60018). Of the commercial planning applications reviewed, the majority of these are also of small scope and scale (e.g. 23/60247). It was noted that the immediately adjacent 'The Mad Ass Bar' public house has been granted permission for demolition and replacement with a number of residential units. However, no in-combination or cumulative impacts may be anticipated from these works should they proceed alongside the development under assessment. No projects were identified that may have any significant or indeterminate in-combination or cumulative impacts on any Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>No relevant planning applications in Kilconney or for adjacent townlands were found within the last 5 years that could have cumulative or in combination impacts with the proposed works at Butler Street, Belturbet.</p>

3.2 Description of any Likely Changes to the Natura 2000 Sites

Any likely changes to the Natura 2000 site are described in the table below with reference to the following criteria: reduction of habitat area, disturbance to key species, habitat or species fragmentation, reduction in species density, changes in key indicators of conservation value and climate change.

Table 7: Likely changes to the Nature 2000 site

Likely Changes to the Natura 2000 Site	
Reduction of habitat area	Works will not change the overall size of the Natura 2000 site nor any habitat thereof.
Disturbance to key species	Works do not have the potential to lead to the disturbance of any protected species for which either designated site has received its designation.
Habitat or species fragmentation	Works do not have the potential to lead to habitat or species fragmentation within the Natura 2000 site.
Reduction in species density	Works do not have the potential to lead to a reduction in species density in any Natura 2000 site.
Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);	Works will not lead to changes in any key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.) which the Natura 2000 site must maintain to uphold good conversation status.
Climate change	No negative effects to any sites as a result of or in combination with climate change are predicted as a consequence of the proposed works.

3.2.1 Likelihood of Interference with the key relationships that define the structure and function of the Natura 2000 Site as a whole:

It is considered that there will be no impacts of any scale, significance or duration arising from these works or from the operation of this facility, upon the key relationships that define the structure and function of the Natura 2000 site.

3.2.2 Indicators of Significance as a Result of the Identification of Effects

Indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects as set out below in terms of loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance and changes to the key elements of site.

Table 8. Indicators of significance

Indicators of Significance	
Loss	None predicted due to all works located outside Natura 2000 site.
Fragmentation	No habitat fragmentation to the Natura 2000 site is predicted.
Disruption	No significant risk of disruption to the Natura 2000 site is predicted
Disturbance	Works do not have the potential to cause disturbance to the Natura 2000 site.
Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.)	No changes to any key elements of the Natura 2000 site are predicted.

Description of any Likely Significant Impacts or Indeterminate Impacts of the Project on the Natura 2000 Site

Based on a consideration of the likely impacts arising from the proposed development as described above no likely significant or indeterminate impacts or effects have been identified to Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC as a result of the proposed development.

3.3 Findings of Article 6(3) Screening Assessment

Name of project or plan: Community, Enterprise and Tourism Hub at Butler Street, Belturbet, County Cavan.

Name and location of Natura 2000 Site: Nearest Natura 2000 site is Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC (Site Code 000007) which is c.170m removed from the proposed site of works.

Description of project or plan: The project will see the conversion of existing commercial premises into a community, enterprise and tourism hub.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?: The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 site.

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)? On the basis that the proposed project will have no impacts on any Natura 2000 sites and no other project or plan that could have significant effects has been identified, no cumulative or in-combination impacts are predicted.

3.3.1 Assessment of Significance of Effects

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site:

The proposed project will not significantly affect any Natura 2000 sites. Works and operation of the completed areas will not impact the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site for the reasons outlined below:

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

There will be no direct significant impacts upon the Natura 2000 sites as:

- None of the qualifying interest habitats or species of the SAC are within close proximity, adjacent to or with hydrological connectivity to the proposed development. Hence there is no source-pathway-receptor chain for impacts.
- No operational impacts of the completed areas on any designated site may be expected.

Indirect impacts upon the Natura 2000 Site:

No indirect impact to the Natura 2000 site are predicted for the reasons outlined below:

- There is no pathway for impacts from the works at Belturbet to the Natura 2000 site. Hence there is no source-pathway-receptor chain for impacts.
- No indirect operational impacts of the completed areas on any designated site may be expected given the remove of the site of works from the designated site.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

- As there is no source-pathway-receptor chain, no significant changes in the chemical or physical composition of the SAC are likely as a result of the construction or operation of the proposed development.
- No significant impacts to habitats or species upon which any of the qualifying interests and Conservation Objectives of the SAC rely upon will be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development.

Cumulative or in-combination impacts

As no direct or indirect impacts have been identified, no cumulative or in-combination impacts are therefore possible.

Consultation with Agencies

- As detailed previously in report

3.4 Data collected to carry out the assessment.

The following sources of data were employed:

- Environmental Protection Agency mapping database
- National Biodiversity Data Centre database
- NPWS protected sites and species database and online mapping
- Cavan County Council Planning Database (ePlan)

Level of assessment completed.

- Desk Study
- Site visit & Survey in January 2024
- Fossitt Level III Habitat Recording

Overall Conclusions

In view of the best and objective scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed development as described here, individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) is not likely to have any significant effects on any European sites. Therefore, it is recommended to Cavan County Council that Appropriate Assessment is not required.

4 References and Guidance Documents

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Appendix A: Site Location and Natura 2000 site

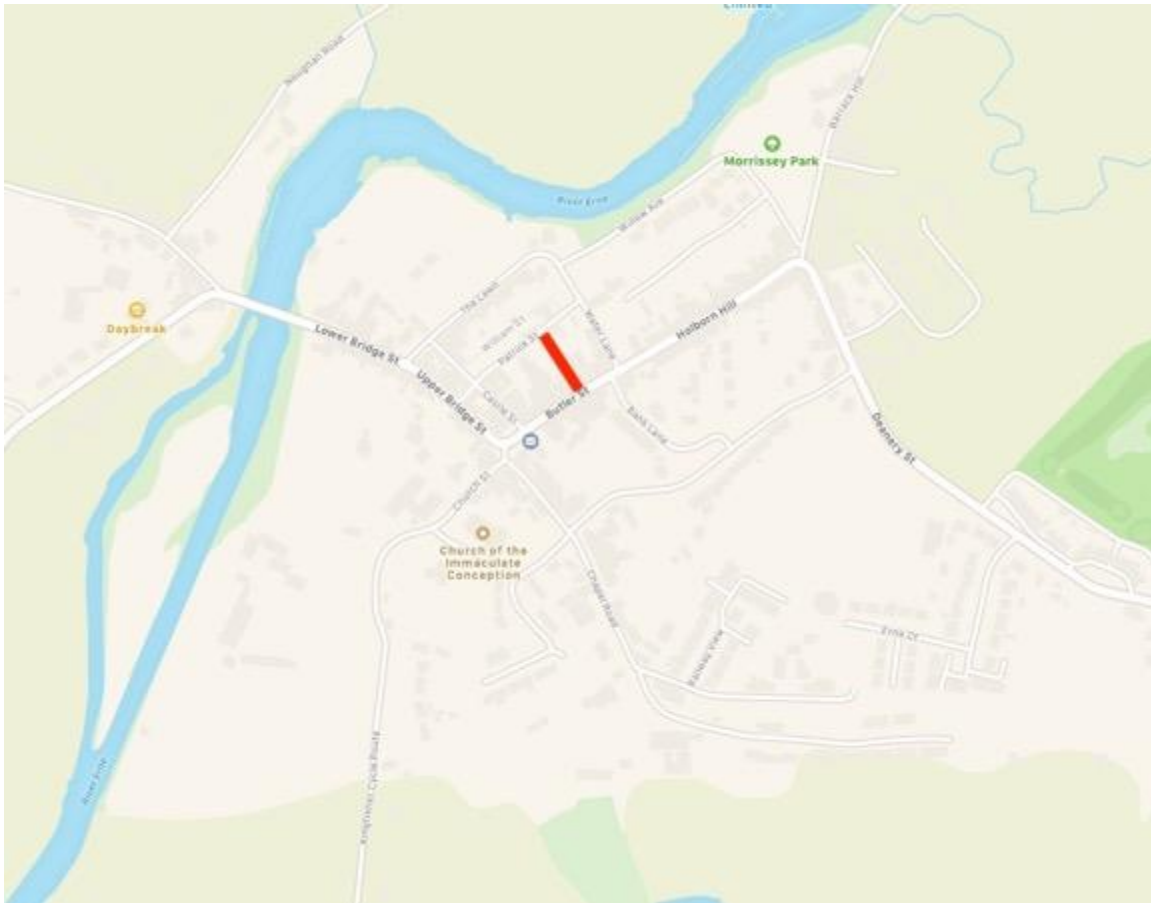


Fig. 1. Proposed Location of Works (indicated by red rectangle) at Belturbet. Base mapping from maps.apple.com.



Fig. 2. Location of works (shown by red rectangle) in relation to Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC. Base mapping from www.gis.epa.ie

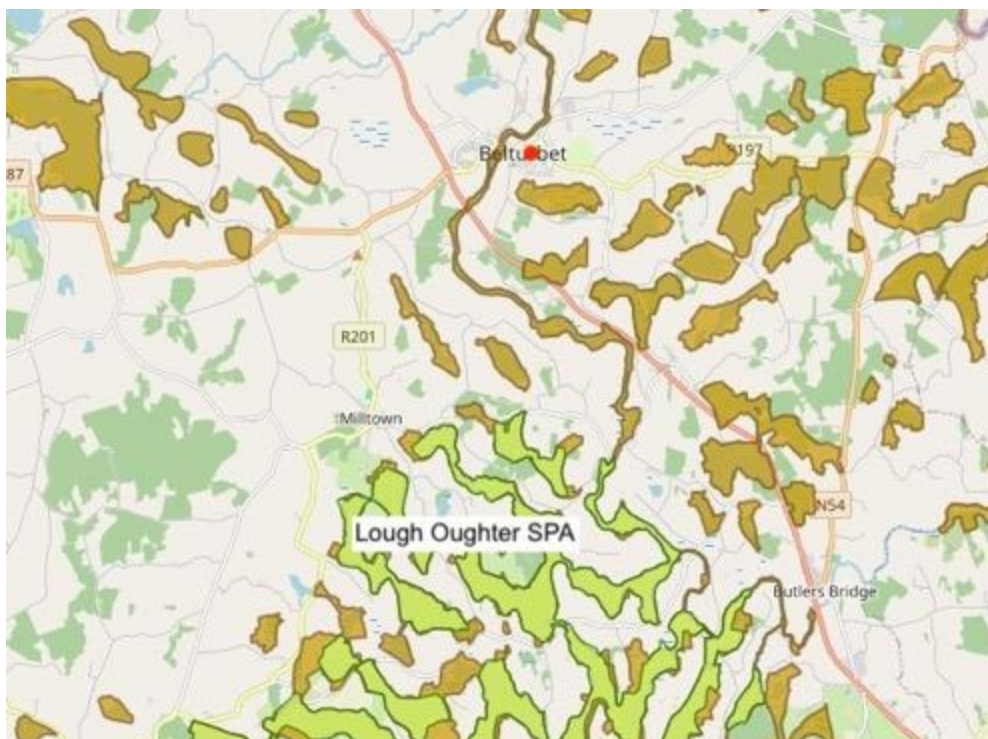
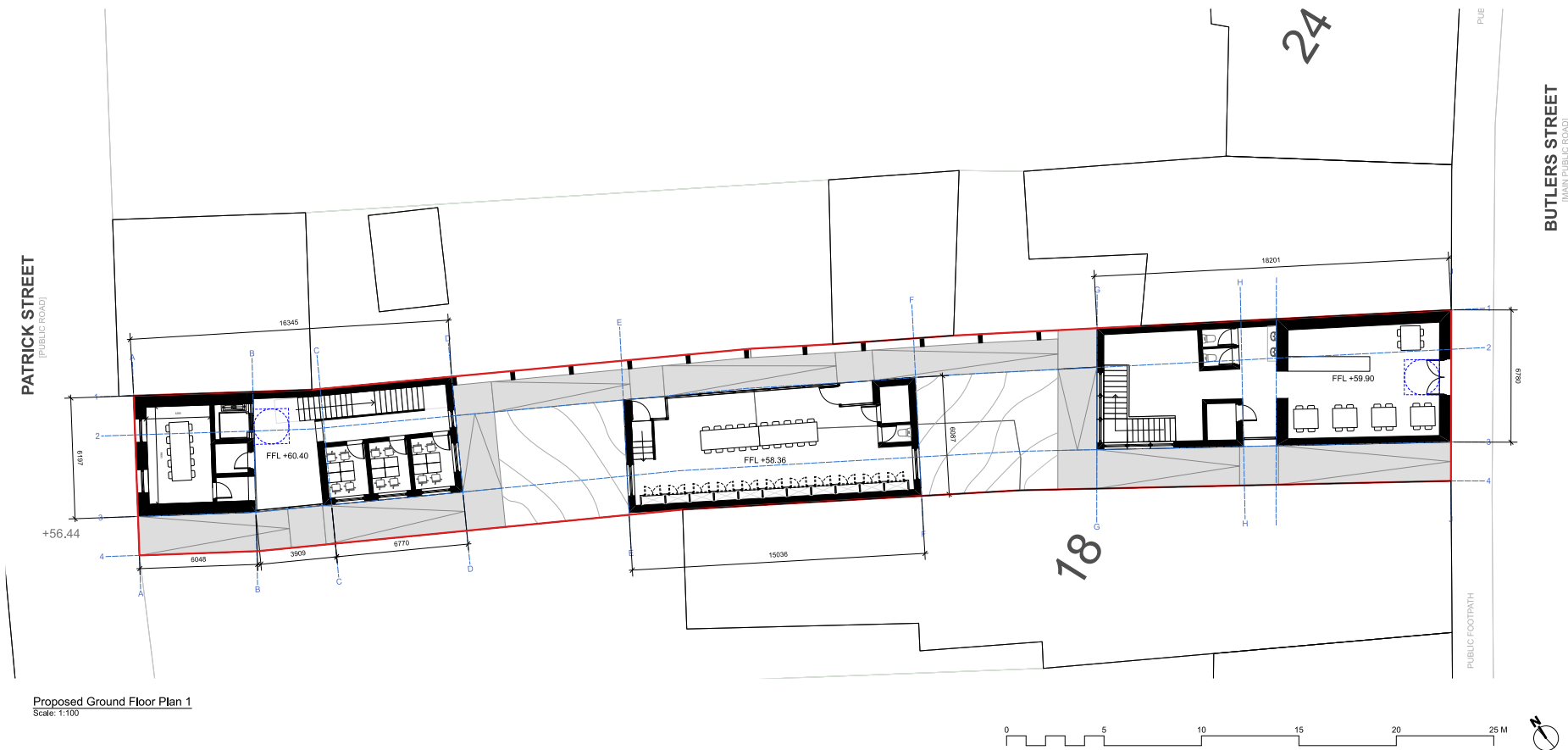


Fig. 3 Location of works (indicated by red circle) in relation to Lough Oughter SPA. Base mapping from www.gis.epa.ie

Appendix B.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan 1
Scale: 1:100

Fig. 1. Proposed Ground Floor Layout. Drawing by Cooney Architects

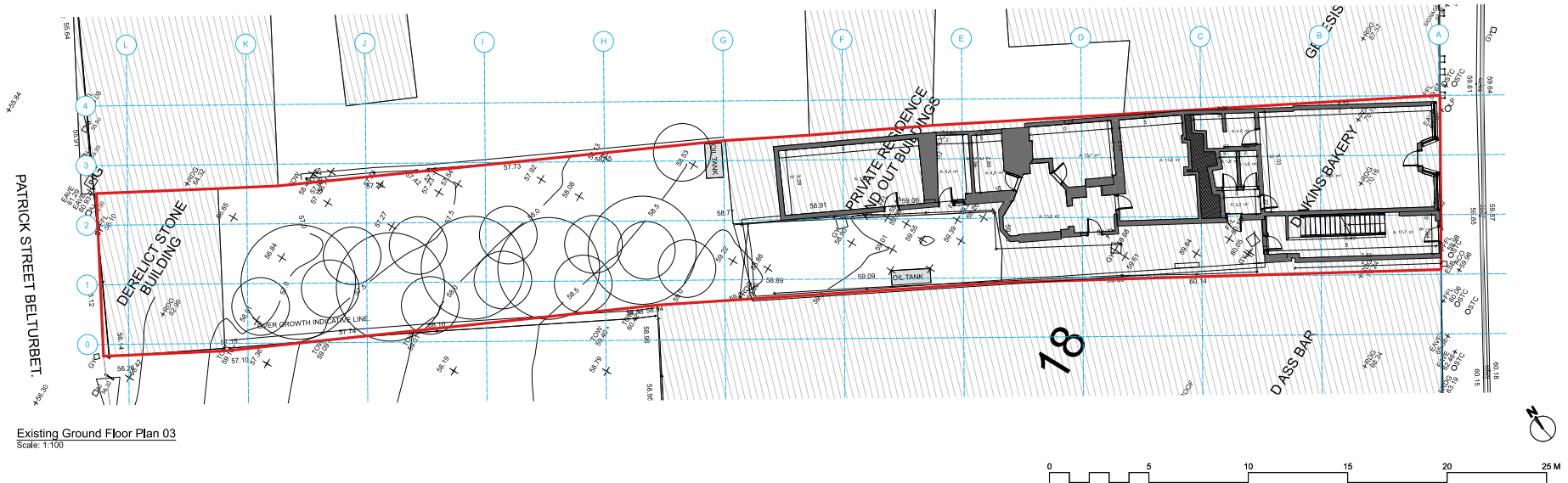


Fig. 2. Existing Ground Floor Plan. Drawing by Cooney Architects

APPENDIX C – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS – 2024

Fig. 1 Street frontage of premises under assessment



Fig. 2 Part of the buildings added as extensions to the original premises



Fig. 3 Bare ground and recolonising bare ground behind the premises.



Fig. 4 Overgrown flowerbed to rear of the premises.

