

Part 8 Planning Application Report

Applicant: Limerick City and County Council

Location: Junction of Wolfe Tone Street and River Loobagh and works along the River Loobagh Walk

Proposal: The proposed development will consist of the creation of a new riverside amenity area on the site of a recently demolished building, at the junction of Wolfe Tone Street and the River Loobagh in Kilmallock, County Limerick. The proposed development is located within the Kilmallock Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). The amenity area will consist of areas of planting, grassland and natural play areas. The works will include removal of existing fencing that encloses the site and installation of new footpaths to provide improved access to the Riverside Park from Wolfe Tone Street. The works will also include upgrade to surface of existing Loobagh riverside walk, installation of benches and signage explaining local nature information and archaeological history about the Kilmallock Town Defences that cross part of the site. New amenity lighting is proposed local to the riverside amenity area.



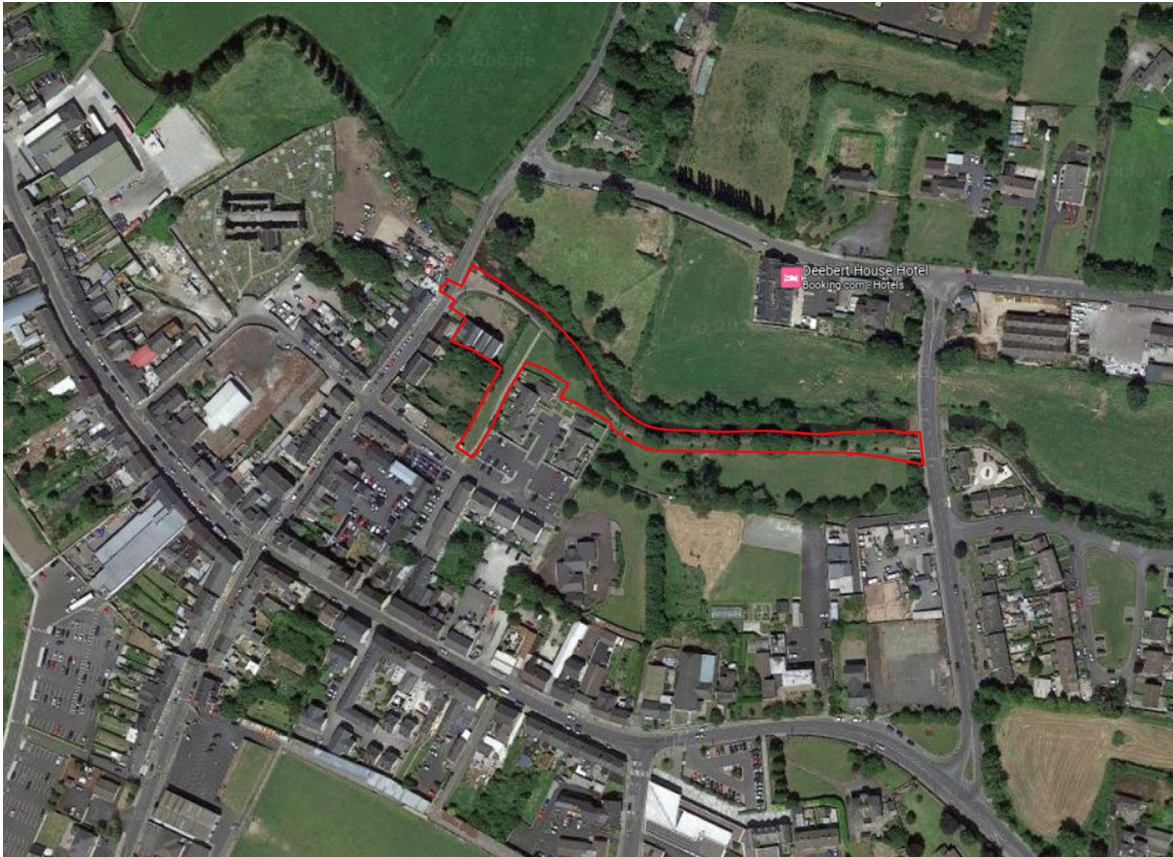
Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

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1. Site Location



Kilmallock is an attractive town of major cultural and heritage value. It derives its name from a monastery founded there by St. Cheallóg in the early 7th century. The historical and archaeological importance of Kilmallock is still evident in the many buildings and monuments that have survived to the present day. It is now the fourth largest town in County Limerick with a population of 1,668 (CSO2016).

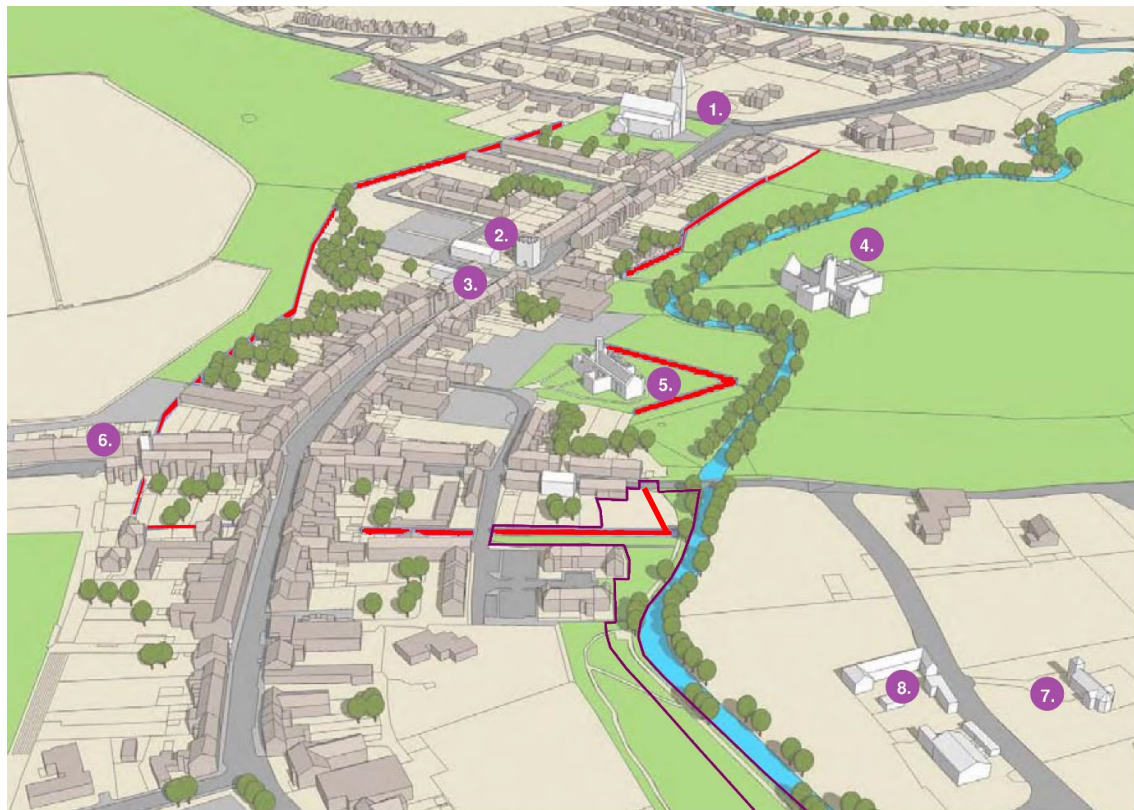
The town is set in the valley of the River Loobagh, an area of natural beauty, with the Galtee and Ballyhoura mountain ranges lying to the east and south respectively.

The application site is located on the eastern edge of the town and is bounded to the north by the River Loobagh, the east by the R515 and the west by Wolfe Tone Street. The site is bounded to the south the Riverside Park, the Deebert Estate and the side elevation of properties fronting onto Wolfe Tone Street.

The Town Walls of Kilmallock are one of the most striking examples of medieval walls in Ireland. A distinctive sense of history pervades the town and the walls contribute greatly to the character and identity of the place.

The Walls are a prominent feature of the townscape, due to their near-completeness, their function as property boundaries and their effectiveness in defining the medieval character. Outside the walls, the Dominican Priory, the Church of Ireland, and Mill complex/farmhouse, as well as several Recorded Monuments and Places, further contribute to the historic interest of the town.

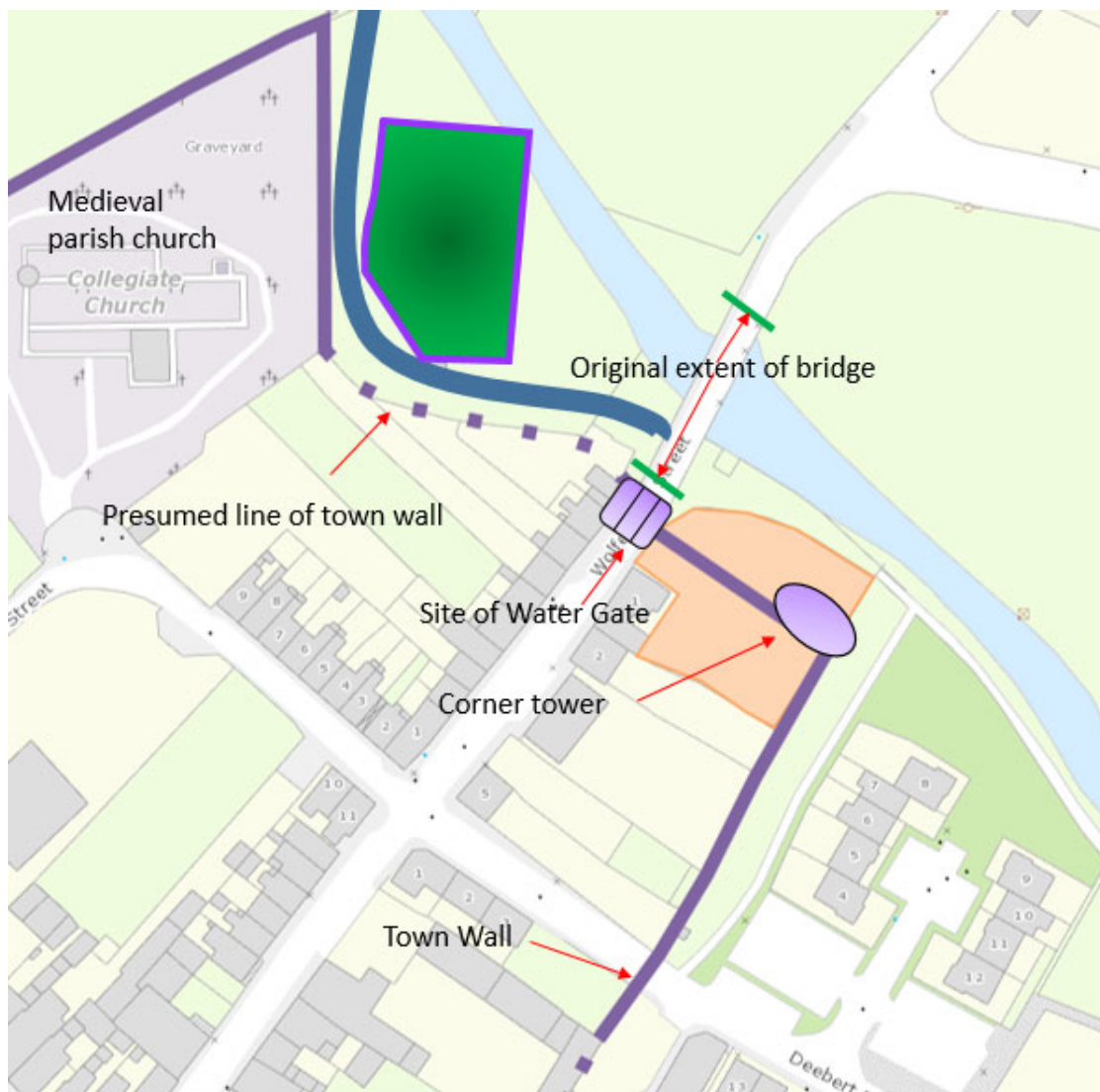
As shown on the 3d drawing below the town walls (shown in red) cross the application site (shown in purple) and as part of the design proposal it is intended to mark the location of the walls through change of surface material and interpretive signage.



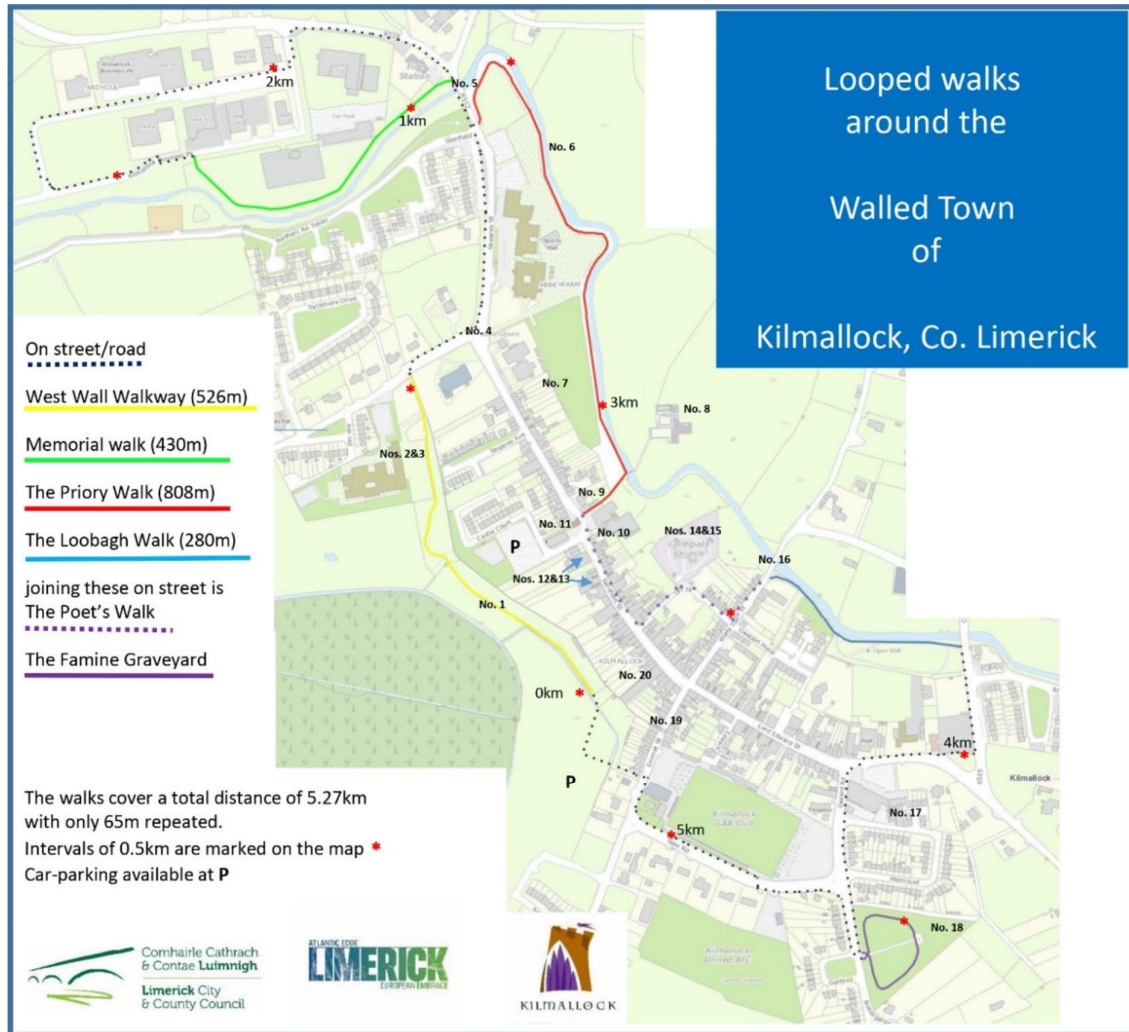
View of Town and Landmark Buildings

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Catholic Church | 5. Collegiate Church |
| 2. King's Castle | 6. Blossom Gate |
| 3. Medieval Stone Mansion | 7. Church of Ireland |
| 4. Dominican Friary | 8. Mill complex/farmhouse |

Kilmallock is a founder member (2005) of the Irish Walled Towns Network. With the help of the Network and the Heritage Council, Limerick City and County Council has been able to conserve much of the circuit of the standing walls. Kilmallock has almost 1200m of its original 1700m of town wall still standing. This site will add hugely to the Walled Town experience as the wall on the south side of the town is largely subsumed by expansion from the urban core. This site is located at the SE corner of the medieval walled town, beside the medieval Water Bridge, abutting the site of the medieval Water Gate (one of the 4 main entrances to the walled town), incorporating the SE corner of walled town, containing nearly 40m of the line of eastern defences and 19m of the southern defences, which includes the possible foundation of the SE corner tower. There may have been an outer ditch/fosse upstream from the bridge. The southern defences continue at or just above exterior ground level for a further 67m to just beyond the access road to Estate & Health Centre. There was an external fosse/ along this section.

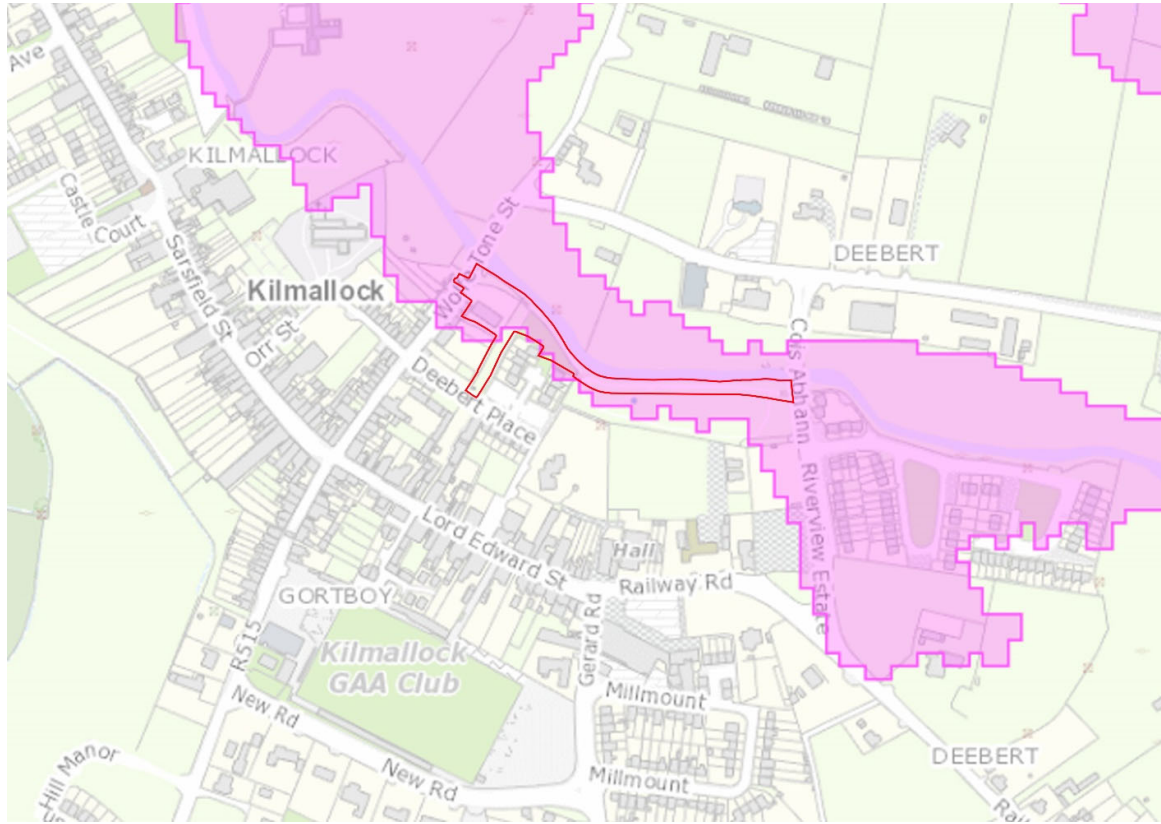


Over the past few years the town of Kilmallock has created a number of looped walks around the town – see maps below.



The West Wall Walk and the Priory Walk were both opened in the last five years and provide high quality, universal access walkways along the route of the Town Walls and the River Loobagh. A further 2km walk was recently added around Kilmallock Hill, the site of the 7th century monastery, bringing to nearly 7km the length of designated walks available within and in the immediate environs of the town. These walkways have been a real success story for Kilmallock and are very well used both by the local community and visitors to the town.

The Loobagh Walk links to the Priory Walk via the Poets Walk as shown on the map above. The proposed project will not only complement the Loobagh Walk but also the wider network of walks within the town.



The site partly sits within Flood Zone A as shown on the map above.

2. Existing Site



The derelict and vacant site at the corner of the Loobagh Walk and Wolfe Tone Street has recently been demolished – see photograph below. The building was started in 2008 and was never completed and has been derelict for the past 15 years.



The site is currently enclosed by a low wall and high steel fencing, all of which will be removed as part of the proposed work.



The photograph above shows the land between the previously derelict site and the River Loobagh and the existing slipway. The photograph below shows the site following the demolition of the derelict building. The slipway is in a poor state of repair and the lack of soft landscaping in this area creates an uninviting entrance to the Loobagh Walk from Wolfe Tone Street.



3. Design Proposals

The works proposed under this application can be broken down as follows:

- Creation of a riverside amenity area on the site of a vacant / derelict unit that has been acquired by Limerick City and County Council under the Derelict Sites Act;
- Removal of fencing / low level walls to vacant site to allow amenity area to be integrated with the Loobagh Walk;
- Installation of benches / seating within the new amenity area;
- Installation of appropriate pollinator friendly planter beds within the new amenity area;
- Interpretation of the Town Wall through suitable surface material and signage – the Town Wall crosses and bounds the vacant site (refer to illustrative masterplan)
- Removal of concrete surface adjacent to River Loobagh and creation of grassed area with seating;
- Improved accessibility from the Loobagh Walk to the River Loobagh through installation of shallow steps with handrail local to existing slipway;
- Biodiversity, Citizen Science project provided by access to river and facilities for examination of samples by groups;
- Resurfacing of the Loobagh Walk from Wolfe Tone Street to R515 Local Road;
- Installation of rock armour in select locations where walkway in danger of collapse due to erosion from the River Loobagh;
- Installation of post and rail fencing along the river side of the Loobagh Walk;
- Lighting to the new amenity area;
- Installation of benches along the Loobagh Walk;
- Undergrounding of overhead wires immediately adjacent to new amenity area;
- Interpretation signage on the Archaeological Heritage and Flora & Fauna.



4. Finishes

A palette of materials for both hard and soft landscaping was deemed suitable to the site and its surroundings.

To aid us during the process to select materials we have developed a simple check list of both hard and soft landscape materials.

Hard works materials must;

- Allow for ease of movement for all users
- Enhance the space and not conflict with historic background of the site
- Work and look attractive in both wet and dry conditions
- Have a long timeline appeal
- Provide a unique experience
- Be durable and attractive

Soft works plant materials must;

- Follow Ecologist's recommendations
- Be suitable for the Irish climate
- Be non-invasive
- Enhance bio-diversity and habitat creation

By approaching the overall landscape design of the scheme at both macro and micro levels, the scheme delivered will provide a high level of amenity.

Hard Landscape Materials

Circulation Routes:

- Footpaths will be surfaced with a variety of materials, each one responding to its location and use
- Materials include natural stone or re-constituted stone paving, asphalt and water bound gravel (Ballylusk).
- All paths will be accessible as far as existing levels allow.
- A sustainable urban drainage approach will be implemented where possible.
- A distinct band of natural stone paving will highlight the location of the historic town wall.

Seating and Signage:

- All park furniture elements will follow a similar style in terms of materials and colour, providing an interesting and inviting space.
- Seating will consist of a mix of park benches and low seating walls.
- Signage will follow the general colour scheme.
- All materials used will be durable and/or easily replaceable.

Natural Play Equipment:

- All natural play equipment will be made from trees felled as part of general tree surgery works in the County.

Soft Landscape Materials:

- All soft landscape materials used will follow the Ecologist's recommendations.
- No fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides will to be used on site to protect the existing adjacent habitat unless it is required for treatment of invasive species.
- The general aim is to create an attractive and diverse park with minimum maintenance requirements.

5. Lighting

The proposed lighting scheme is to illuminate the proposed amenity area and are based upon recommendations by our Heritage Officer and Consultant Ecologists, MKO. The lighting will be installed at low level and integrated into the walls, robust bollards and seating. The proposed location of lighting within the amenity area is shown in drawing LP01.

Any lighting incorporated into the proposal will conform to Objectives EH O24 Light Pollution and Objective EH O25 'Dark Sky' Parks and Reserves in the Limerick Development Plan 2022 - 2028, with the overall aim of minimising light spillage, thus reducing any potential disturbance to wildlife while also maintaining less than 1LUX along linear features including the river and any retained or newly planted trees/hedgerows (for bats, birds, pollinators and local non-volant mammals including otter, badger, fox, pine marten and any other local fauna likely to pass within the area at least on occasion):

- Lamps will have a lamp flux/colour of Warm White LED light source (2200 - 2700K or depending on the councils' own specifications) in areas of linear habitat features – less attractive to insects thus bats.
- Directional accessories such as internal louvres/cowls/hoods etc. should be incorporated to direct light away from treelines and linear habitat features – to reduce horizontal light spill and eliminate upward light.
- Lamps should also be specified with 0 Degree tilt (where possible) to ensure limited unwanted light spill onto the river/wider environment.
- Lighting control regime – consider controlled lighting scheme during peak bat activity (i.e. 30min after sunset and 40 min before sunrise), as well as reduced illuminance during hours of lower human activity (i.e. 12:30am – 5:30am).
- Lighting to be used only where necessary (needs to be justifiable).

The electrical installation will be carried out to meet the requirements of IS 10101:2020 and ET211:2003

The purpose for providing the illumination at night is for the following reasons:

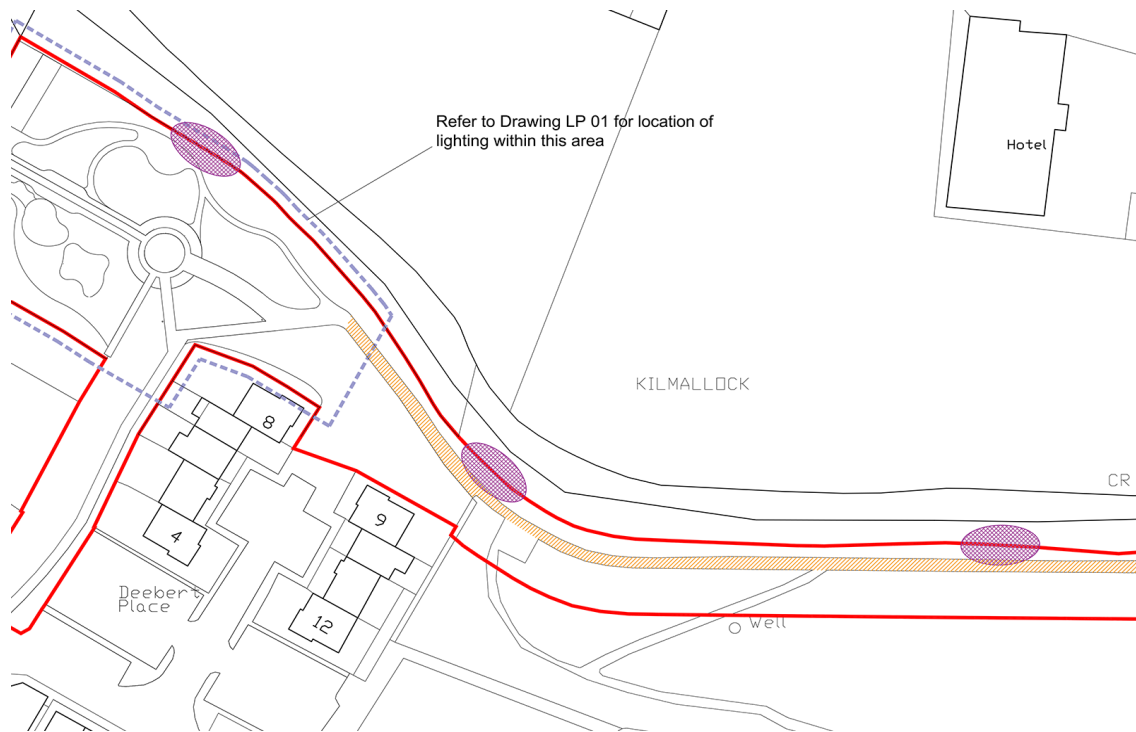
- To allow pedestrians to safely use the riverside amenity area
- To reduce crime and provide a safe environment

6. Rock Armour Installation

Installation of rock armour at agreed locations to the riverbank will be done in conjunction with Inland Fisheries requirements whereby there would be slight removal of overgrown vegetation and rock armour (one tonne rocks) will be placed adjacent to existing river bank. The chosen contractor will be required to prepare a method statement which will be issued to Inland Fisheries for their approval / sign off prior to any works commencing.

The installation of rock armour along the riverbank has been included and assessed within the supporting Environmental Reports.

The location of the rock armour on the river bank is shown on drawing LP02 – see extract below.



7. Environment Report

The Environment Impact Screening Report together with the Biodiversity Plan prepared by MKO Ecology is submitted as part of this planning application.

8. Drawing Schedule

Landscape Plan:	LP 01
Red Line Plan:	LP 04
Proposed Site Plan:	LP 02A