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Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme

Trim Castle, Co. Meath.

Prepared by Macro Works Ltd.

April 2024

LVIA I TVIA I Landscape Design I Visibility Analysis I Glint and Glare I Verified Photomontages I CGI I Shadow Flicker Analysis

1 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared in respect of a planning application for a proposed pedestrian footbridge across the River Boyne in the grounds of Trim Castle in County Meath. The proposed bridge will replace an existing temporary bridge located in the same location. The LVIA report describes the landscape context and assesses the likely landscape and visual impacts of the new pedestrian footbridge on the receiving environment.

Landscape Impact Assessment (LIA) relates to assessing effects of a development on the landscape as a resource in its own right and is concerned with how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character.

Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) relates to assessing effects of a development on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. This deals with how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements. Visual impacts may occur from; Visual Obstruction (blocking of a view, be it full, partial or intermittent) or; Visual Intrusion (interruption of a view without blocking).

This LVIA uses methodology as prescribed in the following guidance documents:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publication '*Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements* (2022);
- Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment publication entitled Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013).

1.1.1 Statement of Authority

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment report was prepared by Macro Works Ltd; a landscape consultancy firm specialising in LVIA along with associated visibility mapping and photomontage graphics. Relevant experience includes LVIA work for a vast range of infrastructural, industrial and commercial projects since 1999.

1.1.2 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises of a permanent pedestrian bridge within the grounds of Trim Castle to replace a temporary pedestrian bridge that is currently in place.

1.1.3 Assessment Methodology

Production of this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment involved:

- A desktop study to establish an appropriate study area, relevant landscape and visual designations in the Meath County Development Plan as well as other sensitive visual receptors. This stage culminates in the selection of a set of potential viewpoints from which to study the effects of the proposal;
- Fieldwork to establish the landscape character of the receiving environment and to confirm and refine the set of viewpoints to be used for the visual assessment stage;
- Assessment of the significance of the landscape impact of the development as a function of landscape sensitivity weighed against the magnitude of the landscape impact; and
- Assessment of the significance of the visual impact of the development. This aspect of the assessment is supported by photomontages prepared in respect of the selected viewpoints.

1.1.3.1 Landscape Impact Assessment Criteria

When assessing the potential impacts on the landscape resulting from a proposed development, the following criteria are considered:

- Landscape character, value and sensitivity;
- Magnitude of likely impacts; and
- Significance of landscape effects

The sensitivity of the landscape to change is the degree to which a particular landscape receptor (Landscape Character Area (LCA) or feature) can accommodate changes or new elements without unacceptable detrimental effects to its essential characteristics. Landscape Value and Sensitivity is classified using the following criteria set out in **Table 1.1.**

Table 1.1 Landscape Value and Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Areas where the landscape character exhibits a very low capacity for change in the form of development. Examples of which are high value landscapes, protected at an international or national level (World Heritage Site/National Park), where the principal management objectives are likely to be protection of the existing character.
High	Areas where the landscape character exhibits a low capacity for change in the form of development. Examples of which are high value landscapes, protected at a national or regional level (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), where the principal management objectives are likely to be considered conservation of the existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape character exhibits some capacity and scope for development. Examples of which are landscapes, which have a designation of protection at a county level or at non-designated local level where there is evidence of local value and use.
Low	Areas where the landscape character exhibits a higher capacity for change from development. Typically, this would include lower value, non-designated landscapes

	that may also have some elements or features of recognisable quality, where landscape management objectives include, enhancement, repair and restoration.
Negligible	Areas of landscape character that include derelict, mining, industrial land or are part of the urban fringe where there would be a reasonable capacity to embrace change or the capacity to include the development proposals. Management objectives in such areas could be focused on change, creation of landscape improvements and/or restoration to realise a higher landscape value.

The magnitude of a predicted landscape impact is a product of the scale, extent or degree of change that is likely to be experienced as a result of the proposed development. The magnitude takes into account whether there is a direct physical impact resulting from the loss of landscape components and/or a change that extends beyond the Site boundary that may have an effect on the landscape character of the area. **Table 1.2** refers.

Table 1.2 Magnitude of Landscape Impacts

Magnitude of Impact	Description
Very High	Change that would be large in extent and scale with the loss of critically important landscape elements and features, that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that contribute to an overall change of the landscape in terms of character, value and quality.
High	Change that would be more limited in extent and scale with the loss of important landscape elements and features, that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that contribute to an overall change of the landscape in terms of character, value and quality.
Medium	Changes that are modest in extent and scale involving the loss of landscape characteristics or elements that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that would lead to changes in landscape character, and quality.
Low	Changes affecting small areas of landscape character and quality, together with the loss of some less characteristic landscape elements or the addition of new features or elements
Negligible	Changes affecting small or very restricted areas of landscape character. This may include the limited loss of some elements or the addition of some new features or elements that are characteristic of the existing landscape or are hardly perceivable

The significance of a landscape impact is based on a balance between the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of the impact. The significance of landscape impacts is arrived at using the following matrix set out in **Table 1.3**.

Table 1.3 Impact Significance Matrix

	Sensitivity of Receptor				
Scale/Magnitude	*Very High*	*High*	*Medium*	*Low*	*Negligible*
Very High	Profound	Profound-substantial	Substantial	Moderate	Slight
High	Profound-substantial	Substantial	Substantial-moderate	Moderate-slight	Slight-imperceptible
Medium	Substantial	Substantial-moderate	Moderate	Slight	Imperceptible
Low	Moderate	Moderate-slight	Slight	Slight-imperceptible	Imperceptible
Negligible	Slight	Slight-imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Note: The significance matrix provides an indicative framework from which the significance of impact is derived. The significance judgement is ultimately determined by the assessor using professional judgement. Due to nuances within the constituent sensitivity and magnitude judgements, this may be up to one category higher or lower than indicated by the matrix. Judgements indicated in orange are considered to be 'significant impacts' in EIA terms.

1.1.3.2 Visual Impact Assessment Criteria

As with the landscape impact, the visual impact of the proposed development will be assessed as a function of sensitivity versus magnitude. In this instance, the sensitivity of the visual receptor, weighed against the magnitude of the visual effect.

1.1.3.3 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Unlike landscape sensitivity, the sensitivity of visual receptors has an anthropocentric basis. It considers factors such as the perceived quality and values associated with the view, the landscape context of the viewer, the likely activity they are engaged in and whether this heightens their awareness of the surrounding landscape. A list of the factors considered by the assessor in estimating the level of sensitivity for a particular visual receptor is outlined below and used in **Table 1-6** below to establish visual receptor sensitivity at each VRP:

1. **Susceptibility of Receptors** - In accordance with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ("IEMA") Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (3rd edition 2013) visual receptors most susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity are:
    - "*Residents at home;*
    - *People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;*

- *Visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;*
- *Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area; and*
- *Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes where such travel involves recognised scenic routes and awareness of views is likely to be heightened*".

Visual receptors that are less susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity include;

- "*People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; and*
- *People at their place of work whose attention may be focussed on their work or activity, not their surroundings and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life*".

2. **Recognised scenic value of the view** (County Development Plan designations, guidebooks, touring maps, postcards etc). These represent a consensus in terms of which scenic views and routes within an area are strongly valued by the population because in the case of County Developments Plans, for example, a public consultation process is required;

3. **Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas**. Again, highly sensitive landscape designations are usually part of a county's Landscape Character Assessment, which is then incorporated within the County Development Plan and is therefore subject to the public consultation process. Viewers within such areas are likely to be highly attuned to the landscape around them;

4. **Primary views from dwellings**. A proposed development might be seen from anywhere within a particular residential property with varying degrees of sensitivity. Therefore, this category is reserved for those instances in which the design of dwellings or housing estates, has been influenced by the desire to take in a particular view. This might involve the use of a slope or the specific orientation of a house and/or its internal social rooms and exterior spaces;

5. **Intensity of use, popularity**. This relates to the number of viewers likely to experience a view on a regular basis and whether this is significant at county or regional scale;

6. **Connection with the landscape**. This considers whether or not receptors are likely to be highly attuned to views of the landscape i.e. commuters hurriedly driving on busy national route versus hill walkers directly engaged with the landscape enjoying changing sequential views over it;

7. **Provision of elevated panoramic views**. This relates to the extent of the view on offer and the tendency for receptors to become more attuned to the surrounding landscape at locations that afford broad vistas;

8. **Sense of remoteness and/or tranquillity.** Receptors taking in a remote and tranquil scene, which is likely to be fairly static, are likely to be more receptive to changes in the view than those taking in the view of a busy street scene, for example;

9. **Degree of perceived naturalness**. Where a view is valued for the sense of naturalness of the surrounding landscape it is likely to be highly sensitive to visual intrusion by distinctly manmade features;

10. **Presence of striking or noteworthy features.** A view might be strongly valued because it contains a distinctive and memorable landscape feature such as a promontory headland, lough or castle;

11. **Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance.** Such attributes may be evident or sensed by receptors at certain viewing locations, which may attract visitors for the purposes of contemplation or reflection heightening the sense of their surroundings;

12. **Rarity or uniqueness of the view**. This might include the noteworthy representativeness of a certain landscape type and considers whether the receptor could take in similar views anywhere in the broader region or the country;

13. **Integrity of the landscape character**. This looks at the condition and intactness of the landscape in view and whether the landscape pattern is a regular one of few strongly related components or an irregular one containing a variety of disparate components;

14. **Sense of place**. This considers whether there is special sense of wholeness and harmony at the viewing location; and

15. **Sense of awe**. This considers whether the view inspires an overwhelming sense of scale or the power of nature.

Those locations which are deemed to satisfy many of the above criteria are likely to be of higher sensitivity. No relative importance is inferred by the order of listing in the **Table 1.5**. Overall sensitivity may be a result of a number of these factors or, alternatively, a strong association with one or two in particular.

1.1.3.4 Visual Impact Magnitude

The magnitude of visual effects is determined on the basis of two factors; the visual presence (relative visual dominance) of the proposal and its effect on visual amenity.

Visual presence is a somewhat quantitative measure relating to how noticeable or visually dominant the proposal is within a particular view. This is based on a number of aspects, aside from scale in relation to distance. Some of these aspects include the extent and complexity of the view, as well as the degree of existing contextual movement experienced. The backdrop against which the development is presented and its relationship with other focal points or prominent features within the view is also considered. Visual presence is essentially a measure of the relative visual dominance of the proposal within the available vista and is often, though not always, expressed as one of the following terms:

- Minimal;
- Sub-dominant;
- Co-dominant;
- Dominant;
- Highly dominant.

Given that the solar panels and ancillary structures do not represent significant bulk and follow the ground plane, visual impacts will result almost entirely from visual 'intrusion' rather than visual 'obstruction' (the blocking of a view). The magnitude of visual impacts is classified in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4 Magnitude of Visual Impact

Criteria	Description
Very High	The proposal intrudes into a large proportion or critical part of the available vista and is without question the most noticeable element. A high degree of visual clutter or disharmony is also generated, strongly reducing the visual amenity of the scene
High	The proposal intrudes into a significant proportion or important part of the available vista and is one of the most noticeable elements. A considerable degree of visual

	clutter or disharmony is also likely to be generated, appreciably reducing the visual amenity of the scene
Medium	The proposal represents a moderate intrusion into the available vista, is a readily noticeable element and/or it may generate a degree of visual clutter or disharmony, thereby reducing the visual amenity of the scene. Alternatively, it may represent a balance of higher and lower order estimates in relation to visual presence and visual amenity
Low	The proposal intrudes to a minor extent into the available vista and may not be noticed by a casual observer and/or the proposal would not have a marked effect on the visual amenity of the scene
Negligible	The proposal would be barely discernible within the available vista and/or it would not detract from, and may even enhance, the visual amenity of the scene

1.1.3.5 Visual Impact Significance

1.1.4 As stated above, the significance of visual impacts is a function of visual receptor sensitivity and visual impact magnitude. This relationship is expressed in the same significance matrix and applies the same EPA definitions of significance as used earlier in respect of landscape impacts (Table 1.3 refers).

1.1.5 Extent of Study Area

1.1.6 From similar studies, it is anticipated that the proposed development is likely to be difficult to discern beyond approximately 500m and is not likely to give rise to significant landscape or visual impacts beyond this distance. The proposed footbridge is of a modest scale and the landscape within the immediate vicinity is deemed most susceptible. Thus, a 500m radius study area is used in this instance.

Figure 1.1: 500m extent of the study area

1.1.7 Landscape and Visual Policy Context and Designations

1.1.7.1 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

1.1.8 A landscape character assessment is incorporated within the current Meath County Development Plan, which divides the county into 20 geographically specific Landscape Character Areas LCA's (see Figure 1.2 below). The LCA's are then designated a 'Landscape Value', 'Landscape Sensitivity' and 'Landscape Importance'.

1.1.9 The proposed footbridge at Trim Castle is contained entirely within the Landscape Character Area; 'Boyne Valley'. The 'Boyne Valley' LCA is "*characterised by steep river valley with areas of rolling lowland adjacent to River Boyne*." It references Trim specifically where it states; "*Trim is a large historic town and one of Meath's primary historic settlements. Trim Castle and Talbot Castle dominate the skyline, with the River Boyne and floodplain providing public open space and a picturesque setting for the town. The town centre is attractive with modern development successfully integrated into the historic built environment, particularly Trim Courthouse. The setting of Trim and Trim Castle within the landscape is extremely important, and residential development needs to be carefully planned to avoid eroding the area*."

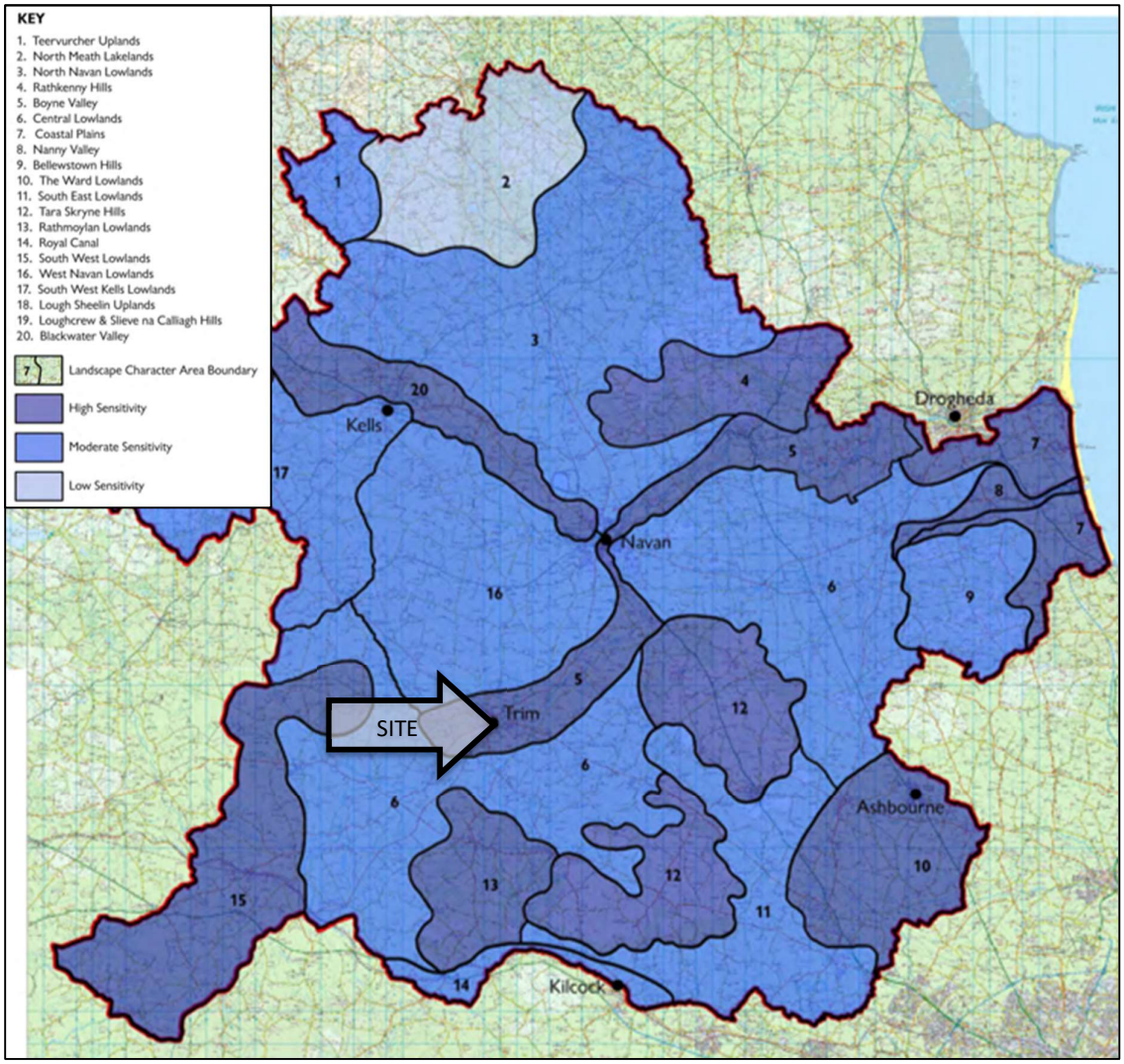

Figure 1.2 Landscape Category and Sensitivity Map, showing the approximate location of the proposed development in relation to designated landscape areas within Meath

1.1.10 With regard to landscape sensitivity, a sensitivity rating has been assigned to each LCA to determine its ability to accommodate change. The 'LCA 5- Boyne Valley', is designated as having a 'High' landscape sensitivity. These are described as; "*a vulnerable landscape likely to be fragile and susceptible to change. The frequency and sensitivity of users are likely to be high. The introduction of a change is likely to significantly alter the character to the extent that it would be difficult or impossible to restore."*

1.1.11 The 'LCA 5- Boyne Valley', is also considered to be of 'Exceptional' Landscape Value and of 'International' Landscape Importance.

1.1.12 With regard to Landuse zoning within the Trim settlement itself, the site where the bridge is located is zoned 'H1 High Amenity Zone' with the objective ***"****to protect and improve areas of high amenity."*

1.1.13 The land to the west of the proposed development that encompasses the Trim Courthouse and the village centre is zoned 'B1 - Commercial Town or Village Centre' with an area zoned 'A1 - Existing Residential' to the southwest. The land directly north across the River Boyne that contains St Mary's Abbey is zoned 'F1 - Open Space'. The remainder of the Trim Castle grounds to the east is zoned 'H1 - High Amenity'.

1.1.14 Views of Recognised Scenic Value

1.1.15 The Meath Development Plan designates scenic routes and views within the county. Following a review of the study area, it is not considered that there are any protected views in the study area deemed relevant to the proposed development.

1.1.16 The Trim Settlement Plan includes a number of Protected views and Prospects within the context of the settlement. The two most relevant to this application are;

- Trim Castle to the river valley, St Mary's Abbey and Newtown Abbey (represented herein by VP6)
- Towards Trim Castle and the Porch field from St Mary's Abbey (represented Herein by VP2

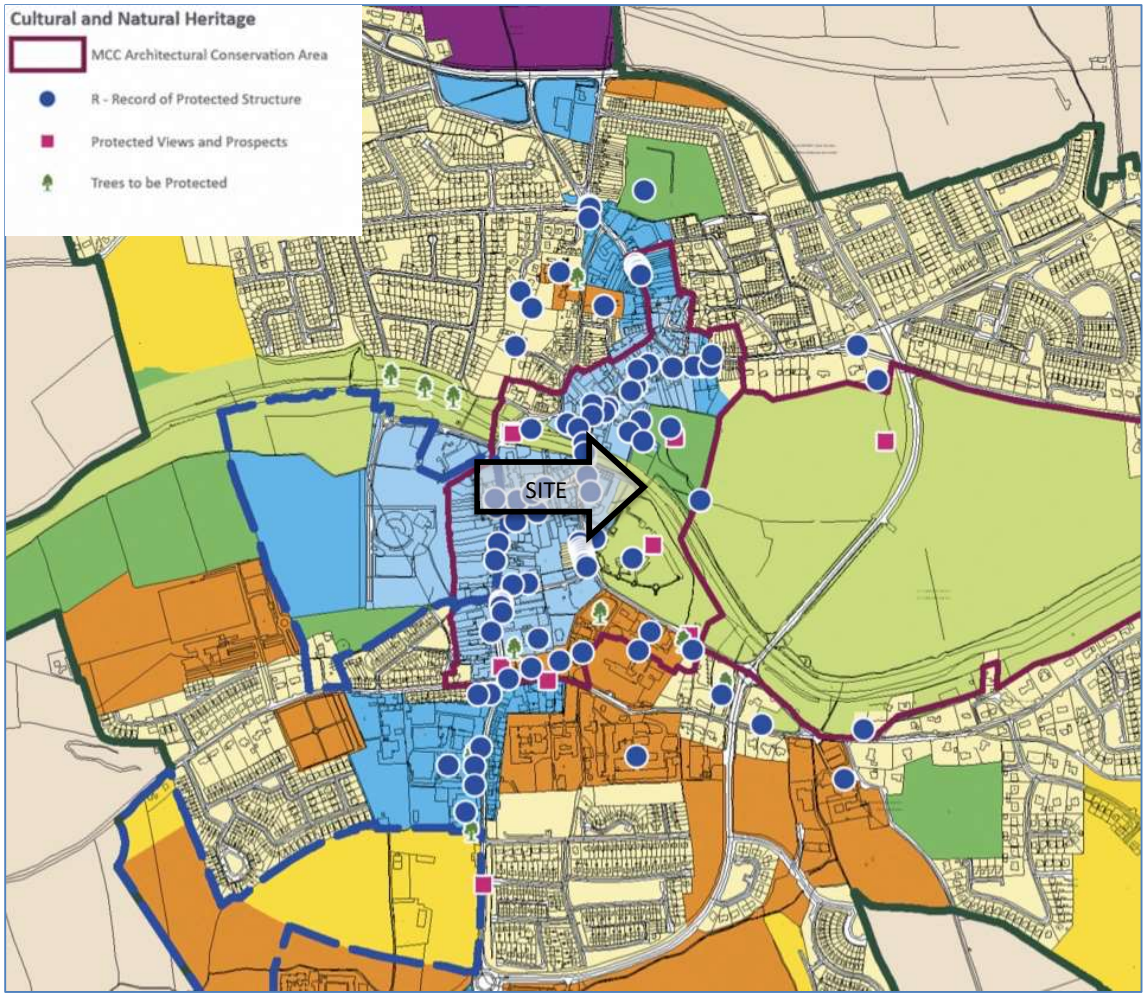

Figure 1.3 Excerpt from sheet Trim - 38(b) Heritage of Meath County Development Plan (2021-2027)

1.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

1.2.1 The landscape baseline represents the existing landscape context and is the scenario against which any changes to the landscape brought about by the proposed development will be assessed. A description of the landscape context of the proposed application site and wider study area is provided below under the headings of landform and drainage, vegetation and land use, centres of population and houses, transport routes and public amenities and facilities. Although this description forms part of the landscape baseline, many of the landscape elements identified also relate to visual receptors i.e. places from which viewers will be susceptible to any change caused by the proposed development.

1.2.2 The proposed pedestrian footbridge is located across the River Boyne within the grounds of Trim Castle. A temporary footbridge currently sits slightly to the west of the proposed footbridge. The existing footbridge resembles a flat steel structure that traverses horizontally across the River Boyne. Steel scaffolding rises from the platform to above the handrails along the side of the bridge. Located in the western extent of the Trim Castle estate, the footbridge

provides a key connection between Trim Castle itself c.100m south, and St Mary's Abbey located c.90m north of the bridge.

1.2.3 Land use within the immediate context is predominately influenced by Trim Castle and its attendant grounds. Trim Castle is an estate-like setting rich with heritage, scenic and tourist amenities. Notable features include; Trim Castle, St. Mary's Abbey ruins, Sheep Gate ruins and a large open space to the east of the Abbey used for general recreational amenity and for hosting events such as the Trim Haymaking Festival (Scurlogstown Olympiad CLG) and the Royal Meath Show. Trim Castle is considered to be the largest, best-preserved and most impressive Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland. The River Boyne is a notable feature of Trim Castles' setting and meanders through the southern portion of the grounds separating the castle from a large area of parkland on the northern side of the river. With regard to the wider study area, the township of Trim occupies the periphery of the castle boundary, predominately with commercial business and then residential development further beyond. Publicly accessible open greenspace occupies the majority of the eastern periphery of the study area.

1.2.4 At a local level, the site is gently undulating with low rolling terrain. The landform in the immediate context drains centrally towards the River Boyne which meanders through the middle of the study area in a west-to-southeast direction. The grounds of Trim Castle are abundant with mature trees in a demesne parkland setting. Vegetation alongside the River Boyne varies between woodland species, low scrub to manicured hedges.

1.2.5 The most notable transport routes in relation to the proposed development include;

- The footbridge is attached to pedestrian paths on either side of the river which are connected to a series of internal access paths located within the castle grounds.
- R161- located c.124m northwest of the proposed development. The Bridge Street Bridge crosses the River Boyne and is considered Ireland's oldest bridge.
- The R154 located c.373m southeast- frames the eastern boundary
- French's Lane -west 47m
- Castle St- c.113m west- running north to south-east

1.2.6 The most notable amenities occur within the grounds of the Trim Castle itself on the land surrounding the proposed bridge. These include;

- Trim Castle the largest, best-preserved & most impressive Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland c.100m south
- St Mary's Abbey c.90m north
- Bridge Street Bridge (Ireland's Oldest Bridge) is considered Ireland's Oldest Bridge- c.124m northwest.
- Recreational – Trim Castle River Walk, Boyne Riverside Walking Path, Trim Playground

1.2.7 Identification of Viewshed Reference Points as a Basis for Assessment

Viewshed Reference Points (VRP's) are the locations used to study the visual impacts of a proposal in detail. It is not warranted to include each and every location that provides a view of Evidence of other residential dwellings displayed in development as this would result in an unwieldy report and make it extremely difficult to draw out the key impacts arising from the proposed development. Instead, the selected viewpoints are intended to reflect a range of different receptor types, distances and angles. The visual impact of a proposed development is assessed by Macro Works using up to 6 no. categories of receptor type as listed below:

- Key Views (from features of national or international importance) (KV);
- Designated Scenic Routes and Views (DSR);
- Local Community views (LCV);
- Centres of Population (CP);
- Major Routes (MR);
- Amenity and heritage features (AH).

1.2.8 VRP's might be relevant to more than one category and this makes them even more valid for inclusion in the assessment. The receptors that are intended to be represented by a particular VRP are listed at the beginning of each viewpoint appraisal. The Viewshed Reference Points selected in this instance are set out in the Table 1.5 and Figure 1.3 below.

Table 1.5 Outline Description of Selected Viewshed Reference Points (VRPs)

VRP No.	*Location*	*Representative Of*	*Direction of view*
VP1	View from 'Sheepgate' historical ruin	LCV, AH, KV	W
VP2	St Mary's Abbey	DSR, LCV, AH, KV	S
VP3	View from Bridge St Bridge	LCV, AH, KV, MR	SE
VP4	Footpath outside Trim Castle	LCV, AH, KV,	E
VP5	Looking south at bridge	AH, KV, LCV	S
VP6	Footpath in front of Trim Castle	DSR, AH, KV, LCV	NW

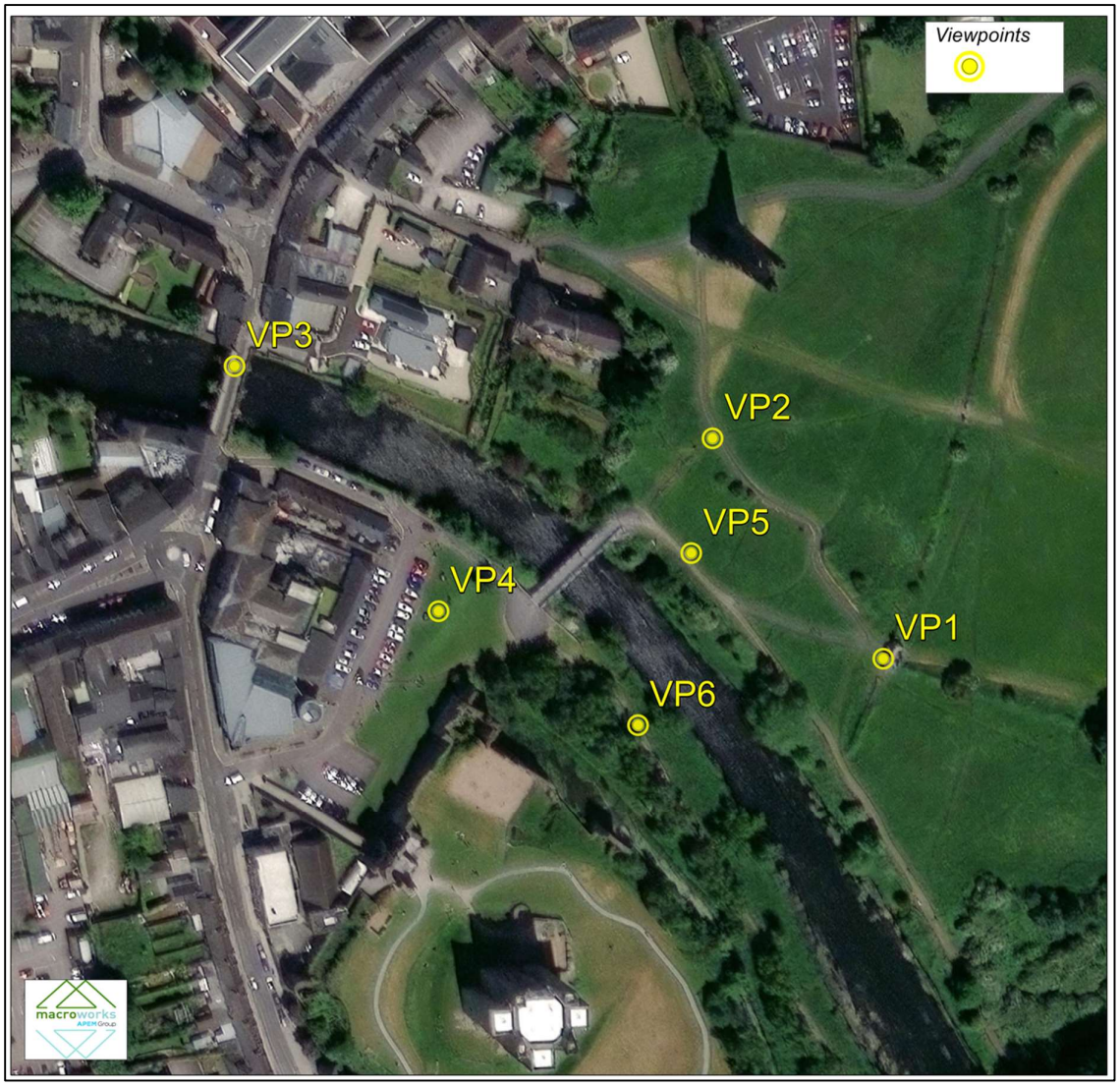

Figure 1.3 Viewpoint location map

1.3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1.3.1 LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1.3.1.1 Landscape Value and Sensitivity

Landscape value and sensitivity are considered in relation to a number of factors highlighted in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2013, which are set out below and discussed relative to the proposal site and wider study area. Trim Castle Estate is an area with a very strong heritage and a high degree of scenic and recreational amenities which are deemed highly susceptible to development. This is further supported by the Meath County Development Plan which designates the 'LCA 5- Boyne Valley' to have a 'High' landscape sensitivity, 'Exceptional' landscape value and to be of 'International' landscape importance. The River Boyne is integral to the tranquil and scenic values

of this landscape and enhances the picturesque, parkland setting. On the balance of these factors and in accordance with the criteria outlined in Table 1.1, the landscape sensitivity of the immediate site context is deemed **Very High**, sensitivity due to the scenic, heritage and amenity values associated with the site.

1.3.1.2 Magnitude of Landscape Effects

In terms of physical landscape effects, the proposed bridge will not require any significant excavation that would permanently alter the landform of the site as the abutments are already in place. There may be some very minor and localised loss of riparian vegetation during the demolition of the old bridge and the installation of the new one. During the construction phase of the new bridge, there will be a higher intensity of site activity. However, this is only estimated to take 2-3 months to complete. Construction-related effects are, therefore, brief in nature and will only result in temporary landscape and visual impacts.

In relation to landscape character, the proposal seeks the introduction of a new footbridge structure into what is deemed a highly susceptible heritage landscape. It is considered that the tone and form of the new footbridge are better aligned with a heritage environment and more cohesive with the Trim Castle landscape values than the temporary bridge that is there currently. The proposed bridge will have a permanent, yet positive impact on the receiving landscape. The proposed bridge structure is in better alignment with the policies of the Meath County Development Plan and that of the 'Boyne Valley LCA'. As a replacement of one bridge structure with another, it is considered that the magnitude of landscape impact is **Low**-**negligible**.

With reference to the significance matrix (Table 1.3) above, the **Very High** landscape sensitivity judgement attributed to the study area, coupled with a **Low-negligible** magnitude of landscape impact in the immediate vicinity (<300m) of the proposed development is considered to result in an overall significance of **Slight**. On the basis the proposed bridge has a more appropriate and aesthetically pleasing form than its existing (temporary) counterpart, the quality of effect is deemed to be **Positive**.

1.3.2 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

VISUAL IMPACT MAGNITUDE

This assessment of visual impacts has been done using each of the selected viewpoints aided by photomontages of the proposed development. Photomontages are a 'photo-real' depiction of the scheme within the view utilising a rendered three-dimensional model of the development, which has been geo-referenced to allow accurate placement and scale. For each viewpoint, the following images have been produced:

1. Existing view
2. Montage view

Of the viewpoints selected for this study, VP4 & VP5 represent the nearest views to the proposed bridge. VP4 represents an open north-facing view on alignment with St Mary Abbey. As presented by the existing view of VP4, the current platform cuts across the river in a sharp horizontal manner. Steel scaffolding rises above the handrails on either side of the bridge platform which implies the interim nature of this structure. The existing footbridge reflects a temporary structure that does not complement the highly susceptible heritage setting of its setting.

The proposed footbridge shown in VP4 reveals an elegant arched structure that appears to be more appropriate and cohesive with the heritage setting of Trim Castle. The curved form appears to be nestled into the river bank and is sympathetic to the undulating landform of its surroundings. The proposed footbridge emerges seamlessly from the river banks, gently curving over the river without detracting from the key heritage features located on either side. Design materials are timeless and fitting for a heritage location. Overall the proposed footbridge will reflect a more attractive design that enhances the existing heritage character of Trim Castle.

VP5 reveals a south facing view of the footbridge. The view encompasses vegetation in the foreground with views of Trim Castle itself behind an existing tree. Similar to VP4 the proposed footbridge is presented in an elegant manner that pays respect to the notable heritage setting it resides in. From this angle, the proposed bridge provides an inviting gateway to Trim Castle and integrates smoothly into the existing path on the alternate side of the river.

VP3 and VP6 display a view along the river where the elevational profile of the proposed bridge is of its most relevance. The self-supporting, hump-backed form of the proposed bridge is more elegant and appropriate than the flat steel lattice structure of the temporary bridge. VP3 in particular shows a view from the Bridge Street bridge approximately 120m west which displays the arched structure of the proposed bridge that integrates more seamlessly into the wider landscape setting than the previous temporary bridge.

VP1 and V02 represent more distant views where the bridge presents a subtle but more appropriately designed structure to compliment the heritage setting. Both of these views depict a clear scene of Trim Castle and reveal the bridge blending into the wider parkland setting.

1.4 CONCLUSION

The proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge development at Trim Castle is considered to have only a modest physical impact on the application site which will endure during the construction phase only. Once construction is completed, the implementation of the new footbridge will have a positive impact on the receiving landscape.

Visual impacts were assessed at six viewpoint locations, representing various viewing distances, and angles in which visual receptors may interpret the proposed footbridge. The representative viewpoints were all highly sensitive receptors associated with various locations of importance within the vicinity of Trim Castle. All six viewpoints resulted in positive effects, revealing a more elegant and appropriate view than currently exists of the temporary bridge structure. As revealed from the VP4 photomontage, the self-supporting arched footbridge is better integrated into the undulating landform of the receiving environment and more reminiscent of heritage bridge design. This therefore enhances the amenity of the site and within the landscape vicinity. The proposed truss footbridge represents the addition of a replacement structure that is sympathetic to the receiving environment and cohesive with the heritage setting of Trim Castle. The proposed footbridge will help strengthen the character of Trim Castle and the heritage village of Trim and gives a sense of a permanent and long lasting feature.

1.5.2 Overall Significance of Impact

Based on the landscape and visual impact judgements provided throughout this LVIA, the proposed bridge is not considered to give rise to any significant impacts. Instead, landscape impacts are considered to have a positive enduring impact on the receiving environment.