



Archaeological Monument - Copes Mountain, Sligo

2.6 Archaeological Heritage

2.6.1 Analysis

"The archaeological heritage of an area includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other kind as well as their contexts, whether situated on land or under water."¹⁶

The area covered by the Sligo City and Environs Development Plan is rich in archaeological interest, containing traces of social activity dating from 7000 B.C, including significant remains from the pre-Christian period. The most significant element among these is the city of Sligo itself and the megalithic cemetery at Carrowmore.

Sligo is the only city of archaeological importance in the county. The site of which has been the scene of human activity in Prehistoric, Early Historic, Medieval and post-Medieval times. The megalithic tomb in Abbeyquarter North is similar to those at Carrowmore and it indicates the presence of people in Sligo from the late fourth and early third millennium BC. The discovery of stray finds of bronze axeheads shows the continued presence of people in the area of today's city into the Bronze Age. However, from c. 1000 B.C. until the 12th century A.D., evidence relating to the activities of man in the urban area is lacking. Both documentary sources and known archaeological remains indicate that the city has been occupied continuously from c. 1188 to the present day.

With the exception of the Dominican friary and the Green Fort, all other standing archaeological remains pre 1640 within Sligo City have been removed. Although the destruction of buildings above ground has been substantial, the street pattern of the 17th century town is largely intact and archaeological deposits are likely to exist over a wide area.

The cluster of megalithic tombs at Carrowmore represents one of four major passage tomb cemeteries in Ireland. There are approximately 30 passage-tombs, which date from around 4000 BC or earlier, as suggested from excavations. This site formed an important ritual centre for the Stone Age inhabitants of the Cuil Irra (Knocknarea) peninsula and perhaps further a field. Monuments of later periods, barrows (earthen burial mounds) and ringforts occur in the vicinity of the cemetery area with a number of isolated passage-tombs on the eastern edge of Sligo City.

It will be an objective of the planning authority to secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in-situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally. This includes all remains and sites which might yet be undiscovered, as the Record of Monuments and Places is subject to ongoing continuous updating. (See Appendix E, Record of Monuments and Places).

In securing such preservation the planning authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, both in respect of whether or not to grant planning permission and/or in respect of any conditions to be applied to a permission.

The precise location of Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAP) and Monuments and Places included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) are identified on Maps 16 and 17 respectively. The Zone of Archaeological Potential within Sligo is based on the size of the town in 1689 and the area just outside the walls in order to allow for a possible fosse¹⁷.

¹⁶ European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (revised), Valletta 1992

¹⁷ A 'fosse' is an external ditch outside the medieval walls or embankment.

To the north of that zone around Holborn Hill, an area was included because the 'redoubt'¹⁸ shown on the 1689 map may still survive in the green of the housing estate which lies between Holborn Hill and Barrack Street. In addition, the area around the megalithic tomb in Abbeyquarter North has been identified as a ZAP, as has the area in the vicinity of the fine ringfort at Rathedmond.

Underwater archaeology may be another important aspect of Sligo's archaeological heritage as there is generally a high archaeological potential within maritime environments. Under the National Monuments Acts 1930-1994 all shipwrecks over one hundred years old, including underwater archaeological structures, features and objects are protected. In addition remains of former bridges may be found in the Garvogue riverbed. The Record of Monuments and Places does not include all underwater archaeological sites, as a result development could potentially impact negatively on underwater cultural resources. Therefore the possible impacts on riverine, lacustrine, intertidal and sub-tidal environments by developments will be considered.

Any proposed developments that may (due to their location, size or nature) have implications for the archaeological heritage must be referred to Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands for comment. This applies to National Monuments in the care of the Minister, archaeological and architectural monuments and sites in the Record of Monuments and Places, the Register of Historic Monuments as well as Zones of Archaeological Potential in the historic town and the underwater archaeological heritage, including Historic Wrecks. It is the duty of the planning authority to oppose on archaeological grounds any works that are considered to be harmful to recorded monuments or the integrity of their setting.

2.6.2 Policies

It is the policy of the local authority to:

- Protect and preserve, where feasible, the archaeological and historical heritage of Sligo City and Environs.
- Support the County Sligo Heritage Plan 2002-2006.
- Ensure that all archaeological and historical remains are protected as required by the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.
- Have regard to Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAPs).
- Consult with Dúchas regarding any development proposal that might impact on a Recorded Monument or Site (RMS).
- Preserve and maintain the known existing archaeological monuments within Sligo and Environs and safeguard the integrity of archaeological sites and their settings, where practical and feasible.
- Protect, manage and improve access to and the understanding of monuments and archaeological sites and objects.
- Require, where feasible, the inclusion of known or possible archaeological sites (as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places) within open spaces (e.g. pocket parks) of developments.

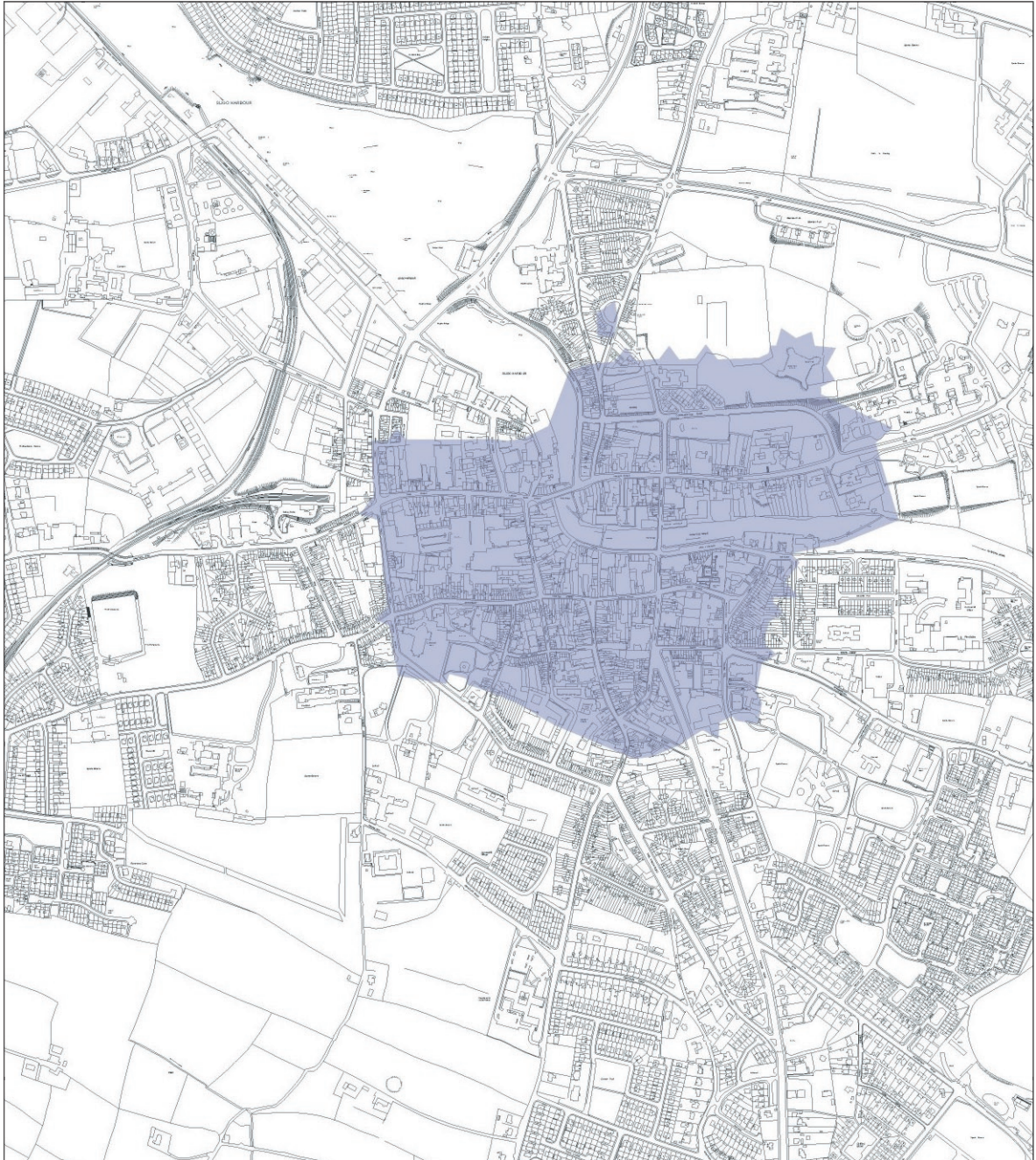
2.6.3 Objectives

It is an objective of the local authority to:

- A1** It is the objective of the local authorities to develop an Archaeological Heritage Park at Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery, with a strict control of further development at the park and its immediate vicinity.

¹⁸ A 'redoubt' is a defensive position outside of a fort used to slow the enemies advance and fort.

Map 16: Zones of Archaeological Potential, Sligo



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Map 17: Record of Monuments and Places

