

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

**Prepared by
Cunnane Stratton Reynolds**


**On behalf of
Cavan County Council**

For a Part 8 planning application for Kingscourt Regeneration Scheme

**At
Kingscourt, County Cavan.**

Document Control Sheet

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Disclaimer: The advice in this report has been informed by a search of the available online planning history and development plan zoning objectives for the site in question, and excludes consideration of other existing or potential, perceived or actual issues including but not exclusively relating to wayleaves, other rights of way, ownership, availability or otherwise of access, flood risk, infrastructural constraints, and of other advices produced in relation to the site by other parties. Our advice has been prepared without consultation with any other party including the local authority in whose jurisdiction the site is located. We reserve the right to amend the advice contained in the report based upon the availability of further information as and when it may become available. The site boundary indicated in Figures is indicative only.



One Albert Quay

The Curragh

Teelings

The Capitol

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STATEMENT OF COMPETENCY

The EIAR Screening Report has been compiled by Eamonn Prenter of Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Ltd (CSR). Eamonn is a Director of CSR and a member of the Irish Planning Institute. His qualifications are as follows:

Eamonn Prenter, BA (Hons) Geography, MSc Planning; MRTPI MIPI,

Eamonn is a chartered town planner with both public and private experience and over 30 years post qualification experience having undertaken a number of EISs, EIARs, SEAs and various screening reports over that period of time for both public and private sector clients.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Cunnane Stratton Reynolds has prepared this EIAR Screening Assessment on behalf of Cavan County Council who intends to develop lands for Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration Scheme under the Part 8 planning process.

Details of the construction and design of the proposed development are provided in the technical reports attached to the planning application.

It is noted that regulations dealing with environmental screening obligations under Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 (“the 2014 Directive”) have not yet been implemented in Ireland. Notwithstanding, having regard to best practice and guidance, this report has had regard to Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment as amended by the 2014 Directive. The provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, including the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations which came into effect on 1st September 2018, are also considered in this screening report with respect to EIA and EIA Thresholds.

This report outlines the methodology used to screen the proposed development in respect of environmental assessment and assesses the requirement to prepare an EIAR. It sets out the proposal, the assessment of potential environmental effects, and the outcome and conclusions of the screening process.

This EIAR Screening Statement has been prepared having regard to Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive EU 2014/52 which came into effect in May of 2017. As at the time of writing, Ireland has not yet transposed the Directive. The EIAR Screening Statement has been written to address the guidance provided by “*Advice on Administrative Provisions in Advance of Transposition and Implementation of Directive 2014/52/EU on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive)*” and the Key Issues Consultation Paper prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning Community and Local Government, May 2017. This EIA Screening Report is also informed by the advice contained in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage guidance to date, in particular Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, August 2018. This EIAR Screening Report has had regard to more recent advice in the form of ‘*Guidelines on Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*’ published by the Environmental Protection Agency in May 2022.

1.2 Purpose of this EIAR Screening Report

An EIAR is:

‘A statement of the effects, if any, which proposed development, if carried out, would have on the environment.’

The EIAR is prepared by the developer, in this case Cavan County Council, and is submitted to a CA (‘Competent Authority’) in this case the County Council as part of the consent process. The CA uses the information provided to assess the environmental effects of the project and, in the context of other considerations, to help determine if consent should be granted. The information in the EIAR is also used by other parties to evaluate the acceptability of the project and its effects and to inform their submissions to the CA. The EIAR consists of a systematic

analysis and assessment of the potential effects of a proposed project on the receiving environment. The amended EIA Directive prescribes a range of environmental factors which are used to organise descriptions of the environment and these factors must be addressed in any EIAR. These factors are considered in the context of screening for EIA as in this case.

The overall purpose of this Screening Report is to identify and detail the findings of a desktop study undertaken to analyse the impacts, if any, of the proposed development on the receiving environment and, based on the results, decide whether or not an EIAR is required.

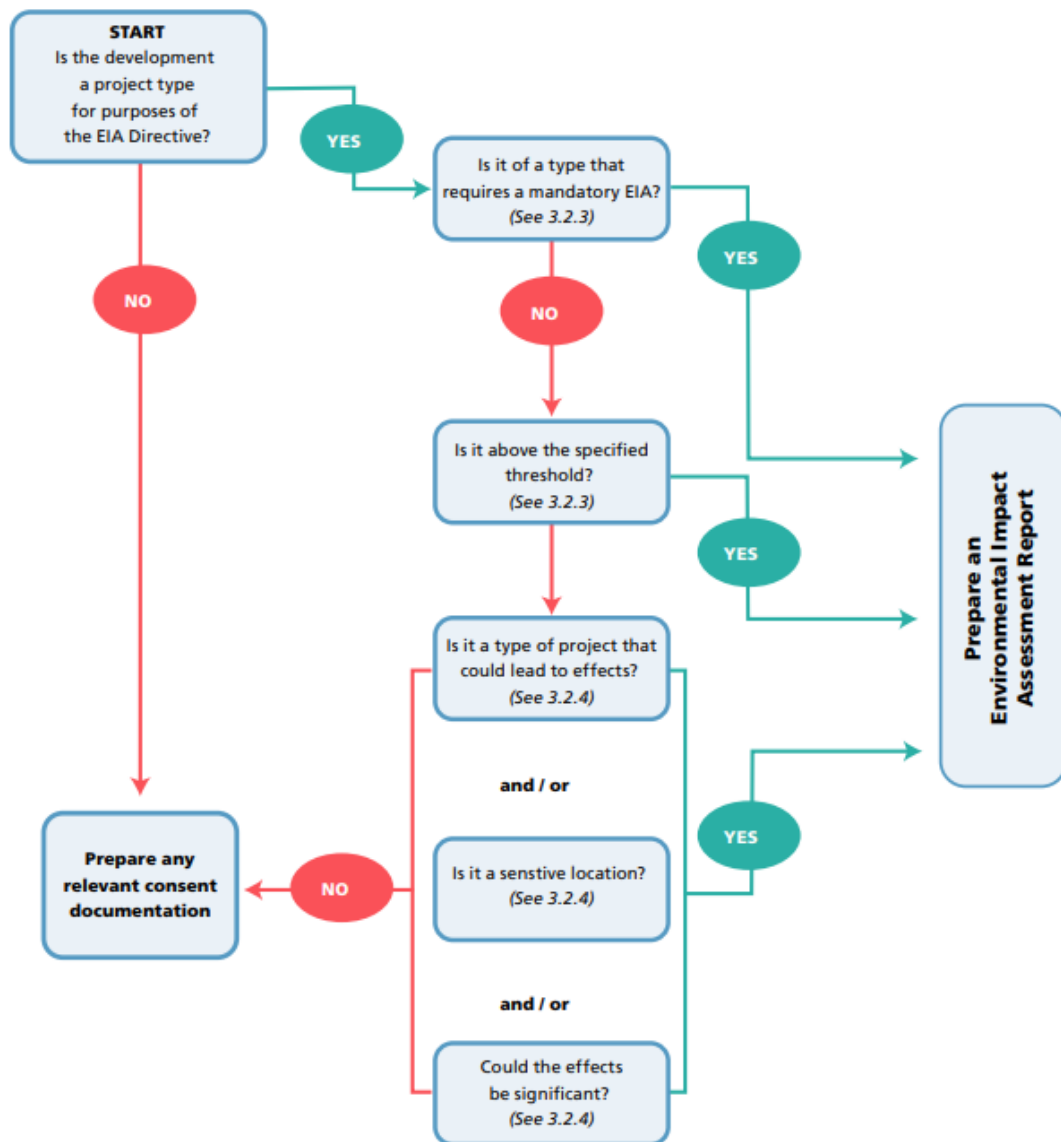
The term 'screening' is used to describe the process of ascertaining whether or not a proposed development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be provided to aid EIA by the competent authority of that project. EIAR is mandatory where project size, type or location EIA thresholds are met or exceeded. By request of the competent authority, an EIAR may be requested where mandatory EIA criteria are not met (ie sub threshold development) but the authority deems EIA necessary. EIA legislation sets out the types of projects that require a mandatory EIAR and the considerations that may give rise to the requirement for an EIAR where prescribed thresholds are not met.

The mandatory requirement for an EIAR is based on the nature and/or scale of a development. This is addressed in EU Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directive 97/11/EC and 2014/52/EU). Regard must also be had to the criteria as set out under Annex III of the EIA Directive the majority of which criteria are also referred to under Schedule 7 and Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended ('the 2001 Regulations').

In determining whether a development requires an EIAR to be undertaken, it is first necessary to determine whether the development falls into a category of specified development for which an EIAR is mandatory and thereafter consider whether the proposed development would require an EIAR if the relevant spatial or area threshold for that category is exceeded. Where the development falls within the relevant area or spatial category as sub-threshold, it is then necessary to consider whether the proposed development is likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment. Such significant effects may arise by virtue of the type and scale of development proposed, and also the location of the development in relation to nearby sensitive environments.

The screening process is summarised in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Screening Process



Source, Table 3.2 Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, May 2022.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, outline the requirements for the assessments of the effects of certain projects on the environment.

Section 176 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, provides the initial steps in relation to the criteria for determination of whether an EIA is required. It allows the Minister to prescribe classes of development that require EIA having regard to Ministerial Powers and EIA transposed legislation.

Part 10, Article 92, of the Planning and Development Regulations define ‘*sub threshold development*’ as ‘*development of a type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 which does not equal or exceed, the case may be, a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development.*’

2.1 Project Type

The screening process begins by establishing whether the proposal is a ‘project’ as understood by the Directive (as amended). The proposed refurbishment, adaptation and extension of the former bank building on Market Square and use as a new library; refurbishment works to the statutorily protected bank (RPS:CV35015) on Main Street and use as a ‘remote working hub’; reconfiguration of Shekleton’s site demolition of former salon building (RPS:CV35012) to accommodate access to the rear; reconfiguration of road layout, car parking and public realm enhancements to Main Street between Market Square and Kells Road roundabout; new segregated cycleway along Main Street; reconfiguration of road layout, car parking and public realm enhancements to Market Square; proposed off street car parking; proposed new access road from Rocks Road to proposed off street car parking incorporating repairs to existing boundary walls within the curtilage of Protected Structure (RPS:CV35012); junction improvements and traffic calming measures in Rocks Road and St Mary’s Road to facilitate new access to off-street car parking; public realm enhancements and associated works to Main Street, Market, Market Square, Rocks Road and proposed off street car parking area. in this instance the proposed development does indeed constitute a ‘**project**’ comprise developments that **requires planning permission** under the planning and development statutes.

2.2. Thresholds

The next step to screening is to determine whether the project exceeds a specific threshold. Thresholds are set out in Annex I and II of the EIA Directive, as amended. For this proposal, thresholds in the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended are also relevant.

It must be ascertained whether the proposal is a type where EIA and thus EIAR is prescribed/mandated and whether it exceeds the applicable thresholds or not. The Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment Reports published by the EPA in May 2022 note that projects that at first glance may not appear to come under the Schedule, but on closer examination when the process is further examined, may do so because of the sensitivity or significance of the receiving environment etc.

In this instance the proposal is not of a type, scale or activity at Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, or within Schedule 7 or Schedule 7A of the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 where EIAR is prescribed and does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report due to the activity type proposed.

2.3 Mandatory EIAR

Other categories of specified EIA development are listed in Schedule 5 (Part 1 and Part 2) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended. These and those in the amended EIA Directive 2014/52/EU (also reference Directive 2011/92/EU) Annex II and Annex III have also been reviewed and it is not considered that the proposed development breaches any relevant threshold.

In the amended EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, Annex I contains projects referred to in Article 4(1) of the Amended Directive. The subject proposal would fall within none of these classes of development and therefore does not represent a form of development considered under Annex I where EIAR is considered mandatory.

In the amended EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, Annex II contains projects referred to in Article 4(2) of the amended Directive. There are various forms of development (including sub-classes) that are referred to in that Annex. The proposal would not fall within any such category and a mandatory EIAR is not required in this instance.

The subject development does not fall within development classes set out in Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 10(b)(iv) sets out that an EIAR is mandatory for an urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere. The relevant threshold in the present case is 2 hectares because the location as town centre is considered to be a 'business district' as envisaged in the Directive and Regulations as amended. The consolidated site area at 1.59ha is considerably below the 2ha threshold for developments or projects located within a business district. A mandatory EIA is not triggered in regard to this site area threshold therefore.

The relevant class/scale threshold for development to be considered is set out in Schedule 5 (Part 2) of the Regulations under Class 10 (Infrastructure Projects) where construction of a car park of more than 400 spaces, other than a car-park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development, requires a mandatory EIAR. In this case the provision of 126 no. car parking spaces falls considerably below that threshold.

The works of demolition proposed do not come under Class 14 (Works of Demolition) of Schedule 5 (part 2) of the above Regulations which state:

'14. Works of Demolition

Works of demolition carried out in order to facilitate a project listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of this Schedule where such works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

15. Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.'

There is no significant impact anticipated, involving demolition or otherwise, having regard to the criteria set out in schedule 7. See next section for assessment of the proposals against the criteria of Schedule 7.

2.4 Screening for Sub-Threshold EIA

Where a project is of a specified type but does not meet, or exceed, the applicable thresholds above then the likelihood of the project having significant effects on the environment needs to be considered (both adverse and beneficial). This is done by reference to the criteria as specified in Annex III of the amended Directive.

Recital (27) of Directive 2014/52/EU states that:

“The screening procedure should ensure that an environmental impact assessment is only required for projects likely to have significant effects on the environment”.

The Guidelines go on to state that the project needs to be considered in its entirety for the screening purposes. This means that all elements of an overall project must be considered for significance of impact. Other related projects need to be identified also and appraised at an appropriate level of detail (where appropriate). This will identify the likely significance of cumulative and indirect impacts thus providing the consent authority with a context for its determination.

This screening exercise has determined that the subject application does not meet or exceed the applicable threshold of 2ha at Schedule 5, Part II, 10 in the present case as the application site measures 1.59ha.

Directive 2014/52/EU introduced a new mandatory article, Article 4(4), which states:

“Where Member States decide to require a determination for projects listed in Annex II, the developer shall provide information on the characteristics of the project and the likely significant effects on the environment. The detailed list of information to be provided is specified in Annex IIA. The developer shall take into account, where relevant, the available results of other assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to Union legislation other than this Directive. The developer may also provide a description of any features of the project and/or measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment”.

Article 4(4) introduces a new Annex IIA to be used in the case of a request for a Screening determination for Annex II projects. The information to be provided by the developer is set out below.

1. A description of the project including, in particular:
 - (a) A description of the physical characteristics of the whole project, and where relevant, of demolition works,
 - (b) A description of the location of the project, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected,
2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project.
3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the project on the environment resulting from,
 - (a) The expected residues and emissions and the production of waste where relevant; and,
 - (b) The use of natural resources, in particular soil, land water and biodiversity.
4. The criteria of Annex II shall be taken into account, where relevant, when compiling the information in accordance with points 1 to 3.

The criteria for determining whether or not Sub Threshold EIA is required are set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) including the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 and Annex III of the EIA Directive as amended.

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, lists criteria for determining whether development listed in part 2 of Schedule 5 should be subject to an environmental impact assessment by virtue of the following as per Annex III of the EIA Directive as amended:

- I. Characteristics of Proposed Development
- II. Location of Proposed Development
- III. Type & Characteristics of Potential Impacts

I. Characteristics of Proposed Development

The characteristics of project, with particular regard to:

- the size and design of the whole project,
- cumulation with other existing and / or approved development,
- the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- the production of waste,
- pollution and nuisances,
- the risk of major accidents and / or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate changes, in accordance with scientific knowledge,
- the risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).

II. Location of Proposed Development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by projects must be considered, with particular regard to

- the existing and approved land use,
- the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
- the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
 - (a) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
 - (b) coastal zones and the marine environment;
 - (c) mountain and forest areas;
 - (d) nature reserves and parks;
 - (e) areas classified or protected under national legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC,
 - (f) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure,
 - (g) densely populated areas,
 - (h) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

III. Type & Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The likely significant effects on the environment proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:

- the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the nature of the impact;
- the transboundary nature of the impact,

- the intensity and complexity of the impact,
- the probability of the impact,
- the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.
- the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and / or approved projects;
- the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

As per the requirements of the 2014 Directive, this Screening Report provides details of the information specified in Annex IIA, taking account of the criteria in Annex III. The screening statement sets out information under the headings provided for under Schedule 7 of the 2001 Regulations. In effect, this ensures that all of the information required under Schedule 7A has been furnished. It also presents the information in a manner that facilitates the competent authority in its screening assessment.

This report will now review the proposed development project under these three main criteria.

3.0 REQUIREMENTS OF ANNEX II(A) OF 2014/52/EU

3.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

The principal characteristics or features of the proposal are as follows:

- Refurbishment, adaptation and extension of the former National Irish Bank building on Market Square as a new library and part-demolition of existing outbuilding;
- Refurbishment works to Protected Structure (RPS: CV35015), formerly Bank of Ireland building on Main Street and adaptation as a new “remote working hub”, with demolition of rear extension and replacement with new extension for universal accessibility;
- Reconfiguration of the former Shekleton’s site (RPS: CV35012), including: the partial demolition of the overhanging room above entrance gate, demolition of outbuildings located to the rear of the main building and demolition of former salon building to the north of Shekleton’s to accommodate new access road from Main Street to proposed off-street car parking area;
- Reconfiguration of road layout, car parking, and public realm enhancements to Main Street between Market Square and Kells Road Roundabout;
- New segregated cycleway along Main Street;
- Reconfiguration of road layout, car parking and public realm enhancements to Market Square;
- Proposed off-street car parking off Main Street and rear of Shekleton’s to accommodate 126 no. car parking spaces; including 9 no. accessible car parking, 2 no. EV spaces and 1 no. occasional loading bay;
- Proposed new access road from Rocks Road to the proposed off-street car parking area incorporating repairs to existing boundary walls within the curtilage of Protected Structure (RPS: CV35012);
- Junction improvements and traffic calming measures on Rocks Road and St. Mary’s Road to facilitate new access to off-street parking area;
- Public realm enhancements including new tree planting, greening, paving, street furniture, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs), street lighting, undergrounding of overhead cables, and associated works and services to Main Street, Market Square, Rocks Road and proposed off-street car parking area.

The proposed development, the subject of this EIA Screening Assessment, is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Indicative Proposed Site Layout Plan



The spatial extent of the proposed development is shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Extent of Proposed Development



There are 4 no. principal components:

Firstly, there is the demolition of protected overhang and side building on Main Street to permit vehicular access off the main street to the rear of Shekleton's site (also containing a protected structure) where some 126 car parking spaces are proposed as part of a backland development off Rocks Road.

Secondly, a further component of the proposed scheme is the refurbishment and reuse of the two former bank buildings, of which only the former Bank of Ireland is on the statutory Record of Protected Structures, with an extension to National Irish Bank building located on the main street, with demolition or partial demolition of rear outbuildings and existing extensions proposed.

Thirdly, there is the reconfiguration and greening of Market Square. The area of the proposed scheme within Market Square comprises loss of existing car parking spaces, provision of 2 no. disabled spaces, access reconfiguration and public realm enhancements, and measures an area of 858sqm (33m by 26m).

Fourthly, there is the realignment, reconfiguration of parking and access, and greening on Main Street involving the redistribution of road space from vehicles to pedestrian, cycle and civic use. This element of the proposed scheme extends a distance of 188m along Main Street with a width of 32m, effectively a corridor along the Main Street to ensure that environmental enhancements and realignment of the Main Street can all be incorporated into the proposed scheme.

Crucially from an environmental perspective spatially speaking the majority of the proposed development comprises reuse and refurbishment of two key buildings in the town, and resurfacing and redistribution of road space from vehicles to pedestrian, cycle and civic use of Main Street. These works are surface based with no substantial construction or excavation required. Market Square is proposed to be reconfigured with parking removed except for the provision of 2 no. disabled parking spaces and the greening of that square. The most significant development is the demolition of an overhang building and adjoining former shop unit on Main Street and creation of a new road to the proposed car park at Rocks Road. The creation of the new road involves improvements to the junction and the creation of an access road including Market Square. The length of new road created to the west of Main Street to the proposed car park is approximately 70m. The length of new road created to the west of the car park joining Rocks Road is 120m approximately.

Substantial greening of the town centre will be undertaken, and significant tree planting and general planting will be initiated as part of the proposed development.

The Brief for the Proposed Scheme

The following works are required to be designed and implemented thereafter:

- Redesign of Market Square to reduce car parking and increase civic space;
- Redesign of the Main Street between Market Square and the Kells Road Roundabout, to include the reduction of car parking to allow for increased civic space in the town;
- Identification of suitable buildings and sites for the provision of a new public building and provision of new off street car parking in the town centre;
- Refurbishment of suitable buildings to provide a public 'Remote working hub' and a public 'community space', to include an open plan office with hot desks and meeting room and a ground floor open plan, multifunctional space for use by both the community and local business and that will act as a catalyst for regeneration of neighbouring town centre buildings by their private sector owners.

- Clearance of suitable sites to provide a new off-street carpark in the town centre and adjacent amenity area;
- Undergrounding of all overhead utilities through the town core;
- Proposals for the addressing of dereliction within the town core including a façade painting scheme; and
- Proposals for the opening up of backlands for future development in the town core for potential housing and commercial use.

Design Objectives

The intention behind the proposed development is to address the following issues identified in previous assessments of the town: dereliction within the centre of the town; under-utilised land; the reduction of retail presence in the centre; and finally, the poor visual appearance of the public realm through a scheme of regeneration and revitalisation.

The design team has developed a strategy to meet those requirements through the following:

- Increased footfall on Main Street and Market Square;
- A focal point for improved economic and social activities in the town centre;
- Sufficient valuable space for new business in the core area;
- Strengthened existing economic and social activity in the town centre;
- Opening up and connecting available back lands for development and active land use;
- An inclusive and well connected public realm for all ages and interests;
- A robust and permeable walking/cycling network to promote sustainable transport;
- Additional trees, planting and seating for a greener streetscape;
- Overall improve economic performance and visual appearance of the public realm; and;
- A safe and comfortable town centre that attracts local people and visitors alike to trade and socialise and which reflects the town’s history, character and heritage.

The above are anticipated to be substantial benefits and positive impacts on the town and in town centre life in particular.

Phasing of Proposed Development

There are 4 no. phases of construction consistent with the 4 principal components of development identified above. However, it is proposed that the final phase of development be split into those works necessary on the western side of the main road and those works necessary on the eastern side. These elements would comprise Phases 4a and 4b. It is anticipated therefore that Phase 4a relating to the western side of the main road would precede works and development to the eastern side. It would be most efficient for western works to the main road to run directly from or be undertaken simultaneously with Phase 3 in relation to the upgrade of Market Square also on the western side of Main Street.

The phasing of development is set out in summary form in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Phasing and Order of Proposed Development

Phase	Proposed development
1.	Backland car park, access road and junction enhancement on Rocks Road
2.	Refurbishment and reuse with partial demolition and extension of the former bank premises on Market Square and refurbishment and reuse of former bank premises on Main Street
3.	Reconfiguration and greening of Market Square
4(a)	Western side of Main Street
4(b)	Eastern side of Main Street

Prior to Demolition

A pre-demolition or re-construction inspection for bats, carried out by a qualified and experienced bat specialist, will be undertaken on site. If bats are found to be present on site during this inspection a Bats Derogation Licence will be required. This requirement would be covered by a planning condition attached to any Part 8 planning permission.

There maybe asbestos on site and necessary steps shall be taken to ensure that this does not present a hazard or danger to human health and environment. It is suggested that the necessary detailed surveys and inspection shall be undertaken by appropriate experts prior to any demolition. The following planning condition shall be applied in any grant of planning permission: *“A construction and demolition waste management plan shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site. The Plan shall contain details of the various waste streams to be generated during site clearance and construction phases and volumes of export/importation of soil and stone material for the site.”*

Commencement of Construction

It is anticipated that construction would commence within 18 months of the grant of Part 8 planning consent.

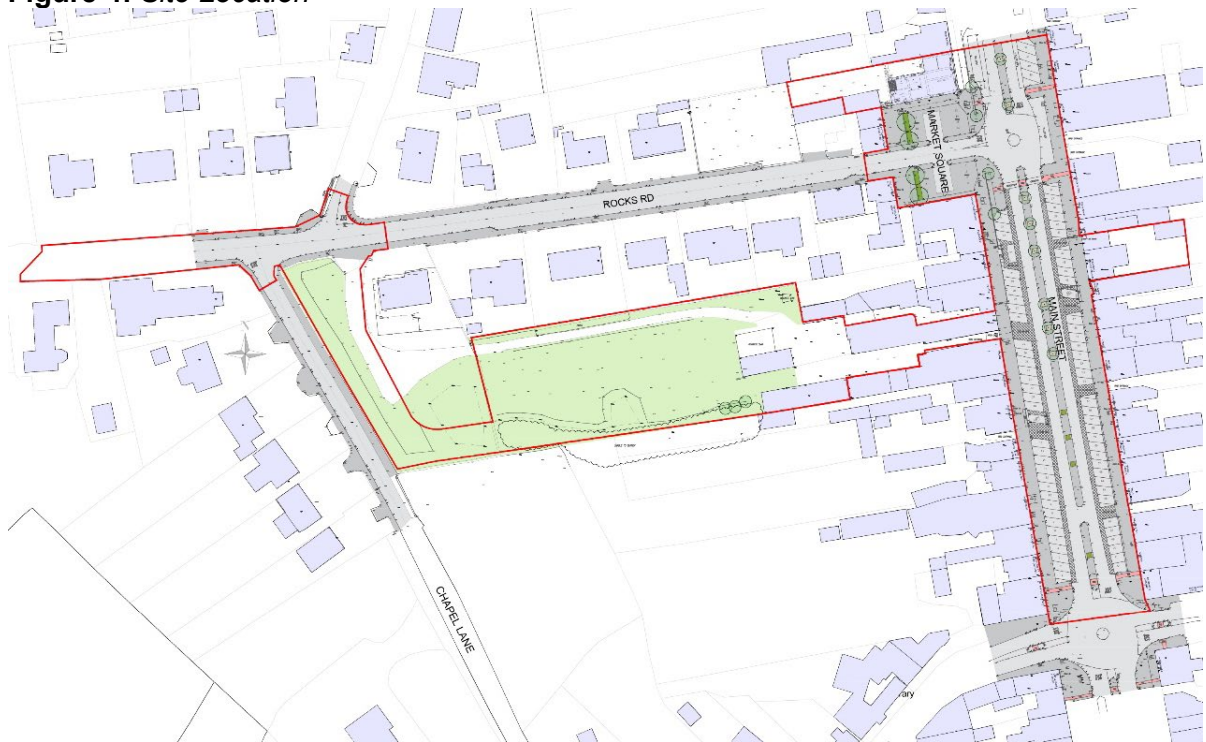
Duration of Construction

It is anticipated that construction would run for a period of no more than 18 months from the commencement of construction.

3.2 Location of the Proposed Development

The location of the area the subject of the proposed development is shown in Figure 4 below.

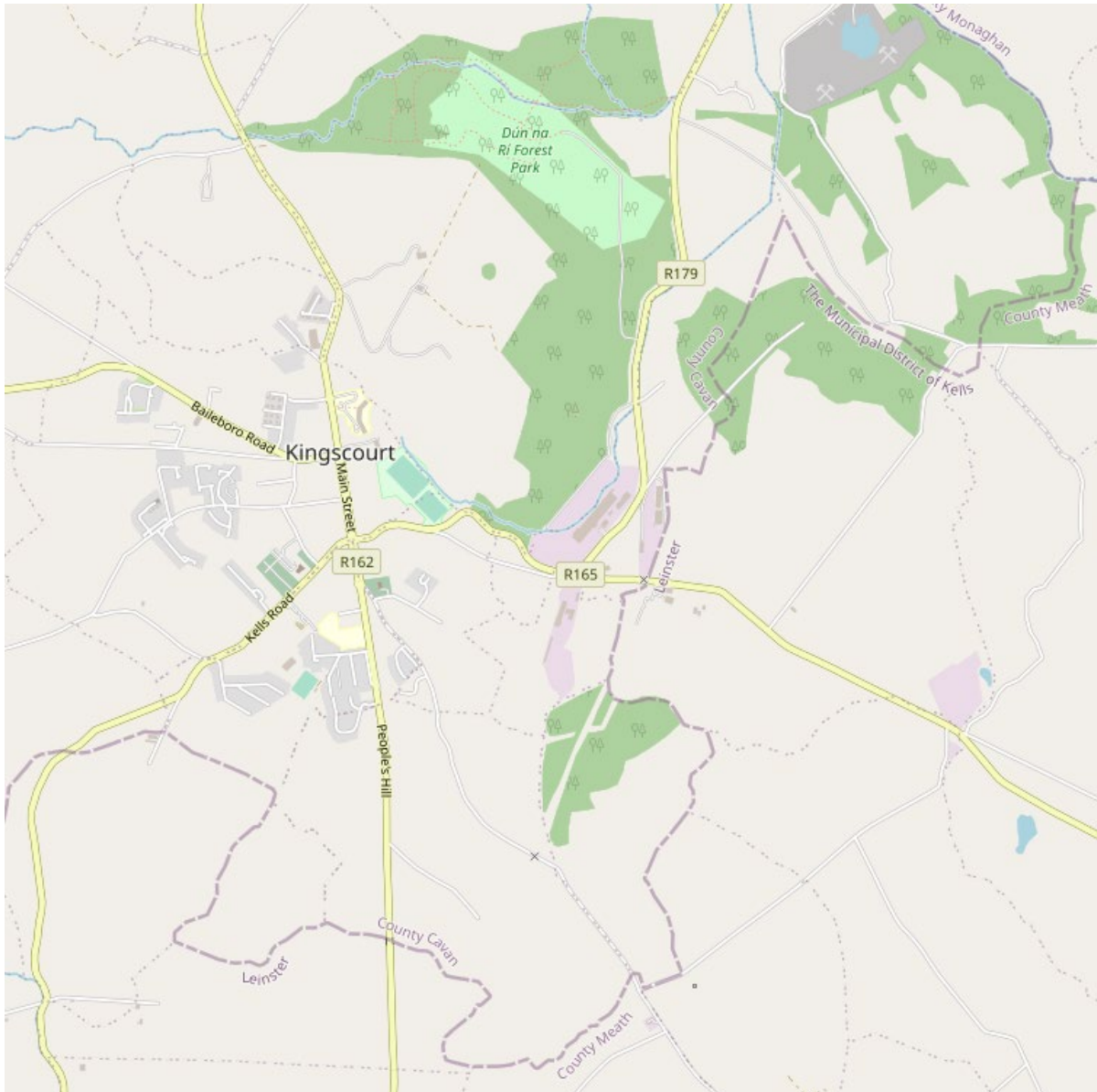
Figure 4: Site Location



The site runs from the rear of former bank building on the eastern side of the main street to the end of Rocks Road where it joins Chapel Lane to the west. The application site runs on a north south axis from the northern part of Main Street some 20m north of Market Square to the roundabout at Hall Street and Carrickmacross Road to the south.

The strategic location of the application site is shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Strategic Location of the Town



The town of Kingscourt, which has a strong and vibrant manufacturing base, is located on the R162 regional road where it connects to the R164, the R165 and the R179. The town is also located conveniently to the M1 and which can be accessed through through Ardee in County Louth or Carrickmacross in County Monaghan. The town is located some 95km from Dublin airport, Dublin city (90km), Drogheda (50km), Dundalk (35km) and Belfast (130km). The town is therefore broadly equidistant to Belfast and Dublin.

The town used to be well served by rail. The rail line remains but services have ceased for many years. The line was used for freight services only. The line ran from Kingscourt to Navan and from there to Drogheda. Historically the line carried gypsum ore. The towns manufacturing history benefitted considerably from access to rail.

The town has a significant number of large employers well above that expected for a town of this population. Major employers include Kingspan, O'reilly Concrete and Barleystone Paving and several other major employers.. As manufacturing operations these are located well outside the town centre and in some cases outside the town.

The town is reasonably well connected to national, regional and bus services. There are daily bus connections to Nobber and Navan in County Meath and to Dublin. On Tuesdays and Thursdays Bus Eireann route 166 provides a service to Cavan via Bailieborough in County Cavan.

A significant feature for the town is Dun na Ri Forest Park from is located some 1.7km approximately from the town to the north east of the town. The Forest Park is home to a number of protected species.

There are no streams or watercourses running through the subject site, overall its extent, nor are there any watercourses over ground or underground in close proximity.

3.3 Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

There are likely to be positive and negative potential environmental impacts from the proposed development proceeding, none of which are anticipated to be significant.

The most likely significant positive effects are likely to be a reduction in vehicular traffic on the main street but a general increase in car parking provision within the town centre to where cars can be accommodated in a purpose built car park with the main street devoted to more benign modes of transport, which will facilitate greater social interaction and a more pleasant environment for residents, visitors and workers.

A significant benefit of the proposed development is the greening of the town centre and the planting of a substantial number of trees (67nos.). The proposed development is likely to improve air quality in the town centre in the area of the main street and town square. The proposed development is also likely to improve vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist safety.

The most likely negative impacts are likely to include the following:

- Traffic disruption during the course of construction with potential road closing.
- Construction traffic that may result in traffic congestion on the local road network for a short period.

None of these are considered to be significant given the relatively modest scale of development and relatively small scale and nature of newbuild proposed.

The provision of a Construction Management Plan and Construction Waste Management Plan will be provided by the contractors and agreed with the local planning authority in advance of construction commencing by way of mitigation against substantial environmental impact occurring.

The proposal is considered neutral on impact on surface water drainage and water supply as the proposed uses as community work hub and library are changes of use of former commercial buildings with relatively modest extensions in the case of the former bank building on Market Square.

3.4 Expected Residues and Emission and the production of waste

Residues and emissions from the construction period are related to construction waste and emissions from construction plant. No unusual residues or emissions, are expected during the construction period and the construction management plan will mitigate likely impacts of construction works.

No residues are anticipated during the operational phase of development. Emissions will be linked to heating systems of the 2 no. refurbished and reused buildings and will be within the appropriate standards and regulations for modern developments.

Operational waste that will be generated by the proposed development will be minor in scale from the reuse of the 2 no. former bank buildings. All waste generated by the proposed development will be disposed of by a licensed waste contractor.

There maybe asbestos on site and necessary steps shall be taken to ensure that this does not present a hazard or danger to human health and environment. It is suggested that the necessary detailed surveys and inspection shall be undertaken by appropriate experts prior to any demolition. The following planning condition shall be applied in any grant of planning permission: *“A construction and demolition waste management plan shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site. The Plan shall contain details of the various waste streams to be generated during site clearance and construction phases and volumes of export/importation of soil and stone material for the site.”*

3.5 Use of natural resources including soil, land, water and biodiversity

The application site comprises largely developed or used land in the case of the lands to the rear of Shekleton’s and is considered of low ecological value with minimal ecological habitats present. Use of water will be related modest from the reuse of the 2 no. former bank buildings and there are no high generators of water usage or demand within the proposed scheme. Natural resources may be used in the construction phase including stone, gravel and water. Given the nature of development, mainly resurfacing and limited built form, there will be minimal use of natural resources during the operational phase of development.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANNEX III EU DIRECTIVE 2014/52/EU AND SCHEDULE 7 AND 7A OF THE REGULATIONS

In considering whether the proposed sub-threshold development is likely to have significant environmental effects, it is necessary to have regard to the criteria set out under Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, including the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 or Annex III of the EIA Directive.

As indicated above the criteria set out in Annex III are grouped into three categories:

- (i) Characteristics of Proposed Development (Project),
- (ii) Location of the Proposed Development (Project) and
- (iii) (Type and) Characteristics of Potential Impacts.

The assessment for this sub threshold development is as follows:

EIA assessment criteria	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts
1. Characteristics of proposed development		
The characteristics of the proposed development, in particular:		
<p>(a) The size and design of the whole project</p>	<p>The proposed development comprises principally surface works to existing roads and car parking areas with some demolition and creation of a new car park and access road to that car park as well as junction improvements. None of these elements are considered substantial or impactful on the environment either individually or considered collectively. There are minimal ground works and excavation. The size of the subject site is 1.59ha.</p> <p>The proposed development is consistent with the regeneration objectives of both the adopted and emerging Cavan County Development Plans. The proposed street works and refurbishments and reuses are located within the Town Core zoning of the adopted and County Development Plan. The proposed town car park is also consistent with the Town Core zoning. The proposed new road to the</p>	<p>The proposal is considered an environmental and streetscape enhancement of the centre of the town. The proposals will not be impactful in a significant manner during the operational period. The operational phase of development will likely enhance biodiversity, result in the greening of the town centre and will likely become a safer environment for vehicle users and in particular for cyclists and pedestrians whose routes will be segregated from vehicular routes. The scheme is appropriate to and beneficial to the town centre. It is not</p>

	<p>west of the car park is consistent with the Existing Residential zoning objective for that part of the site.</p> <p>There will be no significant impact during the construction phase. Construction works are limited to principally surfacing works and are confined to an area of 1.59ha and will be completed over an estimated 18 month period for all elements to be completed. A construction and demolition and waste management plan (CMP) will be in place for the construction phase. A construction traffic management plan (CTMP) will also be put in place for the construction phase.</p> <p>With mitigation measures detailed in the CMP and CTMP in place prior to construction no significant negative impacts are likely during the construction phase.</p>	<p>out of keeping with the scale or design of surrounding development.</p>
<p>(b) Cumulation with other existing and /or proposed development</p>	<p>A search of the Cavan County Council planning register indicates that there are no proposed or recent construction projects in the vicinity of the proposed development of significance to the proposed development other than the grant of permission for the change of use of the frontage building on Main Street to be demolished (CCC Reg. Ref. 19152). Cumulative impact of both developments does not arise as they are mutually incompatible developments and cannot both be implemented.</p>	<p>It is not considered likely that the operation of the proposed development will result in significant cumulative environmental impacts with other developments existing or proposed. Existing town centre amenity will be considerably enhanced and will interact positively with other town centre developments.</p>
	<p>The proposed works involve comparatively minor</p>	<p>Water, consumption of electricity and energy</p>

<p>(c) The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity</p>	<p>intervention into the ground. There will be no significant impact on water supply, surface or waste water drainage. Biodiversity in the very centre of the town is likely to be substantially enhanced. Energy, including electricity and fuels, will be required during the construction phase. Raw materials will be used during the construction process but this usage will not be significant during the construction phase.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>related to the occupancy of the completed development. There will be no significant use of natural resources during the operation phase.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are anticipated. A relatively significant number of trees will be present during the operational phase.</p>
<p>(d) The production of waste</p>	<p>The construction process will result in some construction related waste. This will be disposed of in compliance with the CMP that will be in place prior to construction.</p> <p>There may be the presence of asbestos on site and it is anticipated that further inspection is required in this regard. If this is found to be the case a Demolition and Waste Management Plan shall be agreed with the appointed contractor.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>	<p>Operational waste generated will likely be of minor scale. All waste will be disposed of by a licensed waste contractor.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>
<p>(e) Pollution and Nuisances</p>	<p>There is potential to cause nuisance related to noise, dust and vibration impacts. The CMP will detail measures to mitigate likely impacts.</p> <p>The proposed development will be subject to planning conditions limiting construction hours to protect the residential and community based amenity of the area.</p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measures will ensure that</p>	<p>No operational pollution or nuisance is anticipated.</p>

	no negative impacts are likely during the construction phase.	
(f) 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	<p>No major accidents are anticipated. There will also be strict compliance with building regulations and environmental controls.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>	<p>No major accidents or disasters are anticipated. There will also be strict compliance with building and fire regulations with mitigation measures in place, no significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>
(g) The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	<p>The CMP will detail measures to mitigate any likely impacts associated with noise, dust or pollution from the construction process. There is no significant excavation such as to generate water contamination or air pollution.</p> <p>The proposed development will be subject to planning conditions limiting construction hours to protect the residential and community based amenity of the area.</p> <p>With mitigation measures in place no significant negative impacts are anticipated.</p>	<p>The proposed development will be connected to public water and sewer infrastructure. No emissions other than from air conditioning and heating units are anticipated.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are anticipated.</p>
2. Location of proposed development		
The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, with particular regard to:		
(a) The existing and approved land use	<p>The proposed development is a mixture of enhanced town centre uses and an upgrade to town centre amenity. The proposed developments are consistent with the split zoning objectives for the site which is shared between Town Core and Existing residential. The proposed development will greatly enhance the safety, enjoyment of and access to the town centre.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>	<p>The completed development will provide for a pleasant, more green, safer environment for existing and proposed activities in the town centre. The proposed uses and enhancements are fully compatible with the predominant existing land use in the area.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are anticipated.</p>

<p>(b) The relative abundance, availability quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground</p>	<p>There are no sensitive habitats or significant mature trees within or surrounding what is a largely developed or brownfield site. A search of recent records in the National Biodiversity Datacentre Database (NBDC) has indicated no rare or endangered habitats or species present.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>	<p>The proposed operational phase will not have any significant impact on natural resources.</p> <p>Biodiversity is expected to be enhanced from the proposed development proceeding.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>
<p>(c) The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying attention to the following areas: (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths; (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment; (iii) mountain and forest areas, (iv) nature reserves and parks, (v) areas classified or protected under national legislation, Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, (vi) areas 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, (vii) densely populated areas, (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.</p>	<p>Items (i) to (iv) do not apply in this instance. There are no natural environments in close proximity to the site likely to be impacted by the construction of the proposed development.</p> <p>In respect of item (v) AA Screening has been undertaken which concluded that there would be no significant effects on Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>Item (vi) does not apply in this instance.</p> <p>In respect of (vii) the subject site is within the built-up area and defined development boundary of the town. The area is already substantially developed. There may be some minor disturbance from noise and traffic during construction for adjacent residents over a short period of time but construction will be limited to traditional working days and normal business hours. This will not be significant. This is not a densely populated area.</p> <p>In respect of item (viii) the site is not in proximity to landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance. There is development proposed on Shekeltons land which is</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any significant impact in respect of any of these items during the operational phase of development.</p>

	<p>within the curtilage of a protected structure and there is the demolition of an overhang extension to the remaining protected structure on Main Street.</p> <p>The overhang to be demolished is a more recent extension to the original protected building. There are also outbuildings to the protected structure that are being removed to accommodate the proposed car park. Please refer to the accompanying Heritage Statement.</p> <p>No significant impacts are likely from the construction phase of the development.</p>	
<p>3. Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts Likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:</p>		
<p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) The nature of the impact</p>	<p>The site size is 1.59ha. It is located in a built-up area that is served by public transport. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be put in place to mitigate negative impacts on traffic flow.</p> <p>With mitigation measures no significant negative impacts are predicted.</p> <p>The construction impacts have potential to cause nuisance associated with noise, dust and traffic but these will be limited, temporal and not significant.</p> <p>With mitigation measures in place no significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>	<p>The scale and nature of development is modest for an urban environment on a site that is already developed or brownfield.</p> <p>The operational phase will result in significant environmental and streetscape enhancement. The proposed uses are appropriate to the town centre location and proximity to existing facilities.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>
<p>The transboundary nature of the impact</p>	<p>There are no construction phase transboundary impacts.</p>	<p>There are no operational phase transboundary impacts.</p>
<p>The intensity and complexity of the impact</p>	<p>The intensity and complexity of the construction phase is not</p>	<p>The operational phase of the development is modest in scale, not intense nor is</p>

	<p>considered significant. These are predominantly surface works and streetscape enhancements</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>	<p>the impact predicted likely to be complex or significant.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>
The probability of the impact	<p>Non-significant construction impact is probable. This will be short term and not significant. Any impacts will be mitigated by the CMP to be approved prior to construction.</p>	<p>The operational phase will bring probable impact of a non-significant nature. Measures will be put in place to avoid, reduce, or mitigate any likely negative impacts.</p>
The expected onset, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the impact.	<p>Construction and therefore construction impacts will commence within 18 months of the grant of planning permission. The period of construction is likely to be for 18 months. The construction impacts will be restricted by planning condition in terms of the hours of construction. No permanent or irreversible negative impacts are anticipated as a result of the construction phase. No significant negative impacts are predicted.</p>	<p>The development will be occupied all year round.</p> <p>Impacts which will be non-significant will be irreversible.</p>
The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and / or approved projects;	<p>No other adjacent major construction projects are known or identified which will have an impact cumulatively with the proposed development. Permission CCC ref: 19/152 will not proceed if this Part 8 application proceeds so there can be no cumulative impact in regard to that development.</p>	<p>The proposed development is in character with the area and surrounding development.</p>
The possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	<p>The CMP will avoid, reduce or mitigate construction impacts related to noise, dust and traffic during the period of construction which will be relatively short.</p>	<p>The predicted impact is not significant, and the reduction of impacts is neither needed nor proposed in this instance,</p>

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development is assessed to fall outside of the requirement for mandatory EIA by virtue of the below threshold size of the site, its developed context and proposed activity typology. Having regard to the **characteristics of the proposed development** sub threshold EIA is not considered to be required, due to scale and type of development.

In relation to the **location of the proposed development**, the site is located within an area substantially developed and which would benefit greatly in planning, regeneration, streetscape and environmental and social terms from Part 8 permission being granted in this instance. The subject site is removed from any Natura 2000 sites with no pathways, direct or indirect to same. The AA Screening Report accompanying this Part 8 application found that there is no likelihood of any significant effects on any European sites arising from the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Characteristics of the potential impacts of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant in this location. Any impact associated with noise, vibration, air, and traffic are likely to be insignificant during the construction and operational phases.

Having regard to the criteria outlined in Section 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, it is concluded that the proposed development will have no likely significant effects, indirect or direct, on the receiving environment, either on its own or cumulatively with other development. It is our professional opinion that no adverse impacts occur such as to warrant an Environmental Impact Assessment for a sub threshold development.

In summary, the proposed development has been screened to determine whether an **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** is required, and it has been concluded that there will be no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that an EIA is not required.