

Phelan Sarah-Jane

From: O'Malley Vincent
Sent: Tuesday 12 July 2022 13:34
To: Watt Robbie
Cc: Nea Christian; Phelan Sarah-Jane
Subject: RE: RE. TO289 Northwest Bridges Reactive Maintenance Works – Abbert River Bridge (GC-N63-003.00)

Robbie,
I accept the reasoned determination as set out below.
Sincerely
Vincent

From: Watt Robbie <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday 11 July 2022 16:50
To: O'Malley Vincent <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Nea Christian <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: RE. TO289 Northwest Bridges Reactive Maintenance Works – Abbert River Bridge (GC-N63-003.00)
Vincent,

Having reviewed the information contained within this email chain and having regard to the minor nature of potential effects, I recommend that the following reasoned determination can be made:

“Having performed screening for Appropriate Assessment in respect of the proposed reactive maintenance works detailed in the email received from Paul O’Donoghue dated the 24th of June 2022, and entitled ‘ RE. TO289 Northwest Bridges Reactive Maintenance Works – Abbert River Bridge (GC-N63-003.00)’, I accept the recommendations of Atkins that the proposed reactive maintenance works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site in view of the best scientific knowledge and the site’s conservation objectives. I determine that an Appropriate Assessment of these proposed works is not required, as it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information following the screening done that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any European site.”

Kind regards,
Robbie.

From: O'Donoghue, Paul <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday 11 July 2022 14:54
To: Nea Christian <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Phelan Sarah-Jane <[REDACTED]>; Watt Robbie <[REDACTED]>; ROGER RYAN (NRDO) <[REDACTED]>; Daly, Vincent <[REDACTED]>; Martin Jennings <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE. TO289 Northwest Bridges Reactive Maintenance Works – Abbert River Bridge (GC-N63-003.00)

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Christian
RE. TO289 Northwest Bridges Reactive Maintenance Works – Abbert River Bridge (GC-N63-003.00)
The bridge location is illustrated here (bridge location circled in Red). Supporting Drawings attached, as are a set of photographs and Method Statement from the Contractor for proposed works.



Figure 1. Abbart River Bridge (GC-N63-003.00) (Source: NBDC Mapviewer).

Abbart River Bridge (GC-N63-003.00) is located on the N63 crossing of the Abbart River east of Abbey, Co. Galway (to the east of Corofin, East Galway). The Abbart River (30A01) is a 4th order river. This flows to the southwest to join the Clare River. The Clare River flows through Corofin onwards to Claregalway before entering the south-eastern side of Lough Corrib. Water quality was recorded in the Abbart River by the EPA as Good (Q4) (Station - RS30A010300) in 2021. The river in the environs of Abbart Bridge is assigned a Water Framework Directive ecological status of 'Good' upstream of the bridge (Abbart_030); and 'Moderate' downstream of the bridge (Abbart_040). The Abbart River upstream of the bridge (Abbart_30) is defined as being *Not At Risk* of achieving its Water Framework Directive status; while downstream of the bridge it is characterised as *At Risk* (Abbart_40).

Scope of Works:

1. IFI and NWPS notified prior to works and MSRA submitted for comment.
2. No instream works on the structure.
3. While not required to protect the European site, as an additional measure, silt fencing will be installed immediately adjacent to the works.
4. No mixing of mortars within 50m of the structure.
5. The scaffold will be installed spanning from bank to bank.
6. Beams for the scaffold will be lifted into position using a Hiab lorry parked on the roadway inside the TTM.
7. Following the installation of the scaffold, the scaffold will be lined with polythene and geotextile to prevent contaminants entering the watercourse.
8. The 3 nr. arches directly adjacent to the works will then be propped using 4x3 timbers and acrow props. Timbers will sit onto the skirt of the piers which are 1m above water level, these will be installed from the scaffold. [Note: propping will be done off the piers. All works will be done from the scaffold with timbers placed spanning the pier skirts; this will work as the propping is only local to the edge of the arch. No need for any instream works.]
9. The parapet will then be sawcut for removal.
10. The damaged parapet will then be demolished using compressors with breakers and spoil removed using the JCL Pickup and a 3t excavator.
11. Stone for the rebuild will then be delivered and stored inside the TTM along the roadway.
12. The parapet will then be rebuilt using NHL5 Mortar and locally sourced stone to match existing.
13. Mortar will be mixed away from the bridge structure to prevent contaminants entering the watercourse.
14. New stone copings will then be lifted onto the rebuilt parapet using a grab and 3t excavator.
15. Works will then be carried out on the parapets which require concrete repairs, sand and cement mortar will be used to match existing.
16. The hard shoulder will then be sawcut and excavated.
17. The hard shoulder will then be resurfaced and relined which will be covered under a separate MRSA.
18. Minor Masonry repairs will then be carried out at the drainage hole on the approach to the bridge, again using NHL5 Lime mortar.
19. The scaffold will then be removed using a Hiab lorry for the removal of the beams.
20. The TTM will then be removed.

Weather precautions:

- Weather will be closely monitored to ensure suitable conditions.
- Works will be covered to prevent mortar run-off during wet weather.

Handover:

- Remove all materials and clean back pointing with soft brush.
- Sweep & clean the road next to the parapet.
- Spray any vegetation growth as per works orders.
- Remove All traffic management measures.
- Once the works are completed it will be offered to Atkins / TII for review.

Ecological Characteristics

Abbert Bridge is located within Lough Corrib SAC (000297) – see <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000297> for full list of conservation objectives. It is ca. 30km upstream of Lough Corrib on the Abbert River. The Abbert River is not within a Margaritifera sensitive area and there are no records of pearl mussel.

Terrestrial qualifying interests of the SAC are: -

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210]
- Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]
- Active raised bogs [7110]
- Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]
- Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]
- Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210]
- Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]
- Alkaline fens [7230]
- Limestone pavements [8240]
- Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0]
- Bog woodland [91D0]
- *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
- *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216]

These habitats are not located at Abbert Bridge (see e.g. NPWS, 2017; Site photos; GoogleEarth); nor are there records of Lesser Horseshoe Bat from this location.

Key aquatic qualifying interests of the SAC are: -

- Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110]
- Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130]
- Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140]
- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]
- *Margaritifera margaritifera* (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]
- *Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]
- *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095]
- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096]
- *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]
- *Najas flexilis* (Slender Naiad) [1833]

The proposed works are to replace a parapet wall (both masonry and concrete elements, as well as replacement of concrete capping stones – these areas do not provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats. As noted works will take place from the road surface or from scaffolding which will be erected on the river banks to clear span the stream is also required to facilitate these works. While the 3 nr. arches directly adjacent to the works will need to be propped using 4x3 timbers and acrow props, no instream works are required to complete this. All works will be done from the scaffold with timbers placed spanning the pier skirts; this will work as the propping is only local to the edge of the arch.

While Otter (*Lutra lutra*) is not recorded on NBDC from Abbert Bridge – it is recorded from the Abbert River downstream of the bridge (M458418; Otter survey of Ireland 1982 - Vincent Wildlife Trust) and as such is assumed to be present within the river. The riverbanks in the immediate environs of the bridge are open (apart from some bramble cover on one bank). The bridge is a multi-arch structure so passage up/ down stream will not be impeded. However, temporary disturbance locally is likely to Otter for the duration of works.

White-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) have been recorded from Abbert Bridge (M516436; River Biologists' Database (EPA); NBDC web viewer). Floating river vegetation also occurs around Abbert Bridge. Slender Naiad is restricted to the upper basins of Lough Corrib. There are no records of Slender Green Feather-moss from the environs of the bridge (NPWS, 2017). However, as noted no instream works are to be undertaken.

River basin fish surveys undertaken in 2019 recorded Brown trout, Atlantic salmon, Stone loach and Three-spined stickleback from Abbert Bridge; fish ecological status was defined as Good (O’Brian *et al.* 2019).

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) or Giant rhubarb (*Gunnera* sp.) have not been recorded from the bridge location (Source: NBDC).

As noted, the proposed works are within a Natura 2000 site – Lough Corrib SAC. Based on the type, location, duration and scale of proposed works, no direct or indirect impacts to a Natura 2000 site are predicted to occur as a result of the works, either alone or in combination with other projects.

Bibliography

NPWS (2017). *Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1.* National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

O’Brian *et al.* (2019). Sampling Fish in Rivers 2019 – Clare River Catchment, Factsheet No. 2019/2. [http://wfdfish.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WRBD_Clare-River-catchment_2019.pdf]

Atkins Findings -

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment is based on the best available scientific information. It is concluded that the proposed project poses no likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Thus, it is recommended that it is not necessary for the proposed project to proceed to Appropriate Assessment.

Findings of TII Appropriate Assessment -

Can you please provide a Reasoned Determination?

Paul O’ Donoghue BSc PhD CEnV MCIEEM

Associate Director, Ecology

Ireland

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