

Built Heritage Impact Report



BEARA BREIFNE WAY

August 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Brief for the project set out the context and background, as summarised below.

The Beara Breifne Way is a 700km long distance walking trail, stretching from Dursey Sound in Co. Cork to Blacklion in Co. Cavan. The Beara Breifne Way is a unique grass-roots community-led initiative and is the largest community-based project undertaken in Ireland. Its development has been supported by a large number of stakeholders since 2001 including The Heritage Council, Fáilte Ireland and the Local Authorities along the trail (Cork County Council, Kerry County Council, Limerick City & County Council, Tipperary County Council, Offaly County Council, Galway County Council, Roscommon County Council, Leitrim County Council, Sligo County Council and Cavan County Council).

The trail generally follows the route of the historic march taken by Dónal Cam O'Sullivan Beara and visits many of the places and communities shaped by his story. On New Year's Eve 1602, he led one thousand men and women, including four hundred soldiers, on the epic march north, hoping to join forces with rebel leaders in Ulster. They sheltered and ate where they could but were ambushed time and again by native chieftains, who hoped to protect their stores of food and ingratiate themselves with the English. After fourteen days, O'Sullivan Beara and his people reached Leitrim Castle, stronghold of the rebel O'Rourke of Breifne. Of the one thousand who had started out, only thirty-five remained.

The trail has been identified as one of the 'Signature Experiences' of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and its delivery needs to be closely aligned to its key objectives. Fáilte Ireland intend that the trail will become a framework around which to cluster a range of engaging visitor experiences increasing visitor spread and dwell time and helping deliver the proposition of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. It is the aim that the Beara Breifne Way becomes a long-distance walk of international significance as well as a local attraction for a wide range of people to explore nature and cultural experiences.

The Beara Tourism and Development Association has championed and driven this project over the past 17 years, and 12 community groups have signed an MoU to ensure continuity amongst themselves as the drivers of the trail development. Significant efforts have been made by the National Waymarked Way committee and local communities to develop the Beara Breifne Way.

In 2019, Fáilte Ireland commissioned the development of a Tourism Masterplan to guide future investments and developments to ensure the Beara Breifne Way realises its potential as an internationally compelling visitor experience.

1.2 Fáilte Ireland appointed a multi-disciplinary team led by ORNI to carry out the necessary surveys, reports and proposals to facilitate the individual section developer or Local Authority to take it to the relevant consent process. The brief required the team:

- To conduct a technical Trail Audit to include detailed trail design and build specifications;
- To develop an Interpretation Framework and Branding Strategy to bring the trail and its rich history and heritage to life
- To develop Wayfinding and Orientation Strategies for the trail
- To carry out Built Heritage Studies
- To provide Environmental Services that help realise the above

1.3 This report fulfils the Brief requirement to consider the potential impact on the built heritage by the development of the trail. The statutory framework against which development works are to be assessed is set out in Section 2. The methodology for the assessment is set out in Section 3 with the detailed, site by site review set out in Appendix A. Section 4 is a summary of the findings and indicators of the next steps in the development process as regards built heritage considerations.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

2.1 The Institute of Historic Building Conservation Ireland (IoHBC Ireland) has summarised the legislative base for built heritage protection as follows.

There are two main strands of legislation affecting heritage assets in Ireland, the National Monuments Act, 1930–2004, a broad piece of legislation dealing with the protection of historic monuments and archaeological areas, and the Planning and Development Acts, 2000–2017, in which measures affecting historic structures form an integral part of a broader framework for local authority planning. All recorded archaeological monuments are protected under these acts.

There is a constant balancing of the need to protect cultural heritage with the rights and freedoms of the individual, guaranteed by the state under the Irish Constitution. International conventions and charters influence the form legislation may take, but the provisions of the constitution take precedence over acts of parliament.

The primary legislation for the conservation of built heritage in Ireland is the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000 (as amended), which consolidated the Planning and Development Acts, 1963–1999. The 1999 act introduced significant change regarding heritage protection by giving effect to the Granada Convention of 1985, ratified by Ireland in 1997. A further piece of legislation enacted at that time, the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999, established the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) on a statutory basis. The NIAH surveys provide the basis for the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) to make recommendations to planning authorities concerning designation for protection.

The Planning Act, 2000 (as amended) requires each planning authority to include a record of protected structures (RPS) in its development plan. In the context of development in relation to any protected or proposed protected structure under this legislation, the definition of works includes 'any act or operation involving the application or removal of plaster, paint, wallpaper, tiles or other material to or from the surfaces of the interior or exterior of a structure'.

If a structure is included in the RPS, a planning authority (or An Bord Pleanála, the national planning appeals board) must provide an owner or occupier (on request) with a declaration clarifying the kind of works that would or would not materially affect the character of the structure. Planning authorities are obliged to have regard to any guidelines issued under the act and also to any ministerial recommendations made in relation to specific structures.

The minister is obliged to issue guidelines to planning authorities concerning development objectives for protecting structures, and for preserving the character of architectural conservation areas (ACAs). Planning authorities must have regard to the guidelines issued in considering development objectives, and should have regard to the guidance for detailed consideration of protected structures and structures in architectural conservation areas in relation to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals, and in relation to the content of declarations.

Each owner and occupier of a protected or proposed protected structure must ensure that the structure or any element of it that contributes to its special interest is not endangered. It is also an offence to cause damage to any such structure.

Each planning authority must include objectives for preserving the character of ACAs in their development plans, once they have chosen to designate an ACA for protection. Works to a structure in an ACA are exempted only if they do not materially affect the character of the area.

In 2012 an expert advisory committee was established by government to review the legislation and its operation. It concluded that the protection of the environment had been significantly improved since 2000. It also made substantial recommendations for improvement, encompassing legislation, economic support and targeting education and training.

2.2 LOCAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

Alongside the 1999 Planning Act, the government also introduced a series of administrative and financial arrangements to support the implementation of the legislation within the local authority framework, which gave rise to the role of architectural conservation officer (ACO). ACOs have formed the Association of Architectural Conservation Officers as their representative organisation, through which they promote the care and revitalisation of the historic building stock in Ireland.

The organisational structure within local authorities varies as does the reporting structure. Duties include the assessment of the impact of projects, measures and policies on protected structures, on buildings within ACAs and other supporting activities.

There is also a county network of local authority heritage officers who play a key role in promoting awareness, knowledge and pride in local heritage. They provide advice, guidance and information on various aspects of Irish heritage and heritage best practice. Heritage officers work closely with the Heritage Council, a statutory body set up in 1995 to facilitate the grant-aiding of heritage and engagement with local government and communities in capacity-building and support.

The Beara Breifne Way passes through 10 counties (Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Galway, Roscommon, Leitrim, Sligo, and Cavan), each with their own County Development Plans which contains the Record of Protected Structures for the county. There are inevitably differing priorities and approaches to built heritage conservation in each jurisdiction, but all operate under the same overarching legislation.

2.3 BUILT HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

Archaeological sites are recorded on the Archaeological Survey database, most easily accessible through the Historic Environment Viewer, a website run by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage. This also includes buildings and structures included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and the National Monuments in State Care. Structures included in the county Record of Protected Structures are set out in the relevant County Development Plan which also lists the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) identified in each county.

The National Inventory for Architectural Heritage (NIAH) survey is not yet complete for the whole country.

3.0 REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

3.1 METHODOLOGY

This is a desk top review of the detailed proposals for the trail put forward by ORNI (trail design), Paul Hogarth Company (landscape design and trail hardware) and Tandem Design (Interpretative material). They have presented detailed proposals for each section of the trail and this report needs to be read in conjunction with their proposals.

The methodology adopted has been to identify all archaeological monuments and protected structures on or close to the trail and in particular at the 'Signature Points' where new trail hardware is being proposed. This has been done primarily using the Historic Environment Viewer coupled with the survey teams photographs, drawings and Google Earth images.

The review has been carried out by Dawson Stelfox, RIAI Grade 1 Accredited Conservation Architect. This Report should also be read in conjunction with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the proposals and in particular the Cultural Heritage chapter.

3.2 OVERVIEW

The design team have actively sought to avoid or minimise any negative impact on built heritage on or close to the trail. This has been articulated in the detailed proposals and site specific review comments are in section 3.3 below and in the table in Appendix A.

The Beara Breifne Way is an existing waymarked route with large sections currently on public roads but it also crosses open land with no built trail. It does not pass through any designated monuments but is in proximity (or Zone of Influence) to many designated sites.

Trail audits in 2021 recommended that a 'built' trail surface should be created in many areas both to define a route and so protect surrounding habitats or heritage structures and to provide a safe and sustainable trail. Whilst there are a few areas which require boardwalk or bog bridge type structures placed on the ground, the majority of the 'built' trails consist of unbound surface aggregate. There are no proposals for hard surface treatments such as asphalt, but in some areas 'stone stepping' is proposed for sections where the gradient would wash out the gravel trails or in wet terrain. This technique consists of individual flagstones being placed on the existing surface, usually interspersed with gravel sections. Bog Bridges are elevated 'floating' surfaces that provide dry passage through wetland areas.

The trail building proposals are set out in the ORNI document 'Technical Trail Audit and Design for the Beara Breifne Way'. In the sections where there is some improvement or reconstruction of the trail surface this is being proposed to be carried out in a manner which avoids any significant excavations which might harm unknown, buried archaeology – by adding trail material to the surface rather than excavations into it, with excavations limited to removal of surface organic matter to expose suitable mineral soil as a stable base for the unbound aggregate finish.

The new build trail width is 1.2m and guidance on construction restricts machinery width to the trail corridor, but this is obviously wider for existing lanes and roads, such as forest roads and farm access lanes.

The trail hardware is located at both 'Trailheads' and 'Signature Points'. The design proposal and the rationale behind them is set out in detail in the Paul Hogarth and Tandem 'Visitor Experience Proposals' document which should be read in conjunction with this report.

Trailheads are existing locations, in towns and villages, where existing trail sections start or finish, with often connections to other trails. All of these have existing trail infrastructure (signage, interpretative panels, trail maps etc) and the new hardware will provide a connectivity in visitor experience missing at the moment.

Signature Points are a mixture of new sites and refreshing of existing interpretative points or signposts and will contain a number of items of trail hardware. Some are in urban environments but most are out in the rural landscape. All will have one of the distinctive 'Beacons'. Individual sites will have directional signage, seating, viewing platforms and a range of 'Shelters'. These are a unique element of this Way and locate sites associated with overnight stays or rests on the long march. They are sculptural rather than operational in form but are an important element in the visitor experience and understanding of the nature of the march. All of this hardware supports interpretative material developed by Tandem. As this hardware will inevitably involve disturbance of the ground for foundations and support its potential impact on any monuments or protected structures is considered.

Although there is an overall brand which provides the connectivity of the story along the route, the proposals recognise the desirability of reflecting local character, geology and geography along the route, which could be manifest in the detailed design of some of the seating and viewing platform interventions. Each site or group of sites in a local authority area will need to be given further detailed consideration as part of the planning process but the proposals set out the overall rationale to achieve a unified trail brand and character whilst at the same time allowing for local significance to be reflected.

Further consideration of the development process is included in Section 4.

3.3 SUMMARY OF SITE ASSESSMENTS

The text below is a summary of the review of each of the 55 trailhead and Signature Points identified in the Paul Hogarth/Tandem Proposals. The table in Appendix A puts this in context but the visual images are in the Visitor Experience Proposals.

TH refers to a Trailhead and SP refers to a Signature Point.

References are from the Archaeological database and the NIAH database. The Archaeological database start with two letters representing the County – CO (Cork), LI (Limerick), TS (South Tipperary), TN (North Tipperary), GA (Galway), SL (Sligo), R (Roscommon). LE (Leitrim), CA (Cavan).

1. Dursey Island – TH and SP

Beacon located at existing path down to churchyard and graveyard (CO126-012003, 2004 and 2005). The beacon is set at a distance of over 100m from the monuments at the edge of the public road and has no physical or visual impact on the monuments.

2. Ballydonegan Beach – Landscape SP

Beacon and boardwalk platform at trail/beach edge. This is located c 200m away from the closest recorded monument (CO 127-049), described as an overgrown cairn. No physical or visual impact on the monument.

3. Dunboy Castle – Historic SP

This is a Beacon with directional posts and integrated seating in Castletownbere harbour, close to the site of the former Dunboy castle (CO 115-021) which had links to the O'Sullivan Beare clan, but the record states that there are 'no visible surface traces'. Given the village setting there is the potential for the proposed seating to be a local landmark.

4. Beara Peninsula – Landscape SP

Proposed Beacon with seating benches and engraved stone to reflect local geology. There are no recorded monuments close to the site – the nearest is c 300m away (CO 116-046), remains of a circular hut site. The proposals have no physical or visual impact on this.

5. Toberaranha Lough – Landscape SP

Beacon, directional posts and seating. No monuments are recorded within 1km from this site.

6. Coomarkane Valley – SP and Shelter

This marks the gathering point of the marchers and so the proposed location for the first of the sculptural 'shelters'. There are no monuments recorded at the site. The closest are a number of hut sites and enclosures about 500m away (CO 104 – 023001, 002 and 003) so there are no physical or visual impacts on any recorded monuments.

7. Glengarriff – TH and SP

Located in Glengarriff village, closed to a two shop/houses on the NIAH – Ref 20910408 and 10407. The proposed location for the beacon, seating and interpretative boards is at an existing trailhead and seating area in the village and there is the potential to improve the design of this area and the setting of the protected structures. This potential should be reflected in the final design of the seating which will be subject to a planning application. This location marks the start of the march on New Year's Eve 1602.

8. Bantry Bay – Landscape SP

Beacon located just off the trail with stepping stones approach. There are no recorded monuments within 1km. Derrycrpha House is on the NIAH (Ref 20910502) but it is c 600m away from the viewpoint location so there is no physical or visual impact.

9. Beara Way / Sli Gaeltacht Mhuscraí – TH

Existing Trailhead with new beacon – no adverse impact on any monuments or protected structures.

10. Conigar Mountain – Landscape SP

Beacon and bench – no recorded monument within 1km.

11. Augheris Church – SP and Shelter

This was the location of the first night camp and it is close to the church ruins – CO 069-038-001 and 002. It was reportedly a ruin when O’Sullivan Beare camped there in 1602. The proposal is to create a new secondary path away from the main trail so the proposed shelter is located at a distance from the church ruins so as to avoid any archaeological disturbance. There is an existing interpretation board at the church ruin.

12. St Gobnait’s Shrine – Historical SP

The marchers prayed at the shrine of St. Gobnait’s, a 6th century saint. The trail is on the public road and the proposed location for the beacon is at the entrance to a modern graveyard, some distance from the shrine itself and associated monuments. These include the old graveyard, ruins of a Church of Ireland church, a holy well and Bullaun stones (CO 058-034-003 – 009). As the trail and associated hardware is on the public road some distance from the monuments it has no adverse impact on them, but tells the story and draws visitors attention.

13. O’Sullivan Beare Skirmish – Historical SP

Beacon at Ullanes, site of a skirmish between the marchers and the sons of Thady MacCarthy of Kilmeedy castle, former allies of O’Sullivan Beare, who later declared loyalty to the English. There are no recorded monuments within 1km of this location.

14. Claragh Mountain – Landscape SP

Beacon and viewing platform on the existing trail. The closest recorded monument is a souterrain (CO 035-047) c 300m away but the record states there is ‘no visible surface trace’. There is also a rath (CO 039-050) described as being ‘not in a good condition’ c400m away. There is no physical or visual impact on the monuments from the proposals.

15. Sli Gaeltacht Mhuscraí / North West Cork Way – TH

Trailhead information in Millstreet village – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance.

16. Blackwater crossing – Historic SP

This is where the marchers crossed the river Blackwater at a recognised ford. There are no recorded monuments close by. On the NE side of the river, c 500m from the ford is a Bawn (CO 039 – 017) recorded as ‘almost completely destroyed’ on the SW side, also c500m from the ford is a souterrain (CO 039-022002) recorded as having ‘no surface trace’.

17. Derrinagree – Historic SP and Shelter

Location identified as a camp site for the marchers after the river crossing. No monuments are recorded within 1km of the site

18. Island Woods – Historic SP and Shelter

Possible campsite but not certain. This is a popular local walking area and so an opportunity to tell the story to a wider audience. No monuments recorded within 1km.

19. North Cork Way / Ballyhoura Way – TH

Existing Trailhead in Newmarket village – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance.

20. Liscarrol Castle – Historical SP

Liscarrol Castle is an important monument (CO 016-015-001) which has a significant local presence in the village. The proposed location for the Beacon is on the side of the public road outside of the castle grounds within already a busy urban environment so it will not have any adverse impact on the setting of the castle.

21. Ardpatrick Hill – Landscape SP and Shelter

This site is located c 1.2km away from Ardpatrick church and monastic site, in a forest area. It is a likely camp site for the marchers and there are no recorded monuments within 1.2km.

22. Goldenvale – Historic SP

Beacon within forest area. Nearest recorded monument is c500m away (LI 056-026/027) – holy wells and a Mound with 'no surface trace' (LI 056-023). No physical or visual impact.

23. Slieveveagh Viewpoint – Landscape SP

Beacon with boardwalk and viewing platform just off existing trail within a coniferous forest area. Nearest recorded monuments are some distance away and not visible from the site as also within the forest – Earthwork (LI 048 066-001) and Souterrain (LI048-066-002) with 'no surface remains'.

24. Aherlow Shelter – Historical SP and Shelter

Resting place for marchers recorded as being covered in forest and heather and still a forest area today. Closest recorded monument is a mass rock c500m away (TS 073-035) also within trees and not visible from the site.

25. Ballyhoura Way / Multeen Way – TH

Existing Trailhead – existing trailhead information and infrastructure in Tipperary town with opportunity to enhance.

26. Soloheadbeg – Historical SP and Shelter

Wooded area which is recorded as a camp site. Nearest recorded monument is an enclosure c 500m away (TS059-035), but not impacted by the proposals.

27. Donohill – Historical SP

This is an important site – Donohill motte and bailey (TS 059 014 001 and 002) was raided for food supplies by the marchers. The Beacon is to be located at a distance from the monument on the existing trail at the side of the public road, deliberately located to avoid any impact on the setting of the monument. There is an existing small car park area adjacent. Also close-by is the Garryshane National School dating from 1960 and on the NIAH – Ref 22205902.

28. Folidarg – Landscape SP

Open landscape area with modern wind turbines. Proposed beacon and viewing platform to enhance the visitor experience by view selection. Closest recorded monument is a rath c 600m away (TS045-017) but there is no intervisibility due to forest.

29. Multeen Way / Ormond Way – TH

Existing Trailhead – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance.

30. Lackern – Historic SP and Shelter

Recorded resting site. No recorded monuments within 1km.

31. Latteragh – Historic SP and Shelter

Recorded camp site in wooded area. There are a number of recorded monuments nearby but none intervisible due to the woodland setting. Latteragh House (NIAH Ref 22402804) is a farmyard complex dating from 1800-1840. There are also fragmentary remains of a castle c 300m away and an early medieval church and graveyard (TN 028-002 – 007).

32. Scohoboy bog – Landscape SP

Beacon and remodelling of existing boardwalk and viewing platform. No recorded monuments within 1km.

33. Portland – Historic SP and Shelter

Camp site recorded as a two night stay by the marchers. Closest recorded monument is the 'minimal remains of' an enclosure c 400m from the site (TH 004-017).

34. Ormond Way / Hymany way – TH

Existing Trailhead – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance.

35. Shannon Crossing – Historic SP

Important part of the story – beacon, seating area and direction markers. No recorded monuments within 1km.

36. Cloonascragh – Landscape SP

Boardwalk, viewing platform and bridge to enhance the visitor experience in this flat and open area. No recorded monuments within 1km of the site.

37. Aughrim – Historic SP

This site is some distance from the historic town of Aughrim, famous for the battle of Aughrim of 1691 but is an important part of the 1603 story. The marchers were attacked on the 10th January in this area by Captain Henry Malby and a superior force, but O'Sullivan's tactics, using the soft ground as a defence, paid off, Malby was killed, and his forces retreated. The existing trail passes close to a well defined Rath (GA 087-004, National Monument 371) but the proposed beacon and bench are located c 100m away, on the far side of an existing lane, well outside the area of impact on the rath and further away than a later, now ruined, cottage.

38. Hymany Way / Suck Valley Way – TH

Existing Trailhead – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance.

39. Castle Kelly, Aughrane – Historic SP

This site is at a path junction in a clearing of Aughrane forest, formerly part of the Castle Kelly estate. The location of Aughrane House (GA 033-006) seems to be incorrectly marked on the Historic Map Viewer and is c 1.5km away to the NE. Closest recorded monuments are a rath (GA 033-005 and a fishpond (GA 022-012) c 400m away within the forest without intervisibility of the proposed beacon site.

40. Mount Mary – Historic SP and Shelter

This was the 11th night camp site, in a coniferous forest c 300m from the top of Mount Mary. The only recorded monument is a disputed battle site on the hill (GA019 – 077) but this is not visible from the beacon and shelter site.

41. Lough Loung – Landscape SP

Beacon site with boardwalk and bridge over small stream. Close to a recorded battlefield site (GA007-039) but this is noted as a 'redundant site' with no evidence of a battle.

42. Glinsk Castle – Historic SP

An important part of the story happened in this location although the current castle dates from c 1630 and was rebuilt over the castle present in 1603. David Burke refused the marchers entry to the castle and even when later returning disguised as 'Royalists' were unsuccessful at gaining entry and provisions. The Beacon is to be located on the public road c 75m from the castle to avoid impacting on the setting. Potential for a local landmark to be designed.

43. Sleive O'Flynn – Historic SP

Area of cut bog – no monuments recorded within 1km.

44. Suck Valley Way / Lough Gara Way – TH

Existing Trailhead in Ballaghadereen – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance.

45. Crimlin – Historic SP and Shelter

Area of bog land – no monuments recorded within 1km.

46. Lough Gara Way / Miners Way – TH

Existing Trailhead – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance.

47. Carrowkeel – Landscape SP

An important area of Megalithic Tombs – State Care National Monuments (518).

Trail does not go to the monuments but passes c 200m away. Beacon is located at the path junction where rough track goes up to the monuments but does not impact on their setting.

48. Lough Arrow Megalithic Tombs – Landscape SP

The trail follows minor roads at the north end of Lough Arrow and passes c 100m from a megalithic tomb (SL034-206). Beacon and seat with proposed stone wall sculptural installation is designed to indicate the importance of the geology and stone construction in the area without impacting on the monument.

49. Knockvicar – Historic SP and Shelter

Trail through farmed land with rural buildings including pub, but recorded resting site so proposed to be marked by shelter and beacon. Nearest recorded monuments are two 'overgrown and ruinous' ringforts (R 003-053 and 054) c 150-200m away.

50. Miners Way / Leitrim Way – TH

Existing Trailhead in Leitrim town – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance. Marks the end of the main march on 14th January 1603 at O'Rourke's Castle (LE 027-026) but very little of this survives. Trail passes through town c 2km to the east of the castle at canal lock.

51. Lough Allen – Landscape SP

Open trail and landscape – no recorded monuments within 1km.

52. Leitrim Way / Cavan Way – TH

Existing Trailhead – existing trailhead information and infrastructure with opportunity to enhance.

53. Shannon Pot – Landscape SP

Within existing Visitor centre complex – no recorded monuments within 1km.

54. Burren Woodland – Landscape SP

Trail passes through extensive area of forest containing Cavan Burren Park. No monuments recorded near the trail and beacon site. Also within forest but not visible from the trail, (c300m away) are a number of cup marked stones (CV 004 058 – 061) and a 'greatly ruined' megalithic tomb (CV 004-004).

55. Blacklion – SP TH

Existing trailhead in Blacklion town centre. About 250m from trailhead is the Market House (c1830) now the tourist centre (NIAH 40400209).

4.0 SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF BUILT HERITAGE IMPACT

4.1 The Trail

As set out in Section 2, the trail is a mixture of public roads, farm lanes, forest roads and open sections. It does not directly pass through any recorded monuments but crosses the 'Zones of Influence' of many. In the sections where there is some improvement or construction of the trail surface this is being proposed to be carried out in a manner which avoids any significant excavations which might harm unknown, buried archaeology – by adding trail material to the surface rather than any significant excavations into it. The trail design guidelines refer to the removal of surface organic material to expose the mineral soil and this will not disturb buried archaeology. The conclusion must be that the trail will not cause any adverse physical impact on built heritage. The trail route has been designed to avoid going close to monuments – eg at Carrowkeel megalithic tombs – and so does not adversely impact on the setting of monuments or protected structures.

4.2 Signature Points

The Signature Points all have a beacon marker with integral interpretative material. Some in addition have directional material, seating, boardwalks and viewing points, all as set out in the TPHC/Tandem design proposals document. The siting of this infrastructure has been carefully chosen to avoid any physical or adverse visual impact on nearby built heritage in the form of record monuments or protected structures. In Section 3 of this document each site was reviewed in detail and the conclusion was that there are no adverse impacts on built heritage, primarily because of significant spatial separations between the built heritage and the trail hardware and the modest nature of the installations. The design of the beacons and the shelters has specific references to the story of the march and events around it and sets out to engage the visitor with the surrounding cultural landscape, so they have the potential to enhance the character and significance of the built heritage.

4.3 Trailheads

The village and town trailheads are largely existing and have connectivity with other local trails and visitor attractions or features. The Design proposals indicate how there are opportunities for enhancement of the local character and built heritage as part of the detailed design process for these trailhead interventions. Each of those proposals will need to be individually designed for their location taking into account a wide range of factors, one of which will be potential impact on built heritage. For that reason, this assessment can only acknowledge that the potential impact of increased urban signage and street furniture is mitigated by removal of older and more inappropriate hardware and an improvement in design quality.

4.4 Implementation

The proposed trail and trail hardware will require planning applications to be made for each section and the individual applications will be made by differing Councils or local community development bodies. A crucial part of the design and the overall concept is that there is a consistent approach throughout the length of the trail and so it is important that each local authority sign up to the design principles as set out in the Hogarth/Tandem report. This review has confirmed that the trail design and locations of proposed beacons, seating, signage and sculptural shelters does not have any adverse impact on designated built heritage or its setting.

However, in particular within the urban areas, there is design scope for individual interventions picking up on local characteristics and there will need to be a further review of each individual planning application as regards built heritage impact, as part of the normal planning process.

APPENDIX A
SITE SPECIFIC REVIEW