

Chapter 9:

Landscape

9 LANDSCAPE

9.1 Introduction

This section of the Environmental Impact Statement addresses the landscape and visual aspects of the proposed River Lee. The main elements of the proposed development is briefly described, The relevant sections of the River Lee have been described with reference to Landscape Character and the relevant landscape policy recommendations that have been set out for this area by Cork City Council in Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 and also the Cork County Development Plan 2014-2020, in terms of landscape and visual characteristics are also addressed. A number of photomontages are included to assist the assessment of landscape and visual impacts. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the drawings for the proposed drainage scheme in Appendix 3A.

9.1.1 Proposed works

The proposed works for the River Lee Flood Relief Scheme comprise works at a variety of locations, as set out in Chapter 3. This chapter focuses on the works which are relevant from a landscape and visual point of view, and are as follows

- Designation of floodplains (wash lands) upstream of Cork City.
- Flood Defence Walls and grass embankments from downstream of Innishcarra Dam through to Cork Harbour to defend including refurbishment of existing quay walls.
- Removal of bankside features – vegetation, railings and bollards
- Flow Control chamber at the upstream end of the South Channel
- Demountable flood gates (tidal) at a limited number of key bridges and critical locations within the eastern part of Cork City.
- Bridge replacement between Carrigrohane Road Car Park and Sacred Heart lands.
- Reclamation of lands at Grenville Place and north at the rear of Presentation School
- Re-grading of ground and road ramping at a number of locations.
- Other works - Site Investigations, provision of associated drainage infrastructure (including non-return valves on drainage outlets) and pumping stations to manage surface water/groundwater at back of defences.

9.1.2 Study Area

The study area for the Landscape and Visual Assessment was defined following the desk study and again following site visit, and the examination of the proposed works.

The proposed works are located along the lower section of the River Lee. The proposed works commence to the west of the city, downstream of Innishcarra dam, west of Ballincollig, and continue along the river at several locations, including at Ballincollig Regional Park, at Inchigaggin, along the Lee Fields, and to the point where the River Lee divides into the North Channel and South Channel. Thereafter the works continue along both the North and South Channel, as far as the mouth of the river, at Custom House Quay, Kennedy Quay and Horgan's Quay. The study area straddles the Cork City/County boundary to the west of the city, close to the Lee Fields public park.

For the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the Study Area takes in the river itself as well as lands immediately on both sides of the river, including areas where the proposed works will be visible or will have a potential landscape or visual impact. Due to the nature of the proposed drainage works as well as the nature of the river, a Study Area which extends on both sides of the rivers and takes in the immediate features, views and prospects and areas from where the proposed works will be most visible is considered appropriate. The majority of views of the river are available from the immediate vicinity of the proposed works.

This follows the LI/IEMA (2013) Guidance referenced below which proposes that the level of detail in the landscape baseline studies should be “*appropriate and proportionate to the scale and development.*” The Guidelines also state that for the landscape baseline the aim is to provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be visually affected.

9.2 METHODOLOGY

This section broadly outlines the methodology used to undertake the landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development, and the guidance used in the preparation of each section. There are four main sections to the assessment:

- Outline of guidance followed
- Baseline landscape and visual assessment
- Nature and visibility of the proposed development
- Assessment of potential impacts

9.2.1 Guidance Documents

The only available, quasi-official document providing guidance on landscape quality for some time at a national level was ‘Outstanding Landscapes’, published by An Foras Forbartha in 1976. However in 2000, the Department of the Environment and Local Government built on this document by producing ‘Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, which recommended that all Local Authorities adopt a standardised approach to landscape assessment for incorporation into Development Plans and consideration as part of the planning process.

In 2002, Ireland signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which introduces a pan-European concept which centres on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has published a National Landscape Strategy for Ireland in 2015. The Strategy aims to ensure compliance with the ELC and contains six main objectives, which include developing a national Landscape Character Assessment and developing Landscape Policies.

Although the DoEHLG 2000 guidance remains in draft form, this section of the EIS has been informed by the landscape assessment guidelines presented in the DoELHG document, as well as a range of other guidelines which include:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, UK, 2013)

- EPA Guidelines on the information to be contained on Environmental Impact Statements (EPA 2002)
- EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2003).

9.2.2 Baseline Landscape Assessment

One of the first stages of carrying out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is to establish the baseline landscape and visual conditions. In order to carry out this assessment, an initial desk study was undertaken which identified relevant policies and guidelines, both at national and local level. This includes any relevant Cork City Council and Cork County Council policies on landscape and landscape character, designated landscapes, and scenic views and routes.

The Study area consists of the areas to which works are to be carried out is described in Section 9.1.2 and are described in general terms of Landscape Character Areas and types as identified 'Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2000), and as defined in the Cork City Development Plan 2014-2020. In addition, a number of field visits were undertaken in summer and winter 2016 to assess the landscape character and elements both in the Study area and in the wider landscape.

The desk study reviews previous landscape character assessments and reviews that have been carried out within the Study Area. The desk study also includes information on landscape within the immediate vicinity of the proposed works. It incorporates a description of the policies and objectives of Cork City Council and Cork County Council with regards to the Landscape Appraisal, including any Landscape Character Units, Scenic Routes and Protected Views, Landscapes, with specific reference to the Study Area location. The primary sources of information consulted during the course of the desk study include:

- Cork City Development Plan 2014-2020
- Cork City Landscape Study 2008

A number of site visits were conducted to gain familiarity with the Study Area and to ascertain the limits of the visual unit and a walkover survey of the Study Area to assess the landscape character and verify the extents of the Study Area. Photographs illustrating the landscape attributes of the Study Area were taken and notes were taken on landscape features and views in the Study Area.

9.2.3 Visibility of the Proposed Development

The locations of viewpoints for photographs (described further in Section 9.5) were informed by the nature of the proposed development, and the landscape context, maps and aerial images, with actual visibility being verified on the ground by a site visit.

In addition, a number of photomontages representing the likely visual impacts of the development were prepared. These were based on an artist's impression and give an indication rather than the specific description of the likely appearance of the proposed flood relief works.

These were taken at varying locations along the river. The selection of photo locations is designed to give a representative range of views of the proposed development site and the choice of viewpoints (photo locations) is influenced by both the view available and the type of viewer. Due to the site location and the nature of the proposed development, visibility by the general public will be possible only in certain areas in the western part of the study area, for example in some paths in parts of the Ballincollig Regional Park. However the proposed works from the Lee Fields and east to the city centre will be clearly visible.

9.2.4 Assessment of Potential Impacts

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, though related, can be described separately. Descriptions based on the LI/IEMA Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013) define each as follows:

Landscape Impact Assessment: This can be described as deriving from changes to the physical landscape, and which may result in changes to the landscape character and how it is experienced, as well as changes to the landscape as a resource.

Visual Impact Assessment: The assessment which relates to the changes in the composition of views available to groups of people a result in changes to the landscape, including human response to the change and the overall changes to visual amenity.

The potential impacts of the proposed development in terms of visual and landscape impact are informed by both the desktop study, the site visit which outlines current visibility from chosen viewpoints, and study of the proposed works. The impact assessment is also assisted by the production of photomontages or artist's impressions which show the likely appearance of the proposed works. The assessment of impacts is assessed using the terminology recommended by the EPA (2002/3) as set out in Chapter 1 Introduction.

9.3 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT – POLICY

This section contains a review of relevant landscape policies and objectives, as well as designations. The study areas for the Lower Lee (Cork City) Drainage Scheme straddles the Cork City and Cork County and therefore the Development Plans of both local authorities are referred to in this section.

9.3.1 Cork County Development Plan 2015-2021

The western extents of the proposed works are located in Cork County, and these extend from downstream of Innishcarra dam to the boundary with the City at the Lee Fields/Carrigrohane Road.

The Cork County Development Plan 2014 came into effect on January 15th 2015. The Plan includes policies and objectives regarding wind energy development and landscape and amenity designations which are referred to in the following sections.

Landscape Character

Section 13.6 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 sets out the policies and objectives of the Council with regard to landscape.

The Cork County Draft Landscape Strategy continues to inform Landscape Policy within the County. This document identifies 76 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within the county. The LCAs were then amalgamated into a set of 16 generic Landscape Character Types (LCTs) based on similar physical and visual characteristics. Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are smaller physical units with a more detailed description. This section focuses on LCTs, with more detailed discussion of the landscape character of the study area in Section 9.4 of this Chapter.

The Cork County Development Plan notes that it is proposed to wait until the publication of the National Landscape Strategy before commencing a review of the current 2007 Draft Cork County Landscape Strategy (which is reviewed below). The Plan states that the Draft Strategy will be used as a supporting background document to inform the Plan in the interim, while improving its practical application in managing change in the landscape of the County.

Each LCT is assigned a value, sensitivity and importance, and these are listed in Appendix E of the Development Plan.

In terms of Landscape Values, LCTs are assigned defined values ranging from Very High to Low. Landscape Sensitivity is defined as the ability of a landscape to accommodate change without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values. Landscape sensitivities range from Low, Medium, High and Very high in the Draft Strategy. Landscape Importance is rated as either of Local, County or National importance.

High Value Landscape

The County Development Plan 2014 considers that the LCTs which have a high or very high landscape value, and high or very high landscape sensitivity, and which are of county or national importance, should be designated as High Value Landscapes (HVL). (Note that landscape sensitivity, value and importance are explained further in Section 9.3.5 below. These are areas where considerable care is needed to successfully locate large scale developments, and such developments should generally be supported by an assessment including a visual impact assessment. There are two areas of High Value Landscape in the study area, one

to the west of Inishcarra, and one small section at Inchigaggin. These are shown in Figure 9.2. However the proposed works in these areas are minor in nature and of very limited extent.

These areas are highlighted in green in the list in Appendix E, and illustrated in Figure 13.2 of the Plan. The Plan lists the following objectives with regard to landscape:

County Development Plan Objective GI 6-1: Landscape

- (a) Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork's built and natural environment.
- (b) Landscape issues will be an important factor in all landuse proposals, ensuring that a proactive view of development is undertaken while maintaining respect for the environment and heritage generally in line with the principle of sustainability.
- (c) Ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.
- (d) Protect skylines and ridgelines from development.
- (e) Discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

County Development Plan Objective GI 6-2: Draft Landscape Strategy

Ensure that the management of development throughout the County will have regard for the value of the landscape, its character, distinctiveness and sensitivity as recognised in the Cork County Draft Landscape Strategy and its recommendations, in order to minimize the visual and environmental impact of development, particularly in areas designated as High Value Landscapes where higher development standards (layout, design, landscaping, materials used) will be required.

Landscape Character Type

The western extents of the study area which lie in the County, that is, the area from the east of Innishcarra Bridge, which includes Ballincollig Regional Park and the lands along the river as far as the Lee Fields - is described as LCT 6a – Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys. The Draft Strategy describes this landscape as follows:

This landscape type stretches west and east from the environs of Cork City but also includes a smaller area east of Rathcormac. The valleys in these areas are created by the rivers flowing east to west and are surrounded by low well spaced ridges. These shallow and flat valleys wind as they follow the course of the river, rising to the north and south with gentle slopes where the valley is wide but with steeper faced slopes where the valley narrows.

Key Characteristics

Some key characteristics of this LCT are described, however characteristic which are relevant to this particular areas include:

- Landcover comprises a mosaic of regularly shaped fields typically of medium size. The fields throughout this landscape are bounded mostly by mature broadleaf hedgerows but also by post and wire fencing. Lower hedgerows prevail further to the west on higher ground.
- Scrub and areas of gorse are relatively rare but groups of broadleaf trees and shelterbelts are common, providing punctuation across the landscape or hinting at the presence of farmsteads.

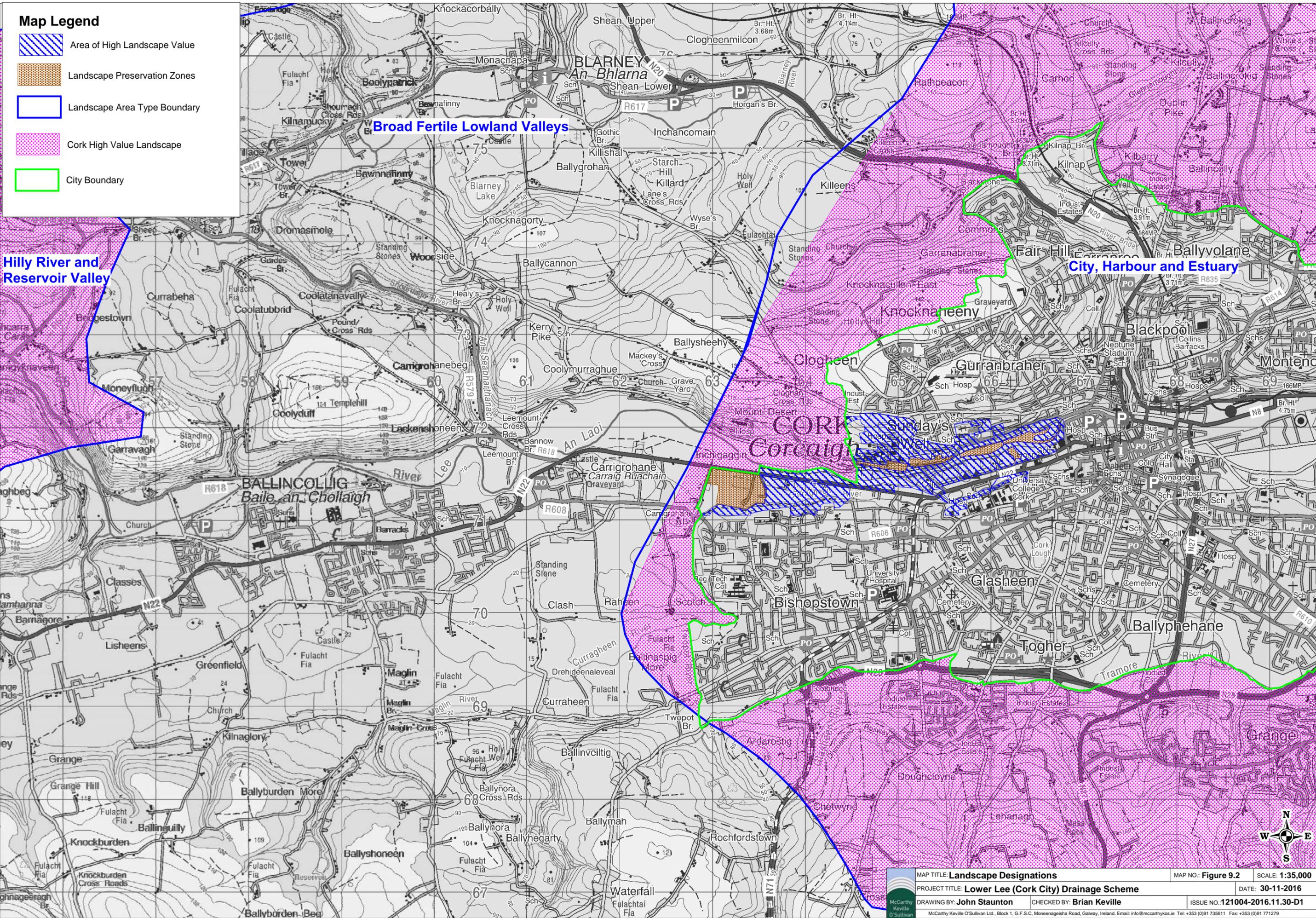
Map Legend

-  Area of High Landscape Value
-  Landscape Preservation Zones
-  Landscape Area Type Boundary
-  Cork High Value Landscape
-  City Boundary

Hilly River and Reservoir Valley

Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys

City, Harbour and Estuary



| | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|--|
|  | MAP TITLE: Landscape Designations | MAP NO.: Figure 9.2 | SCALE: 1:35,000 |
| | PROJECT TITLE: Lower Lee (Cork City) Drainage Scheme | DATE: 30-11-2016 | |
| | DRAWING BY: John Staunton | CHECKED BY: Brian Keville | ISSUE NO.: 121004-2016.11.30-D1 |
| McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Ltd., Block 1, G.F.S.C. Moneenapogha Road, Galway, Ireland. Email: info@mccarthys.ie Tel: +353 (0)91 735611 Fax: +353 (0)91 771279 | | | |

- The valleys in these areas are created by the rivers flowing east to west, for example the Lee and Bandon Rivers, and are surrounded by low well-spaced ridges. They have also created imposing views across the landscape.

The Strategy also notes that this LCT is close to Cork City, and that two of the key settlements of metropolitan Cork are located within or at the edge of the landscape (Carrigaline and Ballincollig).

Recommendations

The Draft Strategy also contains a number of recommendations. Those which are relevant to this part of the LCT and to the proposed works are included below:

- Protect and preserve the Lee Valley and the Bandon River and their surrounding floodplains as unique landscape features in this Landscape Character Type and as valuable resource for scenic and amenity values.
- Control development that will adversely affect distinctive linear sections of the Lee River Valley, especially its open flood plains, when viewed from relevant scenic routes and settlements.
- Conserve and enhance the characteristics in this Landscape Character Type that are important to tourism.

Landscape Value

The Draft Landscape Strategy for County Cork classifies the Landscape Value of each Landscape Type within the county, on a four point scale, ranging from Low to Very High. The Landscape Value of each area was derived from an assessment of the natural, scenic and cultural value as determined within that area. However the Plan notes that the assignment of landscape values in the Draft Strategy predated the designation of some nature conservation designations (such as certain Special Protection Areas -SPAs) and therefore do not take these into account. Landscape sensitivities were defined through an assessment of the landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity of each area. The Landscape Value of LCT 6a is Classed as High.

Landscape Sensitivity

In the Draft Strategy, The Landscape Character Types are ranked into four Landscape Sensitivity categories, ranging from Low to Very High. Landscape Type 6a Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys is described as having High sensitivity.

Scenic Amenity, Views and Prospects

Chapter 13 of the Development Plan, Green Infrastructure and Environment, sets out overall policies regarding views and prospects and scenic routes. These include vantage points from which views of natural beauty may be obtained, and include landscape and seascape views. Scenery and landscape is valued as an amenity resource to both tourists and residents. Specific scenic routes are therefore identified, and these are set out in Chapter 5 of the Plan.

The Plan notes that particular it is important to protect the character and quality of particular stretches of scenic routes that have special views and prospects, particularly those associated with High Value Landscapes. The Plan also notes that landscapes are living and changing, and that it is not proposed that this should give rise to prohibition of development along these routes. Development, where permitted, should

not hinder or obstruct these views and prospects and designed and located to minimise the impact. Objectives included in 13.7 of the Plan are as follows:

- **County Development Plan Objective GI 7-1: General Views and Prospects**
Preserve the character of all important views and prospects, particularly sea views, river or lake views, views of unspoilt mountains, upland or coastal landscapes, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes) and views of natural beauty as recognized in the Draft Landscape Strategy.
- **County Development Plan Objective GI 7-2: Scenic Routes**
Protect the character of those views and prospects obtainable from scenic routes and in particular stretches of scenic routes that have very special views and prospects identified in this plan. The scenic routes identified in this plan are shown on the scenic amenity maps in the CDP Map Browser and are listed in Volume 2 Chapter 5 Scenic Routes of this plan.
- **County Development Plan Objective GI 7-3: Development on Scenic Routes**
 - a) Require those seeking to carry out development in the environs of a scenic route and/or an area with important views and prospects, to demonstrate that there will be no adverse obstruction or degradation of the views towards and from vulnerable landscape features. In such areas, the appropriateness of the design, site layout, and landscaping of the proposed development must be demonstrated along with mitigation measures to prevent significant alterations to the appearance or character of the area
 - b) Encourage appropriate landscaping and screen planting of developments along scenic routes which provides guidance in relation to landscaping. See Chapter 12 Heritage Objective HE 46.
- **County Development Plan Objective GI 7-4: Development on the approaches to Towns and Villages**
- Ensure that the approach roads to towns and villages are protected from inappropriate development, which would detract from the setting and historic character of these settlements.

Chapter 5, Volume 2, of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 contains the profiles of the scenic routes and views and prospects. A total of 118 Scenic Routes are identified within the county. A profile of each Scenic Route is set out in Chapter 5, Volume 2 of the County Development Plan. Within the Study Area y, the following scenic route is identified:

Scenic Route S37: Local Road & R618 Regional Road between Leemount and Macroom via Coachford Views of the Lee Valley & reservoir, rural landscape & Sullane River.

The Plan notes that the Scenic Route passes through two areas where Landscape Value is described as High and one described as Very High. Part of this route passes through the Western part study area.

9.3.2 Cork City Landscape Study 2008

The Cork City Landscape Study was prepared in 2008 and has been incorporated into Chapter 10 of the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 (see below). The Study establishes principles for protecting and

enhancing the City's natural environment. The Study includes a Landscape Character Assessment, Analysis of Key Landscape Elements, identification of Key Landscape Elements and Formulation of Policy Recommendations and the elements which are contained in the Development Plan are outlined in Section 9.2.2 below. The Study also refers to the historical development of Cork City which developed on several islands and in the River Lee. The Strategy recognises the River Lee as a key element in the character of the City.

9.3.3 Cork City Development Plan 2014-2020

The Cork County Development Plan 2014-2020 refers to policies and objectives for landscape in Chapter 10. These policies and objectives are based on the Cork City Landscape Study 2008.

The Council seek to enhance the landscape through the development of a framework including developing and enhancing primary green links along the river Lee Corridor (both North and South channels), extending public access along Secondary Green links along the other river tributaries, developing and improving Key Landscape areas in the City and creating new Urban woodlands.

Landscape Character Areas

Eight Landscape Character areas were identified in the Study. These are shown in Figure 9.1 below and include:

- Estuarine/Riverine
- Natural harbour
- Historic urban core
- Fine-grained inner city residential
- Suburban residential
- Urban sylvan character
- Urban industrial/commercial
- Rural agricultural

The proposed works are to be carried out largely in areas characterised as Rural Agricultural, Urban Industrial/Commercial, Suburban residential, Urban sylvan character, Historic Urban Core.

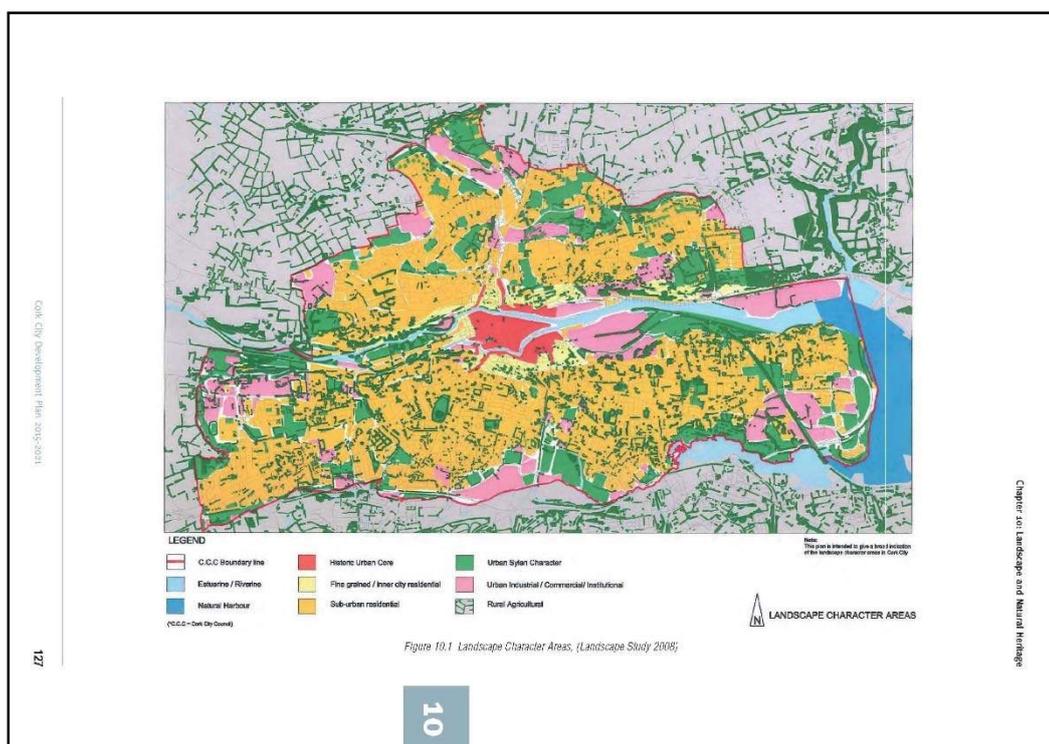


Figure 9. 1 Cork City Landscape Character Areas

9.3.4 Key Landscape Assets

The Landscape Study identifies a number of landscape assets which combine to create Cork's unique cityscape. The Key landscape assets are included in Table 10.1 in the Development Plan and are summarised below:

- Topography (ridges, slopes and escarpments).
- Water/River Corridors (river, estuary, harbour)
- Tree Canopy
- Ecology
- Visually Important Land (includes views and prospects)
- Historic Core
- Landmarks
- Public or Private Open Space
- Institutional Open Space
- Historic Landscapes
- Rural Character Green Belt
- Built Form
- Public Realm
- Gateways to the City
- Bridges
- Pedestrian/Cycle Routes in the City
- Vehicular Access
- The Railway in the City

Key Landscape Assets which are potentially relevant to the areas of the proposed drainage works include river corridors, visually important land, open space, rural character green belt, public realm, gateways to the city, and bridges.

- **Objective 10.1:** Landscape Strategic Objectives: To preserve and enhance Cork's landscape character and key landscape assets, and to preserve and enhance Cork's views and prospects of special amenity value.
- **Objective 10.2:** Cork City Landscape: To preserve Cork's unique and distinctive landscape character through appropriate management and enhancement of Key Landscape Assets as set out in Table 10.1)
- **Objective 10.3:** To preserve and enhance Cork's landscape and where appropriate, to increase access to and utilise the landscape for recreational purposes through the implementation of the Landscape Structure Plan.

9.3.5 Landscape Protection Designations

The Development Plan includes several categories of landscape designations which aim to preserve and enhance the significant landscape elements of the city. These include Areas of High Landscape Value and Landscape Preservation Zones.

Areas of High Landscape Value

These are areas which comprise one of more landscape assets listed above as identified in the Cork Landscape Study 2008. These areas display an intrinsic landscape character and a special amenity value. The Plan notes that development will be appropriate only where it results in a neutral or positive impact on the landscape and that new developments in AHLVs must respect the dominance of the landscape. The Council's objective is as follows:

Objective 10.4 Areas of High Landscape Value

To conserve and enhance the character and visual amenity of Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV) through the appropriate management of development, in order to retain the existing characteristics of the landscape, and its primary landscape assets. Development will be considered only where it safeguards to the value and sensitivity of the particular landscape. There will be a presumption against development where it causes significant harm or injury to the intrinsic character of the Area of High Landscape Value and its primary landscape assets, the visual amenity of the landscape; protected views; breaks the existing ridge silhouette; the character and setting of buildings, structures and landmarks; and the ecological and habitat value of the landscape.

There are several Areas of High Landscape Value within the Study Area. To the west of the city, these include a considerable area of the North Channel, and include the River Lee itself, from the City Boundary at the Lee Fields and Lee Road area, the Mardyke, Fitzgeralds's Park, and part of the Distillery Fields. These Areas of High Landscape Value are illustrated on Figure 9.2. Plates 9.1 and 9.2 show two of these areas, one at the western city boundary at the Lee Fields, and an image of the Distillery Fields to the east.



Plate 9.1 Area of High Landscape Value River Lee and Lee Fields



Plate 9.2 Area of High Landscape Value- River Lee, Sunday's Well and Fitzgerald's Park



Plate 9.3 Area of High Landscape Value River Lee and Landscape Preservation Zone – Distillery Fields

Landscape Preservation Zones (LPZ).

Landscape Preservation Zones (LPZ) are areas which are considered highly sensitive to development, and typically combine distinctive landscape assets such as topography, tree cover, settings to historic structures or open spaces and other landscape assets. These areas have limited development potential. The Plan notes that in these areas, typically the built form is secondary to the landscape character. The Plan contains the following Objective:

Objective 10.5 Landscape Preservation Zones

To preserve and enhance the character and visual amenity of Landscape Preservation Zones through the control of development. Development will be considered only where it safeguards to the value and sensitivity of the particular landscape and achieves the respective site specific objectives, as set out in Table 10.2 (see Table 9.1 below which contains a summary table). There are six LPZs which fall within or partially within the Study Area. Areas close to but not within the Study Area are not included. The Cork City Development Plan also the Landscape Assets to be protected and also site-specific objectives for each LPZ and are also illustrated on the City Development Plan Map 9. These are included in Figure 9.2. These are as follows:

Table 9.1 Landscape Preservation Zones

| LPZ | Landscape Assets to be protected | Site Specific Objectives |
|------|---|---|
| SW1A | Curragheen River/Carrigrohane Road/Lee River Valley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To retain lands as landscape assets and as part of the flood plain of the Curragheen and Lee Rivers. Existing uses may continue as nonconforming uses; medium to long-term objective of creating a public amenity area as part of the overall Curraheen/Lee Fields amenity area. |
| NW5 | Sunday's Well (2)/ Lee Riverside | |
| NW6 | Sunday's Well (3) North Mall Distillery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To create a publicly accessible riverside open space with significant ecological value as part of campus development; ▪ To provide an additional public pedestrian bridge to access the development site at the eastern end of the distillery site from the Lee Maltings site; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an additional public route along through the centre of the site along the Mill Stream |
| SW1A | Curragheen River/Carrigrohane Road/Lee River Valley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To retain lands as landscape assets and as part of the flood plain of the Curragheen and Lee Rivers. Existing uses may continue as nonconforming uses; medium to long-term objective of creating a public amenity area as part of the overall Curraheen/Lee Fields amenity area. |
| SW3 | Sacred Heart | |
| SW7 | South Channel (4)UCC | |
| SW9 | Mardyke | |
| | | |

Many Landscape Preservation Zones (LPZ) are also areas of High Landscape Value. Plates 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6 below show examples of LPZ areas. Two of these are also Areas of High Value Landscape.

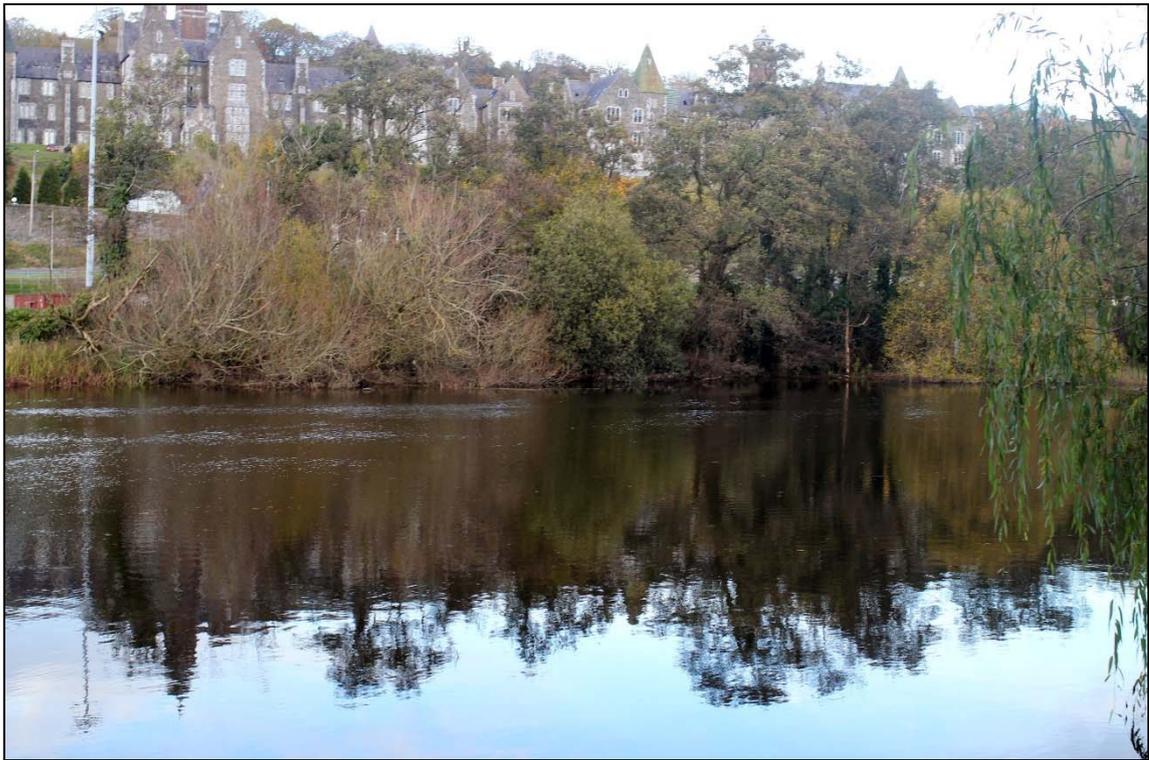


Plate 9.4 Landscape Preservation Zone- River Lee, Lee Fields and Lee Road area



Plate 9.5 Landscape Preservation Zone (NW5) River Lee & Fitzgerald's Park/Sundays Well area



Plate 9.6: View towards the Distillery Field Landscape Preservation Zone

To summarise, the stretch of river from the City Boundary at the Lee Fields up to the Distillery Fields has a number of landscape related designations. A large proportion of this area is classed as Areas of High Landscape Value, and there are a number of smaller areas which are designated as Landscape Preservation Zones.

9.3.6 Protected Views

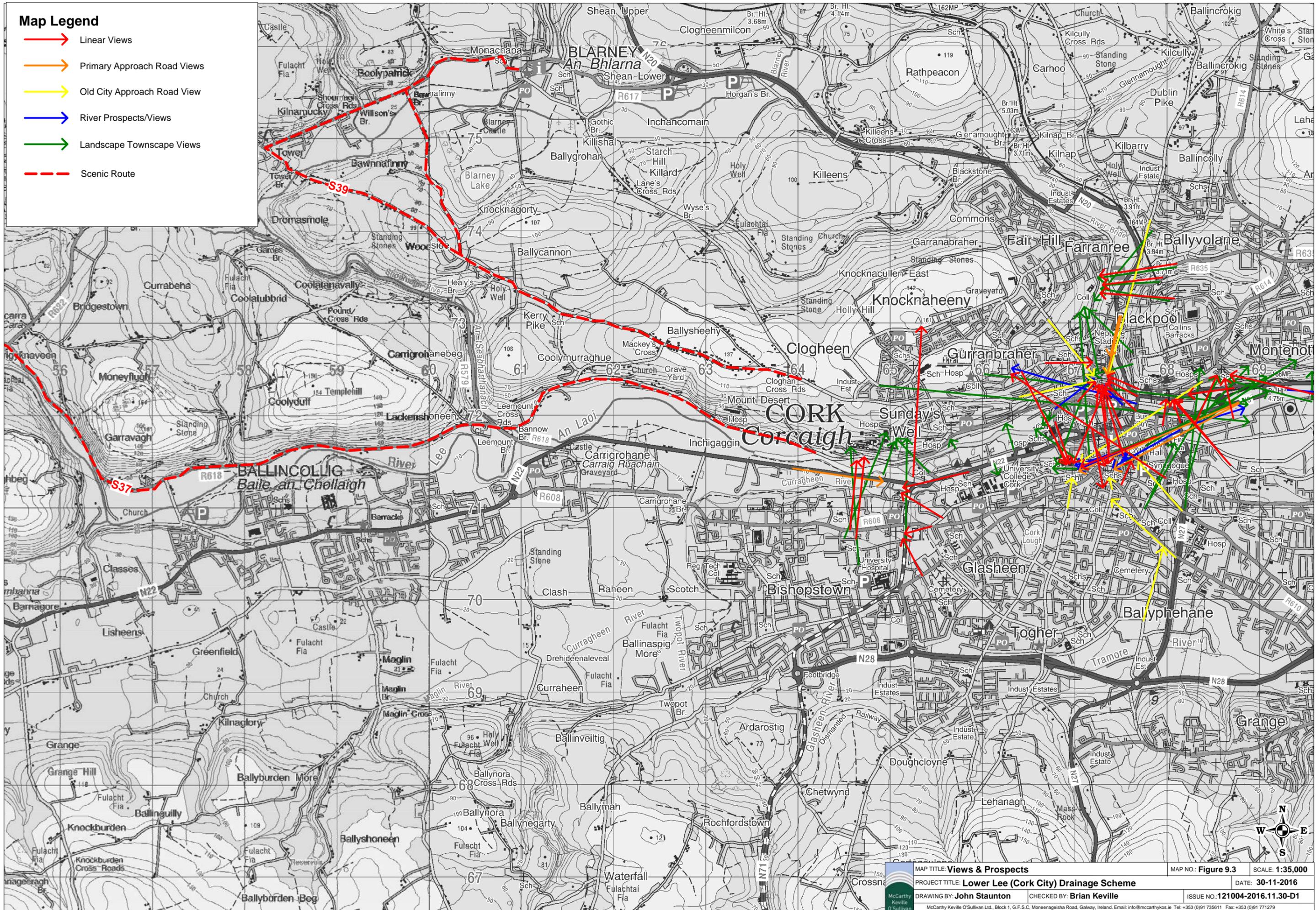
Chapter 10 of the Development Plan lists a number of Views and Prospects. There are several types of views, and these include Linear Views of Landmark Buildings, Panoramic Views, River Prospects, Townscape and Landscape Features and Approach Road Views.

The views which relate to the Study Area are shown on Figure 9.3. The views relevant to the study area are categorised as River Prospects, Landscape and Townscape as follows:

Table 9.2 Views (listed in Tables 1-7 from Map 2 and Volume 3 of the Development Plan 2015-2021.

Map Legend

- Linear Views
- Primary Approach Road Views
- Old City Approach Road View
- River Prospects/Views
- Landscape Townscape Views
- - - Scenic Route



| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| MAP TITLE: Views & Prospects | MAP NO.: Figure 9.3 | SCALE: 1:35,000 |
| PROJECT TITLE: Lower Lee (Cork City) Drainage Scheme | | |
| DATE: 30-11-2016 | | |
| DRAWING BY: John Staunton | CHECKED BY: Brian Keville | ISSUE NO.: 121004-2016.11.30-D1 |
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| View | Description |
|-------------|---|
| View AR2 | View from Carrigrohane Road to County Hall |
| View RP1 | View from Eamonn de Valera Bridge upstream to St Finbarre's Cathedral |
| View RP2 | View from Eamonn de Valera Bridge upstream to Holy Trinity and St Nicholas Church |
| View RP3 | View form Nano Nagle bridge downstream |
| View RP4 | View from Parliament Bridge downstream |
| View RP5 | View from Nano Nagle Upstream |
| View RP6 | View from South Gate Bridge upstream |
| View RP7 | View from St Vincent's Bridge downstream to St Anne's Church |
| View RP8 | View from Christy Ring Bridge upstream to St Anne's Church, Dominican Friary and St Mary's Church |
| View RP10 | View form Mardyke Bridge upstream to County Hall |
| View RP11 | View from Daly's (Shaky) Bridge to County Hall |
| View RP12 | View from Thomas Davis Bridge to County Hall |
| View RP13 | View from St. Patrick's Bridge to Church of the Ascension, Gurrabraher |
| View LT2A | View from Mardyke Walk/Mardyke Bridge/Riverside Walkway to Sunday's Well Townscape |
| View LT2B | View from Mardyke Walk-Daly's Bridge/riverside walkway to Sunday's Well townscape |
| View LT3 | View from Bachelor's Quay to the North Mall |
| View LT4 | View from Fr. Matthew Quay/ Fr. Matthew Street |
| View LT15 | View From the Lee Fields/Carrigrohane Road to Our Lady's Hospital, Shanakiel Ridge |
| View LT 17a | View form Western Road/Thomas Davis Bridge to Our Lady's Hospital, Shanakiel Ridge |
| View LT 31 | View from Sunday's Well Road to the Distillery Grounds |
| View LT 32 | View from Grenville Place to Distillery Grounds |
| | |

A number of these views are shown in Section 9.4 Landscape Character, and a number are also represented by photomontages in Section 9.5. View AR2 is shown in Plate 9.7 below.

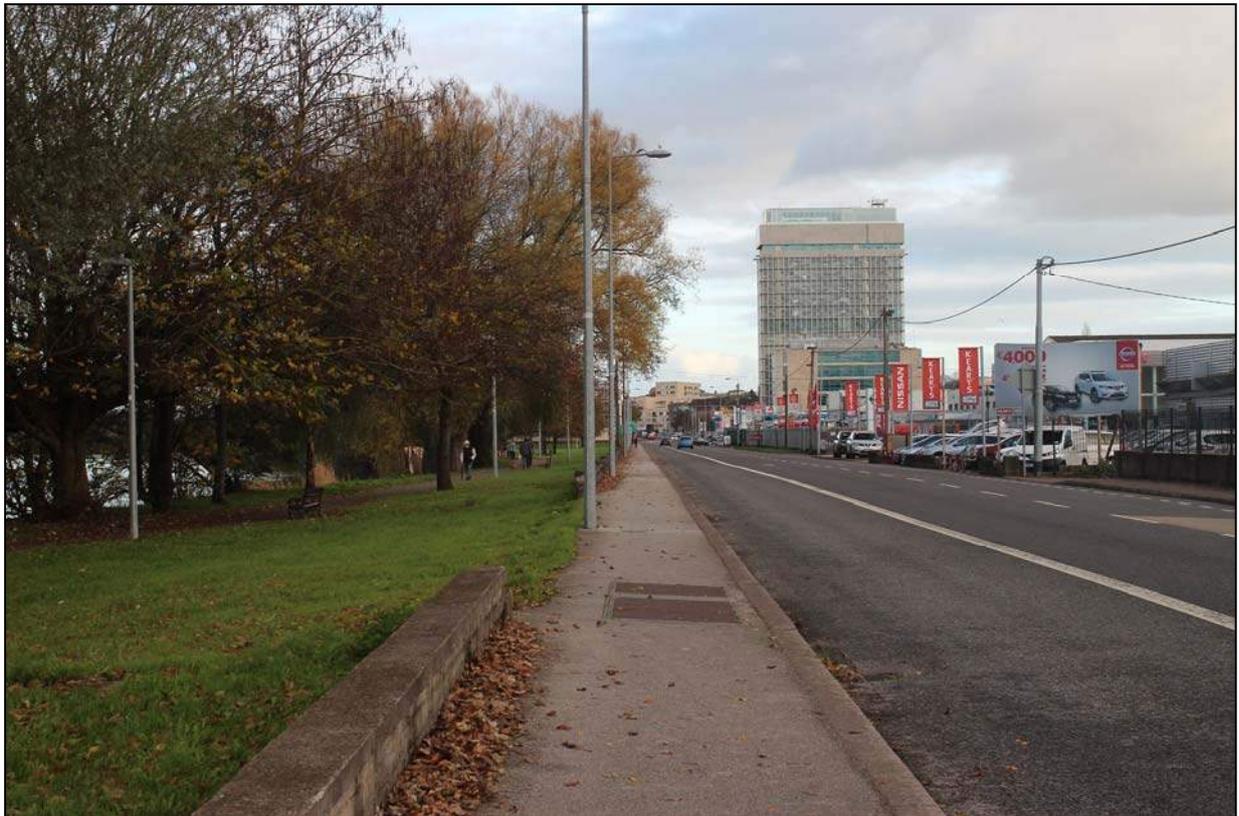


Plate 9.7: Protected View AR2 along Carrigrohane Road towards County Hall



Plate 9.8: Protected View LT15 from the Lee Fields to Our Lady's Hospital and Shanakiel Ridge



Plate 9.9: Protected View RP7 from St. Vincent's Brdge to St. Anne's Church Shandon

The Objective associated with protection of the views and prospects is as follows:

Objective 10.6 Views and Prospects

To protect and enhance views and prospects of special amenity value or special interest and contribute to the character of the City's landscape from inappropriate development, in particular those listed in the development plan. There will be a presumption against development that would harm, obstruct or compromise the quality or setting of linear views of landmark buildings, panoramic views, rivers prospects, townscape and landscape views and approach road views.

To identify and protect views of local significance through the preparation of local area plans, site development briefs and the assessment of development proposals on a case-by-case basis.

9.4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The topography, vegetation and anthropological features on the land surface in an area combine to set limits on the amount of the landscape that can be seen at any one time. These physical restrictions form individual areas or units, known as physical units, whose character can be defined by aspect, slope, scale and size. A physical unit is generally delineated by topographical boundaries and is defined by landform and land cover. Within this larger physical unit, of the Lee River Valley, it is possible to describe four distinct areas of landscape character, which have broad similarities in terms of landform, landcover as well as other cultural and aesthetic similarities. These areas are, broadly:

- Downstream of Innishcarra dam(Curraghbeg) to the Lee Fields
- Lee Fields to Distillery Fields/North Mall (Urban Sylvan/Riverside open space) and UCC Western Road
- North Mall to City Centre – Custom House Point
- Western Road/Wandesford Quay to Custom House Point

9.4.1 Physical Unit

The physical landscape unit in which the Study Area is located is defined by both the topography, in the form of a river valley, as well as the pattern of the river itself, which splits into two, forming the North and South Channels. The topography of the river valley is characterised by generally more steeply sloping ground to the north, and more varied topography to the south of the river, which is gentler in terms of landform. The topography to the south of the river Lee tends to be flatter or gently sloping in most places, excepting escarpments such as that which Elizabeth Fort is built upon, to the south of the city centre.

Landform

Present-day landscapes owe their form to the geological materials from which they were carved. Landform is the term used to describe the spatial and formal arrangement of landscape components as a natural product of geological and geomorphologic processes in the past, and refers primarily to topography and drainage.

Topography

The topography of the study area consists of the River Lee corridor as it flows through the rural areas west of Ballincollig, through the Regional Park and through the centre of Cork City. Overall, the topography of Cork City includes of several prominent ridges which are important characteristics of the city, and form the river valley. The River Lee runs along the valley floor, at times close to the ridges, where the valley narrows, and at times it is further from the ridges, through to the city centre.

The topography of the river corridor within the study area ranges from approximately 20 metres OD in the west of the study area, to less than 10 meters OD in the city centre.

At the western extent of the study area, the proposed works locations are in the rural areas to the west of the City (from west of Innishcarra Bridge to the Lee Fields. In general the topography consists of a river valley, with a wooded ridge to the north of the river, while to the south the topography consists of flatter land at Ballincollig, where the Regional Park and Ballincollig town lie to the south of the river south of the river. The valley narrows as the river continues past the Angler's Rest, and runs parallel to the Carrigrohane Road. Here, the topography slopes noticeably to the north of the river corridor, while the land to the south

of the river remains relatively flat, and forms a natural floodplain which is known as the Lee Fields and the Carrigrohane Road, and the outskirts of Cork City to the south, as seen in Plate 9.7:



Plate 9.10: View from the rear of the Sacred Heart: Prominent Ridge to the north of the River Lee, with flatter lands – the Lee Fields and Kingsley Hotel, Carrigrohane Rd, to the south

Along the North Channel of the river, from the Lee Fields to the Distillery Fields, the ridge to the north remains a prominent element of the topography, and becomes built up east of the Lee Fields. The ridge continues to be prominent to the north of the Distillery Fields. The land to the south of the river remains relatively flat.

From the North Mall to the Custom House Quays/Point, the ridge to the north of the river remains a feature, though it is further away from the river.

Along the South Channel of the river, the topography is flatter, and from Western Road to Frenche's Quay, there is a ridge of higher ground to the south, which contains Elizabeth Fort, though not as dramatic as along the North Channel. The topography of the South Channel to the Custom House Quays is relatively flat.

9.4.2 Drainage

The River Lee rises in the Shehy Mountains, near the Cork/Kerry county border. The Curragheen river flows to the south of the study area, to the south of the Carrigrohane Road.

9.4.3 Geological Processes

Chapter 6 refers to the geomorphology of the South Cork region, where uplands and valleys are characteristic of the region. The Study Area is underlain by Devonian 'Old Red Sandstone'. (The geology of Cork City is reflected in the use of sandstone and limestone in the buildings and walls in the city).

Landcover and Landuse

Landcover

Landcover is the term used to describe the combinations of vegetation and land-use that cover the land surface. It comprises the more detailed constituent parts of the landscape and encompasses both natural and man-made features. Landcover includes vegetation, structures and built form.

On the ground, it is evident that the landcover in the Study Area changes as one moves from east, from the rural area downstream of Innishcarra dam, to the west, as one reaches the centre of Cork City and the point where the river becomes wider, at Custom House Point. As noted above, the study areas is described in four sections, and the landcover of these is described below.

West of Innishcarra Dam to Lee Fields

This area is rural in character and the landcover is dominated by the River Lee itself. The rural parts of this area, downstream of Innishcarra dam to the Lee Fields, have a high proportion of open space, both public and private, and consists of both open agricultural fields and public spaces, such as the Ballincollig Regional Park and Lee Fields. Many areas of the riverbank and fields at Ballincollig Regional Park have considerable tree cover and woodlands are a feature of the wider area. The riverbanks appear largely vegetated.



Plate 9.11: View upstream at Ballincollig Regional Park

The scenic route S37 which runs through this area along the river from Innishcarra dam to the Lee Road, north of the river, also has a high proportion of trees. While there are some areas of built form, these are largely

scattered dwellings. The overall landcover is dominated by the river, vegetation, particularly mature trees wooded areas and open fields. Other noticeable landscape elements include stone bridges, at Innishcarra and at the Lee Road.

Lee Fields to Distillery Fields/North Mall and UCC Western Road

The Study area from the Lee Fields to the Distillery Fields is again dominated by the River Lee, with a high proportion of public open space along the south bank of the river, at the Lee Fields, where the agricultural fields in the County Boundary lie adjacent to the public park. This consists of a natural floodplain, predominantly grass fields, and also contains a network of pathways which are well used for recreation. Trees are also a feature of this areas, and along the Carrigrohane Road, the approach road to the city. The riverbank is vegetated in some areas, such as the area opposite the Lee Fields, along the north of the river.



Plate 9.12: View upstream at the Lee Fields

As one moves east, there are pockets of open space interspersed with built form, and a river walkway runs from the Lee Fields to the Distillery Fields. Fitzgerald's park and the Mardyke sports grounds, Cricket grounds and the Distillery Fields walkway are other well-known areas of open space. Trees and vegetation line the river banks in the majority of these areas west of the Distillery Fields. The north bank includes considerable residential areas along Sunday's Well.



Plate 9.13: View downstream at Fitzgerald's Park – open space and tree lined banks



Plate 9.14: View of walkway and tree cover at Distillery Fields

North Mall to City Centre – Custom House Point (North Channel)

From the North Mall through the city centre the river is still wide and remains the main element, and the river banks become increasingly built up, and the banks themselves are defined by limestone quay walls. The character changes from 'urban sylvan' character to that of the 'historic urban core' and city centre of the Georgian buildings on the North Mall, to Horgan's Quay and the Custom House. Tree cover is greatly reduced, and quay walls or railings separate the river from the viewer. Bridges are also a feature of this area, with Distillery Bridge, St Vincent's Bridge and St Patrick's Bridge being notable landscape elements, as seen in Plates 9.16-9.17 below. Frequent steps provide access to the river which are also a distinctive feature of the area, as seen in Plate 9.16

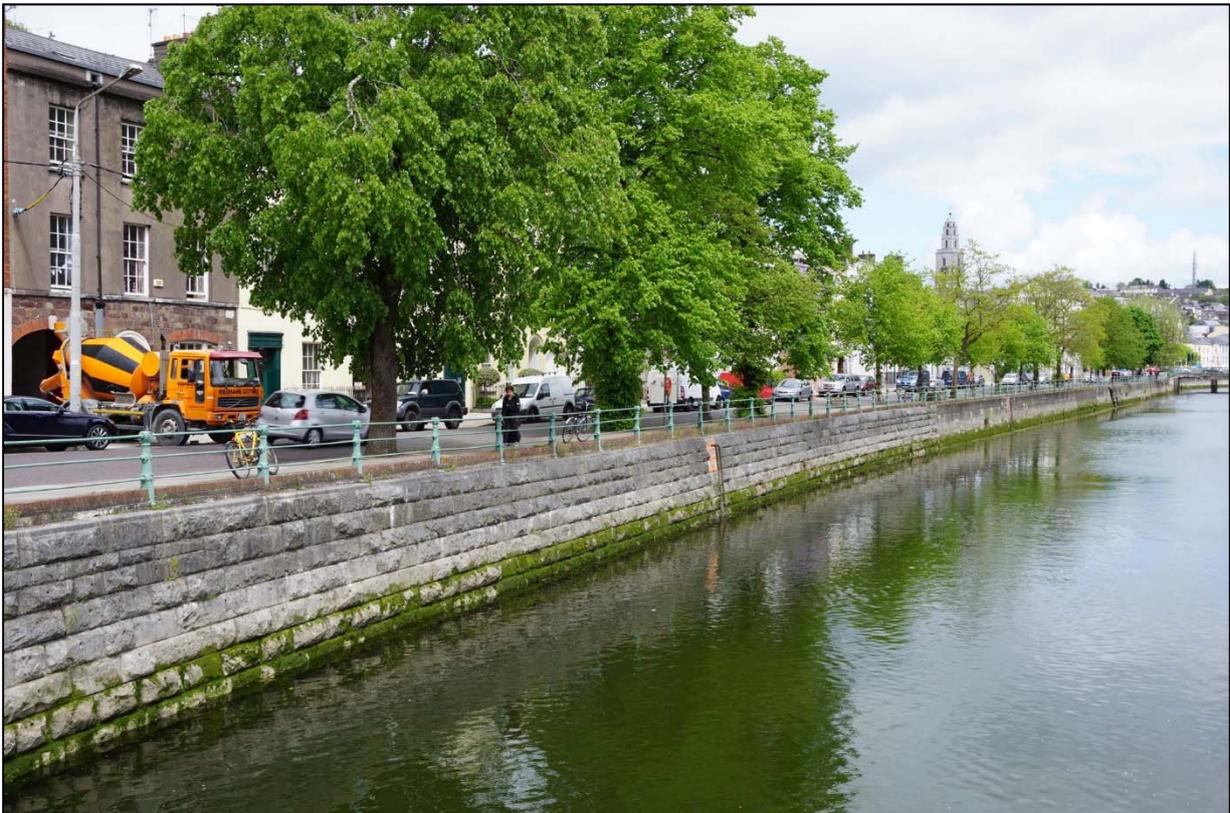


Plate 9.15: View of landcover at North Mall – paved surfaces replace open space



Plate 9.16: View of Lavitt's Quay and Pope's Quay– urban quayside character and riverside steps



Plate 9.17: View upstream towards St. Patrick's Bridge – quay walls and railings to river bank

Western Road/Wandesford Quay to Custom House Point

The south channel of the river, where it separates from the North Channel close to the Sacred Heart grounds, is a narrower channel and while the banks range from vegetated banks to built-up banks which are lined with quay walls, the channel runs primarily through built up areas, apart from the section which runs along through the UCC grounds at Western road. Further east the channel becomes contained by walls and the areas around it on both sides is built up as the river flows past Wandesford Quay, to Frenche's Quay.



Plate 9.18: View upstream of Wandesford Quay and Hanover Quay – stone quay walls/railing

The south channel also flows past Grand Parade and Sullivan's Quay, where there is a large paved public open space and a boardwalk adjacent to the river and Nano Nagle Bridge. Some trees are seen along this area, as seen in Plate 9.19 below.