

## Habitats Directive Project Screening Assessment

**Table 1: Project Details**

<b>Development Consent Type</b>	Part 8 Local Authority Development
<b>Development Location</b>	Mount Congreve, Co. Waterford
<b>File Ref</b>	
<b>Description of the project</b>	<p>Renovation and up-grade of Mount Congreve House, a protected structure , to provide for public access as a visitor attraction , hosting of events, visitor accommodation and offices. Works will include installation of a lift, universal access, toilets, kitchen, fire safety improvements and installation of a bio-energy heating system.</p> <p>Development of the existing farm yard to incorporate a café; offices, meeting facilities, craft yard; childrens play area and a retail unit.</p> <p>Other works will include the development of a car park, waste water treatment system, creation of a wetland garden, upgrade of existing greenhouse, upgrade of apartments and cottages to provide high quality tourist accommodation, enhance the grounds and path and development of a childrens playground.</p> <p>Improvements to sightlines on the L4411 by setting back the estate wall at the entrance just west of the main entrance into the House and Gardens. The second entrance will be used for traffic entering the gardens and the existing main entrance will be used for traffic exiting the gardens.</p> <p>The works materially affect the character of Mount Congreve House and Demesne, a protected structure.</p>

**Table 2: Identification of Natura 2000 Sites (SACs and SPAs) which may be Impacted by the proposed development**

Please answer the following five questions in order to determine whether there are any Natura 2000 sites which could potentially be impacted by the proposed development.

<b>Impacts on SACs</b>		
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Impacts On Freshwater Habitats</b> <i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include freshwater habitats, or in the catchment of same?</i></p> <p><b>Sites to consider: Blackwater River, Lower River Suir</b></p> <p><b>Habitats to consider:</b> Rivers, Lakes and Lagoons</p>	Yes Mount Congreve adjacent to but outside the boundary of the River Suir SAC. Hydrological connectivity through the Ballymoat Stream.
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Impacts On Wetland Habitats</b> <i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include wetland habitats, or within 1 km of same?</i></p>	No

Impacts on SACs		
	<b>Sites to consider: Comeragh Mountains</b>  <b>Habitats to consider:</b> Bogs, Fens, Marshes and Wet Heaths.	
3	<b>Impacts on Intertidal and Marine Habitats</b> <i>Is the development located within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include intertidal and/or marine habitats and species, or within the catchment of same.</i>  <b>Sites to consider: Tramore Dunes and Backstrand, River Suir (Tidal Section), River Blackwater (Tidal Section), Waterford Estuary</b>  <b>Habitats to consider:</b> Mudflats, Sandflats, Saltmarsh, Estuary; Shingle, Reefs, Sea Cliffs.	Yes River Suir Tidal as far as Carrick on Suir.
4	<b>Impacts On Woodlands , Grasslands and Dry Heaths</b> <i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying habitats include woodlands or grasslands habitats, or within 200m of same.</i>  <b>Sites to consider: Glendine Wood Nire Valley Woods, Ardmore Head, Helvick Head</b>  <b>Habitats to consider:</b> Woodlands, Grasslands or Dunes.	No
Impacts on SPAs		
5	<b>Impacts On Birds</b> <i>Is the development within a Special Protection Area, or within 1 km of same.</i>  <b>Sites to consider: Tramore Backstrand, Dungarvan Bay, Blackwater Callows, Blackwater Estuary, Helvick Head –Ballyquin Coast, Mid Waterford Coast</b>	No

### Conclusion Table 2:

If the answer to all of these questions is **No**, significant impacts can be ruled out for Natura 2000 sites. No further assessment is required, proceed to the Habitats Directive Conclusion Statement.

If the answer to any of these questions is **Yes** please refer to tables 3 and 4 below.

### Table 3: Determination of Possible Impacts On Natura 2000 Sites.

Where it has been identified that there is a Natura 2000 site within the potential impact zone of the proposed development, it is necessary to try to determine the nature of the possible impacts. Please answer the following questions as appropriate.

1	<b>Impacts on designated freshwater habitats (rivers, lakes streams and lagoons).</b>  <b>Sites to consider: Blackwater River, Lower River Suir</b>  <i>Please answer the following if the answer to question 1 in table 2 was yes.</i>  <i>Does the development involve any of the following:</i>	
	<b>Works inside the boundary of designated site</b>	
1.1	All works within the boundary of any SAC whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats/species, excluding small extensions/alterations to existing buildings.	No
	<b>Works outside the boundary of designated site</b>	
1.2	Discharge to surfacewater or groundwater within the boundary of an SAC whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats/species.	Yes
1.3	Abstraction from surfacewater or groundwater within 1km of the boundary of an SAC whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats or species.	No

1.4	Removal of topsoil within 100m of the boundary of an SAC, whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats/species.	
1.5	Infilling or raising of ground levels within 100m the boundary of any SAC whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats/species.	Yes for car parking area
1.6	Construction of drainage ditches within 1km of the boundary of an SAC whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats/species.	
1.7	Installation of waste water treatment systems; percolation areas; septic tanks within 100 m of the boundary of an SAC site whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats/species.	Site of WWTP is approximately 250m from the SAC boundary.
1.8	Construction within a floodplain of EU designated watercourse whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats/species.	No building works within flood zone of Ballymoat Stream. Wetland Garden is adjacent to flood zone and is a water compatible development.
1.9	Crossing or culverting of rivers or streams within 1km of the boundary of any SAC whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats.	Yes culverting of field drain to north of car park site.
1.10	Storage of chemicals hydrocarbons or organic wastes within 100 m of the boundary of an SAC whose qualifying features include freshwater habitats/species.	No
1.11	Development of a large scale, within catchment of an EU designated watercourse or waterbody, which involves the production of an EIS.	No
1.12	Development or expansion of quarries within catchment of an EU designated watercourse or waterbody.	No
1.13	Development or expansion of windfarms within catchment of an EU designated watercourse or waterbody.	No
1.14	Development of pumped hydro electric stations within catchment of an EU designated watercourse or waterbody.	No
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Impacts On Wetland Habitats</b>  <i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include wetland habitats, or within 1 km of same?</i></p> <p><b>Sites to consider: Comeragh Mountains</b></p> <p><b>Habitats to consider:</b>  Bogs, Fens, Marshes and Wet Heaths.</p> <p><i>Please answer the following if the answer to question 2 in table 2 was yes.</i></p>	
	<b>Works inside the boundary of designated site</b>	
2.1	All works within the boundary of an SAC whose qualifying features include heath, marsh, fen or bog, excluding small extensions/alterations to existing buildings.	

	<b>Works outside the boundary of designated site</b>	
2.2	Construction of roads or other infrastructure on peat habitats within 1km of any SAC whose qualifying features include heath, marsh, fen or bog.	
2.3	Development of a large scale within 1km of any SAC, whose qualifying features include heath, marsh, fen or bog, which involves the production of an EIS.	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Impacts on Intertidal and Marine Habitats</b>  <i>Is the development located within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include intertidal and/or marine habitats and species, or within the catchment of same.</i></p> <p><b>Sites to consider: Tramore Dunes and Backstrand, River Suir (Tidal Section), River Blackwater (Tidal Section), Waterford Estuary</b></p> <p><i>Please answer the following if the answer to question 1 in table 3 was yes.</i></p>	
	<b>Works inside the boundary of designated site</b>	
3.1	All works within the boundary of any SAC whose qualifying features include intertidal or marine habitats, excluding small extensions/alterations to existing buildings.	No
	<b>Works outside the boundary of designated site</b>	
3.2	Coastal protection works within 5km of any SAC whose qualifying features include intertidal or marine habitats.	
3.3	Development of piers, slipways, marinas, pontoons or any other infrastructure within 5km of any SAC whose qualifying features include intertidal or marine habitats.	Yes site of WWTP is approximately 250m from the SAC boundary.
3.4	Dredging within 5km of any SAC whose qualifying features include intertidal or marine habitats.	
3.5	Works within 1km of any SAC whose qualifying features include intertidal or marine habitats, which will result in discharges to rivers or streams directly connected to the designated site.	Effluent from WWTP processed through a sand polishing filter and soaks to ground in sandstone till soils.
3.6	Infilling of coastal habitats within 500m of any SAC whose qualifying features include intertidal or marine habitats.	
3.7	Removal of topsoil or infilling of terrestrial habitats within 100m of any SAC whose qualifying features include intertidal or marine habitats.	
3.8	Development of a large scale within 1km of any SAC whose qualifying features include intertidal or marine habitats, which involves the production of an EIS.	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Impacts on other designated woodlands and grasslands</b>  (woodland, upland grassland, lowland grassland, coastal grassland including dunes).</p> <p><b>Sites to consider: Glendine Wood Nire Valley Woods, Ardmore Head, Helvick Head</b></p> <p><i>Please answer the following if the answer to question 4 in table 2 was yes.</i></p> <p><i>Does the development involve any of the following:</i></p>	
	<b>Works inside the boundary of designated site</b>	
4.1	All works within the boundary of any SAC whose qualifying interests include woodland or grassland habitat types excluding small extensions/alterations to existing buildings.	
	<b>Works outside the boundary of designated site</b>	
4.2	Development within 200m of any SAC whose qualifying interests include	

	woodland or grassland habitat types.	
4.3	Development of a large scale within 1km of any SAC, whose qualifying interests include woodland or grassland habitat types, which involves the production of an EIS.	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Impacts on birds in SPAs</b></p> <p><b>Sites to consider: Tramore Backstrand, Dungarvan Bay, Blackwater Callows, Blackwater Estuary, Helvick Head –Ballyquin Coast, Mid Waterford Coast</b></p> <p><i>Please answer the following if the answer to question 5 in table 2 was yes.</i></p> <p><i>Does the development involve any of the following:</i></p>	
	<b><i>Works inside the boundary of designated site</i></b>	
5.1	All works within the boundary of any SPA excluding small extensions/alterations to existing buildings.	
	<b><i>Works outside the boundary of designated site</i></b>	
5.2	Erection of wind turbines within 1km of any SPA.	
5.3	All construction works within 100m of any SPA.	
5.4	Infilling of coastal habitats within 500m of intertidal SPA.	
5.5	Works within 1km of coastal/wetland SPAs which will result in discharges to rivers or streams that are directly connected to designated sites.	
5.6	Development of cycleways or walking routes within 100m of SPAs.	
5.7	Construction works on feeding areas adjacent to SPAs	

**Conclusion Table 3:** If the answer to all of the above is no or n/a, significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites can be ruled out. No further assessment is required, proceed to the Screening Conclusion Statement. If the answer to any question in table 3 is yes, you may require further information, unless you are satisfied that the project proponents have incorporated adequate mitigation into their design to avoid impacts on the Natura 2000 site (e.g. water pollution protection measures). Such information should be provided in the form of a Natura Impact Statement which should address the particular issues of concern as identified through the above.

**Table 4: Consideration of Potential Impacts on Protected Species**

Many of our Special Areas of Conservation are designated for species as well as for habitats. These are listed below, alongside the sites for which they are designated. Included is a short list of the types of activities which could have an impact on these species. Please tick if you are concerned that the proposed development could have an impact on these species.

Species	Relevant Sites	Activities which could have impacts on species	Possible Impacts Identified? Y/N
Otter	Lower River Suir River Blackwater Waterford Estuary	Activities that interfere with river banks.	No, works will not affect banks of River Suir.
Bats (all species outside designated sites)	Blackwater River, Lower River Suir, Waterford Estuary Glendine Wood, Lismore Woods Nire Valley Woods  Along with above, in general <b>all sites</b> with any of the following; woods, mature treelines and hedgerows, old buildings and bridges	Activities that result in loss of woodland or hedgerow habitat or causes disturbance to roost sites. Renovations of old buildings; Re-pointing of old bridges.	Bat survey to be carried out before any renovation works carried out on buildings or removal of mature trees.
Salmon	Lower River Suir River Blackwater Waterford Estuary	Activities that interfere with water quality, levels or the river bed;	No
River Lamprey	Lower River Suir River Blackwater Waterford Estuary	Activities that interfere with water quality, levels or the river bed;	No
Brook Lamprey	Lower River Suir River Blackwater Waterford Estuary	Activities that interfere with water quality, levels or the river bed;	No
Sea Lamprey	Lower River Suir River Blackwater Waterford Estuary	Activities that interfere with water quality or the river bed . estuarine areas;	No
Twaite Shad Allis Shad	Lower River Suir River Blackwater Waterford Estuary	Activities that interfere with water quality or the river bed . estuarine areas;	No
White-clawed Crayfish	Lower River Suir River Blackwater Waterford Estuary	Activities that interfere with water quality or the river bed;	No
Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Lower River Suir River Clodiagh River Lickey River Blackwater	Activities that interfere with water quality, levels or the river bed ;	No
Whorled Snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>	River Blackwater	Activities that result in loss of fen, marsh or wet grassland habitat within or close to the SAC.	No
Killarney Fern	Glendine Wood Lismore Woods (River Blackwater)	Woodland clearance or other activities resulting in loss or disturbance to woodland habitat within the relevant SACs.	No

**Conclusion Table 4:** If the answer to all of the above is no, significant impacts on species can be ruled out. If the answer to any of the above is yes, then further information is likely to be required in relation to potential for impact on that particular species. Where potential impacts on the above listed species are within designated sites, then further information should be sought in the form of a Natura Impact Statement. Where impacts are outside designated sites, then a species specific survey should be requested.

## Habitats Directive Screening Conclusion Statement

Development Type	Part 8 Local Authority Development
Development Location	Mount Congreve, Co. Waterford
Natura 2000 sites within impact zone	River Suir SAC 002137
Planning File Ref	
<b>Description of the project</b>	
<p>Renovation and up-grade of Mount Congreve House, a protected structure , to provide for public access as a visitor attraction , hosting of events, visitor accommodation and offices. Works will include installation of a lift, universal access, toilets, kitchen, fire safety improvements and installation of a bio-energy heating system.</p> <p>Development of the existing farm yard to incorporate a café; offices, meeting facilities, craft yard; children's play area and a retail unit.</p> <p>Other works will include the development of a car park, waste water treatment system, creation of a wetland garden, upgrade of existing greenhouse, upgrade of apartments and cottages to provide high quality tourist accommodation, enhance the grounds and path and development of a children's playground.</p> <p>Improvements to sightlines on the L4411 by setting back the estate wall at the entrance just west of the main entrance into the House and Gardens. The second entrance will be used for traffic entering the gardens and the existing main entrance will be used for traffic exiting the gardens.</p> <p>The works materially affect the character of Mount Congreve House and Demesne, a protected structure.</p>	
<b>Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) could affect Natura 2000 site(s).</b>	
<p>Inadequate treatment of wastewater from on-site toilets and washing facilities and contaminated surface water from car parking areas could lead to potential water quality impacts and ecological effects on the River Suir and any habitats connected to it. Faecal contamination can alter the nutrient balance in soils and water, causing significant changes in microbial communities and reductions in oxygen levels. This can have significant effects on vegetation structure and composition in receiving habitats and impact on freshwater fish species and mammals.</p> <p>Lighting of previously unlit areas along treelines and in wooded areas could impact on foraging and commuting bats.</p>	
<b>If there are potential negative impacts, explain whether you consider if these are likely to be significant, and if not, why not.</b>	
<p>The proposed development is adjacent to but outside the boundary of the River Suir SAC. The proposed development will not incur loss of ecological footprint from the SAC. No Annex 1 habitats occur along this section of the River Suir. The nearest occurrence of Annex I habitats (salt marsh) is c. 14 km downstream of the Project, on the southern bank of the Suir Estuary at King's Channel and Ballinakill. Given the distance between the project site and the Annex 1 Saltmarsh there will be no reduction in the area of these habitats or any change in the distribution of these habitat types in the River Suir SAC.</p> <p>The proposed Waste Water Treatment Plan serving a population equivalent of 500 is located approximately 250m south of the River Suir in an area of high but not extreme groundwater</p>	

vulnerability on sandstone till soils with good percolation- T value of 7 and P value of 7. The proposed system involves a settlement tank , wastewater treatment and sand polishing filter which can reduce fecal coliform and e. coli to less than 10cfu resulting in contaminant free final effluent 99% and in compliance with standards of Waste Water Discharge Regulations.

Car parking surface shall be designed appropriate to a sustainable drainage system incorporating hydrocarbon and sediment traps to avoid contaminated run off to adjacent watercourses and the River Suir.

A Bat Survey incorporating wildlife appropriate lighting scheme shall be prepared to inform design and construction of craft yard and car parking areas.



**Plate 1. Habitat Map of Mount Congreve Estate, Boundary of River Suir SAC runs along the riverbank to the north of the site.**

Areas subject to development comprise existing built land, amenity grassland and wet grassland.

Freshwater Pearl Mussel and White-clawed Crayfish do not occur within this section of the River Suir and thus the project will not pose significant effects on the Conservation Objectives for these qualifying interests.

Lamprey species, Twait Shad and Atlantic Salmon are known to migrate through the Middle Suir during their migrations. All of these species are sensitive to water quality impacts. Effluent from the WWTP will be subject to secondary treatment and a sand polishing filter and shall be in compliance with Waste Water Discharge Regulations.

Otter is known to occur in the River Suir. The project will not interfere with the riverbank but as with freshwater fish species Otter are sensitive to water quality impacts which may affect their food source. Effluent from the WWTP will be subject to secondary treatment and a sand polishing filter

and shall be in compliance with Waste Water Discharge Regulations.

**Conclusion of assessment**

The proposed works will take place outside the boundary of the River Suir SAC which is located to the north of the estate. Given the distance between the proposed development and the nearest annexed habitat ó saltmarsh occurring some 14km downstream and proposed measures to deal with foul and surface water it is considered that there will not be potential for significant effects i.e. effects that will cause loss, fragmentation, disruption or disturbance to the qualifying interest habitats relevant to this section and downstream on the River Suir SAC -saltmarsh habitat in the Kingø Channel and Ballinakill Sections of the River Suir SAC.

With regard to relevant species that are qualifying interests in this section of the River Suir SAC, the conservation objective for Sea Lamprey, Twaite Shad and Salmon is to restore their favourable conservation condition in the River Suir. The conservation objective for Otter is to maintain their favourable conservation condition in the River Suir. The proposed development will not give rise to constraints to otter habitat. Constraints to restoring favourable conservation condition for Sea Lamprey, Twaite Shad and Salmon are artificial barriers to migration and access to areas of suitable spawning habitat. The proposed development will not give rise to these constraints. Given the proposed measures to deal with foul and surface water from the proposed development it is considered there will not be potential for significant impacts i.e. impacts that will cause loss, fragmentation, disruption or disturbance to the habitat of Otter, Shad, Lamprey and Salmon.

On the basis of the foregoing it is concluded the proposed development will not pose significant effects for the conservation objectives of the qualifying interest species that occur in this section and downstream in the River Suir SAC