

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING
REPORT FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS**



Screening is used to determine if an AA is necessary by examining:

- If the plan / project is directly connected with / necessary to the management of the European site.
- If the effects will be significant on a European site in view of its conservation objectives, either alone / in combination with other plans / projects.

Planning Authority: Offaly County Council

Housing Application Ref. No.: LAI - 31

(A) DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND LOCAL SITE:			
Proposed development:	PERMISSION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EXTENSION TO AN EXISTING DWELLING HOUSE AT SIDE OF SITE AND ALL ASSOCIATED SITE WORKS AND SERVICES		
Site location:	8 VILLAGE CRESCENT, RHODE, CO. OFFALY		
Site size:	0.090 ha	Floor Area of Proposed Development:	25.6 m ²
Identification of nearby European Site(s):	Raheenmore Bog SAC		
Distance to European Site(s):	8.53 km		
The characteristics of existing, proposed or other approved plans / projects which may cause interactive / cumulative impacts with the project being assessed and which may affect the European site:	As the proposed development will not lead to a physical encroachment on the cut away bogland, woodland or will affect the water table below the European designated site from excessive water abstraction and the subject site not border the European designated site or linked through a surface water body, it is not considered likely to be interactive/cumulative impacts other existing, proposed or approved plans in the area.		
Is the application accompanied by an EIAR?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

(B) IDENTIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT *European* SITE(S):

The reasons for the designation of the *European* site(s):

Please see the following extract from Raheenmore Bog cSAC National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Plan for 2005-2010.

Raheenmore Bog is situated 12km north-east of Tullamore, Co. Offaly and comprises 182ha. It developed in a small basin in the catchment of the Brosna and Boyne rivers, and is the deepest remaining raised bog in Ireland. The majority of the site (89%) comprises a statutory Nature Reserve. The underlying rock is Carboniferous limestone, with overlying gravely glacial till and lacustrine deposits above this. Deep peripheral drains surround the bog. Surface drains are also present, mostly on the eastern side of the bog. By far the most important habitat present is the active raised bog, an Annex I priority habitat listed in the E.U. Habitats Directive. The habitat has a well-developed hummock and hollow system. The hummocks are often colonised by the bog mosses *Sphagnum imbricatum* and *S. fuscum*. Pool areas support Great Sundew, the moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum* and the liverwort *Cladopodiella fluitans*. In places, moss lawns of *S. magellanicum* have infilled the pools. Overall, the cover of bog mosses on the bog is very good. Away from the dome summit, Bog Asphodel flats dominate the peat surface. Other species include Ling Heather, Deergrass, lichens, Bog Cottons and White Beak-sedge.

Other habitats present on the site include cutover bog, strips of Birch woodland at the margins, lowland wet grassland (fertilised to varying degrees) and freshwater marsh. Small relict areas of poor fen or lagg vegetation have been identified at Raheenmore. It may therefore be possible to restore some lagg areas, which would add to the quality of the site. Noteworthy plant species present include Tussock Sedge and the moss *Sphagnum pulchrum*. Merlin frequents the site and the Irish Red Grouse recently bred on the bog.

The conservation objectives / qualifying interests of the site and the factors that contributes to the conservation value of the site: (which are taken from the *European* site synopses and, if applicable, a Conservation Management Plan; all available on www.npws.ie) **(ATTACH INFO.)**

The nature conservation objectives for this site are:

Objective 1: To maintain and, where possible, enhance the quality of the active raised bog (64% of the site).

Objective 2: To restore areas of lagg vegetation around the raised bog i.e. in the westnorth- west and south of the site.

Objective 3: To maintain and, where possible, enhance the ecological quality of other habitats, in particular dry, broadleaved semi-natural woodland (3% of site), cutover bog (10%), lowland wet grassland (23%), and freshwater marsh (<1%).

Objective 4: To maintain, and possibly increase, the populations of Annex I and other important species of flora and fauna present e.g. Merlin, Grouse and *Sphagnum pulchrum*.

Objective 5: To maintain effective liaison between NPW, landowners and other interested parties, in order to effectively manage the site for conservation.

(C) NPWS ADVICE:

Advice received from NPWS over phone:	None received.
Summary of advice received from NPWS in written form (ATTACH SAME):	None received.

(D) ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS:

*(The purpose of this is to identify if the effect(s) identified could be significant – if **uncertain** assume the effect(s) are significant).*

Would there be...	
... any impact on an Annex 1 habitat? (Annex 1 habitats are listed in Appendix 1 of AA Guidance).	Not likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site.
... a reduction in habitat area on a <i>European</i> site?	Not likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site
... direct / indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality and supply, soil compaction) in the <i>European</i>	Not likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site
... serious / ongoing disturbance to species / habitats for which the <i>European</i> site is selected (e.g. because of increased noise, illumination and human activity)?	Not likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site

<p>... direct / indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the <i>European</i> site?</p>	<p>Not likely due to the location and type of development. The site is sufficient distance from the European site.</p>
<p>Would the project interfere with mitigation measures put in place for other plans / projects. [Look at <i>in-combination effects</i> with completed, approved but not completed, and proposed plans / projects. Look at projects / plans within and adjacent to <i>European</i> sites and identify them]. Simply stating that there are no cumulative impacts' is insufficient.</p>	<p>No other plans known of in the vicinity of the site. The site is sufficient distance from the European site</p>
<p>(E) SCREENING CONCLUSION:</p>	
<p>Screening can result in:</p>	
<p>1</p>	<p><i>AA is not required</i> because the project is directly connected with / necessary to the nature conservation management of the site.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><i>No potential for significant effects / AA is not required.</i></p>
<p>3</p>	<p><i>Significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain.</i> (In this situation seek a Natura Impact Statement from the applicant, or reject the project. Reject if too potentially damaging / inappropriate.</p>
	<p><i>Conclusion: 2; No potential for significant effects / AA is not required.</i></p>
	<p>As the proposed development will not lead to a physical encroachment on the cut away bogland, woodland of the Raheenmore Bog SAC or will affect the water table below the European designated site from excessive water abstraction and the subject site not border European designated site or linked through a surface water body, it is not considered likely to be have significant effects on the European Designated site.</p>
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<p>Position:</p>	<p>Assistant Engineer</p>
<p>Date:</p>	<p>16TH February 2023</p>