

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING NOTE

Project Reference	220255
Date & Time	10/09/2024
Subject	Belvedere House Restoration, Mullingar, County Westmeath.
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Introduction

MKO has been commissioned by Westmeath County Council to carry out an environmental assessment of the proposed restoration works at Belvedere House, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (Proposed Development).

Statement of Authority

This report has been prepared by Conor Jackson and Tom Madden and reviewed by Eoin O Sullivan, all of MKO.

Conor is a Graduate Environmental Scientist who joined MKO in 2024. He holds a BSc (Hons) in Geography and Geosystems from the University of Galway. Tom Madden is an Environmental Scientist with over 4 years' experience in professional environmental consultancies. Tom holds a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science from the University of Limerick. Tom's key strengths are in compilation of various types of environmental reports such as EIAR Chapters, Construction & Environmental Management Plans, Construction Waste Management Plans. Tom is also proficient in conducting environmental sampling such as groundwater, surface water, noise, and odour.

Eoin O'Sullivan is Project Director Environment at MKO with over 14 years of experience in the assessment of a wide range of energy and infrastructure related projects and working in the fields of environmental and human health risk assessment, waste management, waste policy and permitting. Eoin has wide experience in the project management of large-scale infrastructural projects and brownfield developments which includes all aspects of geo-environmental and geotechnical investigation.

Legislative Context

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU) as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, aims to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for EIA, prior to consent being given, of public and private developments. EIA screening determines whether an EIA is required for a specified project.

Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) identifies development i.e., prescribed classes of development requiring EIA where a development meets or exceeds the thresholds set out under Schedule 5 (Part 1 and Part 2) mandatory EIA is required and, as such, there is no screening determination required. Where a development is of a class included in Schedule 5 but is sub threshold the development shall be subject to a preliminary examination and if required, screening, to determine (i.e., a Screening Determination) if it would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The

Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018) state:

- › Where, based on a **preliminary examination** of the information submitted with the application and any other supplementary information received, the competent authority concludes that, having considered the nature, size and location of the proposed development, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment, this should be recorded with reasons for this conclusion stated, and no EIA required, or formal determination made. The recording of the competent authority's view should be brief and concise, but adequate to inform the public. In many cases this considered view will be included in the planner's/inspector's report on the planning application and this may be cross-referenced in the competent authority's decision. Normally, this will be published at the time of the decision of the competent authority.
- › Where, based on the information submitted with the application and any other supplementary information received, and having considered the nature, size and location of the proposed development in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), **there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment, the competent authority must determine that an EIA is required.** The main reasons for this determination should be recorded.
- › Where, based on the information submitted with the application and any other supplementary information received, the competent authority, having considered the nature, size and location of the proposed development in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), forms the view that there is **significant and realistic doubt** in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment, **the competent authority must proceed to a further examination to determine whether EIA is required.** This requires the applicant to submit the information specified in **Schedule 7a** to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) in order to facilitate a formal Screening Determination.

In the event that a formal screening assessment is required the applicant may need to engage the services of an appropriately qualified consultant (MKO) to assist with same. This Preliminary EIA Screening Note has been prepared to assist the applicant in recording whether the Proposed Development is of a class of development requiring EIA.

Pre-Screening

Site Location	The site of the Proposed Development is located at Belvedere House and Gardens, Mullingar, County Westmeath (ITM: 641899, 747661). The Proposed Development site is located 6km south-southwest of Mullingar Town and is accessed via L1136 Rochfort Demesne Road, off the national road N52.
Proposed Development	The proposed works will consist of the strengthening of a first floor structure at bay ends. The proposed works will consist of strengthening of the existing first floor structure in Belvedere House which has an estimated area of 2000m ² . It is proposed to rearrange the floor and timber panelling of the bay windows in both rooms to accommodate a new steel beam running east-west under the proposed steps. This will allow continued use of the rooms without damaging the historic plasterwork beneath.
Site Context	The site is located circa 220m from the shores of Lough Ennell which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) as designated under the European Union (EU) Habitats Directive. An

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) has concluded that no European Designated Sites are considered to be at risk of significant effects as a result of the subject works.

According to FloodMaps.ie, the site is not located within an area that is prone to flooding.

Belvedere House is listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). According to the NIAH website, this building was constructed in 1740-1750 and has a record number of 15402615. A Conservation Method Statement was completed by 7L Architects which outlines the methodology and mitigation to be employed during the works which will ensure that the architectural character and heritage of the building is not negatively impacted. The report concludes that the proposed works will protect and maintain the existing built heritage of Belvedere House.

1. Does the Development constitute a class of development requiring EIA having regard to Schedule 5 of the Regulations?	Yes:
	No: ✓

2. If YES, is the development meeting or exceeding a threshold set out in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations?

Tick		Threshold	Comment	Result
No	✓			No EIA is Required
Yes		Exceeds/	n/a	No EIAR Required
		Is Equal to	n/a	
		No Threshold	n/a	EIA Screening - Preliminary Examination or Screening Determination Required
		Sub Threshold	n/a	

Conclusion

Pre-screening for the requirement for EIA has been carried out for the proposed works at Belvedere House. It has been concluded that that the Proposed Development does not constitute a class of development requiring EIA having with regard to Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations. Given the limited nature and scale of the proposed works which will be carried out within the confines of the existing building, and the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity of the site there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the Proposed Development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at this stage and a preliminary examination or screening determination is not required.