Refurbishment, Demolition and Construction Works at Portlaoise Garda Headquarters

Preliminary Examination (for the purposes of EIA) in accordance with Article 123A of Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2019

BSM Est. 1968

Brady Shipman Martin

Built. Environment.

Strategic Assessment **Built Environment**

Client: OPW

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1 Introduction

The Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland (OPW[1]) is seeking permission under Part 9[2] of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2019 (hereafter PDR 2001) for development involving refurbishment demolition and construction works at a site comprising the Portlaoise Divisional Garda Headquarters and an adjoining area (hereafter the 'PSSB' lands), all located off the Old Abbeyliex Road, County Laois.

Brady Shipman Martin was appointed by the OPW to prepare a Preliminary Examination of, at least, the nature, size or location of the development in relation to the requirement, or not, for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), in accordance with article 123A[3] of the PDR 2001, to allow the State authority make a conclusion, based on such preliminary examination, that –

(i) there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, the authority shall conclude that an EIA is not required,

(ii) there is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, the information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination, or

(iii) there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall—

(I) conclude that the development would be likely to have such effects, and

(II) prepare, or cause to be prepared, an EIAR in respect of the development.

This report is a Preliminary Assessment of the Proposed Development prepared on behalf of the OPW by Thomas Burns, (BAgrSc. (Landscape); Dip. EIA Management; Ad. Dip. Planning & Environmental Law) Partner with Brady

[1] Office of Public Works
[2] Provisions with respect to certain development by or on behalf of State authorities
[3] Sub-threshold EIAR

Shipman Martin, environmental, landscape and planning consultants. Thomas has over 25 years' experience in the area of Environmental Impact Assessment.

The application for permission for the Proposed Development is also accompanied by a Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening prepared by Moore Group – Environmental Services, and by an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment Report prepared by ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals.

2 Environmental Impact Assessment

2.1 Background and Applicable Legislation

EIA requirements derive from Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. The Directive and its previous amendments were subsequently codified and replaced by Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended in turn by Directive 2014/52/EU[4]. This amending Directive was transposed into national planning consent procedures in September 2018 through the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018).

The objective of EIA is to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for environmental impact assessment prior to development consent being given, for public and private developments that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

2.2 Mandatory Requirement for EIA

EIA is mandatory for certain types of projects as set out in Annex 1 of the EIA Directive (and Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the PDR 2001). EIA is also mandatory for other projects that meet or exceed a stated threshold as set out in Annex II of the Directive (and Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the PDR 2001).

The Proposed Development does not correspond to a class of development set out in Annex 1 (or Part 1 of Schedule 5 the PDR 2001) for which EIA would be a mandatory requirement. Likewise, the Proposed Development does not meet or

[4] Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

exceed any threshold stated in Annex 2 (or Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the PDR 2001) for which EIA would be a mandatory requirement.

2.3 Requirement for 'Sub-threshold' EIA

Certain developments by State authorities prescribed under Section 181[5] of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2019 (hereafter the PDA 2000) that do not meet or exceed a stated threshold for EIA (i.e. requirement for EIA is mandatory) are subject to a Preliminary Examination in accordance with article 123A of the PDR 2001 for the requirement, or not, for '*sub-threshold*' EIA.

The Preliminary Examination must consider, at least, the nature, size or location of the proposed development.

The report has had regard to the requirements of Schedule 7 of the PDR 2001 in preparing this Preliminary Examination.

[5] Development by State authorities.

3 The Proposed Development

The Proposed Development involves the refurbishment/conservation and extension of the existing Garda Station building and construction of a new building on the site to the rear, West of the existing Garda Station site. The total site area is c. 0.728 hectares. The total area of the Proposed Development, including retained existing protected structures totals 3,159sqm.

The works, which will be phased to maintain an operational Garda station on site at all time, include

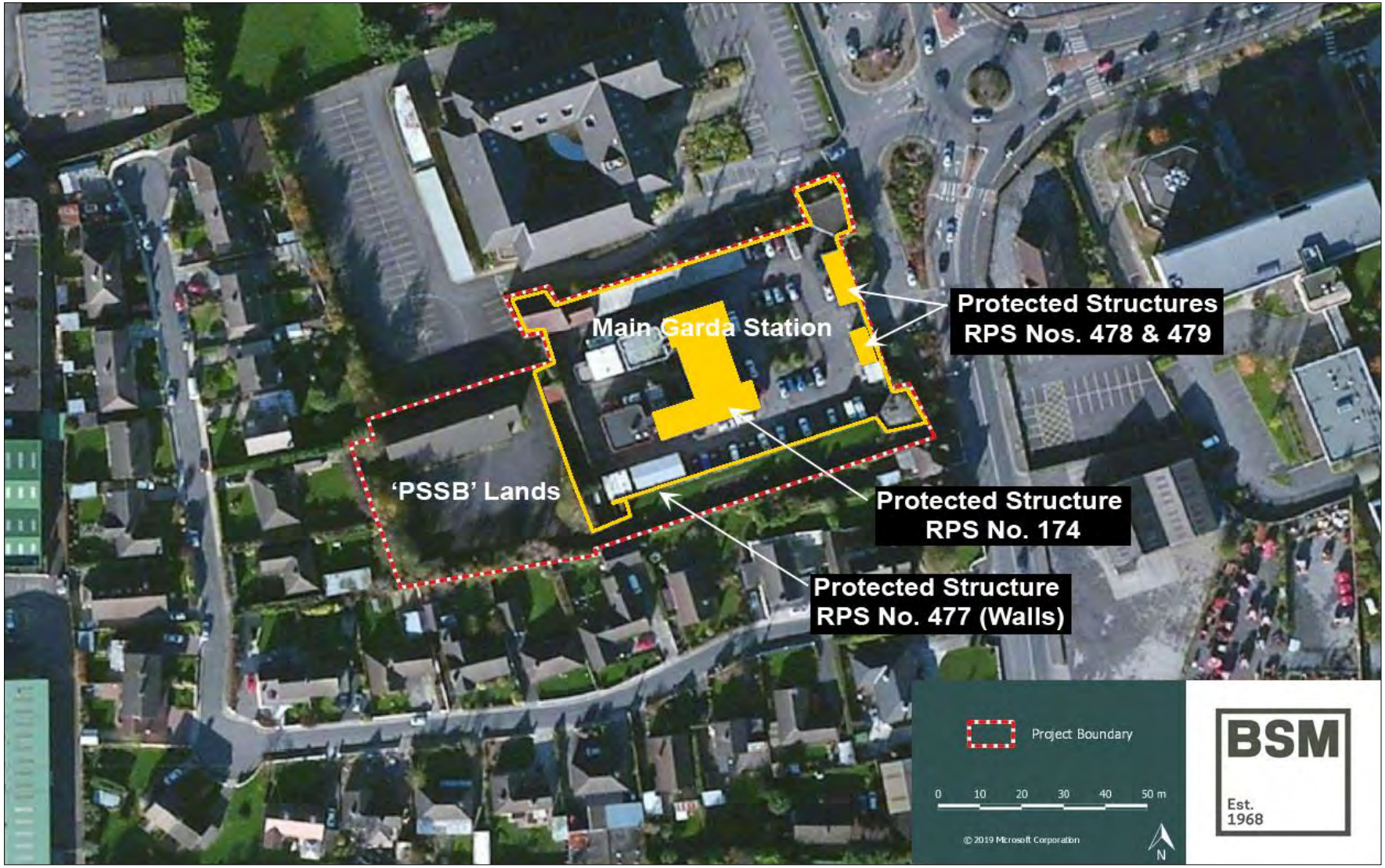
- Refurbishment/conservation of existing Garda station building and entrance guard houses (RPS 174, 478 and 479);
- Refurbishment/conservation of existing Garda station/fort wall (RPS 477) including necessary structural repairs, repointing and repairing of the masonry, provision of new lime mortar capping, new entrance gates and new pedestrian gated opening to west wall;
- Construction of part two/part three storey extension to existing Garda station building, with new staircore and lift, links to existing building on two levels, and a new enclosed external courtyard; and
- Construction of a new three storey over basement building on site to rear (west) of existing Garda station site.

The development site contains four no. Protected Structures (under Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023). These are:

- RPS 174-Garda Barracks;
- RPS 477-Garda Station Wall;
- RPS 478-Former OPW Offices at Garda Station; and
- RPS 479-Two bay single storey Guard House at Garda Station.

The overall site extends to c. 0.728 hectares, (refer to Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Site Location - Aerial



4 Preliminary Examination of the Proposed Development

The Preliminary Examination considers, at least, the nature, size and location of the Proposed Development and the requirements of Schedule 7 of the PDR 2001.

4.1 The nature of the Proposed Development

4.1.1 The Proposed Development

The Proposed Development involves the refurbishment/conservation and extension of the existing Garda Station building and construction of a new building on the site to the rear, West of the existing Garda Station site. The overall Site area is c. 0.728ha and the existing site layout is illustrated on Figure 2 below.

The works, which will be phased to maintain an operational Garda station on site at all time, include

- Refurbishment/conservation of existing Garda station building and entrance guard houses (RPS 174, 478 and 479 with total GIA 763m^2);
- Refurbishment/conservation of existing Garda station/fort wall (RPS 477) including necessary structural repairs, repointing and repairing of the masonry, provision of new lime mortar capping, new entrance gates and new pedestrian gated opening to west wall;
- Construction of part two/part three storey extension (total GIA 994m^2) to existing Garda station building, with new staircore and lift, links to existing building on two levels, and a new enclosed external courtyard; and
- Construction of a new three storey over basement building (total GIA 2,165m^2) on site to rear (west) of existing Garda station site.

In order to facilitate the development, the following structures (with a total footprint of 1,346m^2) are required to be removed:

- Two storey gymnasium building (built c. 1910, listed no. 12506162 on NIAH), to have detail survey and photographic record undertaken prior to removal;
- Later additions/extensions to existing Garda Station – 2 no. two storey yellow brick blocks (built c. 1980), and a single storey yellow brick ESB sub-station;

- Two (2 no.) single storey buildings attached to the north-east and south-east corners of the perimeter limestone wall on the Garda station site;
- Corrugated metal lean-to roof canopy attached to existing Garda station/fort walls;
- Single storey lean-to building attached to north guard house at main entrance;
- Rifle range building attached to perimeter limestone wall to west of Garda Station;
- Single storey PSSB building to west of Garda Station compound; and
- Removal of portacabins, containers, planters, some existing services including an oil tank, gas tank and telecommunications mast, and all other structures noted on existing site plan drawing PLA-002.

The Proposed Development will also include the provision of hard and soft landscaping, a new ESB substation (incorporated into new three storey-over-basement building to rear), bin stores, new foul drainage, attenuated surface water drainage, 60 no. car parking spaces including 3 no. disabled parking spaces, 20 no. bicycle parking spaces, site lighting, cameras, gates and all ancillary site structures and works.

As with the existing development, the Proposed Development will connect to existing potable water, surface water and wastewater infrastructure networks as well as to power and telecommunications networks.

Figure 2: Existing Site Layout - showing 2 parts of Site (Main Garda Station in blue & PSSB lands in yellow

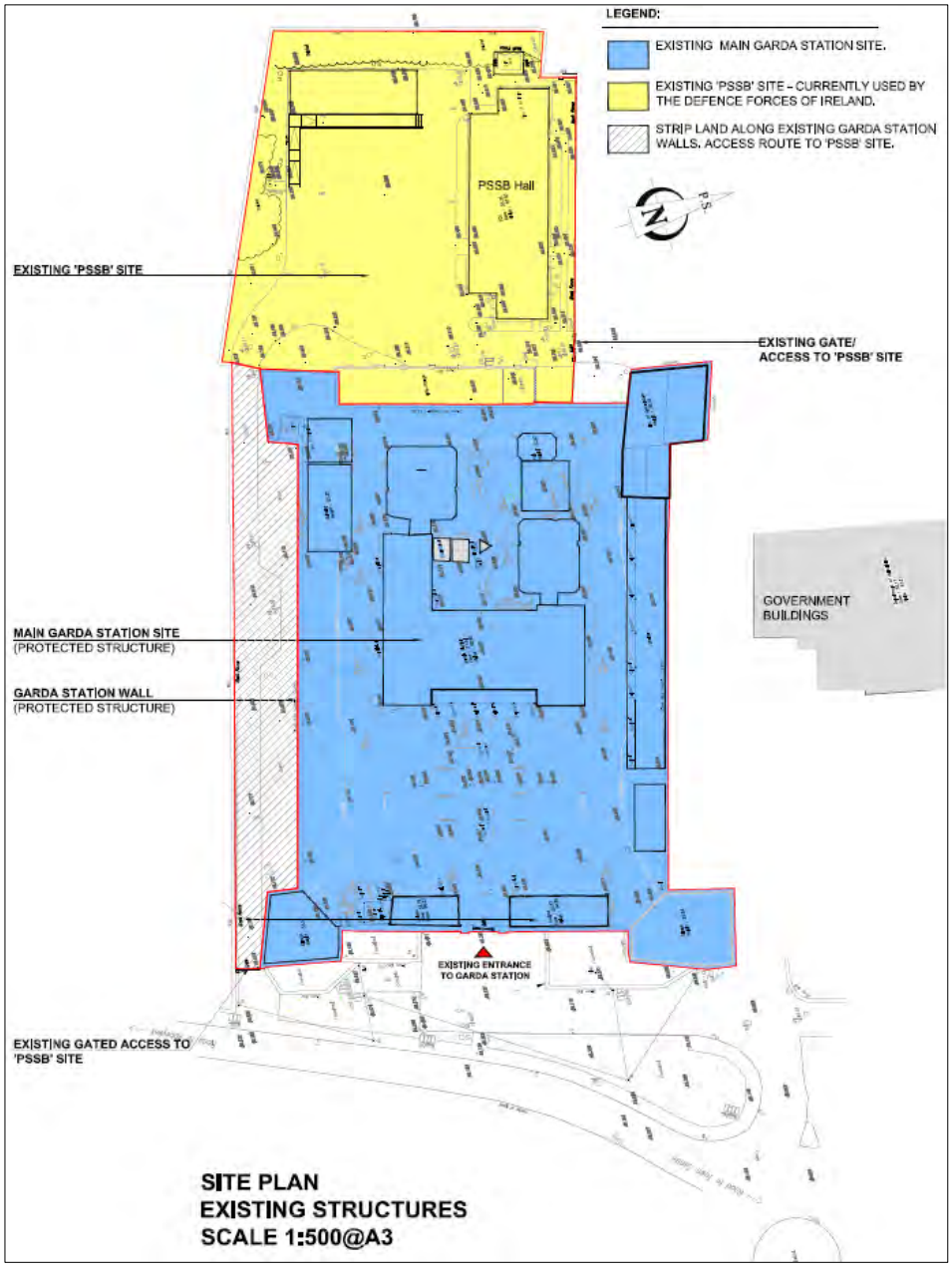


Figure 3: Proposed Demolitions

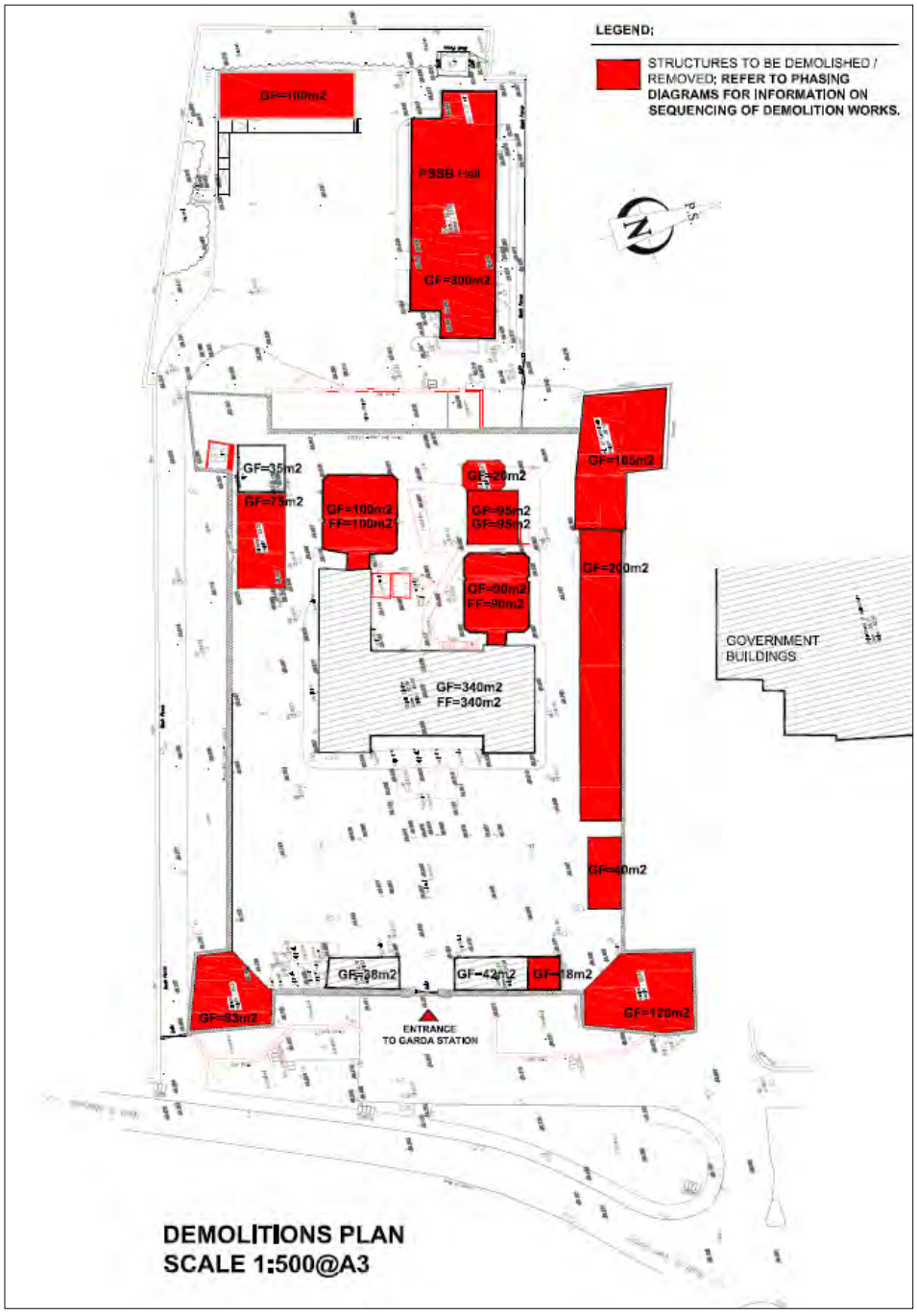


Figure 4: Proposed Site Plan

4.1.2 Appropriate Assessment

A report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been prepared by Moore Group (Environmental Services) and accompanies the planning application. The Report notes that there is no connectivity to any European sites and significant effects on any European sites as a result of the Proposed Development have been ruled out, and potential significant effects on European sites have been excluded at a preliminary screening stage.

The assessment concludes that:

> *"It can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site."* (Section 6 Conclusion, page 17).

4.1.3 Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

A detailed report on the architectural heritage impact assessment has been prepared by ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals and accompanies the planning application.

The assessment concludes that:

> *"…the proposal as set out in the Planning Application that this report refers to, will ensure that the building will have a renewed purpose and prolong the use of the building for many years. The proposed mitigation measures will ensure that the impact of the individual and overall impacts are mitigated and any loss of fabric will be retained by record to an internationally accepted standard."* (Section 8 Conclusions and Suggested Mitigations, page 158).

4.2 The Size of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is located on a small sub-urban / urban site of c. 0.728ha. The Site is already a developed site comprising in part Portlaoise Divisional Garda Headquarters, and in part, adjoining 'PSSB lands'. As noted under Section 4.1 above, the Proposed Development includes for small scale demolition of c. 1,346sqm in plan area of existing buildings and structures; for refurbishment of c. 763sqm of retained buildings; and for construction of c. 2,165sqm in plan area of new buildings.

4.3 The Location of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is located within the developed town centre / sub-urban environment of Portlaoise. Established Government offices lie to the immediate north of the Site. One and two-storey residential properties within Glenside lie to the south and west of the Site. To the east of the Site, town centre lands, including the offices of Laois County Council, lie to the east of the N77 Abbeyleix Road.

The Site is accessed of the Old Abbeyleix Road, via a roundabout on the N77 Abbeyliex Road.

The Site is laid out in hardstandings, parking areas, lawns, and small landscape beds surrounding a range of existing buildings and structures.

4.3.1 Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023

There are no protected trees or scenic views (views and prospects) pertaining to the Site (Map 1.7.11 of County Development Plan).

4.3.2 Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2018-2024 (LAP)

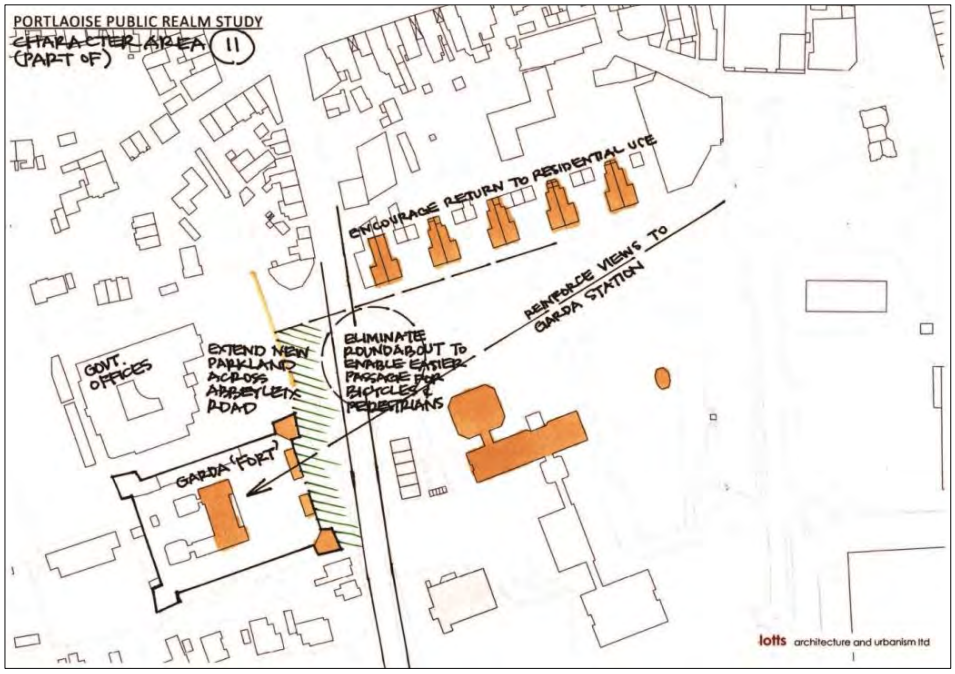
The Site is located within the identified 'Public Realm (TRC01)' of Portlaoise (refer to Map 1 of LAP). Objective TCR 01 seeks to:

> *"Improve the quality, vitality and vibrancy of the town centre through the implementation of the Portlaoise Public Realm Strategy "*2040 and Beyond: A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre*"."* (page 31).

As part of proposed '**Interventions for Area 11**', the Strategy proposes:

> *"Remove planting to reveal the fortified character of the Garda Station ('New Barracks' of 1805) emphasising its star-shaped bastions typical of defences constructed during the Napoleonic Wars. The building forms an interesting counterpoint to the Fort Protector, having carried on its military function, and holds special interest in the context of a town for which its military history is part of its foundation story;"* (refer to Figure 5 below also) (page 45).

Figure 5: Extract from 2040 and Beyond: A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre (page 45)



While the Public Realm Strategy envisages some landscape improvements to the public realm outside (east) of the Garda Station (as part of works along James Fintan Lalor Avenue - pages 25 & 45), the Strategy does not include proposals within the development site itself.

The Site is zoned '*Community, Educational & Institutional*' (refer to Map 2 of LAP). Lands comprising Government Offices to the immediate north of the Site are similarly zoned. Lands to immediate south and west are zoned '*Residential 1 – Existing Residential*', lands to the east are '*Town Centre*'.

The Site is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area (refer to Map 6 of the LAP) or an Archaeological Significance Zone (refer to Map 7 of the LAP).

The Site is not located within or adjacent to an area identified as being susceptible to flooding (refer to Map 8 of the LAP).

The Site is not located within or adjacent to a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) (refer to Map 9 of the LAP).

4.4 Criteria under Schedule 7 of Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2019

The criteria for determining if a development *would, or would not*, be likely to have significant effects on the environment is set out in Schedule 7 to the PDR 2001. The criteria are grouped under three headings as follows:

1. Characteristics of the Proposed Development.
2. Location of Proposed Development.
3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts.

Each of the above groupings includes a number of sub-criteria and information is provided for each in the following Sections 4.4.1 - 4.4.3 respectively.

4.4.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Table 1 assesses the environmental sensitivity of the characteristics of the Proposed Development and the potential for significant impact.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Type and Characteristics of Proposed Development	Comment
a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development,	The Proposed Development is located on a site of c. 0.728ha. The Proposed Development involves the demolition of a number of existing structures, the refurbishment of retained structures and the construction of a number of new structures on the existing Garda Station lands and adjoining PSSB lands. There is no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* by reason of the size and design of the proposed development.
b) cumulation with other existing development and / or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and / or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or	The Proposed Development is located within the developed town centre of Portlaoise. The Site is zoned 'Community, Educational & Institutional' in the Portlaoise LAP. Established Government offices lie to the immediate north, one and two-storey residential properties lie to the south and west of the Site. To the east of the Site, town centre lands, including the offices of Laois County Council, to the east. There is no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* by reason of cumulation with other development for the purposes of Section 172(1A)(b) of the PDA, 2000.

Type and Characteristics of Proposed Development	Comment
under any other enactment,	
c) the nature of any associated demolition works,	The Proposed Development involves the demolition of a number of existing structures, the refurbishment of retained structures and the construction of a number of new structures on the existing Garda Station lands and adjoining PSSB lands. Works which will be phased to maintain an operational Garda station on site at all time. There is no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* by reason of the small-scale development and the phasing of works.
d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity,	There are no unusual aspects to the Proposed Development. Use of natural resources will be limited to the normal use of building materials and no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
e) the production of waste,	There are no unusual aspects to the Proposed Development. Normal site clearance works are included in the construction phase of the proposed development. Therefore, production of waste will be limited and subject to appropriate recycling or removal to approved, licensed facilities. There is no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arising.
f) pollution and nuisances,	Construction works have the potential for noise disturbance. However, any such disturbance will be temporary (limited to the construction phase), localised and controlled and mitigated by standard construction best practice and normal day-time working hours. No other pollution or nuisances are identified and no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
g) 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, and	There are no unusual aspects to the Proposed Development. No particular risks are identified and no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water	There are no unusual aspects to the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will

Type and Characteristics of Proposed Development	Comment
contamination or air pollution).	connect to existing potable water, surface water and wastewater infrastructure networks. No particular risks to human health are identified, with no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.

4.4.1.1 Section Summary

There is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the nature of the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development involves the demolition of a number of existing structures, the refurbishment of retained structures and the construction of a number of new structures on an overall Site area is c. 0.728ha. Therefore, the scale of the Proposed Development, when viewed individually and / or cumulatively, is very small in terms of the extent of development and significantly below relevant EIA thresholds.

This scale of development will not give rise to significant effects on the environment either by way of its size or design.

Any potential pollution aspect will be avoided through appropriate standard construction practice management regimes.

Any noise and nuisance associated with the proposed construction works will be short-term and subject to standard construction management and best practice procedures.

Any waste arising will be small in quantity and taken from the Site for reuse or disposal, subject to normal statutory controls.

The Proposed Development will not result in any significant environmental effects arising from the nature of the development.

4.4.2 Location of the Proposed Development

Table 2 assesses the location of the Proposed Development with regard to the environmental sensitivity of the geographical area likely to be affected and the potential for significant impact.

Table 2: Location of Proposed Development

Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts	Comment
i) the existing and approved land use	The Site is located within the identified 'Public Realm (TRC01)' in the Portlaoise LAP. There is an objective to '*improve the quality, vitality and vibrancy of the town…'*. No likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
j) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,	The Proposed Development will consist of refurbishment of the existing two-storey Portlaoise Garda Station building and the construction of a new part two-storey, part three-storey extension to the rear. The Site is laid out in hard-standings, parking areas, lawns, and small landscape beds surrounding a range of existing buildings and structures It will have negligible impact on the quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area. No likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises
k) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:	Having regard to the criteria listed below, it is considered that the Site has a high absorption capacity for the scale and type of development proposed and no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	No impact arises.
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;	No impact arises.
(iii) mountain and forest areas;	No impact arises.
(iv) nature reserves and parks;	No impact arises.
(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;	A separate Screening Report for the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared and excludes any potential for impact on Natura 2000 Sites. No impact arises.
(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid	No issues arise.

Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts	Comment
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;	The small scale development is located in a town centre / sub-urban environment – Portlaoise. Established offices lie to the immediate north, one and two-storey residential properties lie to the south and west of the Site. To the east of the Site, town centre lands, including the offices of Laois County Council, to the east. No likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
(viii) Landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	The Proposed Development has no impact on any aspect of sensitive landscape or heritage. The Site is not located within an ACA or an Archaeological Significance Zone (LAP). The Site is not located within or adjacent to a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) (LAP). There are a number of protected structures of architectural heritage value on the site. These structures will be retained and refurbished as part of the proposed works. No likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.

4.4.2.2 Section Summary

There is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the location of the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development will consist of small scale demolition works, modest new construction and refurbishment of the existing two-storey Portlaoise Garda Station building.

The Screening for the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA) concludes that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, in light of best scientific knowledge, will not, in view of the conservation objectives of the site, adversely affect the integrity of any European sites.

In terms of other environmental sensitivities, e.g. landscapes / sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance, the Proposed Development will not give

rise to any significant effects. A separate report on Architectural Heritage (ACP - Architectural Conservation Professionals) has found that the Proposed Development *"will ensure that the building will have a renewed purpose and prolong the use of the building for many years".*

The Proposed Development will not result in any significant environmental effects arising from its location.

4.4.3 Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Tables 3 and 4 assesses likely significant effects on the environment of the Proposed Development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 (*i.e*. Sections 4.4.1 & 4.4.2 and Tables 1 and 2 above), having regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(I) to (V) of the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report' in section 171A of the PDA 2000.

Table 3: Type and Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts	Comment
a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),	Any potential impact will be temporary, short-term and limited to the Site. Therefore, the geographical extent and population likely to be affected are slight and no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
b) the nature of the impact	There are no unusual aspects to the Proposed Development and any potential impacts are consistent with and typical of normal small scale development. No likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
c) the transboundary nature of the impact	No transboundary impacts arise.
d) the intensity and complexity of the impact,	No impact of an unusual intensity or complexity is expected.
e) the probability of the impact	N/A
f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,	Any potential impacts will be temporary or short-term associated with the normal construction and / demolition works of the Proposed Development. No medium or long-term impact arises and no likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.
g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment, and	The Proposed Development does not give rise to cumulation with other development for the purposes of Section 172(1A)(b) of the PDA, 2000.
h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	Any potential impacts will be temporary or short-term associated with the normal construction and / demolition works of a Proposed Development. Such potential impacts may be appropriately mitigated through standard construction best practice and control of working hours.

Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts	Comment
	No likelihood of *significant environmental effects* arises.

Table 4: Assessment against the environmental factors specified in Section 171A(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

EIA Factor	Comment
Population	Positive impact as the Proposed Development will work towards improving the quality and presentation of the site. No negative impact arises.
Human Health	No significant impact arises.
Biodiversity	No adverse impact arises. No impact arises on any European site (Natura 2000 Sites). No significant impact arises.
Land	The Site is already developed and is of small area (c. 0.728ha) No significant impact arises.
Soil	The Site is laid out in hardstandings, parking areas, lawns, and small landscape beds surrounding a range of existing buildings and structures. No significant impact arises.
Water	The Site is not located within or adjacent to an area identified as being susceptible to flooding. Appropriate surface water management and discharge measures are provided. No significant impact arises.
Air and Climate	The Proposed Development will consist of demolition and construction works as well as refurbishment of the existing Garda Station building. The proposed refurbishment will be constructed to the required high standards of environmental performance. No significant impact arises.
Material Assets	No significant impact arises.
Cultural Heritage	A detailed architectural heritage impact assessment has been prepared by ACP Architectural Conservation Professionals and accompanies the planning application. The works will have potential for a positive impact on securing the future of protected structures. The Site is not located within an ACA or an Archaeological Significance Zone (LAP). No significant impact arises.
Landscape	The Site is not located within or adjacent to a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) (LAP). There is no impact on Special Amenity Areas, Protected Views or other landscape features of note.

EIA Factor	Comment
	No significant impact arises.
Interaction between factors	No significant impact arises as a result of any potential for interaction between environmental factors.

4.4.3.1 Section Summary

The type or characteristics of the potential impacts arising from the Proposed Development will not give rise to *significant environmental impacts*.

There are no medium or long-term negative impacts and the Proposed Development is capable of successful integration in the surrounding environment.

Whilst temporary or short-term impacts relating to noise levels and dust are typical of any small-scale Construction Phase. The proposed works will be confined to the Site and any potential impact on nearby receptors will be effectively managed through standard best practice construction measures.

The Proposed Development includes refurbishment of the existing two-storey Portlaoise Garda Station building (protected structure) and the construction of a new extension to the rear of the existing building. Proposed works will also include provision of a new ESB sub-station, outdoor storage facility, car parking, new hard and soft landscaping, new foul drainage, attenuated surface water drainage and all ancillary site structures and works.

The Proposed Development does not give rise to any significant impact on environmental (EIA) factors provided in Section 171A(b) of the PDA, 2000.

4.5 Overall Summary

The Proposed Development is located within the built-up town centre / sub-urban environment of Portlaoise. The development is small-scale in nature and in-keeping with the land-use character of the existing site and typical of redevelopment of such sites.

While the Proposed Development involves works to protected structures, which are retained and positively refurbished, the Site is otherwise not considered sensitive in terms of environmental aspects, including human beings, ecology, landscape or cultural heritage. The Proposed Development will not impact any European site.

The Proposed Development will not give rise to significant environmental impacts by virtue of its characteristics, size or location or from the types of potential effects.

5 Conclusion

Having regard to the nature and limited scale of Proposed Development and to the limited nature of environmental sensitivities (i.e. architectural heritage) the Preliminary Assessment has shown that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the Proposed Development.

The need for further screening for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or for Appropriate Assessment (AA) can therefore, be excluded on the basis of the Preliminary Examination, in accordance with article 123A(1)(b)(i) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2019.

6 References

- 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.
- Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.
- Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency, 2017.
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