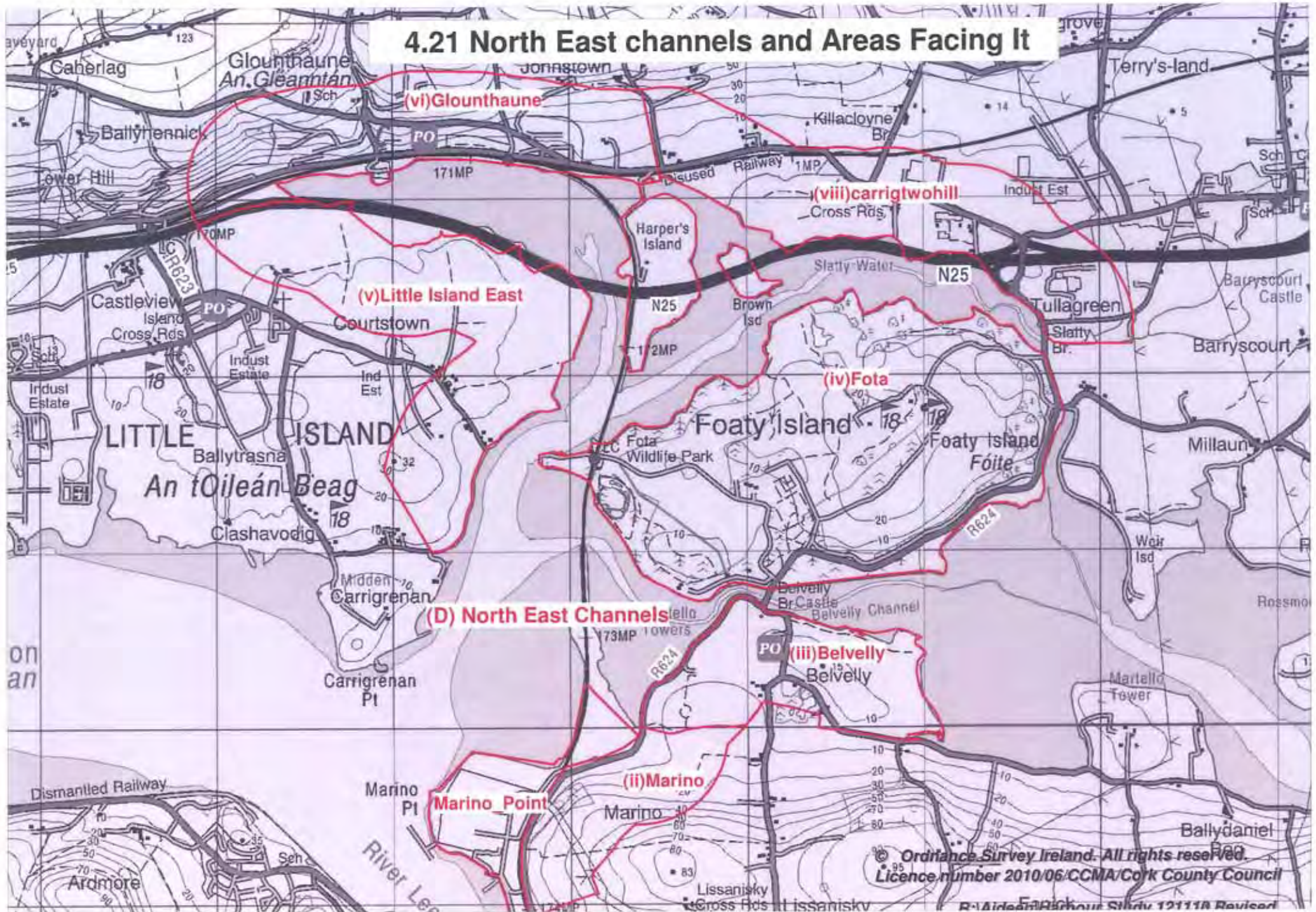


4.21 North East channels and Areas Facing It



D. The North East Channels

These channels enter Lough Mahon at its SE end, and separate Great Island, Fota, and Little Island from each other, and from the mainland. The channels are shallow enough to allow transport corridors such as the Cobh rail line and the new N25 to run across them (N-S and E-W respectively) on causeways.

The inter-tidal nature of most of the channels makes them extremely important for wintering waterfowl with large numbers occurring in winter. Shelduck are the most frequent species, centred on the Fota and Marino Point Area². The entire body of water is designated as an SPA, SAC and pNHA.

The land areas to the east of these channels (the NW corner of Great Island, Fota, Harper's Island, and the area between Glounthaune and Carrigtwohill), are designated scenic landscape in the 2009 County Development Plan, and are the principal undeveloped (or less developed areas) overlooking the north east channels.

The areas facing these channels have different functions. Glounthaune village is mainly residential, the western end of Carrigtwohill and the eastern end of Little Island mainly industrial, Marino primarily agricultural, and Marino Point primarily a Harbourside industrial site. Fota is in a central position, surrounded by the above areas, and is primarily a tourist attraction and integrated tourist resort, accommodated

² Great Island Channel, site synopsis.

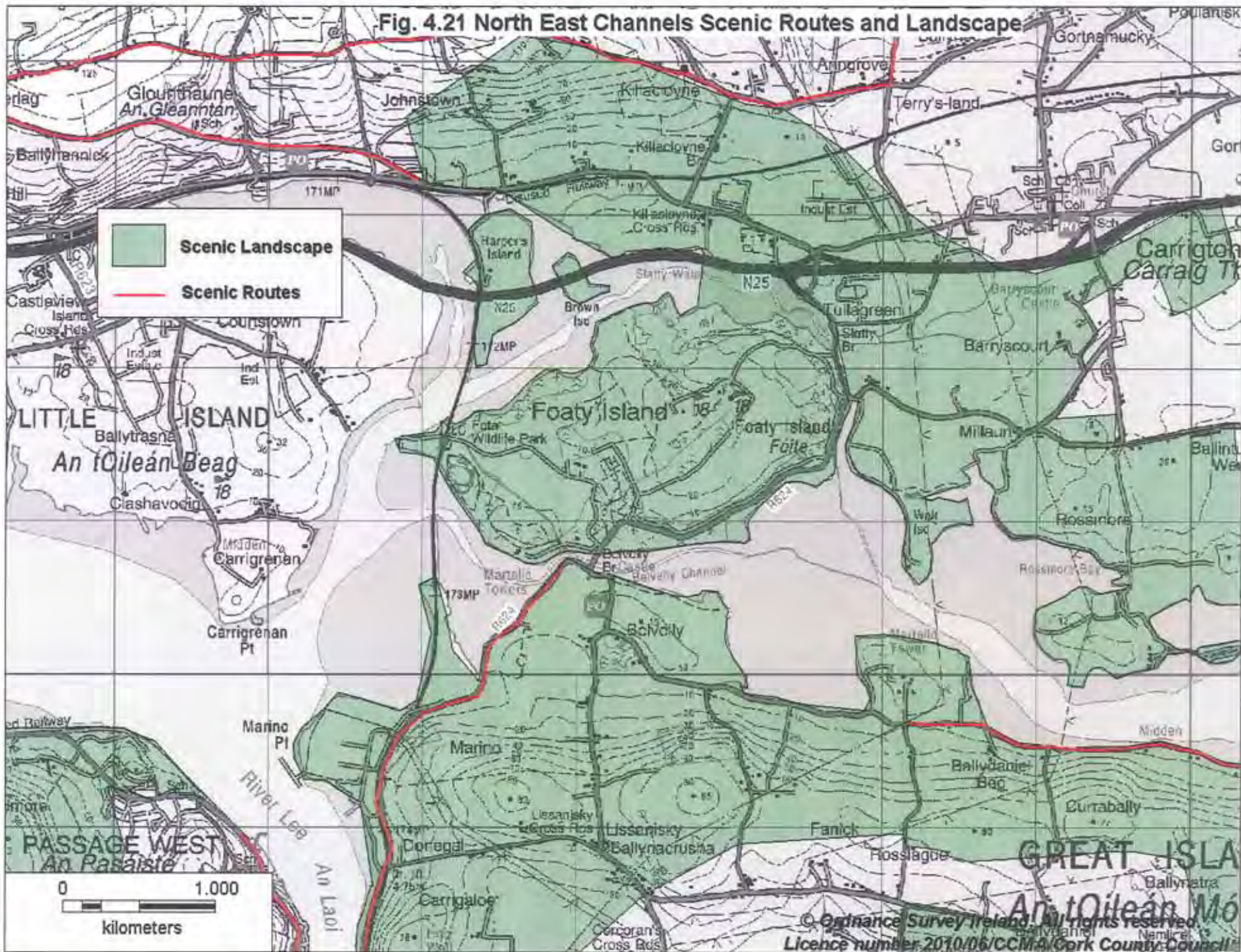
within a well wooded 300 hectare nineteenth century estate of high amenity and heritage value.

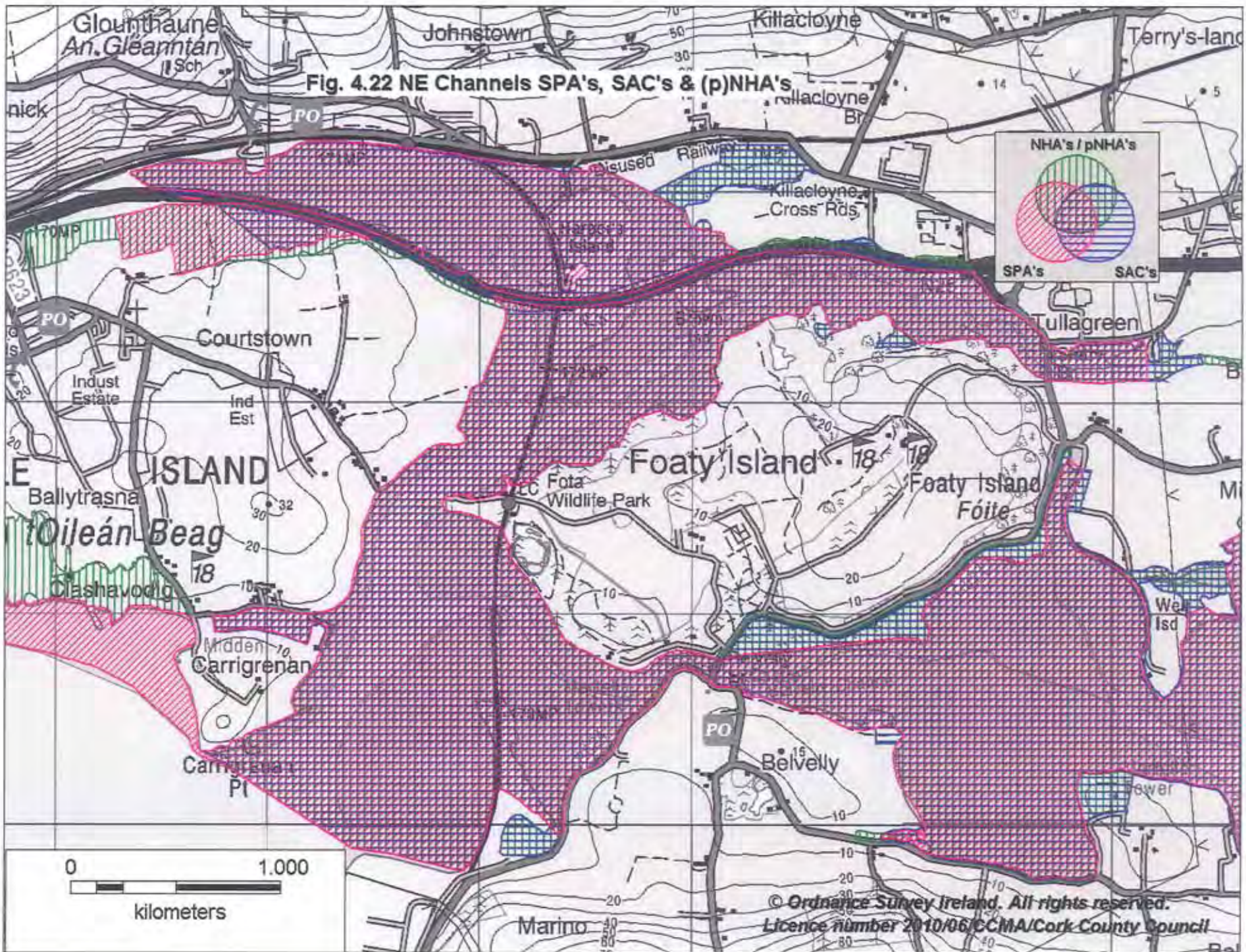
Table 4.4 Estimated Employment and Population Densities in areas overlooking the NE Channels

Area	Population per km ²	Jobs per km ²
Marino Point	<20	70
Marino	<20	<20
Belvelly	150	<20
Fota	100	40
Little Island (E)	<20	400
Glounthaune	450	100
Carrigtwohill (W)	30	550

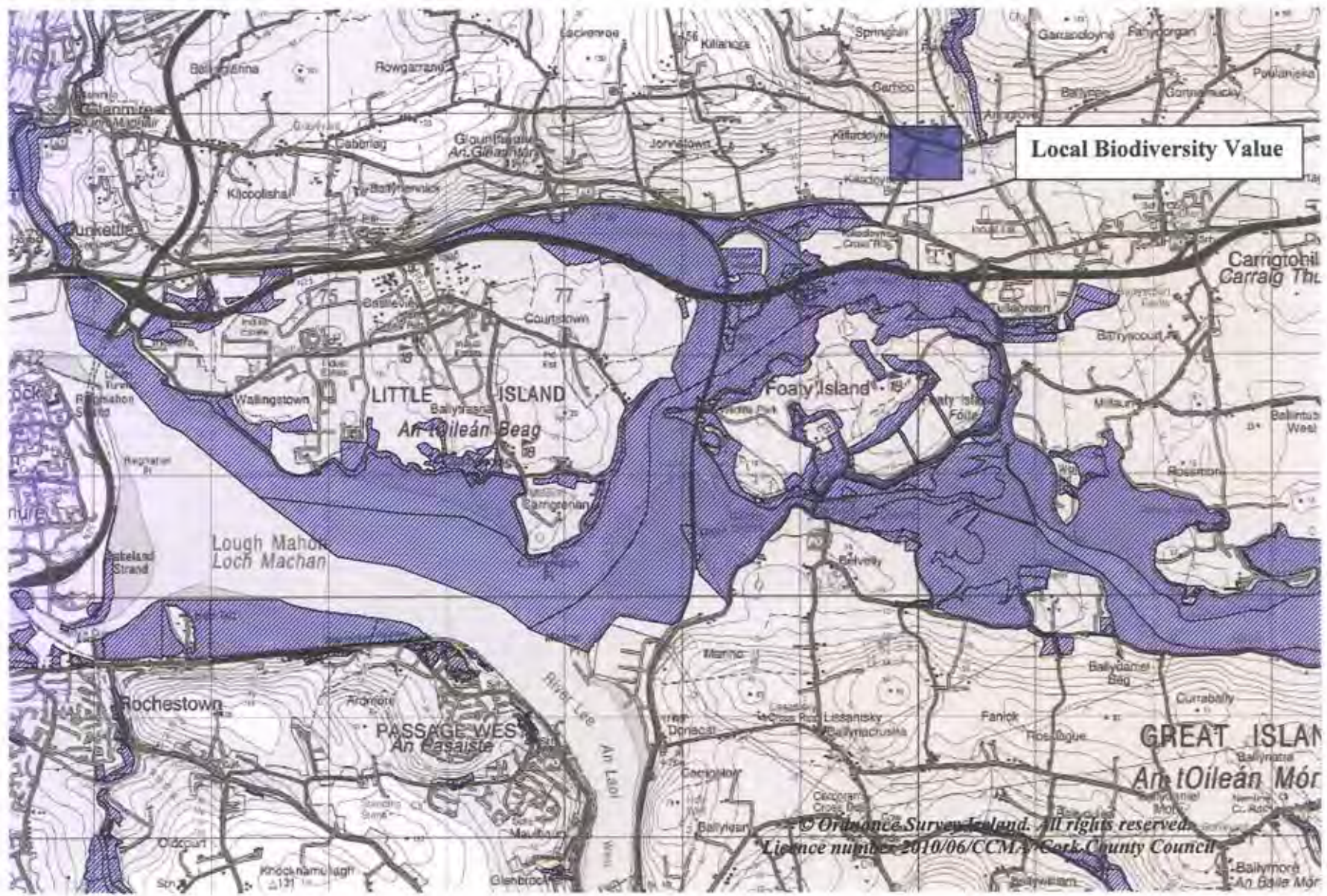
These different areas face each other across channels, so there is considerable visual interaction between these different uses. In particular, Fota is vulnerable to inappropriate development on facing shorelines, because of its heritage and visual amenity value, and land facing it has the potential to benefit environmentally from proximity to it. Movement between these areas is difficult, because much of the time the channels are too wide to cross and too shallow to navigate, and their designation as SPAs, SACs and pNHAs may preclude works designed to improve connectivity. Also, limited access road and rail corridors along the foreshore have the usual effect of inhibiting movement to promontories or reclaimed land on the seaward side of them. The sub areas listed in Table 4.4 are discussed in a sequence which facilitates discussion of cross channel or cross corridor interaction between them.

Fig. 4.21 North East Channels Scenic Routes and Landscape





4.23 North East channels Areas of Local Biodiversity Value



(i) Marino Point

Marino Point is a peninsula of c.43 hectares, the majority of which was used by IFI for 27 years until its closure in 2002, and is now mainly vacant. The IFI site is one of a handful of brownfield strategic sites on the water front with a long established industrial use and associated infrastructure. It is currently on the market.

The remainder of the peninsula is used by the Dynea plant which produces glue products for the wood industry. Dynea uses the deep water jetty for importation of methanol, delivered to the factory itself by a large diameter pipe network. The plant is subject to the Seveso Directive, and any applications within 1km. are referred to the HSA³. Dynea are a long term lease holder and thus a significant consideration in any assessment of future use of the site.

The peninsula is conspicuous, as a terminus to views SE across Lough Mahon, south along the Fota channel and north up the west channel, and it is also prominent across the channel from Passage West, particularly the NE part. The roads on both sides of the west channel are designated scenic route (S53 and S54) in the 2009 County Development Plan, which also classifies Marino Point and the higher Marino area east of the regional road as scenic landscape.

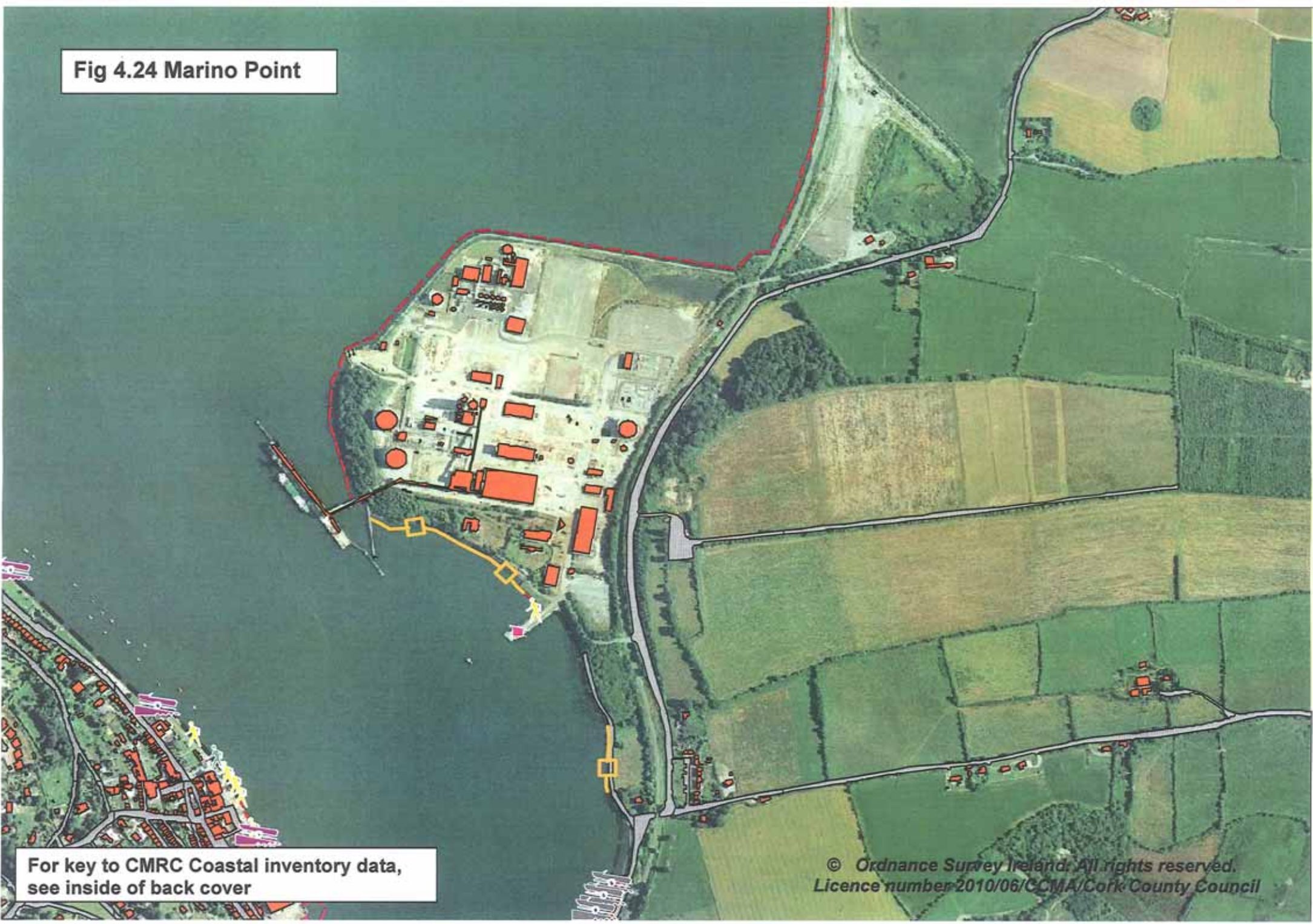
The scenic designation of Marino Point itself might be questioned, in view of the large scale and industrial character

of the remaining plant and machinery on it, but the southern and south-eastern sides of the peninsula are quite attractive. The original Marino House still stands on close to the southern shoreline, surrounded by part of the original gardens and landscaping, including a number of Scots Pines and a fine brick Orangery, restored in the 1980s. The house, like the orangery, is a recorded monument, of Georgian appearance with later Victorian additions, and is in reasonable external condition, though clearly in need of renovation internally. Westward of the house, a treed coastal strip backed by a rock cliff face 5-8m high continues around the SE corner of the peninsula, and halfway up its western side.

The landscape is now configured in this way, because NET (as IFI was initially known) excavated the interior of the peninsula when constructing the plant in the 1970s, but left this outer rim around what was originally the southern and western sides of the peninsula to partly screen the industrial structures being built within it. In any reuse of the peninsula, there would be a strong case for retaining this screen, but its retention would be more compatible with some uses than with others. Some uses (eg residential, tourism) would probably want a view out from the interior of the site southward down the west channel and west across to Passage. However, grouping of buildings in the the 'virtual hill' manner (described below in Theme 5 in the subsection on the centre of Passage) might provide this, and otherwise fit in with this inherited rim feature. Port uses (including a container port) might require an open platform continuing directly to a quay. At present, only a narrow roadway cut through the cliff gives access to the jetty and any ships moored to it, and the rim otherwise remains intact.

³ Health and Safety Authority

Fig 4.24 Marino Point



For key to CMRC Coastal inventory data,
see inside of back cover

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NET used the material excavated from the interior of the peninsula to fill and reclaim an area of c.16 hectares on the northern side of the peninsula, almost doubling its size. As a result, what are now the northern and north-western shores of the peninsula do have views out at ground level, though the view from the northern coast is over inter-tidal areas, which are mudflats at low tide, and not suitable for boats. The reclamation process left a tidal lagoon occupying the eastern half of the new northern perimeter. Direct contact with open water at all stages of the tide is only available from c.20% of the peninsula's 1.5km coastline.

A small section of the site is located diagonally opposite the main peninsula, on the eastern side of the rail line⁴. The Great Island Channel SAC, which adjoins the northern shores, includes some undeveloped/wetland parts of that section of the site, which may inhibit further development there. The SW corner of this section is linked to the NE corner of the main peninsular section via an internal bridge which crosses over the railway line.

⁴ This section of the IFI property also includes the "Monning" Martello tower, which is somewhat inaccessibly located on the seaward side of the rail causeway, 0.8km north of the over bridge, and a similar distance south of Fota.

Longer Term Options on the Use of Marino Point

The CASP Study (2001, p.51) refers to Marino Point as a possible site for port use or for medium to high density mixed redevelopment, perhaps including high quality workplaces and apartments. These comments imply a choice, as dense docklands type redevelopment including a residential component is not compatible with the established port related industrial pattern of use. The pros and cons of a port/industrial based option and two variants on a residentially based alternative are discussed below.

Any such choice is unlikely to arise in the short term, as there is an existing Seveso industry on site which would not be compatible with residential use. Also, the 2008 CASP Update and consequent Development Plans made generous provision for housing growth to 2020, which on current indications should be ample. A choice may however arise after 2020, and as this Study has a 40 year horizon, the implications of the various options are worth considering.

The Port/Industrial Option

Following An Bord Pleanála's decision to refuse an application for a Container Port in Ringaskiddy in 2008, the Port of Cork carried out a Review of their Strategic Development Plan, which reassesses the suitability of locations around the Harbour for port functions. Table 4.5 reproduces their preliminary ranking of 12 sites, reflecting aggregate scores on 9 criteria. On that basis, they carried out

Table 4.5 Summary of Site Assessments, Port Strategic Development Plan Review

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Containers</i>		<i>Bulk Solids/General Cargo</i>		<i>Bulk Liquids</i>	
1	Marino Point B	35.5	ADM	32	East Side Ringaskiddy Basin	37
2	Adjacent Ringaskiddy Ferry Terminal	34	Adjacent Ringaskiddy Ferry Terminal	31	Marino Point B	37
3	East Side Ringaskiddy Basin	29	Marino Point B	31	Adjacent Ringaskiddy Ferry Terminal	35
4	Dogsnose Bank	28	East Side Ringaskiddy Basin	27	ADM	34
5	ADM	28	Dogsnose Bank	27	Dogsnose Bank	32
6	Whitegate	26	Whitegate	25	Cork Dockyard	29
7	Hawlbowlne	25	Cork Dockyard	23	Marino Point A	27
8	Cork Dockyard	25	Hawlbowlne	22	Whitegate	26
9	Curlane	23	Curlane	22	Hawlbowlne	26
10	Marino Point A	23	Marino Point A	20	Curlane	24
11	Cuskinny	21	Cuskinny	20	Cuskinny	22
12	Aghada	18	Aghada	17	Aghada	19

Source: RPS *Port of Cork - Strategic Development Plan Review*, June 2010, Table 8.5, p.62

more detailed assessments of Marino Point, 3 sites in Ringaskiddy, and Dogsnose Bank (off Whitegate)

Marino Point was thus seen as one of the most suitable sites for all 3 main port functions at that stage. On more detailed assessment, the Review concluded that a site adjoining the Ringaskiddy Ferry Terminal was more suitable than Marino Point for the container port function, for reasons which included:

- the more advanced and comprehensive road improvement proposals for the N28 link to Ringaskiddy
- the greater number of sensitive noise receptors (mainly in Passage West) likely to be affected by night time noise from Marino Point
- the difficulty of locating a container storage yard immediately adjoining the quay at Marino Point, leading to less efficient working
- the Port does not currently own the site

However, Marino Point was seen as the best site for liquid bulk functions, and as a secondary site to supplement Ringaskiddy, in relation to dry bulk/general cargo, including some activities displaced from the City quays. Marino Point was seen as capable of taking on such functions at low initial cost, using existing facilities⁸. This is an illustration of the potential of the specialised facilities currently on site there, which include:

⁸ Port of Cork Strategic Development Plan Review, 2010, p.124-5, 134, 137-8

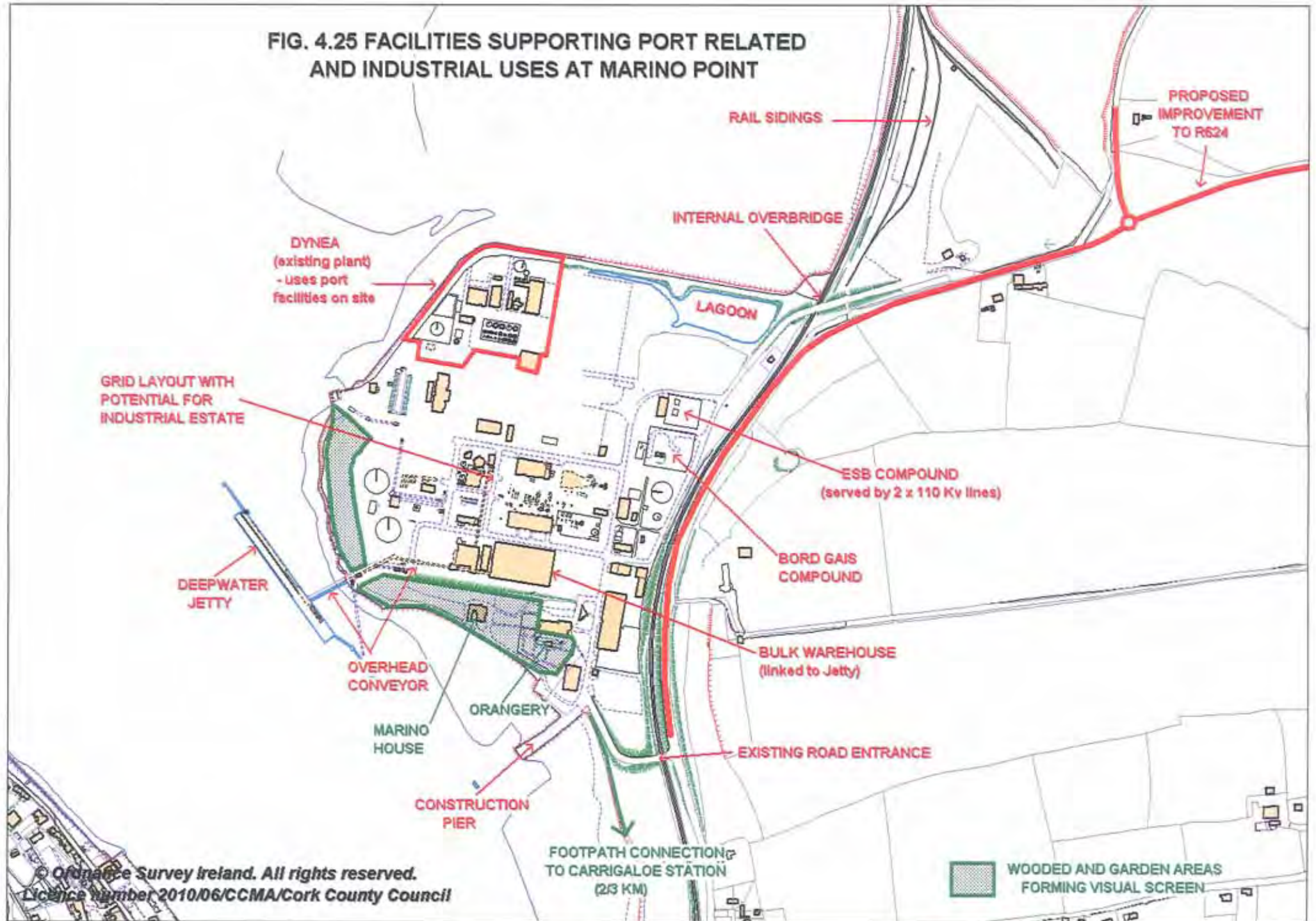
- (a) a deep water jetty approximately 240m long with c.10m depth in the channel at low tide and suitable for large ships, served by pipelines and an overhead conveyor system suitable for dry bulk goods.
- (b) an industrial gas supply via an on-site Bord Gais AGI⁹ facility
- (c) an ESB compound served by 2 110kv powerlines
- (d) a high capacity water main
- (e) rail sidings (since disconnected) to a marshalling area NE of the peninsula and accessible from it by an overbridge. Direct access from the Cobh line into the peninsula itself would probably also be possible, though level differences might cause some difficulties
- (f) The possibility of connection to the Carrigrennan waste water treatment plant, 1km north-westwards across the channel.
- (g) Topography, and the use of the site by IFI and Dynea, has resulted in few residential properties close to the site, reducing the constraints on its use.

In addition to being well adapted to the needs of port functions involving dry or liquid bulk cargoes, these facilities may also have value for processes which produce them or require them as inputs. A general case can be made that it would be simpler and more sustainable to reuse such facilities, rather than create them afresh on a new greenfield or reclaimed site elsewhere. As in other Harbour side areas, port related activities could be combined with other industrial or business park type uses.

More broadly, the site has scarcity value as a large site with direct access to deep water. It is possible to lose sight of how exceptional Cork Harbour is, in terms of its size, sheltered

⁹ Above Ground Installation

FIG. 4.25 FACILITIES SUPPORTING PORT RELATED AND INDUSTRIAL USES AT MARINO POINT



conditions, and availability of such sites within it. It is true that three such sites have been vacated by their respective industries (Verolme, Irish Steel and IFI). However, they are specialised assets which are difficult to reproduce, and a source of competitive advantage if market conditions shift. The possibility of such a site being needed for production of wave energy devices is discussed further in the section on Rushbrooke Dock in the next chapter, and also in Chapter 7. Of the sites available in Cork Harbour, Marino Point is the one least constrained by land side issues.

Dockland Redevelopment Options

For the alternative possibility referred to in CASP - of redeveloping the peninsula for medium to high density mixed redevelopment – to be pursued, a number of conditions would need to be met:

- (1) Ground conditions would be more of an issue for residential uses. There are 12 EPA bore wells on site, which monitor ground contamination continuously. A geotechnical investigation did not suggest there were major environmental problems on the site.
- (2) The Lee CFRAMS Study identified an area – c. 5 ha on the northern edge of the peninsula adjoining the lagoon - which is vulnerable to flooding, with the risk of this portion of the site flooding in any given year as 1 in 10. The land is however made ground, which could presumably be raised if necessary.
- (3) The case for an intensive use would be based partly on the site's position on the rail line. However, Carrigaloe station is 0.7-1.4km from the main IFI site, which is probably too far.

- (4) For the usual coastal transport corridor reasons, access to Marino Point is via a single road bridge over the rail line from the Cobh road (R624) at the SE corner of the peninsula. This is adequate for industrial purposes, but probably not for more intensive mixed use development. There is however also a disused emergency entrance (also from the R624), and a footpath along the shore from the SE corner to Carrigaloe.

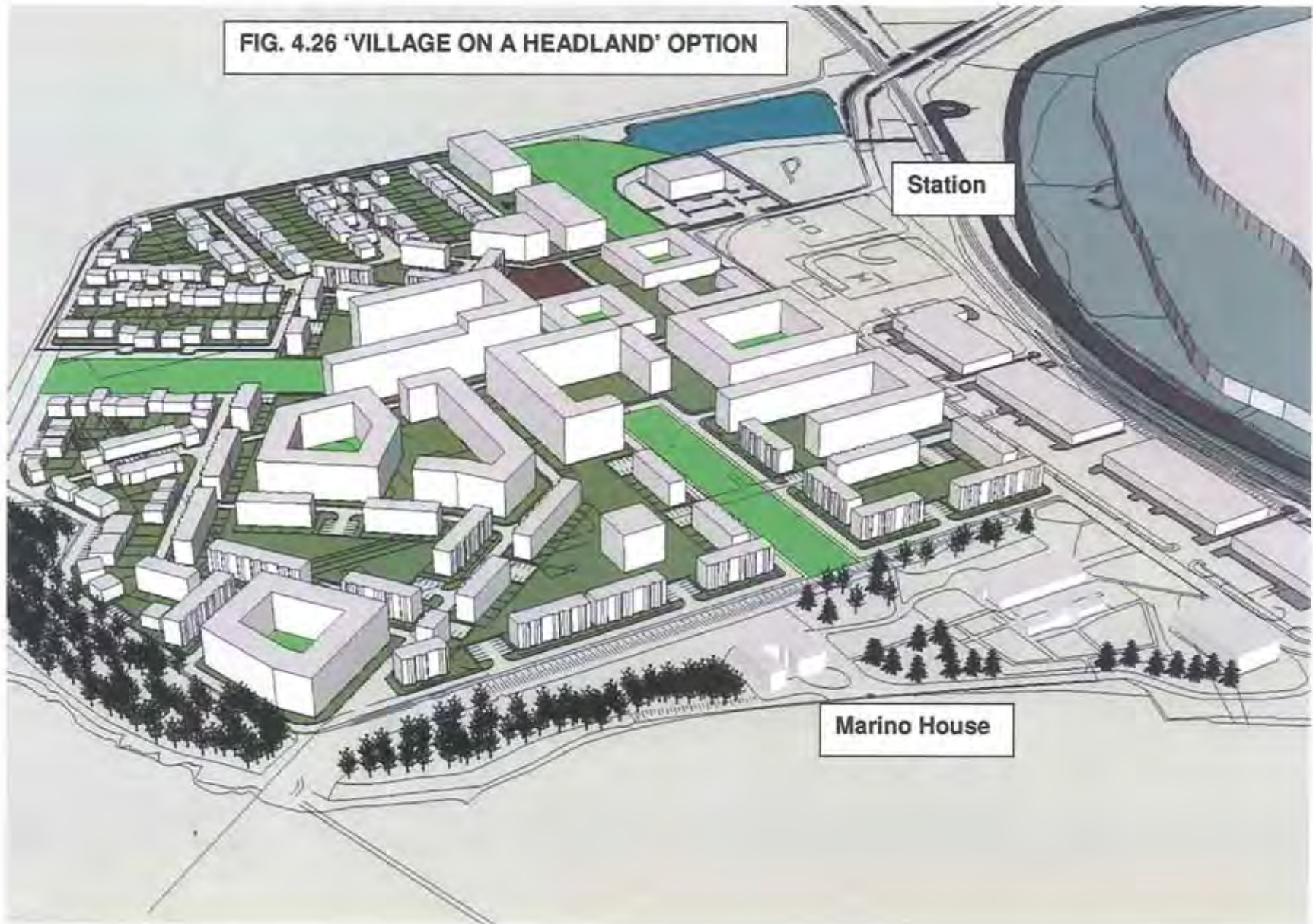
Any redevelopment option would need to satisfactorily resolve items (3) and (4).

'Village on a Headland' Option

If a new station was to be constructed, sites at either the southern or the northern end of the peninsula would have advantages. A station site at the southern end would be within reasonable walking distance of the whole of the Marino Point peninsula, and would be accessible via the existing overbridge over the rail line. The road improvement currently proposed ends just north of that bridge, and so does not affect it directly. There is already a car park adjoining it on the eastern side, and it would be well placed to pick up park and ride users from Ballynoe, which at one time was itself considered as a possible site for a new station.

One obvious difficulty would be the need to close the existing Carrigaloe station, as they would only be 700m apart, though the new station would be within reasonable walking distance from Carrigaloe village, along the coastal footpath. The line is however on a slight curve at this point (radius c.650m), though less so than, say, Kent station (radius c.200m).

FIG. 4.26 'VILLAGE ON A HEADLAND' OPTION



'Twin Village' Option

There is an alternative possible station site, at the northern end of the peninsula, which could have more users, if designed to serve a 2nd new village to the east in Marino and Belvelly townlands as well (see next sub-section). This latter option would approximately double the developable catchment area within 1km of a station. The rail line is more or less straight at this point, and access to the western side of a station could be provided via the internal overbridge within the IFI site, which has a roadway of c 6.5m, plus a footpath of c.0.75m.

A new station would need to overcome the coastline transport corridor barrier effect. As in Tivoli and Little Island, the rail and road corridors are contiguous to each other, and the proposed upgrading of the R624 will follow the existing road alignment beside the rail line on the boundaries with the IFI property, probably reinforcing the barrier effect further. This problem could however be resolved if the new road were rerouted south and east of the existing one, and the existing road redirected over the existing bridge over the rail line, and into the peninsula.

An additional station would not be compatible with the clockface timetable and other assumptions of the 2002 Suburban Rail Feasibility Study, and the option could only meet that test if there was a departure from the current pattern whereby all trains stopped at all stations on the Cobh line.

Disadvantages include the need to re-run the design process for the section of the R624 improvement south west of the

proposed junction with the road which runs along the northern coast of Great Island, and that the section closest to IFI would be through land with a significant crossfall. On the other hand, there would be two roads into the Marino Point peninsula instead of one, which would be helpful if it was to be more intensively used. Also, rerouting of the proposed improvement to the R624 would in any case be necessary for creation of the eastern twin village.

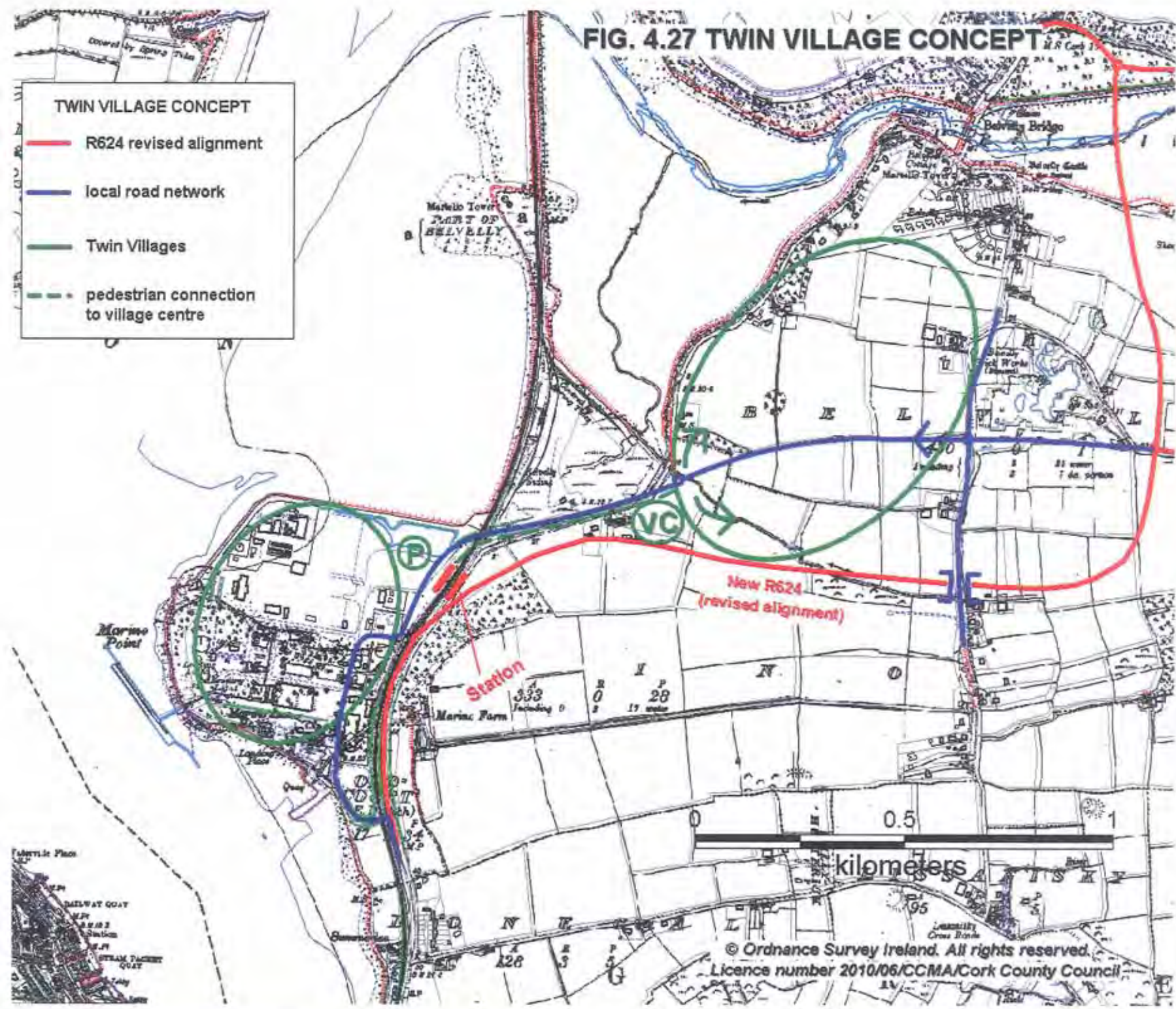
Timing

As with the 'Village on a Headland' option, the twin village option would not be possible so long as the Dynea plant remains on the peninsula, and would be not be prudent pending resolution of the question of where the Tivoli container port should relocate to. The 2008 decision by An Bord Pleanála to refuse the application for relocation of the container port to Ringaskiddy implies a possible preference on their part for Marino Point. The Board's decision on this application was based on the additional congestion on the southern ring road and exclusion of a possible future rail connection, and Marino Point is the most obvious alternative site not subject to either of these particular difficulties. The Board's Inspector also seems to have given some weight to the disadvantages of having to reclaim c.18 hectares to reach the deep water channel at Ringaskiddy, and to have seen this as comparing unfavourably with Marino Point. A container port at Marino Point could however raise serious visual impact issues if significant sections of the existing rim around the south and south west shoreline of the peninsula had to be removed. Serious ecological ones could also arise, if dredging in the designated

FIG. 4.27 TWIN VILLAGE CONCEPT

TWIN VILLAGE CONCEPT

- R624 revised alignment
- local road network
- Twin Villages
- - - pedestrian connection to village centre



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SPA/SAC/pNHA immediately north of the peninsula, to facilitate ship turning movements was necessary.

The argument for a port site suitable for direct transshipment between ship and rail arguably applies more strongly to bulk cargoes than containerised ones, as bulk cargoes are more likely to result in train load movement to/from a single landward side production or distribution facility. In principle, train load movements are usually regarded as more economically viable – or at any rate less uneconomic - than wagonload ones. The option of bulk movement to/from the port by rail would become difficult and complicated to re-establish if both Tivoli and Marino Point were committed to redevelopment for high intensity urban uses.

As noted previously, any reallocation of the Marino Point site for predominantly residential purposes would also be obviously premature at present, because of the SEVESO use and the generous provision for housing growth in the CASP Update and subsequent Development Plans. In the absence of such development at Marino Point, there would be justification for a new or relocated station serving development east of the rail line.

As there is no likelihood of either of the ‘village’ options being acted on for at least a decade, we have an interval, which could be used to see whether real demand for port/industrial uses on the Marino point site emerges. Redevelopment options might be reconsidered if it does not.

(ii) Marino

Inland from Marino Point, the rest of the townland of Marino is generally in agricultural use aside from the 18 hole Cobh Golf Club on its southern boundary, opened in June 2009. The golf course is on a ridge with commanding views of the Harbour, which runs east-west and rises to c.80m above sea level. This east-west ridge forms a steep backdrop to lower land below the 20m contour to the north, in Marino and the adjoining townland of Belvelly.

If the longer term possibility of a new ‘twin’ village were to be pursued at some future date, in this area it would need to be kept on this relatively level lower land, below the 20m contour, so the steep, partly wooded hills behind it would provide the necessary green backdrop, and reduce the visual impact from Fota and Glounthaune to the north. The realigned R624 might run more or less along the 20m contour, at the base of the hills, where it could form the southern boundary to the new village.

There would be something of a gap between any such new village and Marino Point, because the western end of the ridge comes close to the sea as the existing NE-SW section of the R624 approaches the corner where it turns S. to run alongside the rail line. There would be very limited scope for connecting development in this section – perhaps a small number of apartments on the S. side of the existing road. However, if Marino Point was redeveloped as a more intensive residential and/or employment location, it could share a rail station with and a residential village based on conventional housing 0.3 or 0.4km to the east.

Fig 4.28 Marino



There is a lot of land adjoining Cork Harbour potentially available for apartments and other high density residential development, including most obviously the City Docklands, but not much for new conventional housing, although the latter represents a much larger market. The main settlements adjoining the Harbour are at this stage tending to expand their residential areas inland rather than along the coast, though there are exceptions (eg at Ardmore, on the northern side of Passage). In some cases this reflects the steep gradients on land adjoining the Harbour, in others, established industrial uses or amenity considerations. Given the limited supply of Harbour side land, the desirability of using up more of it for not particularly dense conventional housing is also questionable. The effect on the adjoining SAC and SPA would also be an issue, making such development subject to Appropriate Assessment.

The main argument on the other side is that there is a block of reasonably level land close to the Cobh rail line at Marino and Belvelly, and it is far enough out from the City for rail to be an attractive option, particularly as in this case the rail route is more direct than the road one. Most other infrastructure is already available at Marino Point, apart from sewerage, where a joint underwater connection to Carrigrenan might be provided. A new village in this location fits in with the broad principle of the CASP rail corridor strategy, though neither CASP nor the 2008 CASP Update envisaged it, and the latter allocated sufficient land elsewhere until at least 2020. All of this would suggest that the new village option is at best a long term one. It would also be contingent on funding and

implementation of a modified improvement to the R624, relocation of the Dynea plant, and agreement on a new station.

Even as a long term option, the amounts of development possible are modest. There may be c.50ha of usable land between a possible station at the northern end of Marino Point and the back road to Cobh, implying a possible population of 3,500-4,000 (in addition to a roughly similar population in the other half of the 'twin' village, at Marino Point). The two settlements in combination would be enough to justify a reasonable level of services, and provision or relocation of a station. Conversely, if Marino Point remains in port or industrial use, there would probably be insufficient critical mass in Marino/Belvelly alone to support either.



Fig 4.29 Belvelly



For key to CMRC Coastal Inventory data,
see inside of back cover

(iii) Belvelly

Belvelly was classified as an 'other location' in the 2005 Midleton Electoral Area Local Plan. At this stage it does not have common services, though the 1934 map showed a school and post office, each with a small group of adjoining housing, close to the historic focus around the Martello tower, bridge and Castle. Since then, 2 small housing estates have been built south of this historic group of buildings, and a line of houses c.½ km long has developed incrementally overlooking the shore along the Cobh road, after which there is a largely undeveloped gap of c.1km before one reaches the NE corner of the Marino Point peninsula.

As a result of the way Belvelly has developed historically, there is a perimeter of buildings along the coast facing north and north-west. South of this perimeter, there is rolling landscape and a shallow valley running along the boundary between Marino and Belvelly townland down to the coast road. If the longer term possibility of a new village (see previous 2 sub-sections) was to be pursued further post 2020, these features would help absorb new development, with the existing settlement providing a low density edge at the end furthest from a possible rail station. The shallow valley, which is closer to the rail line, could provide a possible location for a new village centre, as well as being the natural route for infrastructure.

Retention of green belt designation is desirable, as this both maintains the attractive coastal countryside around Belvelly, and keeps open the alternative of a substantial new 'twin'

village in the medium to long term, if this is on balance seen as needed and of sufficient value to outweigh visual and ecological impacts.



Fig 4.30 Fota



(iv) Fota

Fota is the principal integrated tourist resort in the Cork area, with a range of tourism and leisure uses, in the setting of a wooded and attractive landscape nineteenth century estate. The main attractions are the original Fota House with its arboretum and gardens, a 18 hole golf course, and a wildlife park. The wildlife park was opened in 1983, with the intention of creating open and natural surroundings for wild animals when Dublin zoo was reaching capacity.

Facilities at Fota include a 5 star hotel, and 287 permitted holiday lodges in wooded pockets around the island, though the recession has interfered with the sale and occupation of the latter. Fota also has its own station on the Cork – Cobh rail line, located on the western tip of the island. This gives access primarily to the wildlife park, but a recent permission provides for improved pedestrian access to Fota House as well.

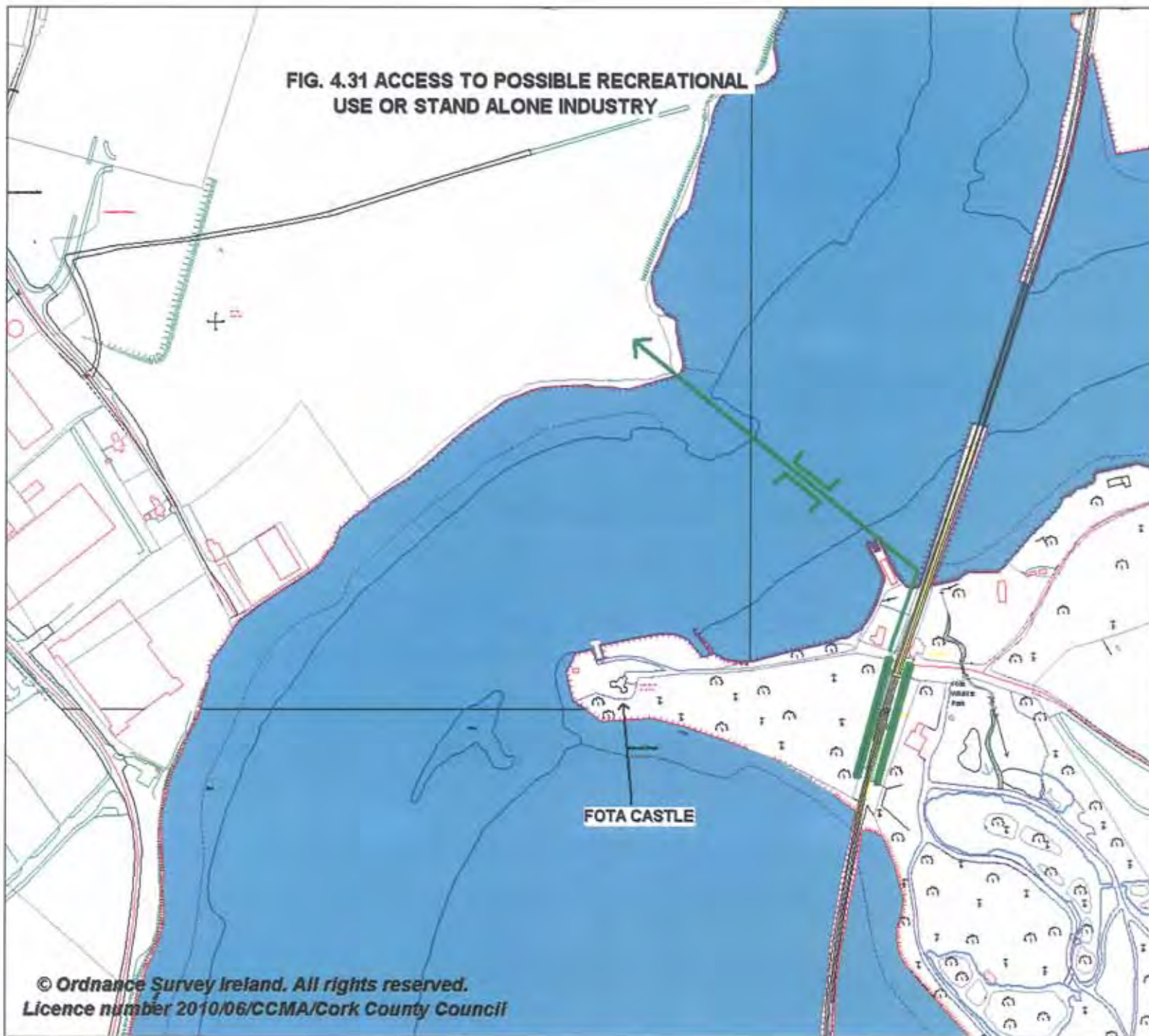
An attractive but ruinous nineteenth century folly known as Fota Castle is located on the seaward side of the rail station, with a quay close by. Planning permission was sought for a 60 berth marina in the channel adjoining the Castle and Quay was submitted in 2004, but was refused permission because access to the marina and its 22 parking spaces would be via the level crossing at the station. This is an “accommodation crossing” serving a single house. For more significant use, Iarnród Éireann would require an overbridge in this location for safety reasons, which would be inappropriate in this location.

The applicants envisaged that the marina would be lightly used, mainly by small motor boats and ribs, with its use dependent on favourable tides. The Board’s inspector felt it was not a satisfactory location for a marina for other reasons as well as inadequate access, including noise and disturbance to waders and wildfowl species, and suggested alternative sites for this facility should be sought away from cSAC’s/pNHA’s, such as at the nearby IF1 site at Marino Point.

The application nevertheless focused attention on the issue – whether a marine dimension could be added to the attractions at Fota – and the location – the promontory which contains the Castle and station, and the channel between them and Little Island. On the first point, a marine leisure focus to complement the large volume of tourism accommodation already provided on Fota Island is attractive in principle. The nearest existing marina to Fota is at East Ferry, and there are proposals for Cobh and Rushbrooke. Marino Point would be closer, if future uses there permitted, and an adequately protected site outside the SPA/SAC on its northern shore could be created.

As regards the location, it would be desirable to find a use for Fota Castle, as otherwise it will be difficult in practice to prevent further deterioration. So long as it remains, the grouping of Castle, quay, woodland and channel will be a very attractive feature, but without tourism benefits because of its inaccessibility. Under more favourable economic circumstances, it could perhaps be restored and managed by the developers or their successors as an additional tourist unit. It is photogenic enough to have promotional value in aiding letting of other units.

**FIG. 4.31 ACCESS TO POSSIBLE RECREATIONAL
USE OR STAND ALONE INDUSTRY**

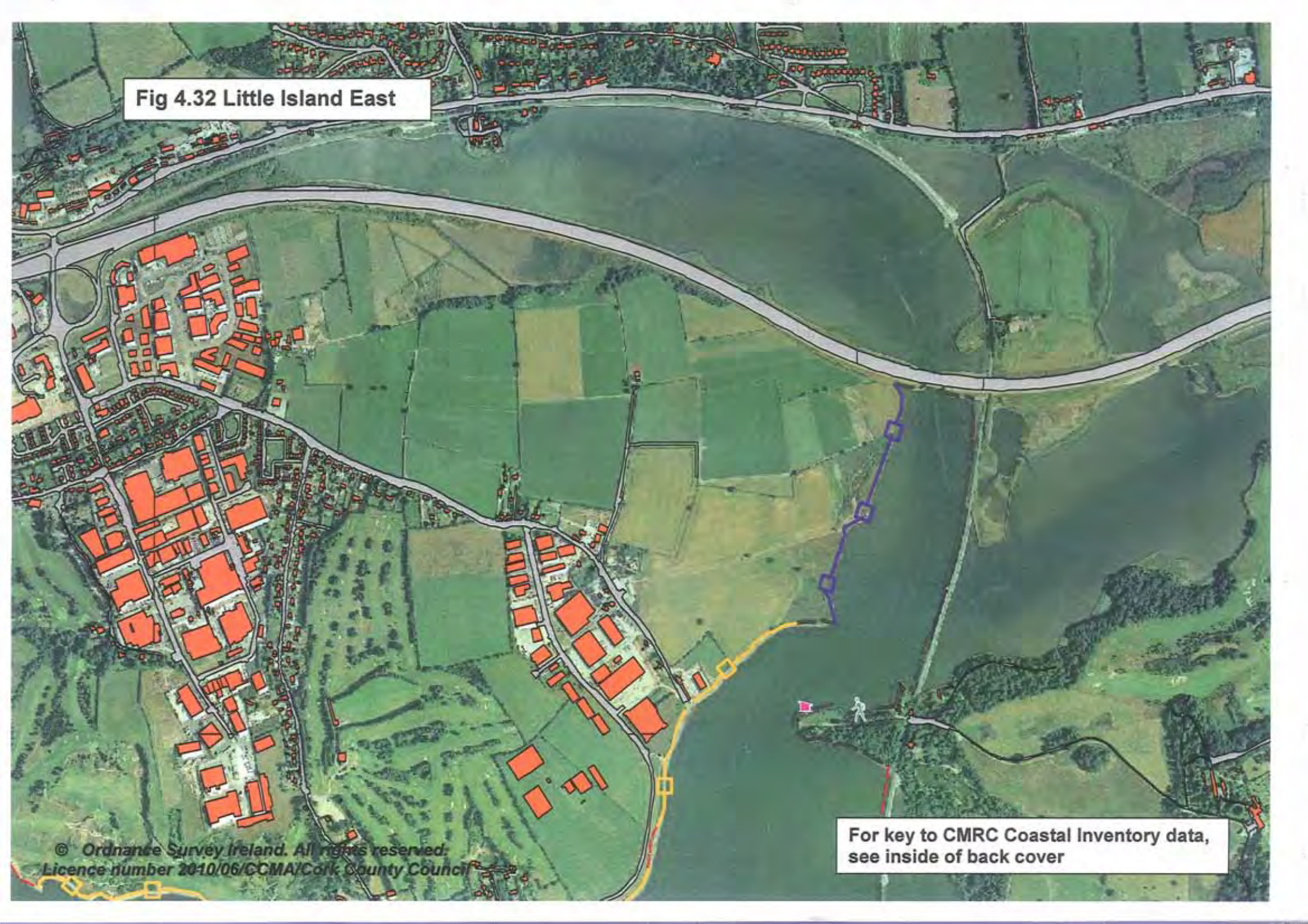


A more ambitious approach would be to treat the promontory and western approaches to the station as part of a larger site for compatible development at the eastern end of Little Island, some 230m across the channel. While a footbridge over this distance would be uneconomic, this particular part of the Harbour already has two causeway/bridge combinations: the nineteenth century one carrying the Cobh rail line, and the late 1990s one which carries the new N25. The feasibility of constructing and successfully managing a further (pedestrian) link would have to be investigated, and would be subject to Appropriate Assessment in relation to possible effects on the SPA/SAC.

There would be no point in such exercises unless land use(s) could be identified at the Little Island end which would be both be intensive enough to make the project economically viable, and be suitable from a planning point of view. This issue is discussed in the next section.



Fig 4.32 Little Island East



(v) Little Island (East)

Courtstown townland, in the eastern part of Little Island, has c.3½ km of coastline, half of which faces SE towards Fota, the other half north towards Glounthaune. The land rises from both coastlines to a high point on the boundary between Harbour Point Golf Course and the Courtstown Industrial Estate. The latter is the only large block of development at this end of Little Island, and has been built in stages it was zoned in the 1980s. A substantial proportion has only been built in the last few years, and is an interesting illustration of the strength of demand for well placed new industrial buildings immediately prior to the current recession, though this recession has now resulted in substantial vacancy there. It also illustrates the bulk and fairly dense placing of new buildings often sought by industrial estate developers, and the visual impact this can have on sloping or plateau land which is not well screened.

The Courtstown Industrial Estate lies south of the pre-industrial road which runs from Island Cross Roads in the centre of the Island, down to the shore facing Fota Castle. From 1996 onwards, a 60 ha block of land north of this road, and sloping down towards the channel between Little Island and Glounthaune, has been zoned for a large stand alone industry (I-03). Some applications for medium sized industrial buildings and a small industrial estate road were nevertheless granted in 2007, as the IDA had no objection to the proposed development, as a significant land bank for stand alone development would still remain on the zoned block. While the ground has been levelled for the structures permitted, they have not so far been built.

These permissions were to some extent an indication that the County Council was willing to depart from the position that the zone should be used as a stand alone site and pending that, remain in agriculture. This poses 2 issues:

- (1) whether the remainder of the block, or some specified part of it, should be retained as part of a longer term land bank for stand alone industry
- (2) in so far as more conventional industrial estate development is accepted, how visually acceptable results can be achieved.

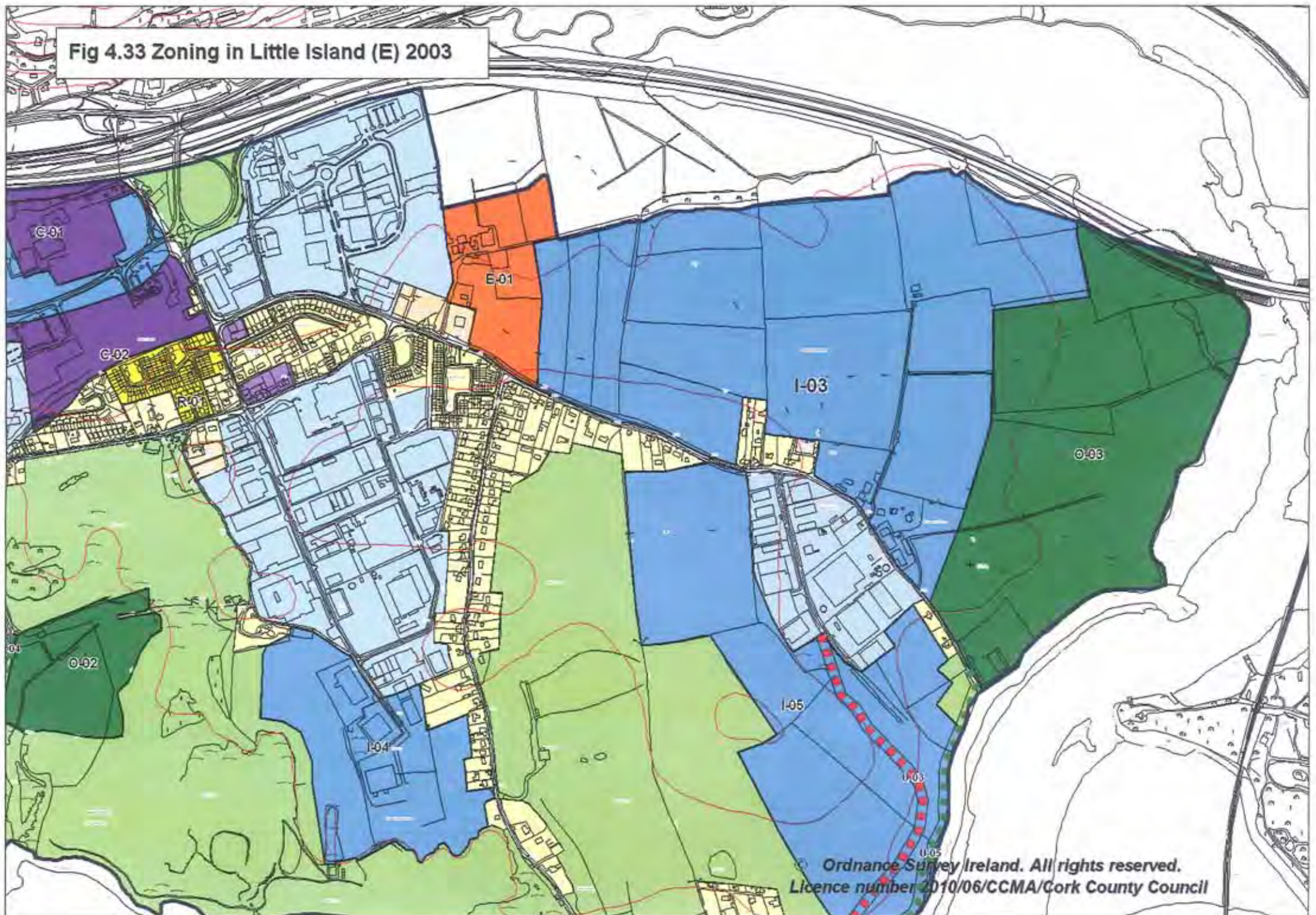
The two issues are interlinked, as large stand alone industries tend to actually build on a much smaller proportion of their overall site than developers of industrial estates, and to provide more generous, higher quality landscaping. Visual issues are important for this part of Little Island, because it is fairly open, with only limited tree cover, and is directly overlooked by Glounthaune⁷, which has the characteristic tendency of steep linear coastal settlements to look mainly in one direction, in this case, towards this block. The site is also overlooked by housing on the S. side of the Courtstown road, which is also on higher ground, and development on E parts of it may also may also make a significant impact from Fota.

In the 2010 Draft Local Area Plan, the revised zoning for this 60 ha block⁸ comes closest to option (c), but includes some provisions for planting and landscaping.

⁷ Discussed in next section

⁸ The zone is labelled I-03 in the 2003 CDP and 2005 LAP, and I-01 in the 2010 Draft LAP.

Fig 4.33 Zoning in Little Island (E) 2003



Options on the I-03 block: Possible options include:

- (a) retaining the remainder of the block currently zoned for stand alone industry (I-03) for that purpose
- (b) dividing it between conventional industrial estate development and a (reduced) stand alone site in the W and N part of the zone
- (c) to zone most of the site for industrial estate or other industrial purposes.

If (b) or (c) were chosen, but it was desired to limit visual impact to levels not greatly in excess of what would apply for a stand alone use, this would imply

- lower site coverage and much more tree planting than normal for a general industrial site. The current absence of activity in the property market could be used to give larger, more strategic blocks of planting a head start. Such blocks would have to be large enough and deep enough to be easy to protect during subsequent construction work, and could be required in advance of permission or development.
- an overall plan for the zone which aimed to achieve visually acceptable 3 dimensional grouping of buildings within a landscaped context, having regard to the directions from which they will be most visible.

Applying these requirements to (b) or (c) would involve seeking a pattern of development not normally provided by the use in question, and would have a lower chance of success than (a), or require greater determination by the planning authority.

A 40 ha block to the east of this, which forms the eastern tip of Little Island opposite Fota, was zoned agriculture in the 1996 Plan and passive or active open space in the 2003/5 one (O-03). This reflects visual considerations, as it is part of the visual context for Fota, as well as being overlooked from Glouthaune.

As mentioned in the previous section on Fota, there is a promontory in this block projecting eastwards towards Fota Castle, which might be capable of connection to Fota railway station by a combined bridge and causeway.

There might be an economic case for such a connection if the active open space use envisaged by the zoning represented an extension of the existing tourist/recreational complex on Fota.

In the longer term, if the I-03 zone had been used for a stand-alone industry under option (a) above, and another site of that type were required, consideration might at that stage be given to modifying the zoning, so as to allow for a further stand alone industry, if linked to Fota rail station. The Amgen proposal in Carrigwohill, which was permitted in 2006-7 but not proceeded with, envisaged construction of a new rail station to serve the plant.

Access to the I-03 site has already been improved by upgrading of the road connection between Courtstown to the centre of the island, and would benefit further if the junctions connecting it with the N25 were upgraded, or supplemented by a further limited access one at the NE point of the island.

Fig 4.34 Glounthaune



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see inside of back cover

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However, 2006 Census returns indicated c.4,500 cars arriving for work in Little Island each day, and continued development in Little Island may face capacity constraints on the national road network, and not just on roads within the Island or at junctions with the N25. For this reason, proximity to public transport (or lack of it) is a relevant consideration, in selecting sites for larger employers.



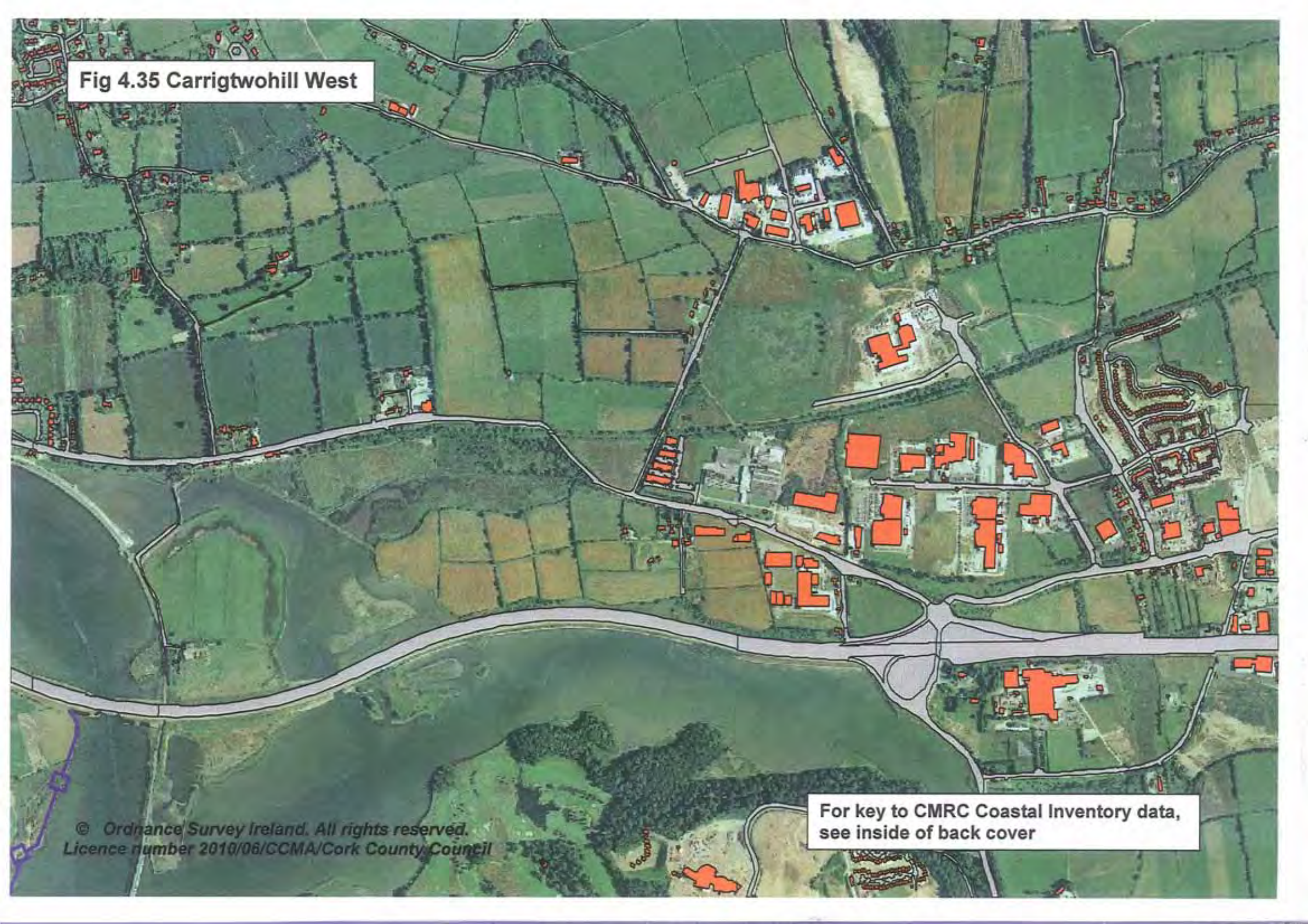
(vi) Glounthaune

The original core was a planned village built in the early nineteenth century on a tidal quay, and is south of the rail line and old N25. It comprises the community centre (formerly a school house), public house, children's playground and a small terrace of houses in an attractive picturesque setting on the estuary. There is a short amenity walk alongside the children's play area which takes advantage of the views across the estuary, but otherwise access to the shoreline is prevented by position of the rail line running along the shore.

The old village of Glounthaune is prone to tidal flooding, with a flood risk of a 10% AEP. A number of properties are located within the flood extent area, and flooding starts at 50% AEP. The extent of flooding increases in the future scenario to include further properties. Glounthaune is one of the areas identified as of potential significant risk, though no structural solutions are proposed. While this reflects the limited number of properties at risk, the architectural and amenity value of the old village should perhaps also be included in any cost benefit assessment.

The main part of the village north of the transport corridors has a small central core of services around the church, surrounded by residential development, most of it sloping hillsides and elevated lands. This part of Glounthaune is a typical linear coastal hillside settlement, in which slopes are steep enough to allow houses higher up the slope to look over those lower down, resulting in a high proportion of houses having views of the Harbour. Unlike other linear coastal hillside settlements,

Fig 4.35 Carrigtwohill West



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such as Cobh or Passage, most of the development is modern, at low densities, and discontinuous, reflecting the prevalence of gradients too steep to be readily developed. This increases the proportion of houses with views. As noted in the previous section, most of Glounthaune is on south sloping land, and faces north sloping land in the north eastern part of Little Island directly across the channel.

The village has a rail station at its E. end, which being served by trains from both Cobh and Midleton, has a more frequent service than either. The steeply sloping and visually sensitive nature of much of the land limit its capacity for residential development, despite proximity to good public transport, and the zoning of quite a lot of the hillside to remain predominately open and rural in character with limited potential for very low density development reflects this. Some 20 ha was zoned for medium or high density residential development in the 2005 Local Area Plan, mostly on lower land near the station. The largest parcel (R-03) has permission for c.250 units but has not yet been developed.

(vii) Carrigtwohill (West)

East of Glounthaune, there is an area of green belt which divides it from Carrigtwohill. Flood risk affects lands west of Fota Business Park, with 10% AEP risk affecting an extensive area. Further west, the W. end of Carrigtwohill itself has developed as a major employment area, which includes Carrigtwohill IDA business park. Within this, the original block south of the rail line is now largely developed, and is

occupied by a number of high quality firms, but there is a recent extension N. of the rail line. The IDA estate is surrounded by other industrial and commercial areas, including the Millipore plant south of the N25. The area has considerable capacity for further employment growth, on land already zoned. Permission for a rail station proposed by the developer of the office/retail warehousing development on the former Youghal Carpets premises was granted late in 2009. As development in the Cork-Midleton corridor expands, it would have value in helping avoid overloading of the N25.

The new N25 runs E. from the NE point of Little Island, across Harper's Island and Brown Island, and then along the northern shore of Slatty Water (the channel north of Fota Island). There are attractive views of the wooded shores of Fota from the N25 and the causeway which links it to the Cobh Road.

Harper's Island was proposed as compensatory habitat to offset the effects of intertidal areas lost through the construction of the new N25. It has been identified as a suitable site for a nature education centre to raise awareness of Cork's biodiversity, as it is in an intensively used feeding area for birds. Development of such a centre is an aim of the Cork County Biodiversity Action Plan, 2009-14.