



**PROVISION OF 7 No. HOUSING UNITS
AT
GRANARD
COUNTY LONGFORD**

**SCREENING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT**

October 2024

Longford County Council,
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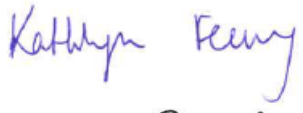


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DOCUMENT APPROVAL

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LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL
PROVISION OF 7 NO. UNITS AT GRANARD, COUNTY LONGFORD
SCREENING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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1 INTRODUCTION

Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited have been commissioned by Longford County Council to carry out a Stage I Appropriate Assessment Screening under Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) for the Provision of Works of a 7 no. Unit Residential Development at Granard, Co, Longford. The works hereafter in this report will be identified as the 'Proposed Development'.

This report provides an Environmental Impact Assessment screening for a Part 179A housing development consisting of an area of land measuring 0.375 ha located at Granard, Co. Longford. The 179A measure was implemented to allow for accelerated delivery of social, affordable and cost-rental housing by local authorities by way of exemption from the local authority own development 'Part 8' process in the section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act) in strictly defined circumstances.

The amendments to the Act and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (the regulations) are balanced with the need to provide for the accelerated delivery of social and affordable housing while also ensuring proper planning and sustainable development by means of the introduction of a temporary time-bound exemption from the 'Part 8' process for the approval of local authority own development housing projects on local authority or State owned lands. This planning amendment will assist local authorities to accelerate housing delivery and is being utilised for this screening process.

This Part 179A process is being pursued by Longford County Council Housing Section.

The EIA Screening Report has been prepared to assess the potential impacts on the environment of the Proposed Development at the subject site and to assess the requirement or otherwise from an EIA.

The proposal is for a residential development consisting of the construction of 7 no. new residential units.

1.1 Purpose of this Statement

The purpose of this Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Statement is to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required for the Proposed Development and to identify any environmental issues that might arise. It is worth noting that this Proposed Development is below any threshold, and we do not consider a Schedule 7A screening process will be required as per Schedule 5 Parts 1 & 2 of the Planning Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001), as amended.

This report is supported and informed by accompanying documentation including an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report prepared by JOD.

1.2 Statement of Authority

This Stage I Appropriate Assessment Screening has been prepared by Kathlyn Feeney and Sarah Moore and Reviewed by David Kiely.

Kathlyn Feeney is a Graduate Environmental Scientist at Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited. She has a First-Class Honours Degree (BSc. Hons) in Environmental Science from Atlantic Technological University, Sligo. Kathlyn also has a QQI Level 5 Award in Animal Care. She is responsible for preparing chapters for Environmental Impact Assessments, Appropriate Assessments, and Natura Impact Statements as part of the Environmental team at Jennings O'Donovan & Partners

Sarah Moore is an Environmental Scientist in JOD with over 17 years of environmental consultancy experience. She has obtained a MSc in Environmental Engineering from Queens University, Belfast, and a BSc in Environmental Science from University of Limerick. Since joining JOD, Sarah has been involved as a Project Environmental Scientist on a range of renewable energy, wastewater, structures and commercial projects. She has experience in the preparation of Appropriate Assessments, Ecological Impact Assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments and Geographic Information Systems.

David Kiely is a Director of JOD who holds a BE in Civil Engineering from University College Dublin and MSc in Environmental Protection from IT Sligo. He is a Fellow of Engineers Ireland, a Chartered Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers (UK) and has over 41 years' experience. He has extensive experience in the preparation of EIARs and EISs for environmental projects including Wind Farms, Solar Farms, Wastewater Projects, and various commercial developments. David has also been involved in the construction of over 60 wind farms since 1997.

2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITIES

2.1 The Proposed Development

It is proposed to construct a new housing development of 7 no. houses with associated services, access roads and car parking at the proposed site. The site is currently a greenfield site. The proposed construction is envisaged to consist of conventional foundations and pavement make up, with some local excavations for services and plant.

The proposal is for a residential development on a net site area of c. 0.375 ha. The proposal consists of the following:

- Construction of 5 No. 2 bedroom, 2 storey dwellings and 2 no. 3 bedroom 2 Storey dwellings.
- All associated site development works including landscaping, boundary treatments, public lighting, site services, drainage works and all associated infrastructure.

All units will have a nap plaster and grey brick finish. Windows and doors will be dark grey in colour. All units will include heat pumps with underfloor heating to ground floors and radiators to first floors.

Key construction activities will include:

- Stripping topsoil
- Placing foundations
- Building works
- Boundary erection
- Connection to existing services
- Hard surfaces and roads
- Finishes
- Landscaping

The site is located to the rear of an existing housing development 'Granada View', it is approximately 0.375 Hectares, is in the ownership of Longford County Council. The Development will be accessed via the existing road to the Granada View housing development.

The layout of the development was designed using best practice principles to enhance the durability and function of the site, while minimising its visual intrusion where possible.

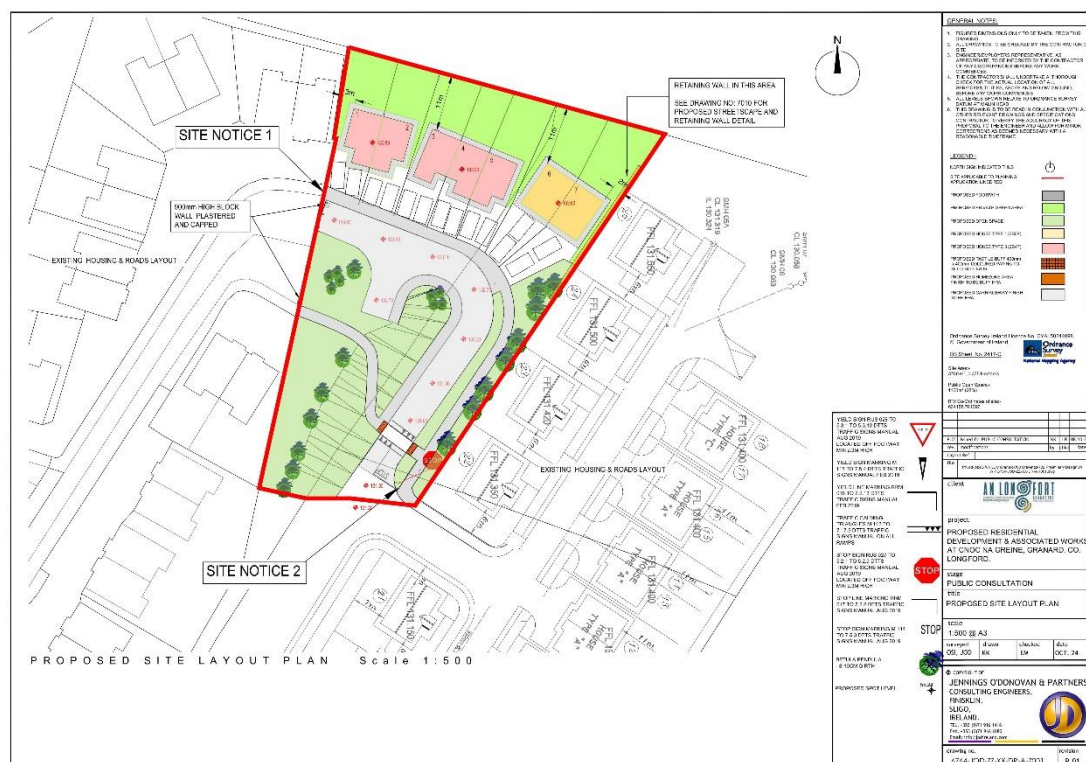


Figure 2.1: Proposed Site Plan

2.2 Location

The Proposed Development is located in the townland of Carragh, approximately 800m from the town centre of Granard, County Longford and 500m from National Road N55 (**Figure 2.1**). The site already has planning permission in place under planning reference PL19/193 to build 3 no. 3-bedroom and 1

no. 2-bedroom houses. Planning permission was originally sought for 6 no. houses, however 4 no. were granted due to a requirement to maintain an 18m buffer zone from the edge of the future Relief Road and the nearest houses. The current plans incorporate a redesign to allow for the construction of 7 no. dwellings within the previously approved footprint.

The site is zoned for residential development in the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, and Granard is defined, as a self-sustaining growth town;

“Granard is a Key Employment Centre with a regional element acting as an important driver for local economies in the area, with well-established economic, administrative and social functions. The town performs an important retail, residential, service and amenity functions for local rural hinterlands and supports the principal town of Longford.”

The site is currently a vacant space between developments and contains grass and scrub growth. The site is relatively flat ranging from 134m in the north to 131m elevation in the south.



Figure 2.2: Location of the Proposed Development Site

2.3 Biodiversity

A desk study was carried out to collate the available information on the ecological environment of the proposed site. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) database was consulted concerning designated conservation areas and records of rare and protected plant and animal species in the vicinity of the Proposed Development. The EPA Geoportal website was used when researching European designated sites and watercourses. The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) website was also consulted.

The Proposed Development is entirely contained within the 1 one-kilometre Grid square 'N3481'. Two 'protected species have been recorded in this grid namely, Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*).

2.4 Land, Soils and Flooding

2.4.1 Geology and Soils

The quaternary sediments at the site of the Proposed Development are classified as 'Till derived from Lower Palaeozoic sandstones and shales'.

The Proposed Development is located within the Slieve Glah Formation. This bedrock formation is described by the Geological Survey of Ireland as 'Siltstone, mudstone & thin turbidite'. The EPA Maps indicate that the subsoil onsite is characterised as Sandstone and shale till (Lower Paleozoic). The soil type found onsite is classified as 'well-drained mineral soils'. Corine 2018 denotes this area as Agricultural Areas.

2.4.2 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

There are no watercourses within or in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development. The closest watercourse is the Order 1 stream (EPA name Mulrick 010) shown on **Figure 2.3**, 0.09 km east of the Site at the closest point, this flows in a Northeasterly direction and discharges in Lough Gowna 10.6km downstream. An unnamed order one stream is also located 0.25 km to the south of the site, this flows in a southerly direction.

The site overlies bedrock which is classified as a '*Poor Aquifer - Bedrock which is Generally Unproductive except for Local Zones*'. The groundwater vulnerability at the site is classified as 'High'. Currently, the groundwater in the area has no significant underlying pressures, including waste abstraction, agriculture, anthropogenic, aquaculture, atmospheric, extractive industry, hydro morphology, invasive species, urban runoff or otherwise (EPA Water Maps, accessed July 11th, 2024).

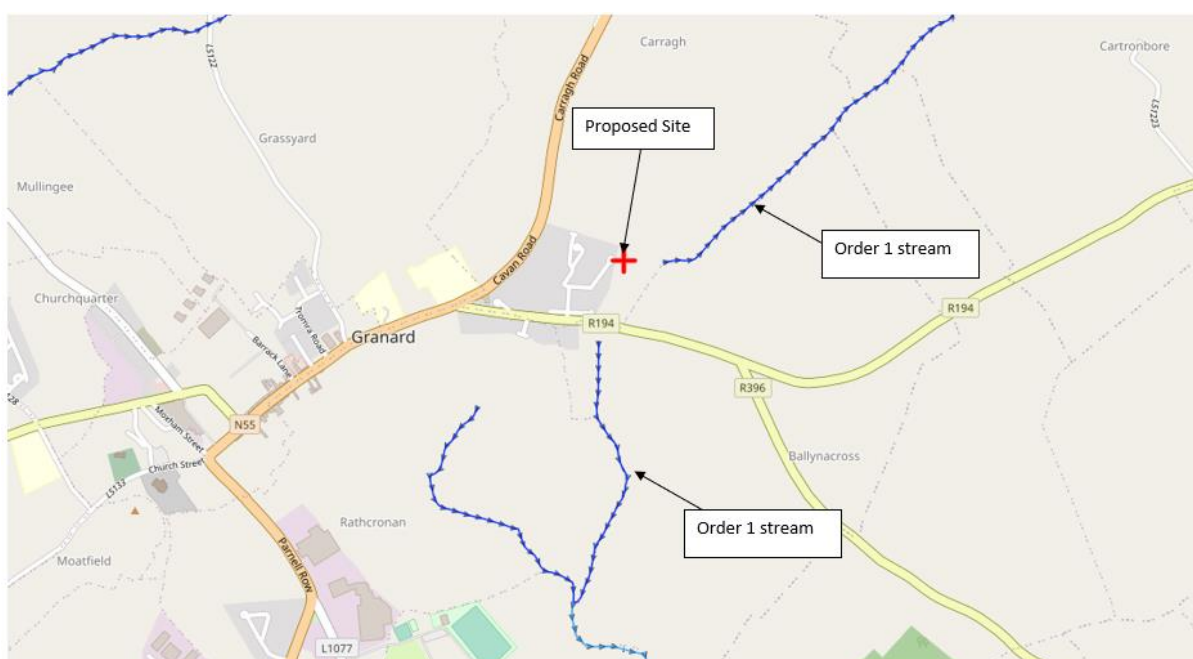


Figure 2.3 Watercourses in the area of the development, note arrow indicates direction of flow

The Proposed Development site is located within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) wider catchment area of the Erne Catchment, The Erne River Basin Districts is transboundary and is therefore classified as an International River Basin Districts (IRBD). The Northwestern IRBD covers an area of 12,320 km² with approximately 7,400 km² of that area in Ireland. The site is at the southern tip of the catchment, close to the border with the Shannon Upper Catchment. It is not mentioned in the Erne flood risk management plan as an area of flooding risk.

Office of Public Works (OPW) website and the CFRAM study were accessed (July 2024) to determine flood areas within and near the Project. **Figure 2.4** shows the probability of flooding at and in the vicinity of the Proposed Development, along with records of past flood events. The mapping service shows that the Proposed Development site is well outside of any areas of flooding.



Figure 2.4 Flooding probability map of the surrounding area

2.5 Air and Climate

The EPA designate the area as Air Zone D: Rural Ireland. County Longford has one air quality monitoring station located in Longford Town (53.7256°N, -7.7913°E). Particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) are measured at the Longford town station. The monitoring station is located on the Dublin Road, Co. Longford.

In relation to the Proposed Development, the monitoring station is located approx. 21km southwest. The EPA Air Quality site was accessed on 11 July 2024 and the following ratings noted:

1. The latest recording at Longford Town air monitoring station 43. Dublin Rd, Longford had a PM_{2.5} average of 3.21 µg/m³ and a PM₁₀ average of 11.39 µg/m³. The Air Quality Index for Health (AQIH) for Longford Town was unavailable at the time of access.

There is no significant impact on air pollution expected from the Proposed Development outside of potential temporary dust impact. Air and Climate are not likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development.

3 EIA SCREENING

Establishing if the proposal '7 Unit Residential Development at Granard, CO. Longford' requires an EIA:	
Development Summary:	<p>The proposal is for a residential development on a net site area of c. 0.375 ha. The proposal consists of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of 5 no. 2 bedroom, 2 storey dwellings and 2 no. 3 bedroom 2 storey dwellings • All associated site development works including landscaping, boundary treatments, public lighting, site services, drainage works and all associated infrastructure. <p>All units will have a nap plaster and grey brick finish. Windows and doors will be dark grey in colour. All units will include heat pumps with underfloor heating to ground floors and radiators to first floors.</p> <p>Key construction activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stripping topsoil • Placing foundations • Building works • Boundary erection • Connection to existing services • Hard surfaces and roads • Finishes • Landscaping
Was a Screening Determination carried out under Section 176A-C?	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, no further action required.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, Proceed to Part A</p>
<p>A. Schedule 5 Part 1 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 1, of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)? (Tick as appropriate)</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, specify class _____	<p>EIA is mandatory.</p> <p>No Screening required</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Proceed to Part B

B. Schedule 5 Part 2 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 , of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and does it meet/exceed the thresholds? (Tick as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2	No Screening required
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, The Proposed Development is listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 and meets/exceeds the threshold, specify class (including threshold): [specify class & threshold here]	EIA is Mandatory No Screening required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, The Proposed Development is of a type listed but is <i>sub-threshold</i> :	Proceed to Part C

	Preliminary Examination:	The planning authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at the least, the nature, size or location of the development.
	Yes/No/ Uncertain:	Comment:
Nature of the development: <i>Is the nature of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?</i> <i>Will the development result in the production of any significant waste, or result in significant emissions or pollutants?</i>	No	The existing environment located on the Proposed Development is a greenfield site. Waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General household waste. • Constructional waste and materials which may be excavated from site during development. Emissions: none Pollutants: low risk of pollutants
Size of the development: <i>Is the size of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?</i> <i>Are there cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted projects?</i>	No	There are housing estates surrounding the site, with Cnoc na Greine housing estate to the west and Granada View housing estate to the east. There are many mixed-use buildings (residential and commercial) around the site. Having regard to the scale of the permitted developments in the vicinity, the AA Screening Assessment noted that there will be no in-combination effects with local planning applications.
Location: <i>Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or does it have the potential to</i>	No	An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) has been prepared. The AASR found that: "It can be objectively concluded that there are not likely to be any significant effects on any European Site as a result of the construction or operation

<p><i>impact on an ecologically sensitive site or location?</i>¹</p> <p><i>Does the proposed development have the potential to affect other significant environmental sensitivities in the area?</i></p>		<p>of The Proposed Development at Carragh, Granard Co. Longford“.</p> <p>The proposed development will be constructed in accordance with the design and best practice that is described within this report, therefore significant effects on biodiversity are not anticipated at any geographic scale.</p>
Conclusions		
Based on a preliminary examination of the nature, size or location of the development, is there a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment?		
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required	X
There is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	Screening Determination Required	N/A
	Schedule 7A information required	N/A
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA not required	N/A
The preliminary examination as required by Article 120 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) has determined that formal EIA Screening is not required therefore it is not necessary to proceed to Step 3. It is considered that a sub-threshold EIAR is not required for the Proposed Development as the proposal is below the thresholds of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations.		

4 CONCLUSION

This EIA screening report has been prepared in relation to a part 179a residential development on land situated at Carragh, Granard Co. Longford in accordance with Article 120 (1) (b) of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 as amended, having regard to the following:

- The location, size and nature of this serviced site located in an urban setting and distanced from protected and/or environmentally sensitive sites.

¹ Sensitive locations or features includes European sites, NHA/pNHA, Designated Nature Reserves, land designated as a refuge for flora and fauna, and any other ecological site which is the objective of a CDP/LAP (including draft plans).

- The proposed development is below the threshold of a mandatory EIA which would require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)
- The modest scale and quantum of the residential development proposed and integration with the adjoining community of Granard, Co. Longford.
- The description of possible effects on the environment are not considered significant and therefore further assessment pursuant to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended are not considered necessary.
- An Appropriate Assessment Screening has been carried out. It concluded that the proposed development will not cause direct or indirect impacts on any Natura 2000 sites, and that an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

All standard practices will be employed throughout the construction and operation phase of the development to ensure that the Proposed Development will not create any significant impacts on the quality of the surrounding environment.