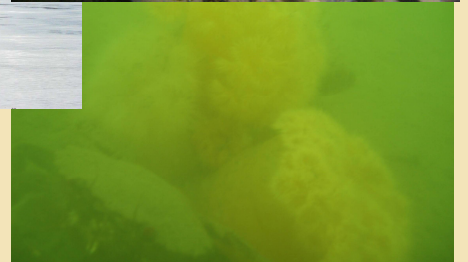


**IN-COMBINATION ASSESSMENT
SUPPLEMENTAL TO APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FLOATING PONTOON MARINA AT
WHITE POINT, COBH, CO. CORK**



Prepared By

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**For
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On behalf of Cove Sailing Club

18th October 2011

Job No. 10C03

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Moore Group was commissioned by Cove Sailing Club in association with Cronin Millar Consulting Engineers to compile a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the development of a floating pontoon marina at White Point, Cobh, Co. Cork.

The NIS submitted to the Local Authority contains information on the predicted and potential direct and indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.

During the application for the Foreshore Licence the Department of the then Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government requested supplemental information with regard to in-combination effects to be provided in order to procedurally complete the Appropriate Assessment process.

This short report presents an assessment of the in-combination effects of the proposed development on the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Great Island Channel SAC (Site Code 001058)
- Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code 004030)

1.2 Proposed Development

Cove Sailing Club proposes to develop a 74 berth marina at White Point, Cobh, Co. Cork. The marina will be an all tide access marina in Cork Harbour with all marina components comprising floating pontoons. Access to the marina will be via a fixed platform and gangway extending from the quay wall at the 'five foot way'. The marina will be restrained in position with a chain and anchor system. Dredging at the site is not envisaged.

Proposed Marina

The proposed marina will provide 74 No. berths. It is anticipated that all berths will be utilised from May to September, with approximately 30-40 berths being used at any one time in various locations of the

marina during the off peak season. The 74 No. berths (including all marina components and anchors) occupy a footprint of approximately 2.55ha (approximately 1 berth per 345m²).

The footprint of the marina will be approximately 30% greater than that of the moorings to be removed, however, the marina will provide a more efficient use of the foreshore with a berth rate per m² approximately 31% greater than the swing mooring field removed.

It is envisaged that the majority of berth holders at the proposed marina will be existing berth holders and swing mooring users within Cork Harbour. Many of the berth holders will be existing swing mooring users at the site. In this regard there will be no significant intensification of berth numbers in Cork Harbour.

Leisure Activity

The proposed marina will not directly contribute to an increase in boating activity in the harbour, as the majority of the proposed berth holders are currently based in Cork Harbour.

Currently, there are approximately 2,000 boats berthed in Cork Harbour¹, with a useable water area of 52 sq. km, giving a boat density of 38 boats/sq.km. This is a relatively low density for recreational boating, compared with European, American and UK figures. As an example, Chichester Harbour in the UK, which contains an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has approximately 9,000 boats with a useable water area of 31 sq. km, giving a boat density of 290 boats/sq.km.

Cork Harbour also accommodates many visiting boats during the summer season and numerous boating events are held throughout the year. Therefore there is an existing precedent for increased boating traffic at various times of the year.

1.3 Direct Impacts

The predicted impacts are considered on the marine environment with regard to undesignated habitats under the footprint of the proposed development and the adjacent Natura 2000 sites, particularly the Cork Harbour SPA at Monkstown Creek.

¹ Assessment of Coastal Recreational Activity & Capacity for Increased Boating in Cork Harbour. Kopke, O'Mahony, Cummins & Gault. Coastal & Marine Resources Centre. UCC, 2007.

Predicted impacts in this regard are presented in conjunction with information provided by the Consulting Engineers, Cronin Millar Consulting Engineers (CMCE).

The proposed floating pontoon would be held in place using a chain and anchor system. Dredging at the site will not be required.

There would be no significant direct impact on marine flora and fauna as a result of the construction of the proposed marina.

1.4 Indirect Impacts

It is envisaged that the majority of berth holders at the proposed marina will be existing berth holders and swing mooring users within Cork Harbour. In this regard there will be no significant intensification of berth numbers in Cork Harbour.

The proposed marina will not directly contribute to an increase in boating activity in the harbour, as the majority of the proposed berth holders are currently based in Cork Harbour. Thus there would be no cumulative impact on bird life.

There would be no significant impact on marine mammals or breeding or Wintering birds. Furthermore, it is anticipated that all berths will be utilised from May to September with reduced traffic during the winter months, further reducing the potential impact on Wintering birds.

There would be no significant impact on the adjacent Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC, see Section 5 below with regard to mitigation measures to avoid potential pollution.

1.5 In-Combination Effects

The proposed marina will not directly contribute to an increase in boating activity in the harbour, as the majority of the proposed berth holders are currently based in Cork Harbour.

Thus there would be no significant impact on marine mammals or breeding or Wintering birds. Furthermore, it is anticipated that all berths will be utilised from May to September with reduced traffic during the winter months, further reducing the potential impact on Wintering birds.

Given the avoidance of impacts on wintering birds and the enforcement of appropriate mitigation avoiding pollution in the harbour and disturbance to wintering waterfowl, there would be no significant impacts on the overall integrity of the adjacent Cork Harbour SPA or Great Island Channel SAC.

At the time of writing this report there are four operational marinas in Cork Harbour. These include the Port of Cork City Marina, the East Ferry Marina, the Crosshaven Boatyard Marina and the Royal Cork Yacht Club Marina. Monkstown Bay Marina Co Ltd. was recently granted permission to develop a 285 berth marina at Monkstown which is the subject of a Planning Appeal.

The additional number of berths at White Point would be 35, based on the provision of 74 in the proposed marina plus the remaining 11 after 39 have removed from 50 existing.

It is envisaged that these additional berths will accommodate existing boat users in Cork Harbour moving between the existing and proposed marinas in Cork Harbour.

1.6 Overall Conclusions

Given the relatively small footprint area of the proposed development and the proposed use of point anchoring, there would be no direct impact on the adjacent Cork Harbour SPA or Great Island Channel SAC.

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Thus there would be no significant impact on marine mammals or breeding or Wintering birds. Furthermore, it is anticipated that all berths will utilised from May to September with reduced traffic during the winter months, further reducing the potential impact on Wintering birds.

Appropriate mitigation measures are presented in Section 5 of the NIS. These will be consolidated in an Environmental Management Plan for the proposed project. Additionally, Cove Sailing Club will operate the marina as a 'Blue Flag Marina' where a berth holder's hand book will be provided which informs of all guidelines in relation to health safety and the environment. Information on the environment will include information on the adjacent SAC and SPA areas including the reasons for conservation and how boat users

can avoid impacting on the designated areas. If the mitigation measures are enforced, there should be no direct or indirect impacts on the adjacent Natura 2000 Sites.

Given the avoidance of impacts on wintering birds and the enforcement of appropriate mitigation avoiding pollution, there would be no significant impacts on the overall integrity of the adjacent Cork Harbour SPA or Great Island Channel SAC.