

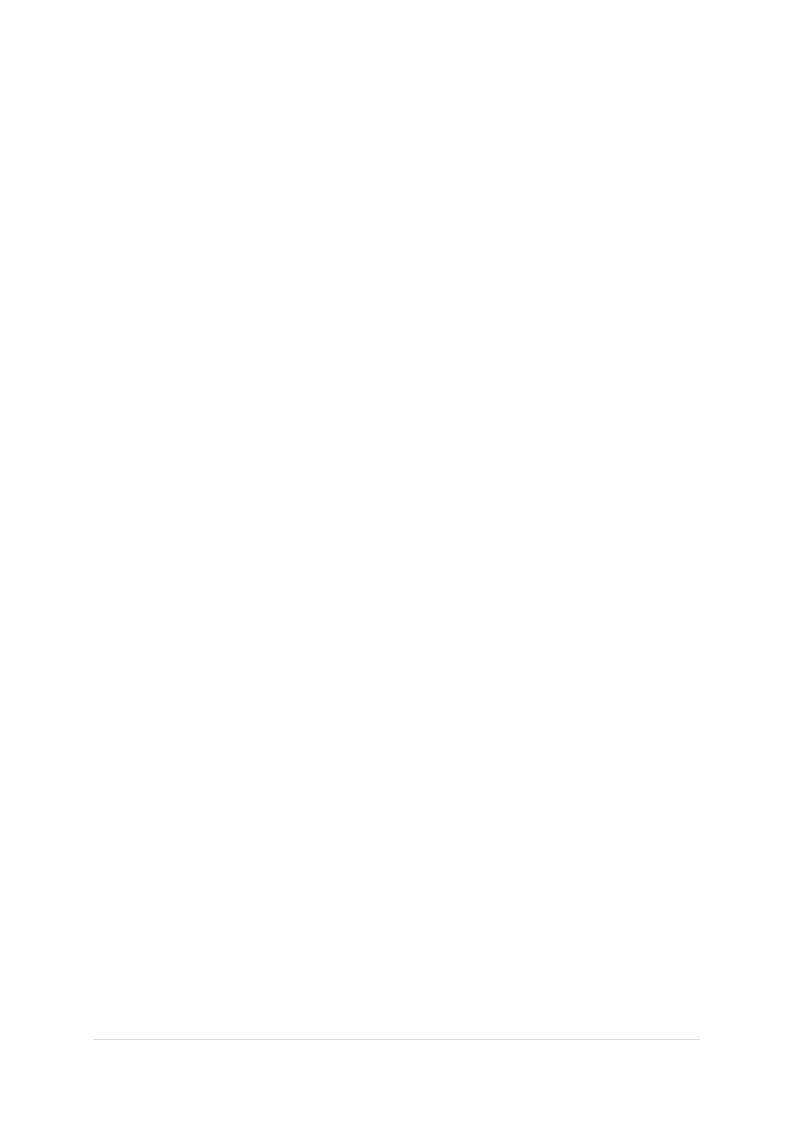
# **Leitrim County Council**

# Planning & Development Acts 2000, as amended Part XI

Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended PART 8

Planning Register Ref. No. 23-C-06

**GLENFARNE WOOD PROJECT** 



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#### 1.0 Introduction and Scheme Overview

Leitrim County Council in partnership with Coillte CGA propose to undertake the Glenfarne Wood Project consisting of the following elements:

- 1. Glenfarne Wood Gate Lodge Entrance/ Amenity Start Point to include an information point and small car and bicycle parking area. This facility will also provide a small trail head for a riverside greenway link to a new Trailhead Centre Point.
- 2. New Trailhead Centre Point which will connect to the existing trail network as well as the proposed greenway from the Gate Lodge Entrance and includes a service building, congregation area, vehicle and bicycle parking, sheltered event space, open playground, sensory trail and proprietary wastewater treatment system and percolation area.
- 3. Playground located adjacent to the current road between the proposed new Trailhead Centre Point and the slipway.
- 4. Sensory Trail located close to the playground and includes features, surfaces, objects and plants that stimulate the senses.
- 5. Lake Slipway & Forest Bathing to include a redesign of the existing car parking area at the slipway, the provision of vehicle control measures, designated parking for slipway users only, a new trail access point, additional picnic benches, bicycle parking and enhanced interpretive and information points. A new trail will provide access to 4 no. specifically designed forest bathing locations.
- 6. Glenfarne Wood River Lake: Greenway comprising of a greenway standard trail starting at the Gate Lodge entrance and running parallel to the Glenfarne River, linking to the ruins of Glenfarne Hall before descending through a cutting to the new Trailhead Centre Point. A branch trail off this greenway will provide an alternative route to the Slipway.
- 7. Long Tom's View (Myles' Big Stone) Panoramic Platform consisting of enhanced access to a multi access viewing platform extending out from Myles Big Stone providing a tree top panoramic view of the forest and the lake along with the provision of information panels.
- 8. A Native Tree Arboretum consisting of a new small trail adjacent to the Trailhead Centre Point where a series of native trees will be planted in sections to represent various parts of the county.
- 9. Ladies View Changing Place consisting of a simple sheltered changing screen to provide basic facilities for users.
- 10. Floating Boardwalk extending from just beyond Ladies View across Lough MacNean out to the wooded Bilberry Island and returning back to shore across Lough MacNean.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been entered into between both organisations for the purposes of this Part 8 proposal. This builds on the co-operation between both organisations over the past number of years which culminated firstly in the publication of 'Glenfarne Wood Options Report' (October 2020) and subsequently in the 'Glenfarne Wood – Recreation and Tourism Development Strategic Plan' (July 2022). The proposed Glenfarne Wood Project the subject of this Part 8 public consultation process has emerged from these strategic reports and demonstrates the co-operation and commitment from both organisations to further develop this commercial forest as a destination for SLOW adventure tourism in the north of the county. The location of the existing Coillte forest north of Glenfarne and to the west of the shores of Lough Macnean Upper is shown overleaf on Figure 1.

The Part 8 consultation documentation was extensive and comprised of the following:

- 1. Schedule of Drawings (Architectural, Landscaping and Engineering drawings)
- 2. Planning Statement Briefing Report
- 3. Memorandum of Understanding between Leitrim County Council & Coillte
- 4. Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement and determination by Leitrim County Council
- 5. Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Statement and determination by Leitrim County Council
- 6. Ecological Impact Assessment
- 7. Archaeological Impact Assessment
- 8. Soil Characterisation and Site Suitability Report Wastewater Treatment & Disposal
- 9. Glenfarne Wood Forest Bathing Report
- 10. Glenfarne Wood Proposed Native Tree Arboretum Species Map
- 11. Glenfarne Wood Options Report (October 2020)
- 12. Glenfarne Wood recreation and Tourism Development Strategic Plan (July 2022)

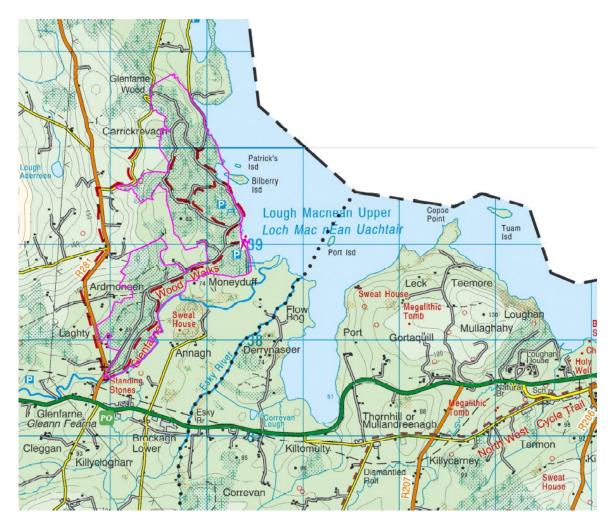


Figure 1: Location of Proposed Development – Glenfarne Forest

Section 179(3)(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires the report prepared by the Chief Executive to include an appropriate plan of the development and appropriate map of the relevant area. All of the documents in this regard are available at <u>Glenfarne Wood Project 2023-C-006 - Leitrim County Council (leitrimcoco.ie)</u>. Figure 1 identifies the location of the proposed development whilst some other drawings are included as an appendix to this report.

#### 2.0 Public Consultation Process

The project was formally advertised for public consultation between Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Details of the proposed works were available for inspection during normal office hours at the office of the Planning Authority and also on the Council website. Following a request from Drumshanbo library, a full hard copy of all documentation was made available for inspection at the library for the duration of the public display period. The closing date for submissions was Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The public consultation period took account of the days between December 24<sup>th</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup>, both days inclusive, been discounted in accordance with section 251 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended.

#### 3.0 Planning Policy Context

Section 179(3)(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires the report prepared by the Chief Executive on a proposed Part 8 development to evaluate whether or not the proposed development would be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development relates, having regard to the provisions of the development plan and giving the reasons and the considerations for the evaluation.

The Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 is the statutory land use plan against which the proposed development shall be assessed against. A number of the relevant policies and objectives which relate to the proposed development are outlined in the submitted Briefing Report, Section 1.3.5, prepared by prepared by the Design Team (Spentide & CST Group) on behalf of the Council and Coillte. The Briefing Report also considered the proposed development against the policy framework contained in the Leitrim Economic & Community Plan.

It is considered that the principal sections of the County Development Plan 2023-2029 relevant to the consideration of the proposed development include the following:

Section 5.6 *Adventure Tourism, Lakes and Waterways* of the Leitrim County Council Development Plan 2023-2029 states:

"The value of the lakes and waterways in Leitrim from a tourism and amenity perspective is significant having regard to their scenic beauty, serene environment and natural heritage and habitat value. There is potential to expand public amenity in these areas to include car parking, information boards, toilets, viewing points, boardwalks and boat mooring. The Council will seek to facilitate increased visitor access and enjoyment of the lakes and waterways, through encouraging developments which provide visitor services and create stronger connections with towns and villages which can provide those services."

The following policies and objectives contained in this section of the County Development Plan are considered of relevance in the consideration of the proposed development:

#### **ADV TOUR POL 1**

To develop the water-based leisure sector in the region in a sustainable manner making the best use of existing and planned infrastructure and resources, in a manner that is sensitive to the natural and cultural heritage resources.

#### **ADV TOUR POL 2**

To support the development of angling centres and associated infrastructure/products in the county to meet customer demands and expectations in every aspect of the angling experience.

#### **ADV TOUR POL 4**

To support both the enhancement of existing and development of new access to water locations in the county for recreation purposes. The provision of shared facility centres for water-based activities in the county shall be supported by the Council.

#### **ADV TOUR OBJ 1**

To facilitate walking and cycling access to lakes and waterways from towns and villages where services are provided.

#### **ADV TOUR OBJ 2**

To support the development of infrastructure and tourism enterprises which increase the tourism offering on waterways including boating, canoeing, angling, water sports, bird watching, and the provision of storage, shelters and other facilities to enhance the user experience subject to planning permission and only where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

#### **ADV TOUR OBJ 6**

To support and facilitate the continued development of the Greenways/Blueways and maximise the economic opportunities presented by Greenways/Blueways.

#### **ADV TOUR OBJ 7**

To develop Fowley's Falls and Glenfarne Forest Park as must-see tourist destinations.

There are other policies also contained in the Tourism chapter of the Plan which are supportive of elements of the proposed development.

#### **TOUR POL 1**

To support the development of new strategic tourism attractions that can create 'experiences' as motivational 'must do' signature experiences to draw visitors to the county, in a manner consistent with Leitrim's own brand identity.

#### **TOUR POL 6**

To seek to sustainably manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as blueways and greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones.

Section 5.5 *Greenways, Cycling and Walking* of the Leitrim County Council Development Plan 2023-2029 states:

"Leitrim County Council, working with strategic partners at a national, regional and local level, is strongly committed to developing further walking and cycling tracks, recognising the benefits not only for the local community but also for generating tourism activity and the resulting economic impacts."

Section 8.9 *Blueways and Greenways* of the Leitrim County Council Development Plan 2023-2029 states:

"The Council recognises the numerous benefits arising from the further development of Blueways and Greenways in Leitrim, as a tourism product with significant potential to attract internal and overseas visitors, for local communities in terms of economic benefits, and for all users as an amenity for physical activity and a contributor to health and wellbeing. Accordingly, it is Council policy to continue to expand and create an integrated network of Blueways and Greenways across the county and maximise pedestrian and cycle access to same."

The following policies and objectives contained in this section of the County Development Plan are considered of relevance in the consideration of the proposed development:

#### **BG POL 1**

To continue to support the develop an integrated and connected network of sustainable greenways, blueways and green routes within Co. Leitrim and into adjoining counties.

#### **BG OBJ 7**

To support the provision of services for visitors using walking and cycling trails which are appropriate to the location and activity, including bike rental and service points, picnic benches at scenic locations, public toilets, and other ancillary services in remote areas.

#### **BG OBJ 9**

To encourage access to forestry and woodlands, including private forestry, in co-operation with key stakeholders for walking routes, bridle paths, mountain biking, nature walks, orienteering, hiking, recreational areas and other similar facilities and to retain existing public rights of ways through forest lands where such rights of way exist.

Section 10.6.5 *Forestry Policy Framework* of the Leitrim County Council Development Plan 2023-2029 states:

"The Council also recognises that forests and woodlands can have a significant recreational and amenity value in the local community such as Coillte's Glenfarne Demesne and Derrycarne forests. While walking is the most popular activity, forest recreation embraces other specialised activities including orienteering, mountain biking, horse riding and fishing. The Council are keen to further exploit opportunities in this area. In line with Forest Service Guidelines, the Council will support the development of roads, tracks, and purpose built trail and cycle tracks in selected locations. The Council will also support and encourage the carbon neutral harvesting of forestry....... The development of Blueways and Greenways presents valuable opportunities for rural communities to attract more visitors. These values lie not only in the recreational opportunities that they offer but also in their potential to stimulate local businesses and regenerate local areas. Leitrim County Council is committed to the development of further Blueways and Greenways during the life of the County Development Plan."

Volume II – Settlement Plan, Section 19 Glenfarne (Brockagh Lower, Sranagross And West Barrs).

"An Options report for the future development of Glenfarne Woods (216-acre woodland area) on the shore of Lough MacNean was commissioned jointly by Coillte and Leitrim County Council and published in October 2020. It explores options for the development of new Tourism infrastructure and outdoor recreation facilities at Glenfarne Wood. This Plan (the Leitrim County

Development Plan 2023-2029) supports the further development of this important amenity which will become an important attraction along the SLNCR Greenway when developed."

The following specific objective is included as part of the Settlement Strategy for Glenfarne:

### Glenfarne Development Objectives

It is an objective of Leitrim County Council to:

GE 5

Co-operate with Coillte in the further development of Glenfarne Woods and seek to develop further new tourism infrastructure and outdoor recreation facilities identified in the Options Report for the future development of Glenfarne Woods (October 2020).

It is clear from the foregoing extracts from the County Development Plan 2023-2029 (Volume I and II) that the further development of tourism infrastructure and outdoor recreation at Glenfarne Woods was envisioned in the policy framework contained therein. In particular, objective GE 5, outlined the intention of the Local Authority to co-operate with Coillte in this regard. The proposed Part 8 development brings this objective to fruition. All of the wider policies contained in the Plan in relation to the further development of tourism, greenways, outdoor recreation and supporting infrastructure such as toilets, changing facilities and car parking facilities have been highlighted. It would be expected in time that this development will become a new strategic tourism attraction for north Leitrim that will create an 'experience' and a motivational 'must do' signature experience drawing visitors to the county, in a manner consistent with Leitrim's own brand identity (TOUR POL 1 refers). All of the necessary environmental assessments were undertaken and determinations made to ensure that the proposed development adheres to the policy framework contained in the County Development Plan and to the requirements of EU legislation.

I am satisfied that the proposed development therefore adheres to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, having regard to the provisions of the County Development Plan 2023-2029. I have outlined the basis for this evaluation be referring to the supporting narrative and various policies and objectives from the County Development Plan. It is evident the manner in which the proposed development will realise and be consistent with a significant number of said objectives, and objectives GE 5 and ADV TOUR OBJ 7 in particular.

#### 4.0 Submissions

#### 4.1 Prescribed Bodies

The application was referred to the following:

- 1. An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- 2. Fàilte Ireland
- 3. An Taisce
- 4. The Heritage Council
- 5. Development Applications Unit National Monuments Service, Architectural Heritage Service and National Monuments Service
- 6. Inland Fisheries Ireland (Erne River Basin)
- 7. Uisce Éireann
- 8. Health Service Executive
- 9. Waterways Ireland
- 10. Cavan County Council

A submission was received from the Development Applications Unit covering archaeology and a submission was received from Uisce Éireann. The number of external referees who responded is disappointing.

#### **Development Applications Unit**

The Department notes that the proposed development is large in scale and is situated in an area where there is a high density of Recorded Monuments which are subject to statutory protection in the Record of Monuments and Places, established under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1930-2004. Given the location and the scale of the development, it is possible that archaeological remains could be encountered during the construction phases that involve ground disturbance. The Department therefore recommends that a full program of licenced archaeological pre-development testing should be carried out in all areas of the proposed development. A condition to this effect is included in the submission.

#### Response

The Planning Authority has no difficulty acceding to the request from the Development Applications Unit with regard to the inclusion of a condition requiring the monitoring of ground works by an archaeologist under licence.

It is noted that no submission was received form the Department with regard to the natural heritage or built heritage elements of the overall project which is disappointing. This was requested from the Department at referral stage. It is assumed therefore that the Built Heritage Division & National Parks & Wildlife Service have no objection to the proposed development on the basis of no submission having been received in either regard.

#### **Uisce Éireann**

Uisce Éireann requests that prior to any works being undertaken, that the location of any / all watermain(s) / sewer(s) and any associated fittings shall be confirmed on the ground with the local water curator. Uisce Éireann requests that the integrity of the infrastructure shall be protected during the works and the Council's water service's engineer consulted prior to and during construction. A condition to this effect is included in the submission along with Uisce Éireann's Standard Details and Codes of Practice.

#### Response

There is no wastewater network within the Glenfarne forest with the wastewater from the service building discharging to a proprietary wastewater treatment system opposite. It is only watermains therefore which are of concern to Uisce Éireann. I am satisfied therefore that this matter can be managed through the imposition of a condition to the Part 8 consent which will required to be adhered to by the appointed contractors to the project in due course.

#### 4.2 Internal Submissions

The application was referred to the following:

- 1. Chief Fire Officer; and;
- 2. Access Officer

#### **Access Officer**

A report has been received from the Access Officer outlining no objections subject to the inclusion of a number of conditions, as follows:

- 1. All works shall comply with the guidance contained in Book 1 of Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, published by the National Disability Authority.
- 2. All street furniture, e.g. seating, bins, bollards or tree guards, to be colour contrasted to their surroundings.
- 3. Any proposed benches should include a hard surfaced area at either end that can accommodate a wheelchair or child's buggy.
- 4. Proposed coach parking area to have raised passenger embarking/disembarking area to cater for low floor/threshold accessible coaches.

#### Response

The purpose of this stage of the process (Part 8 application) is to make the general public aware of the intentions of Leitrim County Council who are exempt from having to obtain planning permission to undertake development within our own administrative area. It is respectfully considered that all of the points raised in the submission from the Access Officer will be taken into account at the detailed design stage of the project. The Local Authority will adhere to all requirements set out in the respective reports which relate to compliance with separate codes at detailed design and construction stage.

#### 4.3 Submissions from the General Public

4 no. submissions were received from the general public with regard to this proposed development.

- 1. Mr. Joe White
- 2. Ms. Sarah Clancy & Mr. Hugo Clancy
- 3. Ms. Teresa White
- 4. Mr. Thomas White

#### Summary of issues raised

The submission from Mr. Joe White who resides with his family along the local road L6195 does not welcome the proposed development as presented and objects to same. The basis for this objection is on the basis that the proposed development will bring increased traffic onto the local road (L6195). This local road is stated as being is a narrow, twisty and hilly route. It is currently a favourite route for walkers, cyclists and runners. It is contended that this road is not capable of increased vehicle traffic in its current condition with the surface not having been upgraded since circa 2000/2001 except for pothole filling. When a car and cyclist meet, it necessitates the cyclist having to pull in and dismount. When two cars meet, there is no option except to do an emergency stop procedure with one car having to reverse. In order to get past, one car must go onto the verge as there are very few safe places to pass another vehicle. It is also stated that there are multiple open drains and as a result, cars regularly get stuck. Some landowners on this road are absent and do not maintain their hedges. As the road is so twisty with very poor lines of sight, it makes for challenging driving conditions when the leaves are out. This road is currently one of the routes that Coillte use to draw timber harvested in the area. It is questioned if the proposed development will result in an increase of HGV traffic associated with forestry activities and the associated deterioration of the road surface as the route past the development will be busier with tourist traffic. The submission concludes that the introduction of extra pedestrians/cyclists and vehicles without doing upgrades to the road will be a recipe for disaster on the L6195. This road needs to be considered when approving the project.

The submission from Ms. Teresa White who also resides along the local road L6195 welcomes the proposed development and the benefits it brings to the area. It is noted that the longer 10km marked walk through Glenfarne woods is along this road with Ms. White's residence approximately 1km from the entrance to Glenfarne Woods and 2km from the proposed development. Ms. White outlines concerns in relation to the extra traffic on the L6195. It is contended that people who use the development will further travel along the lake and access the L6195 and use it to return to Glenfarne

and Kiltyclogher. Drivers, walkers and cyclists do this frequently at present and it is very noticeable in summer and at holiday times to enjoy the scenery. It is stated that the L6195 is currently badly maintained and will need extra maintenance, passing points and possible warning signs noting that strangers to the road are slow to pull in at the verge and to reverse which makes passing more difficult. The submission concludes that the L6195 needs to be improved and a number of hardcore passing points developed to take account of the increased traffic that is expected following this development. This road needs to be considered prior to approving the Glenfarne Wood Project.

The submission received by Ms. Sarah Clancy & Mr. Hugo Clancy who also reside on the L6195 is similar to that received by Ms. White. The submission welcomes the proposed development and the benefits it brings to the area but then outlines a serious of issues with regard to the L6195 similar to the above submissions. Reference is made to previous damage to this road allegedly arising from work by Coillte. The lack of ongoing maintenance is again highlighted in this submission. Concern is expressed that the development will result in increased traffic which will result in the road deteriorating further. The submission queries whether there are plans in place to ensure that the road condition is maintained, improved and strengthened if this route is used to haul timber from the forest. The lack of existing and need for passing points is again raised.

There is also a safety concern expressed with increased foot and bike traffic. Lines of sight are poor with bends and steep hills. Cars are getting quieter and a bike especially traveling at speed down hills poses danger to cyclists and drivers regardless of how slow a vehicle is traveling on a narrow road. The submission queries if solutions can be found with regard to warning signage or speed slowing mechanisms.

It is submitted that it is not a solution to block the entrance to the Glenfarne woods at the start of the tarred road that runs along the lake and joins the L6195 as the current signs erected by Coillte approximately 2 years ago indicate. The forest roads are used by residents in bad weather as usually snow and ice make the hills impassable.

The final submission was received by Mr. Thomas White who previously lived in Glenfarne but is now resident in Belcoo. The submission welcomes most of the proposal, including development of the forest area and proposals to link it in locally with the proposed SLNCR greenway in time. The submission then outlines a number of concerns in considerable detail.

Similar to the other submissions, concerns are raised about the development exacerbating existing issues arising from different modes using this road and that additional traffic on the L6195 resulting from the proposal will interfere with existing users and lack of passing areas along this road. The status of the road from the lodge through the forest is queried with regard to the role of the Council.

Concern is raised about the future maintenance schedule of the tarred surface of the cycleway and its suitability within a forest. The responsibility for the maintenance of this cycleway is queried as it is not clear from the MoU on file. Public rights of way need to be clearly defined including mapping and legal notices and declaring existing roads as public roads if necessary.

Whilst noting the small amount of broadleaf and native woodland in the plan, more should be planned. The extent of wildlife present in coniferous forestry is mentioned along with the impact on wildlife from human interaction and traffic noting that such wildlife tends to concentrate on the fringes / edges of the forests where some of the proposed development is located. The need for a plan to be developed to develop further areas of natural woodland needs to be prepared and integrated with the tourism offer proposed.

The submission outlines his opposition to the proposed boardwalk element of the overall project. It is contended that Bilberry island has been essentially untouched by humans for 50-75 years and is essentially an untouched habitat. It is contended that the submitter does not believe that a proper habitat's survey has been carried out to the degree that it should have been. Taken together with the viewing platform, it is stated that there seems to be a gentrification of how we interact with nature proposed. The submission states that a proper assessment of the effects of transecting Bilberry island does not appear to have been carried out. It is also considered that the boardwalk would seem to destroy what is an iconic view with a photograph submitted to reinforce the point. It is considered that there needs to be more consultation on this and provide enough information for a decision to be made on this element of the proposal. At a minimal, it is considered that artists impressions of what this boardwalk will look like in the present landscape is necessaary. The impact on an existing 'free from human interference' habitat has not been assessed appropriately.

The final issue raised before the conclusion relates to the resurgence of raptors (falcons and hawks) and buzzards in the McNean valley. Again, it is contended that the habitat assessments does not seem to have taken this into account, and concerns are expressed about additional traffic and footfall and loss of environment causing issues in this regard.

In conclusion, comparison is drawn with the Cuilcagh boardwalk whereby it is the boardwalk which becomes the attraction rather than it being an iconic nature location to visit and damage caused from over tourism. Part of Glenfarne's attraction is the very undeveloped nature of the forest and shoreline. Reference is made to existing fishing platforms and concrete bases, whilst respecting the need for access for all, the submission raises concerns that some of this development has already detracted from the natural beauty of the place and on the natural habitats.

#### Response

The Planning Authority note the points raised in each of the submissions received and has considered each carefully. It is considered that the response can be grouped to the principle points raised therein.

#### **Local Roads**

3 of the submissions received relate to the L6195 local road. The L6195 road is in two sections L-6195-1 and L-6195-2 respectively. According to the Pavement Management System, the L-6195-1 local road extends 2.4 km in length from the junction of R281 at Ardmoneen/Carrickrevagh Td, has an average width of 2.3 metres and an average Pavement Survey Condition Index rating of 6. This indicates that the surface is in fair condition and may need surface restoration. According to the Pavement Management System, the L-6195-2 local road extends 2.8 km in length from the junction of R281 at Corraclonna Td, has an average width of 2.6 metres and an average Pavement Survey Condition Index rating of 7. This indicates that the surface is in good condition and maybe an older surface with aged appearance.

The L-61951 connects to the L61952 at a junction and extends southwards along the shore of Lough Macnean Upper for a distance of 508 metres. Beyond this distance, the road is reclassified to a private roadway through the forest where it connects to the L61993 close to the slipway. There is no demarcation at the end of the local road to signify that a driver, walker or cyclist is now on a private roadway. There is a network of such private roadways within the forest area but only 3 public roads as referenced above.

It is noted that works were carried out on the L-6195-1 in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2008 and on the L-6195-2 in 1999, 2005 and 2007 under the respective Restoration Improvement Grants Programmes. It is also noted that works were also carried out on L-6195-2 under a Community Involvement Scheme in 2019 which involved the laying of macadam on a 500m section of the road.

The view of the District Engineer's Office is that looking at the entire road from both junctions of the regional road, the ratings would indicate that the road is in moderate condition with some defects.

With regard to the carrying out of future improvements to the surface of the roadway, as the members are aware, there are two options :

- 1. Surface dress the road under the Restoration Maintenance Grant Programme. Decision is made which schemes need to be done on an annual basis.
- 2. Include it in the new 3 year programme (2025 2027) for Restoration Improvement Grant which will be formulated this year. Under this scheme, it would be provided with a new macadam surface and surface dressing.

In order for the roadway to be considered under either scheme, the road would have to be fully assessed and compared with other potential roads which may require more urgent attention. This is not a decision to be made as part of the current Part 8 proposal.

The proposed development is primarily served off the L61993 which accesses the woods off the R281 close to Glenfarne. This road has an average width of 3.0 metres and a Pavement Survey Condition Index rating of 9. This is a public roadway as far as the slipway as the status of this road was queried in the submission by Mr. Thomas White. It is only the proposed floating boardwalk to and from Bilberry Island, the sheltered changing screen at Ladies View and the Panoramic Platform at Long Tom's View (Myles' Big Stone) that are accessed off private roadways close to the shore of Lough Macnean Upper.

It is accepted that the entirety of the woodland owned and managed by Coillte CGA was included in the application site boundaries although the works do not extend north of Myles Big Stone or opposite Patrick's Island along the shoreline. It is accepted that the wider woodland is accessed from the R281 at Ardmoneen/Carrickrevagh Td and at Corraclonna Td for people approaching from the Kiltycloger direction. The roadway is used for vehicular access but also by cyclists and walkers. It is a public roadway and the responsibility rests with the Roads Authority to ensure that the pavement condition is maintained and if necessary, improved. The L6195 is not planned as an access route for Glenfarne Wood recreational offer. However, Coillte CGA have confirmed that the current access for locals from the L6195 into Glenfarne Wood will be maintained and therefore it will remain open. The public roads are clearly identified and as outlined above, Coillte CGA does not seek to close off access to locals within their lands. This does not however confer a public right of way of such private roads.

It is accepted that there is a risk that Google maps or other navigation devices may route visitors coming from the Kiltyclogher side via the L6195 but these should be comparatively fewer than from other directions and signage can be used to focus traffic from that direction to the main entrance.

The requirement for the provision of pull in areas on the L6195 is a matter for the Roads Authority to determine and would be subject to the provision of necessary funding and the identification of suitable locations along a road. In general, the District Engineer's Office has advised that they are installed in wider areas of margins rather than using private lands and when the Local Authority are implementing a grant aided scheme (Restoration Maintenance Grant or Restoration Improvement Grant).

The requirement for the provision of pull in areas along the private roads which extend northwards from the L-61591 to access the proposed floating boardwalk to and from Bilberry Island, the sheltered changing screen at Ladies View and the Panoramic Platform at Long Tom's View (Myles' Big Stone) will be considered by Coillte CGA. Such works are considered minor in nature and would not be considered

to require a separate planning consent. The proposed development is dependent on obtaining funding from the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund or other source. Subject to such funding being obtained and the development being undertaken, there will inevitably be a requirement to monitor the impact which such increased visitors' numbers have on the existing infrastructure and to ensure that such infrastructure is upgraded as required.

#### **Future Maintenance**

With regard to the future maintenance schedule of the tarred surface of the cycleway and of the other elements of the proposed development, such matters are not covered in the Memorandum of Understanding. There is a more detailed agreement being prepared by the Local Authority and Coillte CGA and preliminary discussions on this regard are underway. It is estimated that the maintenance regime of this development with require annual funding of up to €40,000 to ensure that the experience will retain the qualitative standard which is being strived for.

#### Nature of Planting

With regard to the nature of planting being undertaken by Coillte CGA at Glenfarne, it is not considered that this is relevant to the consideration of the proposed Part 8 development. Nonetheless, there are a number of features which Coillte CGA are doing in Glenfarne and in their wider corporate strategy that will allay some of these concerns included in the submission by Mr. Thomas White. It must be remembered that the forest landscape in Glenfarne is an artificially created one including that of the islands which were also planted with exotic conifers. A specific part of the plan is to create greater diversity within one area specifically for native tree species. In the wider context, Coillte CGA is moving to increase biodiversity areas from 20% to 30% by the end of next year and to 50% by 2050. The proposed development is sited close to existing infrastructure (roads, parking, slipways, etc.) and away from the heart of the plantation. This decision was twofold, firstly to avoid impacting on forest operations which includes thinning and harvesting of trees within a commercial plantation with the requirement for subsequent replanting but also to minimise impact on wildlife. Future forest operation and management will respect the newly enhanced status of Glenfarne Wood and look at alternative silvicultural options like Continuous Cover Forestry in certain locations and greater species diversity in replanting when their time comes. Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) is a forest management approach suitable to both conifers and broadleaves. It allows for the production of commercial timber while retaining a forest cover at all times. It often relies on harnessing natural forest processes such as natural regeneration of trees, mixed species, increased biodiversity and natural forest development (forest succession). For this reason, it is also known as Close-to-Nature forest management.

#### Boardwalk to Bilberry Island & Adequacy of Ecological Assessment

The submission from Mr. Thomas White outlines his opposition to the proposed boardwalk element of the overall project. As outlined above, the existing woodland habitat on Bilberry Island is not naturally occurring woodland but rather planted woodland. It is accepted that the island is rarely visited and the habitat is largely unaffected by human activity. The Local Authority would not accept that inadequate surveys have been undertaken or that the drawings prepared are not sufficient to inform the decision making process. Comprehensive habitat and faunal surveys of the entire site were carried out which included on Bilberry Island. The entire island was surveyed and the forest habitat has limited diversity due to it being dominated by conifers with little light penetrating.

As stated in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), there will be no loss of woodland cover as a result of trail construction; the odd individual tree might have to be removed to facilitate the trail but generally there will be sufficient space between trees to facilitate the trail. The only woodland to be lost is young conifer plantation to facilitate the proposed amenity area. This has low biodiversity value, as stated in the EcIA. Whilst it is accepted that view of the island is indeed pleasant from the shoreline,

the woodland on the island is conifer plantation with very little floral diversity under it. Regardless, there will be no loss of this woodland. The boardwalk has been positioned to land at the western tip of the island with minimal intervention as a result.

The quality of the drawings contained in the consultation package are of the same specification and standard are those prepared for the boardwalk at Acres Lake, Drumshanbo and at the marina in Carrick-on-Shannon. Whilst accepting that a visual impression would have assisted, no such requirement arises from the legislation. The view referred to is indeed an impressive view but not one which is identified as a Protected View or Prospect in the County Development Plan 2023-2029. The submitter did not engage in the Development Plan review process in which the view in question could have been considered for inclusion as a Protected View or Prospect.

#### **Raptors**

In relation to the raptors, buzzards are indeed very abundant and increasing in number. However, they are not on any red list and there is more than abundant potential foraging and nesting habitat for them in the Glenfarne area. Buzzards are scavengers, particularly of farmland, and are very abundant in intensively managed farmland in the east of the country. They are extremely abundant in areas much less secluded than Glenfarne. There will be no loss of Buzzard supporting habitat as a result of the proposed development. There are no records for osprey in the area and NPWS did not have osprey on their list of protected species for the area which the ecologist who prepared the EcIA requested. There is no record of osprey for Lough Macnean Upper.

#### 5.0 Assessment

#### 5.1 Policy Assessment

This report has outlined the principal relevant provisions of the County Development Plan 2023-2029 as applicable to the consideration of this Part 8 proposal. On the basis of the reports which were prepared and formed part of the Part 8 application, the Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposed development adheres to and is consistent with the policy framework contained with the statutory County Development Plan. It is not considered that further analysis is required in this regard.

All necessary development management policy considerations were applied to the project by the Planning Department at pre consultation stage. This includes modifications to the submitted design of the proposed service building and other elements of the overall proposed development.

Section 13.16.10 of the County Development Plan 2023-2029 prescribes development management standards in respect of electric vehicle (EV) charging points, with the recommendation that all "developments should provide facilities for the charging of battery-operated cars at a rate of up to 20% of the total car parking spaces." The proposed development results in 20 no. spaces at the existing car park near the Gate Lodge with the new car park providing a total of 33 no. 6 no. electric charging points are proposed in the larger of the car parks where electrical supply will be required to serve the service building and street lighting. It is considered that such provision is adequate.

The submitted Soil Characterisation and Site Suitability Report (Wastewater Treatment & Disposal) has demonstrated the suitability of the site to accommodate the proposed wastewater treatment system. The proposed water treatment system is an O' Reilly Oakstown EN Treatment system (50PE System) or similar EN Certified System, Ecoflo Coco Filter and gravel Pressurised bed. The location was chosen due to the poor percolation characteristics on the main site adjoining the proposed service building and this was the most suitable location for the proposed polishing filter and associated treatment system. As the depth to bedrock is not deemed to be extreme, it is the professional opinion of Traynor Environmental Ltd that the presence of a small amount of roots outside of the polishing

filter will not be an issue in terms of the overall treatment of effluent on site. Traynor Environmental Ltd also recommends as a precaution that at the time of when the installation of the polishing filter taking place that any roots present close to the polishing filter are removed.

#### 5.2 Appropriate Assessment

Leitrim County Council, as competent authority, in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42 (1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment Screening on the proposed development.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has assessed, in view of the best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of European Sites, if the proposed works, individually, and in combination with other plans and projects, are likely to have a significant effect on any European site (known as a Natura 2000 site). This report concluded that the works individually, and in combination with other plans and projects, are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site.

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42 (1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, Leitrim County Council made a determination that Appropriate Assessment is not required for the proposed development.

#### 5.3 Environmental Assessments

Leitrim County Council, in accordance with the requirements of EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU; the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended; the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended; and the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, undertook an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening in respect of the proposed development.

Leitrim County Council determined that the proposed Drumshanbo Town Centre Regeneration Project would not be likely to have any significant effects on the environment and, accordingly, that the preparation and submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report was not required.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

The proposed development the subject of this Part 8 public consultation process aim to complement and enhance the existing recreational amenity provided by Coillte CGA in the existing Glenfarne Woods. It is intended to apply under the current call for applications under the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund to implement the proposed development if approved by the Elected Members. It is considered that this investment and indeed commitment by both partner organisations would become a catalyst for the regeneration and economic development through SLOW tourism of this rural area economic in the short to medium term, and as the basis for its sustainable development in the longer term.

The Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposed development adheres to the policy framework provided for in the County Development Plan 2023-2029. All matters pertaining to Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment have been adequately addressed through the documentation submitted with the Part 8 application and the determinations made by the Local Authority prior to the commencement of the public consultation process. The development will not adversely impact upon its receiving environment noting the sensitivities of same.

The Planning Authority is therefore satisfied that the proposed development adheres to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

#### 6.0 Recommendation

The Planning Department are satisfied that the principle of the proposed development adheres to the provisions of the statutory County Development Plan 2023-2029. The Planning Authority is equally satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely impact upon the local receiving environment and that the development would accord with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Section 179(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires the preparation of a report by the Chief Executive of the Local Authority following the placing of the proposed Part 8 application on public display. This report shall culminate in a recommendation "whether or not the proposed development should be proceeded with as proposed, or as varied or modified as recommended in the report or should not be proceeded with, as the case may be".

It is recommended that the proposed development be proceeded with as proposed subject to the inclusion of the attached recommended conditions.

Bernard Greene Senior Planner

Justin Fannon,

Acting Director of Service

Justi Farron

#### Appendix 1 Schedule of Conditions

- The development shall be generally executed in accordance with plans, particulars, details and specifications lodged as part of the Part 8 consultation documentation, save, as is herein under otherwise required.
- 2. The successful consultants appointed by the Local Authority to undertake the detailed design shall ensure that the necessary recommendations, as practicable, contained in the following reports are adhered to in the final approved detailed design:
  - i. Access Officer;
  - ii. Uisce Éireann
  - iii. Oran Ecology Ecological Impact Assessment— Section 5 Assessment of Effects and Mitigation Measures
  - iv. Traynor Environmental Ltd. Soil Characterisation and Site Suitability Report Wastewater Treatment & Disposal
- 3. The successful appointed contractor is required to engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930–2004) to carry out predevelopment testing at the site. No sub-surface work shall be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without his/her express consent.

The archaeologist is required to notify the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of site preparations. This will allow the archaeologist sufficient time to obtain a licence to carry out the work.

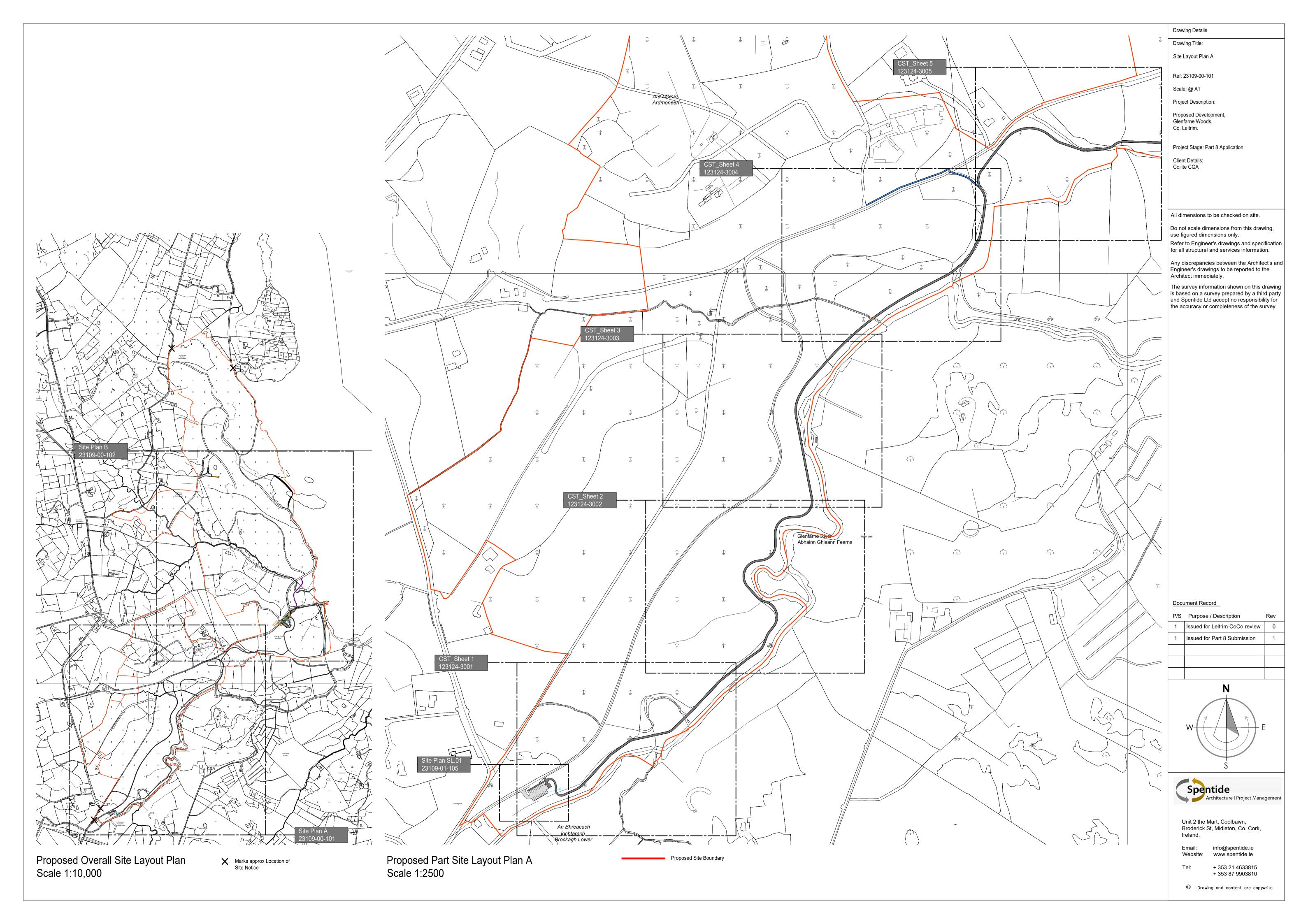
The archaeologist shall carry out any relevant documentary research and may excavate test trenches at locations chosen by the archaeologist, having consulted the proposed development plans.

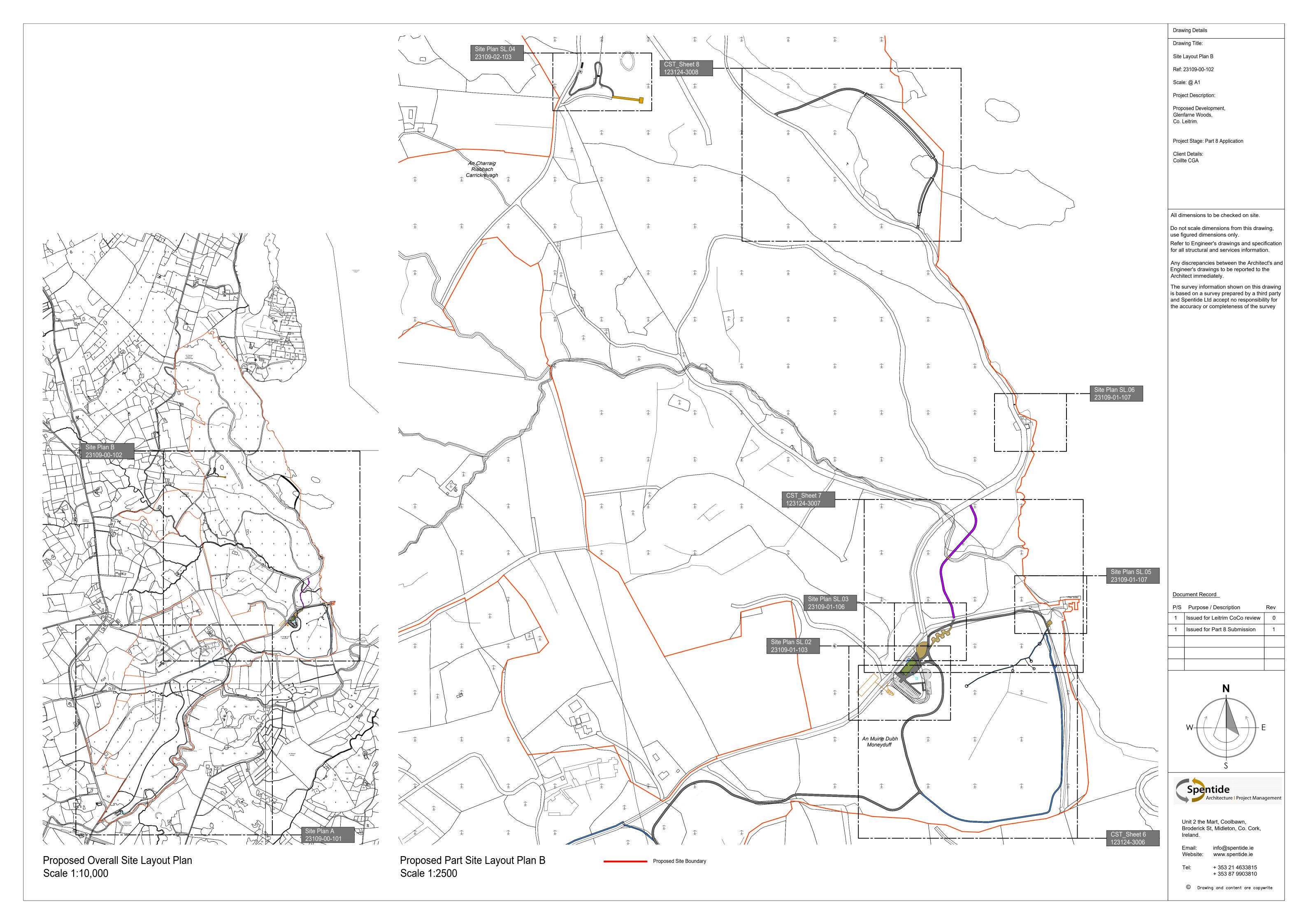
Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report to the Planning Authority and to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Where archaeological material is shown to be present, avoidance, preservation in situ, preservation by record (excavation) and/or monitoring may be required, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will advise the contractor and client with regard to these matters.

No site preparation or construction work shall be carried out until after the archaeologist's report has been submitted and permission to proceed has been received, in writing, from the Planning Authority in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

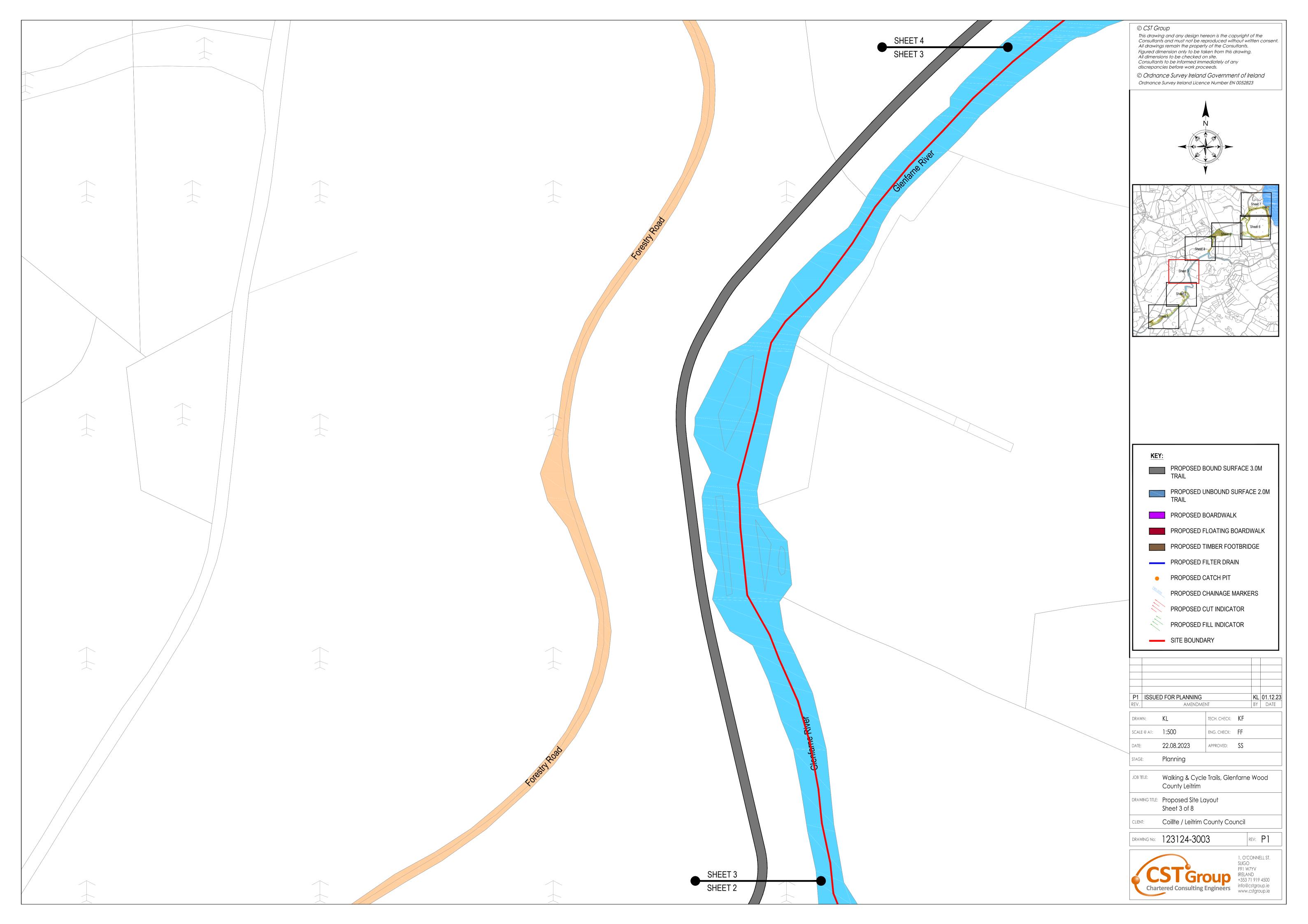
### Appendix 2 Schedule of Drawings



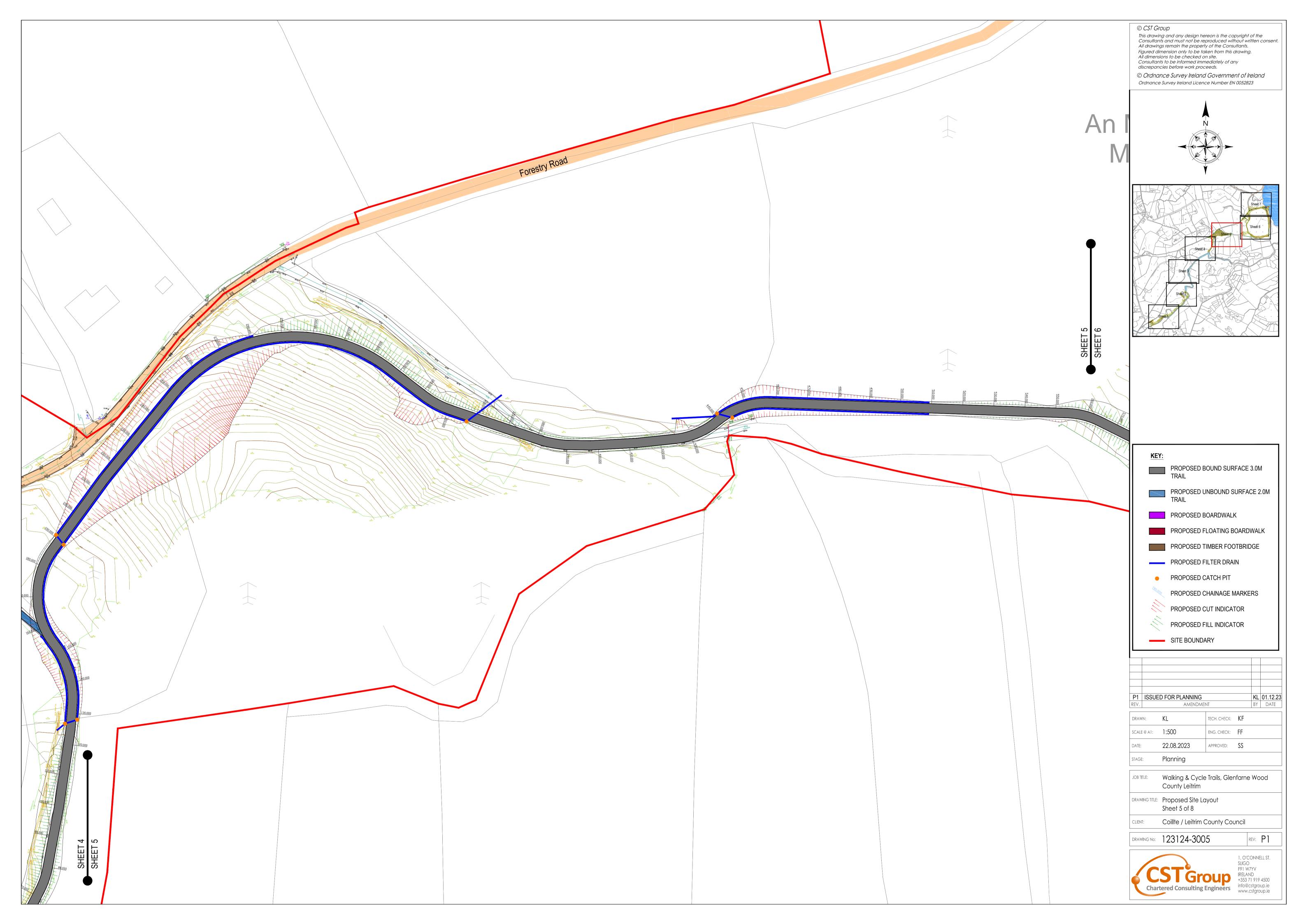




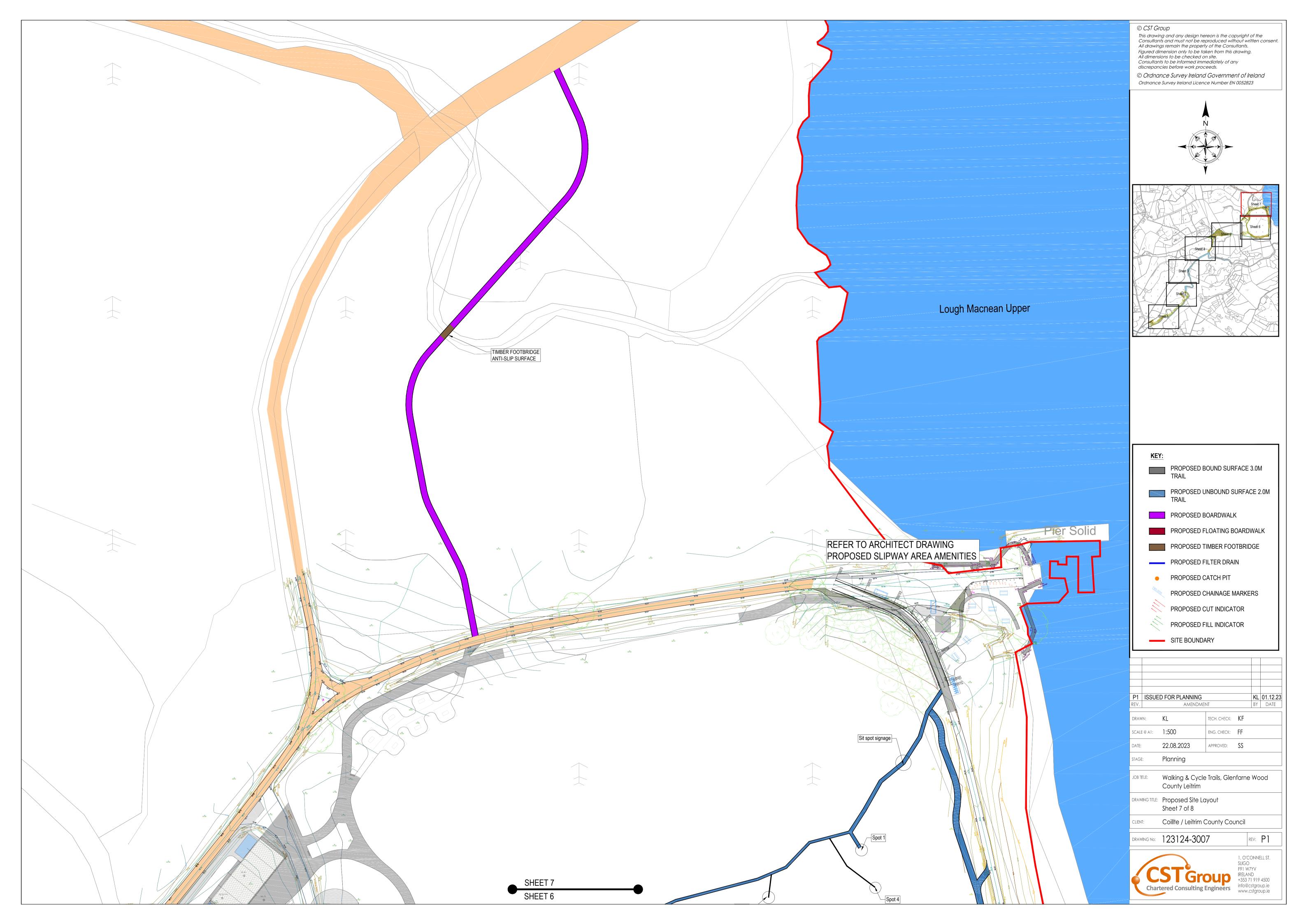


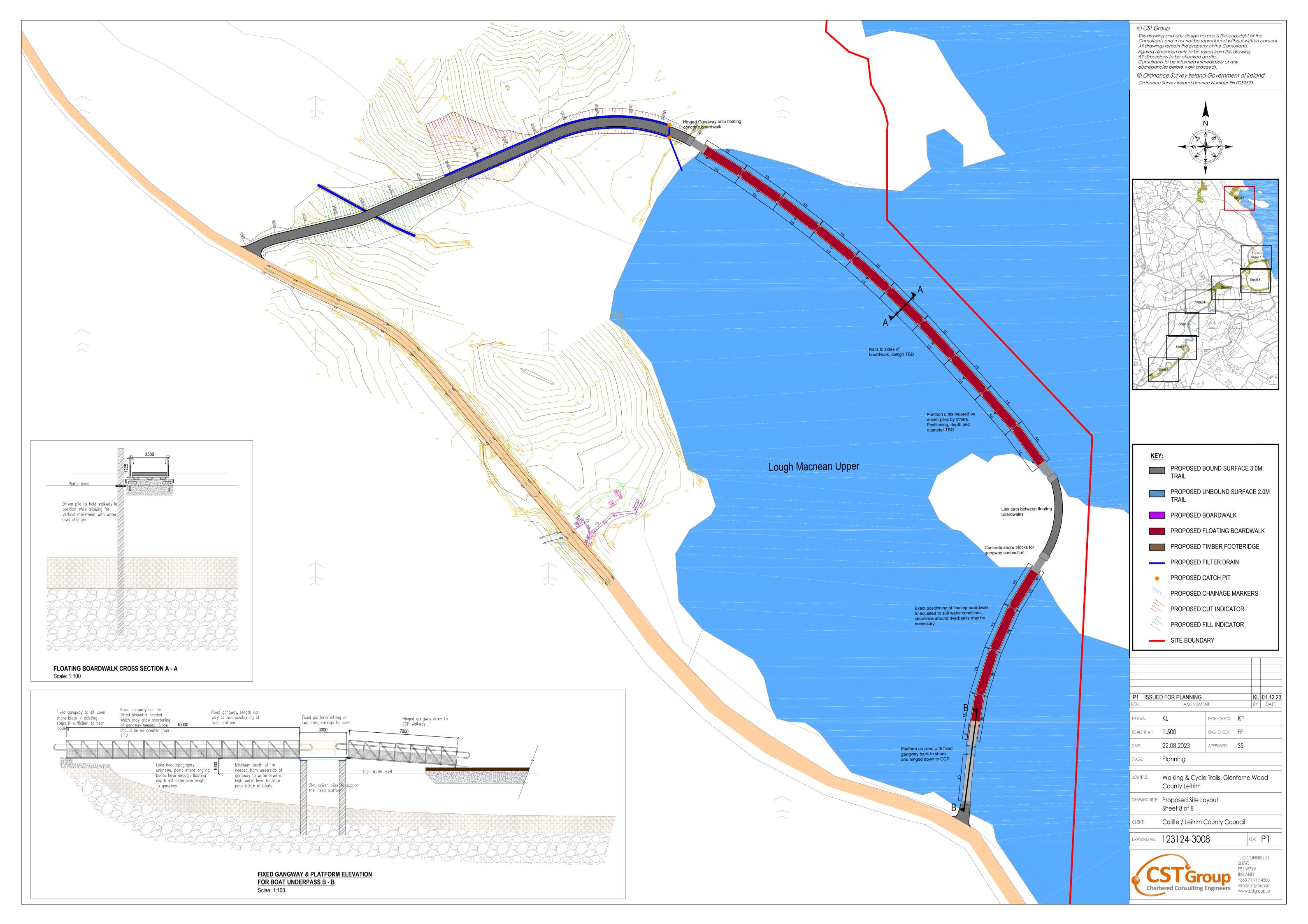


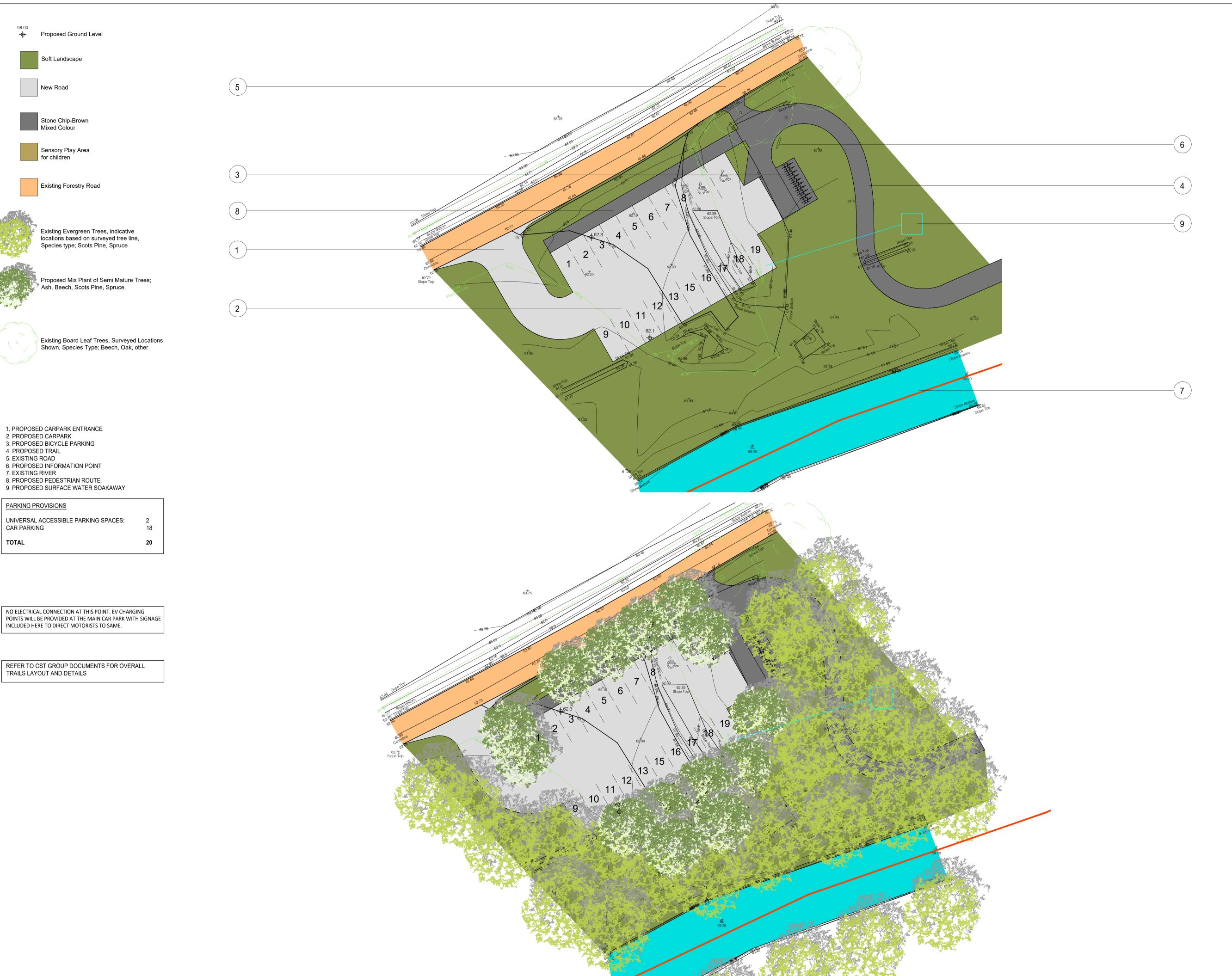












Drawing Details

Drawing Title:

Proposed Upgrade of Existing Car Parking Area

Site Layout Plan SL.01

Ref: 23109-01-105

Scale: 1:250 @ A1

Project Description:

Proposed Development, Glenfarne Woods, Co. Leitrim.

Project Stage: Part 8 Application

Client Details: Coillte CGA

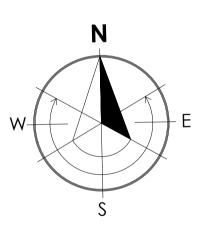
All dimensions to be checked on site.

Do not scale dimensions from this drawing, use figured dimensions only.

Refer to Engineer's drawings and specification for all structural and services information.

Any discrepancies between the Architect's and Engineer's drawings to be reported to the Architect immediately.

The survey information shown on this drawing is based on a survey prepared by a third party and Spentide Ltd accept no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the survey



## Document Record

P/S	Purpose / Description	Rev
1	Issued for Discussion	0
1	Issued for Approval	1
1	Issued for Leitrim CoCo Review	2
1	Issued for Part 8 Submission	3

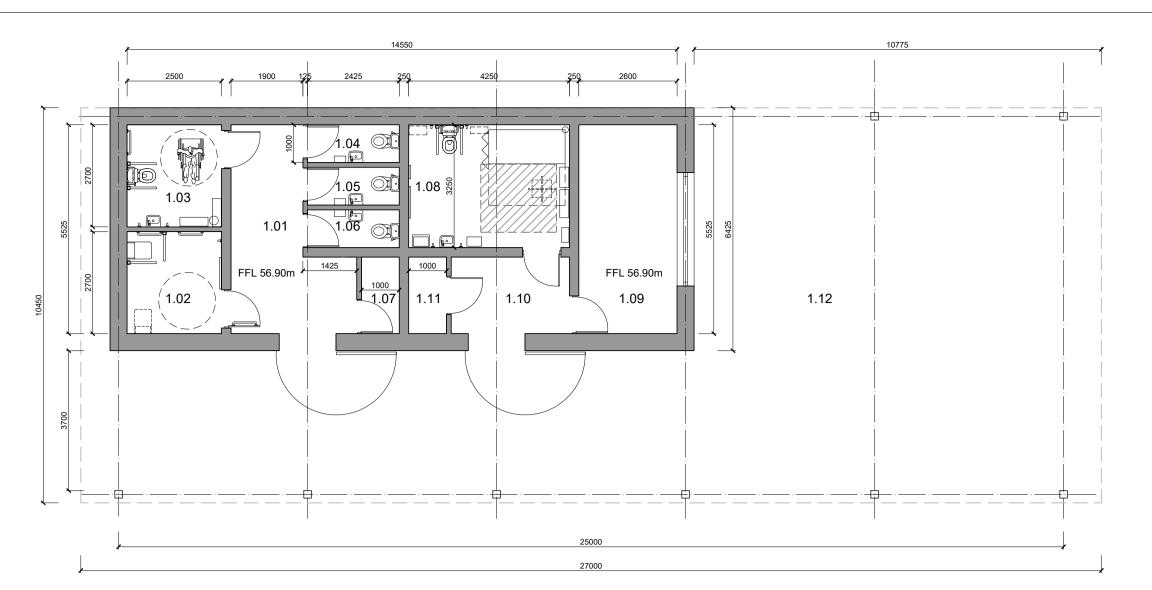


Unit 2 the Mart, Coolbawn, Broderick St, Midleton, Co. Cork, Ireland.

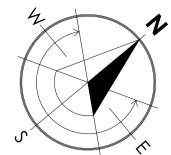
info@spentide.ie Email: Website: www.spentide.ie

> + 353 21 4633815 + 353 87 9903810



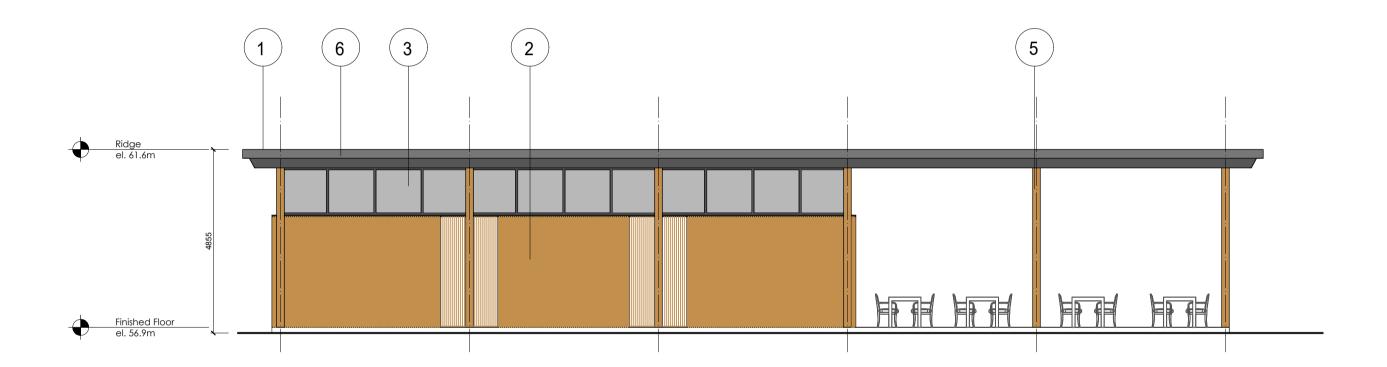


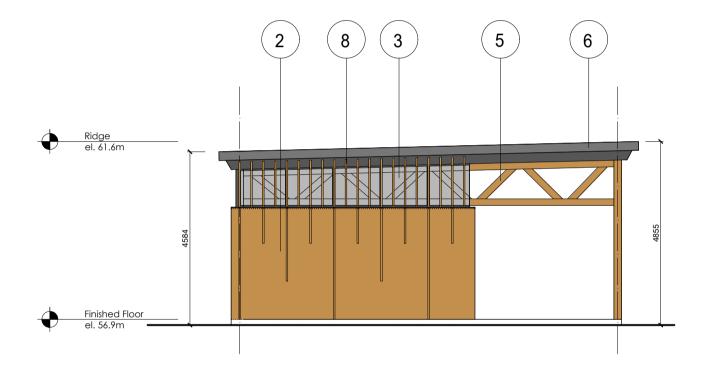
- 1.01 Lobby
- 1.02 Self Contained Accessible Shower and Changing 1.03 Universal Accessible Toilet
- 1.04 WC & WHB 1.05 - WC & WHB
- 1.06 WC & WHB 1.07 - Cleaners Sink & Discharge point for Campervan Foul Waste
- 1.08 Changing Places Facility
- 1.09 Office/Store
- 1.10 Lobby 1.11 - Plant room / Services
- 1.12 Covered Seating Area
- $G.I.A = 80m^{2}$



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

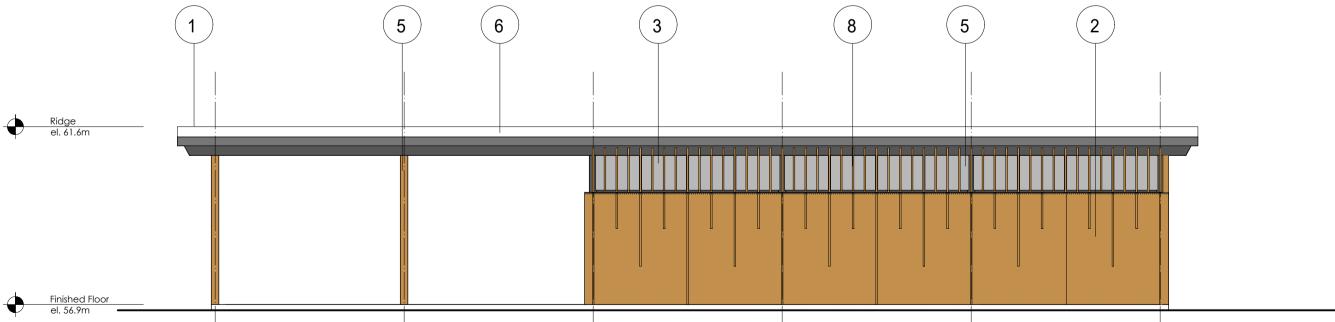
Scale 1:100

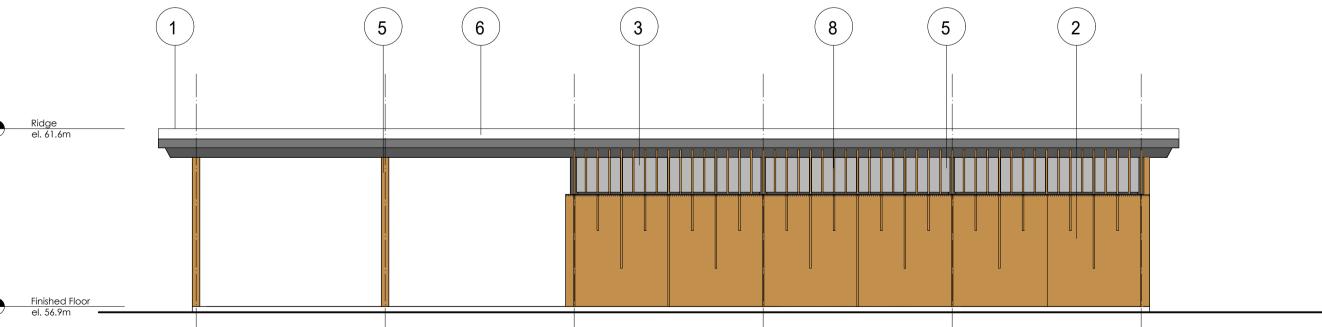




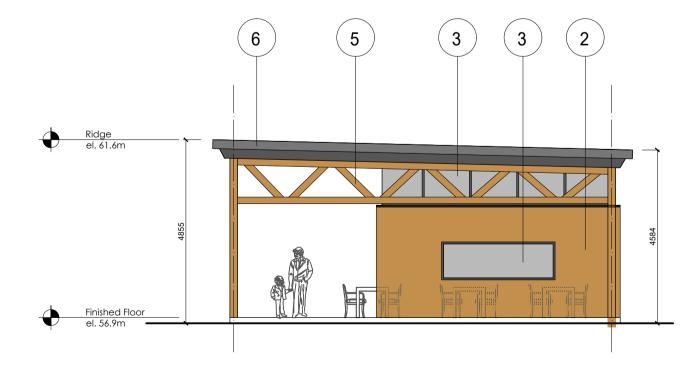
Proposed East Elevation Scale 1:100

Proposed South Elevation Scale 1:100





**Proposed West Elevation** Scale 1:100



Proposed North Elevation Scale 1:100

### **Drawing Details**

Drawing Title:

Proposed Trailhead Building Plans & Sections A, D & Elevations

Ref: 23109-01-200

Scale: 1:100 @ A1

Project Description:

Co. Leitrim.

Proposed Development, Glenfarne Woods,

Project Stage: Part 8 Planning Application

Client Details: Coillte CGA

All dimensions to be checked on site.

Do not scale dimensions from this drawing, use figured dimensions only.

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Any discrepancies between the Architect's and Engineer's drawings to be reported to the Architect immediately.

The survey information shown on this drawing is based on a survey prepared by a third party and Spentide Ltd accept no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the survey

### Materials Legend

- 1. Ballast to Roof Covering.
- 2. Larch Vertical Cladding with open Joints.
- 3. Powder Coated Aluminium Windows.
- 4. Powder Coated Aluminium Doors.
- 5. Treated Timber Structural Trusses.
- 6. Powder Coated Aluminium Facia & Soffits.
- 7. Powder Coated Aluminium Down Pipes.
- 8. Larch Vertical Louvers Solar Shading.

# Document Record

P/S Purpose / Description

1	Issued for Discussion	0
1	Issued for Leitrim CoCo Review	1
1	Issued for Part 8 Submission	1



Unit 2 the Mart, Coolbawn, Broderick St, Midleton, Co. Cork,

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EXAMPLES OF SENSORY GARDEN EQUIPMENT AND FEATURES, TO BE DEVELOPED

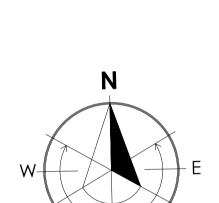
REFER TO CST GROUP DOCUMENTS FOR OVERALL TRAILS LAYOUT AND DETAILS





EXAMPLES OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, TO BE DEVELOPED





# Document Record

Drawing Details

Site Layout Plan SL.03

Ref: 23109-01-106

Scale: 1:250 @ A1

Project Description:

Co. Leitrim.

Client Details: Coillte CGA

Proposed Development, Glenfarne Woods,

Project Stage: Part 8 Application

All dimensions to be checked on site.

use figured dimensions only.

Do not scale dimensions from this drawing,

Refer to Engineer's drawings and specification for all structural and services information.

Any discrepancies between the Architect's and

The survey information shown on this drawing

is based on a survey prepared by a third party and Spentide Ltd accept no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the survey

Engineer's drawings to be reported to the Architect immediately.

Proposed Playground & Sensory Garden

Drawing Title:

P/S	Purpose / Description	Rev
1	Issued for Discussion	0
1	Issued for Approval	1
1	Issued for Leitrim CoCo Review	2
1	Issued for Part 8 Submission	3



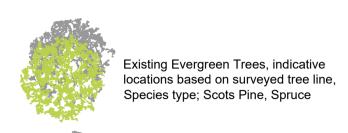
Unit 2 the Mart, Coolbawn, Broderick St, Midleton, Co. Cork, Ireland.

Email: info@spentide.ie Website: www.spentide.ie

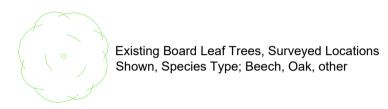
Tel: + 353 21 4633815

+ 353 87 9903810





Proposed Mix Plant of Semi Mature Trees; Ash, Beech, Scots Pine, Spruce.



1. PROPOSED CONTROLLED CAR & BOAT TRAILER PARKING AREA
2. PROPOSED HAMMER HEAD TURNING (SUBJECT TO AUTOTRACK)
3. PROPOSED ADDITIONAL PICNIC AREA & FIXED BENCHES
4. PROPOSED BICYCLE PARKING & INFORMATION POINT / WAY FINDING
5. PROPOSED CLEAR ACCESS ROUTE TO SHARED LANEWAY
6. PROPOSED FIXED TIMBER BOLLARDS
7. PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN TRAIL TO PICNIC BENCHES
8. LAKE
9. PROPOSED HEIGHT RESTRICTION BARRIER
10. EXISTING RAISED CONCRETE PLATFORM
11. PROPOSED PLASTER FINISH CHANGING SCREEN, CIRCA 1.8m HIGH ABOVE

GROUND LEVEL

12. EXISTING SCULPTURE TO BE RETAINED

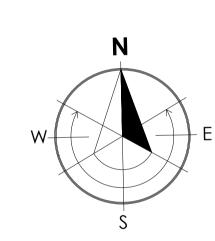
13. EXISTING RAISED TREE BED TO BE RETAINED

14. EXISTING LOW LEVEL STONE WALLS TO BE RETAINED

REFER TO CST GROUP DOCUMENTS FOR OVERALL TRAILS LAYOUT AND DETAILS







## Document Record

**Drawing Details** 

Ref: 23109-01-107

Scale: 1:250 @ A1

Project Description:

Glenfarne Woods,

Co. Leitrim.

Client Details:

Coillte CGA

Proposed Development,

Project Stage: Part 8 Application

All dimensions to be checked on site.

use figured dimensions only.

Architect immediately.

Do not scale dimensions from this drawing,

Refer to Engineer's drawings and specification for all structural and services information.

Any discrepancies between the Architect's and

The survey information shown on this drawing is based on a survey prepared by a third party and Spentide Ltd accept no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the survey

Engineer's drawings to be reported to the

Proposed Slipway Area & Changing Amenities

Site Layout Plan SL.05 & SL.06

Drawing Title:

	<del></del>	
P/S	Purpose / Description	Rev
1	Issued for Discussion	0
1	Issued for Approval	1
1	Re-issued for Approval	2
1	Re-issued for Approval	3
1	Re-issued for Approval	4
1	Issued for Leitrim CoCo Review	5
1	Issued for Part 8 Submission	6



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