

Plate 9.19: View of Grand Parade open space and boardwalk
From French's Quay to Sullivan's Quay the river bank is more open, with railings and bollards the primary



Plate 9.20: View of Lapps Quay - built up riverbank with railings to edge

Further east of the Grand Parade the river flows along Morrison's Quay, George's Quay to Lapps Quay as shown in Plate 9.20 above, and Anderson's Quay to Custom House point. The river banks are edged with railings in these areas, which allows permeability and views to the river. As one approaches the Custom House Point, there are almost open quaysides with minimal edging (see Plate 9,21) with a more open character, with greater space at the river bank. The built form remains dense but there are more warehouse buildings which relate to the historic port, such as the Custom House and the Bonded warehouses, shown in Plate 9.21 below.



Plate 9.21: View of Bonded warehouses and Custon House Point from Kennedy Quay

#### Land Use

Land Use, as it is related to landcover, in the Study Area ranges from a small area of residential and agricultural fields in the west of the Study Area, from Iniscarrra dam west of the Lee Fields. Recreation is also a lands use with several popular areas including Ballincollig Regional Park and the Lee Fields while some residential land uses are scattered throughout.

From the Lee Fields through to the Distillery Fields, open space and recreation are important land uses, with a high proportion of public open space, both in terms of parks and active recreation facilities and playing fields. These land uses are interspersed with areas of increasingly dense built form, including residential, commercial and educational land uses.

From the North Mall to Custom House Point, and from Western Road to Custom House point, the land uses are typical of those in a city centre built up area, include residential, commercial, educational, and industrial. Near Custom House point, and at Kennedy Quay and Horgan's Quay, the Port of Cork land uses are evident.



#### 9.4.4 Visual Unit

When describing landscape character, physical units can be restricted in terms of visibility due to landform or land cover and may be made up of smaller visual units.

A visual landscape unit is defined by spatial enclosure and pattern, i.e. by landform and landcover. The limits of the views that are available from a particular area are therefore determined by the physical landscape, such as topographical and vegetation boundaries. The overall physical unit is the river Lee valley itself, which contains the City of Cork, but due to the winding nature of the river valley, as well as localised built form and vegetation, the river valley in the study area is experienced in smaller units.

Views to and from the river are described in Section 9.4.7

#### **Image Unit**

An image unit is a feature that acts as a major focal point within the landscape, such as Croagh Patrick in Co. Mayo. Such features contribute to the creation of a strong identity or sense of place. The river Lee itself, which divided into two channels, combined with iconic views such as St Anne's Church in Shandon, or St. Finbarr's Cathedral, are well known views and landmarks associated with Cork City.

#### 9.4.5 Landscape Value

In order to determine the landscape value, which feeds into the assessment of landscape sensitivity, and ultimately the likely significance of the impacts, assessments of landscape value for the proposed development site and wider (LVIA) study area were carried out. Landscape value includes designations such as scenic views and sensitivity designations found in Development Plans, as well as values which are attached to undesignated landscapes. A number of criteria were developed in order to assess the landscape values of the study area. These then contribute to the assessment of landscape sensitivity which is described in Section 9.5.1.

Table 9.3 Features of Landscape Value

Feature	Description
Landscape Designatons	A high proportion of the Study Area is covered by one or more designations. These include Areas of High Landscape Value, Landscape Preservation Zones, Views and Prospects (City) and the value of the LCT in the County is classed as High.
Landscape/Townscape Quality/Condition	This refers to the physical state of the landscape, and the condition of individual elements. The quality of the landscape in this area can be described as somewhat modified, with areas of agricultural pasture and semi natural vegetation to the west of the study area, while the east of the study area in the city centre is built up. Overall quality is described as good.
Aesthetic Qualities	Much of the Study Area, has noticeable aesthetic qualities, reflected in the landscape designations. The river and its banks have scenic qualities along the route, with certain sections having high aesthetic value e.g. Ballincollig Regional Park, Lee Fields, Fitzgeralds's Park, Distillery Fields.
Wildness/Naturalness	Feature of the landscape which could be described as natural are the western extents of the river bank where there is a sense of naturalness, in areas downstream of Innishcarra dam, through to the Lee Fields and the in areas along the North Channel to the Distillery Fields.



Feature	Description
Rarity	Details on conservations interests and habitats are contained in Chapter 5 Flora and Fauna
Cultural Meaning	A sense of cultural meaning arises where a site or features within a site are deemed to explain, represent or inspire cultural values. There are a number of noteworthy buildings, collections of buildings and monuments and landscape elements in the Study Area which are detailed in the Cultural Heritage Chapter – such as the many bridges in the study area, and buildings such as the Custom House and Bonded warehouses, and the Georgian street fronts such as the North Mall. The River Lee itself can also be said to have cultural value, associated as it is with songs and poems (The Banks of my own Lovely Lee) and is associated with the City of Cork.
Recreation Value	The study area includes a high proportion of areas that are important and very well used in terms of active recreation (sports) and passive recreation (public parks and walkways). These include the Ballincollig Regional Park, Lee Fields, Cricket Club, Tennis Club on the Mardyke, Distillery Fields, Mardyke sports grounds, and the Banks of the Lee Walkway which runs from the Lee Fields to the Distillery Fields.

# 9.5 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

# 9.5.1 Assessing Landscape Impacts

Landscape Effects: This can be described as changes which affect the landscape as a resource. This includes how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects, and its landscape character. Landscape effects also relate to changes in the structure of the landscape. Under the GLVIA (2013), the assessment of likely significant effects on landscape receptors includes a judgement on both the sensitivity of the receptor as well as magnitude of the change.

#### **Assessing Landscape Sensitivity**

Landscape Sensitivity, which is described in the GLVIA (2013) as a combination of the landscape's susceptibility to change as well as the value attached to the landscape, as shown in Table 9.4 below. Susceptibility to change can be described as the ability of the landscape receptor (either the overall character or quality of the landscape, or a particular landscape feature), to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline (existing) landscape situation, and/or the achievements of landscape planning policies and strategies. Landscape value is a combination of values which are assessed in the landscape baseline (see table 9.2 above) combining any formal landscape designations with the criteria included in Table 9.3 below.

#### Assessing Magnitude of the change

This is then combined with the magnitude of the impacts, which is a combination of the visual presence - size and scale - of the change, the extent of the area to be affected, and the duration and reversibility of the impact. Significance is then calculated by combining the magnitude and sensitivity judgements.



# **Table 9.4 Assessing Landscape Sensitivity**

Susceptibility of	Description and example criteria
landscape to change High	This includes landscapes where the overall landscape character or condition is highly susceptible to change, and where the landscape receptor has a low ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the landscape character and the achievement of planning policies/strategies.
Medium	This includes landscapes where the overall landscape character has a moderate ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the landscape character and the achievement of planning policies/strategies.
Low	This includes landscapes where the overall landscape character has a strong ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the landscape character and the achievement of planning policies/strategies.
Value attached to Landscape elements	Description and example criteria
High	This includes landscapes which are designated as high value, or are designated as (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value/, Scenic Routes/Views) in the Development Plan, or areas designated at a national or International level.
Medium	This includes landscapes where value is not formally designated, but are of value as they display good examples of good quality, intact landscapes, and areas deemed to be of relatively high scenic quality, landscapes which contains some rare elements, which have areas which are wild or have a sense of naturalness, strong cultural associations or which have recreational value.
Low	This includes landscapes which are not formally designated and which are considered to be modified. These include areas which do not have particular scenic qualities and do not include rare elements or landscape features and do not have strongly evident cultural or heritage associations.

**Table 9.5 Assessing Magnitude of Landscape Impacts** 

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	This includes landscapes which will experience a loss of landscape features over a large extent, and where this has an impact on the overall landscape character, and where there this results in a high degree of change to the aesthetics of the landscape. This includes landscapes where the impacts affect key characteristics of the landscape's character. The geographical extent of these changes is evident over a wide area.
Medium	This includes landscapes where there is some loss of landscape features over a medium extent which will result in some change to landscape features and aesthetics. This includes landscapes where there is a moderate impact on the overall landscape character but does not affect key characteristics.
Low	This includes landscapes where these is loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, and where these changes do not have an impact on the overall landscape character and does not affect key characteristics. Changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes are



Magnitude of Change	Description
	low. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area.

### Visual Receptors - Assessing Magnitude and Sensitivity

Visual Receptor Sensitivity depends on the occupation or activity of the people, as well the extent to which the attention is focused on views and visual amenity, according to the GLVIA Guidelines (2013). Value of the visual receptor is a combination of values are assessed in the baseline, combining any formal landscape designations with the criteria such as those included in Table 11.8. This is then combined with the Magnitude of the impact, which is a combination of size and scale of the change, the extent of the area to be affected, and the duration and reversibility of the impact.

**Table 9.6 Assessing Visual Receptor Sensitivity** 

Susceptibility of visual receptor	Description and example criteria
High	These include viewers at designated views or landscapes; Viewers such as residents which are focused to a large extent on the development due to location in close proximity; viewers at well-known heritage or popular tourist or recreational areas, viewers along scenic or tourist routes
Medium	These include viewers who may have some susceptibility to a change in view, such as those from views which are not designated but may have local recreational uses or those travelling along routes or at view which are considered moderately scenic.
Low	These include viewers engaged in activities where the focus is not on the landscape or view. These including those travelling along a busy route, viewers at work or engaged in sport not related to views or experience of the landscape.
Value attached to the view	Description and example criteria
High	These include protected views of views from designated landscapes of national or international importance, and views indicated on tourist/cultural publications, or views considered of high scenic quality, naturalness, tranquility or the presence of rare elements in the view.
Medium	Views which are not designated but which include panoramic views or views judged to be of some scenic quality, which demonstrate some sense of naturalness, tranquility or some rare element in the view.
Low	Views which are not designated and which are not judged to be panoramic views, of particular scenic quality as described above.  These are views which have no distinctive features.

Table 9.7 Assessing Magnitude of Visual Impacts

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	This includes viewpoints where the proposed development results in a large scale change of the view and its composition, and creates a high degree of contrast. This includes viewpoints where the proposed development is fully or almost fully visible over a wide extent, at close proximity to the viewer. The duration of the impact is long term or permanent and have a low level of reversibility.



Magnitude of Change	Description
Medium	This includes viewpoints where the proposed development results in a moderate scale change of the view and a moderate degree of contrast with the existing view. This includes viewpoints where the development is partially visible over a moderate or medium extent, and viewpoints which are not in close proximity to the development.
Low	This includes viewpoints where the proposed development results in a low level of change in the view and its composition and a low degree of contrast. This includes viewpoints where the development is partially or barely visible, and over a small extent, and includes viewpoints at a distance from the proposed development.

#### 9.6 VIEWS TO AND FROM THE SITE

This section of the EIS describes the views of the surrounding landscape that are available to the Study Area, as well as describes the existing views towards the Study Area from the surrounding area, with particular reference to the views from area where the development is visible by a high proportion of viewers

#### 9.6.1 Views towards the site

Overall, views from the study area, which is the immediate environs of the river banks, towards the river, are available from most of the study area, both for viewers travelling in vehicles and on foot. In the west of the study area, views of the river and its banks are available in several areas along the road Ró18 north of the river (Scenic Route S37), but these are intermittent. Views are available in locations such as Ballincollig Regional Park, Innishcarra Bridge, and at the Angler's Rest. Views are available from certain sections of the Carrigrohane Road and Lee Road, and views are available more frequently as one approaches the city from the Carrigrohane Road.

Much of the River Lee, in terms of both channels, is visible at close proximity from Study area east of the Lee Fields, from the Lee Fields through to Custom House Point. There are walkways, pavements, open spaces on one or both banks throughout the majority of the city in these areas, and the river is a key feature in the experience of the city, both as a pedestrian, cyclist and motorist. The fact that the river divides into two channels further emphasises the visibility of the river as one travels through the city. There are also a high number of bridges along the north and south channels from which views are available.

Areas where there is limited visibility of the river would include parts of the upper reaches, downstream of Innishcarra dam, and certain areas west of the Angler's Rest. Some views are restricted along the South Channel in sections where the river is culverted. Views are also restricted in some areas by built form such as from areas of Sunday's Well Road. Overall, the river and the river banks are highly visible elements in the study area. This is reflected in the list of protected views on the City Development plan, which contains a considerable number of views of or along the river, as indicated in Figure 9.3.

#### 9.6.2 Views from the study area

Views from the study area are generally influenced by the location in a river valley, and to the west of the study area, views are, in general, available to the surrounding river corridor and ridges, though intermittent due to vegetation in some areas. Views on the approach to the city along the Carrigrohane Road are extensive, and east of the Lee Fields, approaching the city, views along the river channel and to the ridges to the north and the flatter lands to the south are generally available, becoming intermittent in some areas



such as the Distillery Fields, where trees partly screen views. From the North Mall to Custom House point, and Western Road to Custom House point, views are open and many views from the riverbanks and bridges are of the surrounding ridges and townscape, including landmark buildings, and bridges, and many of these are protected views.



#### 9.7 PHOTOMONTAGES

# 9.7.1 Limitations of Photomontages

Photomontages are visualisations that superimpose an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs. They are intended as graphical representations of the likely appearance of the proposed development in the existing landscape.

Visualisations such as photomontages are tools that can represent the likely effect of a development at a particular time and are used to inform the viewer's prediction of how that development will appear. In terms of impact quality however, i.e. whether a visual impact is deemed to be positive, negative or neutral, this involves a degree of subjectivity.

### 9.7.2 Location of Photomontages

A series of 50 photomontages has been prepared as part of the EIS, which show the proposed scheme from different locations in the receiving environment, in both rural and urban contexts. The photo-locations are illustrated in Figure 9.4. These locations were chosen to represent a number of views throughout the study area, form varying elevations, locations and distances. These represent views from public areas along the river, as these are numerous.

The photomontages represent views which are generally be available to a large number of people from public areas such as roads and walkways, open spaces and the riverbank, and bridges throughout the study area. They also represent a range of the proposed works types, and include images of proposed embankments, proposed flood defence walls, railings and removal of certain elements form the existing environment.

An existing view is shown from each photo-location to provide a representation of the current view, and then a proposed view is presented in order to illustrate the difference. A brief description of each view is also included. These photomontages contribute to the assessment of visual impacts, and the visual impact of each photomontages is assessed, using the methodology outlined in Section 9.5.

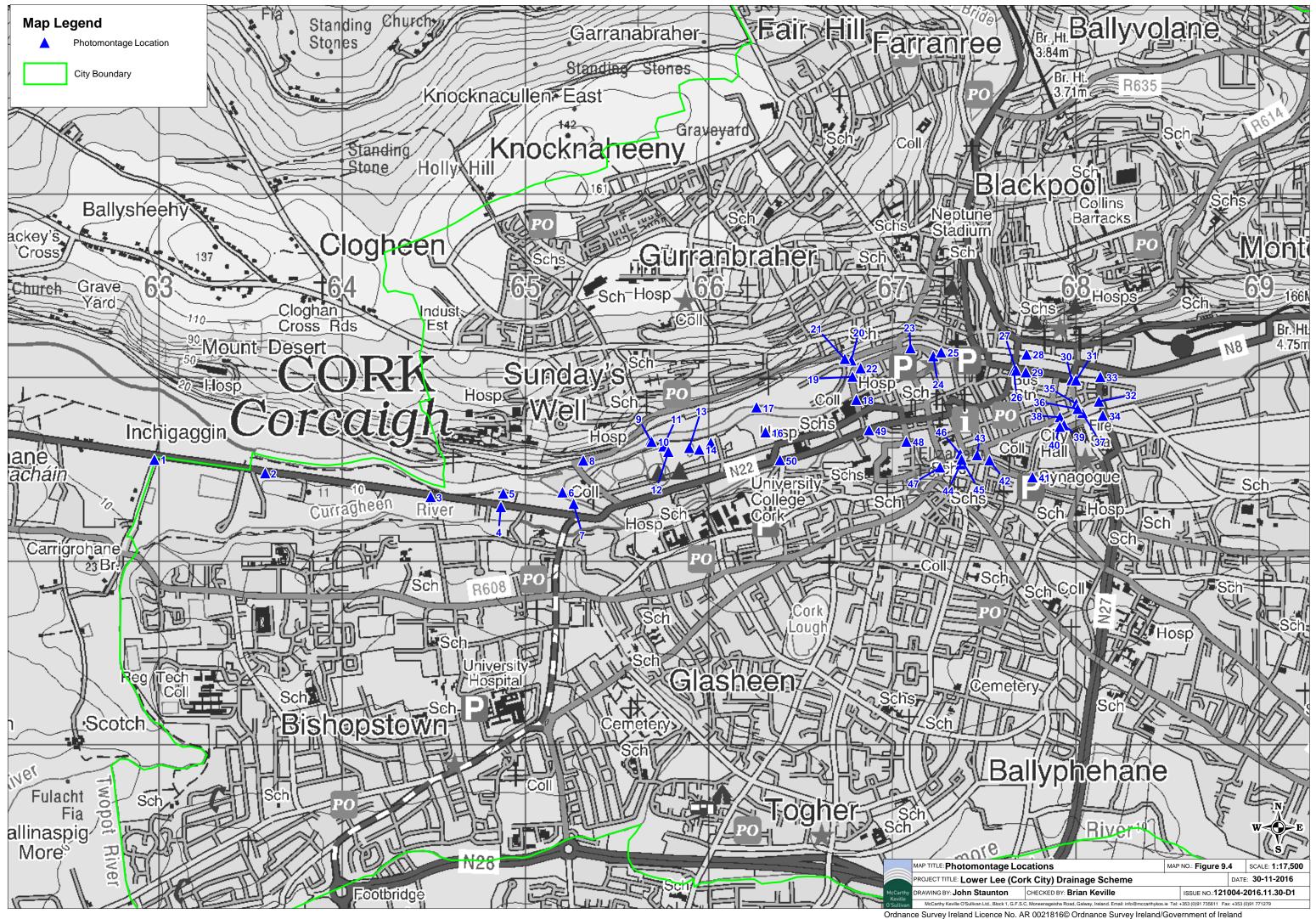






Plate 9.22: Photo Location 1 – Existing View



Plate 9.22: Photo Location 1 - Proposed View showing proposed embankment



### Photo Location 1 - Existing View

The existing view above shows a view towards an agricultural field along the Carrigrohane Road.

# **Photo Location 1 - Proposed View**

The proposed view shows the low grass embankment which is proposed behind the existing wall and gate.

In this location, the visual receptor is considered of medium to high sensitivity, and the proposed works are considered to be of Low magnitude of change. The visual impact is considered to be Imperceptible.





Plate 9.23: Photo Location 2 – Existing View



Plate 9.23: Photo Location 2 - Proposed View



# Photo Location 2 - Existing View

The existing view above shows a view towards the Lee Fields Park and a wooded ridge in the background, and along the Carrigrohane Road.

### Photo Location - 2 Proposed View

The proposed view shows the grass embankment with access walkway inside the railing, and some of the mature trees have been removed. In this location, the visual receptor is considered of high sensitivity, and the proposed works are considered to be of Medium magnitude of change. The visual impact is considered to be Moderate negative visual impact.





Plate 9.24: Photo Location 3 - View to Lee Fields - existing Car Park on Carrigrohane Road



Plate 9.25: Photo Location 3 – View to Lee Fields and proposed new Car Park



### Photo Location 3 - Existing View

The existing view looks towards an existing car park at the Lee Fields, on Carrigrohane Road. Mature trees are evident in the background and along the road.

### Photo Location 3 - Proposed View

The proposed new carpark and flood defence embankment will result in the loss of some mature trees along the roadside and this will restrict views of the river. As many trees are to be retained as possible to maintain the character of the area. The visual receptors at this location are considered to be high sensitivity, and, while these changes will be noticeable, the magnitude of change is considered Slight to Moderate. The removal of the trees and the increased car parking is a negative visual impact, while the replacement of the low wall is regarded as a neutral to positive impact.





Plate 9.26: Photo Location 4 – Existing View looking towards Lee Fields and Kinsgley Hotel



Plate 9.27 Photo Location 4— Proposed View looking towards Lee Fields and Kinsgley Hotel



### Photo Location 4 - Existing View

The existing view is towards the Lee Fields par, which has some scattered mature trees in the foreground, and there are views to the River Lee and opposite riverbank, and a glimpse of the Waterworks.

### Photo Location 4 - Proposed View

The proposed works will result in the loss of some semi mature trees in the park, as well as the construction of the grass embankment. The main change is that the views to the river will be obstructed by the embankment, and this will be the case for both motorists and pedestrians. The open nature of the park at this location is also changed. The magnitude of change is regarded as Slight negative visual impact.





Plate 9.28: Photo Location 5 – Existing View looking towards Lee Fields and Kinsgley Hotel



Plate 9.29: Photo Location 5 – Existing View looking towards Lee Fields and Kinsgley Hotel



# Photo Location 5 - Existing View

The existing view is taken form the pedestrian path along the Lee Fields looking towards the Kinsgley Hotel, while the Carrigrohane Road and County Hall are visible.

### Photo Location 5 - Proposed View

The main change is that the views experienced by the users of the park, which are considered of high sensitivity in this location, will be obstructed by the embankment, and this will be the case for both motorists also. The open nature of the park at this location is also changed and some trees are removed. The magnitude of change is regarded as Moderate negative visual impact.





Plate 9.30: Photo Location 6 -Existing View to County Hall, Kingsley hotel and river walkway



Plate 9.31: Photo Location 6 - Proposed View to County Hall, Kingsley hotel and river walkway



### Photo Location 6 - Existing View

The existing view is taken form the lands to the rear of the Sacred Heart convent, looking at the river (South Channel). The river itself is an important element in the view, and a considerable amount of vegetation is seen along the riverbank and walkway, including some semi mature and mature trees.

### Photo Location 6 - Proposed View

The proposed view shows some trees and vegetation removed, opening up the views of the hotel and County Hall. The proposed wall and railings contribute to the hard surfaces which are visible. Some trees have been replaced.

The majority of viewers at this location will be pedestrian and cyclists engaged in recreation and are considered to be of high sensitivity. The magnitude of the change is considered to be Medium. The overall visual impact is considered to be Moderate negative visual impact.





Plate 9.32: Photo Location 7 –Existing View to bridge over South Channel



Plate 9.33: Photo Location 7 - Proposed View to bridge over South Channel



### Photo Location 7 - Existing View

The existing view shows the existing bridge which is part of the Banks of the Lee Walkway, with trees and vegetation on both sides of the bank, and views towards the ridge in the background.

### Photo Location 7 - Proposed View

The proposed view shows the ground level raised considerably, tree and vegetation removal, and the bridge replaced by a concrete bridge, and also a flow control structure in the river.

The majority of viewers at this location will be engaged in recreation and are considered to be of high sensitivity. The magnitude of change is considered to be Medium, and the visual impact is considered to be Moderate to Significant negative visual impact.





Plate 9.34: Photo Location 8 –Existing View to River Lee and Mardyke Sports Ground



Plate 9.35: Photo Location 8 –Existing View to River Lee and Mardyke Sports Ground



### Photo Location 8 - Existing View

The existing view shows the view from Sunday's Well road to the river, the trees on the opposite bank and the playing fields beyond. The river wall is in the foreground.

### Photo Location 8- Proposed View

The proposed view shows the wall in the foreground replaced and to a slightly higher level, and the wall across the river is raised.

Viewers at this location will be engaged in a variety of activities, and while some may be involved in recreation, viewers will also be travelling to/from work and to and from residences and are considered to be of medium to high sensitivity. The magnitude of change is considered to be Low, and the visual impact is considered to be Slight, negative visual impact.



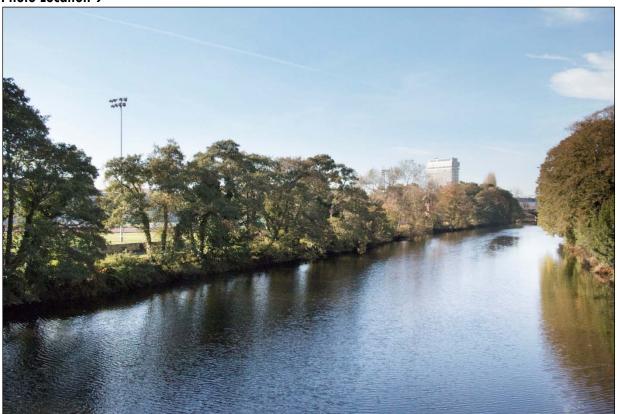


Plate 9.36: Photo Location 9 – Existing View to County Hall, Kingsley hotel and river walkway

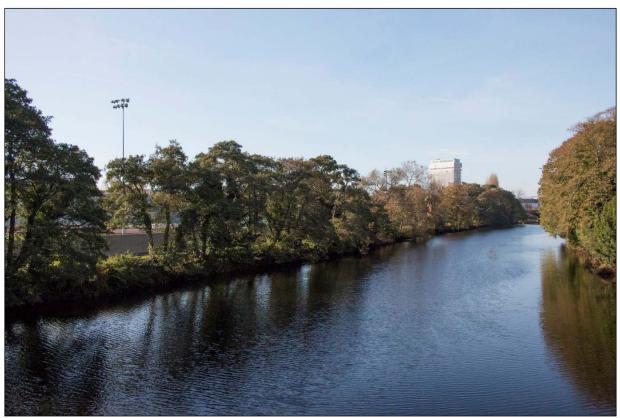


Plate 9.37: Photo Location 9 - Proposed View to County Hall, Kingsley hotel and river walkway



# **Photo Location 9 - Existing View**

The existing view is a protected view in the development plan, from Daly's Bridge upstream with a view of County Hall and the tree lined banks of the river.

# Photo Location 9- Proposed View

Visual receptors are considered of high sensitivity in this location, and it is also a valued protected view. The magnitude of change is considered Imperceptible at this location, as the proposed wall is located behind vegetation on the opposite bank. The visual impact is considered imperceptible negative visual impact.





Plate 9.38: Photo Location 10 -Existing View looking from Daly's Bridge to Fitzgerald's Park



Plate 9.39: Photo Location 10 - Proposed View looking from Daly's Bridge to Fitzgerald's Park



# Photo Location 10 - Existing View

The view above is taken from Daly's Bridge (Shaky Bridge) looking towards Fitzgerald's Park and downstream along the river. The river itself, trees and views of the park are important elements in the view.

### Photo Location 10 - Proposed View

The proposed views shows the proposed flood defence walls replacing the existing, re-grading of the end of Ferry Walk, and some tree removal. Glass panels on the wall top are visible which allow views of the river, and in the park, the raised embankment can be seen in the distance.

Visual receptors are considered of high sensitivity in this location, and the magnitude of change is considered Slight from this view. The glass wall will retain some views of the river and the wall cladding reduces visual impacts. Tree removal is minimal in from this view. Visual impacts range from Permanent Slight Negative to Permanent Slight Neutral impact.





Plate 9.40: Photo Location 11 - Existing View of Fitzgeralds's Park



Plate 9.41: Photo Location 11 - Proposed View of Fitzgeralds's Park



# Photo Location 11 - Existing View

The view is from the walkway at Fitzgerald's Park, over an area of grass and towards the trees and the river and the opposite river banks beyond.

### Photo Location 11 - Proposed View

This view shows the proposed walkway located on top of the embankment. The change is considered to be of Moderate to High magnitude, as views of the river and opposite bank, which are a feature of this area, are now restricted, and a grass embankment and glass wall replaces an open view of the river.

Visual receptors are considered of high sensitivity in this location, as they are viewers engaged in recreation and enjoyment of the surroundings. The visual impact is considered Moderate to Significant, negative visual impact.





Plate 9.42: Photo Location 12 -Existing View from Fitzgerald's Park



Plate 9.43: Photo Location 1 — Proposed View from Fitzgerald's Park



### Photo Location 12 - Existing View

The view is from the walkway at Fitzgerald's Park, over an area of grass and towards the trees and the vegetation, and the opposite river banks beyond.

# Photo Location 12 - Proposed View

Visual receptors are considered of high sensitivity in this location, as they are likely to be viewers engaged in recreation and enjoyment of the surroundings. The change is considered to be of Slight magnitude, as views of the river are not currently apparent form this view. A grass embankment and glass wall are seen along the river bank. The visual impact is considered a Slight, negative visual impact.



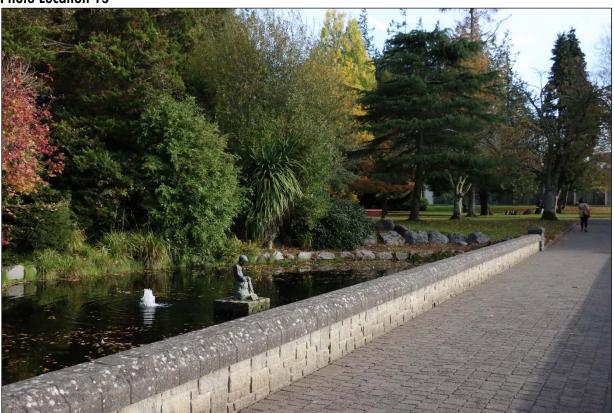


Plate 9.44: Photo Location 13 -Existing View from Fitzgerald's Park



Plate 9.45: Photo Location 13 —Proposed View from Fitzgerald's Park



# Photo Location 13 - Existing View

The view is from a walkway at Fitzgerald's Park, across the pond, with a water fountain, trees and vegetation and a statue also part of the view.

# Photo Location 13 - Proposed View

Visual receptors are considered of high sensitivity in this location, as they are likely to be viewers engaged in recreation and enjoyment of the surroundings. The removal of vegetation, grass embankment and flood defence walls are all visible. The magnitude of change is considered Medium to High, and the visual impact is considered Moderate negative visual impact.