

PART 8 DEVELOPMENT
**PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS IN RATHANGAN TOWN CENTRE,
CO. KILDARE**

PART 8 – PLANNING REPORT

15/01/21



the **paul hogarth** company

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the **paul hogarth** company



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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the Part 8 planning report relating to the proposed environmental improvement works in Rathangan Town Centre. It is written in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

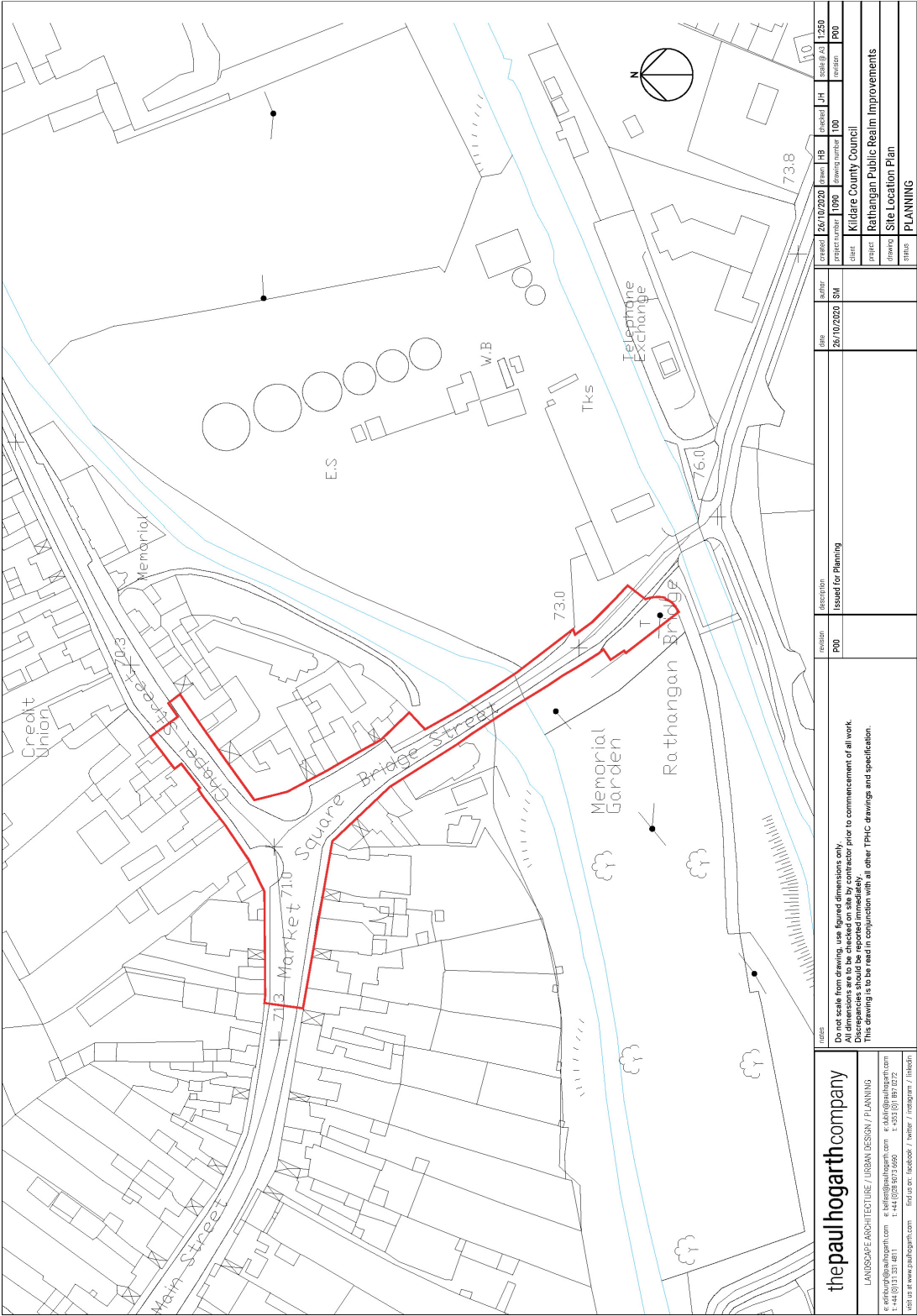
Kildare County Council (KCC) commissioned landscape architecture and planning consultancy The Paul Hogarth Company to prepare design proposals for Rathangan Town Centre (hereafter referred to as the Part 8 site). The Council's objectives for this project, in accordance with existing strategies and established policies and objectives, are to:

- Create a people friendly village centre by increasing footfall and pedestrian activity
- Stimulate business activity
- Develop visitor experience
- Manage appropriate village development
- Enhance the historic character of the village



Existing Site Image

2. SITE LOCATION



Site Location Plan (not to scale)

The Part 8 site is located in the centre of the town of Rathangan, in the west of County Kildare. The site is outlined on the Plan above and comprises land extending southwards from Market Square along Bridge Street to the junction with Kildare Road.

The Front Square is defined by buildings to the north fronting Market Square, spreading to east and west along Chapel Street and Main Street. The junction where they meet Bridge Street is part of the principal traffic route passing through the town. The east and west sides of the site are bounded at the north end by the commercial and residential properties fronting Market Square and Bridge Street, to the south by the sides of Rathangan Bridge and areas of trees. The south boundary is where the road crosses the canal bridge (Grand Canal Athy branch) and meets the junction of the R414.

The proposed works are confined to the horizontal surfaces of the Part 8 site with no works proposed to the buildings fronting onto Bridge Street and Market Square. The Part 8 site measures 125m east-west by 250m north-south, comprising a total area of 0.56Ha



Existing Site Image

3. ANALYSIS OF THE PART 8 SITE

The following key analysis findings have been informed by a detailed assessment of the site and a collaborative consultation process, facilitated by The Paul Hogarth Company on behalf of and in partnership with Kildare County Council.

3.1 RICH HISTORY AND BUILT HERITAGE

The development area is centred on Market Square, which is probably coterminous with the former medieval borough Rathangan. Rathangan is located on a ridge immediately north of the Slate River, on ground surrounded to the south, west and north by large tracts of bog. The place name Rathangan is derived from 'Ráth lomgháin', probably in reference to the large ringfort which stands to the north of the town. It has been suggested that the ringfort was refortified as a ringwork castle by the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth century.

By 1331 a manor existed in Rathangan which contained a castle, a parish church and a substantial borough with a population perhaps in the region of 500-600. In 1540, the population had reduced substantially, with just ten cottages and a watermill being present at this time, and by 1621 the settlement comprised just the castle and a watermill. It is likely that at least some of the present street pattern may still be of medieval origin and the plots that run off of Main Street, Market Square and Chapel Street may reflect a burgage-plot pattern. In 1672 a royal grant was given to the 18th Earl of Kildare for a market at Rathangan and this presumably acted as a catalyst for the development of the current street plan. A substantial Georgian country house, Rathangan Lodge was built on the north side of Rathangan in 1765.

The present bridge over the River Slate was built c. 1780, probably to replace an earlier structure. The construction of the Athy Branch of the Grand Canal on the south side of Rathangan between 1783 and 1795 provided a major boost to the local economy and probably was responsible for the construction of many of the mills along the Slate river at Rathangan. Two bridges were constructed over the canal, Rathangan Bridge and Spencer Bridge, and a Police Barrack, which acted as a chief station for constabulary, was added between the canal and the River Slate. The latter was converted into a Malthouse in around 1840.

The built heritage of the town is an important element in the character of Rathangan.

3.2 BALANCING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE AND CARS

Despite the fine built heritage, the volume of parked and moving vehicles compromises the environmental quality of the central area of Rathangan. Presently, the road network comprises two-way traffic linking the Main Street (R401), New Street (R414) and Bridge Street (R401). Traffic figures from the report show the R401 is the busiest route through the town with the peak southbound traffic between 8am-9am and peak northbound traffic between 5pm-6pm, corresponding with the common peak time as commuters travel to/from work. The report shows that the town receives a relatively low number of Heavy Goods Vehicles of total traffic. However, due to the compact nature of the streetscape and confined horizontal geometry, the perceived impact of HGV vehicles in Rathangan is anecdotally much greater.

All of the on-street parking provision within town is free of charge which lends itself to long-term parking, both by residents and those working in the town. The presence of this long-term parking, and a lack of robust parking enforcement, has resulted in haphazard short-term parking occurring within the Part 8 site and causing traffic congestion. At present, several informal spaces are being used illegally for parking, which combined with narrow paving poses potentially serious pedestrian safety issues that need to be addressed.

Large sweeping bends in the road network at the central junction of Rathangan mean that priority is given to cars over pedestrians as the road formation encourages vehicles to travel at greater speed. However, due to the vertical nature of the built environment, with limited forward visibility and an urban context, the report states that traffic is generally travelling at less than the speed limit within the Part 8 area. On the approach roads to the north and west of the town, with long straights and wider carriageways (R419), traffic speeds are markedly higher, and so some traffic calming measures may be required in the future to encourage drivers to reduce their speed in the area.

Within the Part 8 area, approximately 56% of car parking spaces are used at any one time mid-week, mainly as short stay parking, and approximately 67% of which are used at any one time on a Saturday, again mainly as short stay parking. From the Parking Utilisation Survey data, the report states that the proposed reduction in car parking provision would not negatively affect the town.

Overall, the environment in its current state is relatively unpleasant for pedestrians, discourages active travel, is potentially unsafe and overly dominated by private vehicles. Through its' focus on moving vehicles as quickly as possible through the area, Rathangan has undermined the central area of the Part 8 Site as a quality civic space, disincentivising community activities and events and detracting from the surrounding heritage assets.

3.3 TOWN CENTRE ANIMATION

Rathangan was once a successful market town, boosted by the introduction of the Grand Canal and thriving economically through the 19th and early 20th centuries. Yet like many rural Irish towns it has struggled to sustain economic vibrancy through the late twentieth and early twenty first century. This has materialised with a proliferation of vacant shop units and reduced footfall in central areas. This is especially noticeable after dark, combined with low quality lighting within the centre.

In recent years, the local community has made concerted efforts to regenerate the town, most recently winning a Silver Medal in the 2016 Tidy Towns Competition. Floral arrangements and shopfront improvements have clearly made a difference to the town. However, vacancy levels have largely persisted, requiring more substantive investment in the town centre to catalyse private sector investment.

Furthermore, as Rathangan lacks large open spaces or civic squares, there is currently limited potential for footfall to be driven by outdoor cultural and community events. Animation of the town centre through events and 'spill out' from buildings, is therefore limited to pavement space along the main street, which is restricted in places.

To rectify this an opportunity exists for the Part 8 site to be reconfigured to incorporate community space, reasserting Rathangan as a market town and enhancing the position of the pedestrian, local and visitor, within the user hierarchy.

3.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION FINDINGS

In addition to stakeholder engagement meetings with local businesses, council officers and elected members, a public consultation event was held on the Part 8 site at the commencement of the project. Advertised widely in advance, this event provided the opportunity for members of the public to meet the Project Team and share their thoughts and ideas for the future development of Rathangan and the Part 8 site. Questionnaires were distributed at the event, with a total of 296 completed surveys returned. The findings from the questionnaires are summarised below and have helped inform the design of the proposed Part 8 scheme.



Public Consultation Day

What three words would you use to describe Rathangan?

The table below lists the top 10 adjectives used by respondents to describe Rathangan. The adjectives overwhelmingly describe Rathangan positively, with the top five most common descriptions accounting for over 50% of total responses received.

1	Friendly	111
2	Beautiful	109
3	Quiet	57
4	Small	53
5	Safe	46
6	Strong Community Spirit	34
7	Historic	33
8	Rural	26
9	Boring	24
10	Busy	22

What are the top three things you like and dislike about Rathangan?

A majority of responses (148) identified Rathangan as a 'Friendly and Welcoming' town, with the town's natural amenities, convenient location and historic built fabric cited as key 'likes'. On the other hand, a majority of responses (108) cited 'derelict and vacant buildings' as a main dislike.

Likes

1	Friendly and Welcoming	148
2	Natural Amenities (river, canal, woods, walks)	111
3	Sports and Play Facilities	68
4	Shops	66
5	Community Events	48
6	Peaceful and Safe	44
7	Convenient Location	32
8	Restaurants and Takeaways	29
9	Schools	27
10	Historic Buildings/Features	22

Dislikes

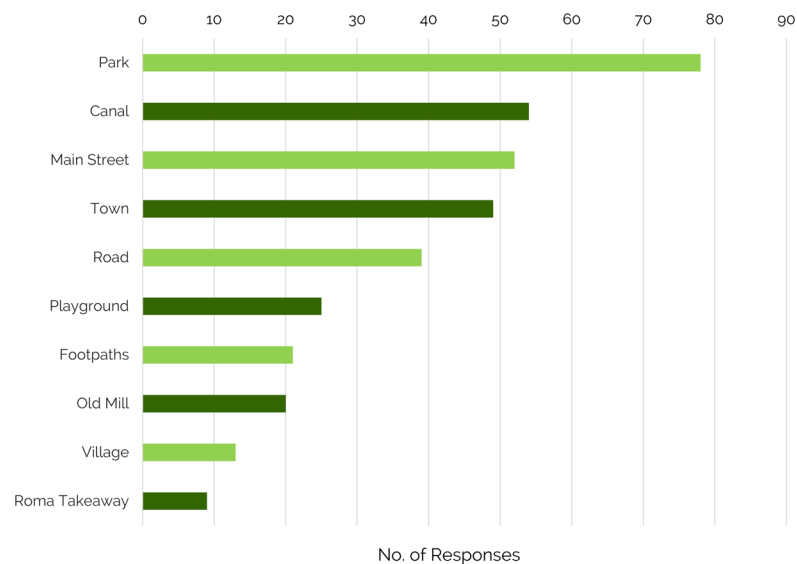
Likes

1	Derelict/Vacant Buildings	108
2	Lack of variety of Shops, Coffee Shops and Cafés	65
3	Lack of Parking	62
4	Town Centre Traffic Congestion and Speeding	56
5	Neglected and Rundown	55
6	Poor Public Transport	51
7	Poor Quality Footpaths and Disjointed Walking Network	51
8	Lack of facilities for Teenagers	39
9	Littering and Dog Littering	32
10	Low Quality Street Lighting	28

Dislikes

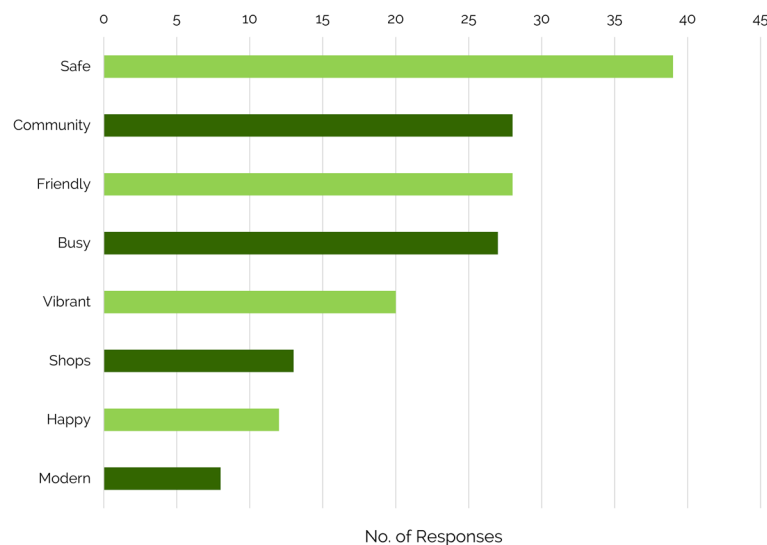
Which locations in the village do you think need improved?

The graph below outlines the top ten most common responses to this question, with the main area cited as requiring improvement being Tannery Park. While the Part 8 scheme does not propose any works to Tannery Park, five of the ten areas listed will be positively impacted, namely, 'Main Street', 'Town', 'Road', 'Footpaths', 'Village'



What kind of place would you like Rathangan to be in the future?

The graph below lists the top ten priorities for the future of Rathangan, which have in turn informed the design of the Part 8 scheme.



4. PROPOSED SCHEME

4.1 Project Description

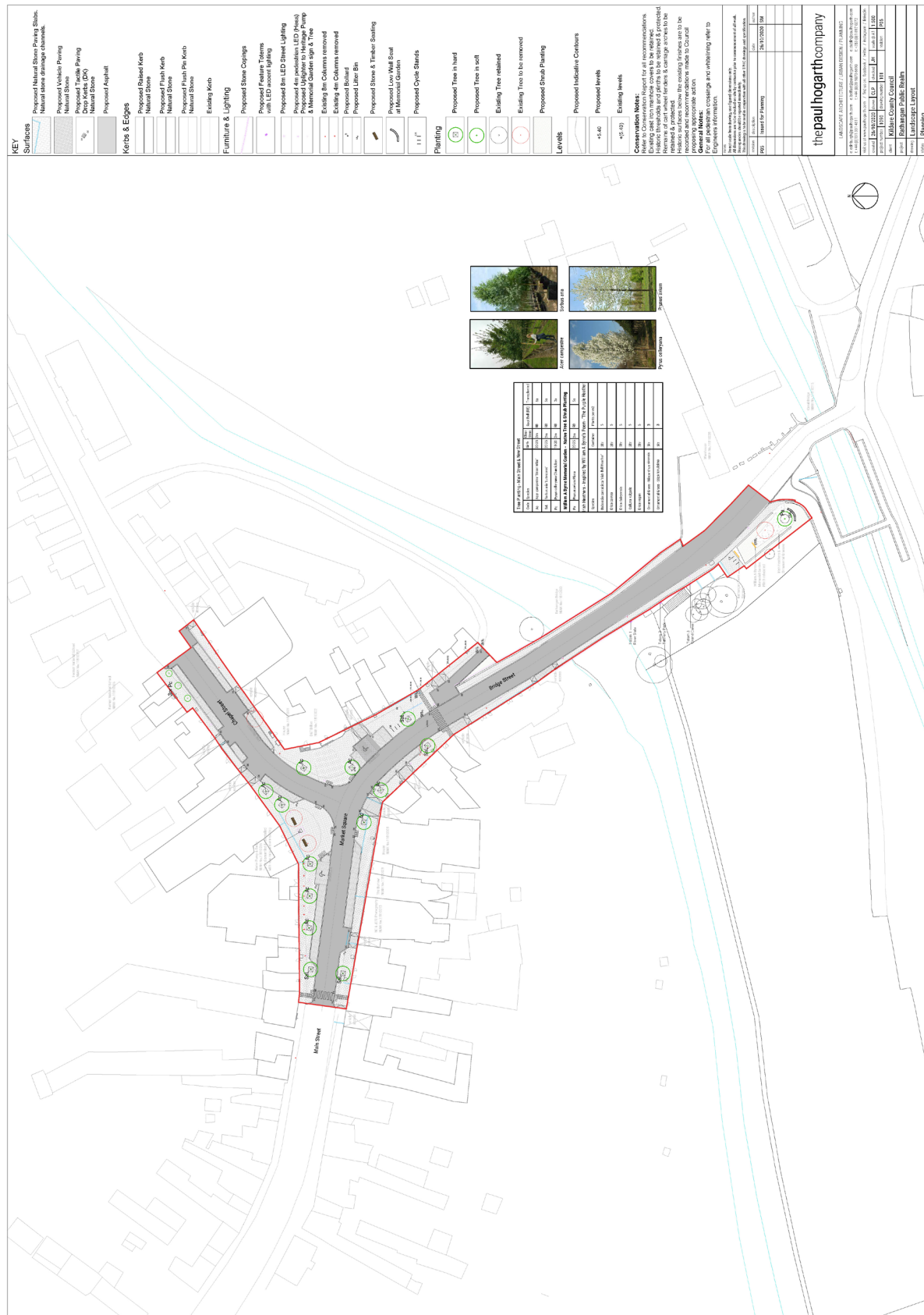
Proposed environmental improvement works in Rathangan Town Centre, comprising:

- a. footpath widening and resurfacing,
- b. upgrade of street furniture and street lighting,
- c. replacement of existing trees with new trees and additional trees (5 existing trees removed, 14 trees proposed to replace)
- d. Formalisation of car parking spaces and resurfacing, including additional disabled parking bays
- e. Sensitive restoration of water pump NIAH No. 11810056
- f. Re-design of 'William A Byrne memorial garden
- g. Welcome signage at approach to town
- h. Gateway feature artworks on approach to town
- i. New street lighting columns and pedestrian feature lighting to replace existing



Visualisation of Market Square

Visualisation of Proposed Part 8 Scheme



Landscape Layout Plan (not to scale)

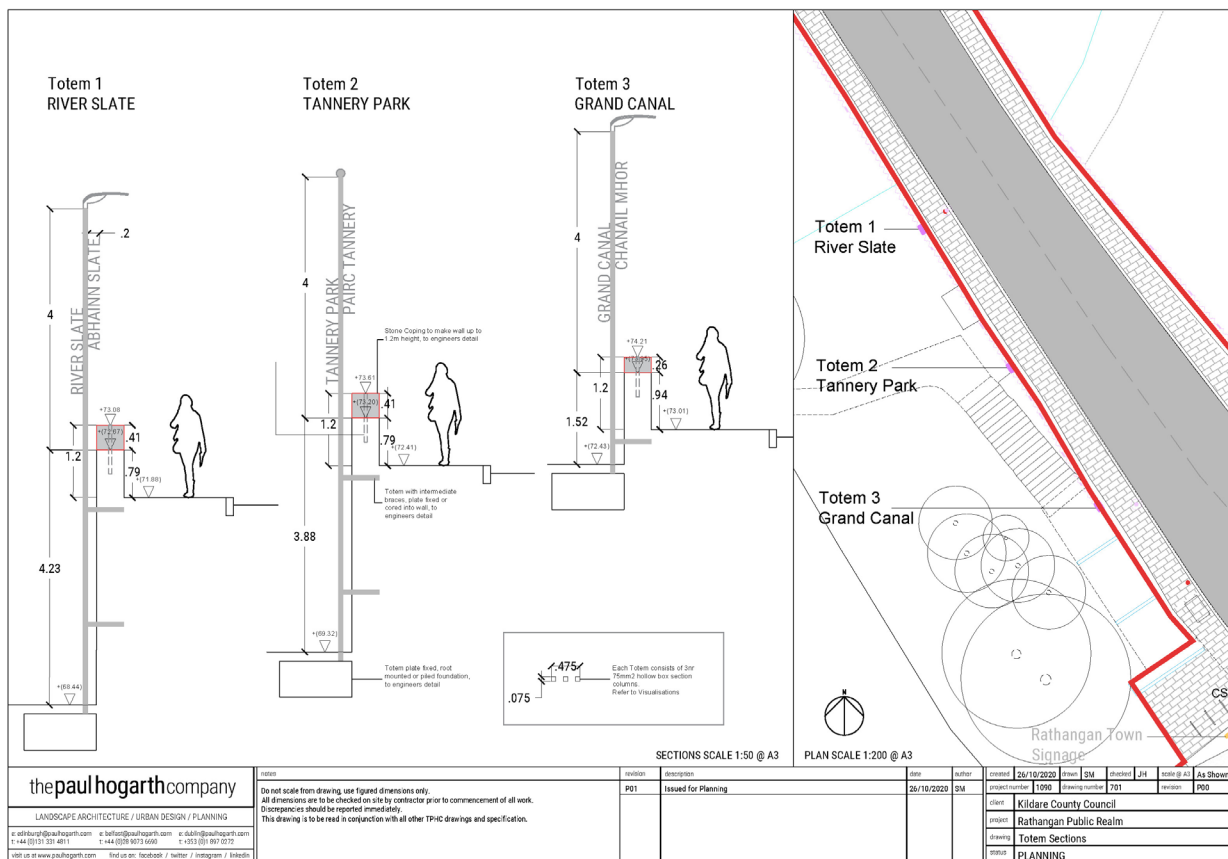
4.2 Design Features

4.4.1 Use of High-Quality Public Realm Materials

The proposed scheme uses high quality public realm materials and craftsmanship comprising natural stone paving, tree planting, bespoke street furniture and street lighting.

The use of these materials will:

- Convey a message of quality that reflects the vision held for Rathangan.
- Utilise materials that last much longer than inexpensive alternatives - as used previously.
- Provide hard landscaping throughout the space, which is necessary to facilitate high footfalls associated with a range of activities and events.
- Improve quality of the environment after dark, particularly with the bespoke totem lighting feature with bi-lingual signage on the River Slate bridge.
- Provide a visually attractive setting for the heritage features, including buildings and monuments such as the Water Pump.



4.4.2 *Creation of a Flexible, Pedestrian-Orientated Space, that enables Social Distancing*

The proposed design of the Market Square redresses the balance from what is currently a vehicular dominated location to a civic space that puts people and pedestrians first, creating a flexible area capable of accommodating a range of community events and activities.

Particularly important given the impact of Covid-19, the increased quantity of pedestrian-orientated space allows for socially distant safe interaction which will play an important role in the socio-economic recovery of Rathangan.

Such a design feature will involve an adjustment to the road network, removing informal and illegal car parking spaces and formalising the overall parking arrangement. As such, footpath widening and footpath surface upgrade is proposed, using high quality natural stone that will improve pedestrian connectivity and pedestrian experience within this central area.

Doing so will:

- Establish an attractive environment for all users, thereby stimulating increased footfall.
- Increase opportunities for greater use of the Market Square by communities, businesses and the local authority for outdoor activities, events and markets, thereby generating spin-off benefits for local businesses.
- Expand the quantity of pedestrian space to allow for socio-economic activity in a safe and socially distant manner.



4.4.3 Establishment of a Safer Environment for all Users

The scheme proposes the rationalisation of vehicular infrastructure throughout the Part 8 site, including the removal of informal parking spaces. The sweeping road junction between the R414 and R401 will be decreased to allow for an increase pavement space. This rationalisation of roads infrastructure, coupled with the removal of the car parking spaces will allow the Part 8 site to be given back to community use and pedestrians, as would have historically been the case.

The quantity of disabled car parking bays has been increased from one space to two and a dedicated loading bay has also been designed into the scheme.

The proposed rationalisation of vehicular infrastructure and car parking, in addition to footpath widening and enhanced street lighting will deliver:

- a safer environment for all users, particularly pedestrians, including those with disabilities and using buggies, as well as cyclists.
- better quality pedestrian links.
- a safer environment after dark.

5. ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING POLICY

5.1 National Planning Framework - Project Ireland 2040

Published 16th February 2018, the National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country to the year 2040.

The NPF sets out 10 National Policy Objectives (NPO's) that seek to create attractive, liveable, well-designed, and high-quality urban places. The National Policy Objectives seek to regenerate and rejuvenate urban environs, done so through enhanced levels of amenity space and design quality to reverse patterns of stagnation and decline.

The NPF also details a series of objectives that promote the integration of residential development with safe and convenient alternatives to car use, such as prioritising walking and cycling travel modes, to assist in the creation of sustainable communities.

Whilst the town of Rathangan is not specifically mentioned within the NPF due to its high-level and strategic nature, County Kildare is listed within the Mid-East section of the Eastern and Midland Region.

Out of the 10 NPO's those of greatest relevance to the Part 8 proposal are:

- NPO 1: Compact Growth,
- NPO 4: Sustainable Mobility,
- NPO 7: Enhanced Amenities and Heritage, and
- NPO 8: Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society

Project Response

Through the delivery of a high-quality environmental improvement scheme that prioritises active travel, enhances public amenity space and celebrates local heritage features, the Part 8 proposal aligns with and supports the following policies from the National Planning Framework:

Making Stronger Urban Places

National Policy Objective 4

Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.

National Policy Objective 6

Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.

National Policy Objective 7

Apply a tailored approach to urban development, that will be linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with a particular focus on reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities.

People, Homes and Communities

National Policy Objective 27

Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

Realising Our Sustainable Future

National Policy Objective 60

Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.

5.2 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013

The Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (DMURS) was prepared for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. The Manual provides guidance on a series of principles, approaches and standards that are necessary to achieve balanced, best practice outcomes with regards to design of urban roads and streets.

Project Response

The proposed scheme has been informed by and incorporates the values of the current best practice guidance set out in DMURS in creating safe, attractive streets and spaces that prioritise pedestrians and stimulate town centre vibrancy. This involves increasing permeability for pedestrians by removing barriers and street clutter as well as addressing existing safety concerns that arise from interaction between pedestrians and motorists throughout the Part 8 site. This has been further corroborated and supported by an independent Road Safety Audit, provided as part of the Part 8 documentation.

5.3 Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The elected members of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly adopted the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (EMRSES) on the 28th June 2019, in accordance with section 24 (9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the region to 2031 and beyond. The aim of the strategy is to create a sustainable and competitive region that supports the health and well-being of its people and places, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for everyone. Within the EMRSES, County Kildare is located within Eastern region.

The three key principles of the RSES are focused on:

- Healthy placemaking,
- Climate action and
- Economic opportunity

Each of these principles are supported by 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSO's) which are aligned with international, EU and national policy. Out of the 16 RSO's, those of greatest relevance to the Part 8 proposal are:

- RSO 2: Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration
- RSO 4: Healthy Communities
- RSO 5: Creative Places
- RSO 6: Integrated Transport and Land Use
- RSO 10: Biodiversity and Natural Heritage
- RSO 12: A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise and Innovation
- RSO 13: Improve Education Skills and Social Inclusion
- RSO 15: Enhanced Strategic Connectivity

Project Response

In providing a safer, people-centred, civic space in the centre of Rathangan, the project will stimulate increased footfall and increase socio-economic opportunities for communities, businesses and the local authority to introduce outdoor activities, events and markets.

Whilst delivering on the three key principles of the RSES (healthy placemaking, climate action and economic opportunity), the Part 8 proposal will assist and support in realising the following key objectives of the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy:

Town Centre Renewal

RPO 6.12: Local authorities shall include objectives in development plans and local area plans supporting emphasis on placemaking for town centres, for example through inclusion of a Placemaking Strategy for towns and implementation of Town Centre Renewal Plans.

RPO 6.13: Local authorities shall support the preparation of Design Guidelines to provide for improvements in the appearance of streetscapes and for revitalising vacant spaces for example with cost effective, temporary uses that build on the longer-term vision for space.

Integration of Transport and Land Use Planning

RPO 8.1: The integration of transport and land use planning in the Region shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the transport strategy of the RSES. Mobility Management and Travel Plans

RPO 8.7: To promote the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use.

Walking and Cycling

Enhance pedestrian facilities in all urban areas in the Region

Healthy Placemaking

RPO 9.10: In planning for the creation of healthy and attractive places, there is a need to provide alternatives to the car and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking in the design of streets and public spaces. Local authorities shall have regard to the Guiding Principles for ‘Healthy Placemaking’ and ‘Integration of Land Use and Transport’ as set out in the RSES and to national policy as set out in ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ and the ‘Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)’.

RPO 9.11: Local authorities shall support the preparation of Design Guidelines to provide for improvements in the appearance of streetscapes and for revitalising spaces for

example with cost effective, temporary uses that build on the longer-term vision for space.

RPO 9.12: In Planning policy formulation and implementation local authorities and other stakeholders shall be informed by the need to cater for all levels of disability, through the appropriate mitigation of the built environment, and in particular for the needs of an ageing population.

Arts, Culture, Language and Heritage

RPO 9.24: Promote and facilitate the role of arts and culture in recognition of its importance to people's identity and the potential for economic development through a unique cultural tourism offering throughout the Region.

RPO 9.25: Seek to work with all relevant stakeholders to promote equality of access to and engagement with arts and cultural services and in the promotion of culture and heritage led urban and rural regeneration.

5.4 Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (Volume 1)

The Kildare County Development Plan was adopted by the Elected Members of Kildare County Council on 1st February 2017 and came into effect on 1st March 2017. It sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the functional area of County Kildare, over the period 2017-2023. The overarching aim of the Plan is;

“To build on the strengths of the county by facilitating sustainable development, through the provision of high quality employment opportunities and residential developments supported by quality urban and rural environments with physical and social infrastructure to support communities throughout the county.”

Project Response

By delivering a high-quality attractive environment that balances the needs of all users and has engaged with the community through the process, the proposed scheme aligns with, and supports, the following policies and objectives from the County Development Plan 2017-2023.

Economic Development, Enterprise & Tourism Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- **ECD 38:** Work with stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, the Arts Council, local communities and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in County Kildare.
- **ECD 39:** Support and promote existing festivals and sporting events to increase the cultural, heritage and lifestyle profile of the county, and where appropriate to promote and facilitate the development of new events and venues to host these events.
- **EO 40:** Support the expansion and development of tourism in Kildare.

Walking and Cycling Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- **WC 1:** Prioritise sustainable modes of travel by the development of high-quality walking and cycling facilities within a safe street environment.
- **WC 2:** Promote the development of safe and convenient walking and cycling routes.

- **WC 6:** Ensure that all roads in existing and new developments are designed in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards contained in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013, the NTA National Cycle Manual and other appropriate standards.

Movement and Transport Policies: Road and Street Design

It is the policy of the Council to:

- **RS 1:** Ensure that streets and roads within the county are designed to balance the needs of place and movement, to provide a safe traffic calmed street environment in accordance with the principles set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) while meeting the needs of all road users.
- **RS 2:** Ensure that all streets and street networks are designed to passively calm traffic through the creation of a self-regulating street environment, through a multi-disciplinary team approach (e.g. engineers, planners, architects, landscape architects, urban designers).

Movement and Transport Policies: Traffic and Transportation Management

It is the policy of the Council to:

- **TM 1:** Manage traffic in urban areas and prioritise the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport particularly at key junctions

Retail Policies

Within the Retail Hierarchy, Rathangan is ranked Level 4, Local Centre, Tier 1 Small Town Centre. This means it should have a range of shopping, non-retail services and, to differing degrees, civic and community functions. Therefore, incorporating community event space will help to achieve this role.

It is the policy of the Council to:

- **R 40:** Encourage and facilitate the enhancement and environmental improvement of the county's towns and villages and review the approaches of the exemplars in Ireland and overseas to inform how this can be achieved.
- **R 41:** Pursue all avenues of funding, including State funding, to secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the public realm of the county's towns and villages.

Architectural & Archaeological Heritage: Architectural Conservation Areas

New development within these areas will only be granted planning permission if it can be demonstrated that it will not harm the character or appearance of the area. ACAs provide an opportunity to build upon an existing character by establishing a high standard of urban design. A distinctive sense of place can be created through street lighting, street furniture, paving, signage, and by encouraging best conservation practice in the repair and maintenance of historic buildings, and also by insisting on high design standards for new developments. The proposed works to the Part 8 Site aligns with this objective and will enhance the quality of the public realm within the area.

Urban Design: Town Centres

The aim of this Plan is to support and further develop the role of town centres in their evolution as inclusive, diverse and attractive service, recreational and living centres for residents and visitors alike. Creativity and innovation will be promoted which contribute to the personality of individual town centres and respect their existing character.

Cultural and Social Activity

Public spaces should be capable of accommodating civic activities such as markets, festivals and events which allow for an animated urban landscape, by day and by night, on a year-round basis. The resurgence in popularity of farmer's markets is something that will be encouraged and facilitated. Such markets serve as gathering places for people and help grow and connect urban and rural economies.

Development Management Standards

New planting should consist of local native plant types indigenous to the area and be incorporated into the site so as to enhance overall appearance and biodiversity (Refer to Table 17.2) and contribute to the green infrastructure of the area.

In accordance with Table 17.2, Chapter 17 Development Management Standards of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023, details of soft landscaping have been provided on the Landscape Layout drawing accompanying this Planning Report.

5.5 Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (Volume 2)

Volume 2 of the County Development Plan examines the Small Towns and Environs Plan to provide a coherent planning framework for the development of Rathangan.

Project Response

By providing a welcoming, safe, useable and people-centric civic space which encourages social interaction, the proposed scheme aligns with and supports the following policies and objectives from the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (Volume 2).

General Transport

It is an objective of the Council to:

- **RN 18:** Provide and upgrade public lighting throughout the town as the need arises.

Sustainable Transport

It is an objective of the Council to:

- **RN 19:** Provide a high-quality footpath network throughout the town by improving pedestrian facilities through the refurbishment of footpaths, construction of new footpaths and the provision of appropriate crossing facilities as necessary on the following routes:
 - (i) Along the R401 Regional Road between the development boundaries of the town, including the town centre along Bridge Street, Market Square and Main Street.
 - (ii) Along the R414 Regional Road from Market Square to the development boundary
 - (iv) Along the R414 Regional Road from Rathangan Bridge to the development boundary
- **RN 20:** Provide amenity pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along both sides of the Slate River and the Grand Canal.
- Due to the complexities and sensitivities associated with the bridge, it was decided that for this particular Part 8 scheme Objective RN20 would not be achieved in the short term. The scheme does however seek to create a much more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment overall within the project area and importantly it does not hinder the longer term ability for future infrastructure to be developed over the river and canal.

Parking

It is an objective of the Council to:

- **RN 29:** Provide accessible car parking spaces at appropriate locations throughout the town.

Water, Drainage and Environmental Services

Surface Water/ Flood Protection and Management

It is an objective of the Council to:

- **RN 35:** Ensure that development proposals for lands identified by the dashed Pink line on Map V2-1.7A shall be subject to site specific flood risk assessment appropriate to the type and scale of development being proposed.
- **A** desk top flood assessment of the study area was conducted by OCSC, the approach adopted and results of which are detailed in Section 6.4 of the following chapter, ‘Supporting Studies’.

Architectural and Archaeological Heritage

Natural Heritage

It is an objective of the Council to:

- **RN 45:** Preserve views and prospects to and from the River Slate and the Grand Canal and to ensure that further development along the water system does not affect the quality of either the scenic viewpoint or the amenity of the waterways. New development adjacent to the riverside and canal amenity area shall be restricted where such development could present a negative visual effect or disrupt the vistas available.

6. SUPPORTING STUDIES/ASSESSMENTS

6.1 Archaeological Assessment

The following narrative provides a summary of the findings from the accompanying archaeological assessment that was undertaken by Kilkenny Archaeology in support of this Part 8.

The assessment comprised a field survey of the Part 8 site and a desk-based examination of the following documentary sources:

- Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland
- Archaeological Survey of Ireland RMP files
- Historic maps of Kilcullen and Kildare
- Aerial photographs from 2000, 2005 and 2018 (Google Earth and Bing)
- Accounts of previous archaeological excavations in Kilcullen in the 'Excavations Bulletin', www.excavations.ie
- Architectural Heritage sites in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) for Kildare and the Record of Protected Structures for County Kildare in the 2017-2023 Kildare County Development Plan
- Archaeological 'grey literature' reports
- Secondary sources (see bibliography)

Field inspection was undertaken with the primary aim of identifying any potential impacts that the proposed development may have upon archaeological heritage and identified/previously unidentified archaeological sites/areas of archaeological potential that lie within or in close proximity to the proposed development area. Field survey included examination, photography and written descriptions of each archaeological monument/area.



Plan of historic sites and structures in vicinity of Part 8 site

The assessment identified that the medieval borough of Rathangan was located on the north side of the bridge and whilst there is currently no evidence to suggest there was a medieval bridge crossing in place, it remains a possibility. It is possible that some of the property plots that run off Market Street/Chapel Street and Market Square originated as medieval burgage plots. Likewise, the Market Square could reflect the medieval marketplace and almost certainly that which is referred to in the seventeenth century. Market Street is flanked on the south side by three late nineteenth century houses and an early twentieth century pump is present at the junction between the street and Chapel Street. Both Market Street and Chapel Street (named after the former Catholic chapel which it leads up to) are also probably of medieval origin and some of the plots that run off the latter may be of similar age.

The assessment concludes that no structures or features of archaeological significance were identified as having the potential to be impacted, directly or indirectly, by the proposed development works. However, the development area lies within the Zone of Archaeological Protection for Rathangan deserted medieval settlement and engages with and is proximal to several areas of archaeological, architectural and industrial heritage significance. The proposed development area can therefore be considered to be an area of archaeological potential. Although the proposed public realm project is largely restricted to shallow resurfacing works and the insertion of services, any groundworks on the site have the potential to disturb subsurface archaeological deposits, features, burials or structures, should they exist in the area.

Proposed Mitigation

It is recommended that all groundworks (ground reductions, site investigations, service trenching) associated with the proposed works should be monitored by an archaeologist under licence to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

6.2 Built Heritage

A Conservation Report was prepared by Alastair Coey Architects, in support of this Part 8 submission. It outlines the national, regional and local statutory policy and guidance that informs the safeguarding of architectural and archaeological heritage in Rathangan, including the Architectural Heritage Guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004) and the Rathangan Small Town Plan, Volume 2 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023.

The report highlights that the Part 8 site contains a number of traditional buildings and features such as a water pump and wheel fender posts, which contribute to the distinctive character of the town. Rathangan was recorded as part of the Kildare survey of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2001 and a number of the buildings and structures recorded in the inventory are affected by the proposed scheme. Some have subsequently been included in the Record of Protected Structures deemed to be of regional significance.

RPS No.	Name	NIAH No.
B17-18	D&T Dillon	11810001
B17-19	D&T Dillon	11810002
B17-20	Rathangan Bridge	11810003
-	House (NC & J O'B Photography)	11810013
-	House (The Burrow)	11810009
-	House (Formerly Roma)	11810008
-	Water Pump	11810056
-	Former Rathangan National School	11810005
-	Former Rathangan National School	11810057

The report notes that no historic surfacing materials appear to survive in the Part 8 site although it is possible that some evidence of previous historic finishes may be uncovered during the implementation stage.

Proposed Mitigation

- The construction contractor will be required to implement appropriate measures to ensure that no damage is caused to historic fabric.

Resurfacing

- A watching brief by a conservation architect and archaeologist will be provided during excavation stages and any previous surfaces exposed will be evaluated and, if considered to be of significance, recommendations will be made to the Council proposing appropriate action to be taken. This might involve recording before removal, isolating the relevant surface before laying of new finishes or incorporating the surface in the scheme.
- New finished ground surface levels will be designed to avoid covering building thresholds and plinths, some of which are historical, or exposing underbuilding. It is recommended that the proposed paving for vehicular crossings, for example at carriage arches and entrances between buildings, comprise traditional granite setts to reinforce historic character.
- The Part 8 site retains some good quality cast-iron man-hole covers. Retaining these within the re-surfacing and incorporating new iron covers where necessary is greatly favourable to introducing steel or plastic coverings.

Lamp-posts

- There are seven imitation historic lamp-posts lining the pavement in front of Hackett's supermarket which are of little historical value and it is unlikely that they reflect the town's historical street furniture. We recommended that these are replaced with new lighting furniture in a good quality sensitive contemporary design which can be used across the Part 8 site. Conservation input should be provided in the development of design details.

Rathangan Bridge

- The bridge over the River Slate is a protected structure and is among the most sensitive assets in the Part 8 site. It is a nineteenth-century rubblestone, three-span bridge with a flood arch to the south, rubble-stone buttresses, parapet walls and pavements flanking the carriageway. There is evidence that it was widened later in the nineteenth century.
- Proposals affecting the bridge comprise three lighting totems with attached lettering rising over the south side, a similarly designed railing on the north parapet and new street lighting. There is opportunity for the design of these features to be streamlined further to incorporate specific conservation input in consideration of the

historic bridge and views to and from it. The prominent designed character of the totems and railings as approach features to Rathangan at present feels somewhat out of place with small size and scale of the village and these features are visually dominant over the historic and natural character of the surrounding context. Both designs could be streamlined to make less of a statement, but rather enhance the existing qualities of the setting, and the railings in particular would benefit from making more acknowledgement of the historic rubble-stone parapets on which they sit. We note that at present the proposals do not show the street lighting for the bridge and the arrangement of these alongside the totems will need to be considered to avoid cluttering the approach to the village with vertical elements and affecting the views to and from the bridge.

- Details of fixings with the bridge should be developed with input from a conservation architect, especially if wind-loading creates need for the totems to be fixed to the historic masonry.
- The Planning Authority however welcomes the proposed totem pole placemaking signage which appear to comprise high quality materials with integrated lighting, therefore reducing the requirement for additional tall lighting standards which may increase visual clutter. The proposed placemaking signage is considered an integral part of opening the potential of Rathangan by highlighting the cultural and historic context of the town while also outlining community facilities.
- Objective RN45 of Volume 2 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017- 2023 in particular states: "Preserve views and prospects to and from the River Slate and the Grand Canal and to ensure that further development along the water system does not affect the quality of either the scenic viewpoint of the amenity of the waterways. New development adjacent to the riverside and canal amenity area shall be restricted where such development could present a negative visual effect or disrupt the vistas available."
- Existing surfacing around the bridge, both asphalt and stone setts, has been applied heavily and without consideration for historic features. During excavation for the proposals, record should be made of any surfaces or details of the bridge obscured by the present surfacing and consideration made of whether they should be incorporated into the scheme. In implementation, protection should be provided to the bridge features, including abutments, parapets and arches where they interface with new surfacing.

Free-Standing Features

- Water pump: cast-iron with handle, spout and ribbed cap on concrete plinth emptying into stone basin. It is recommended that the components of the pump and basin are numbered and dismantled during construction period and replaced using appropriate conservation techniques. The proposed new railings around the pump should be of a good-quality contemporary design to enhance the historic features.
- Wheel fender posts to carriage arches: Darchini Restaurant and Chapel Square. Circular granite posts with domed caps. The posts may remain in situ during the construction period but the contractor will be required to implement appropriate measures to ensure that no damage is caused.

Buildings on north side of Part 8 site (Market Square)

- Apartment 2, Busby House – two-storey three-bay attached rendered house with pitched natural slate roof. **No particular protection measures necessary.**
- Apartment 1, Busby House – two-storey three-bay attached rendered house with pitched natural slate roof and timber doors. Protection to be provided to thresholds and timber doors.
- Hackett's Supermarket – two-storey five-bay rendered houses in use as supermarket with pitched natural slate roof, imitation shopfront comprising granite-faced stall-risers and pilasters, and timber window surrounds, with carriage arch to west bay. Protection to be provided to surfaces around carriage entrance.
- 1-2a Market Square – two-storey four-bay attached rendered houses with pitched natural slate roof and imitation shop front to 2a. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Vacant property, Market Square (red) – two-storey two-bay attached roughcast rendered vacant house with pitched natural slate roof and timber door with moulded architrave. Protection to be provided to entrance comprising plinth, threshold, plinth blocks and architrave.
- Vacant property, Market Square (blue) – two-storey three-bay semi-detached roughcast rendered vacant shop premises with pitched natural slate roof and timber imitation shop front. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Rathmore House – two-storey three-bay detached rendered house with pitched natural slate roof, filleted window openings and decorative quoins. Protection to be

provided to plinth course, quoins, tiled threshold, door surround and timber door and screen.

- Lynch's Hardware – two-storey five-bay detached roughcast rendered house with pitched natural slate roof and timber panelled doors. Full-height carriage posts and decorative iron gates to entry to west leading to Aideen Cross Bridal Designers. Protection to be provided to eight-panel timber door, two-panel timber door with glass lights, plinths and thresholds, and to carriage posts and gates.
- 3 New Street – two-storey four-bay roughcast-rendered detached pair of houses with pitched natural slate roof and quoins. **No particular protection measures required.**

Buildings on west side of Part 8 site (Market Square)

- The Village Pump – two-storey three-bay attached rendered public house with pitched natural slate roof, quoins, timber door and fascia. Protection to be provided to plinth course, quoins, six panel timber door and architrave.
- House – two-storey four-bay attached rendered house with pitched natural slate roof. **No particular protection measures required.**
- NC & J O'B Photography – two-storey five-bay attached rendered house and gallery with pitched natural slate roof, quoins, imitation shop front, historic signage to entrance, and carriage arch to west bay. Protection to be provided to surfaces around carriage arch; window box railings; and details of historic door surrounds including two two-panel timber door with glass lights, plinth blocks and arched signage above.
- The Burrow – two-storey five-bay attached roughcast-rendered public house with pitched natural slate roof, timber imitation shop front, casement windows and timber panelled doors. Protection to be provided to shop front including stall risers, pilasters, double four-panel doors and double six-panel cart doors.
- Roma – two-storey four-bay paired attached rendered shop units with pitched natural slate roof, banded rustication to ground-floor, quoins, decorative first-floor window architraves and timber shop fascia. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Bracken's The Corner House – two-storey four-bay rendered semi-detached public house with pitched natural slate roof, quoins, imitation timber shop front fascia and pilasters. Protection to be provided to shop front pilasters; and to entrances comprising two panel half-glazed timber doors with raised thresholds and steps.

- Darchini Indian & Italian Restaurant – two-storey four-bay rendered attached restaurant with pitched natural slate roof, timber shop front pilasters and fascia, and carriage arch to north bay. Protection to be provided to shop front pilasters; and to wheel fenders and surfaces around carriage arch.
- Ladbroke's – two-storey three-bay attached rendered shop unit with imitation timber shop front. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Natasha's – two-storey three-bay semi-detached rubble-stone shop unit with pitched natural slate roof and timber imitation shop front. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Mystique Hair Studio – two-storey three-bay attached rendered shop unit with pitched natural slate roof and timber imitation shop front. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Rathangan Post Office – two-storey two-bay semi-detached rubble-stone shop unit with pitched natural slate roof and timber imitation shop front. **No particular protection measures required.**

Buildings on east side of Part 8 site (Market Square into Bridge Street)

- Cottages – single-storey seven-bay roughcast-rendered cottages with pitched natural slate roof and carriage arch to north bay. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Next Door off license – two-storey two-bay attached rough cast rendered shop unit with pitched natural slate roof and timber imitation shop front. **No particular protection measures required.**
- The Bridge Bar – two-storey four-bay attached rendered public house with pitched natural slate roof and timber imitation shop front with timber doors. Protection to be provided to thresholds, timber doors, plinth course and plinth blocks.
- D. Wall Butchers – two-storey one-bay attached rendered butchers shop with pitched natural slate roof. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Vacant Premises (Bridge Street) – two-storey three-bay attached rendered vacant premises with pitched natural slate roof, timber shop fascia and carriage arch to north bay. **No particular protection measures required.**
- D & T Dillon – two-storey seven-bay rendered corner site public house with three-bays returning to north, pitched natural slate roof, timber fascia, some timber sliding sash windows, quoins and limestone entrance steps. Limestone string course reused

as kerbing at southwest corner. Protection to be provided to entrance steps, terrace and side stepped entrance; and to limestone kerbing.

- River court/ Ryan's Pharmacy – two-storey attached three-part range with pitched natural slate roof, central archway and timber imitation shop front to east. **No particular protection measures required.**
- Forget Me Not – two-storey three-bay attached roughcast rendered florist shop with pitched natural slate roof and timber imitation shop front. **No particular protection measures required.**
- House (to east of Forget Me Not) – two-storey three-bay attached roughcast rendered house with pitched natural slate roof and timber door. Protection to be provided to historical door surround, threshold step and six-panel door with fanlight.
- House on Chapel Square – two-storey three-bay attached roughcast-rendered house with pitched natural slate roof and carriage arch to west bay. Protection to be provided to wheel fenders and surfaces around carriage arch entrance.

6.3 Transport

A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) Report and Parking Report was prepared by O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates (OCSC) in support of this Part 8 application. The report was written to address the design considerations of the scheme associated with traffic and transportation; addressing the volume of traffic, speed of traffic and parking rates in the study area as well as the impact of the proposed scheme on the local road network.

To establish the existing traffic flows on the local network, data collection surveys were carried out by Idaso Ltd using Automated Traffic Counters (ATC) at 5 strategic locations shown on the Figure on the next page.

The ATC figures show that the R401 is the busiest route through the town. The peak time for traffic in the southbound direction is between 8am -9am while the peak time in the Northbound direction is 5pm-6pm. This corresponds with the common peak time as commuters travel to/from work.

The survey results showed that the town receives a relatively low number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). In total, HGVs account for only 3.02% of total traffic.

Speed

A series of speed surveys were carried out over a 7-day period. The results highlighted data from ATC2 and ATC3 that recorded speeds above the limit of 50kph. The main reason for this would appear to be the existing geometry of the approach roads with long straights and wide carriageways that afford long forward visibility. Whereas the survey showed that traffic is generally travelling at less than the speed limit on the other approaches to the town centre and in the vicinity of the Grand Canal and River Slate bridges. This is presumably due to the vertical and horizontal road geometry of these approaches which reduces forward visibility and available carriageway width.

Proposed Mitigation

The report found a moderate number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit upon entering and exiting the town on the R401 and R419. This area is outside the Part 8 Planning boundary therefore no specific design elements could be included in this instance; however, future measures could be introduced in the future Phase 2 area.

Within the Part 8 Planning Area, the proposed public realm upgrade includes positive improvements for pedestrian priority and accessibility for vulnerable road users. Two pedestrian crossing points have been included on the R401, and public footpaths widened, to assist in rebalancing the needs of users and addressing points raised within the report.

Parking

It was suggested in the results of the transport report that the availability of free car parking in the Part 8 site was exacerbating issues of traffic congestion and encouraging some instances of longer-term parking. Cases informal and illegal parking, such as on double yellow lines outside shops and in spaces that had not been formalised, were also hindering pedestrian movement and decreasing the overall inclusivity of Rathangan's accessibility and walkability. In its conclusion, the report stated that the town will not be negatively affected by the proposed reduction in the number of car parking spaces.

Proposed Mitigation

The report noted that the proposed amount of parking spaces, along with the loading bay, would provide adequate provision for the rates of parking within Rathangan and no mitigation measures would be necessary.

By formalising parking within the Part 8 site, including 23 Standard Parking Bays, two disabled parking bays and a dedicated loading bay, as detailed in the design elements discussed in Section 4, the proposed scheme will help to meet parking need for all users of the Part 8 area.

6.4 Drainage Design

Storm Drainage

OCSC carried out a desktop survey to request the existing drainage records from KCC and Irish Water. This information was further verified by comparison to topographical survey data and a site walk.

In general, Rathangan town centre is drained by way of a combined sewerage network which travels along the main street and around the back of the properties heading west (north of the River Slate). There are isolated pieces of storm water drainage out falling directly to the River Slate. It is not clear that there is any form of treatment on these short small catchments.

Proposed Mitigation

It is proposed as part of this scheme to regularise the storm drainage within the area by way of separating the storm water from the foul water and the construction of a separate storm water network through the site area outfalling to the River Slate. It is noted that the storm water network will be designed in detail in line with the principles of the GDSDS with a form of treatment (by way of a Downstream Defender or similar prior to the outfall).

Flood Assessment

OCSC have carried out a desk top flood assessment of the study area. OCSC have consulted www.floodinfo.ie and the CFRAMS data for Rathangan. The River Slate was included in the South Eastern CFRAMS Study by the OPW.

Proposed Mitigation

It is noted that the predicted flood levels for the 0.1% Annual Exceedance Percentage (AEP) event are below the levels within the existing public realm area and the proposed design. On this basis there is no works relating to flooding designed to be incorporated within this scheme.

Utilities

It is a stated aim of the Kildare County Council that the scheme should achieve a minimisation of clutter.

Proposed Mitigation

In order to comply with this aim it has been proposed to underground the existing utilities to the extent feasible within the project extents. With this in mind OCSC have:

- Received existing service drawings from each of the utilities owners in the area;
- Informed all utility owners that there is an opportunity to install planned upgrades as part of the public realm scheme;
- Where relevant we will also meet with service owners to discuss the final detail of the network proposals for their services prior to tender.

7 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Legislation

The accompanying Screening Report in support of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) of this Part 8 has been prepared by CAAS Ltd in accordance with requirements of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the “Habitats Directive”).

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as European sites and Natura 2000.

AA is required by the Habitats Directive, as transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act (as amended). AA is an assessment of the potential for adverse or negative effects of a plan or project, in combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a European site. These sites consist of SACs and SPAs and provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

Methodology

The AA is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and ‘grey’ literature was conducted. This included a detailed review of the National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS) website including mapping and available reports for relevant sites and in particular sensitive qualifying interests/special conservation interests described and their conservation objectives.

The ecological desktop study completed for the AA of the proposed project comprised the following elements:

- Identification of European sites within 15km of the proposed project boundary with identification of potential pathways links for specific sites (if relevant) greater than 15km from the proposed project boundary;
- Review of the NPWS site synopsis and conservation objectives for European sites with identification of potential pathways from the proposed project area; and
- Examination of available information on protected species.

There are four main stages in the AA process; the requirements for each depending on likely impacts to European Sites (SAC/SPA). The accompanying report represents Stage One: Screening. This stage of the AA process identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Findings

Loss/Reduction of Habitat Area

There are no European sites present within the redline boundary and the closest European site is 8.18km away. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site during the field work. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

Habitat or species Fragmentation

A landscape scale assessment of habitats showed that there are no ecological corridors connecting any of the European sites identified above. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site during the field work. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

Disturbance to Key Species

None of the species and/or habitats identified in Table 3.1 were recorded on site. The nearest European site is 8.18 km away from the proposed site and therefore disturbance effects due to noise or lighting etc. are not present.

Reduction in species density

There are no ecological corridors between the site and any European site. Similarly, there are no habitats identified on site of any ecological significance. As there is no supporting habitat and/or connectivity between the proposed project and any European site, there will be no reduction in species density of any of the QI or SCI species.

Changes of Indicators of Conservation Value

The only European sites identified to be hydrologically connected to the proposed site were the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and those in Dublin Bay. The grand canal connects the site to Dublin bay, however given the significant distances observed between the site's areas, and the nature, scale and temporary nature of the proposed works it was determined that there are no likely significant effects to sites in Dublin Bay. The river Slate is hydrologically connected to the river Barrow approximately 10km downstream of the proposed project. The sources for effects to ecological processes from the proposed works were identified to be noise, dust and surface run off during the construction phase. The flow rate and volume of the Slate river introduces substantial dilution effects to any potential contaminants or interactions. The proposed works are small and temporary in nature with no in stream works. Therefore, the sources of effects are deemed to be low risk. The site is 10km upstream from the SAC boundary and therefore hydrological interaction from the temporary construction phase will be diluted to undetectable levels and therefore there are no significant effects identified. There are no pathways for effects to European sites identified due to the nature of the proposed works, the hydrological connectivity of the site and the dilution effects of the Slate and the distance between sites. Therefore, there will be no changes to the indicators of conservation value at any European site.

Climate change

The proposed works will not result in any greenhouse gas emissions to air during the operational phase. The construction phase works will have increased temporary emissions which will be localised however, given the distance to the nearest European site these are determined to be negligible. Such effects upon greenhouse gas emissions will not affect changes projected to arise from climate change to the degree that it would affect the QIs or SCIs of the European sites considered.

Conclusion

This stage 1 screening for AA of the Proposed Streetscape Improvement Works at Rathangan Co. Kildare shows that implementation of the project is not foreseen to have any likely significant effects on any European site.

The proposed project is located 8.18km from the closest European site. The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the project. Through an assessment of

the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European site.

Given the site context in relation to other projects identified as well as the nature of the development, it's scale, connectivity pathways, dilution effects and the temporary nature of the construction effects identified as potential sources the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effect with any other plans or projects.

This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. It is concluded that the proposed project will not give rise to any significant adverse effects on any designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Consequently, a Stage Two – NIS is not required for the project.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An EIA screening report was prepared for the proposed environmental improvement in Rathangan Town Centre, County Kildare (see accompanying). Its purpose was to form an opinion as to whether or not the proposed development should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and if so, whether an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should be prepared in respect of it.

EIA legislation as it relates to the planning process has been largely brought together in Part X of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended and Part 10 and Schedules 5, 6 and 7 of The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. Part 1 of Schedule 5 to The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended lists project types included in Annex I of the Directive which automatically require EIA. Part 2 of the same Schedule, Annex II lists project types and specifies EIA.

The EIA screening document concludes that the proposal is sub-threshold and does not fall within the scope of any class of project prescribed in the Directive or Regulations.

Having regard to the scale and nature of the works proposed, the intended use of the site, and the nature of surrounding development, it is not considered that the proposed development will give rise to any significant effects on the environment and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required.

This is supported by an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared for the proposed development and it concludes that the development is unlikely to significantly affect the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of European Sites. A Natura Impact Statement therefore is not required.

9 CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Construction Management Plan was prepared for the proposed works in Rathangan, County Kildare (see accompanying) by O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates (OCSC). The Construction Management Plan sets out details relating to proposed development programme activities and timelines, site setup, monitoring, security and management, demolition methodology, proposed construction haul routes and construction stage community liaison.

SUBMISSION

Plans and particulars of the proposed scheme will be available for inspection or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at:

- Kildare County Council, Aras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co. Kildare from 9.30 am – 4.30 pm Monday to Friday for a period from the 26th January 2021 to the 23rd February 2021.

Plans and particulars of the proposed development will also be available to view during the period noted above on Kildare County Council's website at:

- <http://www.kildare.ie/countycouncil/AllServices/Planning/Part8Schemes/> or
- <https://consult.kildarecoco.ie/en/browse>

Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development and dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the development would be situated, may be made online at: <https://consult.kildarecoco.ie/en/browse>

Submissions must be made no later than 4.30 pm on 9th March 2021.

Submissions and observations should be clearly headed: '**Part 8 Proposed Environmental Improvement Works in Rathangan Town Centre, Co. Kildare**'.

All comments including names and addresses of those making comments submitted to the Council in regard to the scheme, as outlined above, will form part of the statutorily required report to be presented at a meeting of the elected members. Accordingly, they will also be included in the minutes of that meeting and may appear in the public domain.

10 CONCLUSION

This report supports a Part 8 process for proposed environmental improvement works in Rathangan Town Centre, Co. Kildare. The Part 8 scheme is considered to be in accordance with the proper planning and development of the area and it has been demonstrated that it aligns with and supports national, regional and local planning policies and objectives. Potential impacts, including environmental, traffic and archaeological have been fully assessed, and it is determined that the proposed works have no significant impact on the receiving environment.

It is therefore recommended that the Council proceed with the proposal as outlined in this Planning report and illustrated on the accompanying landscape layout drawing.