

**BALLYHALE TO KNOCKTOPHER FOOTPATH PROJECT**

**FOR ROADPLAN CE & KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**BUILT HERITAGE ASSESSMENT**

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## Summary

This report has been produced as an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed Ballyhale to Knocktopher Footpath Project, on built heritage.

The report investigates the historical background of the land in the vicinity of the proposed project. The route through which the proposed footpath will pass has been in use as a roadway in previous centuries, and is shown as such on historic mapping of the area. The medieval village of Knocktopher has been connected by road to Ballyhale since at least the later medieval period.

At the northern extent the project will commence at the south end of Knocktopher Village and will travel south along the R713 regional road and will cross a road bridge over the Little Arrigle river in Moanroe Commons townland, continuing southeast along the R713 through Kiltorcan townland, finishing on the R713 at the northern end of Ballyhale Village.

No buildings that are included in the Record of Protected Structures for County Kilkenny and no buildings included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage would be adversely impacted by the proposed works.

The project proposes the setting back of approximately 20m of rubble stone wall which forms the front boundary wall of a nineteenth century house. The footpath would also traverse over an adjoining nineteenth century roadside well.

The project also proposes the installation of the footpath on the northern side of a late eighteenth/early nineteenth century bridge. This would negatively impact on the historic aesthetic form of the bridge but it is unlikely that historic fabric would be disturbed.

These proposals should have a moderate adverse impact on the built heritage of the locality and mitigation measures to minimise this impact are recommended in this report.

## Background

This report has been prepared by Colm Flynn of Colm Flynn Archaeology in association with Dr Rosane Walker (BA BAI P.Grad.Dip Applied Building Repair and Conservation PhD) for Kilkenny County Council as part of the input to the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Ballyhale to Knocktopher Footpath Project.

The site was inspected for the purposes of preparing this report on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019 by Colm Flynn and again on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 by Colm Flynn and Rosanne Walker on which occasions the photographs incorporated in the report were taken and the site examined to prepare the descriptions contained therein.

Historical research was carried out on the background history of properties within the site or in close proximity and the findings are set out below.

The bridge is heavily overgrown with vegetation and a detailed inspection was not possible. While this report contains comment on aspects of the condition of the structures, it is neither a condition nor structural report and should not be read as such.

## Methodology

The built heritage assessment examines buildings and other structures along the route of the proposed new footpath between Ballyhale and Knocktopher and assesses the architectural significance of those structures with the anticipated effect of the project on their character. The emphasis is on structures still standing. Where a building or other structure has been destroyed it no longer has architectural significance on the landscape, though it may leave traces that fall within the ambit of the archaeological assessment. It may also have had an importance that remains through the historical record, though this is not of concern to the present task. For a structure to have architectural significance it need not survive intact and ruins, or even fragments of buildings may be of importance.

The identification of buildings and structures to be assessed for impact was based in the first instance on an analysis of current Ordnance Survey maps. The potential for any building or other structure along the project area to have special architectural significance was also gauged through examination of the following sources:

- The Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020
- Pre-Ordnance Survey maps by Taylor & Skinner, William Larkin and the Down Survey.
- Ordnance Survey six-inch maps of 1839 and 1950
- Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps of 1901-02

Any buildings on or close to the proposed project area that were identified on the earlier Ordnance Survey maps were then checked against the current Ordnance Survey maps to ascertain which were still extant.

The project area was then walked to identify those structures noted in the desktop survey to assess them for their architectural quality. The possibility of finding structures of architectural significance not identified either from the desktop assessment was kept in mind during the site work and any potential additional structures were examined.

The entries in the Records of Protected Structures for County Kilkenny were also checked.

The structures identified along the route were examined to assess the potential effects of the proposed road and to consider potential for mitigation where necessary. In each case the structures identified are rated in accordance with the system adopted the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) wherein a structure is rated as being of International, National, Regional or Local interest, or, if a structure is of no special interest, the NIAH includes a category of "Record only"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> National Inventory of Architectural Heritage *NIAH Handbook* edition June 2006 pp. 22-23



period onwards. Although neither the Little Arrigle River or a bridge is depicted on the Down Survey map, a bridge was likely to have been situated south of Knocktopher from the medieval period onwards.

In the late eighteenth century a road is depicted between Knocktopher and Ballyhale in Taylor and Skinners Maps of the Roads of Ireland (1777).

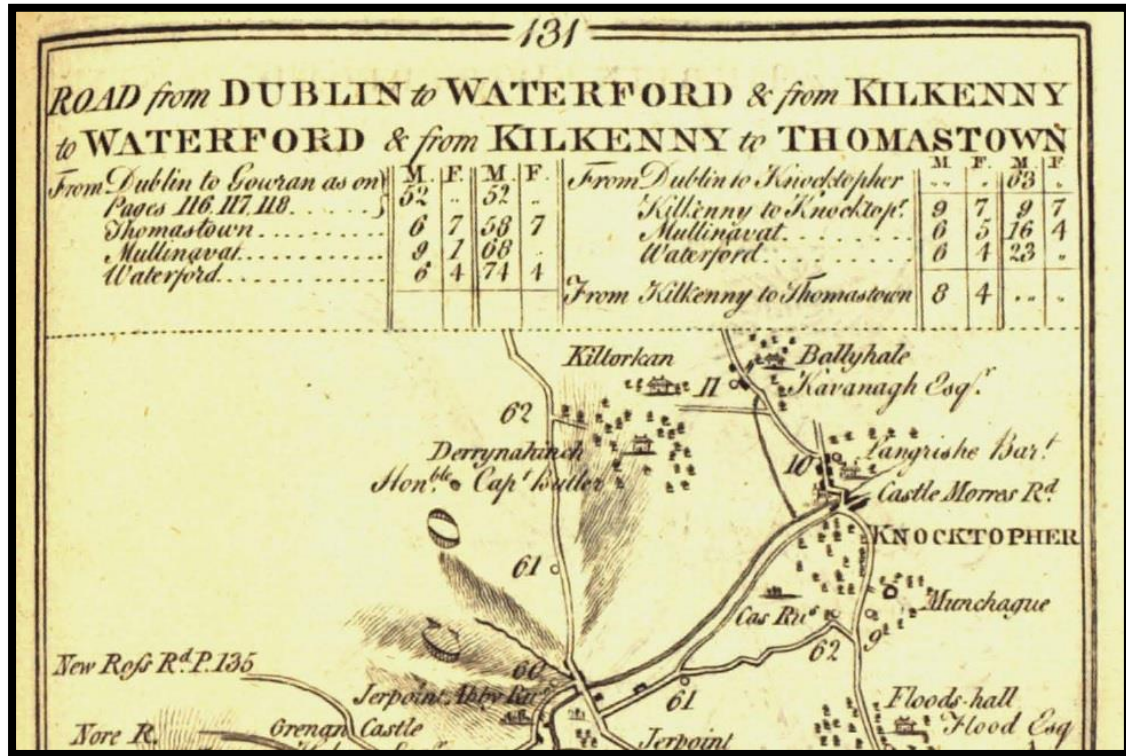


Figure 2: Extract from Taylor and Skinners Map of the Roads of Ireland (1777)

In this map north is to the bottom of the page. This eighteenth century map depicts a bridge over the Little Arrigle River, south of Knocktopher. Also depicted on this map at Knocktopher is an area annotated as 'Langrishe Bar.', indicating the location of the Langrishe Baronet. The Langrishe family held land at Knocktopher from at least the mid seventeenth century. By the time of Taylor and Skinners Map of the area the Langrishe family had increased the size of their land holdings considerably, amounting to 800 acres in the barony of Knocktopher.

The nineteenth century first edition Ordnance Survey map of the area (dating to 1839) was drawn at 6" to a mile scale. This allows for the examination in great detail of the proposed works area between Knocktopher and Ballyhale (see Fig 3).



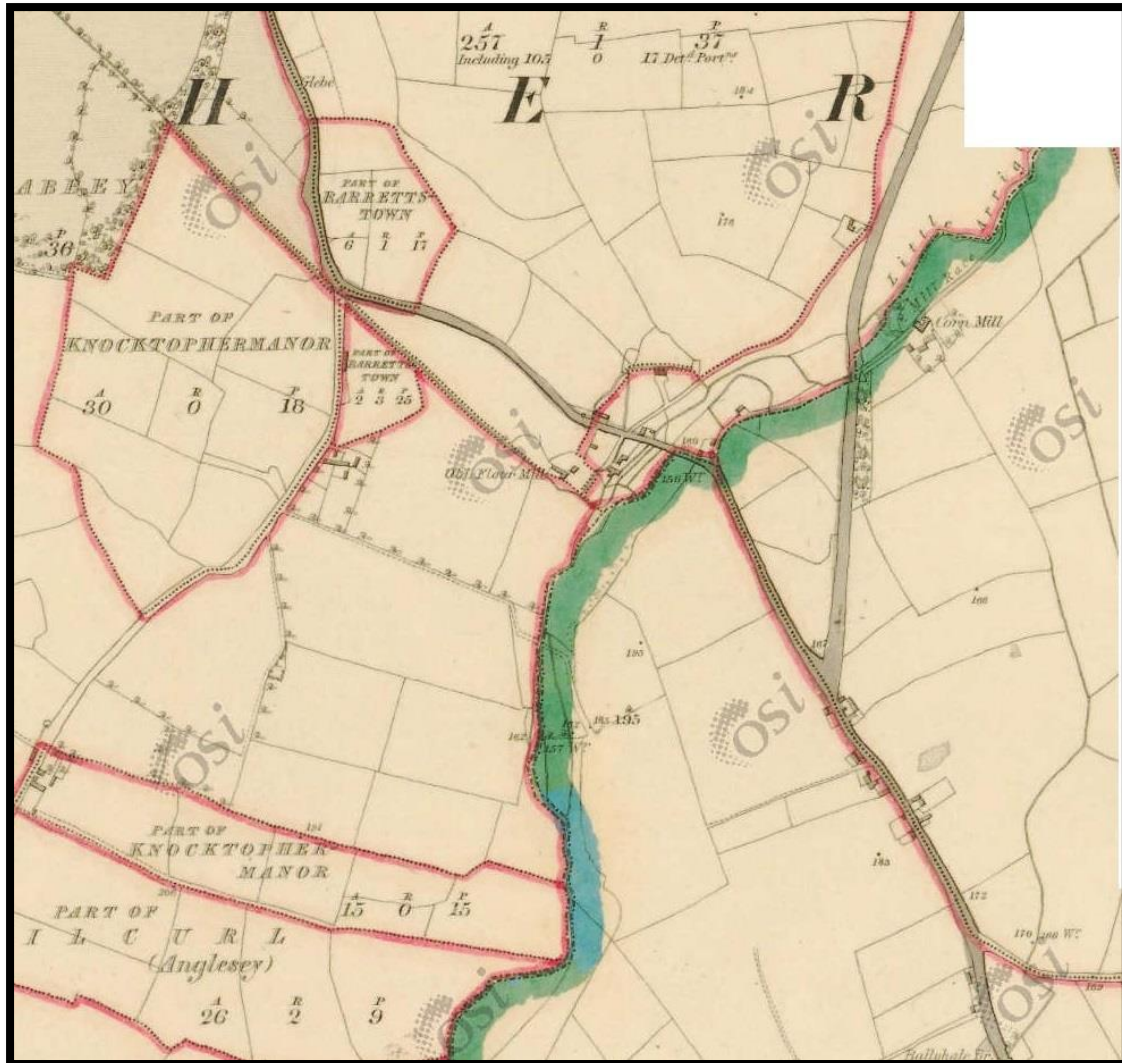


Figure 3: Extract of Ordnance Survey map of road from Knocktopher to Ballyhale, 1839

Several buildings are depicted on the mid nineteenth century Ordnance Survey map of the area, along the road between Knocktopher and Ballyhale (see Fig 4). A building is depicted on the north side of the road, just to the northwest of the Little Arrigle river. The gable of this building appears to abut the road. No building currently stands at the location of this building shown on the nineteenth century Ordnance Survey map of the area.

The pair of houses (of which the proposed scheme intends to setback the front boundary wall of the west house) are evident on this map (circled in blue on figure 4). A circular mark adjoining the front boundary wall of the western house annotates the presence of a well.



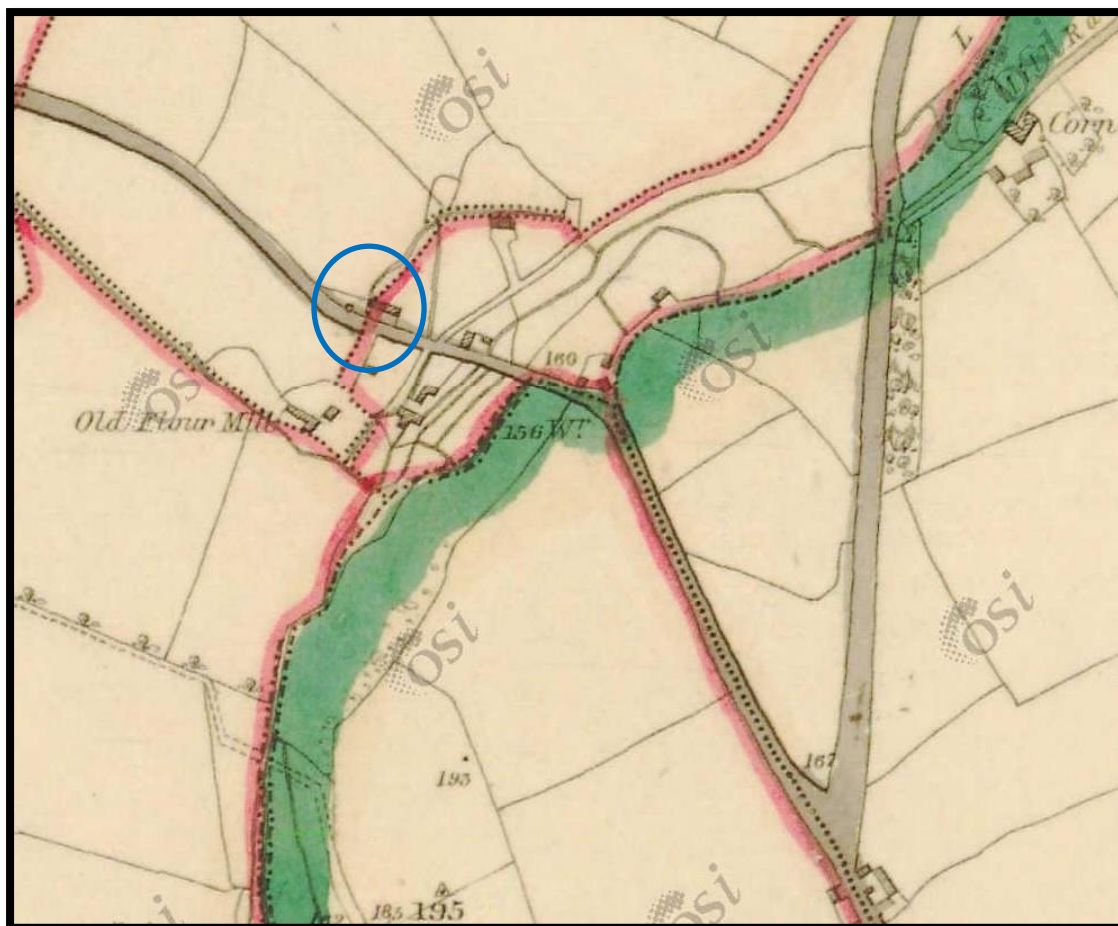


Figure 4: Close up of Ordnance Survey map of road from Knocktopher to Ballyhale, 1839

Griffiths Valuation map of the area (dating 1848) and corresponding valuation documents provides more information about the buildings situated along the route of the new footpath project in the nineteenth century (see Fig 5). The buildings to the south of the road, just north of the Little Arrigle river are described as 'House, corn mill and land' (entry No 17a, on Griffiths Valuation map), owned by Rev. Sir R. Langrishe Bt, and leased by John Garvey, and 'House, offices, and gardens' (entry No 17b, on Griffiths Valuation map), owned and occupied by Michael Mackey. One of the buildings is annotated as 'Old flour mill'. The buildings on the northeast side of the road, just north of the Little Arrigle river are described as 'House, offices, cornmill and land' (entry No 16a, on Griffiths Valuation map), owned by Rev. Edmond Kavanagh, and leased by John Madigan, and 'House and garden' (entry No 16b, on Griffiths Valuation map), owned and occupied by Robert Murphy, and 'Garden' (entry No 16c, on Griffiths Valuation map), owned by Thomas Norman Esq and occupied by John Garvey. A separate group of properties with several owners is depicted to the north of the bridge over the Little Arrigle river, on both the south-eastern and north-western banks of the river. The building depicted on the 6 inch to a mile Ordnance Survey map of the area and referred to previously is included in this entry in the Griffiths Valuation documents and maps (entry No 9a-g, on Griffiths Valuation map). Most of the buildings depicted on Griffiths Valuation map of the area have not survived into the twenty-first century.



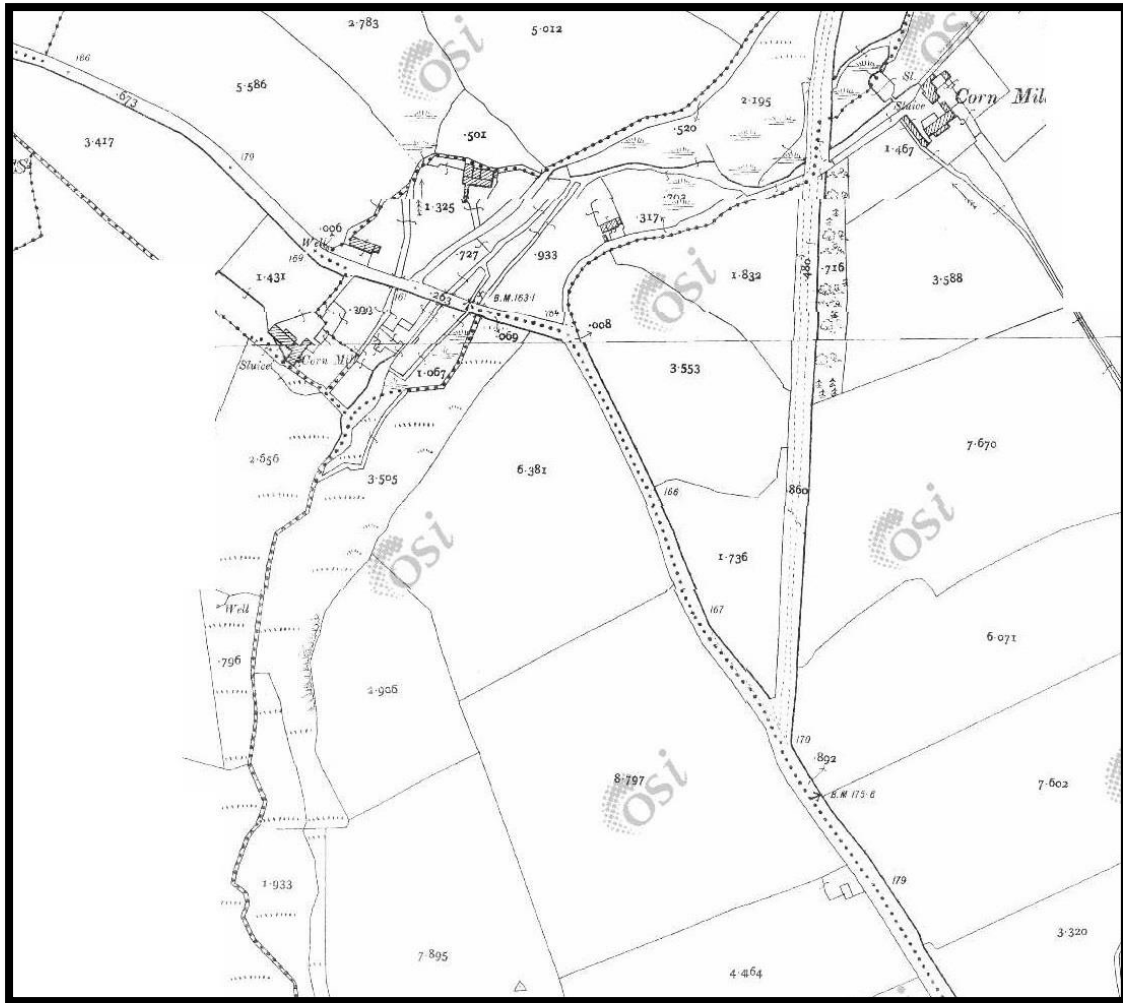


Figure 6: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 inch to a mile map of road from Knocktopher to Ballyhale, 1900

## **Baseline environmental study**

### **Statutory position**

#### **Record of Protected Structures**

There are no protected structures within the vicinity of the proposed new footpath.

#### **Conservation Areas**

None of the land in the vicinity of the proposed new footpath lies within or adjacent to an architectural conservation area.

#### **National Inventory of Architectural Heritage**

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has published the results of its survey of County Kilkenny and no buildings in the vicinity of the proposed footpath project are included in the survey.

## Building survey

In the section below each structure, or group of structures is examined to assess whether it is of special interest as built heritage. This would include special interest for its architectural, historic, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. This list of potential interests is derived from section 10(2)(f) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, which sets down the obligation of a planning authority to include objectives for the protection of structures in its development plan. The list also includes special archaeological interest, but this is not included in this part of the Environmental Impact Assessment as it is considered in its own section.

Where a structure or group of structures is may be of special interest due to its age or other factors an assessment of its architectural heritage significance is noted. In each of these cases the structure is given a number prefixed with "BH" for Built Heritage. Where the assessment finds that a structure is not of special interest and is rated as "Record only" it is not considered to be of sufficient architectural or built heritage significance that the potential effects of the proposal need to be determined. In these cases, the potential impacts are given as "n/a", signifying "not applicable" and no mitigation measures would be warranted other than to record the structure if it is to be demolished or removed.

In each case the survey includes a brief description and appraisal of the structure or group of structures,

The survey commences at the northern end of the project, just south of Knocktopher village, and progresses southeast following the existing R713 road, and finishes to the north of Ballyhale village.



## BH-01 Front boundary wall and entrance of early nineteenth century house



Figure 7: Front elevation of nineteenth century house and boundary wall

#### Location

This section of stone wall is situated on the north-eastern side of the R713 road at the northern end of the project area, just south of the Glanbia Ltd premises. It forms the front boundary wall of an early nineteenth century house and adjoining yard.

#### Statutory Protection

Neither the house nor the wall are contained in the RPS for County Kilkenny, nor in the NIAH database. The wall of the neighbouring house has recently been demolished and replaced with a new wall in a setback location.

#### Description

The historic ordnance survey maps appear to show the same alignment of the property boundary (and therefore wall) to present day. Map evidence and construction suggests that the wall is an early-mid nineteenth century wall.



Figure 8: Extract of ordnance survey maps of nineteenth century house – 1839, 1900 and current day (from left to right)

It is constructed of rubble limestone with lime-based mortar and later cement-based mortar. It has upstanding stone coping and later concrete coping on either side of the entrance gate. The



ground level of the yard is below that of the road and consequently acts as a retaining wall. It is approximately 1m above road level and 1.5m above yard level.

The pedestrian entrance gateway is directly aligned with the entrance door. It has square plan gate piers and later concrete pier caps. The stonework is more dressed and squared than the adjoining boundary wall. It has a simple wrought-iron and modern raised concrete threshold.

### Appraisal

This is a modest stone wall that begets architectural significance as the front boundary wall and part of the curtilage of an early nineteenth century house. The unassuming aesthetic of rubble stone piers and plain wrought-iron gate are congruent with scale and composition of the house and complement its roadside setting.

Furthermore rubble stone walls are an appealing feature of the rural roads in the area. The walls exhibit local craftsmanship and tradition. Within this context, the wall is considered of architectural significance.



Figure 9: View of house and wall from west





Figure 10: View of house and wall from east



Figure 11: Gate piers and gate





Figure 12: Detail of rubble stone and mortar construction and Figure 13: Cross section of wall

BH-02: Well (pre 1840) adjoining nineteenth century wall (BH-01)

Figure 14: Well adjoining roadside

#### Location

The well adjoins the stone boundary wall (BH-01) and is located within the yard of a nineteenth century house.

#### Statutory Protection

The well is not contained in the RPS for County Kilkenny, nor in the NIAH database.

#### Description

The well is located on private property and consequently was not closely inspected. A well is located on the site from before the mid-nineteenth century. The well comprises of a square-arched opening in the lower part of the retaining wall beneath the roadway formed by a limestone lintel and an adjoining circular opening in the ground surrounded by rubble stones.

#### Appraisal

This modest well would have historically provided an important societal role in the provision of water at a convenient roadside location. It is a tangible reminder on the landscape of water supply in Ireland in bygone centuries and adds historic interest to the roadside. Within this context, the well is considered to be of social significance.





Figure 15: View of well

## BH-03: Road bridge

## Location

The bridge is located along the R713 over the Little Arrigle river in Moanroe Commons townland between Knocktopher and Ballyhaise villages.

## Statutory protection

The bridge is not contained in the RPS for County Kilkenny, nor in the NIAH. A similar stone bridge is situated on the R713 500m to the north of the proposed project works in Knocktopher village, and is contained in the NIAH (NIAH No: 12321008), where it is assigned a 'regional' rating, and of special interest for its 'architectural' and 'technical' properties, and the suggested date for its construction is early nineteenth century. Although no date for construction for the bridge BH-03, it is likely to be of similar age.

## Description

Double segmental-arched bridge constructed of random coursed limestone rubble likely in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The main river flow is through the eastern arch while the western arch was likely historically a tailrace for the adjacent "Old Flour Mill" on the first edition ordnance survey map (1839) and "corn mill" on the later edition ordnance survey map (1900)

The spandrel walls and abutments of the bridge are largely concealed on the southern side due to dense vegetation growth. Rubble stone voussoirs are evident to the western arch. The parapet on the south-western side is limestone rubble with rendered half-barrel coping.

Vegetation is less dense on the northern side. It has rubble limestone spandrel walls. The two arch rings are concrete. It appears that the bridge was widened on its northern side during the twentieth century. This is suggested by the barrel of both bridge arches which change in profile and building material (rubble stone vs concrete). The parapet on the north side has been rebuilt in the later twentieth century in modern concrete blocks.

## Appraisal

This picturesque historic road bridge is characteristic of the many small-scale bridges built in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century throughout the country as part of the great expansion of the road network during this period. The bridge displays good craftsmanship in the solid unrefined rubble stone construction and is reflective of traditional construction using materials, technology, and skills that were used for engineering projects at the time. The asymmetrical location of the arches is reflective of the former use of the western arch as a mill race and this connection lends significance as part of the industrial heritage of the area. In this context, the bridge is considered of Regional importance with architectural and technical significance.





Figure 16: View westwards of bridge along road



Figure 17: Southern elevation of bridge





Figure 18: Northern elevation of bridge (eastern arch)



Figure 19: Stonework along northern elevation





Figure 20: Barrel arch of bridge showing the changing building materials and profile



Figure 21: South parapet wall and Figure 22: rebuilt northern parapet wall

## Impacts

The findings of the above survey of the buildings and other structures on which there is a possible impact are summarised in Table 2 below. The table starts with the site number and location. Each structure is given a rating and its categories of special interest identified. It should be noted that this assessment relates to architectural heritage and no comment is offered on effects on aspects such as property rights or effects on property that are not pertinent to architectural heritage. Finally, the table states whether any mitigation measures are required to address the effects of the proposal. Where mitigation is required it is considered more fully in the following section.

**Table 2 – Summary of impacts**

Site	Location	Rating	Significance	Impact	Mitigation required
BH-01	Rubble stone boundary wall	Local	Architectural	Moderate	Yes
BH-02	Roadside Well	Local	Social	Moderate	Yes
BH-03	Railway bridge	Regional	Architectural and technical	Moderate	Yes

## BH-01 Front boundary wall and entrance of early nineteenth century house

## Proposed Works

The exact position of the footpath is not set out but a large section (approximately 20m) of this wall shall be demolished. The gate and piers may also be demolished.

## Impact

The loss of the boundary interrupts the historic setting of the nineteenth century house. Furthermore, the incremental loss of the rubble stone walls over time is detrimental to the historic roadside character of the locality. The proposed works are considered to have a moderate level of impact.

## Mitigation Measures

A detailed written and photographic survey should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works.

The exact position of the footpath is not set out and if the landtake requirement of the footpath allows the gate and piers should be retained and the wall set back in a gradual tapered manner as indicated by the green line in figure 23. It should follow a curving alignment similar to the existing. This recommendation would minimise the impact of the proposed changes on the setting of the nineteenth century house.

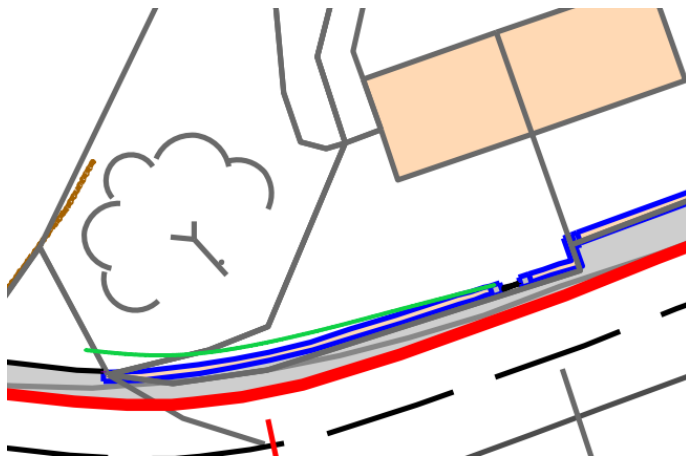


Figure 23: Green line showing the alignment of the reconstructed wall that would have the minimum impact on the nineteenth century house

If the landtake requirement necessitate the demolition of the gate and piers, they should be reconstructed using the existing material by an expert traditional stonemason in a manner matching the existing piers and reusing the historic gate.

The wall should be reconstructed using the existing material by an expert traditional stonemason in a manner matching the existing wall. A plaque should be affixed to the wall indicating that the wall was reconstructed in the twenty-first century as part of a road improvement scheme.

## BH-02 Roadside well

### Proposed Works

The proposed works indicate that an approximately 20m section of stone wall adjoining this well is required to be set back. The exact position of the footpath is not set out but it is likely that the proposed footpath will traverse directly over or very close to the well.

### Impact

The proposed scheme traverses directly over or very close to the well and consequently the well would be covered, potentially damaged and no longer visible along the roadside. This is detrimental to the historic roadside character. The proposed works are considered to have a moderate level of impact.

### Mitigation Measures

A detailed written and photographic survey should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works. The well requires careful protection during the demolition and reconstruction of the adjoining wall.

It is recommended that the well should be retained in-situ and the footpath bridged over the well if the construction scheme allows. A transparent viewing platform along the footpath showing the well would allow the well to continue as an important historic roadside landmark and contribute to its appreciation.



BH-03: Road bridge

Proposed Works

The proposed footpath will be installed on the northern side of the R713 regional road.

Impact

The proposed footpath will alter the visual bucolic aesthetic form of the bridge. This has already been altered by the existing footpath on the southside. The proposed footpath is intended on the northern side of the bridge which appears to have been widened in the twentieth century. It is therefore unlikely that the footpath should impact on the historic bridge fabric. The proposed works are considered to have a moderate level of impact.

Mitigation measures

A detailed written, photographic and measured survey should be undertaken prior to the commencement of work.

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