



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

EIA Screening Report

**Proposed Park at Cornahilt, Ballyjamesduff, Co.
Cavan**

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Prepared by: Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants

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1 Introduction

Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants Ltd. has been engaged by Park Hood for the provision of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening report for the creation of a park at Cornahilt, Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan. The principal requirement for these services is to assist the relevant authorities in forming an opinion as to whether or not the proposed works should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and if so, whether an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should be prepared in respect of it.

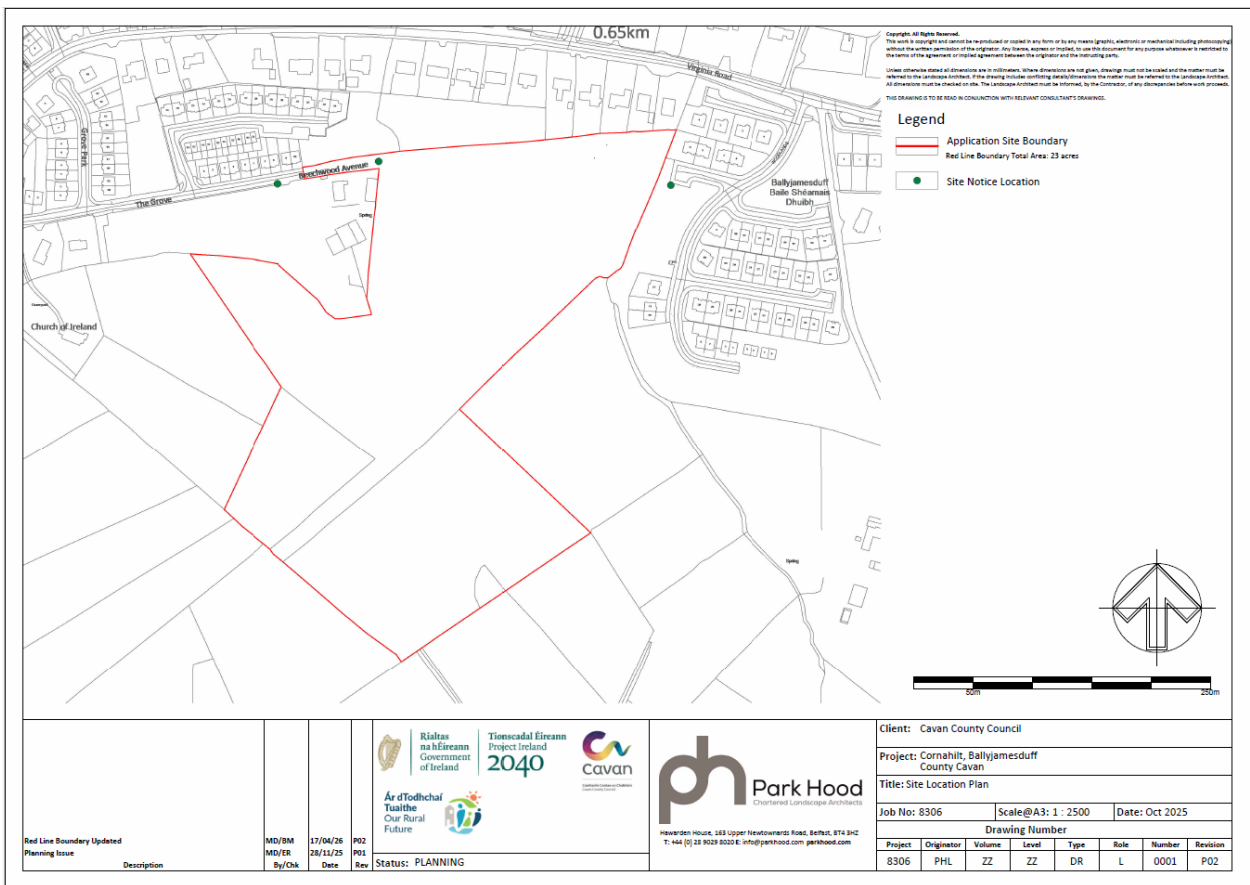


Figure 1. Proposed park area overview provided by Park Hood (2025)

1.1 Proposed Works

The proposed project involves transforming the site into an accessible open space for local residents, with inviting entrances and a network of looping trails combined with the planting of native woodland. Selective clearing of existing conifer plantations to create meadow areas will support the development

of a viewpoint, play area, picnic space, and an outdoor learning environment for local school children, while also creating opportunities to introduce additional recreational and adventure activities that build on the town’s existing tourist attractions. The southern portion of the site will be retained as a quieter, more reflective woodland walk, and the establishment of native woodland planting alongside boundary vegetation will enhance habitat quality and ecological value on-site, while serving as a community woodland and educational resource for the residents of Ballyjamesduff.



Figure 2. Site masterplan provided by Park Hood (2025)

1.2 EIA Screening Methodology

Screening is a process used to establish whether an EIA is required for a proposed development. There are a number of steps in the screening process.

The mandatory requirement for an EIA is generally based on the nature or scale of a proposed development, as set out in Annex I and II of the amended Directive. This identifies certain types and scales of development, generally based on thresholds of scale, for which EIA is mandatory.

The European Commission (2017) have published a Guidance on Screening document (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended 2014/52/EU) which summarises the need for an EIA based on specific measures and/or limits, according to predefined criteria such as the project's characteristics, location and/or certain project features such as projects potential impacts.

In addition, there is sometimes a requirement for EIA 'sub-threshold' developments, and, in this respect, it may be necessary to undertake a screening exercise to assess whether the proposed development requires the preparation of an EIAR.

A methodology was developed to formally screen the proposed development, which was based on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the EPA (2002) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports and the recent 2017 guidance issued by the EU. The screening exercise is divided into a section on Mandatory EIA and another on Sub-threshold or Discretionary EIA. In each section below a screening matrix is presented which examines the requirement for EIA according to the criteria set out in the relevant legislation. The rationale behind the responses within the matrix is provided at the end of each section.

The most recent guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment Screening has been provided by the Office of the Planning Regulator (ORP) (2021) and the EPA (2022).

2 Screening Assessment

EIA legislation sets down the types of projects that may require an EIAR. Annex I defines mandatory projects that require an EIAR and Annex II defines projects that are assessed on the basis of set mandatory thresholds for each of the project classes.

The EIA screening exercise initially assesses the development for Mandatory EIA using classifications defined in the appropriate legislation. Where no mandatory requirement is concluded, screening advances to sub-threshold development assessment, where the competent authority evaluates whether the project is likely to significantly affect the environment, with reference to its scale, nature, location and context.

2.1 Mandatory EIA Screening Assessment

Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, includes this project type:

10. Infrastructure projects (b) (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.

The EU Guidance on 'Interpretation of definitions of project categories of Annex I and II of the EIA Directive' (2015) interprets 'urban development' as taking 'account of, inter alia, the following:

Projects with similar characteristics to car parks and shopping centres could be considered to fall under Annex II (10)(b). This could be the case, for example, of bus garages or train depots, which are not explicitly mentioned in the EIA Directive, but have similar characteristics to car parks.

Construction projects such as housing developments, hospitals, universities, sports stadiums, cinemas, theatres, concert halls and other cultural centres could also be assumed to fall within this category. The underlying principle is that all these project categories are of an urban nature and that they may cause similar types of environmental impact.

Projects to which the terms ‘urban’ and ‘infrastructure’ can relate, such as the construction of cycle paths, road upgrades and pathways.

The proposed development is not considered to have a mandatory requirement for an EIA as it does not fall within any of the categories within Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 - 2018. These regulations have been amended to set out the updated criteria in accordance with the requirements of the EU Directive 2014/52/EU. Part 2: Class 10 (b) (iv) sets out a requirement for EIA for projects. The proposed development is considered an urban infrastructure project, as it involves the construction of cycle paths, upgrades/alterations to the existing road network and alterations to existing and construction of new walking paths. The relevant threshold to trigger a mandatory EIA for an infrastructure development within a built-up area is one involving a site greater than 10 ha.

The proposed development consisting of buildings, car park and trails, will comprise considerably less than 10 hectares and therefore is below the relevant threshold.

Subsequently, the proposed development is identified as being a sub threshold development under Part 2, Class 10 (b) (iv), as it is infrastructural development within a built-up area and it does not exceed the relevant threshold.

As a sub threshold development, the project does not automatically require an EIA but will still need to be screened to determine if an EIA is required. The need for subthreshold (Part 2 Class 15) screening is justified on the basis that the project value, its scale, nature, and setting in a built-up environment and the composition of the discharge and should be subject to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 - 2018. The overriding consideration in determining whether a project should be subject to EIA is based on the likelihood of significant environmental effects.

2.2 Sub-threshold EIA Screening Assessment

In cases where a project is mentioned in Part 2 but is classed as “sub-threshold development”, it is necessary for a planning authority to undertake a case-by-case examination about whether the

development is likely to be associated with significant effects on the environment.

While it is clearly demonstrated above that the subject proposal does not trigger a mandatory EIA, it is considered prudent to establish that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and by extension would not require a sub-threshold EIA.

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 sets out the criteria for determining whether a development would, or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and this was transposed directly from Annex III of the 2011 Directive. These criteria are defined as follows:

1. Characteristics of the proposed development;
2. Location of the proposed development, in terms of the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development;
3. Characteristics of the proposed impacts, in terms of the potential significant effects of the proposed development.

This screening assessment uses the checklist provided in the 'Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU)' (EC, 2017).

2.3 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Table 1. Review of characteristics of the proposed development

Screening Questions	Comment
Characteristics of the Proposed Development	
Is the scale of the project considered to be significant?	The overall project area (red line boundary), as shown in Figure 1 , encompasses approximately 9 hectares and the majority of this land within the boundary will not actually be developed and will remain as a woodland/grassland area and only a relatively small area will consist

	<p>of pathways, car park and built ground (Figure 2). Overall, the proposed development is consistent with the scale and character of the surrounding environment in both size and design and is therefore not considered significant.</p>
<p>Is the size of the project considered significant when considered cumulatively with other adjacent developments?</p>	<p>No permitted or proposed projects were identified which in combination with the proposed development would give rise to significant cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>Will the project utilise a significant quantity of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water or biodiversity?</p>	<p>No. The proposed development will largely be confined to areas of existing woodland, which will continue to function as woodland, scrub, or grassland habitats. Only a small portion of the site will be used for pathways, a car park, and built surfaces, with built development remaining well below 10 hectares. There will be no significant impact on land or overall land area, as most of the site will be retained as woodland and grassland. In addition, planned biodiversity enhancements will increase the ecological value of the site compared to its current low value as a predominantly conifer plantation.</p> <p>An Appropriate Assessment Screening (AAS) was conducted for this project. The screening process concluded that the proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites within the study area (FFEC, 2026). Additionally, no protected species were found within the subject site.</p>
<p>Will the project produce a significant quantity of waste?</p>	<p>During the construction phase, normal construction waste will be produced, segregated where possible and sent to an appropriately</p>

	<p>permitted waste or materials recovery facility. The waste management hierarchy will be implemented on-site, which prioritises prevention and minimisation of waste, followed by reuse and recycling.</p> <p>During the operational phase, waste generated on-site will primarily arise from visitors and the maintenance of facilities, including toilets, which will be connected to the Ballyjamesduff sewerage treatment network. General waste will be appropriately segregated and collected for disposal or recovery at permitted waste management facilities. The waste management hierarchy will continue to be applied, prioritising the prevention and minimisation of waste, followed by reuse and recycling. Regular maintenance and servicing of toilet facilities will ensure that wastewater and associated waste streams are managed in accordance with relevant regulations and best practice.</p>
<p>Will the project create a significant amount or type of pollution?</p>	<p>No significant water or air-borne pollution is envisaged. The proposed development is not a project type that will give rise to significant emissions or pollution.</p>
<p>Will the project create a significant amount of nuisance?</p>	<p>Limited disruption to local receptors (traffic) may arise during the construction phase but this will be short-term in duration. Overall accessibility including walking routes and local amenities, will be improved upon completion of the project.</p>
<p>Will there be a risk of major accidents?</p>	<p>The proposed development is not of a type that poses a risk of major accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used. The proposed construction works will employ best practice methodologies</p>

	and will be subject to the contractor's safety statements and risk assessments.
Will there be a risk of natural disasters, including those caused by climate change?	<p>Based on flood analysis data from Floodinfo.ie, the site is not within an area of low, medium or high probability for fluvial flooding. While flooding may be a cause of environmental impact alone and in conjunction with climate change given the size and scale of the development impacts are not significant enough to trigger an EIA.</p> <p>In terms of fire risk, the proposed development will comply with all relevant health & safety legislation. It is considered that the risk of significant fire occurring, affecting the proposed development and causing it to have significant environmental effects, is limited.</p>
Will there be a risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)?	There is limited potential for negative effects on human health during the construction phase as a result of potential emissions to air, or the potential emissions to land and water. Best construction site practices will prevent any risk of pollution running off the site. On this basis, the potential for negative health effects associated with the proposed development is negligible.
Is the combination of the above factors likely to have significant effects on the environment?	There are no factors above which when combined would result in any significant effect on the environment.

2.4 Potential Impacts by EIA Topic

Table 2. Review of the location and setting of the proposed works

Topic	Comment

Population and Human Health	The potential impacts of the construction phase on human beings are not considered to be significant. During construction, there is the potential for temporary minor impacts related to traffic inconvenience, dust and noise. However, the work will be short-term in duration.
Biodiversity / Species and Habitats	An Appropriate Assessment Screening was conducted for this project. The screening process concluded that the proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites within the study area. No protected species were recorded within the footprint of the proposed works.
Land and soils	No significant impact is anticipated. The development will be constructed in accordance with best practice environmentally sensitive methods and environmental management systems.
Water	Good construction site practices and direct avoidance and mitigation will be in place to prevent any risk of pollution, e.g. chemicals used in construction such as hydrocarbons and cement-based products, running off the site. With best practices incorporated into the design and the construction works, the potential for significant run-off of pollutants is either eliminated or greatly reduced, and no significant residual impacts on water are anticipated for the construction phase. The operational phase does not have potential for significant impacts on water quality.
Air & Climate	During construction, there is the potential for short-term minor negative impacts related to dust to occur, however, this will be short-term in duration and limited to the works area. Best practice construction site management will minimise emissions.

Noise & Vibration	Potential short-term noise impacts may arise during construction activities however this will be managed through best practice measures. No significant impacts are anticipated.
Material Assets: Built Environment	Possible effects include short-term interruption to existing services and damage to existing systems during construction. No significant impact that could trigger the requirement for an EIAR is predicted.
Material Assets: Transportation	There will be no significant long-term impacts on local traffic. During the construction phase, appropriate traffic management and signage will be in place to ensure the safety of other road users.
Waste Management	The development will involve limited excavation works. Possible effects include the re-use / recycle / disposal of excavated material as well as other waste generated on-site i.e. construction waste. Any effects will be mitigated by the implementation of best practices in construction and operational waste management procedures.
Cultural Heritage	The proposed development will not give rise to any significant impacts on cultural heritage.
Landscape	No significant impact is anticipated. The proposed development is located within an existing woodland area and will remain a woodland/park area post construction and will not give rise to any significant landscape or visual impacts that could trigger the requirement for EIAR.

3 Conclusion

The proposed project is not a development for which an EIA is mandatory. In terms of scale, the proposed

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development falls significantly below the threshold set out in Class 10 (b)(i) in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Regulations.

A sub-threshold EIA Screening exercise was carried out to determine the potential for the proposed development to have significant environmental effects or not.

No significant negative effects on the environment have been identified during the construction or operational phase of the proposed development. The overall conclusion of this screening exercise is that there should be no specific requirement for a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development.

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