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9 Landscape and Visual

9.1 Introduction

The **Landscape and Visual** Assessment has been completed by Evelyn Sikora BA, MA, a qualified Landscape Architect with a degree (Edinburgh College of Art 2006). She also holds a Master's in Planning and Sustainable Development (UCC, 2010) and is a member of the Irish Landscape Institute.

Evelyn has over seven years' experience in Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) and has experience in a range of projects throughout Ireland. These include a number of infrastructural projects including road schemes, flood relief projects, telecommunications, quarry developments, wind farms, solar farms, water abstraction projects and residential and commercial development, in both rural and urban contexts.

Report oversight has been provided by Declan O' Leary, LIPI CMLI, Managing Director CSR who has 25 years' experience in LVIA.

9.2 Assessment Methodology

Ireland is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC). The ELC defines landscape as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. This definition is important in that it expands beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. It encourages a focus on landscape as a resource in its own right - a shared resource providing a complex range of cultural, environmental, and economic benefits to individuals and society.

As a cultural resource, the landscape functions as the setting for our day-to-day lives, also providing opportunities for recreation and aesthetic enjoyment and inspiration. It contributes to the sense of place experienced by individuals and communities and provides a link to the past as a record of historic socio-economic and environmental conditions. As an environmental resource, the landscape provides habitat for fauna and flora. It receives, stores, conveys and cleans water, and vegetation in the landscape stores carbon and produces oxygen. As an economic resource, the landscape provides the raw materials and space for the production of food, materials (e.g. timber, aggregates) and energy (e.g. carbon-based fuels, wind, solar), living space and for recreation and tourism activities.

Forces for Landscape Change

The Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA) notes that landscape is not unchanging, and that many different pressures have progressively altered familiar landscapes over time and will continue to do so in the future, creating new landscapes. For example, within the receiving environment, the environs of the proposed development have altered over the last thousand years, from wilderness to agriculture and settlement.

It also notes that many of the drivers for change arise from the requirement for development to meet the needs of a growing population and economy. The concept of sustainable development recognises that change must and will occur to meet the needs of the present, but that it should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This involves finding an appropriate balance between economic, social and environmental forces and values.

The reversibility of change is an important consideration. If change must occur to meet a current need, can it be reversed to return the resource (in this case, the landscape) to its previous state to allow for development or management for future needs.

The GLVIA also notes that climate change is one of the major factors likely to bring about future change in the landscape, and it is accepted to be the most serious long-term threat to the natural environment, as well as economic activity (particularly primary production) and society. The need for climate change mitigation and adaptation, which includes the management of water and more extreme weather and rainfall patterns, is part of this.

9.2.1 *Guidance*

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity. The methodology for assessment of the landscape and visual effects is informed by the following key guidance documents, namely:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd Edition 2013, published by the UK Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (hereafter referred to as the GLVIA).
- *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, May 2022, published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (hereafter referred to as the 'EPA guidelines');

References are also made to the ‘Landscape and Visual Assessment – Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ document, published in 2000 by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Use of the Term ‘Effect’ vs ‘Impact’

The GLVIA advises that the terms ‘impact’ and ‘effect’ should be clearly distinguished and consistently used in the preparation of an LVIA.

‘Impact’ is defined as the action being taken. In the case of the proposed works, the impact would include the construction of the proposed development.

‘Effect’ is defined as the change or changes resulting from those actions, e.g. a change in landscape character, or changes to the composition, character and quality of views in the receiving environment. This report focusses on these effects.

Assessment of Both ‘Landscape’ and ‘Visual’ Effects

Another key distinction to make in a LVIA is that between landscape effects and the visual effects of development.

‘Landscape’ results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create distinctive character of landscape in different places. ‘Landscape character assessment’ is the method used in LVIA to describe landscape, and by which to understand the potential effects of a development on the landscape as ‘a resource’. Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of landscape that make a place distinctive.

Views and ‘visual amenity’ refer to the interrelationship between people and the landscape. The GLVIA prescribes that effects on views and visual amenity should be assessed separately from landscape, although the two topics are inherently linked. Visual assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition of available views, the response of people to these changes and the overall effects on the area’s visual amenity.

The assessment of landscape and visual effects included a desktop study, review of the proposed development drawings and visualisations, and site visit was carried out in July 2020 and May 2022.

9.2.2 Methodology for Landscape Assessment

In Section 9.5 of this report *the potential* landscape effects of the development are assessed. Landscape impact assessment considers the likely nature and scale of changes to the main landscape elements and characteristics, and the consequential effect on landscape character and value. Existing trends of change in the landscape are taken into account. The potential effect is assessed based on measurement of the landscape sensitivity against the magnitude of change which would result from the development.

Sensitivity of the Landscape Resource

Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape sensitivity is a function of its land use, landscape patterns and scale, visual enclosure and distribution of visual receptors, scope for mitigation, and the value placed on the landscape. It also relates to the nature and scale of development proposed. It includes consideration of landscape values as well as the susceptibility of the landscape to the proposed change.

Landscape values can be identified by the presence of landscape designations or policies which indicate particular values, either on a national or local level. In addition, a number of criteria are used to assess the value of a landscape.

Landscape susceptibility is defined in the GLVIA as the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline scenario and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

Susceptibility also relates to the type of development – a landscape may be highly susceptible to certain types of development but have a low susceptibility to other types of development.

Sensitivity is therefore a combination of Landscape value and Susceptibility.

For the purpose of assessment, five categories are used to classify the landscape sensitivity of the receiving environment.

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Areas where the landscape exhibits a very strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony. The character of the landscape is such that its capacity for accommodating change in the form of development is very low. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national or international

Sensitivity	Description
	value and the principle management objective for the area is protection of the existing character from change.
High	Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics. The character of the landscape is such that it has limited/low capacity for accommodating change in the form of development. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national, regional or county value and the principle management objective for the area is conservation of the existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong or has evidence of alteration to / degradation / erosion of elements and characteristics. The character of the landscape is such that there is some capacity for change in the form of development. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principle management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.
Low	Areas where the landscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character of the landscape is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and where the principle management objective is to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.
Negligible	Areas where the landscape exhibits negative character, with no valued elements, features or characteristics. The character of the landscape is such that its capacity for accommodating change is high; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes include derelict industrial lands or extraction sites, as well as sites or areas that are designated for a particular type of development. The principle management objective for the area is to facilitate change in the landscape through development, repair or restoration.

Table 9-1: Categories of Landscape Sensitivity

Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the landscape with reference to its key elements, features and characteristics (also known as 'landscape receptors'). Five categories are used to classify magnitude of landscape change.

Magnitude of change	Description
Very High	Change that is large in extent, resulting in the loss of or major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape and/or introduction of large elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in fundamental change in the character of the landscape.
High	Change that is moderate to large in extent, resulting in major alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape and/or introduction of large elements considered uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Medium	Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Low	Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.
Negligible	Change that is limited in scale, resulting in no alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are characteristic of the context. Such development results in no change to the landscape character.

Table 9-2 Magnitude of Landscape Change

Significance of Effects

In order to classify the significance of effects, the predicted magnitude of change is measured against the sensitivity of the landscape/viewpoint, using the following guide, from the EPA Draft Guidance (2017). There are seven classifications of significance, namely: (1) imperceptible, (2) not significant, (3) slight, (4) moderate, (5) significant, (6) very significant, (7) profound.

		Sensitivity of the Resource				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change	Very High	Profound	Profound-Very Significant	Very Significant-Significant	Moderate	Slight
	High	Profound-Very Significant	Very Significant	Significant	Moderate-Slight	Slight-Not Significant
	Medium	Very Significant-Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight	Not Significant
	Low	Moderate	Moderate-Slight	Slight	Not significant	Imperceptible
	Negligible	Slight	Slight-Not Significant	Not significant	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 9-3: Significance of Effects

The matrix above is used as a guide only. The assessor also uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense, to arrive at a classification of significance that is reasonable and justifiable.

Landscape effects are also classified as positive, neutral or negative/adverse. Development has the potential to improve the environment as well as damage it. In certain situations, there might be policy encouraging a type of change in the landscape, and if a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be positive, even if the landscape character is profoundly changed.

9.2.3 Methodology for Visual Assessment

In Section 9.5 of this report the potential visual effects of the development are assessed. Visual assessment considers the changes to the composition character of views, the of the views, and the visual amenity experienced by visual receptors (groups of people). The assessment is made for a number of viewpoints selected to represent the range of visual receptors in the receiving environment. The significance of the visual effects experienced at these locations is assessed by measuring the visual receptor sensitivity against the magnitude of change to the view resulting from the development.

Sensitivity of the Viewpoint/Visual Receptor

Viewpoint sensitivity is a function of two main considerations:

- Susceptibility of the visual receptor to change. This depends on the occupation or activity of the people experiencing the view, and the extent to which their

attention or interest is focussed on the views or visual amenity they experience at that location.

Visual receptors most susceptible to change include residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation focused on the landscape (e.g. trail users), and visitors to heritage or other attractions and places of community congregation where the setting contributes to the experience.

Visual receptors less sensitive to change include travellers on road, rail and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes), people engaged in outdoor recreation or sports where the surrounding landscape does not influence the experience, and people in their place of work or shopping where the setting does not influence their experience.

- Value attached to the view. This depends to a large extent on the subjective opinion of the visual receptor but also on factors such as policy and designations (e.g. scenic routes, protected views), or the view or setting being associated with a heritage asset, visitor attraction or having some other cultural status (e.g. by appearing in arts).

For the purpose of assessment, five categories are used to classify a viewpoint's sensitivity:

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Viewers at iconic viewpoints - towards or from a landscape feature or area - that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of high value or national value. This may also include residential viewers who are focussed to a large extent on the view.
High	Viewers at viewpoints that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of value, or viewpoints that are highly valued by people that experience them regularly (such as views from houses or outdoor recreation features) and views which are highly valued by the local community. This may also include tourist attractions, and heritage features of regional or county value, and viewers travelling on scenic routes.
Medium	Viewers considered of medium susceptibility, such as locations where viewers are travelling at slow or moderate speeds through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape, or where the landscape has some valued views. The views are generally not designated, but which include panoramic views or views judged to be of some scenic quality, which demonstrate some sense of naturalness, tranquillity or some rare element in the view.

Sensitivity	Description
Low	Viewers at viewpoints reflecting people involved in activities not focused on the landscape e.g. people at their place of work or engaged in similar activities such as shopping, etc. The view may present an attractive backdrop to these activities but there is no evidence that the view is valued, and not regarded as an important element of these activities. Viewers travelling at high speeds (e.g. motorways) may also be generally considered of low susceptibility.
Negligible	Viewpoints reflecting people involved in activities not focused on the landscape e.g. people at their place of work or engaged in similar activities such as shopping where the view has no relevance or is of poor quality and not valued.

Table 9-4: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Magnitude of Change to the View

Classification of the magnitude of change takes into account the size or scale of the intrusion of development into the view (relative to the other elements and features in the composition, i.e. its relative visual dominance), the degree to which it contrasts or integrates with the other elements and the general character of the view, and the way in which the change will be experienced (e.g. in full view, partial or peripheral, or glimpses). It also takes into account the geographical extent of the change, the duration and the reversibility of the visual effects.

Five categories are used to classify magnitude of change to a view:

Magnitude of Change	Description
Very High	Full or extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features or characteristics, or introduction of elements that are completely out of character in the context, to the extent that the development becomes the dominant the composition and defines the character of the view and the visual amenity.
High	Extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features, or introduction of elements that may be considered uncharacteristic in the context, to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.
Medium	Partial intrusion of the development in the view, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in

Magnitude of Change	Description
	the context, resulting in change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity.
Low	Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity.
Negligible	Barely discernible intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are characteristic in the context, resulting in slight change to the composition of the view and no change in visual amenity.

Table 9-5: Magnitude of Visual Change

Significance of Visual Effects

As for landscape effects, in order to classify the importance of visual effects, the magnitude of change to the view is measured against the sensitivity of the viewpoint.

Visual effects are also classified as positive, neutral or negative. This is an inherently subjective exercise. Visual receptors' attitudes to development of various types varies and this affects their perception of the visual effects of development.

Quality and Timescale

The predicted impacts are also classified as beneficial, neutral or adverse. This is not an absolute exercise; in particular, visual receptors' attitudes to development, and thus their response to the impact of a development, will vary. However, the methodology applied is designed to provide robust justification for the conclusions drawn. These qualitative impacts/effects are defined as:

- Beneficial (positive) – improves landscape(townscape)/view quality and character, fits with the scale, landform and pattern and enables the restoration of valued characteristic features or repairs / removes damage caused by existing land uses.
- Neutral - Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality.
- Adverse (negative) – Scheme at variance with landform, scale, pattern. Would degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of valued features, elements or their setting or cause the quality of the landscape(townscape)/view to be diminished.

Timescale of the Impacts

Impacts/effects are also categorised according to their longevity or timescale:

Definition of duration of effects		
	Duration	Description
CONSTRUCTION STAGE*	Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less
	Early Short Term	Effects lasting one to three years
OPERATIONAL STAGE	Later Short Term	Effects lasting four to seven years
	Medium Term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
	Long Term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
	Permanent	Effects lasting over sixty years

Table 9-6: Duration of effects

The construction phase is forecast to 18 months, however works will be taking place in different parts of the site at different times, some parts may be complete and in Operational Stage whilst Construction is ongoing elsewhere. Some views may experience a short construction period and move to operational stage whilst construction is commencing or continuing in other views. The interpretation of this is dealt with in the site specific descriptive text for the assessment where appropriate.

9.3 Baseline Environment

9.3.1 Study Area

The study area for the proposed works consists of the whole of Ballyhale village, with an emphasis on the areas where the works are proposed.



Figure 9-1 – Ballyhale and Study Area

9.3.2 Landscape Policy - Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021-2027 is hereafter referred to as the Plan, and contains several relevant policies and objectives relating to green infrastructure, landscape character, and flood relief.

Green Infrastructure

Section 9.2.3 of the Plan notes that Green Infrastructure is noted in the Plan as having the following advantages:

- *adaptation to the impacts of climate change and flooding*
- *high-quality environment which can attract investment and new business*
- *places for people to access nature, outdoor recreation and for social interaction*
- *local food production - in allotments, gardens and through agriculture*
- *space for nature and wildlife to flourish*

- *a sense of place and local distinctiveness*
- *a resource for environmental education*

The relevant objective is as follows: **Objective 9B** : *To identify and map green infrastructure and sites of local biodiversity over the lifetime of the Plan.*

Biodiversity – habitats outside designated areas

The Plan recognises the importance of the habitats and features which are not subject to legal protection under National or EU law, and the contribution that they make to biodiversity, landscape value and sense of place.

The Plan notes that Kilkenny County Council has commissioned, and continues to commission, habitat assessments and Green Infrastructure surveys of a number of towns, villages, and habitats throughout the county, including, Ballyhale. The findings of these surveys are vital to improving our understanding of biodiversity resource in the county and will be used to inform the development management process.

Objective 9A States: *Continue to identify and map habitats and green infrastructure of county importance, and raise awareness and understanding of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity identifying green corridors and measures to connect them.*

Development Management Standards include:

- *To ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.*
- *To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands, trees) which are not within designated sites.*
- *To ensure that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures to conserve biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure networks are required in developments where habitats are at risk or lost as part of a development.*

Trees and Hedgerows

Several Development management standards, which relevant include standards relating to woodland, hedgerow and tree retention, and planting of native species, are relevant. These include:

- *To protect existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character of the county, and to ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management, when undertaking, approving or authorising development.*
- *To ensure that when undertaking, approving or authorising development that sufficient information is provided to enable an assessment of impacts on woodlands, trees, and hedgerows.*
- *Have regard to, and seek the conservation of (a) sites of significance identified in the Kilkenny Woodlands Survey 1997, and (b) the trees of County Kilkenny identified in the Tree Register of Ireland, (c) Survey of Mature Trees in Kilkenny City and Environs in the assessment of planning applications, and (d) the National Survey of Native Woodlands and Ancient Woodlands*

To retain hedgerows, and other distinctive boundary treatment such as stone walls, when undertaking, authorising or approving development; where the loss of the existing boundary is unavoidable as part of development, to ensure that a new hedgerow is planted using native species, and species of local provenance to replace the existing hedgerow and/or that the wall is re-built using local stone and local vernacular design.

- *To discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development, and where appropriate make use of Tree Preservation Orders to protect important trees and groups of trees which may be at risk or have an amenity, biodiversity or historic value.*
- *To require the planting of native broadleaved species, and species of local provenance, in new developments as appropriate. See Appendix G for a list of native trees and shrubs.*

It should be noted that the trees in Ballyhale are not included on the Tree Register of Ireland or under Tree Preservation Orders.

Objective 8F: *Kilkenny County Council will promote the planting of native tree and shrub species, by committing to using native species (of local provenance wherever possible) in its landscaping work and on County Council property.*

Landscape Character Areas

As noted in the Plan, the Landscape Character Assessment divides the county into four landscape character types (LCTs). These are:

- Upland Areas,
- Lowland Areas,
- River Valleys, and
- Transitional Areas.

Ballyhale is located in an area outlined as a Transitional Area, which lies between the south western uplands (Landscape Character Type C) and the lower lying lands to the north (Landscape Character Area F, Kilkenny Western Basin. This is indicated on Figure 9.2 of the Development Plan, shown overleaf.

The landscape character of this area is defined by a smooth terrain, allowing views over long distances, and vegetation is predominantly low. Land use comprises pasturelands and tree plantations, the area is described as a rural area with scattered, low density settlement patterns.

A map showing areas of Landscape Sensitivity (Figure 9.3 of the Plan) was studied, and it was not possible to identify any areas of sensitivity in the vicinity of Ballyhale. The Plan notes that in general, areas of elevated topography, with low growing or sparse vegetation and little existing development are landscapes of high sensitivity and have a low potential to absorb new development. The Landscape Character Assessment notes that this landscape unit is perceived as having no special landscape or scenic value.

Several Development Management Guidelines include:

- *To protect the landscape character, quality and local distinctiveness of County Kilkenny, and have regard to the guidance set out in the Landscape Character Assessment.*
- *Where necessary, to require that applications are accompanied by a visual impact assessment, particularly in upland areas, river valleys and areas of greater sensitivity.*

- To facilitate appropriate development that reflects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape throughout the county, and require that developments minimise the loss of natural features such as trees, hedgerows and stone walls.

Views and Prospects

Figure 9.1 also indicates Views and Prospects in Co. Kilkenny. The Plan shows that there are no views/prospects in the vicinity of Ballyhale (the approximate location of the village is shown on the map by a pink dot).

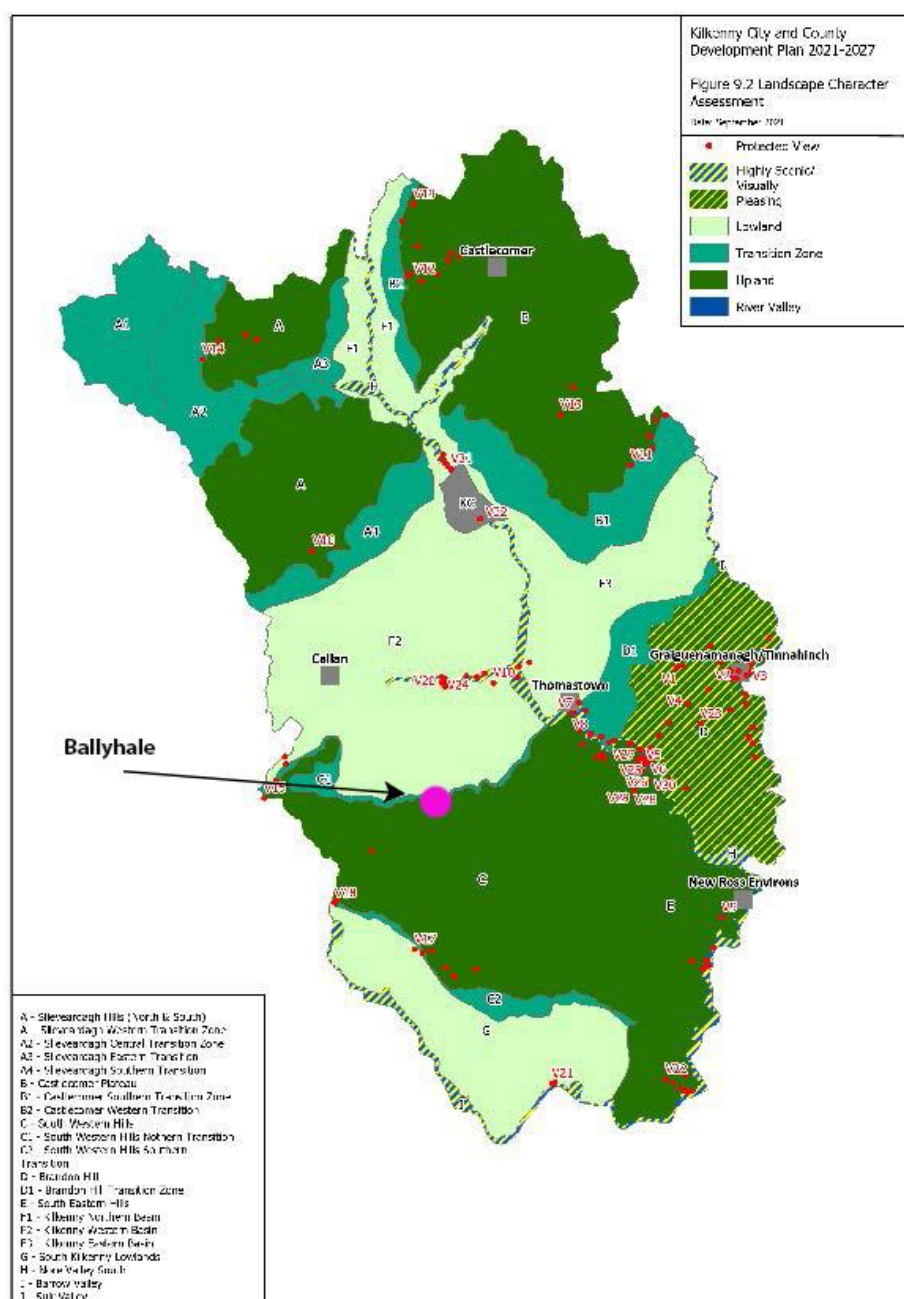


Figure 9-2: Map of Landscape Character Areas, extract of the Plan

9.3.3 Ballyhale LAP

The Ballyhale Local Area Plan 2004 (hereafter referred to as the LAP) were consulted. Although the Plan has expired, the Kilkenny County Council website states that ‘*The expired Plan will be used as a supplementary guidance document*’ and is therefore included here.

The LAP refers to the provision of open space and in particular a linear park.

Objectives relating to open space and the stream corridor

The Plan states that two areas of open space should be provided, one along the stream and one to the north of the village.

‘...a small linear park shall be developed along the stream in this area linking from the N9 opposite the school through to an area to the rear of the Church.’

The LAP notes that this is envisaged as a ‘meaningful route’ along the stream through the village which the provision of an access point through the residentially zoned land to the north and out to the main street.

The LAP also notes that an area of open space shall also be provided to the north of the village, on either side of the stream’s edge, to the east of the Main street, to reflect the designation of this area as an SAC.

The LAP contains the following relevant objectives:

Objective: *To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population*

Objective: *To enhance and protect the quality of the stream, whilst maximising its amenity potential.*

Objective: *To protect the banks of the stream and develop a river walk along it, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups*

Objective: *To prepare an Amenity scheme for the Park during the period of this plan*

Objective: *A pedestrian/cycle linkage shall be provided to link the open space area to the west of Main street and rear of the church through the land to the northwest back out to Main street as indicated on the zoning objective map*

The LAP notes that the stream that runs through Ballyhale, to the back of the Church and graveyard is an attractive feature. The section of the stream that runs to the north

of the village is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC site code 002162). There are opportunities to enhance the interface between the stream and development fronting onto Main street, similar to that created in the Hazelbrook development. This will assist in benefiting local wildlife.

Objective: To adopt a uniform and consistent approach for the integration of the stream into future developments fronting onto Main street.

Land Use Zoning

The LAP contains several maps, which include a zoning map, illustrated in Figure 9.2 below. This includes residential, village centre zoning along the main street, with some areas of open space zoning to the west of the main street, which include the GAA field. Land use zoning along the stream include open space/amenity recreation to the south and west of the church, along the stream corridor. Other areas along the stream corridor are zoned industrial, residential while another section of the stream corridor to the north of the village is zoned open space. Several important tree groups are also indicated. Páirc na Seamróg (the GAA Pitch) is as a large area of open space to the west of the main street and of the stream.

The LAP also includes an Ecological survey of Ballyhale, and Figure 9-3 below indicates important ecological areas. The survey notes the importance of the Ballyhale stream, and an area of ecological interest is described in the vicinity of the stream near Ballyhale castle, (now the church bell tower) and which includes the mature trees to the west of the stream.

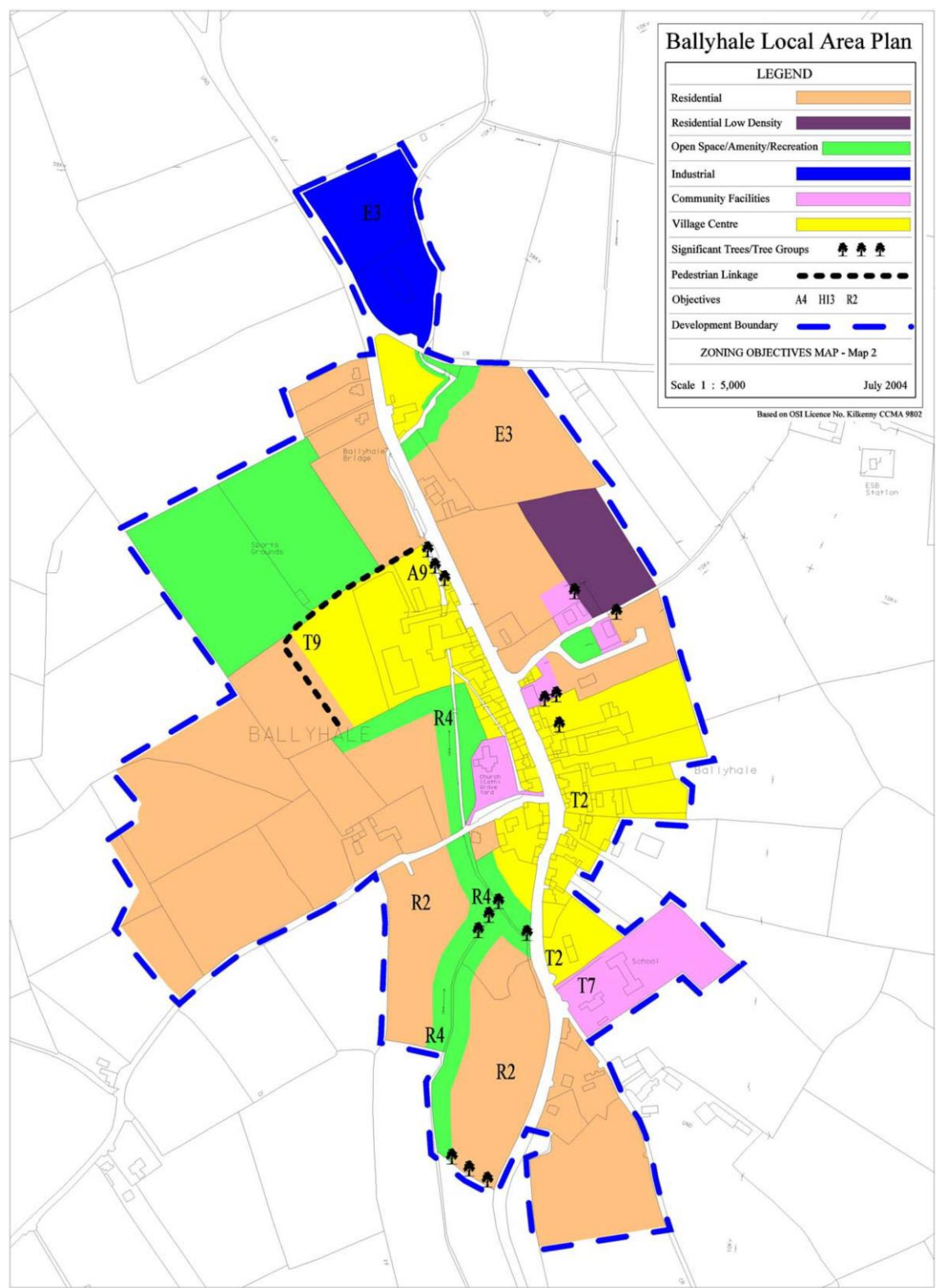


Figure 9-3: Ballyhale Zoning map, extract of LAP

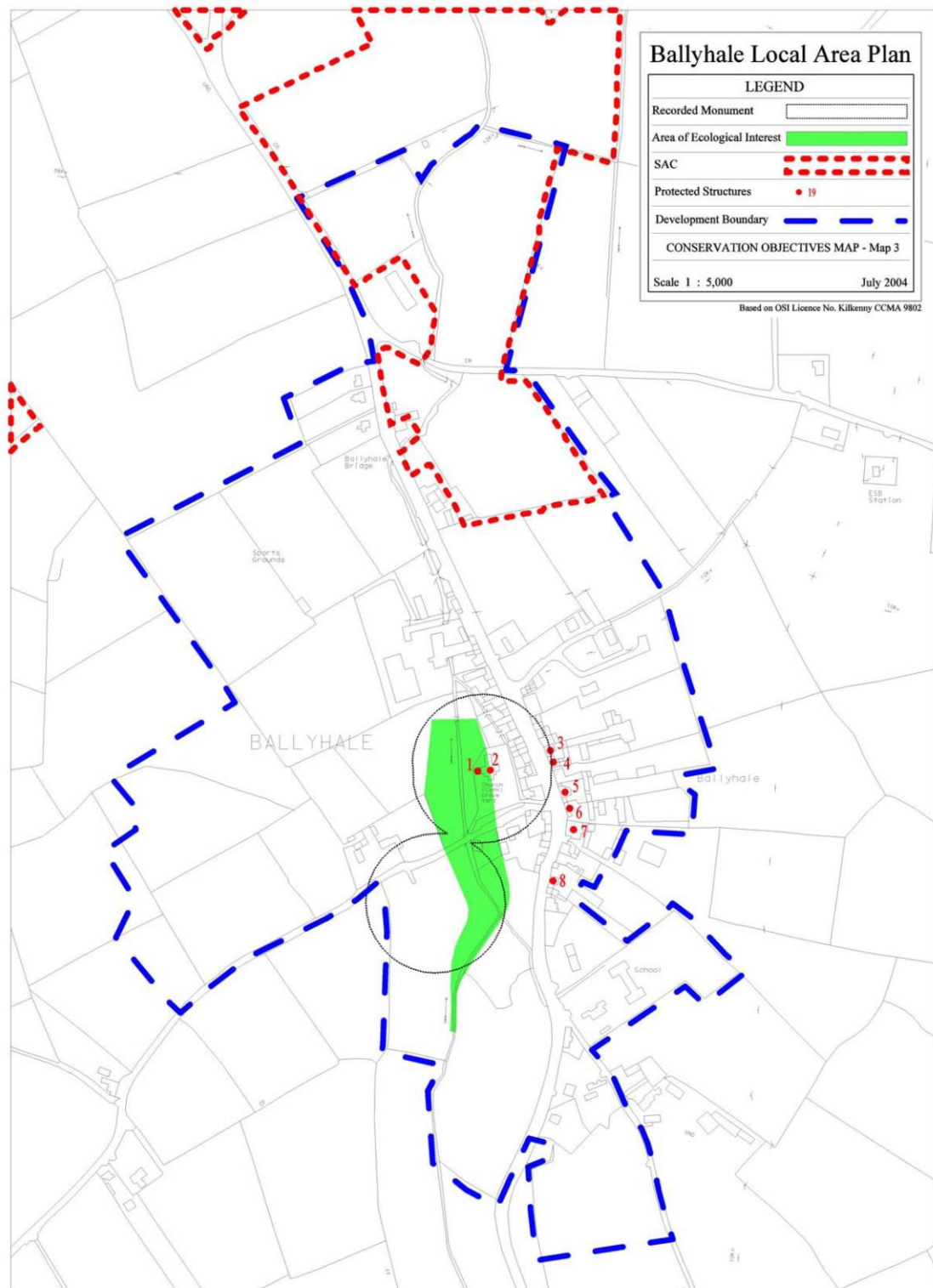


Figure 9-4: Areas of Ecological Interest, extract of LAP

Urban Design Study

An urban design study of Ballyhale is contained in Appendix 2 of the LAP. This includes the identification of several important landscape elements, built form and open spaces, including an 'area of notable character'. This area is in the vicinity of the church, and

includes the church bell tower (Ballyhale Castle), with the stream, stone wall important elements. The Study also notes the attractive nature of the stream to the west of the church, and notes its potential for inclusion in open space strategy for the village.

The Urban Design Map was produced to identify landmark buildings, focal points, significant tree groups, potential open space connections. This is included in Figure 9-5 below.

The map includes several groups of trees, including those to the west of the stream and church, and those to the south of the church in the fields. A linear open space connection is indicated to the west of the church, extending north and south. Another open space linkage is indicated north and south of the stream at the Hazelbrook residential development. An area at the northern end of the village is indicated as a prominent focal site, with a further open space connection indicated along the stream.

Views and Prospects

The Study indicates several focal views, two to the south of the town, with the most relevant view looking towards the stream as it runs through the fields south of the Church, and another at the northern edge of the village, looking towards the main street.

Summary of Landscape Policies:

- The Kilkenny County Development Plan notes the importance of a Green Infrastructure strategy and has carried out a number of ecological surveys including Ballyhale
- The Plan also seeks to protect existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character of the county
- The Kilkenny Landscape Character Assessment characterises this landscape as a Transitional Area, and does not identify any sensitive features.
- The Ballyhale LAP contains a zoning map indicating an open space linkage along the stream to the south and west of the Church, as well as to the north and south of the Hazelbrook development.
- The area in the vicinity of the Church, including the stream to the south and west, and the mature trees adjacent to the stream are identified as both an area of ecological importance and an area of important character in the LAP.
- Stands of trees considered important to the village townscape are identified in the vicinity of the church and along Main Street near the entrance to Ballyhale Business Park.

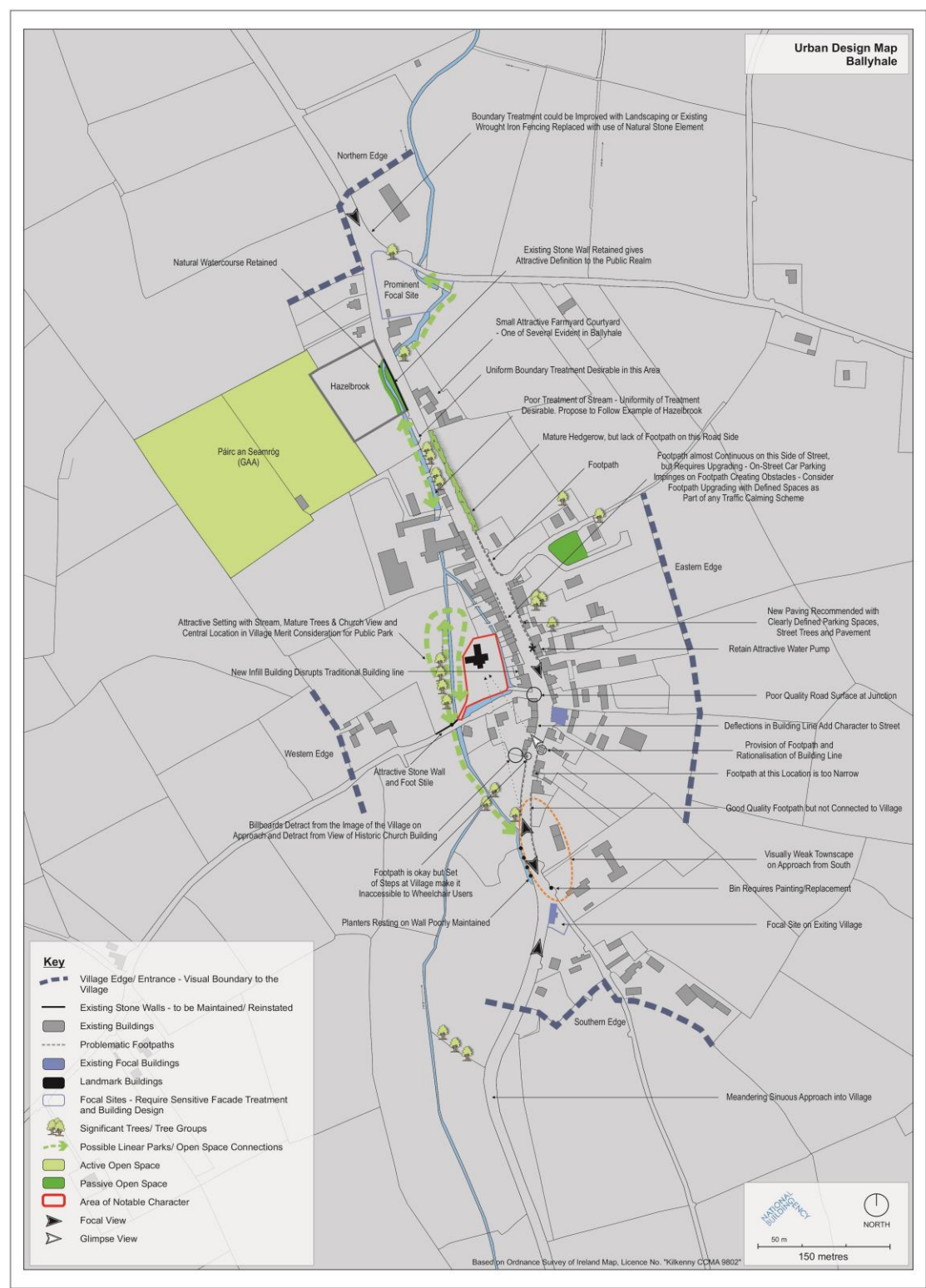


Figure 9-5: Urban Design Map, extract of Appendix 2 of the LAP

9.3.4 Receiving Environment – Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

The Landscape and visual characteristics of the site are discussed in this section.

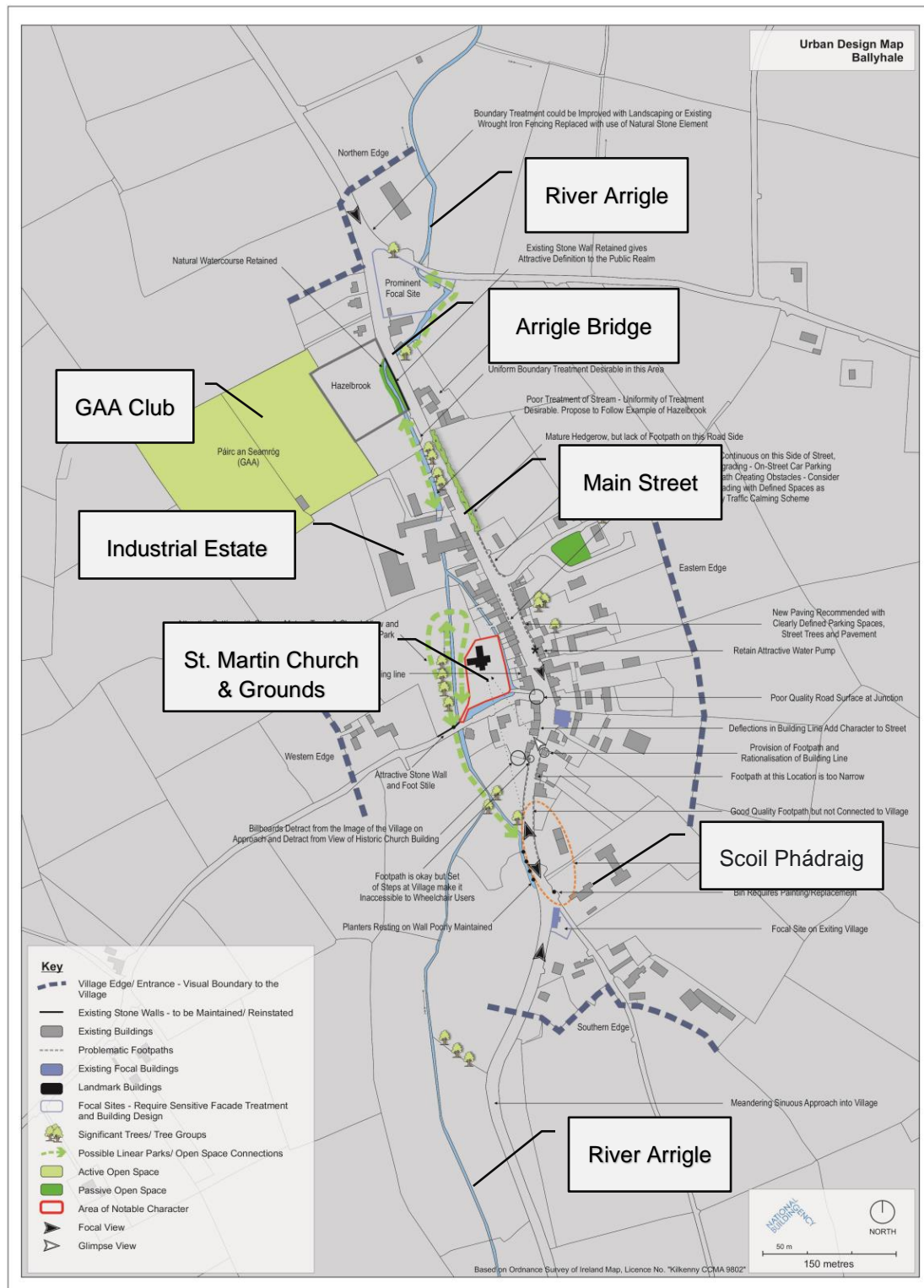


Figure 9-6 – Site Context (overlayed over Urban Design Map, LAP)

Landform – Topography and Drainage

Ballyhale village is located in a gently rolling agricultural landscape, with some scattered small settlements in the wider landscape. Some conifer plantations are evident in the wider landscape, with arable and pasture fields evident.

The village of Ballyhale is a small and relatively compact village, with one main street running north to south. The Ballyhale stream flows north through Ballyhale, rising to the south and running through fields south of the village, as shown in Plate 9-1 below. Another tributary runs north of the school and joins the stream south of the church. At the church, the stream divides into two channels - one to the west of the church while another branch runs to the east of the church and graveyard. It runs under Main Street at Ballyhale Bridge near the northern end of the village. The description of the stream and its character can be described in two main sections – the area to the south of the village, around the church and the section that runs parallel to Main Street and to the north of the village.

South of Ballyhale Village and Church environs

Plate 9-1 below shows the floodplain of the stream just south of the village.



Plate 9-1: Floodplain of stream with mature tree lines, south of Ballyhale

The stream crosses under the road south of the church, and flows along to the west of the church, as shown in Plate 9-2 below. The flow at the time of the site visit was shallow.



Plate 9-2: Ballyhale Stream continues through field west of Church

The stream then travels through the open field, west of the church, with mature trees evident in the area. The stream was not prominent at the time of the site visit, but its route is indicated by a bridge as shown in Plate 9-3 below. It continues towards the Arrigle business park, seen in the background of Plate 9-3 below.



Plate 9-3: Stream continues through open field towards business park

A small shallow tributary of the stream flows directly to the south of the church and graveyard, which is largely overgrown with vegetation, as shown in plate 9-4 below.

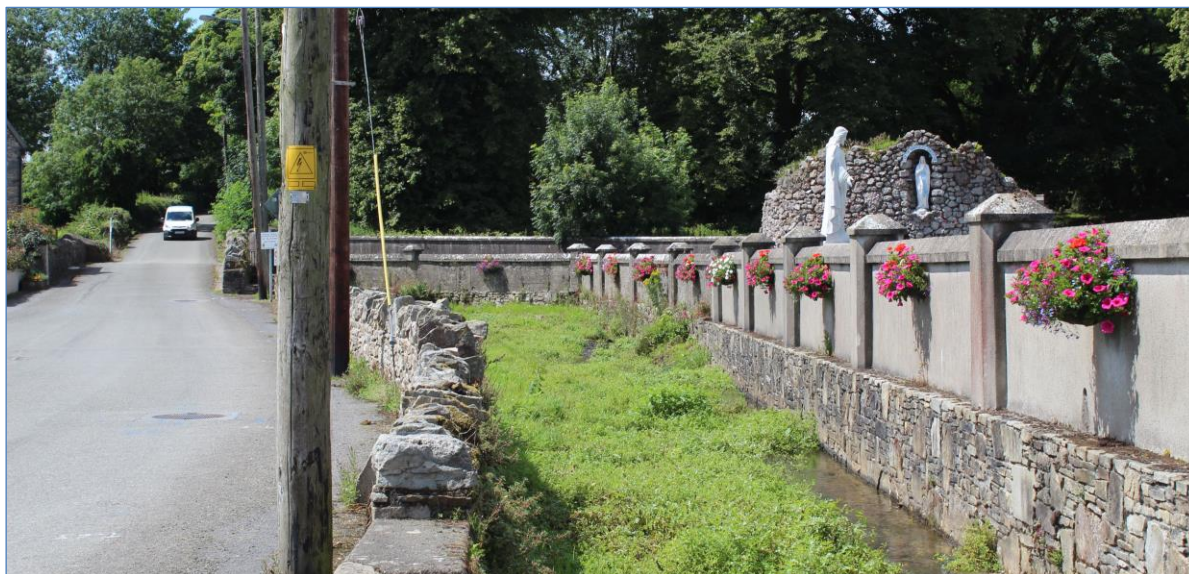


Plate 9-4: Stream tributary south of church and graveyard

Arrigle Business Park and Main Street



Plate 9-5: Stream is culverted under Arrigle business park

The stream continues through the Arrigle Business Park, where it is culverted, and appears along the main street adjacent to the road, where it is very overgrown in some areas. Plate 9.5 shows the dense vegetation along the river in this section:



Plate 9-6: Overgrown stream along Main Street



Plate 9-7: Stream adjacent to Hazelbrook development Plate 9-8: Ballyhale Bridge and adjacent trees

The stream continues to flow adjacent to the Hazelbrook residential development, as shown in Plate 9-7, where it is more visible but still overgrown. It then runs under the main road at Ballyhale Bridge, where it meets the River Arrigle, and flows between an area of open space, lined by mature trees, an area of SAC (which appeared recently cleared at time of site visit) to the north. This is shown in Plate 9-9 below.



Plate 9-9: River flows through SAC at northern end of the village

Landcover – vegetation and built form

The village has one main street, with several smaller streets leading off this. The town is described with reference to several areas which have their own character. West of the Main street, several areas have an individual character which include the church and vicinity, the Arrigle Business Park and Páirc na Seamróga. The Main Street has its own character, with an area at the northern entrance to the village also distinctive.

South of the village – church and surrounds

To the south of the village, there are several scattered dwellings to the east of the road, with large fields to the west, and a number of mature tree lines dividing these fields.



Plate 9-10: Mature tree lines at southern entrance to Ballyhale

The stream runs through these fields but is not visible.



Plate 9-11: Key view towards landmark church tower with mature trees

The church, mature trees and open fields combine to create a pleasant view on the southern approach to the town. The area around the church is characterised by mature trees, the church bell tower (which is also known as Ballyhale Castle) which forms a focal point, as shown above. Other details such as stone bridges, walls, the grotto, and the Ballyhale stream which crosses under the road south of the Church, and flows to the west of the church and graveyard as shown in Plate 9-12 and 9-13, combine to create a strong sense of historic character to this part of the village.



Plate 9-12: Stone walls, grotto, stream and mature trees south of church



Plate 9-13: View of Church, castle, graveyard, mature trees

To the west of the church, an open field with a number of mature trees (including Lime Trees) are found, adjacent to the stream. To the west of this lies Ballyhale Manor, a historic structure, also surrounded by mature trees.



Plate 9-14: Stone arched bridge



Plate 9-15: Mature trees west of church



Plate 9-16: Open field and hedgerow/tree line west of church and stream corridor

Beyond this, open fields lie along the stream corridor, with mature trees in the hedgerows as shown in Plate 9-16 above. The open fields then give way to built form at the Arrigle Business Park, seen in the background of Plate 9-17



Plate 9-17: Buildings of Business Park and tree lines adjacent to open fields

Arrigle Business Park and Pairc na Seamróga

West of the main street, and north of the church and graveyard, landcover consists of a large area of warehouses and hard surface at the Arrigle business Park. This is an area which is different from the character of the church and vicinity, and also from the main street, with an industrial character and no important landscape or visual features. This is shown in Plate 9-5, where the low-quality buildings of recent construction, are seen juxtaposed with the historic Ballyhale Castle (church tower). To the west and north of the business park, the Ballyhale Shamrock's GAA pitch (Páirc na Seamróga) lies adjacent. There is a change in level visible, and several mature trees along the western boundary as evident in Plate 9-18 below.



Plate 9-18: Arrigle Business Park with Pairc na Seamróga in background

Pairc na Seamróga consists of a large pitch (with a training pitch) surrounded by a walking track with several small buildings. The boundary contains some mature trees especially to the west and south, as shown below:



Plate 9-19: Mature tree line west of Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA pitch



Plate 9-20: Mature trees south of business park and Pairc na Seamroga

Arable fields bounded by mature hedgerows lie adjacent to the GAA pitch as shown below.



Plate 9-21: Arable fields north of GAA pitch

Main Street and north of the village

The southern end of Main street has a dense urban form, with one and two storey houses forming the majority of the building types. There are some vernacular buildings with more recent infill buildings also.



Plate 9-22: Main Street in Ballyhale, southern end

On the northern end of Main street, the urban form becomes less dense, with some industrial buildings, the business park and GAA pitch entrance. On the eastern side of the street, section of evergreen hedge and railing replaces built form to the east, while to the west of main street, the Ballyhale Stream is evident along the front of an industrial building, the Pairc na Seamróg, and the Hazelbrook, development, as shown in Plates 9-23 and 9.24 below.



Plate 9-23: Northern end of Ballyhale main street- urban form becomes less dense



Plate 9-24: Stream corridor and industrial buildings on Main Street

The Ballyhale Bridge is located on the northern end of Main street, and beyond this, the stream runs between sheds and a residential open space and is bordered on the latter side by mature trees. North of the sheds, an area of open space (and SAC) is seen in Plate 9-25 below.



Plate 9-25: Stream runs adjacent to open Space at northern end of village

To the west of Main street in this area, open arable fields band a mature tree line border the road which leads out of the village while to the east a small industrial estate is located.

Summary of Landscape and Visual Characteristics:

- The area in the vicinity of the Church and to the south has a strong historic character (shown in Figure 9-6 above and 9-7 below, with several key landscape and townscape features, which include mature trees, the historic church tower, stone walls, bridges and steps, and the stream which runs to the south and west, with a small tributary to the east of the graveyard.
- West of the Church are several very noticeable mature trees and a historic house (Ballyhale Manor). Mature trees lend an important character to this area, and are visible from the road south of the church as well as the main road

approaching the village from the south. These mature trees are also evident from the Arrigle Business Park and the GAA Pitch Pairc na Seamróg.

- Fields to the south and west of the church are characterized by mature tree lines and hedgerows, in particular the trees south of the church and west of Pairc na Seamróg. Some of these mature hedgerows provide a setting for the playing fields. There are several areas with mature trees along the stream at the northern boundary of the village.
- Main Street has a stronger vernacular character along the southern end, south of the Arrigle Business Park entrance, with dense urban form and a mixture of one and two storey buildings.
- The northern part of main street has a more open urban form with more industrial buildings and the GAA pitch entrance and some new housing developments – and overall a less distinctive character.
- It is also noted that while not a key landscape feature, Pairc na Seamróg has a strong cultural association as the home ground of the well-known Ballyhale Shamrocks hurling club.

The key landscape elements are indicated on Figure 9-7.



Figure 9-7: Key landscape features and views

Landscape Values

Conservation Values: These are elements which are considered to contribute to the character of the area and should be retained. These include elements which are considered valued in terms of landscape features, natural heritage, cultural heritage, visual amenity and recreation. These are as follows:

- The mature trees which are a conspicuous feature of several areas. There are also noted on the Urban Design Map in the LAP, and include the tree lines to the south of the Church (in the fields), as well as those in the vicinity of the church itself, especially the Lime Trees to the west along the stream corridor and those surrounding the manor house to the west. Other mature tree lines are located to the west of the GAA pitch, and south of the GAA pitch//Business park.
- The stream is an attractive element, in certain locations, particularly in the vicinity of the church. It is also visible, but to a lesser extent, to the north of the village and along the main street.
- The stone wall, steps, and bridge visible to the south of the church are attractive and should be retained. The church itself is a building of historical interest and adds to the character of the southern part of the village.
- The house to the west of the church (Ballyhale Manor) is listed on the NIAH, and surrounding lands are a feature of the landscape which contribute to the character of the area around the church.
- Pairc na Seamróg is not in itself considered a key landscape feature, but it is a well-known cultural feature of the village, and is also used for formal as well as informal recreation (walking trail around periphery).
- Areas of ecological importance include the SAC to the north of the village and the area in the vicinity of the church

Enhancement Values: These represent opportunities for improvement

- The business park, and industrial building to the west of Main Street do not add to the landscape or townscape character
- There are sections of the stream – such as those which run along Main Street and east of the graveyard - which could be enhanced
- The land north of the Ballyhale Bridge, where the river runs between an open space and some sheds, could be enhanced (with appropriate ecological measures).

Views and Visual Amenity

There are several views in the village which have strong scenic characteristics. These include a view from the southern approach to the village, where the castle (church tower) is visible among mature trees. The visual amenity in the vicinity of the church and area to the south and west, is considered high, and there is a key view from the main street towards the stream, bridge, church and trees. These are indicated on Figure 9-5 and Figure 9.7 above.

While these are not key views, it should also be noted that there are also views from Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA pitch to the surrounding trees to the south and west, as well as to the hills which are pleasant.

9.4 Proposed Scheme

The proposed works consist of a range of interventions along the watercourse reach, which represents one of the options which minimises landscape and visual effects. The proposed scheme includes the following elements:

- Embankments (from 0.3m up to 1m in height) are proposed upstream of the village to cut off overland flow routes nearby agricultural lands and properties south and southeast of the Church area. A longer embankment (between 0.3m and up to 1.8m in height) is proposed north of the Church, at the rear of several properties along Main Street.
- A proposed embankment is located southwest of Ballyhale Church, to restrict or reduce the flow to the Ballyhale Church Channel. This would involve removal of a portion of the existing church walkway to allow the streams to be connected and a replacement access to the church walkway would be provided. A very limited flow will be maintained in the eastern channel, therefore landscaping works will be carried out in the channel to reprofile the bed and banks to suit the lower flow conditions. The proposed concept landscape sketch is contained in Section 9.6 Mitigation Measures
- The discharge of the eastern channel from the culvert under the Arrigle Business Park is proposed to be piped underneath Main Street to connect downstream of this culvert.
- The channel at Ballyhale Business Park is to be regraded and the existing weir removed to increase capacity in the channel.

- It may be possible to deliver a future riverside pathway linking to the existing church walkway. The feasibility of including this with the flood scheme is to be reviewed as the scheme progresses

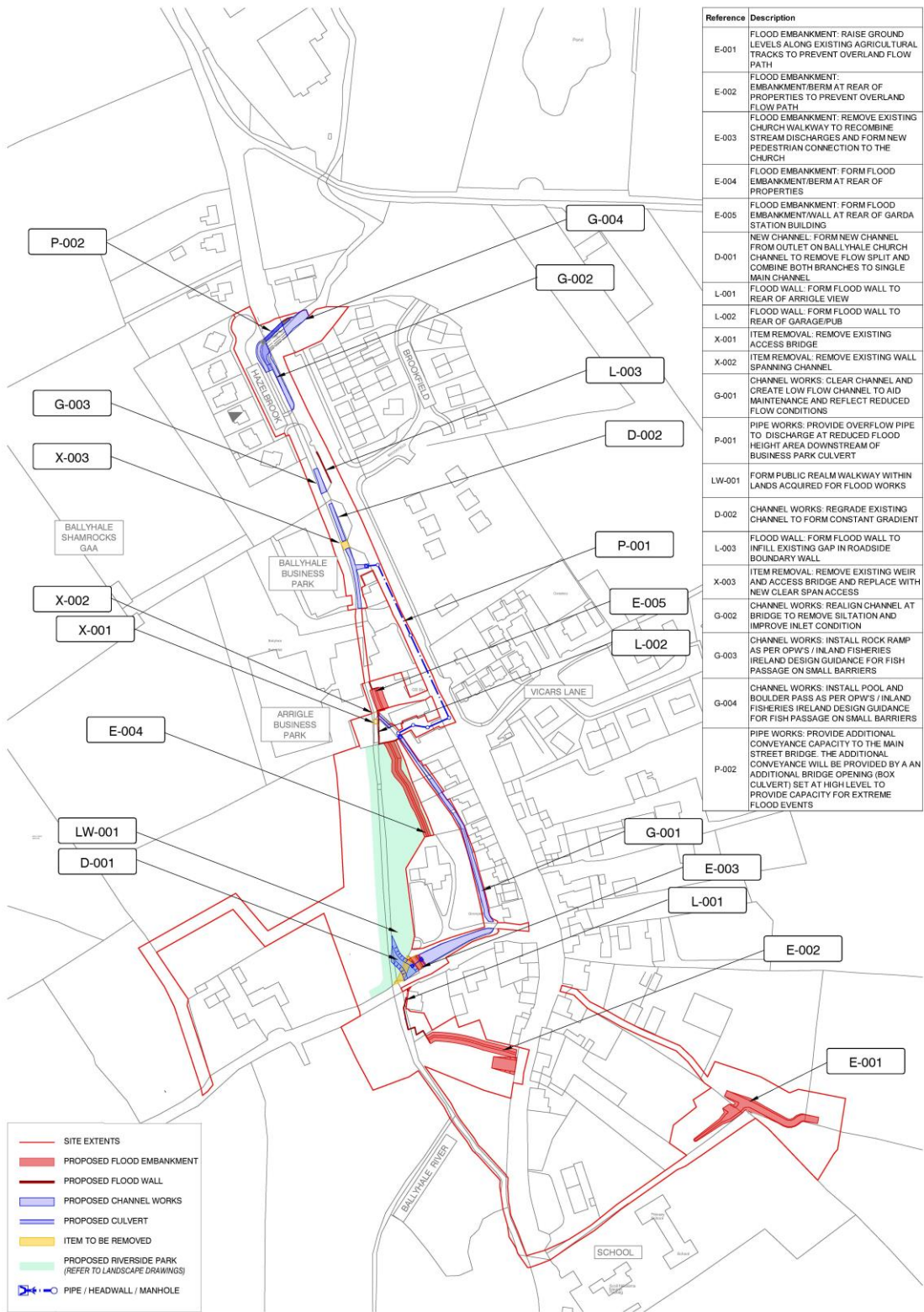


Figure 9-8: Proposed Scheme



Figure 9-9: Proposed Landscape Masterplan for vicinity of St. Martin's church

As part of the works, particularly LW001, a new public realm and walkway is designed along is designed within lands acquired for flood works. The new public realm is shown in the above Figure 9-9

9.5 Predicted Impacts

The predicted landscape and visual effects are described with reference to distinctive character areas in the town, namely some agricultural lands to the south of the village, the vicinity of the church, the Arrigle Business Park/Pairc na Seamrog, and the Main Street and north of the town.

9.5.1 Landscape Effects

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity relates to the landscape value and susceptibility of the landscape to change, and also to the nature of the proposed works. Areas of high landscape sensitivity would include the area in the vicinity of the church with the following elements considered sensitive:

- The area to the south of the village in the vicinity of the church and Ballyhale Manor, including mature trees, the church itself, stone walls, stream channel, and steps.
- Mature trees and hedgerows throughout the village and environs (in particular the Lime trees west of the church)
- The stream channel is a pleasant feature in some areas particularly to the south and west of the church

The Arrigle Business Park and Ballyhale Business Park which is a large building set slightly back from Main Street, would be considered areas of Low sensitivity. The Main Street area is considered of Medium sensitivity in areas such as the southern part of the main street, where there is a pleasant streetscape with some vernacular buildings. Further north along Main Street the urban form is more varied and is considered Low in some areas. Some street trees near the Ballyhale Business Park are elements of Medium sensitivity.

An Arboricultural Assessment was carried out by Murphy Geospatial. The assessment identifies trees potentially affected which are categorised in four groups – A,B,C,D, as follows:

A Indicates a tree of high quality and value. These are trees that are particularly good examples of their species, which also provide landscape value. These trees are in such a condition as to be able to make a substantial contribution. (A minimum of 40 years is suggested)

B Indicates a tree of moderate quality and value. Trees that might be included in the high category, but are downgraded because of impaired condition. These trees are in such a condition as to make a significant contribution. (A minimum of 20 years is suggested)

C Indicates a tree of low quality and value - trees with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or trees with a stem diameter of below 150mm and/or <10m in height.

U Trees that are in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years.

Three 'A' category trees and one category 'B' Lime Trees were identified west of the Church. The majority of the trees surveyed were C category trees.

Landscape Effects – Construction Phase

Magnitude of Change (all areas)

The proposed scheme will be constructed over a period of approximately 12 months. This will consist of site setup, clearance (including vegetation clearance) and demolition, earthworks, installation of drainage, new structures and landscaping and demobilisation. A site compound will be necessary for the duration of the works as referenced in Chapter 5, and an indicative location is shown in the Preliminary CEMP in the fields to the south of village adjacent to the R448 regional road. Temporary fencing or hoarding will be constructed around the works area as required. This phase will involve the works as described above, and the movement of plant and machinery to and from the works locations and compound area, contributing to noise and dust. This will result in a likely Medium magnitude of change on the local landscape character which is temporary in duration.

Significance of Effect (all areas)

The significance of the landscape effect will be Moderate, adverse, temporary effect during the period of construction. The effect is localised to the village and areas in the vicinity of the works, and will not be evident in the wider landscape.

Landscape Effects – Operational Phase

The landscape effects are considered under the different character areas of the village. For each area, the Magnitude of Change and Significance of Effect are described.

Agricultural lands South of the village- Magnitude of Change

Grass embankments are proposed in two locations to the south of the village – one north of the school grounds, and the other is south of the properties across the road from the church. These embankments are relatively low in height (between 0.3 and 1m) and on private lands. A proposed flood wall (0.6-0.8m height) will replace an existing wall west of the house (Arrigle View) opposite the church, tying in with the proposed embankment. Some tree removal is likely but the numbers of trees likely to be removed is low. The trees to be removed consist of Trees in the Category C according to the Arboricultural assessment which are considered to be of Fair landscape value. Overall the magnitude of change is considered **Low**:

Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration of landscape receptors, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.

Agricultural lands South of the village- Significance of Effect

The locations of the proposed works are on agricultural lands some of which are close to properties. The most sensitive receptors in this area south of the village would be the mature trees and the Ballyhale Stream adjacent to Arrigle View. However the proposed works in this location will result in the removal of a low number of trees, all of which are in Category C trees. The proposed wall is a low wall with a section of glass where there is a view from the house towards the river. The Significance of effect is considered **Slight**. The quality of the effect varies from adverse, where the trees are removed, however the proposed embankments and flood walls are considered to have an overall **neutral** landscape effect.

Church and surrounds- Magnitude of Change

The works proposed in the vicinity of the church include:

- New channel from outlet to connect to stream channel west of Ballyhale Church
- Removal of existing pedestrian walkway southwest of the church and proposed replacement walkway to the east of existing entrance adjacent to new channel. This walkway will extend to the lands north of the church, to the rear of some houses along Main St.
- Proposed landscape works to old channel south of church (low flow channel)
- Proposed embankment adjacent to walkway north of the church

These works are proposed in the area south of the church, adjacent to the road which was identified earlier in the chapter as an area of historic character as a result of the church, with several sensitive receptors including the stone walls (some of these old walls such as the bridge parapet) and other replacement newer walls, stone steps and the stream channel as well as the mature trees in the area, particularly the Lime trees. The Lime trees are to be retained and the younger trees to the west also to be retained if possible. The proposed works will result in the removal of the existing pedestrian walkway which is bordered by concrete walls and in itself not a sensitive feature, while the bridge parapet is to be retained. A walkway to the east of the bridge will connect over the low flow channel to the churchyard. The low flow channel to the south (between the road and the churchyard) will be landscaped to enhance the low-flow of the stream as a feature (it is currently overgrown by vegetation).

North of the church, the proposed walkway is to extend through the open field, adjacent to a proposed embankment (0.3-1.8m) to the rear of some properties along Main St.

To the east of the church where the existing overgrown stream channel runs, the proposed works are to clear the channel of vegetation and line with rip-rap.

Overall the proposed changes are considered to be of **Low** magnitude and do not directly affect the identified sensitive receptors. Low is identified as:

Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration of landscape receptors, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape

Church and surrounds- Significance of Effect

While some tree removal may be necessary and considered an adverse effect, the majority of the changes are of neutral to beneficial quality. Improvements to the area south of the church include a more visually and physically accessible walkway to the church and to the field beyond, and the landscaping of the low-flow channel. The retention of the important Lime trees (Category A trees) is also important, while the proposed embankment and clearance of the eastern channel are also considered beneficial. The significance of effect is considered to be **Slight to Moderate** (the area contains receptors of High sensitivity) and **neutral** to beneficial in quality.

Main Street and north of the village- Magnitude of Change.

A number of minor works are proposed along Main Street, including to the rear of properties, where the two channels of the stream converge. These works include:

- Proposed embankment/berm (up to 1.2 m in height) to rear of Garda Station
- Removal of existing access bridge and wall to the rear of the garage/Andy's Pub and proposed flood wall of up to 1m
- Proposed piped channel from Church stream (north of Andy's Bar) along Main Street and connecting to the stream in channel at front of Ballyhale Business Park.
- Removal of weir (and possibly bridge) and re-grading of existing channel at entrance to Ballyhale Business Park on Main Street
- Proposed flood wall (0.3m in height) along river channel between Pairc na Seamróg entrance and Hazelbrook estate

The above works will result in minor changes at a very localised level, some of these to the rear of private property and the majority in areas of Low landscape sensitivity. Works along the Main Street are also considered minor in nature, with the piped channel not visible, the removal of weir and possibly bridge (which are considered of Low sensitivity) and the proposed low flood wall. These works necessitate some vegetation removal –mainly a low number of Ash and Sycamore trees both along and to the rear of Main Street, which are classified as C2 and therefore not of high value. However the trees along Main Street which do form a noticeable element of the streetscape are mostly to be retained. Some planted hedging/screen planting along the footpath in front of Hazelbrook will be removed due to channel re-alignment. These proposed works are all considered to impart a **Low** magnitude of change:

Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration of landscape receptors, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape

Main Street and north of the village - Significance of Effect

The works to the rear and along the northern end of Main Street (which is considered of Medium to Low sensitivity) are considered of Low magnitude. The key landscape elements of the mains street are the vernacular buildings and the overall streetscape, which are not affected, and the elements which are to be affected are not highly sensitive. Though some trees are to be removed, these are low in number. The character of the Main Street will not be affected, and this results in a **Not Significant to Slight** landscape effect. The quality of the effect is considered **neutral**.

9.5.2 Visual Effects

Potentially Sensitive Visual Receptors

Sensitive visual receptors include:

- Residents in close proximity to proposed flood relief works,
- Viewers in the vicinity of the Church area, either walking or accessing the Church or graveyard, as this area is noted as having a strong historic character and important landscape elements.
- Other sensitive receptors include those at the locations of the focal point identified in the Ballyhale LAP, the most important of these is the view approaching from the south looking towards the Church tower and the view along the Main Street.

Magnitude of Change Construction Phase Visual effects during the construction phase will include effects at the works locations as well as at the site of the temporary construction compound as identified in Chapter 5. The visual effects will tend to be localised and confined to the works locations and immediate surroundings, and some will be from private properties. The majority of visual effects will result from the proposed works at locations along Main Street and Chapel Lane areas, as well as south of Chapel Lane where the compound is located. The magnitude of change is considered to range from Low to Medium depending on the location.

Significance of Effect - Construction Phase

The visual effects during construction are expected to be localised, and of Slight - Moderate, adverse effect which is Temporary in duration. Appropriate site fencing and hoarding can reduce visual impacts during construction.

Visual Effects – Operational Phase

Visual effects are to be discussed for the three character areas of the town as for Landscape Effects.

A number of viewpoints were chosen to assist in the assessment of visual effects. These include views to the south of the town, in the vicinity of the Church of St Martin, and along the Main Street.

VP	Description of viewpoint	Rationale for selection
1	Opposite 3 Hazelbrook Looking NE	Residential receptors
2	Near 4 Chestnut Drive looking South	Receptors from Main Street and residential users
3	Opposite 2 Main Street looking NW	Receptors from Main Street
4	From rear Garden of Andy's Bar looking SE	View from rear of private lands
5	Church Road at start of Graveyard looking SW	View of the Church Lands and complex.
6	Looking north from the bridge on Church Road	View of the stream and Church
7	Looking north-east from the bridge on Church Road	View of the Church
8	From agricultural field / private lands looking south-east	View of the river banks and Church
9	From agricultural field / private lands and opposite "Arrigle View" Stone House looking North	View of the river bank and 'Arrigle View' Stone House and proposed works
10	Main Street opposite Property no. 1 looking NW	View from Main Street

Table 9-7: Viewpoint Locations



Figure 9-10: Location of verified viewpoints

Viewpoint 1: Opposite 3 Hazelbrook Looking NE		
Description	The existing view is from Hazelbrook Lane looking north east. The viewpoint is situated on a grass verge along the lane and to the west of the river bank. The viewpoint is representative of views enjoyed from vehicular and pedestrians. The viewpoint is also located close to residential receptors.	
	The view is looking at grass verge in the foreground. The Little Arrigle River banks, railings, the Little Arrigle River Bridge (old stone bridge) and stone wall along the eastern bank of the river are visible in the middleground. There is a big drop in elevation from the lane to the river floor, which is evident in the photomontage. The Main Street is behind the stone wall. In the background, to the left a tyre repair and retail garage is visible; in the middle the eastern wall of the bridge and thick riparian vegetation are visible; and to the right backs of residential properties are visible.	
	In the view, the most valuable landscape assets are the old stone bridge and stone wall, and associated riparian planting along the bank.	
Sensitivity	High	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	There may be construction boarding and safety measures visible in the view during the construction period. Along with movement of large machinery and equipment. The views would be generally adverse.	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Importance of Effect	Very Significant
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Temporary to Early Short term
Operational Phase	The proposed development would include the realignment of the channel to improve inlet conditions at the base of the bridge. New overflow weir structure and overflow culvert. The realignment of the metal railing along the bankside.	
	The proposed changes in the foreground is the realignment of the metal railing. In the middleground and background, the realignment of the channel and extensive clearing of riparian vegetation along the banks are clearly visible. The proposed culvert and outflow are designed to match existing stone bridge. In the medium term the riparian vegetation will re-establish and the leafy corridor reform.	

	Magnitude of Change	Low
	Significance of Effects	Moderate-Slight
	Quality	Neutral
	Duration	Permanent

Viewpoint 2: Near 4 Chestnut Drive looking South

Description	<p>The existing view is from the Main Street and looking south. The viewpoint is situated on a parking bay along the main street and in front of 4 Chestnut Drive. The views are representative of view enjoyed by road users and is located close to residential receptors.</p> <p>In the foreground view, the viewer is looking at the parking bays to the left, the Main Street in the middle and the stone wall along the river to the right. In the middleground, the main street, the existing stone along the river, some individual trees and a residential property are visible.</p> <p>In the background, the centre of the village is partly visible at the end of the Main Street and some roofs of existing dwellings. The Spire of the church is hidden behind an existing tree in the middle of the background.</p>	
Sensitivity	High	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	There may be construction boarding and safety measures visible in the view during the construction period. Along with movement of large machinery and equipment. Generally, the views are generally adverse.	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Very Significant
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Temporary to Early Short term
Operational Phase	The proposed development would include the removal of 2no. existing trees along the western side of the Main Street and / or along the river and a new low boundary / flood wall to tie into existing wall for flood defence purposes.	

	The proposed changes are visible to the right in the middle ground. These are the removal of 2no. of trees and the construction of new low stone wall as flood defence.	
	Magnitude of Change	Low
	Significance of Effects	Moderate - Slight
	Quality	Neutral
	Duration	Permanent

Viewpoint 3: From Main Street and opposite to Property No. 2 looking north-west

Description	<p>The existing view is from the Main Street. The view is situated in front of property no. 2 on the main street and is looking north-west. The views are representative of views enjoyed by road users.</p> <p>In the view, the main street is clearly visible. Existing dwellings along the western side of the street are visible to the left of the view. Low stone walls and some vegetation along the road / along the river are visible; and the entrance to an existing warehouse is also visible in the middle of the view.</p>	
Sensitivity	Medium	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	There maybe construction boarding and safety measures visible in the view during the construction period. Along with the movement of large machinery and equipment. Generally, the views are generally adverse.	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Significant
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Temporary to Early Short term
Operational Phase	<p>The proposed development would include the reconstruction of partly destroyed low stone wall for flood defences. Replacement of 1 no. bridge that is an entrance to private lands / warehouse. The removal of trees and clearing of riparian corridor of planting.</p> <p>The proposed changes are visible in the middle ground of the view. 2 no. trees are removed along the westside of the Main Street and or</p>	

	<p>along the stream. Partly reconstructed low walls are also visible along the stream. The replacement bridge and new access is partly visible.</p> <p>The proposed changes are minor or no major alteration is visible.</p>	
	Magnitude of Change	Low
	Significance of Effects	Slight
	Quality	Neutral
	Duration	Permanent

Viewpoint 4: Looking east from private lands to the rear of Andy's Pub / PJ Power north

Description	<p>The existing view is from private lands. The viewpoint is situated in the rear property of Andy’s Pub and close to PJ Power on the Main Street. The view is looking east from private lands. The views are experienced by private users and not the location is not accessible to the public.</p> <p>In the existing view, the open space / grassy area is visible in the foreground; an existing footway bridge to the left, a row of conifer trees and low wall and railing in the middle and another footway bridge to the left are visible in the middle ground. In the background, another grassy open space associated with a dwelling are visible.</p>	
Sensitivity	Low	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	<p>During the construction, clearance of existing vegetation along the river would be visible. Site boarding and safety measures along with the movement of machinery and equipment would be visible. Demolition works of existing bridge and railing would be visible. Generally, adverse views are experienced during construction period.</p>	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Moderate-Slight
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Temporary of Early Short term
	<p>The proposed works at this location are; removal of one of the existing bridges and replaced by a new guard rail (western bank of the river)</p>	

Operational Phase	and by a wall (eastern bank of the river); and the construction of new flood defence wall to along the eastern bank of the river.	
	The removal of existing bridge (to the left of the view) is evident and the replaced with guard railing at the location is visible to the left. The new flood defence wall along the eastern bank is also visible in the view.	
	Magnitude of Change	Medium
	Significance of Effects	Slight
	Quality	Neutral
	Duration	Permanent

Viewpoint 5: Church Road at start of Graveyard looking SW		
Description	The existing view is from Church Road. The viewpoint is situated on the northside of the lane and looking west. The views are representative of views enjoyed by road users and visitors to the Church.	
	In the view, to the left is the Church Road, to the middle is the stream and to the right is the Church complex. In the middle ground, to the left a 2-storey residential dwelling constructed in stone is visible, the lane and the stream in the middle and the Church Complex to the right. Over the stream in the middle ground, an existing walkway connecting the road to the church grounds is visible.	
	In the background, the lane meanders through the landscape. There are mature and tall trees visible in the view, acting as an attractive backdrop to the view.	
	The view is of importance because of the old stone walls and historical significance.	
Sensitivity	High	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	There maybe construction boarding and safety measures visible in the view during the construction period. Along with the movement of large machinery and equipment. Clearance work of the stream would be visible during this period. Generally, the views are generally adverse.	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Very Significant

	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Permanent
Operational Phase	<p>The proposed works along the stream are the landscaping works to the old channel to form low flow channel and a new walkway bridge across the stream from Church Road to the Church Complex.</p> <p>The clearing of the stream is visible in the view. The new walkway across the stream is visible in the middle of the background. Additional planting and minor changes are visible in the background of the church complex. The proposed works would not obstruct any valuable views.</p>	
	Magnitude of Change	Low
	Significance of Effects	Moderate - Slight
	Quality	Neutral to Beneficial
	Duration	Permanent

Viewpoint 6: From the Bridge on Church Road looking North	
Description	<p>The existing view is from the bridge across the river on Church Road. The view is situated on the bridge and looking north at the river. The views are representative of views experienced from road users and by a local residence. The view of the Church along the stream with mature trees in a tranquil rural landscape setting.</p> <p>In the view, the viewer is looking at the stream in the middle of the view. To the left of the view, rural landscape setting with mature trees and vegetation is visible. To the right of the view, the Church is visible and the church complex is partially visible.</p> <p>In the background of the view, an old stone bridge across the river is partially visible. Further back existing buildings are visible.</p>
Sensitivity	High
Visual Impacts and Effects	
Construction Phase	<p>There may be construction boarding and safety measures visible in the view during the construction period. The movement of large machinery and equipment would be visible. Clearance work of the stream and demolition works of the existing walkway bridge across the stream would be visible during this period. Generally, the views are generally adverse.</p>

	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Significant
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Early Short term
Operational Phase	<p>The proposed works at this location are; the removal of existing footway bridge across the stream from Church Road to the Church complex; new boundary and safety wooden fence along the western side of the stream; clearance of the stream and rewilding the stream banks; proposed replacement of walkway to the existing Church with materials to reflect existing stone walls.</p> <p>The proposed changes are visible in the view are the clearance of the existing stream to form a new landscape structure and rewilding of the banks. The new fence is visible along the west bank of the river. The new landscape structure; footpath, planting and tree planting are visible to the east bank of the river.</p> <p>Whilst initially destructive, the proposed works would improve the exiting conditions of the stream and its banks over time with new landscape features and restored natural corridor.</p>	
	Magnitude of Change	Medium
	Significance of Effects	Significant
	Quality	Adverse in the short term and improving to neutral-beneficial in the medium and long term
	Duration	Permanent

Viewpoint 7: Looking north-east from the bridge on Church Road

Description	<p>The existing view is from the bridge across the river on Church Road. The view is situated on the bridge and looking north-east at the walkway and Church complex. The views are representative of views experienced from road users and by a local residence. The view of the Church along the stream with mature trees in a tranquil rural landscape setting.</p> <p>In the view, the Church Road, the old stone wall, access to the walkway bridge and some planting are visible in the foreground. In the middle ground, the rural landscape with mature trees in a grassy area is visible to the left and the Church complex and village dwellings to</p>
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	the right. In the background, the village dwellings are visible. The view is of the Church within the village of Ballyhale.	
Sensitivity	High	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	There may be construction boarding and safety measures visible in the view during the construction period. Along with the movement of large machinery and equipment. The demolition works of the existing walkway bridge across the stream would be visible during this period. Generally, the views are generally adverse.	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Very Significant
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Early short-term
Operational Phase	The proposed works at this location are; the removal of existing footway bridge across the stream from Church Road to the Church complex; clearance of the stream and rewilding the stream banks; additional planting and new landscape setting to the banks of the river; and proposed replacement walkway to the existing Church complex with materials to reflect existing stone walls. The proposed changes visible are; the demolition of the walkway and reconstruction of a stone wall in the foreground; the new landscape structure; footpath, planting and trees along the east bank of the river and adjacent to the church complex visible in the middleground and background. Other elements partially visible in the view are replaced walkway bridge in the foreground to the right. Whilst initially the works would be negative, over time the natural setting would re-establish and create improved amenity.	
	Magnitude of Change	Medium
	Significance of Effects	Significant
	Quality	Adverse in the short term and Neutral-Beneficial in the medium and long term
	Duration	Permanent

Viewpoint 8: From private lands / agricultural field looking South East		
Description	The existing view is from private lands / agricultural field along the west bank of the stream. The view is looking south-east towards the Church and the town. The views are representative of views experienced from private lands with limited access to the public.	
	In the view, the field is visible in the foreground. The river, bridge and riparian planting are visible in the middleground. In the background the back walls and rear of existing dwellings in the village are visible to the left and middle, and the Church is visible to the left of the background view. Further behind the buildings, the Kiltorcan Hill acts as an attractive backdrop to the view.	
Sensitivity	Low	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	There maybe construction boarding and safety measures visible in the view during the construction period. Along with the movement of large machinery and equipment. Clearance work of the stream and associated landscape area would be visible during this period. Generally, the views are generally adverse.	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Moderate-Slight
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Permanent
Operational Phase	The proposed works at the location include; a new fence along the west bank of the river, clearance of the river banks from existing overgrown vegetation; and new landscape structure; footpath, planting and trees along the east bank of the river which will soften the open views of the rear boundary walls.	
	The proposed changes visible in the view, is the fence in the foreground and the new landscape structure and open space to the east bank of the river in the middle ground which generally improve the view.	
	Magnitude of Change	Medium
	Significance of Effects	Slight
	Quality	Adverse in the short term and Beneficial in the medium and long term
Duration	Permanent	

Viewpoint 9: Opposite “Arrigle View” Stone House looking North / North-east		
Description	The existing view is from private lands / agricultural field. The viewpoint is situated along the western bank of the river, south of the Church Road and opposite the ‘Arrigle View’ Stone House. The views are representative of views experienced from private lands with limited access to the public.	
	In the view, the viewer is looking at the river and overgrown vegetation in the foreground. The Arrigle house is located on the eastern bank of the river and is visible in the middle ground, and adjacent to it to the left, the Church Road stone bridge is visible. The Church and other built elements within the town are visible in the background.	
Sensitivity	Low	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	During the construction, clearance of the channel and existing vegetation would be visible. Site boarding and safety measures along with the movement of machinery and equipment would be visible. Generally, adverse views are experienced during construction period.	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Moderate - Slight
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Temporary of Early Short term
Operational Phase	The proposed works at this location are; the clearance works to banks of the river; and new flood wall (partly stone and partly glass) acting as flood defence system along the east bank, adjacent to the house.	
	The proposed changes visible are the clearance of overgrown vegetation along the river banks. The inclusion of flood defence walls adjacent to the existing house is clearly visible.	
	Over time as existing and proposed riparian planting matures the effect of the development will reduce over time.	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Moderate-Slight
Quality	Adverse in term short term improving to neutral in the long term once riparian vegetation regrows and re-establishes	
Duration	Permanent	

Viewpoint 10: Looking north / north-west from Main Street opposite to Property No. 1		
Description	<p>The existing view is from the Mina Street. The viewpoint is situated on a footpath along the western side of the Main Street, and is situated opposite a residential property. The view experienced are views enjoyed by road users and also from a residential receptor.</p> <p>The view is looking at a field, boundary wall along the road in the foreground and middle ground. The river is located west of the field and matures trees and vegetation grown along the river. In the background, the gable ends of residential properties and the spire of the Church acting as a backdrop to the view.</p>	
Sensitivity	Medium	
Visual Impacts and Effects		
Construction Phase	<p>During the construction, clearance of existing vegetation along the river would be visible. Site boarding and safety measures along with the movement of machinery and equipment would be visible. Generally, adverse views are experienced during construction period.</p>	
	Magnitude of Change	High
	Significance of Effects	Significant
	Quality	Adverse
	Duration	Temporary of Early Short term
Operational Phase	<p>The proposed works at this location are; removal of a cluster of trees to build a new flood wall and embankment; and demolition of a section of existing wall and construct new field gate for construction and maintenance works.</p> <p>The proposed changes would include the removal of a small number of trees in the landscape visible adjacent to the Arrigle House in the background of the view. The new field gate and entrance from Main Street is partially visible to the right in the background. Other works are imperceptible from this location.</p>	
	Magnitude of Change	Medium
	Significance of Effects	Moderate
	Quality	Neutral
	Duration	Permanent

Summary of Visual Effects during Operational Phase

Agricultural lands South of the village

- The main changes to the views in this area would be the proposed embankment and flood wall south of the Church visible from the approach road to the town. The proposed embankment north of the school and limited tree removal is not likely to be noticeable from the public roads.
- The proposed embankment is likely to be grassed and blend in well with the surroundings
- Limited tree removal is proposed to facilitate the embankment and flood wall but likely to be visible
- The proposed flood wall adjacent to Arrigle View (opposite Church) is likely to be visible from the property and the main road.

The magnitude of change is expected to be 'Medium-High' from this area and the visual effects are likely to range from Slight to Moderate. Initially, the quality of the change is assessed as 'adverse', but as overtime the proposed landscaping proposals and natural regeneration of the cut-back vegetation matures, the quality is expected to remain 'neutral' and or improve to 'Beneficial'.

Church and surrounds

- The changes will be clearly visible in this area and a number of viewpoints are proposed.
- The changes will be visible from the churchyard and the road to the south of the church as well as some views from the residential receptors along the road.
- The magnitude of the change is expected to be Low-Medium – the change to the existing walkway and proposed new walkway, landscaping of the low-flow channel and proposed water channel connecting to the eastern channel and the possible) removal of some smaller trees. The main elements of the view – the church, stone bridge parapet and stone walls with steps, mature trees including Lime trees, and the low flow river channel adjacent to the road, will all remain.
- The proposed landscaping measures are likely to improve the visual amenity of the area and contribute to the view over the long term.
- The removal of the concrete walls along the pedestrian walkway is seen as a likely beneficial effect and opportunity to use a more appropriate design.

The magnitude of change is expected to be Low-Medium, majority being Medium in this area and the visual effects are likely to range from Slight to Significant. Initially, the quality of the change is assessed as 'adverse', but as overtime the proposed landscaping proposals and natural regeneration of the cut-back vegetation matures, the quality is expected to improve to 'Neutral-Beneficial'.

Main Street and north of the village

- The proposed changes are for the most part minor in terms of visual effects such as the underground piping and the measures to the rear of properties which are minor in nature and in some cases replacing existing walls.
- The most pronounced effects are likely to result from the tree/vegetation removal along Main Street and the realignment of the channel south of the Little Arrigle bridge.

The magnitude of change is expected to be Low-Medium, majority being Low in this area and the visual effects are likely to range from Slight to Moderate. The proposed changes are assessed as being 'Neutral'.



Figure 9-11 – Aerial view of proposed works around Ballyhale Church prepared by Chris Shackleton

9.6 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation by avoidance and design was carried out during the design process, and at the Options stage, four potential options were assessed. The proposed works represent one of the options with fewest landscape and visual effects.

The mitigation for the proposed scheme includes:

- Avoidance of trees in particular large and significant trees such as the Lime Trees west of the Church and avoidance of other trees where possible.
- An Arboricultural assessment to assess tree quality was carried out. Tree removal is confined to Category 2 Trees (described as Fair) while no category A or B trees are to be removed. Category A trees are (defined as:

...a tree of high quality and value. These are trees that are particularly good examples of their species, which also provide landscape value. These trees are in such a condition as to be able to make a substantial contribution. (A minimum of 40 years is suggested)

- Proposed tree planting along Main Street to replace removed trees. Trees will be retained where possible.
- Design quality and detailing, particularly in the area near the Church of St Martin resulting in the overall enhancement of the setting and amenity associated with the church. Appropriate materials will be used to complement the sensitive elements of the built environment. Retention of the sensitive elements in this area is proposed. A landscape sketch design was produced for the vicinity of the church and is included in Figure 9-9.
- See Landscape Proposals (20392-100/101/102/103) drawings for details.