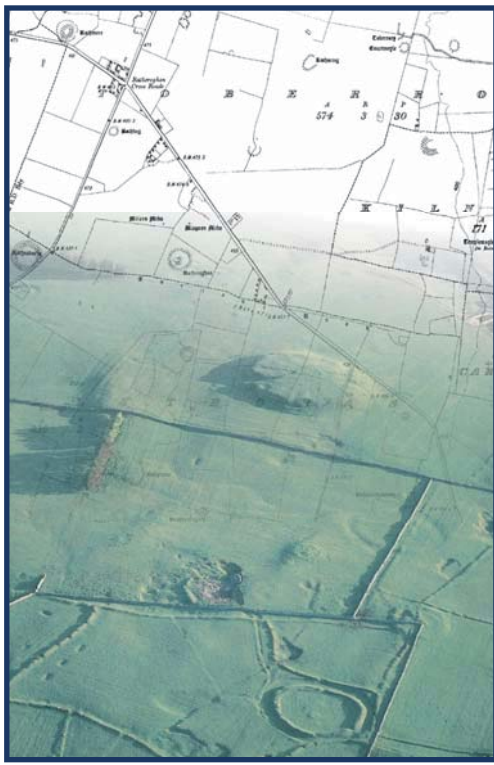


Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex Conservation Study



July 2007



**Client: Department of the Environment,
Heritage and Local Government**

Issue N^o: 2
OA Tender N^o: 6894
NGR: S 180 283

Client Name: Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Ireland

Client Ref No:

Document Title: The Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex Conservation Study

Document Type: Strategic Study

Issue Number: 2

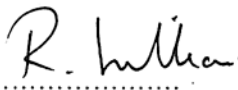
National Grid Reference:
Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 3299
Site Code:
Invoice Code: RORACPCO
Receiving Museum:
Museum Accession No:

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Document File Location Rathcroghan/Final Report/Final Report Version 7.doc
Graphics File Location Rathcroghan/Geomatics/01_PDFs/Current/JULY_2007
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THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**THE RATHCROGHAN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPLEX**
CONSERVATION STUDY



Oxford Archaeology
July 2007

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Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex Conservation Study

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PREFACE

This Conservation Study has been drafted for the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex by Oxford Archaeology, in partnership with ADAS, on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Ireland.

Following the production of a draft study report in October 2006, a summary was made available for consultation throughout November 2006. Two local consultation meetings were held on the 22nd of November in Tulsk, County Roscommon. Comments and submissions made during the meetings and the consultation period have been included in this version of the study. The final version will be available on the project web site from mid 2007.

To view a PDF version of the study please go to: [www. Oxfordarch.co.uk/rathcroghan](http://www.Oxfordarch.co.uk/rathcroghan).

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was written by Jill Hind, Ros O'Maolduin, Klara Spandl and Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Oxford Archaeology. It also includes written contributions by Keith Rowe and Chris Forster Brown of ADAS. Advice and comments were also provided by Julian Munby of Oxford Archaeology. Valuable comments and suggestions were provided by the project Steering Group within the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the National Roads Authority archaeologists, staff at the Department of Archaeology, NUI, Galway, Roscommon County Council, the Cruachan Ai Visitor Centre and Tulsk Action Group, local landowners and stakeholders who attended the consultation meetings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The complex of archaeological monuments at Rathcroghan in County Roscommon is of major national significance as the traditional site of the seat of Connacht's Iron Age elite and the burial place of the pagan kings of Ireland. Access to the monuments and potential long-term threats to the complex and its setting as a whole have been a cause for concern. Consequently, Oxford Archaeology has been commissioned by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to carry out the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex Conservation Study. ADAS UK LTD have contributed to the project in terms of landscape and ecological studies.

The Study covers an area of *c* 725 hectares, containing 114 Recorded Monuments of which 39 are in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. These date from the Neolithic to Medieval periods.

The objectives of the conservation study are:

- To provide an assessment of the significance of the archaeological monuments in the complex
- To assess the vulnerability of the monuments and make recommendations regarding their protection
- To improve local and national understanding of the monuments in the complex
- To recommend management schemes for effective maintenance and provide guidance for the conservation of the study area.
- To recommend policies for monitoring and protecting the setting of the monuments
- To recommend policies to improve access to, and interpretation of, the core monuments within the archaeological complex

The policies outlined and the implementation strategy have been developed within the context of relevant legislation relating to built heritage, policy frameworks and best practice guidance on the formulation of conservation and management plans.

In the course of the study, OA has examined archaeological datasets, aerial photographs, and documentary evidence and map sources for Rathcroghan and its surroundings. In particular, information relating to previous investigations which have been carried out has been studied, including recent work by the National University of Ireland, Galway. Following an initial assessment, a field investigation visit was carried out which included the landscape and ecological surveys.

The importance of Rathcroghan was largely a consequence of its geographical location within Connacht. It overlooks the valley of the River Shannon, ensuring good water supply and accessible communication routes. In addition, it is situated on a relatively low-lying area of limestone capped with boulder clay, which has good potential as farmland. Today, it is classed as manured lowland grassland of moderate quality, a land-use conducive to the conservation of archaeological earthworks. Lowland peat bogs are situated to the west and south of the Rathcroghan plateau. To the north and north-east the land is more mountainous, while to the west are the exposed uplands of the Atlantic coast. The Rathcroghan area, therefore, provides a good settlement area within eastern Connacht.

Rathcroghan lies within Mag nAí, the pastures ruled by the Kings of Connacht, which also contains another monument complex at Carnfree, *c* 4 km to the south-east of Rathcroghan. The Rathcroghan study area falls into two zones, a plateau above 120 m OD and a surrounding band of lower lying ground to the east and south. Both areas are now mostly divided into fields by stone walls and a few hedges and are used as pasture. The ecological significance of the land is low. The existing N5 trunk road bisects the area, but proposals to divert this section of road are under consultation.

At present, there is public access to view only four monuments: Rathcroghan, Rathmore, Rathbeg and

Rathnadarve. Limited vehicle parking spaces exist only at three of these. Access to other monuments may be arranged through the Cruachan Aí Heritage Centre in Tusk.

The monuments within the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex cover a wide time span, but the principal periods of significance are the Iron Age, Early Christian and Medieval periods. Five particular elements have been identified which contribute to the overall significance of the complex. These are:

- As a well-preserved, multi-period and ritual landscape, Rathcroghan is of exceptional significance both nationally and internationally.
- Cattle rearing is the principal agricultural use of the natural landscape. This type of farming is crucial for preservation of the archaeological monuments as it has little adverse affect on their conservation.
- The monuments of the Rathcroghan Complex are impressive as individual features, and some are of clear national importance, but the combination or group value of the various components, increases their significance.
- The association of the Rathcroghan monuments with the myths and legends of early Irish history enhances public interest in them.
- The surviving pattern of medieval occupation and land use is of considerable significance, particularly as it lies in a former Gaelic lordship providing a contrast with better understood landscapes in Anglo-Norman areas.

The Study identified a number of key issues related to the significance of the Rathcroghan monument complex and its future. A set of policies has been developed to cover five broad areas, for each of which there are a series of subsidiary recommendations. The principal areas for consideration are:

Policy 1: Protection

To place the conservation of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Monuments (including their setting) and the protection of their significance at the heart of future planning and management of the area.

Policy 2: Conservation and Monitoring

To implement effective regimes for monument management, and to protect their significance by observing best practice standards of conservation.

Policy 3: Research and Education

To further develop our understanding of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex through recording and research, ensuring the dissemination of all information in accessible form.

Policy 4: Enhancement & Improvement

To enhance the character and qualities of the monuments by appropriate means.

Policy 5: Ownership, Access and Interpretation

To enable and encourage public understanding and enjoyment of the monuments and their setting by promoting a high degree of physical and intellectual access through the provision of information and interpretative material, meeting the needs of a broad variety of visitors.

A number of actions have been identified for each of the policy areas which, if implemented, would enable the objectives of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex Conservation Study to be met. These tasks would be carried out across a time span of several years, with some actions requiring consultation and agreement with a range of stakeholders.

1 Protection

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Develop a management strategy for the Rathcroghan conservation study area	1.1	Establishment of a steering group of key stakeholders
Recognition of Rathcroghan study area within County Development Plan, Local Area Plan and their policies	1.1	Prepare a map indicating the boundary of the study area for inclusion in Local Area Plan and draft appropriate statement and policies
Ensure that public services and infrastructural works outside planning control do not cause damage to the monuments or their setting	1.1	Ensure that liaison with service providers explicitly includes heritage considerations. Liase with landowners and farmers
Establish the data with which to assess and protect significant views and vistas within the planning system	1.1, 4.2	Create GIS database (from conservation study) and develop viewshed analysis and digital terrain modelling
Seek opportunities to protect areas of nature conservation, such as wet grassland areas, which may be ecologically significant	1.2	Management agreements with landowners
Meet all relevant statutory and legal requirements for the protection of the monuments, the health and safety of individuals and the requirements of disabilities legislation.	1.3	Continue to enforce the National Monuments Acts for the protection of monuments

2 Conservation and Monitoring

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Establish a detailed baseline study of monument condition, and a programme of regular and effective monitoring, including monitoring indicators	2.1, 5.2	Commission a study with the results linked to the GIS database and ongoing 5-yearly monitoring.
Monitor changes in land management	2.2, 4.2	Liase with landowners, encourage participation in REPS

3 Research and Education

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Raise awareness of the significance and conservation needs of the monuments in schools at local level	3.2	Develop an education project in local schools and web site or weblinks.
Develop a research agenda for the Rathcroghan archaeological complex	3.1	Establish a research group with representatives from statutory bodies, universities and local interest groups

- A specific Research Agenda for Rathcroghan could link, as appropriate, with the outcomes of the report “Research Needs in Irish Archaeology: Framework for a National Archaeological Research Programme” of the Heritage Council, prepared for the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

4 Enhancement and Improvement

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Reduce the impact of landscape elements which adversely impact on the core monuments in the long term	4.1	Develop a management strategy, management agreements with landowners, and liaison with utility companies
Enhance appreciation of the intervisibility of the monuments	4.2	Establish orientation points with information panels at the four main view points in the landscape (Fig. 5)
Support an alternative route for the N5	4.3	Maintain liaison with NRA and the planning authority

5 Ownership, Access and Interpretation

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Identify and highlight core area(s)/monuments within conservation study area at a local level	5.1	Field inspection of monuments within study area and local consultation
Identify a co-operative management approach to allow wider public access to the monuments	5.1	Develop a management strategy and the establishment of a land use and access liaison group
Seek opportunities to consolidate land-use and to promote wider access	5.1	Possible land acquisition related to core area(s) by the State or local authority etc.
Develop a strategy for visitor access and interpretation	5.2	Land use and access liaison group to be established as part of the management strategy Publish a range of leaflets/maps and provision of additional site signage

In order to assist with the issues of access and protection, the most significant monuments or monument groups have been identified. Two suggested routes, of differing lengths, with options for siting of information and interpretative media, have been proposed for discussion for visitors to Rathcroghan. These routes and the monuments along them are shown on Figure 10. These monuments are identified through a numbered key.

THE RATHCROGHAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPLEX CONSERVATION STUDY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose

Background

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned in July 2006, by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to produce a conservation study for the archaeological complex at Rathcroghan in County Roscommon. Tradition states that Rathcroghan, or Cruachan, was the seat of Connacht's Iron Age elite and served as the burial place of the pagan kings of Ireland. The archaeological monuments in the area are of importance both locally and nationally, but access to the monuments and the potential long-term threats to the area as a whole have been a cause of concern. In order to meet the scope of the brief prepared by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, OA invited ADAS UK Ltd to form part of the team.
- 1.1.2 The importance of Rathcroghan was largely a consequence of its geographical location within Connacht. It overlooks the valley of the River Shannon, ensuring a good water supply and accessible communication routes. In addition, it is situated on a relatively low-lying area of limestone capped with boulder clay, which has good/excellent potential as farmland. Today, the area is classed as manured lowland grassland of moderate quality, a land-use conducive to the conservation of archaeological earthworks. Lowland peat bogs are situated to the west and south of the Rathcroghan plateau. To the north and north-east the land is more mountainous, while to the west are the exposed uplands of the Atlantic coast. The Rathcroghan area, therefore, provides a good settlement area within eastern Connacht.
- 1.1.3 The Rathcroghan Archaeological Conservation Study Area lies in County Roscommon, five kilometres north-west of the village of Tulsk in the west of Ireland (Figure 1.) The study area encompasses some 725 hectares and contains a total of 114 Recorded Monuments, of which 39 are in State care (Figure 2). The boundary largely follows the 120 m contour line which defines the Rathcroghan Plateau and relates to topographical features on the ground such as roads and field boundaries. Whilst the area figures greatly in early Irish literature, its value and importance is reflected in the archaeological landscape which provides evidence of its use from Neolithic to Medieval times. The study area contains a complex of monuments including a megalithic tomb, tumuli, ritual enclosures, ring barrows, twenty ring forts, caves and ancient field systems.
- 1.1.4 Landscape, land management and visitor access issues were assessed through a field visit and reference to information provided through local knowledge. An ecological assessment was also conducted from desk based research and a site visit. However, it is recognised that although the ecological interest of the area is an integral part of the

overall conservation study, in terms of the conservation study, it is of secondary importance to the archaeology.

- 1.1.5 Landscape and ecological studies were undertaken by ADAS UK Ltd, working as part of the OA team. Ecological baseline conditions are described and evaluated in terms of recognised criteria (Appendix 3). An assessment is made of the current management regime of the area and recommendations are put forward for future management.

Objectives

- 1.1.6 It is anticipated that the conservation study will be of use for the following:
- To provide an assessment of the significance of the archaeological monuments in the complex
 - To assess the vulnerability of the monuments and make recommendations regarding their protection
 - To improve local and national understanding of the monuments in the complex
 - To recommend management schemes for effective maintenance and provide guidance for the conservation of the study area.
 - To recommend policies for monitoring and protecting the setting of the monuments
 - To recommend policies to improve access to, and interpretation of, the core monuments within the archaeological complex
- 1.1.7 In addition, the conservation study consolidates the documentation relating to the study area found in local records, historical mapping and national archives. Relevant data can be disseminated in a manageable form and can be used for the formulation of policies for management and protection, subject to review every five to ten years.

1.2 Basis and Structure

Background to Conservation Study

- 1.2.1 The underlying principles of the study are derived from *The Conservation Plan* (Semple Kerr 1996). It also takes into account the series of international charters summarised in the *Guide to International Conservation Charters* (Historic Scotland 1997), the principal ones being the *Charter of Venice* (1964); the *UNESCO Recommendations*, (1976); the *Congress on European Architectural Heritage* (Council of Europe 1975), and the *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (Australia ICOMOS, 1988; referred to as the Burra Charter). Guidance has been sought from sources such as *Commissioning a Conservation Plan* (English Heritage 1998) and in *Conservation Plans for Historic Places* (Heritage Lottery Fund 1998) and *Informed Conservation* (English Heritage 2001). The archaeological landscape forms an important part of the management plans developed for World Heritage sites and the most relevant, *Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site Management Plan* (DOEHLG Dúchas 2002), *Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan* (English Heritage 1998 and 2005) and *Stonehenge World*

Heritage Site Management Plan (English Heritage 2001) have been used as guidance.

Current Recognition and Protection of the Monuments

- 1.2.2 Although these charters are not legislation, the principle of understanding historic sites as a necessary basis for decision making, and the requirement to protect their significance through processes of change or conservation, are enshrined in national legislation. Within the framework of the government the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has responsibility for the archaeological heritage and exercises functions under the *National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004*.
- 1.2.3 *The National Monuments Act, 1930* (with amendments and additions in 1954, 1987, 1994 and 2004) is the principal statute, although at the time of writing a Consolidation Bill is under consideration which would have important implications for monument protection. The term ‘monument’ as used in the Acts is deliberately broad so as to include all artificial structures of any date and of any heritage interest, although buildings in use for ecclesiastical purposes are excluded. As stipulated by the Acts, the Minister is required to establish and maintain the *Register of Historic Monuments and a Record of Monuments and Places*. The monuments included in the *Record of Monuments and Places* are referred to as Recorded Monuments. This protection requires anyone proposing to carry out works at or close to any recorded monument to give notice in writing to the Minister and not to start work without consent until two months after giving such notice.
- 1.2.4 The Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has the power to place Preservation Orders in relation to monuments considered to be of national importance that are in danger of being destroyed and to acquire, either compulsorily or by agreement, any national monument. No Preservation Orders have been issued with respect to monuments in the Rathcroghan area. When the Land Commission was dividing up the Rathcroghan area (c 1920-1950) it was considered worthwhile and desirable to vest ownership of 39 national monuments in the Office of Public Works (OPW). This was an unprecedented occurrence and highlights the fact that the importance of these monuments and this area has long been recognised.
- 1.2.5 *The National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1987*, also provides that a person should not demolish or remove wholly or in part or disfigure, deface, alter or in any manner interfere with a historic monument (or area) entered in the Register.
- 1.2.6 The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is responsible for the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and the list of monuments identified for each county are recorded in a Sites and Monuments Record. After 1994 the lists formed the basis for the Records of Monuments and Places with the statutory protection described in 1.2.3. The monuments are subject to field inspection and descriptions prepared, which are published as Archaeological Inventories for each

county. For County Roscommon the fieldwork has been completed, but the Inventory volume is yet to be published

- 1.2.7 In 2004 an amendment of National Monuments Legislation was made to provisions related, *inter alia*, to the regulation of archaeology in relation to approved road developments. Under Section 14A (2) of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004* archaeological works associated with an approved road development must be carried out in accordance with directions issued by the Minister. By way of directions the Minister can provide that archaeological works, including excavation, are carried out appropriately within feasible timescales and to acceptable standards in accordance with the directions. Once the road development has been approved by An Bord Pleanála (Planning Board) the relevant road authority must seek Ministerial directions for all archaeological aspects of a project including geophysical surveys, dive surveys, test/full excavation phase or any other aspect of archaeological work. The Minister is required by law to consult the Director of the National Museum of Ireland on all applications for directions.
- 1.2.8 The *Heritage Act, 1995* provided for the establishment of a statutory Heritage Council to be appointed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. The Heritage Council is an independent body with a remit to provide advice on heritage and the proposal of policies to protect, preserve and enhance the national heritage.
- 1.2.9 *The Planning and Development Act 2000 and Regulations 2001* require Development Plans to include a ‘record of protected structures’, ‘for the purpose of protecting structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest’. At the same time the *Architectural Heritage (National Inventory and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999* established a National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.
- 1.2.10 The environmental impact assessment process established through the *European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989* (as amended) and the *Roads Act 1993* is also pertinent to the protection of the archaeological heritage (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999, 13).
- 1.2.11 The *Planning and Development Act 2000*, implemented fully by the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001*, arose out of a review of planning legislation in 1997 and aligned it with an ethos of sustainable development. This Act consolidates all previous Acts and much of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and stresses that the main instrument for regulation and control of development is the Development Plan. Section 9 of the Act requires all local authorities to prepare/formulate development plans for their administrative areas at least every 6 years.
- 1.2.12 Of relevance in a rural, farmed landscape is Schedule 2 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001* which defines Exempted Developments. These

include the extension of a house by up to 40 square metres, where not previously extended and construction of various structures related to livestock and agricultural buildings. However the provisions of the National Monument Acts still apply. In addition, where otherwise exempted development under the Planning Acts would have an impact on an archaeological feature protected in the Development Plan, the exemption does apply, however, the notification requirements discussed in 1.2.3 must be followed.

Roscommon Development Plan (2002)

1.2.13 It is the County Development Plan and associated Heritage Plan that are key to guiding the local planning decision making process and which are increasingly being promoted by the Government to facilitate the protection of important monuments and heritage areas.

1.2.14 Roscommon County Council is the relevant authority for planning control within the Rathcroghan area. The *Roscommon Development Plan (2002)* includes policies for the historic environment within its Environment section. It was written prior to recent guidance on Sustainable Rural Housing. The relevant policies are:

- To conserve the natural and built environment in the county
- To promote environmental awareness and environmentally friendly practices in agriculture and other rural activities
- To reassess and update where necessary the buildings, structures etc. listed for the county.

1.2.15 One of the aims stated in the Roscommon Development Plan:

‘This County has a number of amenity areas that are of scenic, recreational, scientific, historical or archaeological interest. The Council will seek to protect such amenity areas from development that would have a detrimental effect on the environment. The Council will, where funds permit, develop recreation and tourism facilities such as footpaths, picnic sites and viewing sites in special amenity areas’ (Roscommon County Council 2002, 32).

1.2.16 The Roscommon Development Plan includes lists of Archaeological and Historic Sites (Schedule 12) and of buildings and structures of significance (Schedule 13). The historic environment is addressed specifically in a number of the associated objectives:

- To conserve the physical features, vegetation and man-made features of the landscape
- To conserve the Archaeological and Historical sites and their settings in the county listed in Schedule 12
- To conserve the buildings and structures listed in Schedule 13, together with their settings

- To review and update the Register of Protected Structures in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department of Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

- 1.2.17 Schedule 12, Sites of Archaeological and Historic Interest, includes two sites, a rath (RO022-056017) and an ancient roadway (RO022-057021), within the Rathcroghan Complex, both in Toberrory townland. No entries in Schedule 13, Buildings and Structures to be Protected, lie within the Rathcroghan Complex.
- 1.2.18 Elements of policies on Tourism and on Recreation and Community facilities may also be applied in the context of the historic environment, with Rathcroghan being particularly mentioned as a place where there is significant potential for further development of such facilities and where the Council will seek to facilitate the development of these resources (Roscommon County Council, 2002, 35). This is reflected in its inclusion in Schedule 14 – Major Amenity Scheme Proposals.
- 1.2.19 Although the historic environment of the Rathcroghan Complex currently does not figure specifically in the Development Plan, it is identified in the draft *County Roscommon Heritage Plan 2004-2008* (2003), prepared by the County Roscommon Heritage Forum, in response in part to the National Heritage Plan 2002 which recommended that each Local Authority produces a Heritage Plan. It is also taken into account in the County Development Board strategy document, *Roscommon Common Vision* (2005), which includes the historic environment in its Cultural Priorities. The three main objectives of the Heritage Plan are: to raise awareness of their heritage, to collect and disseminate heritage information and to promote best practice in heritage conservation and management (County Roscommon Heritage Forum 2003, 7). One of the key actions (3.1.9) is to ‘establish a working group to prepare a conservation plan for the Rathcroghan Area, to include access to the sites and planning policy for this important landscape’ (*ibid.*, 19).
- 1.2.20 As a follow up to issues raised at public consultation meetings and the resultant objective 2.2 of the county Heritage Plan, a separate report was undertaken to audit the access issues within the County (Roscommon County Council, 2005). This report stresses the importance of public access to heritage sites within County Roscommon and assesses a selection of sites on an individual basis. It discusses the problems and issues revolving around provision for access in the county and recommends suitable ways forward. Of the individual sites assessed the report examines four that fall within the Rathcroghan study area. The report goes on to identify the Rathcroghan complex as one of the county’s ‘most important components of archaeological heritage in terms of national importance’. It addresses access issues affecting the site by referring back to key action 3.1.9 of the Roscommon Heritage Plan and the commissioning of this Conservation Study.

2 UNDERSTANDING THE MONUMENTS

2.1 Scope of the Study

- 2.1.1 The study area includes 114 Recorded Monuments of which 39 are in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (Figure 2). The boundary of the study area was defined with the assistance of the DoEHLG to incorporate the main complex of monuments and their setting. The boundary largely follows the 120 m contour line which defines the Rathcroghan Plateau and relates to topographical features on the ground such as roads and field boundaries.
- 2.1.2 An initial study was made of the available documentary evidence prior to a field investigation of the study area.
- 2.1.3 In the course of the study, OA has examined archaeological datasets, aerial photographs, and documentary evidence and map sources for Rathcroghan and its surroundings. In particular, information relating to previous investigations which have been carried out have been studied, including recent work by the National University of Ireland, Galway. Following an initial assessment, a field investigation visit was carried out which included the landscape and ecological surveys.
- 2.1.4 Following the completion of the draft Conservation Study in October 2006, public consultation meetings were held at Cruachan Aí Heritage Centre, Tulsk on Wednesday 22nd November 2006. In the morning *c* 20 landowners were present. They had formed the Concerned Rathcroghan Land Owners Group, on whose behalf Pdraig Dunn presented a written submission. Further submissions were presented on behalf of Professor Waddell and his team at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and a local resident, Michael Mulleady. These are included in Appendix 6. The stakeholders meeting in the afternoon was attended by *c* 12 people plus a delegation of landowners. The names of all known attendees are given in Appendix 6.
- 2.1.5 The principal issues raised during the meetings were:
- Clarification on who commissioned the study and what prompted it
 - Clarification on the origins of the Study Area boundary and its legal status
 - The need for the approach to conservation of, and access to, the monuments to be decided following discussions with all stakeholders
 - The format of separate consultation meetings and limited involvement of the DoEHLG
 - The current position with respect to planning decisions in the Rathcroghan area
 - The future of the N5 trunk road, both route and timescale.
- 2.1.6 The field investigation of the study area comprised visiting most of the monuments and a landscape assessment. The Landscape Character was assessed in the field using guidance adapted for the project from *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance*

for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage 2002). Landscape character is defined in the guidance as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. Particular combinations of physical features create distinct character such as geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, field patterns and human settlement. The Character Assessment process is primarily concerned with identifying the landscape character of an area, rather than its quality or value.

- 2.1.7 An ecological survey was also undertaken. Baseline ecological information for the study area was collected through desk study and original field survey. The desk study entailed consultation with Roscommon County Council, a review of relevant information gained from a web and literature search. An ‘extended’ Phase I habitat survey was carried out in August 2006, covering the area of the site. This was based on the Nature Conservancy Council guidelines (NCC 1989), but also included a general evaluation of the site in terms of its mammals, birds and invertebrates. In addition, habitats were classified according to *A Guide to habitats in Ireland* (Fossitt 2000).
- 2.1.8 Phase I habitat categories were mapped on a base map, using lettered codes. These are supported by general abundance ratings for species, using the DAFOR scale. This scale classifies species as Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional or Rare based on the percentage of plants present. Species nomenclature follows that in Stace (1991). Habitats and plant species of particular interest were target-noted and the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) categories suggested.
- 2.1.9 The site was also surveyed in terms of its fauna, with particular attention being paid to (a) protected animal species [e.g. badger *Meles meles*, bats and amphibians], (b) Red Data Book (RDB) species and (c) BAP species. The locations of other mammals, birds and invertebrates and/or indications of their activity were recorded, though no attempt was made to estimate abundance. In addition, a general assessment was made of the habitat’s suitability for bird, mammal and invertebrate diversity, by looking for indicators such as vegetation quality, variation in vegetation height/microtopography, and presence of old buildings (potential roosting/breeding sites) on site.

2.2 Review of Sources

- 2.2.1 There is a quantity of primary evidence and secondary source material relating to the history and development of the Rathcroghan study area. National records were consulted to provide information regarding the ownership, nature, location and condition of the monuments.
- 2.2.2 Documentary searches were carried out at the Bodleian and Sackler Libraries in Oxford, the National Library of Ireland, the National Museum of Ireland, the SMR files and through the Internet. These searches covered archaeological source material,

legislation and policy on built heritage, planning and access at national and local levels. The web sites maintained by the Heritage Council, and Roscommon County Council were of particular use. During the field visit, additional information was acquired from the Cruachan Aí Visitor Centre in Tulsk where the Rathcroghan Complex features in the exhibition (Photos 8 and 9). The Visitor Centre provides the main source of information about Rathcroghan in the area and is eager to develop its role in supporting a full range of visitors.

- 2.2.3 Aerial photographic evidence from various sources was examined. The Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs was interrogated and photographs taken by Professor John Waddell were viewed in the National Museum of Ireland. Further aerial photos were viewed in the SMR files and Air Corp photos were supplied for viewing by the DoEHLG. Orthostat photos (1995 b&w and 2000 colour) were supplied digitally by the Department.
- 2.2.4 Ordnance Survey vector data was supplied at a scale of 1:50,000 by the DoEHLG along with 10 m contour data. Data from the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) was also supplied digitally along with the townland data. Land registry information was supplied in PDF format from which OA created landowner polygons. Summary versions of departmental files, maps of the study area indicating monument status, Registered Monument maps and a site gazetteer were supplied by the DoEHLG. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey maps (6-inch) were viewed and compared.
- 2.2.5 Information was also obtained from Roscommon County Council (Nollaig McKeon, Heritage Officer Roscommon CC) for three designated sites in the vicinity of the Rathcroghan archaeological complex.

2.3 Previous Research

- 2.3.1 Despite attracting the attention of many early archaeologists and antiquaries, little invasive work has taken place within the Rathcroghan complex, preserving *in-situ* what is reputed to be one of Ireland's primary royal centres.
- 2.3.2 A comprehensive review of Antiquarian interest is included in John Waddell's 1983 (23-26) analysis of the site. Notable parties who have written about or examined the site include a clergyman named John Keogh in 1684, Charles O'Connor of Belengare in 1753, Gabriel Beranger in 1779 (published by William Wilde in 1871), R. R. Brash and John Windele in 1852 (Brash 1879), Samuel Ferguson in 1864 (M Ferguson 1896, Vol. 2, 47), Knox (1911;1914) and E.C. Quiggin, Professor Ridgeway, Dr. W.M. Tapp and Professor R.A.S Macalister in 1911. The complex also features in the Ordnance Survey notes by John O'Donovan (1837).
- 2.3.3 The first known invasive investigations to take place within the Rathcroghan complex were carried out by Charles O'Connor of Mount Allen some time after 1779 (Waddell 1983, 25). The results of this excavation, purporting to have discovered "a square chamber and some bones", were related to John O'Donovan (1837, 87; 1851,

205) by Mathew O’Conor, nephew of the said excavator and grandson of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare.

- 2.3.4 The first published account of investigations within the Rathcroghan Complex appeared in 1864 written by Ferguson, who visited the cave of Owneynagat, producing plans and detailed drawings of the Cave, the Ogham stones and their inscriptions (Ferguson 1864). Perhaps most importantly, he also drew a plan of the enclosure that then surrounded the entrance to the cave, which is now no longer extant.
- 2.3.5 In 1911 Professor R.A.S. Macalister accompanied Cambridge academic Dr Quiggin, Professor William Ridgeway, Dr W.M. Tapp and E.C.R. Armstrong to Rathcroghan where they conducted excavations within Relig na Rí and on Dathi’s mound. The excavations did not reveal what the expedition hoped for and unfortunately no notes or report were ever published. What is known about the excavation is from letters between E.C. Quiggin, Douglas Hyde and the then current O’Conor (Waddell 1983, 26) and later references by Professor Macalister (1928, 179; 1949, 308).
- 2.3.6 Detailed survey and aerial reconnaissance of the study area was not carried out until the latter half of the 20th century. A series of articles by Professor John Waddle and Professor Michael Herity offer alternative analyses of the layout and nature of the monuments, wider landscape and the historic data. In the 1980s Professor Waddell and his team excavated at ‘Dathi’s Mound’, an embanked mound topped with a standing stone said to be the tomb of the last pagan king of Ireland. The work did not find any burials and showed the monument to date from the Iron Age rather than the Early Christian period (Waddell 1988).
- 2.3.7 Recently, significant work has been carried out by the ArchaeoGeophysical Imaging Programme under Professor Waddell. (Fenwick *et al.* 1999, Geraghty *et al.* 2006, Fenwick, Brennan and Delaney 1996, Barton *et al.* 1996, Fenwick and Barton 2005). This comprised a large scale programme of geophysical survey and detailed topographical survey of individual monuments and areas within the complex. It has proved particularly successful in exploring Rathcroghan Mound itself, and its immediate surroundings (Fenwick *et al.* 2006). Since the advent of non-invasive scientific techniques of investigation no archaeological excavation has taken place within the complex.
- 2.3.8 In 2002 the Discovery Programme began work on the *Medieval Rural Settlement Project*. The results of their work in the Roscommon area was published in Discovery Programme Report No 7, *North Roscommon in the Later Medieval Period: an Introduction* (Discovery Programme 2005). For the Rathcroghan area most of the work comprised a desk-based survey of published sources.
- 2.3.9 Two excavations were carried out within the Rathcroghan Complex in 1996 in connection with proposed developments, at Glenballythomas (Connolly 1996) and at Moneylea (Ryan 1996). In neither instance was any evidence for archaeological deposits identified.

2.3.10 Some survey work has been commissioned in connection with the County Roscommon Heritage Plan. This consisted of a *Hedgerow Survey* and a *Heritage Access Audit*, the latter covering both natural and built heritage. Little was recorded of significance for Rathcroghan's ecology, but the importance of the monument complex was confirmed.

3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 Topography and Setting

- 3.1.1 The study area lies in the centre of County Roscommon's limestone pasture plains on an elevated plateau overlooking the River Shannon. It is located *c* 5 km north-west of Tulsk village and *c* 20 km north of Roscommon town and is centred around the Rathcroghan mound, just south-east of Rathcroghan crossroads. The area comprises the townlands of Carrowgobbadagh and Carrowntoosan and parts of Glenballythomas, Kilnahooan, Knockavurrea, Moneylea and Toberrory. It is bisected by the existing Dublin to Castlebar N5 road.
- 3.1.2 The Rathcroghan Complex of monuments, comprising a total of 114 Recorded Monuments, of which 39 are in state care, is distributed across the whole of the study area. These monuments are shown on Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 distinguishes the monuments in state care. Most of the study area lies on the east side of a plateau of land at 120-140 m OD. Lower land extends along the eastern and southern sides, reaching its lowest point, 90 m OD, in the south-east corner.
- 3.1.3 When examining the Rathcroghan study area it must be viewed as an element within the wider landscape of Mag nAí and particularly in conjunction with the complex of Carnfree, located *c* 4 km to the south-east. The Mag nAí refers to the wider limestone pastures over which the Kings of Connacht reigned and while Rathcroghan is traditionally considered the seat and burial site of its elite, Carnfree is reputed to be the burial place of Fraech and the inauguration place of the Kings of Connacht. The Carnfree complex contains Carnfree mound itself, a set of conjoined circular earthworks similar to Teach Chormaic at Tara, ring barrows, a standing stone, an ecclesiastical site and a medieval field system. The Discovery Programme began excavations within the Carnfree complex in 2006, as part of the Medieval Rural Settlement Project, under the directorship of Dr Niall Brady.

Landscape

- 3.1.4 The landscape character within the study area falls into two distinct zones (Figure 4) and this is significant as it reflects the location of the Rathcroghan complex and begins to provide some boundaries for the area. The following landscape character descriptions are supported by the Photographs in Appendix 2. Key Viewpoints, referred to as VPA- VPD, are shown on Figure 5.

Rathcroghan Plateau (defined by the 120-130 m contour)

- 3.1.5 A plateau landscape with an undulating topography on a very local scale. The landscape pattern is strong, textured and fairly complex with the bright green of improved pasture dominant. It is very difficult to identify whether the small hillocks

and dips in the landscape are man-made or natural features. Long distance views are striking, but local views within the area are interrupted by trees creating enclosures. It is both a pleasant and interesting landscape.

Rathcroghan Plateau Edge (sloping land below the 120-130 m contour)

- 3.1.6 An open spreading landscape which slopes markedly away from the plateau. The landscape is less complex than the plateau, still with a strong pattern, but much more muted in colour and with a rougher texture. Spring lines create varied vegetation and boundary features are more temporary and less well managed. Both long distant and local views are attractive and on the whole, are not interrupted.

3.2 The Development of the Monuments and Landscape

The site

- 3.2.1 The fact that little invasive archaeological fieldwork work has taken place within the Rathcroghan complex does, however, cause difficulty when attempting to assign definitive dates to many of the Rathcroghan monuments. It is also probable that while these monuments continued to have cultural significance, their functions could have changed throughout the ages.

Neolithic/Bronze Age

- 3.2.2 The Neolithic in Ireland lasted from *c* 4000 BC to 2200 BC. Remains characteristic of this period include Megalithic tombs, the first field systems and rectangular house structures. The Bronze Age is characterised by the introduction of metal and its use in the production of weapons, tools and jewellery. In Ireland it lasts from around 2200 BC to 600 BC.
- 3.2.3 There are very few elements within the Rathcroghan complex that can be reliably dated to either of these periods. A Neolithic court tomb, Clohannagorp (RO022-057043), is situated in the valley to the south of the study area, below Knockannagorp (Dathí's mound) (RO022-057046). While not extensive, these remains do show that the area's potential as a location for ritual activities had been realised from an early point. The extent of Bronze Age remains within Rathcroghan is uncertain, but many of the barrows and more complex monuments may owe their origins to this period.

Iron Age

- 3.2.4 In Ireland, the introduction of iron working has been dated to *c* 400 BC. The Iron Age ends with the widespread adoption of Christianity in the sixth century. During this time Ireland was ruled by a Gaelic people, often referred to as Celtic. Much of what is known about this period was passed down orally and then committed to the written word in the early Christian and Medieval periods. Apart from the great ritual centres at Tara in Meath, Eamhain Macha (Navan Fort) in Ulster, Dun Ailinne (Knockaulin) in Leinster and Rathcroghan in Connacht, Iron Age archaeological evidence is relatively sparse in Ireland.

- 3.2.5 Tradition states that Rathcroghan or Cruachan was the seat of Connacht's Iron Age elite and served as their cemetery. There are numerous barrows/burial mounds within the complex and a concentric enclosure named Relig na Rí (burial place of the kings) (RO022-057035). The only mound that has been subject to modern scientific excavation is Knockannagorp (RO022-057046). It was reputed to be the resting place of Ireland's last pagan King Dathí, however the excavations carried out by Waddell (1984) failed to find any evidence of a burial. Excavations carried out by Charles O'Connor of Mount Allen some time after 1779 (Waddell 1983, 25) within Relig na Rí (RO022-057035) did purport to have discovered "a square chamber and some bones", but later excavations carried out by Quiggin in 1913 and observed by Macalister (1928; 1949, 308) failed to locate any significant remains.
- 3.2.6 Rathcroghan mound itself (RO022-057010) is comparable with Navan fort, Knockaulin and Tara's Rath na Senad. Geophysical and microtopographical survey by Galway University's Archaeogeophysical Imaging Project (Fenwick *et al.*. 1996, 1999; 2005; 2006) have shown a complex combination of features within and on the mound. Those investigations have also revealed an enclosure some 370 m in diameter surrounding the mound and encompassing many other monuments.
- 3.2.7 Many of the other undated enclosures, standing stones and linear features within the complex may also be of Iron Age origin.

Early Christian/Early Medieval

- 3.2.8 In the middle centuries of the 1st millennium AD, provincial and local dynasties, and the Irish legal and social system became established throughout the island. From the 9th century to the 12th century provincial rivalry for the High Kingship, also known as the Kingship of Tara, became a dominant theme of Irish politics in which the O'Conors, as the almost perpetual kings of Connacht, played a leading part.
- 3.2.9 In Ireland, the term Early Christian is synonymous with Early Medieval. It is traditionally dated to between the introduction of Christianity and the arrival of the Anglo-Normans c AD 400 - AD 1169. Christianity was introduced to Ireland by St Patrick in the 5th century and its monasteries were renowned for art and scholarship, with the illuminated manuscripts including the pagan legends as well as religious works. Fighting between the Gaelic lords continued throughout this period, although some unity emerged following the Viking invasions in the late 8th century. By the 10th century, the Irish had regained control, absorbing the Viking towns into the Irish political system. While the lack of unity among the Irish dynasties enabled the Anglo-Normans to gain an irreversible hold on large parts of Leinster and Munster, this lack of unity and the absence of a single authoritative King ensured that large parts of Ulster and Connacht remained outside Anglo-Norman control. In these areas, Gaelic culture, as developed over the previous millennium, continued to flourish and even to dominate cultural life throughout the island in the later middle ages.
- 3.2.10 It has been suggested that during the Early Christian period there was "a zone of avoidance"(Herity 1991, 8) surrounding the Rathcroghan complex. However, a

number of ringforts and cashels dating to this period were built within the Rathcroghan Conservation Study Area. They are considered family homesteads but whether they were primarily defensive structures or mainly used to keep livestock under control is debatable. Several do have souterrains (underground passages). The ring forts tend not to interfere with the earlier monuments.

- 3.2.11 There are two Ogham stones at Rathcroghan. Both are incorporated into a souterrain over the entrance to a cave, Oweynagat (RO022-057029). While the Ogham stones probably date from the very early stages of the Early Medieval period, they have been removed from their original location to be reused in the souterrain's construction.
- 3.2.12 A Bullaun stone (RO022-056055) (a rock with a hollowed out hemispherical cup) located on Caran Fort (RO022-056023) may also originate from this period. The original function of these stones is unclear, but they were often incorporated into later Christian rituals and are found near churches and holy wells.
- 3.2.13 It is probably towards the end of this period that the seat of the local elite shifted from Rathcroghan.

Later Medieval

- 3.2.14 The later medieval period in Ireland begins with the coming of the Anglo-Normans after circa AD 1150 and ends with defeat of the Gaelic Irish c AD 1600.
- 3.2.15 During the later medieval period Rathcroghan fell within the Gaelic Lordship of the O'Conors. It is unclear what role the major monuments at Cruchain played during this period but ongoing excavations in the nearby village of Tulsk and the complex at Carnfree are revealing tantalising information about the area (Discovery Programme 2005). What is certain is that this area lay in a frontier zone that was in constant flux. The castle at Roscommon town was built by Robert de Ufford, Justiciar of Ireland, on lands previously held by the Augustinian Priory and continued to change hands frequently. The pattern of land ownership and land use within the Gaelic estates is not currently well understood and detailed documentary records are only available from the late 17th century onwards. The Rathcroghan area contains a considerable quantity of surviving earthworks representing the remains of the field systems and settlements dating from this period. What is known is that the pattern is different from the open-fields found in the Anglo-Norman parts of the country and that they had fallen into disuse before the famines of the mid 19th century.

Post-medieval and Modern

- 3.2.16 By the 17th century the land was already divided along the lines of the modern townlands. Arable cultivation had ceased and some of these fields were already in the process of subdivision. A comparison of the 1st and 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey maps demonstrates how the size of fields has decreased since the early 19th century. The only monument which can be assigned to the post-medieval period is the remains of a sweat-house (RO022-056051), built into one of the field walls. The house-sites

identified occasionally throughout the complex may date to the post-medieval period rather than the medieval period.

3.2.17 The land within the Rathcroghan Conservation Study Area is now divided between more than 30 different landowners (Figure 7) and almost all of the land consists of improved pasture grazed by cattle. Fields are usually surrounded with stone walls (although there are some hedges) and are then further subdivided using wire and wood fencing. A number of farmsteads and associated buildings are distributed across the landscape.

3.2.18 The monuments of the Rathcroghan complex are interspersed with these boundaries and are in most cases part of the grazing land. Generally, however, the grazing regime means that the monuments are in good condition and not subject to plough damage or covered with excessive plant growth. There is evidence of vehicular and stock movement over individual monuments. In addition private ownership has restricted access to the land so the monuments are not unduly affected by visitor erosion.

Myths and Legends

3.2.19 Rathcroghan is a focal point of many ancient sagas, myths and legends. Its status in this context is mainly due to its association with the legendary Queen Maeve and her various consorts.

3.2.20 The Tain Bó Cuailngne, the centre piece of the Ulster cycle and one of Ireland's best known sagas, begins and finishes at Cruchain. Rathcroghan mound itself (RO022-057010) is reputed to have been the site of Maeve and Aillil's great hall, Relig na Rí (RO022-057035) the burial place of their kin and Rathnadarve (RO022-057004), the scene of the legendary battle between the two bulls.

3.2.21 Owneynagat (Cave of the cats) (RO022-057029), a natural fissure in the limestone with an entrance constructed in the style of a souterrain, is particularly associated with the goddess of war, Morrigan. It is also known as 'The Cave of Crúacha' and has been described as the Gate to the Underworld. In many tales, magical animals and spirits emerged from Owneynagat at Samhain, or Halloween. It is also associated with Freach son of Maeve and Alill through an inscription on an Ogham stone (RO022-057030) within its entrance.

3.2.22 Legend holds that Dathí, the last Pagan King of Ireland, died while in the Alps and his remains were returned and interred within Rathcroghan. Knockannagorp (RO022-057046), a barrow within the complex, is also known as Dathí's Mound and a standing stone on its summit matches the description within medieval literature.

3.3 Setting and Context

3.3.1 This section describes in more detail the landscape character of the two areas identified in Section 3.1.

Rathcroghan Plateau (defined by the 120-130 m contour)

- 3.3.2 The Study Area is on a rolling limestone plateau at the east end of a broad spur with the land sloping down at the edges in all directions, except to the west. The lower ground to the north and east is part of the greater Shannon catchment area (Photo 1). Long distant views greater than 180 degrees are possible across the Shannon Valley and beyond to distant hills. On the north slope of the area, the dominant view is of the table-top of Kesh Corran Mountain, Co. Sligo, while on the east, the aspect is dominated by Slieve Bawn.
- 3.3.3 This part of the study area is rich in tumuli, ritual enclosures, ring barrows and ringforts. However, relationships within the landscape are difficult to interpret due to the nature of the undulating topography and multiple ownership boundaries (Photo 2).
- 3.3.4 The predominant buildings are farmsteads, farm buildings and associated structures bounded by pine or other conifer wind-breaks. Settlement is linear, set alongside local roads. The area is crossed by numerous telegraph poles and wires. There are some clumps of trees, isolated trees and lines of mixed species shrubs marking field boundaries, all of which interrupt the views across the site (Photo 2).
- 3.3.5 The main N5 trunk road bisects the area, creating a significant severance effect due to the frequency, type and speed of traffic. However, the Ballaghaderreen to Strokestown stretch of this trunk road which passes through Rathcroghan is currently under review and the options for the future include its diversion away from the area.
- 3.3.6 The proposed route options for the selection stage of this road scheme have not been publicly released at the time of writing. The National Road Authority's (NRA) North-West Archaeology Team have consulted widely on the N5 strategic study with relevant consultants and are taking measures to avoid the most sensitive archaeological areas within the possible road corridors. A preferred corridor was identified by the NRA and forwarded to the relevant prescribed bodies for review. The public consultation process on the preferred corridor was completed in June, 2007. Three minor roads also cut through the study area, passing close to important monuments and facilitating access to farms and small settlements (Photo 2).

Rathcroghan Plateau Edge (sloping land below the 120-130m contour)

3.3.7 This part of the study area forms the edge of the Rathcroghan plateau as it dips into the broad Shannon Valley and associated tributaries. Although it forms the south

side of a valley, the character of the landscape changes significantly from one side of the valley to the other and the Rathcroghan Plateau Edge is similar in character to the Rathcroghan Plateau (Photo 3).

- 3.3.8 Remnant hedges and isolated trees mark former field boundaries and scrub has spread throughout these boundary features. Bog appears on the lower parts of the area, mostly arising from the spring line. Archaeological earthworks and former hedge banks criss-cross the plateau edge and run down into the valley (Photo 3).
- 3.3.9 The N5 and the three minor roads mentioned above cross through this area as do numerous telegraph wires and poles (Photo 5). Pylons with high voltage wires pass across the south-western part of the area.

3.4 **Land Use**

- 3.4.1 An aerial photograph of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Conservation study area, which shows the current land use pattern is given in Figure 6.
- 3.4.2 The land is used as pasture, both rough and improved with recent evidence of a silage crop being taken off several fields (Photo 1). The land is grazed predominantly by cattle with some sheep (Photo 7) and a few fields have been turned into paddocks for horses. There are few hedges as most fields are bounded by stone walls with metal gates, many of which look in need of repair. Field size is small with further subdivision provided by fences and wooden posts (Photo 18). However, stock is generally allowed to roam across several fields at one time.
- 3.4.3 There is a multiplicity of landowners (possibly 37 different owners including public ownership) and some areas where ownership is not entirely clear. This includes seven small areas (mainly monuments) owned by a combination of national and local government. Through analysis of information from the Land Registry, OA has been able to identify the ownership of 70% of the land. Some further identification (5%) was confirmed through the consultation process and by writing to over 60 addresses of possible landowners in the area. Known landownership is shown on Figure 7.
- 3.4.4 Within the Rathcroghan study area, some of the land is being operated within the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme, an agri-environment scheme. The relevant schemes are discussed in Appendix 4. It was not possible to gather the information relating to how many land managers within the study area have land in the scheme or how many have actively carried out Measure 7. No land managers within the study area have Eligible Target Land.

3.5 **Access**

- 3.5.1 Currently, public access is extremely limited and consequently few visitors venture into the wider landscape. Four key monuments, Rathcroghan, Rathmore, Rathbeg and Rathnadarve, may be viewed from the adjacent main road and three of these have some form of vehicular parking space.

- 3.5.2 Public access to the remainder of the complex is only available by permission of the various landowners. Visiting groups have been able to secure permission through the Cruachan Ai Heritage Centre in Tulsk, which liases with the landowners in gaining special one-off permissions (Photo 16).
- 3.5.3 The Cruachan Ai Heritage Centre provides an exhibition and interpretation for the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex. The Centre was opened in 1999 and was the flagship project of the Tulsk Action Group, a voluntary community organisation with aims to promote regional tourism and economic regeneration. The Centre was developed to promote and interpret the archaeological heritage of the area and act as a focus for community activities. The Centre currently attracts around 2,500 paying visitors a year to its exhibition. Anecdotal information (Carolyn Candish, pers. comm.) suggests that a similar number of visitors attempt to visit the main monuments. The role of the centre in relation to Rathcroghan and the importance of access to the monuments were highlighted in its recent Strategic Review (Bane Marketing 2004).
- 3.5.4 At one time the southern part of the study area must have been publicly accessible as a number of concrete stiles provide access between fields with major earthworks (Photo 18). However, there are currently no signs or obvious paths across the land.
- 3.5.5 There has been much discussion in recent years between local landowners, government departments and local authorities about the development of agreements to allow for improved access and facilities for visitors to the Rathcroghan Complex. One meeting of local landowners held in December 2004 concluded that an agreement could only be established if certain actions were implemented. These are given in Appendix 7.

3.6 Nature Conservation

Designated areas

- 3.6.1 Information was obtained from Roscommon County Council (Nollaig McKeon, Heritage Officer) for three designated sites in the vicinity of the Rathcroghan archaeological complex. All three of these designated areas are some distance from the archaeological complex, and are discussed in more detail in the gazetteer. They do, however, provide contextual information for the habitats found within the site itself.

Plant communities and habitats

- 3.6.2 The Rathcroghan archaeological complex is, on the whole, not of significant ecological interest. By far the majority of the site is dominated by improved agricultural grassland (GA1, Fossitt 2000). A small area is more diverse and comprises the categories dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1), drainage ditch (FW4) and wet grassland (GS4). A small area of scrub (WS1) is also present in the

west of the site. Habitats are described further in the Gazetteer and the ecological areas are mapped in Figure 8.

Fauna

- 3.6.3 Observer knowledge suggests the site is generally poor for mammals and is very poor for bird species. In general, the habitats present would result in a low diversity of invertebrates across the site.

4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Basis of the Assessment

4.1.1 The assessment of significance reflects the cultural and ecological aspects of the monuments as a whole, whilst also assessing the monuments individually. Significance in other terms is taken into consideration, such as in an academic context and also in the light of other values that visitors or local residents may assign to the area and its historical perspective.

4.1.2 The monuments are assessed individually so as to provide a detailed framework, before being considered in a wider setting. This will be used to identify key elements and to highlight specific areas of consideration.

4.1.3 Initially an assessment is made on the significance of the monuments and the complex at three levels:

- *National importance*
- *Regional importance*
- *Local importance.*

4.1.4 The monuments and complex are then further considered on four major criteria:

- *Archaeological interest:* taking into account the nature of above and below ground remains, their structure, form, function and condition
- *Historical interest:* with regard to important aspects of the area's social, economic and cultural history
- *Historical association:* with nationally important people or events
- *Group value:* how the monuments as a whole are perceived.

4.1.5 Other factors that are taken into consideration include:

- *Ability to characterise a period.*
- *Rarity of survival*
- *Extent of documentation*
- *Association with other monuments*
- *Survival of archaeological potential above and below ground.*
- *Fragility/vulnerability*
- *Diversity - the combination of high quality features.*

4.1.6 Less tangible, but still vital to the significance of the monuments, are the social and spiritual values. These can be formulated into seven fields:

- *Representative value*: the ability to demonstrate social or cultural developments
- *Historical continuity*
- *Literary and artistic values*
- *Formal, visual and aesthetic qualities*
- *Evidence of social historical themes*
- *Contemporary communal values*
- *Power to communicate values and significance.*

4.2 Values to be Used and Degrees of Significance

Archaeology

4.2.1 In assessing degrees of significance, these criteria have helped to inform assessments of overall significance, the relative importance of key elements or phases, and the judgements on individual monuments, at Gazetteer level. The degrees adopted are:

Exceptional Significance: elements of the monument which are of key national or international significance, as among the best (or the only surviving example) of an important class of monument, or outstanding representatives of important social or cultural phenomena, or are of very major regional or local significance.

Considerable Significance: elements which constitute good and representative examples of an important class of monument (or the only example locally), or have a particular significance through association, although surviving examples may be relatively common on a national scale, or are major contributors to the overall significance of the monument.

Moderate Significance: elements which contribute to the character and understanding of the monument, or which provide an historical or cultural context for features of individually greater significance.

Low Significance: elements which are individually of low value in general terms, or have little or no significance in promoting understanding or appreciation of the monument, without being actually intrusive.

Intrusive: items which are visually intrusive or which obscure understanding of significant elements or values of the monument. Recommendations may be made on removal or other methods of mitigation.

Uncertain significance: elements for which the level of information available is insufficient for a reliable assessment of significance to be made.

Nature

4.2.2 The ecological value of a habitat or species can be expressed in terms of its geographical significance. Following recent Institute of Ecology and Environmental

Management (IEEM) guidelines, a habitat or species may be ecologically valuable on a sliding scale of: international, national, regional, county/metropolitan, local or neighbourhood importance. These are defined, with examples, in Appendix 3.

4.2.3 Assessments of overall significance are set out from two perspectives:

Overall significance: a statement of what is special about the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex as a whole.

Chronological assessments and key elements of significance: an assessment of the monuments through time, identifying what is important about each principal stage, and why, including an evaluation of the social and community values of the monuments.

4.3 Overall Significance

4.3.1 The Rathcroghan Complex is one of the major surviving ritual landscapes in Ireland, containing evidence for its use from the Neolithic period onwards, with the majority of the monuments associated with the Iron Age and Early Christian periods. From the medieval period onwards the area was more densely occupied and used for settlement and agriculture, although much of the settlement had been abandoned by at least the 18th century. Since the medieval period, most of the farming was pastoral, which has aided the preservation of the monuments, which might otherwise have been damaged by repeated ploughing.

As a well-preserved, multi-period and ritual landscape, Rathcroghan is of exceptional significance, both nationally, and as a representative of a handful of such areas within Ireland, internationally.

4.3.2 The landscape of the Rathcroghan area and its flora and fauna are not of particular interest and value to ecologists, although there are three designated sites. Most of the area is unimproved grassland which is used for grazing, principally cattle, but with some sheep. The main significance of the natural environment at Rathcroghan results from the landuse pattern which it supports. Grazing regimes have a minor impact on the monuments and control growth of vegetation on and around them.

The natural landscape where cattle rearing forms the principal use is of considerable significance for its capacity to contain archaeological monuments with little adverse affect on their conservation.

4.3.3 The Rathcroghan Complex contains a large collection of archaeological features of mixed dates. A number of these are of national importance as individual features, including a court tomb, raths, barrows and souterrains. As well as the significance of specific monuments, the relationships between contemporary features and across time periods are both of interest

The monuments of the Rathcroghan Complex are of considerable significance as individual features, some are of clear national importance, but the combination of the various components increases their significance.

- 4.3.4 The significance of the Rathcroghan complex as a whole derives in part from its association with the myths and legends associated with Ireland's pagan gods and its early kings. It is viewed as the setting for some of the most significant events in the *Táin Bó Cúailgne*, among the most important of the historic sagas. Interest in early legends remains strong in Ireland and they are seen as part of the identity of the country. It is a significance which will also have a strong appeal for visitors.

The association of Rathcroghan with the myths and legends of early Irish history is of considerable significance.

- 4.3.5 The surviving evidence for the medieval Gaelic field systems which overlies the earlier monuments has the potential to contribute to the understanding of how land was organised and managed during that period. The visible patterns show that these were different in the Gaelic lands from the models studied in the Anglo-Norman areas, which adds to their value as a resource. It also has the potential for further discovery and interpretation of the relationships between the medieval landscape and the modern townlands.

The surviving pattern of medieval occupation and land use is of considerable significance, particularly as it lies in a Gaelic lordship providing a contrast with better understood landscapes in Anglo-Norman areas.

4.4 Chronological Assessment and Key Elements of Significance

4.4.1 Phase I Neolithic/Bronze Age periods

The one monument definitely assigned to this period, a Neolithic court tomb (RO022-057043), is significant in itself, but it is not necessarily an indication that Rathcroghan was already regarded as an area of importance by the Neolithic period. There is potential for other elements of the Rathcroghan Complex to be assigned to these periods, for example some of the barrows could date to the Bronze Age.

The potential of the earlier prehistoric exploitation of Rathcroghan is of moderate significance.

4.4.2 Phase II Iron Age period

There is potential for discovering more about the likely burial complex at Rathcroghan. The number of barrows identified within this area suggests that there was, as legend suggests, an important cemetery at Cruachain. This significance is linked to both standing monuments and below-ground archaeological remains. The importance of these monuments is further enhanced by their legendary associations, although the limited archaeological evidence available has shown that the dates of monuments do not always correspond with those of the legends.

The potential for further investigation of the Iron Age archaeology of Rathcroghan is of considerable significance.

4.4.3 Phase III Early Christian period

Raths and cashels are among the characteristic monuments of this period. The Rathcroghan Complex contains several examples of each. Several have additional

features associated with them including souterrains, which are also characteristic of the period. Further below-ground archaeological remains are also likely.

A number of stones (RO022-057030, RO022-057084) carrying inscriptions in Ogham, a script particularly associated with this period, have also been identified. This earliest form of written Irish is very rare in this part of the country.

The surviving monuments from this period are of considerable interest, with some elements of national significance. The below-ground remains are of uncertain character, but the potential of the archaeology of this period is of considerable significance.

4.4.4 **Phase IV** Medieval - Early Post-Medieval Periods

The monumental landscape into which the raths fitted was further developed during the medieval period. It is overlain by extensive networks of small fields, within which pits and house platforms demonstrate that there was a significant level of occupation. There are signs of possible ridge and furrow cultivation suggesting that the concentration on pastoral agriculture is of more recent date. Rathcroghan lay within the areas held by Gaelic lords during this period, although the Anglo-Normans were present in County Roscommon. Medieval land use in Gaelic areas has not been extensively studied and the level of survival of this evidence around Rathcroghan has the potential to make a significant contribution in this field of study.

The surviving evidence of medieval and early post-medieval field systems and settlement with their potential for aiding understanding of land use during this period is of considerable significance.

4.4.5 **Phase V** Later Post-medieval - Modern periods

The date of abandonment of the extensive field systems is uncertain, but it had taken place prior to the 19th century famines. The local organisation of townlands is believed to be a legacy of medieval or earlier land organisation. From the post-medieval period arable agriculture has been abandoned in favour of a concentration on raising cattle. The resulting pattern of fields, surrounded mostly by stone walls, has changed recently as fields have been further divided by wire or wooden fences. The more recent subdivision of land parcels and increase in number of landowners reflects the overall pattern of rural Ireland and is of no particular significance. This change is seen when the modern map is compared with the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 9).

The later history of the land use around Rathcroghan and any surviving elements, such as sweat houses and field boundaries, are of moderate significance.

5 INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

5.1 Policy Framework and Guidance

5.1.1 The statutory basis for the policy framework has been outlined above in Section 1.2.2

5.1.2 The *National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland 2002 to 2020* has done much to guide recent policy in Ireland. Its aim is to promote a better spread of job opportunities, a better quality of life and better places in which to live. It is being implemented at three broad policy levels, the two most relevant here being a) at Regional level; following adoption by Regional Authorities of Regional Planning Guidelines implementation frameworks are being developed, and b) at County level; the production of development plans within the context of the NSS and Regional Planning Guidelines (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2005, 37).

5.1.3 Also of relevance here and in the context of all historic landscapes, are the *Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing for Planning Authorities* (April 2005)

5.2 Sustainable Rural Housing

5.2.1 Recent concern in Ireland regarding ‘one-off’ housing developments on family land has led to the publication of planning guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing, *Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Government of Ireland 2005). This document contains new and more detailed policies than those set out in the 1997 policy document ‘*Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland*’ which recommended that there should be a presumption against urban-generated one-off housing in rural Ireland. It was thought that this presumption was sometimes operated over-rigidly and *The National Spatial Strategy 2020* set rural housing policy in a broader, more flexible context. The subsequent Guidelines published in 2005 built on the NSS to ensure more flexibility on rural housing than the 1997 document, but stated that houses in rural areas should be sited and designed to integrate well with their physical surroundings and generally be compatible with (amongst other things) ‘the conservation of sensitive areas such as natural habitats, the environs of protected structures and other aspects of heritage’. The Guidelines state that such habitats would not constitute an inflexible obstacle to development, but that planning authorities should be satisfied that they will not adversely affect the integrity of the designated area (Government of Ireland 2005, 1-2).

5.2.2 The *SRH Guidelines* also explain that siting new developments in rural areas in a way that protects the integrity of these natural and man-made features [features include built heritage including undesignated sites] is an essential part of sustainable development and that the policies quoted in the guidance should be integrated in all future local development plans (*ibid.*, 12).

- 5.2.3 Together with the NSS, these guidelines comprise the policy framework at national level for the provision of sustainable housing in rural areas, along with the *Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, which was launched in June 2007.
- 5.2.4 The *Rural Housing Guidance* then looks at how these policies should be integrated within development plans and suggests that ‘particular care should be taken to protect those features that contribute to local distinctiveness’ including:
- The pattern of landscape features
 - Historic and archaeological areas and features
 - Water bodies
 - Ridges, skylines, topographical features, geological features and important views and prospects.
- 5.2.5 The *SRH Guidelines* state that the development plan should outline the planning authority’s responsibilities and objectives in relation to the conservation of the natural and built heritage. Furthermore the planning authority should also outline the matters which it proposes to take into account where a rural housing proposal impacts on items, sites or areas of natural or cultural significance. The development plan should also make clear that all developments that have potential implications for cultural or natural heritage will be referred to all relevant prescribed bodies for comment (*ibid.*, 26-27).
- 5.2.6 Of particular relevance here, the *SRH Guidelines* stress the need for the development plan to map and understand the significance of these items to ensure that the conservation of such items is being fully taken into account in the preparation and assessment of rural housing proposals.
- 5.2.7 In addition, different landscape types possess varying capacities to absorb single houses, or groups of single houses, without resulting in a significant change in character. The greatest concern in relation to rural housing is its cumulative impact on the landscape, i.e. on a landscape scale. In some areas, the impact is so diffuse as to be of little concern, at least with regard to its affect on our national heritage. In others, the density of development and the characteristics of the landscape result in significant landscape character change. It is the view of the Heritage Council that at national, regional and local level the Planning Authorities should be able to plan for and manage that change, rather than allow it to occur in an ad-hoc fashion
- 5.2.8 In terms of site-specific heritage features, such as archaeological sites and monuments, architectural heritage and biodiversity, the development of single houses in rural areas should on balance, in comparison to other types of development and land use change, result in a relatively low impact
- 5.2.9 The Heritage Council also suggests that the accuracy by which impacts on the national heritage can be assessed is only as good as the baseline data available and

that further landscape characterisation projects should be undertaken to enable an understanding of the character of the resource and its relative significance. This would lead to more area designations of the most significant landscapes, for reasons that were understood and transparent, which would in turn allow for better protection under local plans for mapped areas and associated policies.

5.2.10 In the Supplementary Information on Heritage provided at the back of the *SRH Guidelines* (Appendix 2) further guidance is supplied to aid in the decision making process. For ‘Important Landscapes’ this guidance states (p 44-5):
‘Careful siting and location are central to sensitive development in the landscape. The capacity of a particular landscape to absorb change without significantly changing its character can be directly related to the quality of location and siting of a development within that landscape. The location and siting of rural housing should be informed by landscape character, quality and distinctiveness. Proposals for housing in rural areas should be assessed having regard to the extent to which they:

- Complement the landscape and avoid unacceptable visual intrusion,
- Introduce incongruous landscape elements, and
- Help maintain important landscape elements and features that contribute to local landscape character, quality and distinctiveness (e.g. topographical features, geographical features, cultural features, or ecological resources which are characteristic of that landscape type)’

5.2.11 The *SRH Guidelines* provide similar guidance for biodiversity issues including the need to seek and protect and preserve existing hedgerows. There are also references to the document *Framework and Principals for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltecht and the Islands, 1999).

5.2.12 This Heritage Council, a non-governmental body established to propose policies and priorities for National Heritage, has also published a document on rural housing, *Rural Housing in Ireland - Location in the Landscape and Place in the National Heritage* (2005). This document recognises the difficulties in protecting large areas containing monuments where it is as important to preserve the spaces in between – i.e. their setting, as it is to preserve as the monuments themselves.

‘Individual developments which, in themselves, may have a negligible impact on individual monuments may, when taken together or cumulatively, have a more serious negative impact on the archaeological landscape. There are no systematic measures in place to deal with the problem of recognising, preserving and maintaining historic landscapes’

(The Heritage Council, January 2005, 7).

5.3 The Planning Framework

5.3.1 The State archaeological service is delivered through the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the National Museum of Ireland (Irish Antiquities Division). The Heritage Council is a statutory independent body

appointed by the Minister and may in certain circumstances be a prescribed body for purposes of the Planning Act 2000.

- 5.3.2 The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government provides archaeological advice on behalf of the Minister to planning/local authorities in respect of planning and development matters submitted by the planning authorities. It also carries out the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, inventorying and surveying archaeological sites to provide in the first instance the baseline inventory of known sites, known as the Sites and Monuments Record, and maintain the Record of Monuments and Places.
- 5.3.3 The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government states that ‘the physical planning system seeks to facilitate and encourage development within sustainable patterns of settlement whilst fostering protection of the natural and built environment... and provides an expert advisory service on heritage/conservation issues to planning authorities and to An Bord Pleanála’ (the Planning Appeals Board) (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2005, 36).
- 5.3.4 All developments unless specifically exempted (see Section 1.2.14) require planning permission, although this de-exemption does not apply if the development falls under S.9 (1) (vii) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. The Planning Regulations require that all planning applications which may affect the built heritage resource, or which may have an impact on known or suspected archaeological sites or their setting, should be notified by the planning authority to the Development Applications Unit of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- 5.3.5 The relevant planning applications are sent to the Development Applications Unit which co-ordinates the Department’s evaluation of all development proposals referred by the Local Authorities. Relevant planning applications are considered in the light of known archaeological sources and an appraisal is made as to whether the development is likely to affect the archaeological resource and, if so, to what degree.
- 5.3.6 Early consultation by the developer with the planning authority and/or the Development Applications Unit may highlight the need for an archaeological assessment as part of the planning application. This could include both desk-based work (including assessments on the impacts on setting) and archaeological evaluation in the form of geophysics, trenching etc. This will inform both the decision-making process and future mitigation which may be required. Once this information has been submitted as part of the planning application either a Grant of Permission is issued, with or without conditions, or it is sent back to enable additional information to be included, or turned down. The developer can appeal to the An Bord Pleanála against a refusal or against conditions attached to a grant of permission.
- 5.3.7 Since 1999, the majority of local authorities in Ireland, including Roscommon, now employ a Heritage Officer in partnership with the Heritage Council. Heritage Officers are instrumental in the preparation and implementation of the County

Heritage Plans which in turn, as discussed above in association with development plans, are an important element of local Heritage Policy. County Heritage Plans provide a structured and strategic approach to the delivery of heritage policy at a local level over a five-year period. The work of a County Heritage Forum is facilitated by the Heritage Officer and ensures that local communities and local heritage interests play a tangible role in the development of local heritage policy.

5.4 Access

- 5.4.1 There is a distinction in Irish law between public and private rights of way. A public right of way is a person's right of passage along a road or path, even if the road or path is not in public ownership. A private right of way is the right to enter onto private lands, but only for the purposes of gaining access to or exiting from another piece of land.
- 5.4.2 Private rights of way will be shown on deeds and are restricted to those persons named in the deed. Public rights of way entitle all members of the public to use them, although there is a lack of clarity on the location and nature of these public rights of way. Landowners have been known to block these rights of way, with court action often the only avenue open to resolve such disputes. 'Local authorities can include public rights of way as local amenities in development plans. This measure is fraught with difficulty unless the relevant landowners agree and considerable research is undertaken to discover the legal basis for the Rights of Way' (Roscommon County Council website www.roscommoncoco.ie).
- 5.4.3 Walkers and ramblers may be regarded as "recreational users" of property within the meaning of the Occupiers Liability Act 1995. Section 1 of the Act defines a "recreational user" as *inter alia* "an entrant who, with or without the occupier's permission or at the occupier's implied invitation, is present on premises without a charge (other than a reasonable charge in respect of the cost of providing vehicle parking facilities) being imposed for the purpose of engaging in a recreational activity..." Pursuant to section 4 of the Act, an occupier of premises, defined by the Act to include land, owes a duty to recreational users to neither injure such users intentionally or to act in reckless disregard for them (Citizens Information Board, <http://www.citizensinformation.ie>).
- 5.4.4 The Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS), operated by the Department of Agriculture and Food, offers an opportunity to promote awareness of the natural and cultural heritage amongst participants and is designed to reward farmers for carrying out farming activities in an environmentally friendly manner which reflects the increasing need for conservation, landscape protection and management of wider environmental problems. There are 11 basic measures in REPs which are compulsory. There is also a series of optional undertakings, which provide the farmer with an opportunity to select the works most appropriate to the environmental or landscape features of the farm.

- 5.4.5 Under Measure 7 of the REPS 3 scheme, which is currently closed for subscription and will shortly be replaced by REPS 4, there is an option 7(b) for the Management of Publicly Accessible Archaeological sites. Under this option the landowner must have one site detailed in the Record of Monuments and Places on their land which is publicly accessible and which the landowner must keep litter free and he must maintain the public access points.
- 5.4.6 Under Section 73(11) of the Roads Act 1993, it is the responsibility of local authorities to protect the public's right to access public rights of way in each local authority area. Under section 207 of the 2000 Planning and Development Act, a planning authority can create a right of way if there appears to be a need for it. A separate report has been undertaken to look at access issues within the County of Roscommon (DARE 2005). This looks at access on a site by site basis and discusses the problems and issues around provision for access in the county and recommends suitable ways forward.

6 MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND POLICIES

6.1 Key Issues

6.1.1 In drafting policies, there is a need to be aware of what has affected the significance of the monuments and their setting in the past and present and what is likely to do so in the future. This section of the study reviews some of these factors as they affect the different aspects of the monuments, their condition, treatment and management.

6.2 Recognition and Protection

1.1.2 As a well-preserved, multi-period ritual landscape, Rathcroghan is of exceptional significance, both nationally, and internationally. Of the 114 Recorded Monuments in the study area, 39 are in State care. Although the individual monuments are subject to a level of statutory protection, the study area as a whole is not a statutory designated area nor is it afforded specific recognition or protection in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2002-2008.

6.3 Monument Survival and Physical Condition

6.3.1 The archaeological monuments within the Rathcroghan complex have been generally well preserved because of the long tradition of people in the area following the pastoral way of life. The land is managed in a way which generally helps to preserve earthworks, and the limited current public access has contributed to this. A few monuments do show some evidence of minor erosion mainly caused by stock movements and sheltering (see Appendix 2, Photos 11 and 12).

6.4 Gaps in Understanding

6.4.1 The main phases of construction and use of the monuments in the Rathcroghan area are only broadly understood. The dearth of well-controlled and modern archaeological excavations has resulted in only a limited understanding of the chronological development of individual monuments and the evolution of the landscape through time. The corpus of literature including both published and unpublished sources is sometimes contradictory and reflects a lack of consensus on some elements of the interpretation of this significant archaeological complex.

6.5 Below-ground Archaeology

6.5.1 Despite the richness and significance of the archaeological remains in the Rathcroghan area, there have been relatively few intrusive archaeological investigations. There is much potential for as yet unknown below-ground archaeological remains to be discovered, as revealed in the recent non-intrusive survey work undertaken by the National University of Ireland, Galway. The potential for the discovery and further investigation of archaeological remains of all periods is of considerable significance.

6.6 Landscape Character

6.6.1 The Plateau landscape contains most of the archaeological features associated with the Rathcroghan complex. The main monuments within this area appear to be intervisible, although the predominance of shelterbelts and some built structures has limited many of the local views. Long distance views are mostly uninterrupted but the significance of these views (in terms of intervisibility of key monuments) is not known. The complex local topography, numerous boundaries and general lack of visual definition to the monuments results in a landscape difficult for the general public to interpret.

6.7 Nature Conservation

6.7.1 No ecologically valuable habitats are present over the majority of the study area. Areas of wet grassland are of local significance and should be considered valuable at a local level as this is a fast-declining habitat. It is unlikely that unimproved grassland could be recreated or restored over the majority of the archaeological complex study area.

6.8 Land Management

6.8.1 The current land-use of cattle grazing has resulted in a fairly stable land management practice to the benefit of the conservation of the archaeological monuments. The large number of landowners has created a landscape partitioned by boundaries, which is inaccessible and vulnerable to individual action. Whilst the predominant land use remains grazing pasture, it is unlikely that there would be significant landscape change. However, over time and due to economic changes, individuals may seek other uses which could be detrimental to the character and the long term protection and conservation of the monuments.

6.8.2 The most significant result of the current land management practice is the discouragement of public access. The multitude of land owners and sub-divided land, lack of signage and routes, lack of stiles and kissing gates and the existence of free-ranging bulls, all create a difficult environment in which to facilitate access. Increasing the uptake of REPS will have a beneficial impact on the conservation of the physical remains of archaeological earthworks. Measure 7 offers a good opportunity to control actions for the direct benefit of archaeological remains.

6.9 Ownership and Access

6.9.1 Public access is one of the most significant and difficult issues to address within the Rathcroghan area. Public access is extremely limited, with only four key monuments having good access provision by being close to the main roads. The ownership of the monuments is not always clear, especially where they form boundaries between different properties. There is effectively no right of public access provided by public bodies and individual landowners/ managers can remove or impose barriers without consequence. Any increase in access will, however, have an impact on land

management practices and farming requirements (electric fencing/ bulls etc) and if not managed correctly may lead to visitor damage to sites. The complex needs to be seen as an entity, requiring protection and more holistic management. Public access should be provided at the very least to a core area containing the key monuments of most significance in the study area. The County Council will obviously have a part in this, but partnership with national bodies, private owners and local interest groups will be important. Access to the monuments would need to be improved and may need to involve regular or occasional access to private property

6.10 Public and Visitor Expectations

6.10.1 At present the main interpretation of the monument complex is provided in the Cruachan Ai Visitor Centre in Tulsk. Whilst this is comprehensive in its description and interpretation of the main monuments, it is located at least five kilometres away from the main monumental complex. However, it is considered that it has a role to play in advising visitors on access and providing educational services (Bane 2004). At the monuments themselves there is very limited interpretative provision. A key part of any future management proposals must be the promotion of the prominent and significant monuments as key features of the area. This could partly be achieved by making information available at the monuments and at points in the landscape, in the form of sensitively placed signage, information boards and orientation points, especially in the four areas identified as being key vantage points in the landscape (Figure 5)..

6.11 Planning and Development Control

6.11.1 Development (including activities exempt from planning permission) could increasingly impinge on the archaeological landscape to the point where its significance and the relationships between monuments are compromised. This could hinder a proper perception of the monuments and the landscape. Where views are blocked by trees, new buildings, communications/ utility routes the links between monuments become fragmented. The recent government guidelines on sustainable rural housing are of key relevance in the Rathcroghan area and should be firmly embedded by Roscommon County Council in the local planning framework. The planned re-routing of the N5, by the NRA, away from Rathcroghan within the next decade could have a beneficial effect on the setting of the archaeological complex. However, the downgrading of the current road could create a knock-on effect with increased development pressures along the downgraded route as access roads to farms and development plots are less restricted.

6.12 Policies

6.12.1 This section of the Study recommends policies for the protection of the significance of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex and on realising the full potential for public enjoyment, access and understanding.

6.12.2 Following a statement of overall purpose, five principal policies are set out which cover broad areas of application:

- Protection
- Conservation and Monitoring
- Research and Education
- Enhancement and Improvement
- Ownership, Access and Interpretation.

6.12.3 These policies are developed into more detailed proposals for action in the succeeding sets of policies, each with subsidiary recommendations.

6.13 Policy Aims

To protect and enhance the visual amenity, historic character, setting and landscape of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex, and promote public understanding and enjoyment of the monuments.

6.14 Principal Policies

Policy 1: Protection

To place the conservation of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Monuments (including their settings) and the protection of their significance at the heart of both future planning of the area and management of the complex.

Policy 2: Conservation and Monitoring

To implement effective regimes for monument management, and to protect their significance by observing best practice standards of conservation.

Policy 3: Research and Education

To further develop our understanding of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex through recording and research, ensuring the dissemination of all information in accessible form.

Policy 4: Enhancement & Improvement

To enhance the character and qualities of the monuments by appropriate means.

Policy 5: Ownership, Access and Interpretation

To enable and encourage public understanding and enjoyment of the monuments and their setting by promoting a high degree of physical and intellectual access, meeting the needs of a broad variety of visitors through the provision of information and interpretative material.

6.15 Policies for Protection

Policy 1.1:

To protect the archaeological monuments and their setting.

- Ensure the recognition of the Rathcroghan Conservation Study area within the Roscommon County Development Plan

- Develop specific policies in a Local Area Plan to protect the significance of the archaeological complex, taking into account government guidelines on sustainable rural housing
- Ensure that development control policies recognise the potential impact of development on monument settings and the interruption of any significant views
- Ensure that public services and infrastructural works and all development exempt from planning control do not cause damage to the monuments
- Develop and implement an agreed Management Strategy for the Rathcroghan Complex with the involvement of all key stakeholders.

Policy 1.2:

To protect the ecological assets and nature conservation values of area.

- If there is a conflict of interest, ensure, where possible, that archaeological conservation takes precedence over nature conservation within the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex
- The area of wet grassland identified as of local significance should be mapped and a management agreement established with the landowner .

Policy 1.3:

To meet all relevant statutory and legal requirements for the protection of the monuments, the health and safety of individuals and the requirements of disabilities legislation.

- Continue to enforce the National Monuments Acts for the protection of monuments
- Undertake a health and safety audit including investigating the need for repair on unsafe parts of monuments which are accessible to the public.

6.16 Policies for Conservation and Monitoring

Policy 2.1:

To ensure regular and effective programmes of monitoring the condition of the monuments, with planned monitoring inspections and, where necessary, reviewing and revising existing management arrangements.

- Undertake an initial comprehensive monument condition survey to gather baseline data
- Monitor and take appropriate remedial action to ensure the integrity of the monuments is preserved.
- Establish a five-yearly regime of condition inspection using fixed-point photography and aerial photography. Results to be integrated into a Geographical Information Systems Database (GIS) for the conservation study area
- Establish a set of monitoring indicators linked to GIS to flag up when management intervention is necessary.

Policy 2.2:

To ensure that any changes in land management and land use do not adversely affect the condition of the monuments.

- Encourage the maintenance of the current dominant agricultural land use as far as practicable
- Where relevant, encourage participation in the REPS to directly benefit the physical conservation of archaeological remains.

6.17 Policies for Research and Education

Policy 3.1:

To promote future research in the area, with a planned research agenda for investigations and flexibility to respond to opportunities.

- Establish a research group with representatives from the relevant statutory bodies, academic institutions and local interest groups
- Develop a research agenda for the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex in order to agree priorities, target funding and promote communication.

Policy 3.2:

To develop the awareness of the significance and conservation needs of the monuments within local schools and other local groups, as an important element in fostering the understanding of conservation, interpretation and the promotion of access.

- Develop an education project in local schools and website or weblinks.

6.18 Policies for Enhancement and Improvement

Policy 4.1:

To improve the appearance of the landscape to make it easier to understand and appreciate the archaeological and historic significance of monuments within it.

- Develop management agreements with individual landowners and seek opportunities to reduce the sub-division of land, excessive wire and electric fencing etc.
- In consultation with utility companies, identify opportunities to rationalise and reduce the number of overhead telephone and electricity wires crossing the core area(s) of the monument complex.

Policy 4.2:

To enhance public appreciation of the intervisibility between core monuments and their setting in the landscape

- Local and long distance views should be assessed (via digital terrain modelling and viewshed analysis), their significance identified and prioritised in terms of intervisibility and general interpretation of the archaeological landscape
- At the four key vantage points already identified (Figure 5) orientation points should be established. Any new signage would have to be sensitively located in order to avoid interrupting views
- As existing shelterbelts mature and require felling, the implications of replacement or planting should be assessed
- The Plateau Edge landscape should be kept as an integral part of the Rathcroghan landscape as it acts as a buffer to the main archaeological complex and facilitates opportunities to interpret the landscape and move between sites.

Policy 4.3:

To enhance the setting of the core area(s) of the archaeological complex following the re-routing of the N5 road away from the centre of the Rathcroghan archaeological complex.

- Support proposals by the National Roads Authority to re-route the N5 away from the Rathcroghan archaeological complex,
- Take steps to prevent any adverse effects that may arise from increased access opportunities following rerouting of the N5 away from Rathcroghan

6.19 Policies for Ownership, Access and Interpretation

Policy 5.1:

To ensure solutions are found to public access issues and to facilitate wider accessibility and understanding of the monuments.

- To seek long term opportunities for a co-operative management approach that allows for the removal of some of the boundaries (e.g. hedging), unified management and increased options for access routes
- To improve public access to the core monuments within the archaeological complex.

Policy 5.2:

To develop improved interpretation of the monuments, and to facilitate access to information.

- Develop, in conjunction with a long-term plan for co-operative management, a visitor access and interpretation strategy for the archaeological complex
- Develop walks as part of an educational/tourist trail of the archaeological complex, as part of the development of a strategy for visitor access and interpretation.
- The strategy should develop a consensus on the feasibility of operating open access to key monuments or organised guided tours
- In agreement with the landowners and as part of a visitor access and interpretation strategy, the visual definition of individual monuments should be improved to pick them out from the local topography (e.g. different grass management regime)
- Take measures to ensure that an increase in visitor access does not increase erosion and adversely impact the condition of the monuments.
- Ensure universal access in the creation of new visitor facilities in the area, where practicable.

7 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The implementation of the Study will require a consensus view for the future of the monuments, their protection, the adoption of policies for them and the planning and implementation of programmes of monitoring. Implementation may need to follow differing time-scales and decision-making processes, with some proposals capable of introduction in the short term, and others, if adopted, coming into play over a longer period.

7.1.2 The following section is a suggested approach rather than a specific and prescriptive plan of action. The following text is indicative and the detail has not been discussed or agreed with any landowner, statutory bodies or other stakeholders.

1 Protection

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Develop a management strategy for the Rathcroghan conservation study area	1.1	Establishment of a steering group of key stakeholders
Recognition of Rathcroghan study area within County Development Plan, Local Area Plan and their policies	1.1	Prepare a map indicating the boundary of the study area for inclusion in local area plans and draft appropriate policies
Ensure that public services and infrastructural works outside of planning control do not cause damage to the monuments or their setting	1.1	Ensure that liaison with service providers explicitly includes heritage considerations. Liaise with landowners and farmers
Establish the data with which to assess and protect significant views and vistas within the planning system	1.1, 4.2	Create GIS database (from conservation study) and develop viewshed analysis and digital terrain modelling
Seek opportunities to protect areas of nature conservation, such as wet grassland areas, which may be ecologically significant	1.2	Management agreements with landowners
Meet all relevant statutory and legal requirements for the protection of the monuments, the health and safety of individuals and the requirements of disabilities legislation.	1.3	Continue to enforce the National Monuments Acts for the protection of monuments

2 Conservation and Monitoring

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Establish a detailed baseline study of monument condition, and a programme of regular and effective monitoring, including monitoring indicators	2.1, 5.2	Commission a study with the results linked to the GIS database, and ongoing 5-yearly monitoring.
Monitor changes in land management	2.2, 4.2	Liaise with landowners, encourage participation in REPS

3 Research and Education

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Develop a research agenda for the Rathcroghan archaeological complex	3.1	Establish a research group with representatives from statutory bodies, universities and local interest groups
Raise awareness of the significance and conservation needs of the monuments in schools at local level	3.2	Develop an education project and website or weblinks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific Research Agenda for Rathcroghan could link, as appropriate, with the results of the draft report “Research Needs in Irish Archaeology: Framework for a National Archaeological Research Programme” of the Heritage Council, as ultimately approved by the Minister 		

4 Enhancement and Improvement

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Reduce the impact of landscape elements which adversely impact on the core monuments in the long term	4.1	Develop a management strategy, management agreements with landowners, and liaison with utility companies
Enhance appreciation of the intervisibility of the monuments	4.2	Establish orientation points with information panels at the four main view points in the landscape (Fig. 5)
Support an alternative route for the N5	4.3	Maintain liaison with NRA and the planning authority

5 Ownership, Access and Interpretation

<i>Action</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Means</i>
Identify and highlight core area(s)/monuments within conservation study area at a local level	5.1	Field inspection of monuments within study area and local consultation
Identify a co-operative management approach to allow wider public access to the monuments	5.1	Develop a management strategy and the establishment of a land use and access liaison group
Seek opportunities to consolidate land-use and to promote wider access.	5.1	Possible land acquisition related to core area(s) by the State or local authorities.
Develop a strategy for visitor access and interpretation	5.2	Land use and access liaison group to be established as part of the management strategy Publish a range of leaflets/maps and provision of additional site signage

7.2 Access Routes

- 7.2.1 In order to assist with the issues of access and protection, the most significant monuments or monument groups have been identified. Two suggested routes for walking around the monuments, of differing lengths, with options for siting of information and interpretative media, have been proposed for visitors to Rathcroghan and these are shown on Figure 10. Existing car parking areas have influenced the choice of directions.
- 7.2.2 The routes suggested have been put forward to form a basis for discussion. Issues likely to arise are the desirability of using existing roads, the possibility of taking new footpaths along existing field boundaries or the need to avoid close proximity to residential properties. Information about the different routes could be available through the Cruachan Aí Heritage Centre.

8 GAZETTEER

8.1 Nature Conservation - Designated Areas

Description

Designated areas

- 8.1.1 The first of these is Annaghmore Lough (Site Code 001626), which is found approximately 8 km to the east of the Rathcroghan crossroads. This is proposed as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), and is thus of European value¹. The principal habitat of interest at this site is alkaline fen, supporting a number of localised plant species indicative of damp calcareous conditions. In addition, the site supports the snail *Vertigo geyeri*, a species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.
- 8.1.2 The second site is Bellanagare Bog, some 7 km to the west of the Rathcroghan crossroads (Site Code 000592). This site features both bog vegetation, and a range of flush vegetation. The site is vulnerable to water loss through extensive nearby drainage, and through ongoing peat cutting. It is also a Special Protection Area (SPA)², designated for wintering Greenland white-fronted geese *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, though these rarely feed on the bog nowadays.
- 8.1.3 The third site is Mullygollan Turlough (Site Code 000612) found approximately 5 km to the south of the Rathcroghan crossroads. This site has been designated for turlough habitat (Annex I, EU Habitats Directive). It also supports three species of bird on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive (Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus*, whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus* and golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*).

Significance

- 8.1.4 The designated sites all lie outside the Rathcroghan Conservation Area. However, their significance lies in the indication of the types of habitat which may be created and sustained in that part of Roscommon. There is some potential for wet grassland to be improved.

8.2 Plant Communities and Habitats Description

- 8.2.1 The Rathcroghan archaeological complex contains mostly improved agricultural grassland, but there are some areas of more varied habitat (Figure 8). The range is described below.

¹ Habitats of European-wide importance (other than for birds) are listed under Annex I of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC (1992) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive). Habitats designated under this Directive are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

² Habitats of European-wide importance for birds are listed under the EC Wild Birds Directive (1982). Habitats designated under this Directive are Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Improved grassland

- 8.2.2 Improved grassland (GA1) is dominant over approximately 95% of the Rathcroghan archaeological complex. This is of very poor ecological quality. The majority of the grassland appears to have been reseeded in the last five years, and fertiliser application has been heavy and persistent. Species diversity is low, and there is little variation in composition throughout the area of improved grassland. Perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* is the dominant plant throughout, interspersed with occasional herbs, such as dandelion *Taraxacum* sp., creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*. All are typical and representative of improved grassland. All earthworks bar one also comprise improved grassland. The majority of this area is heavily grazed by cattle.

Scrub

- 8.2.3 A single field some 500 m south-west of the Rathcroghan crossroads supported gorse *Ulex europaeus*. An impoverished field layer is found beneath this.

Dry calcareous and neutral grassland

- 8.2.4 The earthwork identified as RO022-057004 supports a small remnant of a much more diverse grassland. This can be classified in the category dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1). Herbs here are indicative of a calcareous substrate, and include occasional fairy flax *Linum catharticum* and frequent lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*. In addition, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, eyebright *Euphraia officinalis* agg., yarrow *Achillea millefolia* and bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* are all occasional or frequent. The grassland on this particular earthwork may be indicative of that found on the other earthworks if they had not been subjected to intensive management.

Ditch

- 8.2.5 A ditch is found surrounding the earthwork described above (RO022 – 057004). This supports a range of common aquatic or semi-aquatic species including yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*, marsh ragwort *Senecio palustre*, compact rush *Juncus conglomeratus* and water mint *Mentha aquatica*.

Wet grassland

- 8.2.6 The grassland in the field adjacent to the above earthwork (RO022 – 057004) comprises unimproved wet grassland (GS4). This is the most ecologically valuable area of habitat in the whole area, supporting a wide diversity of herbs and grasses. There is a particular abundance of meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* in this field, alongside abundant devil's-bit scabious and occasional to frequent ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, marsh ragwort, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and quaking grass *Briza media*.

8.2.7 The whole of this field is wet grassland (GS4) containing examples of the annexed habitat *Molinia* meadows (37.31 Molinion caeruleae, EU Habitats Directive). Good quality wet grassland such as this has declined considerably over recent decades, due to drainage and agricultural intensification. Its survival in this highly improved area is surprising and it is of at least local importance (Appendix 1). The abundance of devil's-bit scabious suggests that this field may support the species marsh fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia* (Annex II, EU Habitats Directive).

Fauna

8.2.8 Observer knowledge suggests that the site is generally poor for mammals. The better quality area of wet grassland may provide some temporary shelter/cover/hunting area for species such as mountain hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus* and red fox *Vulpes vulpes*, but is too small to support a resident population of these species.

8.2.9 The site is very poor for bird species. The area of good quality wet grassland is likely to support breeding reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*. The rest of the site is likely to be very species-poor, with little bird fauna. Very few birds were recorded on the day of survey, and all those that were are common resident species.

8.2.10 In general, the lack of habitat diversity, species-poor composition and uniformity of structure would result in a low diversity of invertebrates across the site. However, the better quality area of wet grassland supports a greater diversity of habitat and consequently would support a wider range of invertebrates.

8.3 Key Archaeological Monuments

8.3.1 The phases relevant to the construction, use and destruction of the complex:

- I** Neolithic/Bronze Age Periods 4000 - 500 BC
- II** Iron Age Period 500 BC - 400 AD
- III** Early Christian Period 400 - 1150 AD
- IV** Medieval and Post-medieval Periods 1150 - 1700 AD
- V** Late Post-medieval and Modern Periods 1700 AD to present

Description

8.3.2 The Rathcroghan Conservation Area contains a complex of 114 Registered Monuments, of which 39 are in State Care. The identified features cover a date range from the Neolithic to the Post-medieval period. However, there are three periods which are represented by particularly large numbers of monuments: the Iron Age, Early Christian and Medieval to Early Post-medieval periods. For the Iron Age, barrows and barrow mounds are the most significant features. The Early Christian

period is represented by raths and cashels, several with associated below-ground archaeological features such as souterrains. Evidence for later field systems, house platforms and pits are distributed across the area, demonstrating that it had been much more intensively settled during the medieval period than in more recent times.

- 8.3.3 A summary table has been prepared, providing for each monument an identification number (SMR no), a description, location, possible date. This is included in Section 8.16 and the locations of each feature are shown on Figure 3. For the most significant monuments or group of monuments, a more detailed description and assessment of their significance has been prepared and these are given in 8.4 onwards.

Significance

- 8.3.4 The Rathcroghan Complex is of major national significance, for the scale of the complex, its range of monuments, their mythic and historic associations and their good condition.

8.4 **Rathcroghan (RO022-057010)**

Description

- 8.4.1 The Rathcroghan Mound (Photo 10) lies at the centre of an area densely populated with archaeological monuments and traditionally Cruchain was the seat of the pre-Christian kings of Connacht. The mound itself stands 7 m high and has a diameter of c 90 m. It is largely artificial, with a complex internal structure of successive concentric rings, revealed by geophysical imaging. On the flat top of the mound there are further features including a small burial mound. Two opposing ramps allow access to the summit. Around the mound there is a ditch c 15 m from the base and further out again another encircling ditch, 370 m in diameter. As well as Rathcroghan Mound this outer enclosure contains other barrow mounds, linear features and enclosures. The mound appears to have formed the centre of a major ritual centre. Although its precise functions are unknown and it is a multi-period structure, Rathcroghan would appear to have been of major prominence in the Iron Age.

Significance

- 8.4.2 Rathcroghan is a significant prehistoric monument of major national importance. It forms the focal point of a ritual landscape, which has parallels with others at Tara and Navan.
- 8.4.3 The connection of Rathcroghan with the Kings of Connacht and its role in legends such as the *Táin Bó Cúailgne* also give it major significance.

8.5 **Dathi's Stone (RO022-057047) and Knochennagorp (RO022-057046)**

Description

- 8.5.1 The mound, sometimes referred to as Knochennagorp and sometimes as Dathi's Mound, is reputedly the burial place of the last pagan king of Ireland. It has a

standing stone at its centre (Photo 14). Excavations have found evidence for a surrounding ditch and bank which are appropriate for a burial mound although no evidence for any burial was found. However, dating of the ditch deposits showed the monument to be too early for Dathi, having been constructed in the Iron Age.

Significance

- 8.5.2 The legendary association with Dathi raises the importance of the barrow mound to national significance. The existence of the standing stone at its centre also lends extra significance to this barrow in comparison to others within the complex.

8.6 **Relig na Ri (RO022-057035)**

Description

- 8.6.1 This cashel is a univallate enclosure of *c* 100 m diameter marked by a stony bank. Within it is a concentric smaller enclosure and a souterrain. Another enclosure is attached to the outside of the main monument with the entrance to another souterrain close by. These associated features suggest that this is an Early Christian monument, although the site is complicated by overlying later field boundaries and house platforms. In recent times Relig na Ri has been employed as a cattle enclosure.

Significance

- 8.6.2 Relig na Ri, the “burial place of kings”, is a fine example of an Early Christian cashel with its associated souterrain. The components of the monument from this period are all classed as of national significance.

8.7 **Owneynagat (RO022-057029)**

Description

- 8.7.1 A natural limestone fissure is now reached via a man-made passage from which there is also a short passage running in the opposite direction to the cave. This junction is marked by two stone lintels (RO022-057030, RO022-057084) bearing Ogham inscriptions. These stones would originally have been standing stones on the surface. The cave is also unlike most souterrains in that its entrance was contained within an earthen mound (Photo 15).

Significance

- 8.7.2 Owneynagat is a monument of national importance. The souterrain has some unusual features, but the mythical and legendary associations of the cave are of particular significance. The two Ogham stones are particularly rare in this part of Ireland and further reinforce its significance.

8.8 Rathnadarve (RO022-057004)

Description

- 8.8.1 The name 'Rathnadarve' means 'fort of the bulls' and tradition asserts that this was the site of the battle of the bulls recorded in the *Táin Bó Cúailgne*. The site is a circular enclosure surrounded by an earthen bank in which there are a number of breaks. The diameter of the enclosure is *c* 74 m and the interior contains a low hill or mound. In the past it has been described as a ring barrow rather than a rath. Geophysical surveys have not found any evidence for internal features.

Significance

- 8.8.2 The significance of this national monument lies particularly in its legendary connections, although the good preservation of the encircling bank makes it a very prominent feature within the monumental landscape.

8.9 Cloghannagorp (RO022-057043)

Description

- 8.9.1 This is the only monument within the Rathcroghan Complex which can be assigned to the Neolithic period. Cloghannagorp consists of three orthostats surviving from an east-west gallery of a court tomb. There are two other orthostats to the west, which may mark the remains of another gallery (Photo 13).

Significance

- 8.9.2 Court tombs are rare in this part of Ireland. While Cloghannagorp is not a particularly complete example its location means that it is of national significance. Its presence does not necessarily indicate however, that Rathcroghan was an important ritual area from an early period.

8.10 The Mucklaghs (RO0221-042016)

Description

- 8.10.1 The Mucklaghs are linear earthworks of uncertain date, consisting of parallel pairs of earthen banks. There is a tradition that they were made by a rooting boar, but they are likely to be for some ceremonial purpose.

Significance

- 8.10.2 The Mucklaghs are regarded as being of national importance. Their significance cannot be fully appreciated in isolation, but arises from their relationship with other monuments of the same or earlier date.

8.11 **Misgaun Meva (RO022-057008) and Milleen Meva (RO022-057006)**

Description

- 8.11.1 These two limestone blocks are fallen standing stones, one of which, Milleen Meva, lies alongside a small stone and earth mound. Another mound, probably a burial mound, is close by.

Significance

- 8.11.2 These standing stones are of national importance. Of the numerous mounds in the Rathcroghan complex, few have standing stones associated with them. This association is of particular significance.

8.12 **Rathscreg (RO022056034)**

Description

- 8.12.1 Rathscreg is not a rath, but a barrow mound, surrounded by two banks. It is situated at the end of a linear earthwork, but the relationship between the features is not clear. The linear feature was probably a late medieval road.

Significance

- 8.12.2 Rathscreg is regarded as of national importance. Its main significance arises from its relationship to other features.

8.13 **Cashelmannan (RO021-042017)**

Description

- 8.13.1 Cashelmannan is the remains of a multi-vallate stone fort. Three concentric stone walls separated by ditches surrounded an area 40 m in diameter. Only the wall foundations now survive. There is an annexe attached to the south-east side and a number of field walls are also attached to the perimeter.

Significance

- 8.13.2 A fine example of a cashel, its multi-vallate structure is unusual in the complex. It is regarded as of national importance.

8.14 **Caran Fort (RO022-056023)**

Description

- 8.14.1 Caran Fort is a rath. It is of no particular importance in itself, but within it lies a Bullaun stone (RO022-056055). This sandstone block has a single basin carved into its surface. Later Christian sites such as holy wells came to be associated with them, but no such links are evident at Rathcroghan. There is also a fine barrow (RO022-056022) just outside the rath to the north.

Significance

8.14.2 The barrow could be regarded as of national importance given its sentinel location on the north slope of Rathcroghan, mirroring that of Dathi's Mound on the south side. The close association of the rath would raise that monument's status to national.

8.15 **Rathmore (RO022-056017)**

Description

8.15.1 Rathmore is a rath located within the ceremonial enclosure on the Rathcroghan plateau, to the north-west of the mound.

Significance

8.15.2 This feature could be of national importance, given its relationship to other features within the Rathcroghan complex.

8.16 Database of Recorded Monuments

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO021-042003		179138, 284502	Moneylea	SOUT	Souterrain	Souterrain. Inaccessible, but lintels have been exposed by a quarry hole.	No	Early Christian
RO021-042004	Oweyanisk	179154, 284524	Moneylea	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Barrow mound with a surrounding ditch.	No	Iron Age
RO021-042005		179276, 284437	Moneylea	ROAD	Road	Road defined by earthen banks, identified from aerial photographs.	No	Medieval
RO021-042009		178470, 283417	Glenballythomas	NOAN	Non-antiquity	Area of possible pits seen on an aerial photograph.	No	Unknown
RO021-042010		178846, 283899	Glenballythomas/ Moneylea	ROAD	Road	Road, visible as a slight hollow. Possibly connected to road R0022-05721.	No	Medieval
RO021-042011		179079, 283845	Glenballythomas/ Moneylea	CEEN	Ceremonial enclosure	Large ceremonial enclosure identified from aerial photographs. It is surrounded by an interrupted ditch and some traces of a double bank also survive.	No	Iron Age
RO021-042014		178946, 283192	Glenballythomas	ROAD	Road	Road, running NE-SW towards Rathnadarve.	No	Medieval

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO021-042015	Mucklaghs	179130, 282870	Glenballythomas	LINE	Linear earthwork	Linear earthworks, the Northern Mucklaghs, consisting of two parallel grass-covered earthen banks.	Yes	Unknown
RO021-042016	Mucklaghs	179155, 282770	Glenballythomas	LINE	Linear earthwork	Linear earthworks, the Southern Mucklaghs, consisting of three parallel grass-covered earthen banks.	Yes	Unknown
RO021-042017	Cashelmanannan	178822, 282685	Glenballythomas	CASH	Cashel	Cashel, grass-covered areas defined by remains of three stone walls.	Yes	Early Christian
RO021-042018		178858, 282663	Glenballythomas	ANNE	Annexe	Enclosure attached to SE side of cashel RO021-042017.	Yes	Early Christian
RO021-042019		178805, 282744	Glenballythomas	FIWA	Field wall	Field wall, extending from cashel RO021-042017.	Yes	Early Christian
RO021-042042		178260, 283315	Glenballythomas	DTBA	Barrow Ditch	Barrow mound surrounded by a ditch.	No	Iron Age
RO022-056002		179531, 284917	Ballyconboy /Kilvoy	ROAD	Road	Road from Rathmore extending north towards Mantua House, now visible in short sections, some with drystone walling. A further section lies c 200 m to its north and extending for c 100 m.	No	Medieval
RO022-056015	Knockaunstanley	179610, 284859	Ballyconboy /Kilvoy	ENCL	Enclosure	Enclosure, with earthen bank, located on S end of a N-S ridge on the summit of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Undated

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-056016	Little Rathbeg	179385, 284440	Moneylea	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Barrow mound surrounded by a ditch, bank and outer ditch. Now surrounded by silage pits and animal pens.	No	Iron Age
RO022-056017	Rathmore	179580, 284532	Toberrory	RATH	Rath	Rath within the ceremonial enclosure on Rathcroghan plateau. It is surrounded by two banks with a ditch between. An entrance and causeway can be seen on its south-east side. There is a circular feature within it, possibly a house platform.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-056020		180113, 284638	Toberrory	MOBR	Barrow Mound	Barrow mound on Rathcroghan plateau.	No	Iron Age
RO022-056021		180283, 284703	Toberrory	ENCL	Enclosure	Enclosure, forming part of field system R0022 -056025.	No	Unknown
RO022-056022		180898, 284589	Toberrory	MOBR	Barrow Mound	Barrow mound on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Iron Age
RO022-056023	Caran Fort	180406, 284660	Toberrory	RATH	Rath	Rath on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Defined by an earthen bank with traces of a ditch. A Bullaun stone (R0022-056055) lies within it.	No	Early Christian
RO022-056025		180362, 284682	Toberrory	FISY	Field system	Field system with rectangular enclosures and field banks	No	Medieval

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-056026		180898, 284589	Toberrory	ENCL	Enclosure	Rectangular enclosure, now removed, on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. It is defined by earthen banks. Inside is a house site, shown as a rectangular enclosure (R0022-056056).	No	Unknown
RO022-056027	Toberrory	180854, 284506	Toberrory	HOWE	Holy well	Holy well on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Now surrounded by a concrete wall, there is no sign of veneration.	No	Early Christian
RO022-056028	Courtmoyle	180510, 284413	Toberrory	RATH	Rath	Rath, now removed, on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Visible as a circular feature on aerial photographs.	No	Early Christian
RO022-056029	Toberrory Fort	180864, 284470	Toberrory	RATH	Rath	Rath on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Circular feature is defined by a scarp and has been damaged by quarrying.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-056030	MacDermot's Fort	181051, 284477	Toberrory	RATH	Rath	Rath on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. It is defined by scarps with some evidence for a ditch and outer bank.	No	Early Christian
RO022-056031		181220, 284560	Toberrory	FISY	Field system	Field system on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Banks define rectangular fields. A sweathouse (R0022-056030) has been built into one of the banks.	No	Medieval

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-056032		180310, 284480	Toberrory	FISY	Field system	Field system on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Large rectangular fields are crossed by a network of roads. The area also contains a number of pits.	No	Medieval
RO022-056033		180770, 248210	Toberrory	ROAD	Road	Road defined by earth and stone banks. Part of a network crossing the field system on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Medieval
RO022-056034		180570, 284270	Toberrory	ROAD	Road	Road defined by earth and stone banks. Part of a network crossing the field system on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Medieval
RO022-056035	Rathscreg	180770, 284210	Toberrory	MOBR	Barrow Mound	Barrow mound on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Contained within an oval, outer enclosure.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-056036		180827, 284190	Toberrory	DTBA	Barrow Ditch	Barrow defined by a slight ditch on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Iron Age
RO022-056037		180847, 284182	Toberrory	DTBA	Barrow Ditch	Barrow defined by a slight ditch on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Iron Age
RO022-056038	Flannagan's Fort	180970, 284100	Kilnahooan	DTBA	Stepped Barrow	Barrow mound with ditch and bank on the E-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Iron Age

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-056039	Tobercroghore	181426, 284010	Kilnahooan	HOWE	Holy well	Holy well at the bottom of Rathcroghan ridge. Now with a concrete surround and canopy, it does not appear to be still venerated.	No	Early Christian
RO022-056041	Templemoyle Abbey	181260, 283741	Kilnahooan	CHUR	Church	Remains of a rectangular church, reduced to its base course. There is no evidence for burials, but locals report that some have been uncovered. Among stone fragments is a possible, damaged Bullaun stone.	No	Medieval
RO022-056047		180690, 284770	Toberrory	PITT	Pit	Pits, c 100 in total, within a field system (R0022-056032) on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Medieval
RO022-056051		181099, 284477	Toberrory	SWEA	Sweathouse	Sweathouse built into one of the field banks of field system (R0022-056032) on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Post-medieval
RO022-056052		180770, 284210	Toberrory	ENCL	Enclosure	Enclosure on the N-facing ridge of Rathcroghan ridge. The oval feature was originally within a stone wall, now removed. It contains a barrow mound (R0022-056035) and is itself within a larger enclosure (R0022-056053).	Yes	Unknown

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-056053		180770, 284210	Toberrory	ENCL	Enclosure	Large enclosure on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. The enclosure contains a smaller enclosure (R0022-056052) within which is a barrow mound (R0022-056-35).	Yes	Unknown
RO022-056054		180965, 284096	Kilnahooan	MOND	Mound	Mound close to the centre of the stepped barrow, R0022-056038.	No	Iron Age
RO022-056055		180406, 284660	Toberrory	BULA	Bullaun stone	A small sandstone Bullaun stone with a single basin is situated within a rath (R0022-056023).	No	Early Christian
RO022-056056		180898, 284589	Toberrory	HOUS	House	House site, now removed, seen as a rectangular enclosure, within a larger enclosure (R0022-056026).	No	Medieval
RO022-056057		181348, 283935	Kilnahooan	RATH	Rath	Rath at the bottom of the E-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Oval in shape it is surrounded by a ditch.	No	Early Christian
RO022-057001	Rathbeg	179760, 284152	Toberrory	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Barrow mound on the highest point of Rathcroghan plateau. It is surrounded by a berm and outer bank.	Yes	Iron age
RO022-057002		180294, 284087	Toberrory	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Barrow mound on the N-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. It is surrounded by a berm and outer bank.	No	Iron Age

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057003		180460, 283900	Toberrory	FISY	Field system	Field system on the S- and E-facing slopes of Rathcroghan ridge. A grid of large rectangular fields is defined by earthen banks. There are three roads leading into the system and modern field boundaries often follow the older pattern.	No	Medieval
RO022-057004	Rathnadarve	179430, 283674	Glenballythomas	RATH	Rath	Rath on S slope of Rathcroghan plateau, defined by earthen bank and ditch.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-057006	Milleen Meva	179948, 283795	Toberrory	STST	Standing stone	A fallen standing stone, made of conglomerate.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057007		179955, 283774	Toberrory	MOBR	Barrow Mound	Barrow mound on the Rathcroghan plateau close to standing stones R0022-057006 and R0022-057008.	No	Iron Age
RO022-057008	Misgaun Meva	180043, 283801	Toberrory	STST	Standing stone	A fallen standing stone, made of sandstone.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057010	Rathcroghan	180010, 283660	Toberrory	MOND	Mound	Rathcroghan is a large ceremonial site, the mostly artificial mound built up over two earlier concentric features. Opposing ramps lead to the summit where a number of features have been identified. The mound lies within two circular enclosures.	Yes	Iron Age

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057011		180002, 283666	Toberrory	DTBA	Barrow Ditch	Barrow mound with possible ditch on the top of Rathcroghan mound (R0022-057010).	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057012		179960, 283670	Glenballythomas/Toberrory	CEEN	Ceremonial enclosure	Large ceremonial enclosure on Rathcroghan plateau, surrounding numerous monuments including Rathcroghan mound itself. At one time the interior was under cultivation.	No	Iron Age
RO022-057013		180130, 283637	Toberrory	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Barrow on Rathcroghan plateau, now only visible in very dry conditions.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057014		180118, 283620	Toberrory	DTBA	Barrow Ditch	Barrow mound on Rathcroghan plateau. The mound is surrounded by two ditches with an intervening bank.	No	Iron Age
RO022-057015		180030, 283555	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Ring barrow within ceremonial enclosure R0022-056012, known from aerial photographs.	No	Iron Age
RO022-057016		180065, 283553	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Ring barrow within ceremonial enclosure R0022-056012, known from aerial photographs.	No	Iron Age
RO022-057017		180016, 283440	Glenballythomas	MOBR	Barrow Mound	Barrow mound on the Rathcroghan plateau.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057019		180072, 283505	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Ring barrow just outside ceremonial enclosure R0022-056012, defined by a ditch.	No	Iron Age

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057020		180088, 283394	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Ring barrow on the Rathcroghan plateau.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057021		180550, 283450	Glenballythomas/Toberrory	ROAD	Road	Road extending for at least 3 km across Rathcroghan plateau. Parts are marked by earthen banks on each side. The road post-dates a number of monuments which it overlies, including the ceremonial enclosure R0022-057012.	Yes	Unknown
RO022-057022		180040, 283300	Glenballythomas	RATH	Rath	Rath on the Rathcroghan plateau.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-057023		180335, 283344	Glenballythomas	EART	Earthwork	Earthwork on the Rathcroghan plateau. Possible ritual monument or destroyed rath.	No	Unknown
RO022-057024		179597, 283209	Glenballythomas	CAVE	Cave	Cave, a natural fissure, on S side of Rathcroghan plateau.	Yes	Unknown
RO022-057025		179500, 283200	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Ring barrow on the Rathcroghan plateau.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057026		179360, 283053	Glenballythomas	PONN	Pond	Pond, with spoil mound alongside.	No	Unknown
RO022-057027		179310, 282990	Glenballythomas	DTBA	Barrow Ditch	Barrow ditch on the Rathcroghan plateau.	No	Iron Age

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057028		179590, 283120	Glenballythomas	EART	Earthwork	Earthwork mound containing entrance to souterrain R0022-057029	Yes	Unknown
RO022-057029	Oweynagat	179590, 283112	Glenballythomas	SOUT	Souterrain	Souterrain on the Rathcroghan plateau, considered to be the entrance to the underworld and the residence of Morrigan, a goddess, and other magical creatures. The passage within the souterrain is marked by Ogham stones.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-057030		179590, 283112	Glenballythomas	OGHA	Ogham stone	Ogham stone within the souterrain, reused as a lintel. It is inscribed VRAICCI MQI MEDWI, meaning 'Fraich, son of Mebd'.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-057032		179930, 283038	Glenballythomas	FISY	Field system	Field system defined by earthen banks and ditches.	No	Medieval
RO022-057034		179380, 282780	Glenballythomas	PITT	Pit	Pits within field system R0022-057003.	No	Medieval
RO022-057035	Relig na Ri	179817, 282851	Glenballythomas	COEN	Concentric Enclosure	Concentric enclosure, described as the Royal Cemetery of Connacht in 1837. A central platform may be a rath with the entrance to a souterrain. The site also includes a house platform.	Yes	Unknown
RO022-057036		179795, 282863	Glenballythomas	SOUT	Souterrain	Souterrain within the enclosure of Relig na Ri R0022-057035	Yes	Early Christian

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057037		179816, 282824	Glenballythomas	HOUS	House	Rectangular house site within Relig na Ri RO022-057035.	Yes	Medieval
RO022-057038		179882, 282819	Glenballythomas	ANNE	Annexe	Annexe on the perimeter of Relig na Ri R0022-057035	Yes	Medieval
RO022-057039		179785, 282680	Glenballythomas	CASH	Cashel	Rath within Relig na Ri R0022-057035	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-057040		179737, 282664	Glenballythomas	SOUT	Souterrain	Cave or souterrain outside cashel R0022-057039	No	Early Christian
RO022-057043	Cloghannagorp	179544, 282440	Glenballythomas	COTO	Court-tomb	Court tomb at bottom of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Neolithic
RO022-057044		179800, 282560	Glenballythomas	FISY	Field system	Field system at the bottom of the S-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Medieval
RO022-057045		179890, 282310	Glenballythomas	PITT	Pit	Rectangular grass-covered pits aligned on the field system.	No	Medieval
RO022-057046	Knockannagorp	180097, 282701	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Grass-covered barrow mound surrounded by a ditch and bank. Reputedly the burial place of king Dathi. Excavations found no burial, but Iron Age charcoal in the ditch. There is a standing stone on the top.	Yes	Iron Age

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057047	Dathi's Stone	180097, 282701	Glenballythomas	STST	Standing stone	The standing stone is situated on the top of a barrow mound, reputed to be the burial place of Dathi, the last pagan king of Ireland.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057048		180280, 282180	Glenballythomas	RATH	Rath	Rath on the S-facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. D-shaped with a slight ditch, it has been damaged by a later field system.	No	Early Christian
RO022-057049		180871, 283067	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Barrow mound on the Rathcroghan plateau, surrounded by a berm and outer bank.	Yes	Iron Age
RO022-057051	Cahernalody	180862, 282757	Glenballythomas	RATH	Rath	Rath on the south facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. Formerly described as a ring barrow.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-057052		180730, 282610	Carrowtoosan/ Glenballythomas	ROAD	Road	Road on S slope of Rathcroghan ridge, running E-W in interrupted sections. A further section of road lies to the west of the modern road.	Yes	Medieval
RO022-057053	Tober Caoch	181260, 283337	Carrowgobbadagh	HOWE	Holy well	Holy well, consisting of field stone surround to spring at base of E-facing slope of Rathcroghan. Source of stream.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-057055		181234, 283321	Carrowgobbadagh	RATH	Rath	Rath on the E facing slope of Rathcroghan, defined by an earthen bank.	No	Early Christian
RO022-057057		181601, 282925	Carrowgobbadagh	RATH	Rath	Rath at E foot of Rathcroghan ridge, seen as grass-covered platform defined by a scarp.	No	Early Christian

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057058		181660, 283170	Carrowgobbadagh	FISY	Field system	Field system defined by earthen banks at E foot of Rathcroghan.	No	Medieval
RO022-057059		181640, 283150	Carrowgobbadagh	PITT	Pit	Pits, overlying area of field system RO022-057058.	No	Medieval
RO022-057060		181762, 283470	Carrowgobbadagh	ROAD	Road	Road at the E foot of Rathcroghan plateau, defined by earthen banks.	No	Medieval
RO022-057061		181181, 282884	Carrowtoosan	ROAD	Road	Road on low hill at E foot of Rathcroghan ridge. Possibly part of pre-1837 alignment of Tulsk-Bellenegare road.	No	Medieval
RO022-057062		181260, 282768	Carrowtoosan	ENCL	Enclosure	Enclosure on low hill at E foot of Rathcroghan ridge.	No	Unknown
RO022-057063		181243, 282770	Carrowtoosan	SOUT	Souterrain	Cave on low hill at E foot of Rathcroghan ridge. Lintels of inaccessible passage visible on surface.	No	Early Christian
RO022-057064		180974, 282507	Carrowtoosan	RATH	Rath	Rath, with circular grass-covered area defined by slight bank and ditch.	No	Early Christian
RO022-057068		179660, 282770	Glenballythomas	ROAD	Road	Section of road on the south facing slope of Rathcroghan ridge. The carriageway with earthen banks is the west part of road R0022-05752.	No	Medieval

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057070		180855, 283361	Glenballythomas/Toberory	SEDE	Settlement deserted	A deserted settlement on Rathcroghan plateau. Evidence for small rectangular paddocks are visible either side of road R0022-057021. Two house sites can be identified.	No	Medieval
RO022-057071		180202, 282569	Glenballythomas	HUSI	Hut site	Hut site attached to one of the field banks of field system R0022-057003.	No	Medieval
RO022-057072		181234, 283319	Carrowgobbadagh	HOUS	House	House platform at the centre of rath R0022-057055	No	Medieval
RO022-057074		180020, 283200	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Ring barrow seen on an aerial photograph as a small mound. On the S-facing slope of the Rathcroghan plateau.	No	Iron Age
RO022-057075		180028, 283183	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Ring barrow seen on an aerial photograph as a small mound. On the S-facing slope of the Rathcroghan plateau.	No	Iron Age
RO022-057076		180035, 283162	Glenballythomas	RGBA	Ring-barrow	Ring barrow seen on an aerial photograph as a small mound. On the S-facing slope of the Rathcroghan plateau.	No	Iron Age
RO022-057078		179624, 360700	Glenballythomas	ROAD	Road	A road visible as a slight depression. It aligns with other roads, R0022-05721 and R0021-042010.	No	Medieval

Monument No	Name	NGR	Townland	Class	Class Description	Monument Description	State Care	Period
RO022-057079		180855, 283361	Glenballythomas	HOUS	House	House site within an area of deserted settlement R0022-057070.	No	Medieval
RO022-057080		180855, 283361	Glenballythomas	HOUS	House	House site within an area of deserted settlement R0022-057070.	No	Medieval
RO022-057081		179762, 283131	Glenballythomas	HOUS	House	House site within an area of deserted settlement R0022-057070.	No	Medieval
RO022-057082		179770, 283130	Glenballythomas	HOUS	House	House site within an area of deserted settlement R0022-057070.	No	Medieval
RO022-057083		179778, 283129	Glenballythomas	HOUS	House	House site within an area of deserted settlement R0022-057070.	No	Medieval
RO022-057084		179595, 283112	Glenballythomas	OGHA	Ogham stone	An Ogham stone re-used as a lintel in the souterrain, Owneynagat (R0022-057035). It bears the inscription QUREGASMA.	Yes	Early Christian
RO022-057085		180006, 283719	Toberrory	ENCL	Enclosure	Enclosure on the Rathcroghan plateau. The circular feature is defined by a double ditch.	No	Unknown

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APPENDIX 2

**PHOTOGRAPHS
RATHCROGHAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPLEX**


Image	Photo	Description
	1 VP A	Rathcroghan Plateau A significant Vantage Point. Looking north from Rathmore



Image	Photo	Description
	<p>2</p> <p>VP B</p>	<p>Rathcroghan Plateau</p> <p>View north towards Caran Fort from Rathbeg with N5 in middle distance. A significant Vantage Point</p>
	<p>3</p> <p>VP C</p>	<p>Plateau Edge</p> <p>View south from edge of earthworks associated with Relig na Ri. Hedged fields in distance across valley mark a change of character from one side of the valley to the other. A significant Vantage Point</p>



Image	Photo	Description
	<p>4 VP D</p>	<p>Plateau edge</p> <p>View north-west from Caran Fort. New single properties demonstrating effect on wider landscape. Open landscape improved pasture. A significant Vantage Point</p>
	<p>5</p>	<p>Looking west from Rathbeg showing local road and water tower</p>



Image	Photo	Description
	7	Cattle and sheep in open pasture, long views on the Rathcroghan Plateau, demonstrating the predominant land use
	8	The Cruachain Ai Visitor Centre in Tulsk



Image	Photo	Description
	9	Interior display in the Cruachain Ai Visitor Centre
	10	View north from the N5 towards the Rathcroghan Mound



Image	Photo	Description
	11	Caran fort, displaying evidence of earthwork erosion caused by cattle
	12	The Mucklaghs linear earthworks, showing some signs of erosion



Image	Photo	Description
	13	Cloghannagorp Neolithic court tomb in the southern edge of the study area
	14	The Dathi's Stone, standing on top of a barrow mound, the reputed burial place of Dathi, the last pagan king of Ireland




Image	Photo	Description
	15	Entrance to Oweynagant
	16	Visitor access to Oweynagant

Image	Photo	Description
	18	View of old concrete stile and fence posts at Knockannagorp Iron Age ring barrow

APPENDIX 3

Ecological Evaluation Criteria with Geographical Significance

Level of Value	Examples
International	<p>An internationally designated or candidate site (SPA, pSPA, SAC, cSAC, pSAC, Ramsar site, Biogenetic Reserve).</p> <p>A sustainable area of a habitat listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, or smaller areas of such habitat which are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole.</p> <p>A sustainable population of an internationally important species, i.e., an Irish Red Data Book species or species listed as occurring in 15 or fewer 10km squares in Ireland, which is listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, or as being of unfavorable conservation status in Europe, of uncertain conservation status or of global conservation concern. Also sites supporting a breeding population of such a species or supplying a critical element of their habitat requirements.</p>
National	<p>A nationally designated site (Natural Heritage Area) or a discrete area which meets the selection criteria for national designation (e.g. NHA selection guidelines).</p> <p>A sustainable area of Irish priority habitat, or of smaller areas of such habitat which are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole.</p> <p>A sustainable population of a nationally important species or a site supporting such a species, i.e. a species listed in the Wildlife Acts (1976 – 2000) which is an Irish Red Data Book species (excluding scarce species) that is not listed as being of unfavorable conservation status in Europe, of uncertain conservation status or of global conservation concern. Also sites supporting a breeding population of such a species or supplying a critical element of their habitat requirements.</p>
Regional	<p><i>Sustainable areas of key habitat identified as being of Regional value.</i></p> <p><i>A population of a species listed as being nationally scarce which occurs in 16-10010km squares in Ireland. Sites supporting a breeding population of such a species or supplying a critical element of their habitat requirements.</i></p> <p>Sites that exceed local-level of value, but fall short of NHA selection guidelines.</p>
County / Metropolitan	<p><i>Semi-natural ancient woodland greater than 0.25 ha.</i></p> <p><i>County/Metropolitan sites and others meeting the ecological selection criteria for designation.</i></p> <p>A population of a species that is listed in a County/Metropolitan "red data book". Also sites supporting a breeding population of such a species or supplying a critical element of their habitat requirements.</p>
Local	<p><i>Semi-natural ancient woodland smaller than 0.25 ha.</i></p> <p><i>Sustainable areas of habitat identified in a sub-County (Local) BAP or in the relevant Natural Area profile.</i></p> <p><i>Sites/features that are scarce within the local area or which appreciably enrich the local area habitat resource.</i></p> <p><i>A diverse and/ or ecologically valuable hedgerow network.</i></p>
Neighborhood	<p>Areas of habitat that appreciably enrich the neighborhood resource, e.g., species-rich hedgerow.</p>

APPENDIX 4

THE RURAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SCHEME.

1. The Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS) is administered by the Republic of Ireland Department of Agriculture and Food and is an income support project for farmers which aims at bridging the gap between agricultural production and environmental conservation. The REPS scheme is made up of three major elements, these are:
 1. A general programme consisting of 11 basic compulsory measures for the entire farm holding, a choice of two biodiversity options from 16 and additional compulsory measures (Measure A) if the farmer's land falls under areas designated as environmentally sensitive.
 2. Target land outside the REPS programme. Farmers who do not take part in the general REP scheme can still be supported if they have some target area land and agree to implement Measure A on their land.
 3. Supplementary measures for which a farmer taking part in the general REP scheme can receive extra funding for up to two further measures under this category.
2. Target land areas are Natural Heritage Areas; Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas) and Commonages. There are no target land covering for areas designated for built heritage purposes.
3. To be considered for support under the REP scheme, farmers have to:
 - have at least three hectares of farmland or one for small producers,
 - and have an approved planner prepare an agri-environmental plan for their farms which must cover a minimum of five years.
 - farmers must also have their land included on the Department of Agriculture's IACS website
 - and most importantly, they must agree to implement the basic REPS measures.
4. Participation in the General REPS Programme requires compliance under eleven basic Measures. Measure 7 is the most directly relevant measure for the Rathcroghan Conservation Study available under REPS. The objective of the measure is to promote greater awareness of the Irish landscape, which is an important record of Irish history, a rich heritage of historical and archaeological monuments and the management strategies required to protect them. The options available are to provide for an increase in Buffer Margins for Archaeological and Historical Features and to manage Publicly Accessible Archaeological Sites. The specific requirements of Measure 7 are:
 - Retain all monuments and archaeological features identified in your plan.
 - You must avoid damaging monuments through the use of heavy machinery in their vicinity.
 - Where a monument occurs in grassland the monument itself and an area of 20 metres around it must not be interfered with through activities such as ground disturbance, excavation, construction of buildings or afforestation. If protection is required, light temporary fencing or marker posts can be used.
 - Continuous movement of animals over earthwork features or overwintering of animals must not be allowed in these areas.

- Monuments in tillage fields must be surrounded by an unploughed margin of 5 metres.
 - No materials of any type can be removed from or dumped on such sites.
5. A number of other Measures provide for the conservation of habitats and species and these are Grassland Management (M2); Retain Wildlife Habitats (M4); Conservation of Natural Heritage (MA); Corncrake Habitats (SM1). Full details of those measures that specifically relate to the historic landscape and habitat protection are provided in a table below.

Measures specifically relating to the historic landscape and habitat protection:

REPS MEASURE/OPTIONS	OBJECTIVES	REQUIREMENTS/ ACTIONS
<p>MEASURE 2:</p> <p>Grassland Management Plan</p> <p>OPTIONS:</p> <p>-Traditional Hay Meadows</p> <p>-Species Rich Grassland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a balance between environmental and agricultural plans. • Promote a sustainable grassland management plan that protects habitats, minimises poaching, overgrazing and soil erosion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow a sustainable grassland management plan and the undertakings specified in your REPS • Plan. • House animals for the core housing period as specified in your REPS Plan. • Outwinter stock only in the fields identified in your plan. • Avoid excessive poaching. • Avoid overgrazing / undergrazing. • Supplementary feeding points must be at least 30 metres from any watercourse/waterbody. • Growing vegetation must not be burned between March 1st and August 31st. • Noxious weeds and scrub encroachment must be controlled as specified in your REPS Plan. • Where land is being reseeded an untilled, unploughed and unsprayed margin of 1.5 metres must be left in place.
<p>MEASURE 4:</p> <p>Retain wildlife habitats</p> <p>OPTIONS:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective of this measure is to retain habitats and to ensure that farming practices on these areas are carried out in a manner beneficial to flora, fauna and conservation generally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must retain all habitats identified on your REPS Plan. The following practices must not be carried out on habitats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Afforestation – Land improvement works including drainage

REPS MEASURE/OPTIONS	OBJECTIVES	REQUIREMENTS/ ACTIONS
<p>-Creation of a New Habitat -Broad-leaved Tree Planting -Nature Corridors</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ploughing and re-seeding - Interference with the free-flow of waters to “swallow holes” in turloughs - Removal of sand and gravel from foreshore and seashore - Commercial turf cutting on unexploited bog. Areas included for payment cannot be exploited - during the period of the REPS undertakings - Burning of growing vegetation on land between March 1st and August 31st • Any further conservation practices required to retain the special qualities of the habitat, in addition to those set out under the other measures (including the agreed conditions for the conservation of NHA sites), for example, changes in fertiliser usage and stocking levels that are set out in your plan
<p>MEASURE 7</p> <p>Protect Features of Historical and Archaeological interest</p> <p>OPTIONS</p> <p>-Increase in Buffer Margins for Archaeological and Historical Features -Management of Publicly Accessible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective of this measure is to promote greater awareness of the Irish landscape, which is an important record of Irish history, a rich heritage of historical and archaeological monuments and the management strategies required to protect them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain all monuments and archaeological features identified in your plan. • You must avoid damaging monuments through the use of heavy machinery in their vicinity. • Where a monument occurs in grassland the monument itself and an area of 20 metres around it must not be interfered with through activities such as ground disturbance, excavation, construction of buildings or

REPS MEASURE/OPTIONS	OBJECTIVES	REQUIREMENTS/ ACTIONS
Archaeological Sites		afforestation. If protection is required, light temporary fencing or marker posts can be used. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous movement of animals over earthwork features or overwintering of animals must not be allowed in these areas. • Monuments in tillage fields must be surrounded by an unploughed margin of 5 metres. • No materials of any type can be removed from or dumped on such sites.
MEASURE A Conservation of natural heritage (Targeted areas; natural heritage areas, farmland based areas of conservation, commonages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective of Measure A is to provide a comprehensive approach to the conservation and/or regeneration of designated target areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce stock numbers. Carry out remedial works e.g. fencing or rubbish removal. Without the prior approval of the Department there must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No increase in stocking levels. – No new introduction of stock to previously ungrazed areas. – No changes in stock type during the course of the plan. • Restricted use of pesticides and fertilisers. • Follow any additional requirements set out in your REPS Plan.
SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURE 1 Corncrake habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective of this supplementary measure is to enhance the habitat structure and availability of breeding sites for the corncrake (a globally threatened migratory bird that used to be widespread throughout Ireland) over the summer and autumn months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have land within corncrake habitat area. • Participate in BirdWatch Ireland (BWI) management plan for corncrake sites. • Must follow the farming prescription set out at "A" in Appendix E. • Must, when notified by BWI, follow the

REPS MEASURE/OPTIONS	OBJECTIVES	REQUIREMENTS/ ACTIONS
		farming prescription set out at "B" in Appendix E. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWI will notify you not later than June 30th of the presence of corncrakes on such lands.

APPENDIX 5: STAKEHOLDERS

A: LANDOWNERS

Folio	Name
35361	Andrews Ross and Sandra Barrett
1306F	Annie Josephine Maxwell
18382F	Christopher Dowd
14998F	Christopher Dowd
28023	Christopher Jones
17843	Commissioner of Public Works
21783F	Cyril Francombe and Nancy Barnicle
19565F	David Patton
18858F	Declan Jones
10239F	Declan Jones
8843F	Donal Kelly
19754	Eamon Sharky
7075F	Eithne Galvin
23967	Farnan Devaney
2133F	Francis Coen
9170F	Gabriel Fleming
12944F	Gabriel O'Grady
21466F	Gabriel O'Grady
22687	Gabriel O'Grady
8980F	Gabriel O'Grady and Monica O'Grady
22242F	Gerard Gunning
10531F	Gerard Healy
25169	Hubert Durr Junior
34496	Hubert Taylor
17121F	Irish Land Commission
31909	James Denash and Patricia Denash
23053F	John Brady
6980F	John Faughnan
21910	John G. Geraghty
31129	John Joseph Carney
18019	John S. Kelly
7076F	Joseph Dooley
5460F	Joseph Noel
18974	Joseph Rorke
17132	Julia O'Connor
18467	Katheleen Brady
21115	Kathleen Fleming
14343F	Keiran Spellman
28322	Mark Naughton
20092	Martin Dowd
35881	Mary Gorde and Annie Moloney
17817F	Mary Noone
29914	Mary Scott
25167	Michael G. Kelly
31655	Michael Breheny and Evelyn Breheny
17133	Michael Casserly

19149	Michael Finnerty
23388	Michael G. Dowd
17525	Michael Gill
25212	Michael J. Kelly
24197	Michael Larkin and Anna Maria Larkin
4451F	Michael Patrick Healy
20048	Michael Paul Finnerty
20048	Michael Paul Finnerty
17122F	Oliver Dempsey
31376	Patricia Brooks
25108F	Patrick Galvin
21702	Patrick Malley
9202F	Peter Feeney
18165	Peter Feeney
27868	Peter Rinn
27867	Peter Rinn
22001F	Peter Rinn
17258	Roscommon County Council
15747F	Roscommon County Council
33541	Seamus Dockery
25181	Stephen Darcy
21177	Thomas Breheny
23599	Thomas Coen
15881F	Thomas Galligan
18167	Thomas Galligan
18377	Thomas Galligan
26000	Thomas Joseph Biesty
11934F	Thomas Joseph Durr
22000F	Thomas Moylan
25053	Thomas Moylan
3039F	Thomas Moylan
6986	Trustees of the Congested Districts Board

B: STAKEHOLDERS

Names and Organisations

National Monuments Section, Department of Environment Local Government and Heritage
Office of Public Works, Department of Finance
Eamonn P. Kelly, Keeper of Irish Antiquities, National Museum of Ireland
Nollaig McKeon, Heritage Officer, Roscommon Co. Co.
Prof. John Waddell, Head of Department, Archaeology Department, NUI Galway
Dr. Kieran O'Connor, Lecturer, Archaeology Department, NUI Galway
Joe Fenwick, Field officer, Archaeology Department, NUI Galway
Carolyn Candish, Manager, Cruaghan Aí Visitor Centre
Peter Wrafter, Assistant CEO, Roscommon County Enterprise Board
Dr. Niall Brady, Project director, The Discovery Programme
Brian Shanahan, The Discovery Programme
Rory McNeary, The Discovery Programme
Michael McDonagh, Project Archaeologist, National Roads Authority
Mark Keaveny, Engineer, National Roads Authority
Celine Greaney, Engineer, National Roads Authority
Fr. Austin McKeon, Parish Priest, Tulsk Action Group
Jim Ganly, President, Roscommon Historical & Archaeological Society
Oliver Burke, Chief Agricultural Officer, Teagasc
Ian Doyle, Archaeology Officer, The Heritage Council
Prof Michael Herity
Ian Lumley, Heritage Officer, An Taisce
Tulsk National School
Mairead O'Shea, Journalist, Roscommon Herald
Mary O'Connell, Tonrevagh, Castlerae, Co. Roscommon
P. O'Connor-Nash, Clonalis House, Castlerae, Co. Roscommon
Prof Mairin Ni Dhonnchadha, Depart of Irish, NUI Galway

APPENDIX 6

Consultation Meeting, 22nd November 2006

1 Attendees

Landowners Meeting

Patrick Bewley
John DeNash
Martin Dowd
Padraig Durr
Tommy Farnell
Peter Feeney
Michael Finnerty
Gerard Healy
Michael Healy
Nancy Maxwell
Thomas Moylan
David O'Connor
Gabriel O'Grady
John Reynolds
Joseph Rorke
Michael Scott

Monese Fagan Roscommon Herald

Stakeholders Meeting

Niall Brady	Discovery Programme
Liam Byrne	Roscommon History Society
Laura Claffey	DoEHLG
Bernice Connor	Tulsk
Seamus Conway	Cruach Aí
Tracy Davis	Roscommon CC
Myra Duffy	Roscommon National School
Jim Ganly	
S Kavanagh	Roscommon CC
Mark Keareny	Roscommon National Roads Design Office
Austin McKeon	Cruach Aí
Michael Mulleady	

+ Landowners representatives

2 Submissions

Landowners Group Submission to Consultation Meeting

Submission on behalf of Concerned Rathcroghan Land Owners Group

**To: Oxford Archaeology Team
Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government**

On behalf of the Concerned Rathcroghan Land Owners Group and Committee we would like to welcome the Oxford Archaeological Study Group to our locality and hope we can be of assistance in their endeavours over the up coming months. Unfortunately due to a number of mitigating factors for landowners our compliance with any findings, recommendations or Conservation Policy Implementation have been called greatly into doubt, due to our very well founded concerns on issues such as planning, future farm planning methods, road improvements and an overall lack of a clear, transparent, fair and viable management plan for the complex as a whole unit over the foreseeable future.

We here in Rathcroghan are proud of our area and for generations have respected, conserved and strived to maintain all our monuments locally which is testament to the fact of their excellent condition to the present day, despite being in an area of intense agricultural activity. This happy medium of co-existence has worked in harmony with housing rights, access for study groups, grazing of cattle, field walks by tourists and general sightseers without any hostility or local disapproval.

However we now find ourselves in the situation where our basic constitutional rights are being threatened by faceless bureaucrats who feel that for them, a blanket ban on Planning and restructuring of Farming Practices in the area is the way forward. We are here today in an effort to create a process whereby the interest of all parties concerned can be accommodated side by side.

The main issues of concern may be summarised as follows:

▪ **Planning:**

A ridiculous situation has been allowed to develop where despite County Council Planning Permission approval being obtained, it is then revoked by An Bord Pleanala following an appeal from the Department of Environment Heritage Section. A way has to be found whereby landowners needs can be accommodated on their holding.

▪ **Farming Practice:**

From a farming point of view any attempt to fence off Ring Forts, erect public walkways and signs, promote tourist influx, etc.... all have an intrusive encroachment on peoples privacy and day to day lives. Suitable compensation will have to be forthcoming before any of these proposals can become actual prospects.

Submission on behalf of Concerned Rathcroghan Land Owners Group continued

▪ **New School**

A new school has been sanctioned for development in the centre of the complex by the Government. The first steps of this building plan have been passed by the Office of Public Works.

- How can this be a viable project given the current situation where nobody can build a new house in the environs of this school?
- Where will the pupils come from to attend it?

▪ **Infrastructure:**

We in the area have also been left behind in the dark ages in terms of the infrastructure we are served by. We refer specifically to the state of the N5 Dublin – Ballina Road. Despite the road having undergone massive improvements over the last number of years, its worst and most dangerous stretch is through Rathcroghan. Accidents occur on a weekly basis in this area especially on the stretch of road encompassing Rathcroghan Crossroads.

While at the same time, in Meath the Government can justify routing the new M3 Motorway through the Tara Complex which is world renowned. This is just another glaring contradiction and inexplicable fact of our predicament.

We want to make it clear we have no axe to grind with Oxford Archaeology. However this is the situation we find ourselves in and as such, access onto our lands will be severely prohibited until such a time as the Minister Mr. Dick Roche and the Department of Environment (and it might be no harm to remind him that there is an election coming up!) show us their proposals in full and not deny us access, keeping us completely in the dark as they have done with this Report.

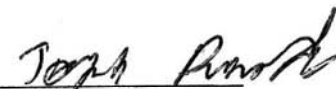
To conclude we want to work with people not against them. Making a no-go area out of our locality for future generations is not an option. We respect and cherish our History but embrace the future also. This is an opportunity to explore pending applications before the local authority and how best to achieve a successful result for all concerned. We trust our point of view is forthcoming and you will take on board our steadfast concerns.

Once again thank you for listening to our issues and we trust that your time in the Area will be pleasant and enjoyable.

Submission on behalf of Concerned Rathcroghan Land Owners Group continued

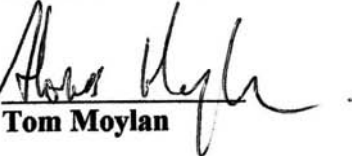
For and on behalf of Concerned Rathcroghan Land Owners Group:

Chairman: 
Padraig Duff

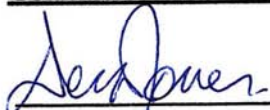
Vice Chairman: 
John Reynolds

Secretary: 
Gerard Healy

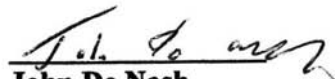
Vice Secretary: 
David O'Connor

Treasurer: 
Tom Moylan

Committee Members


Declan Jones


Gabriel O Grady


John De Nash

Date: 22nd November 2006

Submission from the National University of Ireland, Galway to Consultation Meeting

Could you read out this statement from Professor John Waddell, Joe Fenwick and myself at the meeting tomorrow.

We would like to apologise for not being at the meeting today.

We believe that the present Rathcroghan Conservation Plan being prepared by the Oxford Archaeological Unit should include a management plan which deals with the questions of access to the monuments and the thorny problem of planning permission for houses.

(1) We believe that farmers who allow people access onto their monuments should be adequately compensated.

(2) We also would feel that farmers should be allowed to build houses for members of their families in the parts of Rathcroghan that are not archaeologically sensitive. Such areas need to be defined.

(3) The Carns/Carnfree area should be included within any future Management Plan of Rathcroghan, as this is also highly important from an archaeological point of view.

yours,

Professor John Waddell.

Dr. Kieran O'Conor

As sent to Seamus Conway, 21/11/06

Submission from Michael Mulleady to the Consultation Meeting

A committee was formed in Rathcroghan some years ago with a view to providing a car park and walkway to facilitate visitors to the site and enable them to walk easily to a number of the forts etc. The then O.P.W. (Office of Public Works), now Dúchas, I think, agreed to help us with the project. As a result a car/bus park was acquired. They also agreed to provide a walkway to the sites noted on the accompanying map. The walkway was to be a metre wide, fenced on either side (marked on map). People keeping within the walkway would be covered by insurance. Plaques detailing the site to be provided. A problem arose with "Rights-of-way". This dragged on so long with no visible progress, so interest waned and died out - almost. I was the local teacher there for 38 years. The committee were all ex-pupils of mine except one. Seeing the article in the Roscommon Herald aroused my interest once again. I feel it is a worthwhile project and if the "Rights-of-way" problem could be solved, it would add greatly to visitors to Cruachan Aí's enjoyment. I hope to be at the 2 pm session, but cannot make the 11 am one 22 Nov.

Regards

Michael Mulleady

P.S. We reckoned the walk would take one hour approx. Bus could drop visitors at car park and pick them up at Rathnadtarbh.

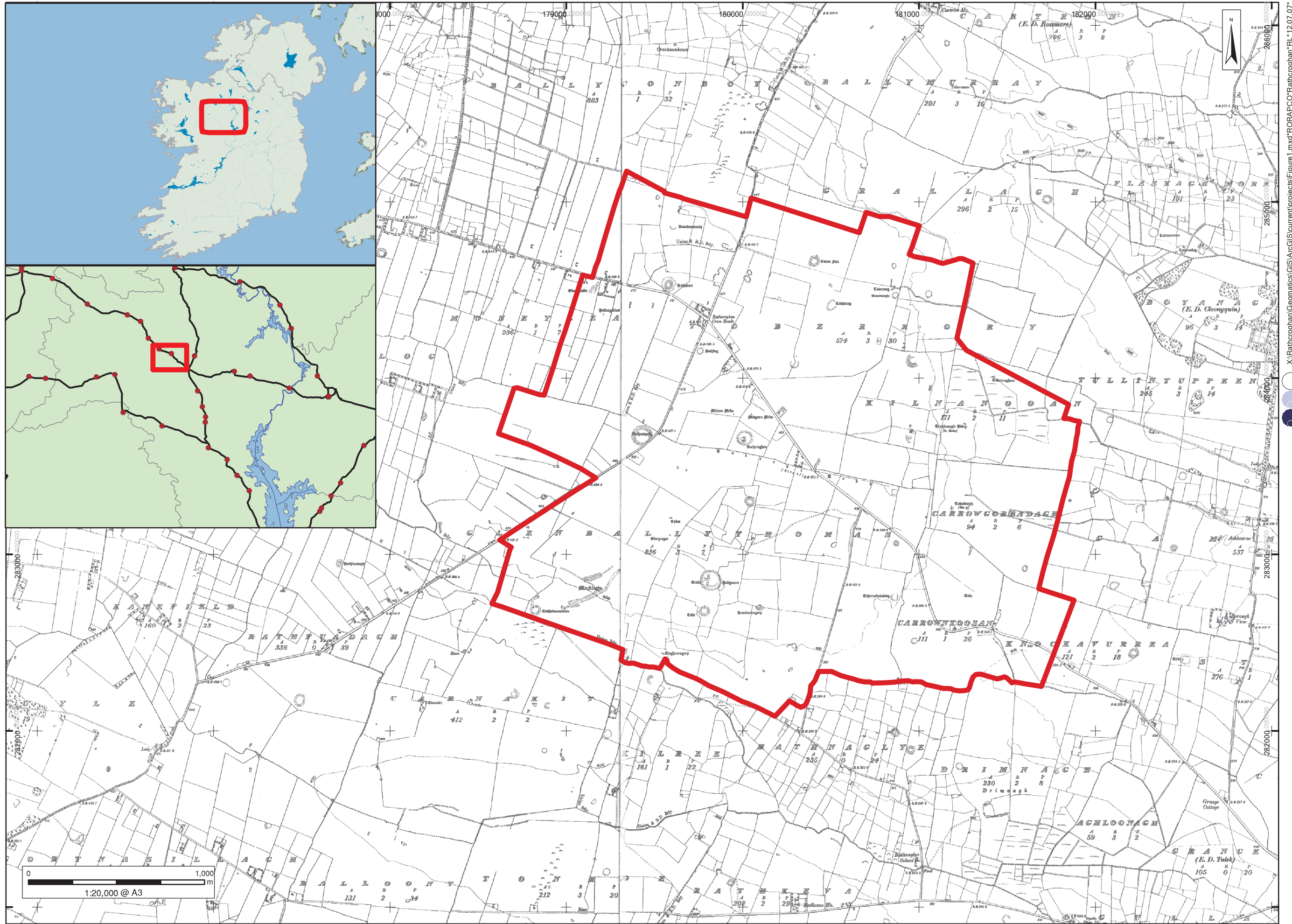
The map of the suggested walkway is shown on Figure 11.

APPENDIX 7

Issues Raised by Landowners in 2004

One meeting of local landowners held in December 2004 concluded that an agreement could only be established if the following actions were implemented:

- The current facilities in the Rathcroghan car park were upgraded and toilet/shelter provided for visitors
- The landowners should be directly involved with drafting any future proposals
- Landowners in the area must be able to gain planning permission to build homes for their families, farmers and others working in the area
- The area should be designated as an area of special conservation
- There should be a system of compensation for landowners allowing access to monuments on their land and insurance cover should be provided.



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Figure 1: Location map



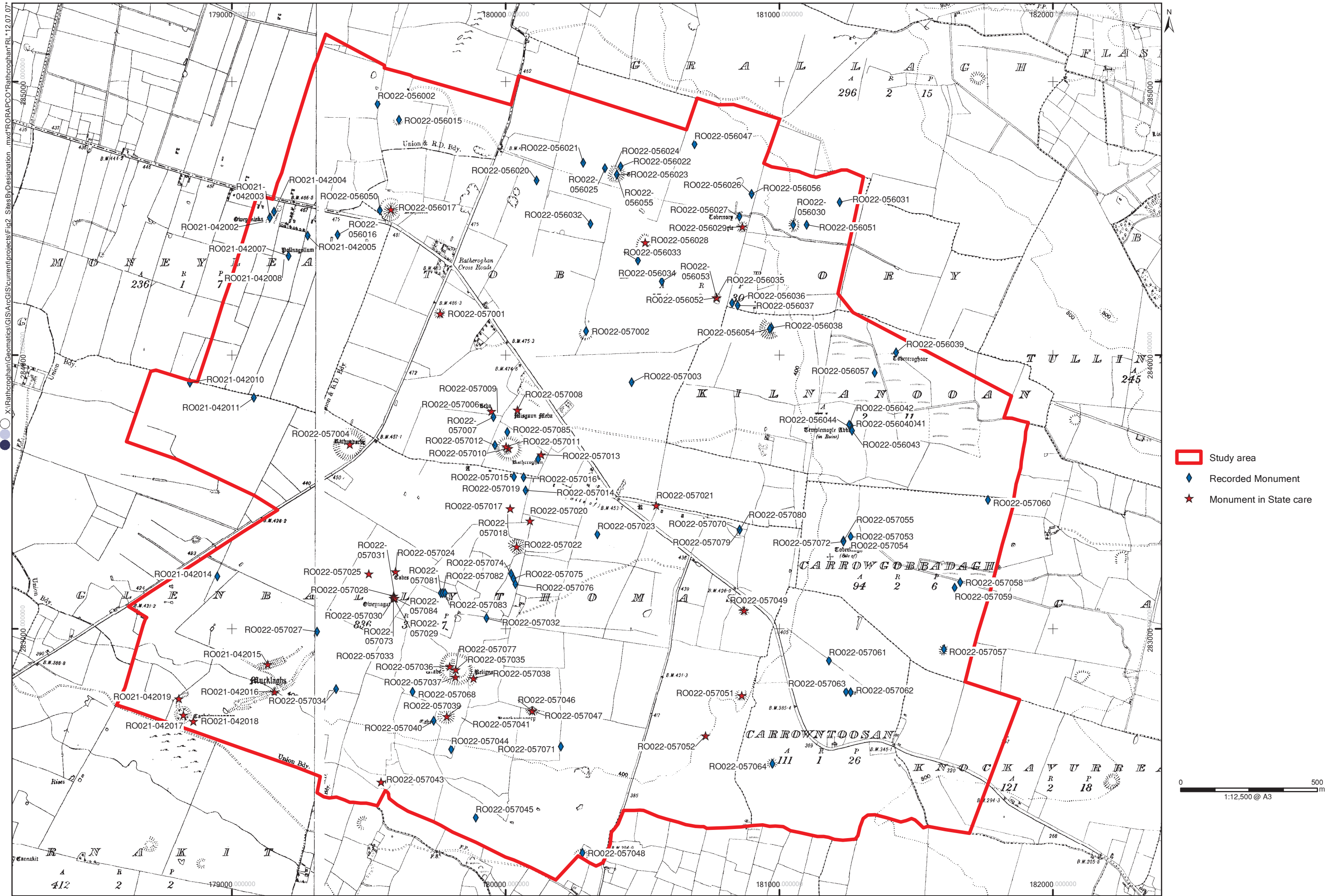


Figure 2: Rathroghan monuments - designations



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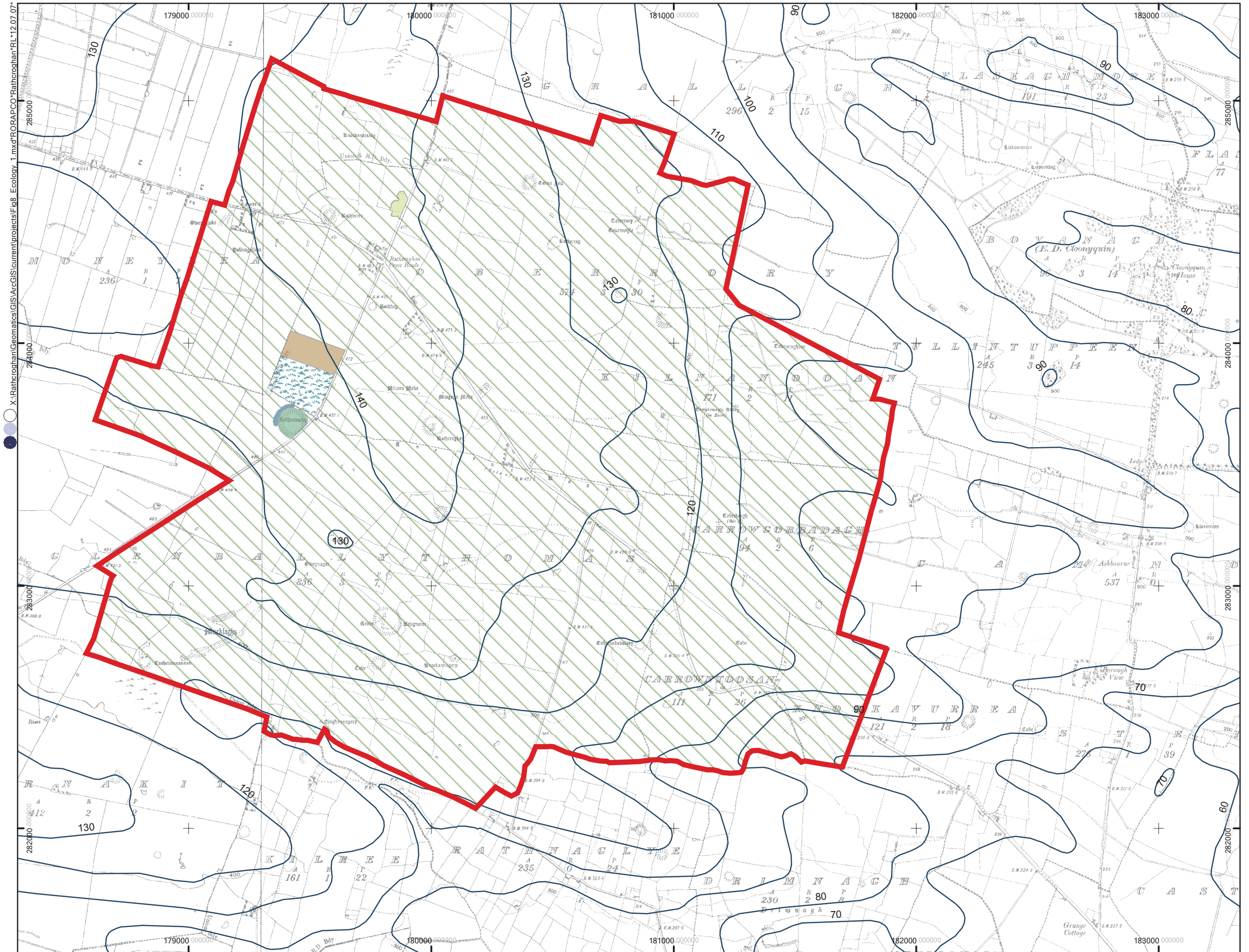
Figure 6: Aerial photographs showing current land use



- Study Area
- ◆ Registered Monument
- ★ Monument in State care
- Government
- 1 Biesty
- 2 Brady
- 3 Breheny
- 5 Carney
- 6 Casserly
- 7 Coen
- 8 Darcy
- 11 Devaney
- 14 Dowd
- 15 Durr
- 16 Faughnan
- 17 Feeny
- 18 Finnerty
- 19 Fleming
- 20 Francombe
- 21 Galligan
- 22 Galvin
- 25 Gorde
- 27 Gunning
- 28 Healy
- 29 Jones
- 30 Kelly
- 31 Larkin
- 32 Malley
- 33 Maxwell
- 34 Moylan
- 36 Noel
- 37 Noone
- 38 O'Connor
- 39 O'Grady
- 41 Rinn
- 42 Rorke
- 43 Ross
- 44 Scott
- 45 Sharky
- 46 Spellman
- 47 Taylor
- Landowner currently unknown

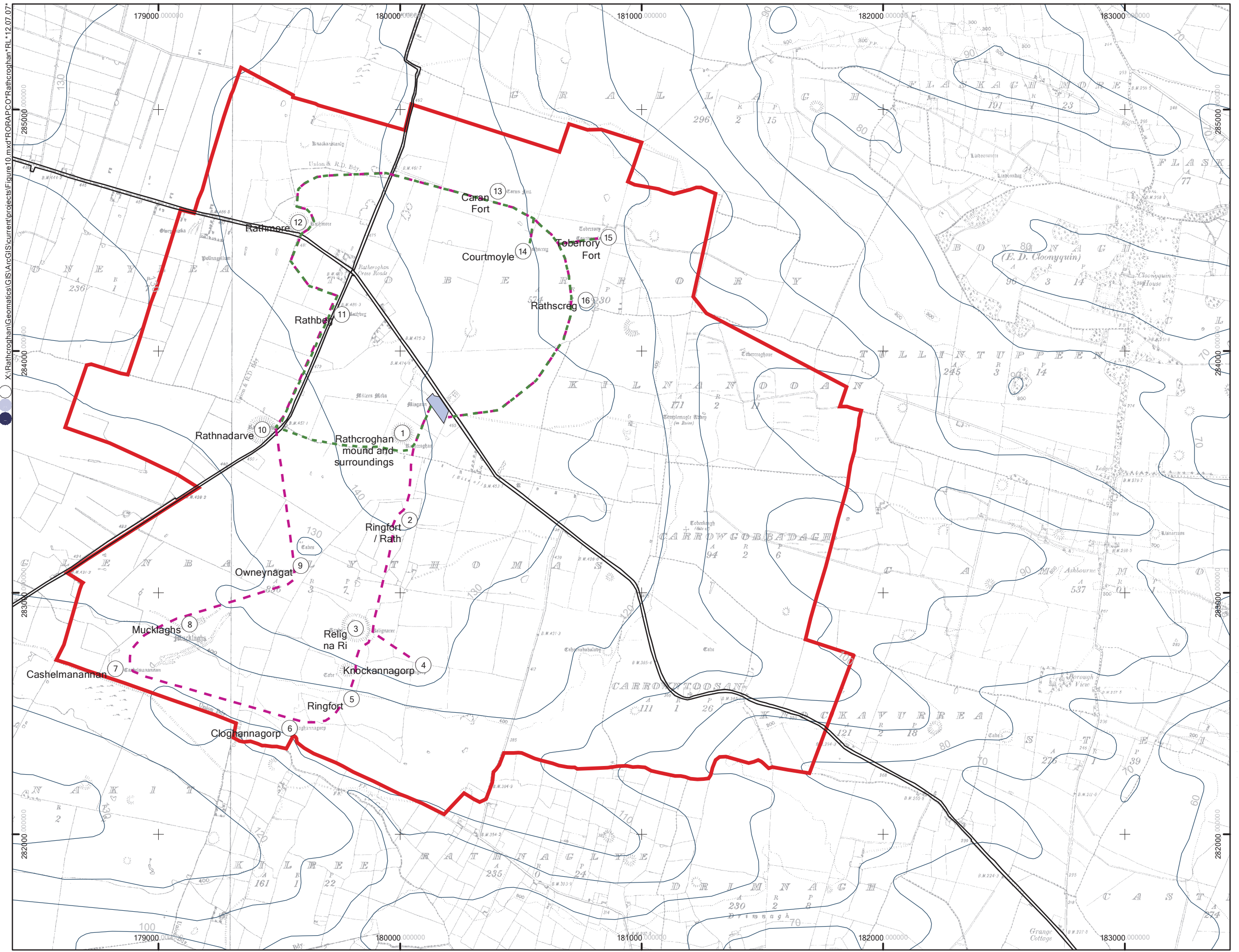


Figure 7: Landownership



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Figure 8: Ecological areas



N

- Study Area
- Contours
- Long Walk
- Short Walk
- Roads
- Car Park

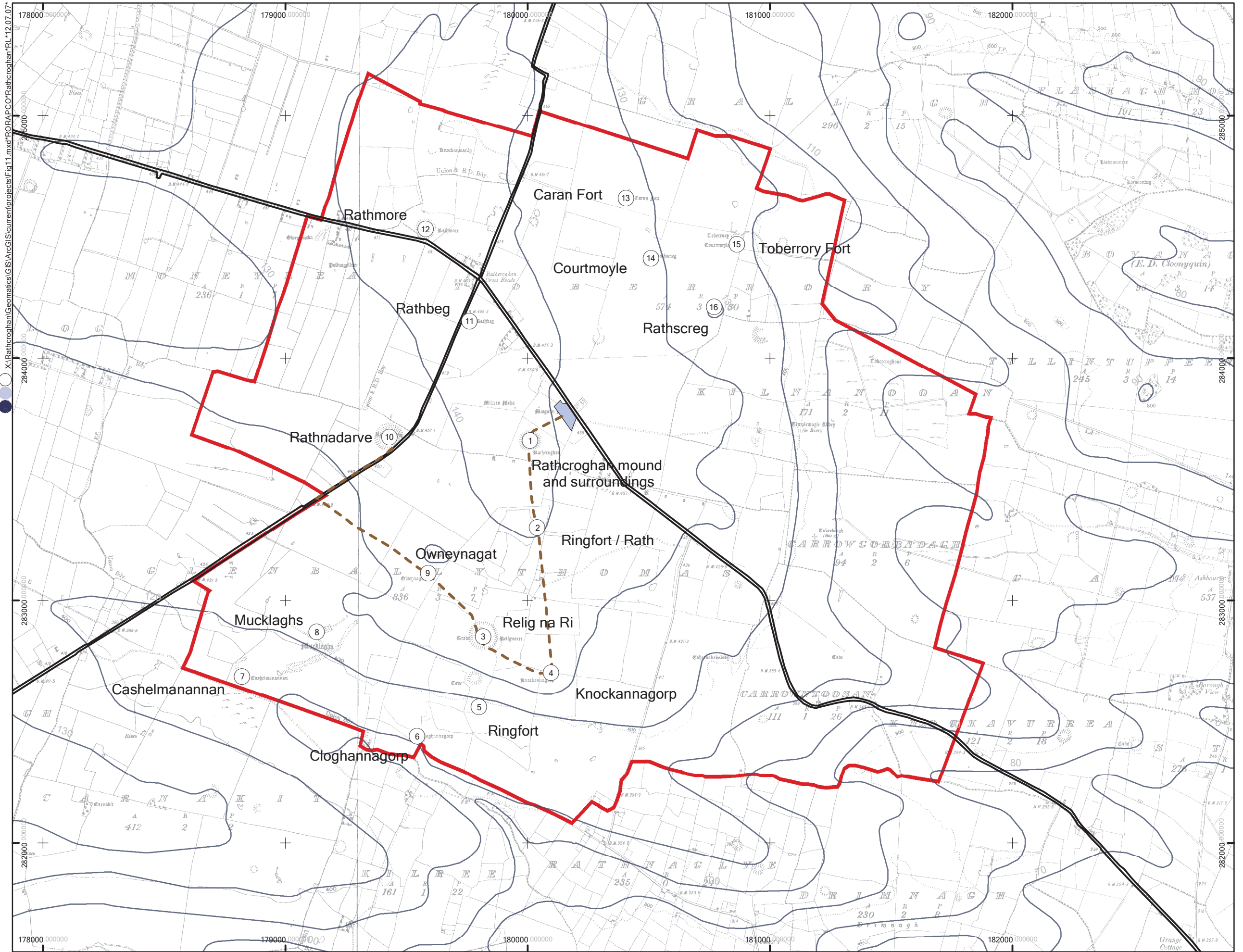
- 1 Rathcroghan mound and surroundings
- 2 Ringfort / Rath
- 3 Relig na Ri
- 4 Knockannagorp
- 5 Ringfort
- 6 Cloghannagorp
- 7 Cashelmanannan
- 8 Mucklaghs
- 9 Owneynagat
- 10 Rathnadarve
- 11 Rathbeg
- 12 Rathmore
- 13 Caran Fort
- 14 Courtmoyle
- 15 Toberory Fort
- 16 Rathscrag

0 500 m

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Figure 10: Suggested access routes



- Conservation Area
- Contours
- Local Prop_walk
- Roads
- Car Park
- ① Rathcroghan mound and surroundings
- ② Ringfort / Rath
- ③ Relig na Ri
- ④ Knockannagorp
- ⑤ Ringfort
- ⑥ Cloghannagorp
- ⑦ Cashelmanannan
- ⑧ Mucklaghs
- ⑨ Owneynagat
- ⑩ Rathnadarve
- ⑪ Rathbeg
- ⑫ Rathmore
- ⑬ Caran Fort
- ⑭ Courtmoyle
- ⑮ Toberrory Fort
- ⑯ Rathscreg

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Figure 11: Possible access route previously proposed by Local Group



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