DRAFT

Nomination of

The Monastic City of Clonmacnoise and its Cultural Landscape

For inclusion in the
WORLD HERITAGE LIST
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Executive Summary

This information, to be provided by the State Party, will be updated by the Secretariat following the decision by the World Heritage Committee. It will then be returned to the State Party confirming the basis on which the property is inscribed on the World Heritage List.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Party</th>
<th>Republic of Ireland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State, Province or Region</td>
<td>COUNTIES OFFALY, ROSCOMMON AND WESTMEATH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Property</td>
<td>THE MONASTIC CITY OF CLONMACNOISE AND ITS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographical coordinates to the nearest second</td>
<td>The centre of the site is Lat 53 deg 19 min 40 sec N / Long 7 deg 58 min 43 sec W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Textual description of the boundary (ies) of the nominated property</td>
<td>Existing designations have been consulted when drawing the proposed core and buffer zones. These include the Archaeological Registered Area (around the monastic site), SAC, NHA and SPA designations, along with the data on eskers (including the esker study undertaken by Offaly County Council). However, in some cases (especially the eskers) the existing designations do not fully cover the proposed core zone and the proposed zone covers areas which do not currently have protected designations. In addition, the cultural landscape of Clonmacnoise is not just confined to County Offaly but naturally extends into parts of Counties Roscommon and Westmeath. Including the callows in the core zone presents the challenge of deciding upon boundaries to the area south and north of the site along the River Shannon. To the south a boundary at the river crossing at Shannonbridge is suggested as there is a narrowing of the callows at this location. To the north the boundary is suggested at the north end of Long Island as this represents the limits of extensive callows around Clonmacnoise and is also the limit of recent grassland mapping by the Parks and</td>
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A4 (or “letter”) size map of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone (if present)

See Attached

Justification

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value
(text should clarify what is considered to be the outstanding universal value embodied by the nominated property)

The monastic city of Clonmacnoise is the finest example in the world of an early medieval Insular city. Unlike Iona or Lindisfarne, that were abandoned after Viking raids, Clonmacnoise continued to develop. However, it did not grow into a modern metropolis like its medieval rival, Armagh, declining in the late twelfth century, leaving a superb example of a relict monastic city.

Archaeological excavation has revealed evidence of craft and metal working, nucleation, and planned urban or semi-urban development of eighth/ninth century date on a larger scale than is apparent today in any other non-Viking Irish context. The urban development of Clonmacnoise is relatively early in the chronology of urban development outside the boundaries of the Old Roman Empire. No other locality can provide such an understanding of the development of urbanism generally in Atlantic Europe, as well as clarifying non-Viking urbanisation in an Irish context.

The relict monastic city of Clonmacnoise contains superlative examples of Insular art and architecture, exemplified by the stunning Cross of the Scriptures. Its archaeological and architectural importance is matched by an exemplary documentary record.

The landscape is one shaped by geological, glacial, fluvial and climatic events that have created a hugely diverse environment including active raised bog, fenland, eskers, callows and raised limestone pavement over a remarkably small area. This unique landscape includes many of the most important yet fragile and vulnerable habitats for the preservation of biodiversity in situ. Rare and endangered flora
Clonmacnoise

and fauna exist here. One essential reason for the survival of these species has been that this landscape has been maintained by human agency for hundreds of years.

The unique, flat and open landscape of Clonmacnoise with its small-scale variation of habitats, its unparalleled views, pilgrim’s routes and holy wells, constitutes an exceptional environment that is perceived of as sacral as well as earthly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria under which property is nominated (itemize criteria) (see Paragraph 77 of the Operational Guidelines)</th>
<th>(iv), (v)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name and contact information of official local institution/agency</td>
<td>Organization: Department of Environment. Heritage &amp; Local Government Address: Ardcavan Business Park, Ardcavan, Co. Wexford Official: Anne Costello Tel: +353 - 1-8883061 Fax: +353 – 53 9185069 E-mail: <a href="mailto:anne.costello@environ.ie">anne.costello@environ.ie</a> Web address: <a href="http://www.environ.ie">www.environ.ie</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Identification of the Property

1.a Country:
IRELAND

1.b State, Province or Region:
COUNTIES OFFALY, ROSCOMMON AND WESTMEATH

1.c Name of Property:
THE MONASTIC CITY OF CLONMACNOISE AND ITS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

1.d Geographical co-ordinates to the nearest second

The centre of the site is Lat 53 deg 19 min 40 sec N / Long 7 deg 58 min 43 sec W
1.e Maps and plans, showing the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

Figure 1 Location Map of Nominated Site
Figure 2 Map of Core and Buffer Zones

1.f  Area of nominated property (ha.) and proposed buffer zone (ha.)

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<table>
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<tr>
<td>Area of nominated property:</td>
<td>2,903.25ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffer zone</td>
<td>7,443.13ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,346.38ha</td>
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</table>
2. Description

2.a Description of Property

Site Location and Boundaries

The nominated Site, which is located close to the centre of Ireland, straddles the banks of the River Shannon in Counties Offaly, Roscommon and Westmeath. It is comprised of a relict monastic city (covered by a designated archaeological area that extends from St Ciarán’s Well on the west, to Bunthalla on the east) and its surrounding semi-natural landscape. This includes the River Shannon, the Shannon callows, raised bog, eskers, fenland and a section of raised limestone pavement, and the varied species that are contained in their different habitats.

The relict monastic city is located 12 km from the town of Athlone (14.5km downstream by boat) and 6.5 km north of the village of Shannonbridge, the two nearest crossing points over the River Shannon from east to west.

The core zone has to contain the area which has features that are representative of the cultural landscape of the proposed World Heritage Site. It need not include all extensive features around the site but must be large enough in area to include the most important features of authenticity and integrity.

Existing designations have been consulted when drawing the proposed core and buffer zones. These include the Archaeological Registered Area (around the monastic site), SAC, NHA and SPA designations, along with the data on eskers (including the esker study undertaken by Offaly County Council). However, in some cases (especially the eskers) the existing designations do not fully cover the proposed core zone and the proposed zone covers areas which do not currently have protected designations. In addition, the cultural landscape of Clonmacnoise is not just confined to County Offaly but naturally extends into parts of Counties Roscommon and Westmeath.

Including the callows in the core zone presents the challenge of deciding upon boundaries to the area south and north of the site along the River Shannon. To the south a boundary at the river crossing at Shannonbridge has been used as there is a narrowing of the callows at this location. To the north the boundary is suggested at the north end of Long Island as this represents the limits of extensive callows around Clonmacnoise and is also the limit of recent grassland mapping by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

UNESCO requires countries to define buffer zones around World Heritage Sites to protect the Outstanding Universal Value and the integrity of the property. The buffer zone itself does not contain any areas of Outstanding Universal Value. Buffer zones should have complimentary management and protection policies.

In the case of Clonmacnoise there are two critical considerations for defining the buffer zone:
• Hydrology
• Visual impact

Hydrology is important because of the dynamic link between the hydrology/hydrogeology of the callows, Mongan Bog, Finn Lough and the eskers with the River Shannon. In particular, the protection of the wetlands (callows, Mongan Bog and Finn Lough) will require the management of drainage (to control the drying of the wetlands) and run-off (to control nutrients etc) to/from the buffer zone. For example, drainage on Blackwater Bog may compromise the integrity of Finn Lough and Mongan Bog. For these reasons the buffer zone has been drawn to include the cut over bogs surrounding the core zone and any significant tributaries to the River Shannon near to the callows. In addition, agricultural land adjacent to the callows has also been included.

Visual criteria are also important because of the relative ‘openness’ of the landscape and the need to preserve vistas; especially from the monastic site and the eskers which are representative of the period when the site was in its heyday. Computer analysis of the digital terrain model prepared for the site indicates a prominent zone of visual influence from Clonmacnoise to the North West, crossing the River into County Roscommon. The zone of visibility from Clonmacnoise in this direction exceeds 5km and there may be a need to have planning policies in this part of the zone which reflect the potential visual impacts on the landscape. Visibility in the South East direction is more limited from Clonmacnoise (but would be greater from the eskers).

Description
The description begins with the extant buildings within the designated archaeological area, and then the landscape and its features in the core and buffer zones.

(NGR = National Grid Reference)

Temple Ciarán 9th-10th century
NGR 201000 230660
This is one of only six extant examples of the unique architectural type of the early Irish shrine chapel, probably the earliest mortared stone structures in Ireland, and of which Temple Ciarán is the only one to have a true-arched doorway: (The others are found at: Iona, Argyll; Ardmore Co. Waterford; Inismurray, Co. Sligo; Inchcleraun, Co. Longford; and Labbamolaga, Co. Cork). This shrine chapel, which works as a complementary space to the cathedral or damliag, is an example of the deliberate separation of reliquary and liturgical space practised by early Irish clerics of the eighth and ninth centuries (Ó Carragáin, 2003, 130).

Showing a quite distinct development of the cult of the relic in Ireland from that of contemporary Francia or England, Temple Ciarán derives rather from a deliberate spatial reinterpretation of the aedicule in Jerusalem. Indeed, it is explicitly compared to the tomb of Christ in a middle-Irish (c. twelfth-century) life of Ciarán. On a different axis
from the cathedral, it may also reflect the orientation of the earliest burials on the site, and the first congregational church, as it was built over what was later believed to be the burial place of St Ciarán himself.

Subsidence necessitated the rebuilding of the north wall in the nineteenth century, but should not be seen as prejudicing its authenticity. It is in fact an indicator of its continuing significance to the local populace as the burial place and shrine of St Ciarán, which led, until recent years, to the removal of clay from within the church to protect crops against pests (Manning, 2003, 71).

Points of Significance:
- There is a deliberate reference to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem
- The building is indicative of distinctive the early medieval Irish attitude towards death, burial, relics and resurrection.
- The building provides a living association with miraculous intervention of St Ciarán, the founding saint.

The Cathedral (damliag) 909 (also referred to as Temple Mac Dermot)

NGR 200978 230654

The largest building in the monastic complex, and situated at the heart of it, the building of this church by Flann mac Maelachlainn, (high king of Ireland 879-916) and Colmán (abbot of Clonmacnoise, d.926) is recorded in the annals in 909. This was one year after Flann’s defeat of king Cormac mac Cuilennáin of Munster, in the battle of Belach Mugna. With Cormac’s defeat, Flann’s claims to high kingship were transformed into political reality. Flann’s erection of the cathedral and high cross at Clonmacnoise immediately thereafter should be seen as an act of thanksgiving to God, a renewal of a covenant between the families of saint and patron, as well as an emblem of royal power and patronage (Manning, 1998, 71-4; Ó Carragáin, 2007, 105). Not only is the church the largest extant pre-Romanesque church in Ireland, but, despite some alterations in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fifteenth centuries, the core of the church and its unicameral appearance have been carefully and deliberately maintained, throughout both the medieval and modern period.

Although simple in appearance, the use of stone masonry at this date was highly charged, alluding to the Romanitas of the Irish church, as well as acknowledging the symbolic reading of the individual stones of which it was composed as the Christian congregation, which was a commonplace of Patristic exegesis (Ó Carragáin, 2005, 100-101). The unusual proportions of the first phase (4:7) are probably due to the significance of such numbers in Christian numerology (Manning, 1998, 77).

Alterations in the twelfth century included a new west door and east window, and a sacristy added to the south, also associated with royal patronage, although by kings of Connacht. In the thirteenth/fourteenth century the south wall was demolished and moved northward by two metres, probably due to structural problems, leaving the west doorway off-centre. Finally, in the fifteenth century, the eastern end of the cathedral was vaulted and a spectacular north doorway was added which has fine limestone carving in the
perpendicular gothic style, with deep and complicated mouldings around the pointed opening. The doorway is surmounted with high reliefs of three saints: Dominic, Patrick and Francis (although Francis’ head is missing) each identified by inscription. A further inscription reads: ‘DNS ODO DECANUS CLUAN ME FIERI FECIT’ indicating that a dean named Odo, who died in 1461, commissioned the work. This doorway is also known as the Whispering Door for a whisper travels from one side of it to the other. Legend says that this enabled lepers to give confession without the priests having to get too close to them.

The cathedral is the resting place of Turlough Ua Conchobair, King of Connaught (buried in 1156) and his son, Ruairi Ua Conchobair, the last high king of Ireland (interred in 1198). The latter abdicated and spent his final years in retirement in the Augustinian abbey of Cong. In 1207 his remains were disinterred and deposited in a stone shrine, and this may have been the occasion when the transitional west doorway and sacristy were added to the building.

Points of Significance:

• This is the largest extant pre-Romanesque church in Ireland, unique in having a firm documentary date and patron. It is representative of now-destroyed churches such as that at Armagh, which was probably the only pre-Romanesque Irish church to surpass it in size. It influenced other churches built shortly afterwards, such as Agha, Co. Carlow.

• It is the most spectacular example of royal patronage at a major ecclesiastical site through stone architecture.

• The careful preservation of most of its fabric throughout the Middle Ages is representative of the Irish attitude towards earlier structures as relics of the founding saints. As at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, (Manning, 2002) or Scattery, Co. Clare (Ní Ghrádaigh, 2006), the earlier stone church was preserved and rebuilt despite knowledge of new and innovative styles present elsewhere on the site in less important buildings (Ó Carragáin, 2007, 100-101).

• It is a representative example of the late Irish Gothic style (in terms of architectural sculpture).

The Cross of the Scriptures (909) and the other High Crosses

High Crosses are the primary surviving monumental works of Insular art and exist from the 7th century in Ireland, and were later seen in Scotland and the rest of Britain, especially Northumbria. High Crosses are, along with illuminated manuscripts like the Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow, Ireland’s greatest contribution to Western European art of the middle ages. Most Irish High Crosses have the distinctive shape of the ringed Celtic Cross, feature figural decoration and are usually larger and more massive than those elsewhere. Many more have survived in Ireland than in Britain, where most recorded crosses were destroyed or damaged by iconoclasm after the Reformation.

High crosses were status symbols, either for a monastery or for a sponsor or patron. The three high crosses now on display in the Visitor Centre originally stood at Clonmacnoise in a semi-circle to the west, south and north of the cathedral. The fragments of two other
crosses are among the cross-slab collection in the cross-slab building at the Site and a
further cross fragment is in the National Museum in Dublin. Due to deteriorating
environmental conditions that were damaging the stonework and because of their
importance as examples of Insular art, the three upstanding crosses were moved into the
nearby New Visitor Centre in 1992 to protect them for posterity. High quality replicas
cast from resin were placed on their original sites to maintain the spiritual and
architectural integrity of the Site.

The best known of the Clonmacnoise high crosses is the West Cross, the Cross of the
Scriptures, which is located directly in line with the west door of the cathedral. The Cross
was mentioned twice in the Annals of the Four Masters: first in 957 and later in 1060.
Standing at 13 ft high, the shaft and head of the cross is carved from one piece of
sandstone and this is slotted into the sandstone base which takes the form of a truncated
pyramid, decorated with figure sculpture on all four sides. A ring surrounds the junction
of the arms and shaft, as is usually the case with Irish ‘high crosses’ but in this instance
the arms have a unique upward tilt which lends lightness and vibrancy to the form.

The west face depicts soldiers guarding the tomb of Christ, the arrest of Christ, the
Flagellation and in the centre of the ring, the crucifixion. At the centre of the East face is
the Last Judgement, and at the top of the East shaft is a panel showing Christ with Peter
and Paul. The bottom scene on the east face panel has two interpretations: it is thought to
commemorate the foundation of Clonmacnoise depicting St Ciarán and Diarmuid, High
King of Ireland, setting the first stake of the church and is also interpreted as King Flann
and Abbot Colman erecting the corner post of the new church (this image from the cross
has been adopted as a logo by the Offaly Vocational Education Committee). The base is
ornamented with hunting scenes showing three riders facing left and two chariots facing
right. At the bottom of the shaft is an inscription, damaged in the past, which indicates
that a prayer be said for King Flann and Colmán, the Abbot who had the cross erected for
King Flann who died in 916.

The two other principal high crosses are earlier and represent earlier stages of the site’s
development as a centre of Christian kingship. The South Cross is also a ringed cross and
it originally stood at the south-west corner of Temple Dowling and is believed to be a
transitional cross. Although very similar to the Ahenny ornamental crosses (having
features apparently derived from metal-encased wooden crosses), it bears a crucifixion
scene on the west side of the shaft, marking a transition to the scriptural crosses. This
cross has many raised bosses and is also similar to the crosses at Iona in Scotland. A very
faint inscription suggests that it may have been commissioned by the father of King
Flann, Maelsechnaill Mac Maelruanaid, High King of Ireland from 846-862. This cross is
carved from one piece of sandstone and sits in a truncated pyramidal base. There is only
one figurative scene on this cross, the crucifixion on the west face, while the entire
surface is covered in panels of interlace, geometric ornament and spirals.

Only the shaft of the North Cross survives with the remains of a tenon at the top, over
which the head, with a corresponding mortise in its underside, would have fitted. Only
three sides of the shaft are decorated; the fourth side on the east is blank which leads to
speculation that it might have once stood against a building. The repertoire of ornament includes interlaced human figures, animals and panels with interlacing designs. This, together with two related fragments from the site, the shaft from Banagher, Co. Offaly and the cross from, Bealin, Co. Westmeath, are the products of one workshop and have been dated to around 800. The art work is typically Insular with interlaced human figures, animals and spiral motifs: the animals are redolent of those appearing on carved slabs in Scotland, while other aspects of the decoration, including the human figures, have parallels in the Book of Kells.

Excavation around the north cross in 1990 determined that the shaft was set in a large circular reworked sandstone millstone. It appears to have been shaped to take a box-like superstructure rising 0.3 metres above the present top of the base. Parallels for this feature are found at Iona, Scotland.

The layout of the three crosses is deliberate for they literally inscribe the whole monastic core with the sign of the cross and this (effectively) undisturbed scheme is unique amongst Insular high crosses. The worldwide importance of the Cross of the Scriptures was exemplified when Irish sculptor, Brendan McGloin, was commissioned by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Portland USA, to handcraft a full size replica of the Clonmacnoise Cross of the Scriptures. The 13 foot, 5 tonne sandstone cross was completed in 2007 and shipped from Donegal to Portland, Oregon, where it will stand as a Famine memorial.

Points of Significance:

- In conjunction with the cathedral, the Cross of the Scriptures is a unique claim to high kingship validated by the community of St Ciarán, and implicitly by Ciarán himself. The representation of Flann and Colmán, or their ancestors Diarmaid mac Cerbaill and Ciarán, driving in the corner post of the church, is a unique representation on an Irish scriptural cross of either a contemporary scene, or one from the founding saint’s life.
- The Cross of the Scriptures is a representative example of the tenth-century Irish high crosses ornamented with multi-figural panels, considered to be the finest expression of monumental stone carving from the decline of the Roman Empire to the revival of sculpture in eleventh-century Europe with the beginnings of the Romanesque style.
- Artistically the Cross of the Scriptures it is one of the masterpieces of its time – a uniquely accomplished piece of stone sculpture in a tenth-century European context. It combines complexity of scriptural iconography, with lively inventiveness of detail and overall beauty of composition. It is unusual although not unique in that we know that it was referred to as *cros na screaptra*, or ‘the cross of the scriptures’ as early as the eleventh century (*Chronicon Scottorum*, 1081).
The Round Tower, 1124 (also known as O’Rourke’s Tower)

NGR 200937 230669

Round towers are early medieval stone towers of a type found mainly in Ireland; around 120 examples are thought once to have existed. Most are now damaged or incomplete, while eighteen to twenty are in a good state of preservation across Ireland. There are also three round towers in north-eastern Scotland: the Brechin Round Tower, the Abernethy Round Tower, and the Muthill Round Tower, and one on the Isle of Man. The purpose and function of the round tower have been much disputed, but it is thought they were principally bell towers as their Irish name, cloigthech, or bell-house, confirm. Although being chiefly associated with Insular Christianity, they imitated the continental European style of bell tower which was popular at the time. Generally found in the vicinity of a church or monastery, the door of the tower faces the west doorway of the church.

The round tower at Clonmacnoise built on high ground in the north-west corner of the monastic complex and to the north-west of the cathedral, is a twelfth-century tower, dated by annalistic evidence to 1124 when it was finished by Gillachrist Ua Maoileóin, successor of Ciarán, and Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, and aspirant to the high kingship of Ireland. It is 5.6 metres in diameter at the base and tapers evenly towards the present top which is just over 19 metres high, but is missing about one third of its original height and its conical cap. It was struck by lightning in 1135 and the reconstructed upper three metres probably dates to the later medieval period. It is composed of well-shaped rectangular grey limestone blocks (which were quarried at the nearby Rocks of Clorhane) to the level of the bell-storey windows where the late medieval work uses smaller and more irregular stone.

As is common with the majority of such towers, the doorway is well above ground level (in this case 3.3 metres) and faces southeast. The arch is beautifully cut of nine matching stones resting on transitional stones that project slightly into the doorway and above the five jambstones on either side. All stones carry through the entire depth of the wall. There are 10 windows. One lintelled window to the northwest is one level above the doorway and another lintelled window is situated to the north facing the River Shannon. The other eight reconstructed windows, all lintelled, are at the bell-storey level facing the cardinal compass points and opposing points between. The tower was re-roofed in the 1980s and fixed ladders were inserted between the floors.

Points of Significance:

- The Round Tower is a representative example of the round tower, an Insular Christian architectural form that has become synonymous with Ireland.
- It is demonstrative of the continuing importance to any contender for the high kingship of Ireland, of the acknowledgement of the community of Clonmacnoise.
**Nuns’ Church, 1167**

NGR 201502 230888

This church was completed by Derbforgaill (1109-93) in 1167. Daughter of the king of Mide (Meath), and wife of Tigernán Ua Ruairc of Bréifne, Derbforgaill’s abduction by the king of Leinster, Diarmait Mac Murchada, during a raid in 1152 has, since the twelfth century, been seen as one of the key reasons for the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland, and the end of the Gaelic order. According to the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, Diarmait Mac Murchada ‘kept her for a long space to satisfy his insatiable, carnall (sic) and adulterous lust’. She was returned to her husband the following year but he never forgave the insult, and, when the opportunity arose in 1166, Ua Ruairc and his allies drove Mac Murchada out of his kingdom into exile. Mac Murchada then enlisted the aid of Henry II of England to regain his kingdom, and this precipitated the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169.

Although recent scholarship has demonstrated that Derbforgaill’s role in this affair was both more complex, and less melodramatic than has been depicted, she remains, in the popular imagination, one of the key figures responsible for Ireland’s so-called 800 years of oppression. Overby (2008) has demonstrated that this is partially responsible for the very paltry amount of scholarship on the Nuns’ Chapel.

The Nuns’ Church itself is significant as one of the only three Hiberno-Romanesque churches in Ireland which have a documentary dating, and is therefore very important in elucidating the chronology of the style. It is also the only complete extant Hiberno-Romanesque church to show female regal patronage. Furthermore, it demonstrates the continuing relation between the royal family of Mide (the Uí Maeleachlainn) and Clonmacnoise. Significantly, it is also the site of the introduction of the first non-Irish order to Clonmacnoise, the Arroasian canonesses.

The path leading to the Nun’s Church marks the start of the Pilgrim’s Road, an ancient route that traverses the lee of an esker. One other pre-Romanesque church is preserved in the same enclosure and forms a part of the south wall of the site, and might be the stone church in the Cemetery of the Nuns which, according to the annals, was burned in 1082. Part of the original enclosure was preserved until the 1860s.

The conservation and reconstruction work carried out at the Nuns’ Church in 1865 by the Revd. James Graves is considered a key early example of best practice in architectural reconstruction, especially in the deliberate distinction between replacement stone and original architectural sculpture.

**Points of Significance:**

- The Nun’s Church is a unique Irish example of female regal architectural patronage that is known elsewhere (e.g. Freshford, Co. Kilkenny – doorway only remaining; Derry, Co. Derry) but through documentary evidence only.
- It is a key representative example of the Hiberno-Romanesque style.
- It has a close connection with significant events in Irish history (the movement of peoples).
- It is significant for the history of architectural conservation in Ireland and Britain.
- It is a unique remaining representative example of a subsidiary female enclosure and group of churches in an early Christian monastic landscape in Ireland. At Armagh such subsidiary enclosures are known from the historical record but are no longer extant.

**Temple Finghin, c.1167 (also known as McCarthy’s Church)**

NGR 200995 230730

Temple Finghin is unusual in showing the integration of a round tower, thought to date from around 1160-70, into the plan of what would otherwise have been a reasonably standard bicameral building, despite a south doorway rather than the almost universal west doorway. In this respect it shows a deliberate reference to Cormac’s Chapel at Cashel 1127-34, (usually considered as the key building in the introduction of the Romanesque style to Ireland), but filtered through a second generation of extremely conservative Irish patrons and builders.

The Romanesque chancel arch appears to have been damaged by fire at some stage and its present inner order is a later limestone replacement. Often called the second round tower of Clonmacnoise, it is 16.7 metres high with a diameter of almost 4 meters at the base. The conical cap, with its unusual herringbone pattern, was taken down and reset by the Office of Public Works in 1879-80. The tower has a door at ground level with no indications that the usual raised door ever existed. Also unusual is the lack of the traditional four bell-storey windows, as there are just the two at this level - to the north and south - and they are noticeably lower than the usual bell-storey windows of other towers. The five windows in the drum are all situated in the south side of the tower. Most of these windows are either arched or in a recessed arched surround. The window built into the west façade belonged originally to the late twelfth-century alterations to the cathedral/damliag.

It was the vandalism of Temple Finghin chancel arch, and the crosses at Clonmacnoise, described at the time as ‘irreparable’ which led the Kilkenny Archaeological Society to instigate an investigation into the identity of the perpetrator, and subsequently to support a case in the courts against the him. In 1864, the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland raised funds to help with the prosecution of John Glennon, for wanton vandalism of this church. The case fell through but it was a key test case for legislation for the protection of public monuments in the United Kingdom, which had previously not been applied outside of a museum context.

**Points of Significance:**

- This is a unique example of native architectural innovation in Ireland in a pre-Norman context: combining the quintessentially Irish form of the round tower with a church ornamented in the Hiberno-Romanesque style.
- It played a key role in the application of protective State legislation to standing buildings.
**The Cross-slabs: 8th -12th Century**

Clonmacnoise has the largest and most remarkable collection of pre-Norman cross-slabs in Europe. Over 600 have been catalogued ranging in date from the 8th-12th century. The slabs are almost all made of sandstone (sourced in all likelihood from nearby Bloomhill) and are elaborately carved with crosses demonstrating that here was a school of craftsmen at Clonmacnoise carving these slabs over a number of centuries. Generally the stone is not shaped or dressed but is carved on a natural and sometimes uneven surface. Almost a third of the Clonmacnoise cross-slabs have an inscription asking for a prayer for the person commemorated; some individuals can therefore be identified in Irish chronicles, thus giving dates to the slabs. The inscriptions are in Irish in what is known as Insular script, requesting a prayer to be said for a named individual.

The earliest slabs, some possibly as early as the 7th century, have either small outline crosses or a simple cross at the beginning of the inscription (known as an initial cross). A fine example of this group and one demonstrating ‘scholastic Ogham’ of the type found in manuscripts, has the name Colmán after an initial cross, followed by the word *bocht* (poor), written in the Ogham script on a line inscribed on the face of the stone.

Crosses in square or rectangular frames are common and date mainly from the 8th and 9th centuries. Another distinctive group are the ringed crosses that also date from the 9th century. In the 10th and 11th centuries, crosses with expanded terminals became common and some of the finest slabs in the Clonmacnoise collection are of this type. A small and representative number of cross-slabs are on permanent display in the visitor centre while the remainder are stored in a purpose built unit on site.

**Points of Significance:**
- This is the largest collection of early Christian/medieval cross-slabs in Atlantic Europe.
- They are indicative of large-scale ongoing industrial/craft activity over several centuries.
- They are the material representation of Clonmacnoise’s role as the royal necropolis of Ireland in the Christian period.

**Temple Melaghlin/Temple Rí, c.1200**

NGR 201000 230640

Located to the east of the cathedral, this building is interesting in showing the continuing association of the Ua Maeleachlainn kings of Mide, with Clonmacnoise, even after their aspirations to power were much diminished. It is of two periods: the earliest being Transitional in style and dating to the early thirteenth century with modifications in the later medieval period. It has fine late 12th/early 13th century east windows.

**Points of Significance:**
- The very plain, but elaborately moulded east windows of this church are typical of the so-called ‘School of the West’. They are representative of a key phase of late Romanesque/early Gothic Transitional style unique to Ireland.
**Temple Kelly, c.1167**

NGR 200995 230667

Only part of the footprint of this church remains. Its possible importance lies in the fact that documentary evidence suggests that it replaced a wooden structure in 1167, indicative of much building activity in the later twelfth century at Clonmacnoise, and perhaps the end of the wooden tradition of ecclesiastical buildings here. This is possibly the church noted in the annals as having been patronised by Conchobhar Ua Ceallaigh in 1167.

*Points of Significance:*
- It is the possible site of an earlier, but substantial, wooden church, the ‘dairthech’.

**Temple Connor, c.1200**

NGR 200973 230704

Situated on low ground, to the north of the cathedral, Temple Connor appears to have been connected with the O’Connors of Connaught. It is a plain and much-modified church, with Transitional features, dating to c.1200. It has been in use as a Church of Ireland place of worship since the mid-eighteenth century.

*Points of Significance:*
- It remains an active Church of Ireland place of worship, a reminder that although Clonmacnoise is a relict monastic landscape, it still holds considerable religious significance.

**Temple Dowling, 10th c., 1689 (formerly known as Temple Hurpan)**

NGR 200980 230630

This church includes part of a pre-Romanesque build, extended in 1689 by Edmund Dowling of Clonalare. In his extension he included (non-functional) antae, the projecting side walls typical of the pre-Romanesque style in Ireland, in a conscious archaism to match those surviving at the east end of the church. Manning (2003, 80) has noted that this rebuilding ‘is particularly interesting and is indicative of the optimism of a prosperous Catholic tenant that the rule of the Catholic King James II (deposed in England in 1688) would prevail at least in Ireland.’

The church was later further extended by the addition of a separate eastern chamber, probably largely for burial purposes, now denominated Mac Laffey’s Church.

*Points of Significance:*
- It indicates continuity of tradition of the preservation of venerable structures through to the modern period.
- It demonstrates the continuity of the tradition of burial.
- It illustrates the historiographical tradition of interpreting Clonmacnoise as expressive of national aspirations.
The Old Burial Ground and New Graveyard

The graveyards are an integral part of the authenticity of the site. People believe that St Ciarán’s burial at Clonmacnoise ensures that all those interred with him will avail of his intervention and thereby gain rapid entry from this world to that most wished-for otherworld, the Christian heaven. The Old Burial Ground dates from the mid-6th century. The graveyards are a part of the sacral landscape, for people from Clonmacnoise parish and places well beyond Co. Offaly desire to be interred at the sanctified location where the body of St Ciarán lies.

In 1955 the core of the monastic enclosure, with the exception of Temple Connor, was transferred to the State by the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland. As the Old Burial ground was full after 1200, years Offaly County Council declared the Old Burial Ground closed and agreed to provide a new burial ground. The land adjacent to and contiguous with the Old Burial Ground on the east side was purchased and laid as the New Graveyard. Numerous large modern memorials were moved from the Old Burial Ground to the New Graveyard so as not to impair the visual integrity of the magnificent high crosses. The only people who still had burial rights in the Old Burial Ground in 1955 were immediate family relatives and their names were placed on a list. These people have all passed away and the Old Burial ground is now closed.

The digging of grave plots since the 1950s resulted in a number of artefacts being exposed which were collected and presented to the National Museum of Ireland. A section in the north-west corner was reserved for people mainly from the community of the Church of Ireland. As they are a small congregation, they handed this area over to the Roman Catholic Church shortly after the Pope’s visit in 1979, which had stimulated renewed spiritual interest in Clonmacnoise. Archaeological excavation in this small section of the New Graveyard has contributed significantly to our understanding of the development of the site from earliest times.

Rescue-excavations in the north-west corner of the New Graveyard in advance of its use for burials uncovered an Ogham stone, the oldest stone monument on the Site (it is now accommodated in the Cross-Slab store on-site). It was the discovery of the Ogham stone while digging a grave that triggered the excavations, primarily to determine the context of this important find. This in turn revealed the complexity of settlement including evidence for earlier Iron Age settlement dating to c.300BC and four main phases of activity. The uppermost strata were of the eleventh century and the twelfth century, characterised by flagged and cobbled areas, pits, well shafts and post holes, below which was the main occupation phase, dating to the ninth and tenth century.

The main feature of this period is a metalled road or street more than 18.5 metres in length and about three metres in width running southward from the low-lying callows adjacent to the Shannon toward the core of the monastic site. On either side of this road there was evidence for round houses about seven metres in diameter, sub-rectangular structures, corn-drying kilns, hearths for cooking and metalworking, a possible boat slip and a quay. There is also an earlier phase dating to the seventh and eighth century consisting mainly of stake holes, spreads of burnt soils and charcoal. Monitoring of new
graves indicates that settlement extended throughout the area now occupied by the New Graveyard. This is within the traditional area controlled by the monastery and close to the site where the monks accepted coffins for burial within their precinct, a custom still acknowledged today when hearse stop for a moment on the hill at Tullowbeg.

**Points of Significance**
- The graveyards at Clonmacnoise link past and present through the ongoing belief in the sanctity of the site. They are an integral part of the sacral landscape.

**Anglo-Norman Castle, 1214**
NGR 200760 230550
The castle at Clonmacnoise situated to the west of the monastic site is the only extant example of a high medieval stone castle in County Offaly. It is a royal castle which was built in 1214 by the Justicar of Ireland, John de Gray, to control the Midlands. The masonry elements consist of a hall keep with an attached inner ward which has a gatehouse at its north-west corner. The massive earthen defences include an outer ward defined by a bank, an external fosse and a barbican to the west. The lack of any later architectural features suggests that it was destroyed during the Gaelic resurgence in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

**Points of Significance:**
- This is the only recorded secular residential (and military) building remaining at the monastic complex to date.
- It is historically significant as it represents the point at which Clonmacnoise ceased to function as a city and began to fossilise into the relict landscape we have today with purely spiritual/symbolic functions.

**St Ciarán’s Well**
NGR 200445 230040
In the centuries after Clonmacnoise’s decline as a monastic city, the monastery, and in particular the holy wells became a focus of worship that sustained the Catholic faith. Penitential pilgrims had been attracted to Clonmacnoise since the early seventh century; the *Annals of Tigernach* record the death of Aedh, an Irish chief, while on a pilgrimage to Clonmacnoise, thus establishing the monastic site as Ireland’s oldest pilgrimage site. A thousand years later the practice had become fused with popular communal activities such as visiting a holy well on the feast day of a particular saint or patron saint. Although at odds with the beliefs of the official church, the practice gained in popularity during the Penal Laws (1691-1760) that attempted to banish the Catholic clergy from the country and to restrict the rights of the Catholic lay population. Pilgrimages to holy wells became the key symbol of Catholic devotion to a persecuted faith.

The principal surviving holy well at Clonmacnoise is dedicated to St Ciarán and is located on private lands approximately 800m to the south-west of the monastic core. According to a legend from *The Tripartite Life of St Patrick*, a leper passing near Clonmacnoise sat beneath an elm tree. He asked a man to pull up some rushes. When he
did so, water broke from where the rushes had been torn up and the site became the Well of St Ciarán. An isolated whitethorn bush once marked the site of this spring well which is enclosed by a dry stone wall. The well has been restored and consolidated in recent years, fenced round and made publicly accessible. Today there is a post-medieval cross-slab at the site, a couple of upright stones and one of three former stone heads that were routinely kissed and marked as pilgrims made their rounds or ‘patterns’ on the third Sunday of September to mark the Feast of St Ciarán (which is actually on the 9th September).

The well is the first stop on a pilgrimage route known as ‘The Long Station’. Bare footed, the pilgrim circles the well, stopping to pray at the stone head and kneeling to kiss the face of the crucified Christ on the upright stone which is inscribed with the words: ‘repent and do penance’. It was formerly a tradition to leave behind a votive offering in the well or on the whitethorn tree. From here the pilgrim continues to the monastic core to say prayers at the various churches and high crosses and to make three clockwise circuits around the graveyard. The route continues along the Pilgrim’s Road, passing by the Cairn of the Three Crosses en route to the Nun’s Church and finally to the last stop on the circuit: Fingin’s Well.

**Points of Significance:**
- This holy well enforces the sense of the landscape surrounding the Monastic City as a sacral one.
- The well is a living landmark linking past and present as it is still in use as a Roman Catholic place of pilgrimage.

**Pilgrim’s Way**

This ancient route running north from Clonmacnoise traverses a glacial ridge, known as an esker, which rises above the adjacent Mongan Bog and offered safe passage to medieval travellers. It leads from the monastic core eastwards through the old burial ground and dissects the New Graveyard where it heads towards the Nun’s Church; a small platform of stones known as ‘the Cairn of the Three Crosses’ is visible on its route. It is a key part of the pilgrimage route at Clonmacnoise known as ‘The Long Station’ performed on the Pattern of St Ciarán.

The Pilgrim’s Way from Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise was a part of the Pilgrim Paths Project, set up by the Heritage Council in 1997, in association with local communities, with the objective of developing a network of walking routes along medieval pilgrimage paths. The aim of the project was to raise the profile of the landscape and its heritage, built and natural that is encountered along the routes, while contributing to sustainable tourism and community development in each local area. Work on the Pilgrim’s Way was completed in 2007.

**Points of Significance:**
- The Pilgrim’s Way demonstrates how the natural attributes of the landscape have been used to benefit the development of the monastic city.
• The Pilgrim’s Way is a further reminder of the sacral nature of the landscape around Clonmacnoise.

**Clonfinlough Stone**

NGR 204280 229630

This limestone glacial erratic lies in a field near the Roman Catholic Church at Clonfinlough some 3km east of Clonmacnoise. On its surface are many unusual carvings. These were believed to have been made by Bronze Age man who modified patterns which had occurred through natural erosion, and excavations in the 1990s in Clonfinlough bog below the site of the stone revealed a large Bronze Age settlement site. However, recent scholarship has cast doubt on this. Similarities in the markings on the Clonfinlough stone and those to be found in the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in Galicia, have been noted which has led to speculation that the Clonfinlough carvings may belong to the medieval period. The proximity of the Clonfinlough stone to one of the ancient pilgrim routes to Clonmacnoise could be indicative of the carvings relating to the activities of pilgrims or other users of the road to Clonmacnoise (Twohig, 2002).

**Points of Significance:**

• The Clonfinlough Stone is an example of how man has interacted with the natural features of the landscape around Clonmacnoise imbuing it with a sacral nature.

*Figure 4 Map of Land Use*
The River Shannon

The River Shannon (Sionainn or Sionna in Irish) is, at 386 km (240 miles), the longest river in Ireland and Britain. The river, which began flowing along its present course after the end of the Ice Age, represents a major physical barrier between east and west. It has been an important waterway since antiquity and was central to the development of Clonmacnoise, which developed at the point where the Eiscir Riada crosses it. The river was crossed by means of a short-lived wooden bridge dating to about AD 804. Dive survey and excavation in the Shannon to the north of the Norman castle revealed substantial remains of this wooden bridge together with eleven dugout canoes and various metalwork finds.

Important species present listed on various Annexes of the Habitats Directive include frogs, otters, and salmon. Some of the best coarse fishing in Europe is offered by the Shannon, and in addition to salmon, the species that can be caught in the vicinity of Clonmacnoise, many of which have been introduced to the waters by man, include: trout, pike, perch, bream, rudd, tench and eels (a migratory species).

The Environmental Protection Agency identified the eight invasive alien species of main concern in Ireland in 2004, one of which is the Zebra Mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) that has spread throughout the River Shannon and its main lakes. They out-compete native mussels. They attach to firm surfaces, boat hulls, rock, gravel, other mussels and plants and spread easily into other systems.

Threats to the Shannon River are declining water quality and increasing levels of pollution as flood waters can carry fertiliser and other chemical pollutants, or more recently, peat silt washed down from the eroding uplands. Some of the Shannon District’s waterways have also been physically altered to allow for navigation, agricultural drainage and flood protection. Stretches need to be cleaned out from time to time, removing silt build-up to reduce flooding risk and to ensure that the system is navigable.

Peat extraction is an important industry in the Shannon District. Peat is harvested to fuel power stations and homes and for gardening products. However, peat extraction can give rise to certain localised water problems including silt nutrient release from milled areas. There are also many former sites in the District that have fallen or will fall out of production requiring rehabilitation plans in the coming decade.

The River Shannon is now a high amenity area, popular with pleasure boat cruisers and anglers. However, these can give rise to certain localised water problems including discharge from on-board toilets, physical disturbance by boat wakes and potential engine oil spillage. The operation of boat “pump-out” facilities to collect and treat the effluent from on-board toilets has been an-ongoing problem in the District. Waterways Ireland and the local authorities adjoining the navigation are working together to address these problems and ensure that there are enough facilities that are well maintained and easy to operate for boat users. Bye-laws have been implemented which apply speed restrictions on boats along the Shannon navigation and the Shannon-Erne Waterway.
Points of Significance:

- Unlike other river systems worldwide, the River Shannon is under a naturally functioning river system. The lack of drainage schemes, dams and land reclamation give it international significance.
- The River Shannon is vulnerable to threats from declining water quality and increasing levels of pollution.

The Shannon Callows

Flood plain subject to natural, seasonal flooding, which can also occur during summer, is referred to as ‘callow’ and is derived from the Irish caladh, which means ‘river meadow’. The Middle Shannon Callows consist of seasonally flooded, semi-natural, lowland wet grassland, along and beside the river between Athlone and Portumna and extends about 50 km, at an average width of about 0.75km reaching 1.5km wide in places, involving a total area of 5,788ha. Along most of its length the Site is bordered by raised bogs, esker ridges and limestone bedrock hills and the soils grade from silty alluvial to peat. The main habitats consist of lowland wet grassland with different plant communities depending on their elevation and their flooding patterns. Other habitats of smaller area but equal importance are lowland dry grasslands, drainage ditches, freshwater marshes and reedbeds.

The flat expanse of land to the north and west of the monastic core may well have given Clonmacnoise its name, as Cluain Mhic Nois, from which it is derived, translates as ‘meadow or clearing (cluain or callow) of the sons of Nós’. The flooding is caused by the very shallow gradient of the River Shannon at Clonmacnoise. When in flood, the river, usually about 100 metres wide, is swollen to ten times that size, dramatically altering the landscape. The name, Clonmacnoise, indicates that man had settled in this area long before the monastery was built and had cleared the land of the swampy forest which took hold after the last Ice Age. This is further attested by the site of a crannog, discovered in 1965 in the callows close to Clonmacnoise, demonstrating that the marginal wetlands were occupied by Iron Age people.

The site that Ciarán chose for his monastery might be considered remote and not entirely hospitable, exposed and surrounded by bog on every side as it was. But he doubtless saw the advantages to be gained from utilising the topography and resources of the semi-natural landscape and the land was nevertheless exploited to the full as the archaeological evidence shows. The monastery was built on the Eiscir Riada, one of the few dry sites that lead to the river, above the winter flood level of the callows. The Shannon, which provided an abundant supply of fish and eels, was also an excellent communication and trade route north and south; the callows were a source of wildfowl as bones discovered during excavations on the Site demonstrate. The callows around Clonmacnoise supported rich grasslands ideal for pastoral farming.

In the eighteenth century the use of the callows changed from predominantly pasture to meadow. A record dated 1792 is the first documented evidence of hay making in the nominated WHS Site and hay making has been continuous since then. As the callows
have never been ploughed or drained, the grasslands are the same as those used by the monks of Clonmacnoise over 1000 years ago.

The callow surrounding Clonmacnoise is divided into roughly 40 small strips owned by different farmers, all of whom manage their land in the same way by taking one cut of hay each year, usually in June or July. The vegetation on the steep slopes of the flood bank is still cut by hand; the remainder is harvested using a mowing machine. If agriculture ceased on the callows, the variety of plant and bird life would diminish, with the breeding bird life the first to be affected. Although the callows have traditionally been managed at low intensity, recent trends in agriculture have seen a change to more intensive practices such as silage making. Apart from the damage posed by over-fertilising and over-stocking, the biggest threat to the wet meadows is drainage.

Similar riparian landscapes in Europe and elsewhere have been much affected by canal-building, hydro-electric dams, drainage and land reclamation schemes, making the naturally functioning floodplains of the Shannon callows a relatively rare feature of the countryside in western Europe. The Shannon callows today are highly valued as survivors of a vanished way of life. Sustainable farming methods, in use from at least the eighteenth century, have given rise to a rich and varied habitat which helps to conserve flora and fauna.

The Shannon Callows are of International Importance for wintering wildfowl involving 15 species and many others (total birds at least 28,922 1995/96). The callows within the Clonmacnoise area are designated as an SAC. The SAC is of international significance in containing four Annex I habitats; Molinia meadows, low lying hay meadows, associated limestone pavement and alluvial forest – the latter two being of priority status. All of these habitats are within the Clonmacnoise envelope. A rare species survey in 1998 revealed as present opposite-leaved pondweed (Groenlandia densa), summer snowflake (Leucojum aestivum); green-winged orchid (Orchis morio); meadow barley (Hordeum secalinum); and marsh pea (Lathyrus palustris). Some of these species are considered to be vulnerable and are in listed the Irish Red Data Book. They are all species that reflect the unique habitat of the callows.

There are seven habitats associated specifically with the callows at Clonmacnoise; Molinia heath, fen transition, flood margins around eskers, modified fen, tall sedge, (Carex elata) zone, and reedbed. The callows area close to Clonmacnoise is also an SPA and is noted for the presence of snipe, lapwing, and curlew. The total population of breeding waders (lapwing, redwing, snipe and curlew) in 1987 was one of three major concentrations in Ireland and Britain (total 1,551 pairs). Overall, there are 125 species of breeding birds, (27 species in the callows alone) and the Site is the only regular breeding location in Ireland for black-tailed godwit.

The globally endangered Corncrake, which is on the Irish Red List, is also known from the area but is declining in numbers. Due to several flooding events between 2005 and 2007, assumed to be the result of climate change, only four calling males were recorded in 2008. This is despite conservation measures to maintain this population through the
Corncrake Grant Scheme that rewards farmers for managing their meadows in a Corncrake friendly manner.

**Points of Significance:**
- The Shannon Callows are, by far, the largest area of lowland semi-natural grassland and associated aquatic habitats in Ireland and in which there is the least disturbance of natural wetland processes. Ecologically diverse, the callows support several rare and endangered species.
- Unlike other river systems worldwide, the lack of drainage schemes, dams and land reclamation give the Shannon Callows international significance.
- The Shannon Callows demonstrate the result of an evolutionary symbiosis between human activity and the physical environment that has been undertaken in a sustainable manner.
- Despite conservation measures, some species in the callows are vulnerable to climate change.

**The Eskers**
The word ‘esker’ comes from the Irish word *Eiscir*. Eskers were created after the last glaciation when streams formed under the melting ice and carried debris for many miles. The transported gravels and till were deposited in long river-like lines and eventually when the ice melted, meandering hills were left rising above the landscape. They are therefore important in studying the pattern of deglaciation. Irish eskers are “original or prototype” and “archeoptype” eskers and are visited by people from all over the world. The formation of the eskers after the glacial retreat determined the subsequent formation of bogs and to some extent, the callows as a functioning hydrosere and they contain significant reserves of water. They are classed as ‘locally important’ aquifers by the Geological Survey of Ireland. The collective hydrologies of the callows, fens, and raised bogs are therefore inextricably linked to the eskers. However, eskers are highly vulnerable to groundwater pollution as they are porous, so problems can arise from septic tank systems and disposal of farm wastes.
The location of Clonmacnoise was much more strategic than it appears today, because it is situated where the Eiscir Riada, the main east-east route across Ireland, meets the navigable Shannon, which is Ireland’s longest river, running north to south. Many of the great Midland monasteries lie on, or close to, the Eiscir Riada. The dry, well drained eskers have been exploited by man in the past, both as trackways which crisscrossed the Irish landscape and as sites of habitation that are of archaeological interest such as ring forts and fullacht fiadhs. The eskers have also been used for tillage farming, grazing and for gravel extraction. The pits left by this activity can still be seen and have in some cases regenerated as grassland.

It is likely that all the present woods on eskers are secondary woodland due to clearance of the original woodland. Permanent pastures and meadows have been the predominant land-use on eskers since 1650, and since 1930, the areas of permanent pastures have increased as tillage decreased. The habitats that have developed and that are now considered to be of biodiversity value were developed under the influence of farming.

Some esker farmers are in REPS (Rural Environmental Protection Scheme) which should provide them with support to manage their land to maintain and enhance biodiversity. The eskers are renowned for their conservation value in terms of both their wide-ranging geomorphology and the habitats they now support, such as broad-leaved woodland and calcareous grassland. Eskers in the Clonmacnoise region are of particularly fine quality and have been surveyed recently by Tubridy (2006). Not many of them are supported by
conservation designations as these are mostly based on vegetation, and consequently, several quarries have been developed to extract the gravel. Approximately 33 pits were identified in the esker system of which three are large scale operations. Quarrying is not compatible with the maintenance of esker geodiversity and biodiversity and alternative sources of gravel should be encouraged.

The Pilgrim’s Road Esker, designated as a cSAC, is a narrow continuous esker running for 2km east from Clonmacnoise adjacent to the Shannon Callows to the north and Mongan raised bog to the south. It is the most scenically impressive esker in the Midlands and the one best known to the public, forming part of the Pilgrim’s Way. The western area includes Bunthalla Hill (north of the road) and Hanging Hill (south of the road). The central portion runs along both sides of the summit ridge before widening out eastwards to include a substantial area of esker grassland.

It harbours orchid-rich calcareous grassland, rare in Ireland, and which is a Priority Annex I habitat under the EU Habitats Directive. The most species-rich grasslands occur on Hanging Hill, a small and very steep-sided hill of unstable calcareous soil. Plant species typical of this habitat occur in abundance, including carline thistle (*Carlina vulgaris*), common centaury (*Centaurium erythraea*) and yellow-wart (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) with a range of orchids including pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), fragrant orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) and common spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsia*). The most species-rich vegetation on Bunthalla Hill occurs on the south- and south-west facing slopes, where spring sedge (*Carex caryophyllea*) and autumn gentian (*Gentianella amarella*) are abundant among the closed sward. The remainder of Bunthalla Hill retains elements of the original flora despite having been semi-improved by means of fertiliser application.

Grassland in the central area consists of similar orchid-rich swards, also with autumn gentian, a species that it locally frequent in the centre of Ireland and scarce elsewhere. Wild carrot (*Daucus carota*) also occurs here. The western extension of this central area contains a young, species-rich flora developing under recent clearance (post-1984) of hazel woodland. Two small areas of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) woodland occur on the northern side of the central area. The site supports a large population of the rare green-winged orchid (*Orchis morio*), which is a Red Data Book species and is apparently the largest in Ireland – over 1,000 individuals recorded in 1991, showing the full colour range of the species.

**Points of Significance:**

- The eskers are geomorphologically outstanding, supporting a variety of habitats and species. They are also of great archaeological interest because as ancient pilgrims’ routes they connected a variety of monastic sites in a sacred landscape.
- The esker habitats that have developed and that are now considered to be of biodiversity value were developed under the influence of farming and need to be maintained by it.
- The eskers are hydrologically important as they help to control the flow of water into the surrounding boglands but they are vulnerable to pollution.
• Eskre grasslands are under threat from over grazing, under-grazing, fertiliser application and gravel extraction.

**Mongan Bog**

Mongan Bog is an excellent example of a raised, or ombrotrophic bog ecosystem. It is estimated to be about 9,000 years old and formed in a lake basin between two adjacent eskers after the last glaciation. It went through a fen-bog transition from fen or reedswamp, through to a dry Eriophorum dominated mire, indicative of low or unstable water tables. Mongan Bog is a source of palynological data which sheds light on the activities of man in the area. Maximum wetness occurred around the 6th century AD, when the Monastery was established, which accounts for the fact that there was a dominance of pastoral farming during the 1st millennium with very little arable.

Mongan and other bogs in the area surrounding Clonmacnoise were still growing as the monastery developed. For people visiting Clonmacnoise, crossing the raised bogs would have been precarious as they contain permanent pools on their surface which vary greatly in depth. For this reason the eskers were preferred routes across the landscape. However, man had been interacting with this seemingly inhospitable landscape for centuries. Archaeological excavations have revealed the presence of wooden toghers and gravel pathways across the bogs around Clonmacnoise which in many cases predate the monastery and demonstrate that the bogs were not as impenetrable as first thought.

The surrounding bogs, including Mongan, would doubtless have been exploited by the monks at Clonmacnoise, not just for transportation, but possibly as a source of bog-iron as the excavations at the monastery have revealed evidence for iron-smelting. Its habitats were a source of food and its turf probably a source of fuel especially when the woodlands began to decline. Mongan Bog has probably been cut for turf for centuries which has left a legacy of high facebanks all around the margin of the bog. The peat here is of high quality, containing the remains of woody plants.

Turbary is the term used to describe the ancient right to cut turf on a particular area of bog. These rights came about with the resettlement of confiscated land or by prescription. Originally, turbary gave individuals the right to cut turf for their own domestic use, effectively allowing people with no other means to fuel their homes. The turf was cut by hand using a ‘slean’ in the mid-summer and left to dry. The turf harvest played a significant part of the annual rhythm of rural life and was deeply embedded in Irish culture.

By the 19th century Mongan Bog was divided among several landowners to whom all the land in the parish belonged. The townlands of Clonascra and Clonmacnoise were originally ‘Bishop land’, according to John O’Donovan’s 1838 OS Field Name Books; therefore the northern half of Mongan was part of the original monastery lands and has the most recent associations with the monastery.

Mongan Bog was probably in common ownership within the parish and its main use was for turf. The Bog Commissioners, appointed to plan the reclamation of bogs, surveyed
Mongan in 1810. They calculated that 25% of the total area had been cut by 1811, the most substantial area along the south side. They were the first to record the name of the bog as the ‘Boggawn of Monfan’, which is an Anglicisation of the original Irish name ‘bogan na mona fionn’. This name, which is still prevalent locally, means ‘small bog of the long white grass’ and is frequently shortened to ‘The Bogan’. Unfortunately ‘Monfan’ was changed to Mongan in the 1960s by Bord na Mona (a semi-state company originally set up as the Turf Development Board Ltd, in 1933 and created in 1946 by the Turf Development Act, 1946). A record of the original name was only discovered in 1987.

The enormous pressures on the land in the 18th and 19th centuries and the abundance of labour witnessed much reclamation of bogland that was limed with marl and used to grow potatoes. Several such pre-famine ‘bog gardens’ can be seen around Mongan Bog and have reverted to pasture. Since the 15th century traditional turbarry has been responsible for the loss of 233,830ha of raised bog and 85,590ha of blanket bog in Ireland equating to 73% of the original area of raised bog and 11% of the original area of blanket bog. The arrival of mechanisation has meant more peat is being harvested over a wider area of bog and on a semi-commercial basis. This change in how turbarry is being practiced, coupled with the ever increasing demands placed on the bog habitat as a resource, has made turbarry an urgent problem today as drains cause the bog to dry out and it loses its unique integrity.

Due to turbarry, and even more so, the extensive industrial peat cutting by Bord na Mona that came to the area in 1953, the areas of intact bogland around Clonmacnoise have shrunk drastically since the mid-twentieth century. Bord na Mona owns 10,000ha of peatland in the West Midlands. The peatland is serviced by 190 km of drains and a 129 km railway which transports the harvested peat to the Shannonbridge Power Station. Blackwater Bog to the south of the monastery has been severely degraded by industrial peat cutting.

Boglands as natural heritage have nearly disappeared in the European cultural region and many raised bogs around the world have been badly damaged or decimated by a variety of factors ranging from industrial turf cutting, drainage and land reclamation schemes, to agricultural development involving the planting of cranberry farms. Mongan Bog would have suffered the same fate had it not been acquired by An Taisce in 1979 from Bord na Mona and was among the first bogs to be saved by the Irish Peatland Conservation campaign. Although somewhat damaged by turbarry, it had maintained its basic integrity and is a rare survivor of an Atlantic sub-type of raised bog. It encloses three distinct habitats: cutaway bog, a man-modified zone and the intact dome of the raised bog.

Mongan Bog is still growing (60% is active raised bog) and is comprised of typical midlands raised bog vegetation, although some species more indicative of western raised bogs are also present. It contains plant and animal species of some rarity or restricted distribution in Ireland and is recognised, nationally and internationally, for its scientific importance as one of the last remaining relatively intact and sustainable midland raised bogs in Ireland.
A wet, central vegetation community has many bog pools and a range of the bog moss species that cause bog growth, including *Sphagnum auriculatum*, *Sphagnum fuscum*, and *Sphagnum cuspidatum*. Cranberry grows on some hummocks. Cut-over bog, grasslands and scrub provide habitat diversity around the bog margins, and the relict of a bog-to-esker transition is found along the south side. The bog has a notable lichen community due to the absence of burning in the recent past. A number of notable invertebrate community have also been recorded in the site. These include three species that are new records for Ireland: a spider (*Gongyiellum latebricolae*, Order Arachnida) and two moths: (*Biselachista serricornis* and *Aristotelia ericinella*, Order Lepidoptera).

The site is an Important Birds Area. It was formerly important for wintering Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*), although it is now only occasionally visited by this species. Over three quarters of total world population overwinter in Ireland. Other breeding species which are listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive are *Falco peregrinus*, *Falco columbarius* and *Circus cyaneus*. Corn crake, a globally endangered Annex I species on the Irish Red List, has also been recorded at the edge of the bog.

119 ha of Mongan Bog is designated a National Nature Reserve (1987), 129 ha is designated a Ramsar Site (1988), 129 ha is designated a Special Protection Area, 129 ha as a candidate Special Area of Conservation and 117 ha is designated as a Biogenetic Reserve (1988). The site is also a part of the Area of High Amenity proposed by Offaly County Council in the County Draft Development Plan (2009-2014) and the Area of Special Control designated by the same organisation. It is currently managed by Bord na Mona and National Parks and Wildlife in coordination with An Taisce. The Parks and Wildlife Service operate a voluntary scheme for buying turbary rights on cSACs.

**Points of Significance:**
- Mongan Bog is one of the last remaining relatively intact Atlantic sub-type of raised bog in Europe. It is a remnant of the landscape that once surrounded Clonmacnoise and as such its survival is vital in assuring the Site’s integrity and authenticity.
- It contains plant and animal species of some rarity or restricted distribution in Ireland.
- The bog is vulnerable to damage from drainage schemes and turbary rights.

**Fin Lough**
Fin Lough is a shallow lake, 16ha in area, bounded to the north and east by the Clonfinlough esker ridge and to the south and west by Blackwater Bog which is now largely cut over. It is spring fed and therefore is prevented from further bog formation. Designated as a NHA the lake and its surrounding wetland communities are arranged in distinct zones reflecting wetness and substrate. They include open water, reedswamp, tall sedge, alkaline fen, fen-bog transition, swamp woodland and bog, covering a total area of 78ha. The transition from calcium-rich lake to reedbed, to fen, to bog is relatively intact in some areas, which is exceptional for this part of Ireland.
The alkaline fen, which is a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, is species-rich with characteristic plants including Black bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) and the sedge species *Carex flacca*, *Carex lepidocarpa* and *Carex panacea*. The total flora of the Fin Lough wetland is remarkably rich: 210 species of vascular plants and 29 species of bryophytes have been identified to date.

In addition, the site supports an extensive invertebrate fauna and is nationally important for two rare hover-fly species (Order Diptera), *Chrysogaster macquarti* and *Platycheirus perpallidus*. The presence of a rare snail, *Vertigo geyeri*, a species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, is of considerable conservation significance. The lake is also an important roosting area for winter bird visitors such as mallard, teal and tufted duck. Shoveller and Whooper swan use it as a winter refuge. Fin Lough contains settlements, barrows and artefacts from the Bronze Age and a stone horizontal mill which predates the monastery (390AD). There is also evidence of a ringfort, metal working and an enclosure for fish and eels.

Two main inlets existed corresponding to the principal streams mapped by the OPW in 1854, one draining east along the margin of Blackwater Bog and the other draining west. Drainage work by Bord na Mona in the mid 1950s, associated with the development of Blackwater Bog, included inserting a deep drain to the south of the lake (3m) and deepening a lake outlet to connect with this outfall. According to local sources, the principal motive in deepening the outlet was to drain the lake. After several days, protests were registered at Bord na Mona local HQ from farmers relying on the lake as a source of water for cattle. Attempts were made to block the outlet but without much success.

It is possible that the lake was used as a silt pond during the early stages of Bord na Mona operations. As well as excavating an outlet, Bord na Mona also blocked the inlet from the east as it cannot be seen in aerial photos from the 1970s. From 1973-1984 the inlet from the west also dried up. Aerial photos taken since the 1950s by the Geological Survey and J.K. St. Joseph in 1973 show many islands on the lake. An undated photograph, possibly from the late 1950s obtained from Bord na Mona, reveals several small islands which may suggest that terrestrialisation had occurred prior to large scale development.

During the third phase of expansion by Bord na Mona the railway line was extended from Blackwater Bog along the north margin of Fin Lough thus destroying part of the north boundary of the lake, further damaging its hydrology. The spring which arose in the gap in the eskers to the north still flows into the lake but since the 1970s drainage from the cutaway margins of Mongan Bog and a Bord na Mona drain constructed to dry the railway line is depleting the water in the lake. It is therefore not self-sustaining and will eventually fill in.

*Points of Significance:*
• Drainage in the area surrounding Fin Lough has revealed the hydrological interconnectedness of the landscape and exposed the fragility of the environment

**Lough Nanag**
Situated about 2km south-west of Clonmacnoise and between the River Shannon callows and a raised bog undergoing commercial peat extraction, the site comprises, for the most part, an esker ridge composed of glacial gravels. A small lake occurs in the south-eastern section of the site. The underlying rock is of Carboniferous limestone. It is a proposed NHA.

The site is much modified by grassland improvement and comprises a mosaic of improved grassland, dry calcareous grassland, wet grassland, scrub, woodland, dense Bracken (Pteridium aquilinum), swamp and lake communities. Much of the site is on a calcareous substrate and Lough Nanag itself shows influence from the adjacent acidic raised bog.

Much of what would formerly have been good quality dry calcareous grassland has been lost through grassland improvement and only small areas of this habitat remain. Two such areas support small populations of the rare and legally protected Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*). The diversity of the esker area is increased by scrub and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) woodland, which has occasional Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) and a mossy ground layer with much Ivy (*Hedera helix*). A small disused gravel pit has been allowed to become re-colonised and now supports several species of open grassland that have declined elsewhere on the site.

In contrast to the lime-loving species of the esker, Lough Nanag is surrounded by typical peatland communities. Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) swamps fringe the water and divides the lake up into pools; Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) colonises several of these. Around the shore in the wetter areas, Mud-sedge (*Carex limosa*), a rare species in the county, is to be found. A small number of wildfowl species use the wetland for roosting. There is an interesting transition from the relatively acid surroundings of the lake, typified by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*), to the esker grassland. Although the floristic diversity of the esker grassland has declined, it still retains some interest. The juxtaposition of the esker and the acidic peatland lake and wetland, makes the site all the more interesting and unusual.

**Points of Significance:**
- The site is vulnerable to further grassland improvement, both overgrazing and undergrazing, encroachment of scrub, and gravel extraction.
- Lough Nanag is vulnerable to drainage and eutrophication.

**The Rocks of Clorhane**
The Rocks of Clorhane are centred on an exposure of limestone which is rare in Offaly and unusual in the Midlands. A proposed NHA and an Annex I habitat with Priority status, it is the only example of crinoid limestone in Ireland. The site includes flooded quarry workings, callow land and a small esker woodland on the Shannonbridge road.
The other habitats are hazel woodland, flooded quarry workings, callows (formed recently by flooding), limestone grassland and esker woodland.

While principally covered in hazel woodland *Corylus avellana*, there are areas of species rich calcareous grassland and the exposed outcrop which displays characteristic weathering of limestone features and has a typical limestone pavement flora. Comprising bare or moss covered rock with a very thin calcareous soil it supports a short, grassy turf. The most notable plant in the grassy area is the rare green-winged orchid (*Orchis morio*), which is a Red Data Book species and occurs with species such as sweet vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), quaking grass (*Briza media*) sedges (*Carex flacca*, *Carex caryophyllea*), common birds-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and narrow-leaved plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). Ferns associated with the cracks in the pavement include *Asplenium trichomanes*, *Asplenium ruta-muraria*, *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*, *Polypodium australe*.

Bryophytes include *Grimmia apocarpa* and *Orthotrichum cf. anomalum*. Anthills are common within the open grassland. The hazel wood is well-developed and supports a rare easterly extension of a type of woodland more often found west of the Shannon. It has species such as primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), common dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*), wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*). The wood is noted for its luxuriant growth of epiphytic mosses and liverworts, with such species as *Neckera crispa* and *Hylocomium brevirostre*. Yew, (*Taxus baccata*) occurs at one area, a feature missing from most hazel woods on limestone and is uncommon.

The area once had a large stand of broadleaved woodland (66ha) as recorded in the Down Survey (1650) but this was felled before 1811. In the early 1960s, the area was planted with conifers by the Forest Service, many of which have since been removed. The limestone has been quarried until recent times, has been used widely by the local people for all stone use and was a source of rock for the building of some of the monuments at the monastic city of Clonmacnoise, in particular the Round Tower. In the interest of historical continuity, stone for the new Visitor Centre, opened in 1993, was sourced from the Rocks of Clorhane.

There are two archaeological sites associated with the Rocks of Clorhane; an enclosure to the north and huts associated with an old field system. The land was once owned by the Bishop of Meath and therefore was part of the Monastic site. There was local knowledge of the traditional use of hazel twigs or “scallops” for thatching until recent times. Most of the wooded area is owned by the State which originally intended to use it for forestry, but has since transferred it to the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

*Points of Significance:*

- The rocks of Clorhane are the best example of crinoid limestone in Ireland and the stone was used in some of the buildings of the monastery, notably the Round Tower.

*Bloomhill*
This hill to the north east of the monastic city, is reputedly the source of sandstone for the cross-slabs and other monuments at the monastic city. It is therefore included in the buffer zone.

**Blackwater Bog**

This extensive cutaway bog to the south of the site is owned by Bord na Mona. Part of it is included in the buffer zone as it is an integral part of the hydrological system of the nominated WHS.

### 2.b History and development

The history and development of the nominated Site has three different foci. The first is the development of the landscape itself; the second is the foundation, rise and decline of the monastic city of Clonmacnoise and the third concerns the monastic core and the surrounding landscape in modern times. All three foci will be set out succinctly below.

The landscape where the great monastic city of Clonmacnoise was to develop has been shaped by glacial and fluvial glacial actions and modified and sanctified by man for many centuries. Underlain by a bed of limestone laid down in a warm sea around 350 million years ago, an outcrop of which may be seen at the rocks of Clorhane, the landscape was covered by a huge ice cap 20,000 years ago. As the ice retreated some 16,000 years ago it left a fairly flat terrain interrupted by a series of lakes and eskers - gravel ridges formed by rivers that ran under the melting ice. The eskers were colonised by mixed forest about 9,000 years ago and eventually became important track ways across Ireland as raised bogs later began to form in the shallow lakes and reed rich fens as the climate warmed up around 10,000 years ago. Through this landscape ran the River Shannon, the major north south route through Ireland, with its seasonally flooded callows.

The first humans arrived in the region just as the climate turned warmer and were hunter gatherers that probably used the Shannon for navigation into the sylvan landscape. Around 6,000 years ago the climate became warmer and wetter and the forest became completely deciduous. Man began to shape the environment between 5,000 and 4,000 years ago. Forests were cleared for grazing for cattle, sheep and pigs, and grain crops were sown in areas with light soils. The forests were also felled for timber and fuel. Around 3,500 years ago the climate turned cooler and dam per and this favoured the growth of sphagnum moss which changed the fenland into raised bog. Today, Mongan Bog is a relict of this once extensive bogland and Fin Lough is a relict of the fenland. The first wooden track ways or *toghers* were constructed across the bogs during this period which later, with the esker roads, became pilgrim’s trails between the great monastic settlements of the Irish Midlands.

Bronze Age man was better able to exploit the landscape with his heavier ploughs and tools and developed field systems on heavier soils. More of the forests were felled and cattle-rearing became the main activity. During the Iron Age the forests were attacked with even greater ferocity to create the landscape we largely see today. Arable and
pastoral farming were actively pursued. It was only the relative wilderness of the major peatlands and the most impenetrable fenland where nature maintained the whip hand over man.

A rich and varied semi-natural landscape with many different habitats over a very small area had thus been shaped by the time Clonmacnoise was founded in 545 AD on one of the esker ridges above the River Shannon. Inspired by a vision which St. Ciarán shared with Enda of Aran, a contemporary Irish saint, this vision was of a great fruitful tree, beside a stream, in the middle of Ireland protecting the island. Its fruit went forth over the sea that surrounded the island, and the birds of the world came to carry off some of that fruit. Enda advised him that Ciarán was that tree: ‘for thou art great in the eyes of God and men, and all Ireland will be full of thy honour. This island will be protected under the shadow of thy favour, and multitudes will be satisfied with the grace of thy fasting and prayer. Go then, with God’s word, to a bank of a stream, and there found a church’. Thus the River Shannon, the great waterway of Ireland, occupies a central role in the very foundation of the monastic city.

The monastery seems from the very earliest period to have attracted the patronage of kings, and its position on the Shannon river, on the borders of the two kingdoms of Mide (Meath) and Connacht, was crucial to this. By the 690s, Tírechán regarded it as the main rival to Patrick’s church of Armagh (Bradley, 1998, 42; Bieler, 1979, 142, 160), while Adomnán in his Life of Columba, c.697 records a prosperous and populous community:

As soon as it was known that he was near, all flocked from their little grange farms near the monastery, and, along with those who were within it, ranged themselves, with enthusiasm, under the abbot Alither; then advancing beyond the enclosure of the monastery, they went out as one man to meet St Columba […]
they conducted him with all honour to the Church. (Life of Columba, Ch.3)

Adomnán’s description of the monastery with its vallum and numerous inhabitants flocking to the centre of the monastery from outlying farms have been gradually revealed through excavation over the past twenty years – a large ditch, purposely in-filled during the eighth-ninth century was excavated in 2000, and ‘would have constituted a very impressive rampart’, (Murphy, 2003, 13, 19). It is possible that this ditch represents the vallum described by Adomnán, although it was certainly re-cut in the eighth century (Murphy 2003, 20).

That the foundation was, within a very few years, attracting member of royal houses, and indeed officials of other monasteries, to retire and die in the odour of sanctity is demonstrated by chronicle entries for the early seventh century. The Annals of Tigernach record the death of Aed mac Colgan, king of Airgialla, of northern Connacht, on his pilgrimage there in 608. Documentary evidence in the chronicles continue to record the deaths of kings on pilgrimage there, such as the king of Connacht in 723, (ATig), while deaths of scribes (e.g. 730, 773, 798), and anchorites (e.g. 756, 835, 847) as well as abbots, attest to the diversity and size of the community. Clonmacnoise became, in effect,
the royal necropolis of Ireland and the patronage of kings, princes and wealthy families resulted in grants of large donations of land to the monastery.

From the mid seventh-century onwards both the chronicle evidence and the archaeological evidence combine to suggest a settlement increasing rapidly in power, prestige and population, and one which is to all intents and purposes a city, albeit of monastic origin. Indeed, as Kehnel (1997, 28) notes, even the Latin hagiographers of Ciarán, writing about this time, ‘use a very non-monastic terminology.’ Excavations to the northeast of the monastic centre, in the New Graveyard, have revealed stake holes and spreads of burnt soil indicating quite extensive occupation across the site. The wooden bridge, dating to 804, which bridges the Shannon just to the west of the monastic core, is no doubt an indication of the very comfortable relations which Clonmacnoise enjoyed with Connacht. This is not the only material witness to the Connacht connection, as Raghnall Ó Floinn has argued that many of the earlier slabs at Clonmacnoise may be associated with the kings buried there during this period.

Hand in hand with this development of ecclesiastical rights went increasing secularisation. This is attested by the violent settling of disputes with neighbouring monastic towns, such as Birr, which fought a battle with Clonmacnoise in the Bog of Coisse Bláí (AT, 760), and more infamously, at the Battle of Argaman, between the familia of Clonmacnoise and Durrow, in which two hundred of the men of Durrow were killed (AT, AU, 764). Clonmacnoise itself was burned on several occasions, although as Ryan (1973, 9) has noted, until 833 these burnings were probably accidental. Attracting the attention of internal and external forces, the burning of Clonmacnoise in 833 was far from accidental, with the king of Munster, Feidlimid, burning the termon or enclosure of the monastery to the very door of the church (AU, 833). This was to be only the first of many such intentional burnings and plunderings, with further burnings in 834, 835 and 845 (AU), the last of these by the Vikings, who burned not just the settlement, but also its wooden churches or dertaigibh.

Nonetheless, this was the period of Clonmacnoise’s most rapid growth and it became an economic force which influenced the entire region. This may have been the period when Clonmacnoise began to hold its market, described as one of the chief fairs of Ireland, and the noblest, in the life of Colmán Ela (Bradley, 1994, 47). In the later ninth and early tenth centuries, the patronage of the Clann Cholmáin of Mide, first under Máel Sechnaill, and then under his son, Flann Sinna saw not just the renewal of the monastic core of monumental buildings in stone, with the erection of stone crosses, but also a burst of chronicling and learned activity in the scriptorium.

Clonmacnoise was representative of a seminary for a whole nation as it was not allied with one particular tribe or district. The masters were chosen on the merits of their learning and zeal and the abbots were elected almost in rotation from the different provinces. Scholars converged from all over Ireland, as well as from the remote quarters of France and England. Its scriptorium was particularly famed. Colgu the Wise, poet, theologian, and historian who died in 794, is said to have been the teacher of Alcuin at Clonmacnoise. Another alumnus of vast erudition, whose gravestone may still be seen
there, was Suibhne, son of Maclume, who died in 891. Described as the “wisest and greatest Doctor of the Scots”, the *Annals of Ulster* calls him a “most excellent scribe”. Tighernach, the most accurate and most ancient prose chronicler of the northern nations, belongs to Clonmacnoise, and probably also Dicuil, the world-famed geographer.

In this school were composed a number of illuminated manuscripts including the *Chronicon Scotorum*, a valuable chronicle of Irish affairs from the earliest times to 1135, and the *Lebor na hUidre* (Book of the Dun Cow), written by Maelmuire, a family member of the family of Conn na mBocht. Written in Irish, the manuscript contains the oldest surviving versions of the *Táin Bó Cuailgne* (The Voyage of Bran) and *The Feast of Bricriú* and other religious, historical and mythical stories. With the exception of the *Book of Armagh*, it is the oldest Irish historical transcript now in existence.

By the tenth century Clonmacnoise had become a beacon of light illuminating Dark Age Europe, a great centre of Insular art, architecture, sculpture, and metalwork. This status is epitomised by the Crosier of Clonmacnoise, the cover of the Stowe Missal, and the exceptional sandstone Cross of the Scriptures. To this school also belong the processional cross of Cong, and a large collection of sandstone cross-slabs. The archaeology confirms intense metalworking activity within the city. Excavations on the site of the new visitor centre, immediately west of the monastic core in the 1990s, found evidence of iron-smelting and bronze-working and more recently, excavation on the sloping ground above the Shannon to the north of the visitor centre has shown that an extensive area was utilised exclusively for early medieval iron-working. A considerable number of burial slabs remain which are dateable to this period also, and there are documentary records of several extremely costly metalwork objects commissioned for the church by its Mide patrons (Ó Floinn, 1994, 92-96).

The twelfth century is sometimes portrayed as one of decline for Clonmacnoise, but although the arrival of the Anglo-Normans was to prove disastrous, the material evidence of flourishing Romanesque construction suggests, prior to the invasion, an optimistic, well-endowed foundation, benefiting from Connacht and Mide patronage. The round tower was built in 1124, while in 1167 the Nuns’ Church, a key example of the Hiberno-Romanesque style was completed. Excavations from the area to the north-east of the monumental core have revealed flagged and cobbled areas, pits, well-shafts and postholes, indicative of continuing urban settlement. Annalistic evidence presents a similar picture – the Anglo-Norman adventurers burned 105 houses in a raid of 1179, and in c.1205 47 houses near the abbot’s fort, and the fort itself were destroyed, all of these references speaking a large and populous community still (Bradley, 1994, 46).

But, as Kehnel (1998, 243) has stated: ‘The system lived by the dynamics between the secular and the spiritual dimensions which determined medieval life.’ This system was irrevocably destroyed by the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, and by church reform. Clonmacnoise did emerge from the twelfth century as the see of a bishop – but of one of the smallest and poorest in Ireland, because the land and revenues which it controlled were incompatible with the principles of church reform (Kehnel, 1998, 244). Its role as a centre of settlement was lost, not through church reform, but through the failed Anglo-
Norman attempt to control the settlement as a significant crossing point on the Shannon. Driven out of Clonmacnoise itself, secular settlement continued instead around the less historically difficult crossing point at Athlone. Burial rights were forgotten, and the site continued to possess symbolic importance through the ages. But without continuing settlement, the core of the monastic town at Clonmacnoise has been preserved almost as it was in the twelfth century, allowing a unique opportunity for research and understanding of one of the most important monastic towns in the Insular world.

Clonmacnoise was designated a national monument in 1877 and is overseen by the Office of Public Works (OPW). On 30th October 1880 the Church Temporalities Commissioners vested the ruins of churches, two round towers and crosses in the State. The castle, also known as the Bishop’s Palace, and the surrounding earthworks were transferred to the State in 1918 and the Nun’s Church was transferred to the State in 1921. On 9th August 1955 the Church of Ireland Representative Church Body vested the old burial ground at Clonmacnoise in the State (with the exception of Temple Connor). The remaining land in the care of the State was acquired under separate land transactions.

The archaeological area at Clonmacnoise was entered in the Register of Historic Monuments on 2 August 1996 under Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1987. The spiritual significance of the Site to western Christendom was recognised by the visit of Pope John Paul II, who conducted a short prayer service at Clonmacnoise in 1979. This event served to stimulate interest in the Site and visitor numbers soared from 10,000 in 1976 to 36,000 in 1986.

In 1993 a new purpose built visitor centre was opened to the public at Clonmacnoise. Comprising a reception, audio-visual area, exhibition on the monastery and natural heritage, tearoom and toilet facilities, it is located in a garden to the rear of a farmhouse which was retained and incorporated into the scheme. The design of the visitor centre was carefully considered and was constructed to blend in with the landscape, reflecting the type of structures that would originally have surrounded the monastery and the traditional hillside farmsteads that can still be seen locally.

Of greatest importance was the re-siting of the three high crosses which a survey had determined were threatened by long-term exposure to the elements. The three circular chambers of the Visitor Centre were specially constructed to accommodate the high crosses. High quality resin replicas of the high crosses were installed in the place of the originals so as to maintain the religious and spiritual significance of their layout. A representative collection of the cross-slab collection also went on display inside the Centre while the reminder, some of which had been on display outside and were therefore subject to erosion, theft and vandalism, were placed into secure storage on site.

Conservation works by the Office of Public Works were undertaken from 2002-2008 and included consolidation to the stone work of Temple Dowling and Temple Rí with a replica lime-based mortar. The walls of the Cathedral have been consolidated and the surviving sections of internal plasterwork conserved. The upper part of the northern wall was developing a lean and a section of the western wall was rebuilt to act as a stabilising

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buttress. To ensure the integrity of this work it was necessary to extend the area of walling over the fragmentary remains of the West or main doorway of the Cathedral. This was undertaken after extensive historical research and detailed survey.

The relict monastic city is surrounded by a magnificent landscape, parts of which have not changed considerably since the monastery’s hey-day. This landscape with its interconnecting pilgrim’s routes, holy wells and tombs has assumed a sacral nature. This is evidenced most clearly by the continued use of Clonmacnoise as a site of pilgrimage and the desire for over 1,000 years by people from the locality and beyond to be interred there with St Cairán and the High Kings of Ireland.

This exceptional landscape contains many rare and vulnerable habitats that have been created and/or maintained by human agency. The River Shannon, the longest river in Ireland and Britain, runs through the centre of the nominated Site and has always been used by the local population as a means of transportation. Now used for recreational purposes by pleasure boaters and anglers, it is one of the last great functioning river systems in Europe.

Its rich callows have historically been exploited for their abundance of birdlife and were a source of wildfowl for the inhabitants of the monastic city, as bones discovered during archaeological excavations attest. Today the Shannon Callows are of International Importance for wintering wildfowl involving 15 species that are protected within an area designed as a SAC. The callows at Clonmacnoise have been cut for hay since the eighteenth century and are unusual in being a communal hay meadow divided into roughly 40 small strips owned by different farmers all of whom manage their land in the same way by taking one cut of hay each summer. The callows are presently farmed in a sustainable manner that promotes biodiversity. Local farmers are members of REPs which encourages corncrake friendly farming methods that endeavour to protect this migratory bird from East Africa which breeds on the callows.

The esker ridges comprised of glacial gravels were ideal transportation routes in antiquity, and today’s road network in the vicinity of Clonmacnoise follows many of the ancient esker routes. Careful grazing on the Pilgrim’s Road esker has encouraged the growth of orchid-rich calcareous grassland, rare in Ireland, and which is a Priority Annex I habitat under the EU Habitats Directive.

Like landscapes everywhere, that of Clonmacnoise has long been exploited by the local population for its requirements. Mongan Bog was formerly cut for turf on a small scale by people with turbary rights which documentary evidence dates to at least the early nineteenth century. In addition, attempts to reclaim parts of it for agriculture in the form of ‘bog gardens’ are recorded in pre-famine times. Over the past two decades, the importance of Mongan Bog has been recognised and it has been protected from falling victim to the fate of neighbouring Blackwater Bog which is being industrially exploited for peat by Bord na Mona. Mongan Bog was designated a National Nature Reserve in 1987, a Ramsar Site in 1988 and a Biogenetic Reserve in 1988. Although slightly damaged by the activities of peat cutters in the past, it is of international significance as a superb example of a relatively intact Atlantic sub-type, actively growing raised bog.
represents a part of Europe’s natural heritage that has almost disappeared and contains flora and fauna of some rarity.

Fin Lough, an alkaline fen, supports extensive invertebrate fauna and is of considerable conservation significance. However, it has become drier over the past 100 years, partially due to the operations of Bord na Mona on the nearby Blackwater Bog which is being cut-over, and reedbeds have spread further into the lake. Lough Nanag, found along the western margin of Blackwater Bog has almost disappeared due to the drainage work involved with industrial peat cutting. The shrinkage of the lakes in both locations is due to man’s industrial activities. The fragility of the landscape which is connected hydrologically is demonstrated with respect to both Fin Lough and Lough Nanag.

The Rocks of Clorhane, formerly owned by the Bishop of Meath and therefore part of the Monastic site, have long been exploited by man for building materials. Documentary evidence reveals that the stone was used in some of the buildings of the monastery, most notably the Round Tower. It was quarried up to the nineteenth century and a jetty could be seen on the Shannon River from whence stone from the quarries was transported by boat. The limestone from here is exceptional, being the only example of crinoid fossil in Ireland. In the 1960s much of the southern part of the Rocks of Clorhane was planted with introduced species – conifers and beech, which have been largely removed since then. Unlike the eskers, the area is largely un-grazed and the ground flora is well-developed with an extraordinary luxuriant growth of mosses.

The interaction of man with the environment over many centuries means that visitors to the relict monastic city can witness a largely unchanged stunning semi-natural landscape that harbours a large variety of biodiverse habitats over a relatively small area. Its visual integrity has been protected due to the lack of large development which creates a sense of timelessness.
3. Justification for Inscription

3.a Criteria under which inscription is proposed

In *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, paragraph 77 states that a site which is nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List will be considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value if it meets one or more of the ten criteria set out. It is considered that the Monastic City of Clonmacnoise and its Cultural Landscape satisfies two of the criteria:

Criterion (iv.): *The Site should be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

The architectural ensemble at Clonmacnoise represents an outstanding example of an early medieval Insular monastic city. It represents a significant stage in the development of early medieval Christianity in the North Atlantic. Archaeological excavation coupled with exceptional documentary sources has demonstrated that Clonmacnoise was a *civitas* in reality as well as in name, unlike many other Irish sites, and, moreover, its dates are relatively early in the chronology of urban development outside the boundaries of the old Roman Empire. It is therefore highly significant to our understanding of the development of urbanism generally in Atlantic Europe, as well as clarifying non-Viking urbanisation in an Irish context.

Criterion (v.): *The Site should be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*

Clonmacnoise developed in the midst of extensive peatlands at the point where the Slí Mhór, (Great Road) esker crosses the River Shannon. These two great routes facilitated trade, commerce and pilgrimage in Medieval Ireland. The remains of the monastic city display an outstanding response to the constraints and opportunities by an environment shaped by glacial, fluvial and climatic actions. This extremely diverse semi-natural and sacral landscape is the product of human creativity and interaction over many centuries. Sustainable land-use has helped to maintain this diversity of habitats considered to be some of the most endangered worldwide. However, such landscapes are both fragile and vulnerable to the pressures of land reclamation, drainage schemes, climate change, quarrying, development and industrial peat cutting. Clonmacnoise is not immune to such threats and appropriate measures are being taken to afford its protection and conservation for the future.
**Clonmacnoise as a Cultural Landscape**

The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention set out guidelines in Annex 3 (paragraphs 6-13) in respect of cultural landscapes. Cultural landscapes are selected on the basis of both their OUV and of their representativity in terms of a clearly defined geo-cultural region and also for their capacity to illustrate the essential and distinct cultural elements of such regions. Cultural landscapes embrace a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and the natural environment.

The landscape at Clonmacnoise falls into category (ii) of cultural landscapes: an organically evolved landscape which results from an initial social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative and has developed its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment. Such landscapes reflect that process of evolution in their form and component features. Clonmacnoise combines elements of a relict or fossil landscape in which the evolutionary process of urbanisation associated with an initial ceremonial complex came to an end, leaving significant distinguishing features visible in material form, and a continuing landscape with significant evidence of evolution over time.

The nominated Site is clearly a combined work of man and nature. The relict monastic city provides exceptional evidence of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment. The development of the relict monastic city demonstrates man’s responses to geological, glacial, fluvial and climatic conditions under the constraints of a relatively remote location in the centre of the Irish Midlands and the utilisation of available resources.

The monastic core is a virtual “island” set strategically amidst extensive raised bogs atop an esker ridge (the Slí Mhoir or Great Road) at the point that this intersects the River Shannon. These were the two most important medieval route ways in Ireland. The esker ridges were used from antiquity as east-west route ways through the Irish Midlands for trade, communication and pilgrimage. Two of these routes leading to Clonmacnoise, the Pilgrim’s Road and the Slí Mhoir, are still in use today, traversing a sacred landscape of holy wells and monasteries. The esker roads avoided the necessity of crossing the extensive and dangerous peatlands, and although the bogs offered a degree of protection from raids, these were not impenetrable, as the discovery of a network of ancient gravel and wooden pathways across them attest. The River Shannon, navigable to the Atlantic Ocean at Limerick was, at the time of the monastery, the main north south route through the centre of Ireland and was Clonmacnoise’s main route way to Europe.

The landscape of the nominated Site with its uninterrupted views is a continuing one, largely unaltered during the past one thousand years. The fact that a stunning variety of habitats which are interconnected hydrologically exist around the relict monastic city today is largely due to human agency. The unique semi-natural landscape of active raised bog, fenland, eskers, callows and raised limestone pavement includes many of the most important yet fragile and vulnerable habitats for the preservation of biodiversity in situ,
including rare and endangered species. One essential reason for the survival of these species has been that this landscape has been managed sustainably for hundreds of years by careful grazing regimes on the eskers, and pastoralism and hay-making in the Shannon callows. The River Shannon, undammed and not witness to significant land reclamation, is one of the last great natural functioning river systems in Europe which allows for seasonal flooding that helps to maintain the hydrology of the nominated Site. The continued healthy state of the habitats at Clonmacnoise depends on their sustainable use into the future.

3.b Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The monastic city of Clonmacnoise is exemplary, for unlike comparable early medieval Insular monastic cities such as Derry or Armagh, which have had their archaeology destroyed or subsumed by later building developments, or the Insular monastic settlements of Iona (Scotland) and Lindisfarne, (England) which were abandoned in the ninth century due to Viking raids and therefore did not continue to expand and develop, Clonmacnoise continued to evolve until the late twelfth century. Only after this did it begin to decline, halting its development into a modern metropolis like Armagh.

Clonmacnoise is an unparalleled and outstanding example of a relict early medieval Insular monastic city unobscured by modern building development. It is set within a superlative semi-natural landscape that deepens it spiritual qualities, adding greatly to its authenticity and integrity.

The interaction between man and the natural environment in Clonmacnoise is of unique universal value. Founded by St Ciarán in the mid-sixth century in the midst of extensive raised bogland at the meeting point of two important routes, the River Shannon and the Slí Mhór or Eiscir Riada, one of the five great roads of ancient Ireland, the evolution of the monastic city of Clonmacnoise was dictated by the constraints and opportunities of natural geography.

Clonmacnoise is set in a landscape moulded by geological, glacial, fluvial and climatic forces. This remarkably diverse area includes the River Shannon and its callows, active raised bog, fen, eskers and limestone pavement, which in turn support numerous rare and endangered species of flora and fauna. For hundreds of years, many aspects of this living landscape have been maintained by human management.

Clonmacnoise and its cultural landscape is an organically evolved landscape which permits and depends to a large extent on continuing, traditional land use. Due to human presence, its ecosystems, interconnected hydrologically, are largely stable but subject to the continuance of agricultural use. The use of the Shannon callows for pasturage and hay-making is a precondition for the preservation of biodiversity. This is clearly reflected in that they are an important habitat for a number of rare and vulnerable bird species. The careful management of Mongan Bog, which is a rare survivor of an ombrotrophic (raised) bog ecosystem, make it an outstanding universal asset from the viewpoints of both
scientific study and preservation. The unique, flat and open landscape of Clonmacnoise with its small-scale variation of habitats, its unparalleled views, pilgrim’s routes and holy wells, constitutes an exceptional environment that is perceived as sacral as well as earthly.

Central in this remarkable landscape is Clonmacnoise, which is an outstanding example of a relict Insular monastic city. The monastery is strategically sited and used the opportunities presented by the landscape’s typography to great effect, being built at the intersection of the River Shannon and the Sli Mhóir that traverses the ridge of an esker. It also used the constraints of the landscape in the form of the extensive boglands as a form of protection and relative isolation. The significance of the River Shannon, on the very banks of which Clonmacnoise stands, is constantly referred to and referenced in all of the hagiographical literature. This stresses the monastery’s symbolic position in the centre of Ireland, on the River Shannon, with influences spreading out not just to the Irish coast, but far beyond also – a site chosen for Ciarán not by human hands but by divine power. The hagiographical literature, in revealing the mindset of seventh-eleventh century monastic writers, demonstrates that the landscape and natural life could literally embody living sanctity.

The site of the monastery is significant in other ways too. It is located where Leth Cuinn and Leth Mogha, the north and south halves of Ireland meet, and it is also on the former boundaries of Mide (Meath) and Connacht. These political boundaries were hugely important to the development of the monastery, and were fuelled by the sanctification of the spot through the burial of the body of its holy founder, Ciarán who died less than a year after the monastery’s foundation. His burial ensured that all those interred with him would avail of his intervention and thereby gain rapid entry from this world to that most wished-for otherworld, the Christian heaven. Burial rights and miracles were what allowed the development of the sacred landscape, literally beneath the feet of the monastic city, but metaphorically referencing the celestial city above. Thus landscapes of earth and heaven are linked at the very heart of Ireland.

In the prologue to his Martyrology, composed in c.804, Óengus singled out the great monastic cities of early medieval Ireland: Armagh, Clonmacnoise, Kildare, Glendalough and Ferns, and contrasted their thronged streets with the desolation of Ireland’s pagan monuments. His description of Clonmacnoise, a religious settlement, yet with close connections with secular rulers, homes in on two aspects of the site which are of vital significance and contribute to its outstanding universal value.

The first of these is its urban status, revealed in the sources by the use of the Latin civitas or Irish cathair, and through archaeological excavation. Significantly, in the New Graveyard in a ten-year period from the 1990s, evidence of craft and metal working, nucleation, and planned urban or semi-urban development of eighth/ninth century date were discovered on a larger scale than is apparent today in any other non-Viking Irish context. The importance of the settlement at this time is clearly indicated by the wooden bridge across the River Shannon, of c.804. These features indicate that Clonmacnoise was a civitas in reality as well as in name, unlike many other Irish sites, and, moreover,
its dates are relatively early in the chronology of urban development outside the boundaries of the old Roman Empire. This makes it the closest Irish equivalent to the sites at Hedeby (Haithabu) and Ribe in Denmark, and Birka in Sweden, all of which are eighth-century foundations. It is therefore highly significant to our understanding of the development of urbanism generally in Atlantic Europe, as well as clarifying non-Viking urbanisation in an Irish context.

Clonmacnoise is the outstanding surviving example of this Irish experiment in urbanism, where the Christian city is not conceived of as a claustral monastery. As their own descriptors showed, the Irish civitas was not for the housing of a monolithic monastic community, and its religious functions had little to do with the exiguous and eremitical lifestyle so well presented at Skellig Michael in County Kerry for example. Although at its core this was a sacred site, it was not a monastery in the sense of the word made famous by the Benedictines or Cistercians. Its population was mainly a lay one; if the monumental core was replete with Christian symbolism and mirrored the celestial city, and if in its functions it mimicked those of the Levitical cities of refuge, in reality it was a city more reminiscent of the urban centres of Mediterranean Europe.

The second vital aspect of Clonmacnoise’s heritage is its superlative buildings and artworks. These are representative of Insular forms and traditions and the material embodiment of regal-ecclesiastical relations from the ninth century onwards that demonstrate a creative response to liturgical and spiritual needs. Not only is Clonmacnoise a microcosm of Irish and Insular architectural development from the 8th-15th centuries, it also demonstrates unique creative responses to European architectural models. It is a remarkable example of a tenth-century planned monumental core, showing royal and ecclesiastical co-operation. It embodies the material expression of that society’s idea of Christian kingship, but also a spiritual response to the idea of the Christian city, based around a holy tomb.

The monuments are not only unique in terms of physical survival, but in terms of the documentary record that allows historians to construct the entire abbatial succession from Ciarán himself until the twelfth century, when the monastic city began to decline. An archaeologist from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has identified the cathedral with the recorded building of 909 (a collaboration between the high king, Flann Sinna, and abbot of Clonmacnoise, Colmán), making this the earliest extant mortared church in Ireland. It was also the largest, until the arrival of the Cistercians in 1142. The cathedral was also part of a larger scheme, which involved the carving of the stunning Cross of the Scriptures. Moreover, the siting of the Cross of the Scriptures, the south cross and the north cross, literally inscribe the whole monastic core with the sign of the cross; this (effectively) undisturbed scheme is unique amongst Insular high crosses.

Patronage was not confined either to Kings of Mide, or to churches, although this family tradition continued to the twelfth century, with the building of the Nuns’ Church by the infamous Derbforgaill in 1167, a key building of the Hiberno-Romanesque style. The round tower of 1124 shows, by contrast, Connacht patronage, by the king, Toirdelbach.
Ua Conchobair, and the then abbot. The first king of Connacht connected with the site had been Guaire Aidne, d.663, famed for his generosity, who was buried there. Its tradition as a royal necropolis was to continue up to the interment of the last high king of Ireland, Ruairi Ua Conchobair, in the cathedral in 1198 and led to craft expansion in the form of the cross-slab industry. Clonmacnoise consequently has the largest cross-slab collection in Europe.

Its scriptorium was exceptionally active, with some of the surviving medieval Irish chronicles deriving from versions written at Clonmacnoise, including the Lebor na hUidre (Book of the Dun Cow), the oldest extant manuscript in the Irish language. Its output also stretched to compendiums of vernacular literature, attracting scholars from the British Isles and Continental Europe. Its metalworking was also famed, exemplified by the exquisitely wrought Crosier of Clonmacnoise. The extant remains of the monastic city of Clonmacnoise are a superb representative example of a centre of Christian art, learning and scholarship in the Irish language, which helped to revitalise learning and Insular art forms throughout Western Europe during the Dark Ages.

The monastery’s welfare was, however, inextricably linked with the fate of the surrounding kingdoms. With the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth century, it suffered for its strategic significance as much as it had gained from it earlier. The ruins of an early thirteenth-century royal castle, the only one of its kind in County Offaly, mark the endeavour to subdue the surrounding territory, an endeavour which ultimately failed. Although it returned to Irish hands, and remained a diocesan see until the seventeenth century, the city itself, bereft of the royal patronage it had enjoyed for six centuries, failed to survive. From the late-16th century, Clonmacnoise, which lies at the centre of a network of pilgrim’s paths and holy wells, became primarily a place of pilgrimage for lay persons of both Protestant and Catholic persuasion, which continues today. In 1979, the importance of Clonmacnoise to the Catholic Church was recognised by the visit of Pope John Paul II.

3.c Comparative analysis

The nominated Site is the first in Ireland to be put forward for consideration as a Cultural Landscape. The preparation of a comparative statement for the nominated Site is a particular challenge due to the fact that Clonmacnoise is a unique site, a type of which is not as yet represented on the WHL A comparative analysis is complex as this relies on the identification of individual features and their assessment on an international basis. Such analysis has been attempted but it is necessary to bear in mind that the essence of the nomination is the nature of the nominated Site as an assemblage of significant features. The analysis begins with a comparison of inscribed early Christian monastic sites, and progresses to a comparison of natural and mixed sites that are inscribed and also those entered onto the WHS Tentative List. Finally, the nominated Site is compared to inscribed cultural landscapes that share common elements.
Early Christian Monastic Sites

The following Early Christian sites in Europe and the Near East were compared and contrasted with Clonmacnoise:

Skellig Michael: Ireland

An isolated monastic complex, perched on an island in the Atlantic, difficult to ascend, and at times cut off from all human contact for weeks on end by weather conditions, this site embodies the most extreme characteristics of early Christian eremitical asceticism.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- It demonstrates eremitic monasticism
- It is non-congregational
- It had no national symbolic value in the medieval period
- It is situated on an island
- It is nominated as a group of buildings rather than as a cultural landscape
- It lacks the architectural and artistic wealth evidenced at Clonmacnoise

Saint Catherine, Sinai: Egypt

This site is inscribed for its landscape setting, sacred to three religions, and for the significance of the buildings, and their collections, to the study of Byzantine art and architecture. It is one of the earliest examples of an ascetic monastic site to survive in a state of preservation to the current day.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- The chronological time frame is different
- Its societal role as an enclosed community difficult of access depicts ascetic monasticism
- It has an Eastern architectural tradition

Early Christian Necropolis of Pécs: Hungary

This is a remarkable complex of early Christian tombs, dating to the 4th century. Originally the cemetery of the provincial Roman town of Sopianae, the modern town of Pécs developed not around the ancient city, but around its cemetery. This is indicative of the importance of the cult of the dead in early Christian Europe. The architecture and ornament of these tombs make them a significant example of commemorative art of the early Christian period.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- Its chronology is 4th century.
- There is a uniformity of purpose: confined to burial and commemoration.
- It depicts part of a mutating tradition of architecture and art which nevertheless was still uniformly based on Roman precedents.
**Ouadi Qadisha, and the Forest of the Cedars of God: Lebanon**

The Qadisha valley is a site of very early Christian eremitical monasticism, representing a cultural landscape deliberately chosen for its austerity and inhospitality. The Cedars are significant as living witnesses to Biblical times, as well as being a national emblem. This site is quite similar to Clonmacnoise in having both a monastic heritage and a surrounding natural heritage combined. They are both Christian in their denomination and are integrated into a surrounding landscape of great importance.

*Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:*
- The chronology and coherence are different. There are few buildings (as opposed to sites) from the early period
- It contains scattered examples of eremitic monasticism, not a single clustered centre
- The Quadi-Qadisha is a valley compared to the riparian setting of Clonmacnoise.

**Episcopal Complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the Historical Centre of Poreč: Croatia**

This Site is inscribed as the most complete surviving episcopal complex of its type, characteristic of Byzantine architecture of the 5th/6th centuries.

*Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:*
- The chronology is different
- Style of architecture is Byzantine
- There is a continuity with a Roman architectural past, in terms of layout and development

**Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna: Italy**

This Site contains an outstanding group of ecclesiastical buildings from the 5th century, with a unique collection of early Christian mosaics.

*Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:*
- The chronology. It represents an earlier period of Christian development
- The style of architecture is firmly within the late Antique-Byzantine tradition

**Jelling Mounds, Runic Stones and Church: Denmark**

The Jelling complex represents a key moment of transition from paganism to Christianity in Denmark in the mid 10th century, within the context of ideas of the formation of a nation.

*Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:*
- Unlike Jelling, where in the 10th century, pagan and Christian monuments overlap and overlay each other, the 10th century monuments at Clonmacnoise are within an established and sophisticated Christian tradition.
• The ideas of national identity are not confined to the 10th century at Clonmacnoise, but vigorously expressed in the 12th century also.

**Birka and Hovgården: Sweden**

The archaeological complex of Birka is the site of the earliest known Christian congregation in Sweden, and illustrative of a non-Roman type of proto-town of northern Europe, based on the trading activities of its inhabitants. It was occupied for two centuries, and this occupation period is well preserved due to the subsequent abandonment of the site.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- The length of occupation and development of architectural core (here confined to 8-10th centuries, at Clonmacnoise it is particularly well preserved for 8th/9th-12th centuries)
- It lacks the self-conscious presentation as a Christian city and key royal national centre, evident at Clonmacnoise.

**Paleochristian and Byzantine Monuments of Thessalonika: Greece**

This Site is inscribed as an example of a well-preserved core of important Christian buildings over a long chronological range, showing both architectural diversity and key architectural types.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- It displays a late Classical/Byzantine architectural tradition

**Monuments of Oviedo and the Kingdom of Asturias: Spain**

Considered important as an example of the use of an innovative pre-Romanesque architectural style, used to create a sense of national, and Christian identity in 9th century Asturias, at a time when the rest of the Iberian peninsula was being conquered by Arab Muslim invaders.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- The main chronological phase is different
- There is a lack of a relict landscape around it (decontextualisation by comparison with Clonmacnoise)

**Old city of Jerusalem and its Walls: Jordan/Israel**

As a holy city for the three monotheistic religions of the west, Jerusalem is of key symbolic importance, as well as containing a range of buildings, especially those associated with Christ’s death and resurrection, which provided a model for much early Christian and medieval architectural developments.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Jerusalem is, to an extent, the model on which Clonmacnoise was basing itself, through the medium of Adomnán’s account of it in De Locus Sanctus. It is difficult therefore to compare them in a summary manner.
Mount Athos: Greece
An Orthodox spiritual centre since 1054, Mount Athos has enjoyed an autonomous statute since Byzantine times. The ‘Holy Mountain’, which is forbidden to women and children, also a recognised artistic site and the layout of the monasteries (about 20 of which are presently inhabited by some 1,400 monks) had an influence as far afield as Russia. Its school of painting influenced the history of Orthodox art. Clonmacnoise has some similarities with Mount Athos in being a monastic site that transformed its surrounding natural landscape into a sacred one.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- Mount Athos is an Orthodox spiritual centre
- Its development is later than Clonmacnoise
- Its landscape setting is very different to that of Clonmacnoise

Aksum: Ethiopia
Aksum was the heart of the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, and contains unique stelae from the 3rd and 4th centuries, as well as an extensive architectural ensemble.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- The period of development
- The style of architecture
- The Christian ideal is not the reinforcing idea behind its planning.

Abu Mena: Egypt
This Site is an early Christian assemblage of church, baptistery, basilicas, public buildings, over the tomb of the martyr Menas of Alexandria, d.296 AD.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- The period of development
- The style of architecture

Rock-hewn Churches, Lalibela: Ethiopia
Eleven cave and rock-hewn churches dating largely to the 13th century are a unique conception of the New Jerusalem materially expressed, founded as a result of the visions of a Christian king, Lalibela, and still a centre of pilgrimage and devotion.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- The period of development is later than Clonmacnoise
- It is a different variation on the theme of the ‘New Jerusalem’.

Natural Heritage Sites

Cairngorm Mountains, Scotland: UK; Saima-Pielinen Lake System: Finland
Placed onto the WHS Tentative List in 1999, the Cairngorm Mountains is one of the only other areas in Europe that contains such a diverse assemblage of habitats within a relatively small area. Despite the difference in altitude, the Cairngorm Mountains contain a similar diversity of habitats centred on glacial peatlands, eskers and lochs. Eskers are currently not represented in the WHS List and apart from that on the Tentative List, Saima-Pielinen Lake System, Finland (entered in 2004) and the Cairngorm Mountains, Clonmacnoise represents the only other site with this relict glacial feature on the WHS Tentative List.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Both the Cairngorm Mountains and Saima-Pielinen Lake System are nominated as natural sites and do not show the symbiosis of how man has interacted with the natural environment.

**The Lake District: UK**
The Lake District added to the Tentative List in 1996 is a heavily glaciated geological dome, significant for its abundant habitats including mires, limestone pavement, upland heath, screes, arctic-alpine communities, lakeshore wetlands, estuary, coastal heath and dunes.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Although it is an example of man’s harmonious interaction with his natural environment, it does not demonstrate the symbiosis of man with a sacral landscape as Clonmacnoise does.
- The landscape around Clonmacnoise shows greater diversity of habitats within a relatively small area compared to the Lake District.

**Northwest Mayo Boglands and Clara Bog: Ireland**
Boglands as natural and cultural heritage have nearly disappeared in the European cultural region and beyond, so it is surprising that they are under-represented in the WHS List. For this reason the Northwest Mayo Boglands and Clara Bog, Ireland, were placed on to the Tentative List in 1992. Bounded on the north by a glacial esker ridge and to the south by cut-away bog, Clara is also a raised bog, larger in extent than Mongan Bog within the nominated Site.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Clara Bog is a proposed natural site and does not have the sacral connections that the intact raised bog around Clonmacnoise does.
- The North West Mayo Boglands are blanket bogs, not raised bogs.

**Soomaa (Peatland) National Park: Estonia**
Another site with similarities to Clonmacnoise is Soomaa Peatland, also entered onto the WHS Tentative list for Estonia in 2004 as a mixed site. It contains a complex of raised bogs, wet alluvial forests, with fens, transition mires, and unregulated rivers with floodplain and wooded meadows. Part of the site, Kuresoo Bog, is one of the two best-
preserved large bogs in Estonia and its species diversity is among the highest. Regular flooding has led to interesting local architectural adaptations and use of archaic single-tree one-piece boats. Soomaa is home for lesser spotted eagles, golden eagles, black storks, corncrakes, brown bears, wolves and lynx.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Soomaa is very large in terms of its range and size of bogs, some of which are wooded. Although they are raised bogs they are formed under different, much colder conditions and lower rainfall (Continental - not Atlantic). The raised bogs of Ireland are an Atlantic sub-group of raised bogs (along with some in the UK) in Europe which are particularly wet and deep.

**The Flow Country, Scotland: UK**
The Flow Country, Scotland, placed on the WHS Tentative List in 1999 and described as having the largest single area of blanket bog in the world.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- The Flow Country has blanket bog and its peat formation is much shallower.

**Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia: USA**
Callow land is also another landscape type that is under-represented in the current WHS List. Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia, USA, added to the Tentative List in 2008, is probably the largest swampland in North America. The similarities between it and the Nominated Site are the intact wetland systems that have hardly been influenced by man containing peat deposits which are relatively undisturbed. Both are a refuge for a wide range of flora and fauna and have rich biodiversity.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Okefenokee is nominated as a natural site and does not show the interaction of man with the environment in the way demonstrated with the callows at Clonmacnoise.
- The Okefenokee swamp was formed over the past 6,500 years by the accumulation of peat in a shallow basin on the edge of an ancient Atlantic coastal terrace, the geological relic of a Pleistocene estuary. It is not shaped by glaciation like the landscape around Clonmacnoise.

The following inscribed cultural landscapes were also researched to demonstrate the unique qualities of the nominated Site.

**The Wachau: Austria**
The Wachau is a stretch of the Danube Valley between Melk and Krems, a landscape of high visual quality. It preserves in an intact and visible form many traces - in terms of architecture, (monasteries, castles, ruins), urban design, (towns and villages), and agricultural use, principally for the cultivation of vines - of its evolution since prehistoric times. The Wachau is situated along a river, similar to the Shannon and encompasses
monastic settlements and agricultural land-use within the landscape. It also contains a landscape of high visual quality.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Clonmacnoise is contained within a more concentrated area with semi-natural landscapes.
- The monasteries in Wachau are not of the early medieval Insular type.

**Hortobágy National Park - the Puszta: Hungary**
The cultural landscape of the Hortobágy Puszta consists of a vast area of plains and wetlands in eastern Hungary. Traditional forms of land use, such as the grazing of domestic animals, have been present in this pastoral society for more than two millennia. The Puszta is similar in being an exceptional semi-natural landscape formed by interaction between the landscape and agricultural use by man. It contains grasslands and wetland habitats similar to Clonmacnoise.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Clonmacnoise has a monastic site associated with its semi-natural landscape whereas the Puszta does not.

**Þingvellir National Park: Iceland**
Þingvellir (Thingvellir) is the National Park where the Althing – an open-air assembly, which represented the whole of Iceland – was established in 930 and continued to meet until 1798. Over two weeks a year, the assembly set laws – seen as a covenant between free men – and settled disputes. The Althing has deep historical and symbolic associations for the people of Iceland. The property includes the Þingvellir National Park and the remains of the Althing itself: fragments of around 50 booths built from turf and stone. Remains from the 10th century are thought to be buried underground. The site also includes remains of agricultural use from the 18th and 19th centuries. The park shows evidence of the way the landscape was farmed for over 1,000 years. The timescale of occupation is similar to Clonmacnoise with similar agricultural use of the landscape over 1000 years. The Althing, like the monastic settlement at Clonmacnoise, represents a cultural gathering of influential people who had a significant impact on the life of the communities present at the time.

**Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:**
- Clonmacnoise was a religious rather than a secular centre.

**Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy: Italy**
The nine Sacri Monti (Sacred Mountains) of northern Italy are groups of chapels and other architectural features created in the late 16th and 17th centuries and dedicated to different aspects of the Christian faith. In addition to their symbolic spiritual meaning, they are of great beauty by virtue of the skill with which they have been integrated into the surrounding natural landscape of hills, forests and lakes. The combination of Christian faith and integration with the landscape is similar to the setting of
Clonmacnoise, embedded within the natural surroundings of the callows, bogs, fens and eskers.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- Clonmacnoise is a lowland settlement whereas the Sacri Monti is situated within a mountain landscape.
- The monastic city of Clonmacnoise is of the early medieval period.

Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park with the Archeological sites of Paestum and Velia, and the Certosa di Padula: Italy
The Cilento is an outstanding cultural landscape. The dramatic groups of sanctuaries and settlements along its three east–west mountain ridges vividly portray the area’s historical evolution: it was a major route not only for trade, but also for cultural and political interaction during the prehistoric and medieval periods. The Cilento was also the boundary between the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia and the indigenous Etruscan and Lucanian peoples. The remains of two major cities from classical times, Paestum and Velia, are found there. The Cilento region served as a key route for cultural, political, and commercial communications. This is similar to Clonmacnoise, as it too was the fulcrum of commercial trade along the River Shannon and the Eiscir Riada. Cilento National Park is the result of the combined work of nature and humankind and assumed its present form in association with and in response to its natural environment. This is also true of Clonmacnoise.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- Cilento is a living landscape which continued to evolve in comparison to Clonmacnoise which is a relict monastic settlement.
- The chronology is different

Fertő / Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape: Austria/Hungary
The Fertő/Neusiedler Lake area has been the meeting place of different cultures for eight millennia. This is graphically demonstrated by its varied landscape, the result of an evolutionary symbiosis between human activity and the physical environment. The remarkable rural architecture of the villages surrounding the lake and several 18th- and 19th-century palaces adds to the area’s considerable cultural interest. The evolutionary symbiosis between the landscape and human activity is similar to the monastic city of Clonmacnoise and its surrounding habitats.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- Clonmacnoise is by contrast a religious site with a central focus in the landscape. It is situated alongside a river rather than a lake.
- The chronology is different

St. Kilda: UK
This volcanic archipelago, with its spectacular landscapes, is situated off the coast of the Hebrides. It has some of the highest cliffs in Europe, which have large colonies of breeding seabirds, especially puffins and gannets. The archipelago, uninhabited since
Clonmacnoise, World Heritage Site Draft Nomination Form

1930, bears the evidence of more than 2,000 years of human occupation in the extreme conditions prevalent in the Hebrides. Human vestiges include built structures and field systems, the cleits and the traditional Highland stone houses. There are records of early chapels, and two incised stone crosses of Early Christian style have been found. This site is quite similar to Clonmacnoise in having a natural heritage which reflects the use of the landscape by man over millennia. They are both principally pastoral landscapes reflecting former ways of using the lands such as hay meadows in Clonmacnoise.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:
- St. Kilda is an island and never had a monastic city associated with the site.

Summary
Although there are a wealth of early Christian monasteries and church complexes in the current WHS list, none of them are representative of the Insular architecture/culture that evolved in the early medieval period in the North Atlantic world in an urban context. The relict monastic city of Clonmacnoise is the outstanding representative of this period and therefore fills an important gap in the chronology and knowledge of the development of Christianity in Europe and the Near East. In addition to clarifying non-Viking urbanisation in an Irish context, it also greatly enhances an understanding of the development of urbanism generally in Atlantic Europe.

The nominated Site displays a range of rare ecosystem types arising from glacial and fluvio-glacial actions which reflect species and habitat adaptation to post-glacial climatic changes. The diverse ranges of habitats with their associated species that are present today fall within a relatively small area which is exceptional on an international level. Furthermore, habitats such as raised bog, eskers and callows are under-represented in the current WHS List. The River Shannon is the most important wetland in Ireland and as an outstanding example of a naturally functioning river system the Shannon Callows is unique in Europe. Mongan Bog is one of the last virtually intact raised bogs in Europe and is of great international significance for scientific research. Nowhere else on earth demonstrates the diversity of habitats and species in such a small area as that found in the nominated Site.

This rare environment is however, semi-natural, and demonstrates how man has interacted with it for centuries, not just physically in the form of sustainable farming methods, but also spiritually to form a sacral landscape of Christian holy tombs, buildings and wells, criss-crossed by pilgrims’ routes. As such, this cultural landscape is without parallel in the current WHS List.

3.d Integrity and Authenticity

The physical integrity of the built heritage of the nominated Site is safeguarded through a broad range of existing protective measures under central and local government legislation and planning polices. The integrity of the natural heritage is protected by the highest national and international nature conservation designations. The core zone forms part of the Area of High Amenity in the Offaly County Council Draft Development Plan.
The nominated Site is well documented, has a long and continuous recorded history, and has been the subject of in-depth research, aerial mapping, measured survey, photography, written records and archaeological excavation. An extensive and still growing reference literature provides a high level of information and knowledge and allows the landscape to be tested for authenticity and integrity and to be monitored effectively so as to inform conservation strategies and to ensure that its structural-historical and visual integrity is retained.

Overall, the Site has a high level of integrity as a relict monastic landscape and a continuing cultural landscape. The archaeological components of the Site, most of which fall within the Archaeological Registered Area, have a high degree of authenticity. Clonmacnoise was and still is an important place of pilgrimage, attested by the medieval Pilgrim’s Road that is still in use today. The religious use of the Site goes back 1,500 years and is continued by both Catholics and Protestants for prayer and pilgrimage, particularly the feast of St Ciarán on the 9 September. Over 150,000 lay people visit Clonmacnoise annually and its importance to the Roman Catholic community was exemplified by the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1979. The desire to be buried at Clonmacnoise is a part of the site’s authenticity, since it continues a Christian tradition which is deeply imbedded in St Ciarán’s relict cemetery and the sacral landscape surrounding his monastery.

Conservation of the relict monastic city has a long history, reflecting its importance. Clonmacnoise is significant on two counts for the early preservation and conservation of its buildings (1860s). In both Ireland and England at this time, there was a growing debate over the type of repair or conservation which was most desirable. This had already begun in the late eighteenth century, when the Society of Antiquaries of London (founded 1717) campaigned to prevent mistaken ‘improvements’, commissioning, for instance, measured plans and drawings of Durham Cathedral, from John Carter (1748-1817) in 1792 in an effort to prevent extensive and mistaken demolition and rebuilding. There is, however, a distinction to be made between conservation of ruined buildings, and repairs necessary for those still in liturgical use, or still inhabited.

The works at Clonmacnoise are significant because they were amongst the earliest to set a standard of repair in buildings already in ruins. In terms of the approach taken, this was one of minimal intervention and sensitive reconstruction. As Emerick (2003) notes, in comparing Clonmacnoise and Whitby Abbey: ‘...both sites are famed and significant religious centres; and both sites are at the centre of defining episodes in the development of conservation philosophy.’

In conformity with the Nara Declaration on Authenticity (1994), recent conservation and reconstruction has been limited to the minimum required to achieve structural integrity and public safety. All modern works undertaken by the Office of Public Works require a consideration for the setting, spirit and feeling of the site coupled with a thorough
knowledge of historic building methods and use of authentic building materials. These factors are underpinned by modern scientific understanding of decay mechanisms and non-harmful repair techniques. The Conservation Works Programme 2002-2008 are described in detail in section 4(a).

The landscape, shaped primarily by glacial, fluvial and climatic events, displays a remarkable diversity of habitats over a relatively small area and harbours a variety of rare and endangered species. Biodiversity within the different and fragile habitats has been sustained by traditional farming practises of pastoralism and hay-making for centuries. This remarkable landscape is considered both natural and sacral with its pilgrims’ routes, holy wells and wayside cairns, which enhances the integrity and aesthetic nature and spiritual qualities of the relict monastic city.
4. State of Conservation and factors affecting the Property

4.a Present state of conservation

Following a long campaign of consolidation and restoration of the buildings within the archaeological area and implementation of measures to protect and monitor the natural heritage of the nominated Site, its cultural and natural heritage is healthy.

A comprehensive works programme was commenced by the Office of Public Works (OPW) in January 2002 with funding provided under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. A rectified photographic survey of the structures was undertaken and deterioration of the fabric of each site was recorded. Loose stonework was observed constituting a considerable health and safety risk. A project management plan was prepared by the design team and consent for the proposed works was sought from the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Linking the traditional skills of OPW’s craftsmen with the laboratory based forensic expertise of the Engineering Department, Trinity College Dublin, has resulted in the application of appropriate repair materials and the introduction of a range of innovative site works practises. These initiatives include the development of specific lime burning and mortar production techniques in the OPW depot at Athenry together with the provision of a sheltered on-site working environment.

The works programme commenced with the consolidation of the stonework at Temple Dowling and Temple Rí. The original mortar and subsequent modern cement based repairs were analysed and the impact of the latter on the masonry was investigated. The cement based material and loose mortar was removed and the stonework was prepared for re-pointing with a replica lime based repair mortar.

At the Cathedral the surviving sections of internal plasterwork was conserved, in addition to the wall consolidation works. The OPW conservation engineer had established that the upper part of northern outer wall of the monument was developing a lean and rebuilding a section of the western wall to act as a stabilising buttress was recommended. To ensure the integrity of this work it was necessary to extend the area of walling over the fragmentary remains of the West or main doorway of the Cathedral. Detailed survey work and historic research enabled the conservation team to proceed with the restoration of this feature of the site.

Future works that have been proposed include consolidation works to Temple Finghin and the Nun’s Church where serious stone decay has been observed. It is proposed to survey and record both monuments and detail the vulnerable sandstone elements and to avail of the expertise of Trinity College, Dublin on stone consolidation. Plans to protect the monument from aggressive environmental conditions will be considered and environmental and condition monitoring systems will be implemented.
The shattered remains of the keep and the associated steep earthworks of the castle continue to constitute a high risk hazard to the public. It is proposed to exclude the public from the castle pending conservation works. A detailed archaeological and architectural survey of the site is required and a comprehensive conservation management plan needs to be prepared. The conservation status of the monastic core of the nominated Site is therefore considered to be very good (the features of national and international significance being in a favourable condition).

Many of the local farmers in the core zone have signed up to the agri-environmental Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS). This scheme helps to ensure that agricultural practises are sympathetic to the environment, promote sustainable land-use and it has specific Corncrake actions incorporated to protect this endangered migratory bird. Other local farmers are in the Farm Plan Scheme which is specific to land in SACs and SPAs only (under NPWS administration). There are currently 13 farmers in REPS with corncrake add-ons and 24 in FPSs – which is only run in the Shannon callows at present.

Dry-stock farming is the main agricultural activity. The Water Frameworks Directive and the Nitrates Directive monitor the health of the River Shannon under the aegis of the Shannon International River Basin District (IRBD) Project established by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and funded through the National Development Plan.

The biggest changes in the area have come about through the peat-mining activities of Bord na Mona and quarrying for gravel, both activities mainly confined to the buffer zone. Extensive industrial peat-cutting of Blackwater Bog and other surrounding bogland has caused the formation of large areas of cut-away bog, while small-scale demand for gravel for local use (within the core zone) and on an industrial scale at three large quarries (in the buffer zone) has resulted in the degradation of the eskers. The drains excavated by Bord na Mona contiguous to Fin Lough and Lough Nanag have disturbed the hydrology of the area and the lakes have been reduced in size, while continued excavation of gravel on the eskers could also have a significant impact of the hydrology of the area. There appears to be no active turbary on Mongan Bog at present, most of which is being well managed by An Taisce as a Nature Reserve. Mongan Bog is one of the few raised bogs that has improved in status between monitoring periods.
4.b Factors affecting the property

(i) Development Pressures (e.g., encroachment, adaptation, agriculture, mining)

The nominated Site is a living cultural landscape in which we must expect and allow for evolution, growth and decline. Much of it is situated in a floodplain or in wetland terrain that is generally unsuitable for large-scale housing or industrial development and which is covered by a wide range of protective countryside and nature conservation designations. It is expected that there will be a gradual growth in population, but that this will not be exponential. However, the increase will necessitate the need for some new housing. Housing developments or new farm infrastructure will be subject to pre-existing planning policies.

The various habitats in the nominated Site are fragile ones interconnected by water, so understanding the hydrology of the whole area is of paramount importance. The main development pressures come from extractive industry and industrial-scale peat cutting in the buffer zone that has the potential to disrupt the hydrology of the nominated Site. Tourism also has the potential to affect the nominated Site adversely (through over-burdening the transport infrastructure, noise pollution and environmental impact on the habitats and built heritage of the Site) if not managed correctly, and this is being addressed in the WHS Management Plan.

Agriculture

The majority of the land in the nominated WHS is currently used for agriculture, predominantly for dry-stock rearing. Over-grazing on the eskers has the potential to cause erosion and loss of species rich grasslands and under-grazing also causes species loss. scrub encroachment is another issue. All are being addressed in the Bio-diversity Action Plans of the three County Councils.

Agriculture is a very important activity, employing approximately 10% of the workforce in the Shannon District. About 70% of the land area is used for agriculture, mostly for livestock grazing on grassland. Estimates of nutrient input into waters in the Shannon District indicate that agriculture produces 55% of the yearly phosphorus load and 85% of the nitrogen load. Bye-laws to control agricultural pollution have been put in place in priority areas including Cavan, Offaly and North Tipperary. Water quality in the River Shannon has been steadily improving and fish stocks are healthy but this could be reversed without suitable monitoring controls in place. The River Shannon is subject to the Nitrates Directive and the Water Framework Directive that are overseen by the Shannon International River Basin District (IRBD) Project which monitors run-off from farms and areas where peat is cut.

Forestry

The principal wooded area in the nominated Site is the Rocks of Clorhane, centred on an exposure of limestone, and principally covered in hazel woodland. This woodland has been damaged in places by under-planting with conifers by the State which acquired the site in 1968. Some hazel stools survive throughout the planted zone and grow up to seven
metres, but in some situations they are increasingly being shaded out by taller conifers. Many of the conifers have been removed and those that remain will form a part of the future management regime for the Rocks of Clorhane.

**Peat Cutting**
Turbary (customary peat cutting) was formerly practised on Mongan Bog but this appears to have ceased. However, turbary rights to Mongan Bog are possibly still active and with rising fuel prices, it is noticeable how peat cutting in the Midlands has increased. Turbary has the potential to damage the actively growing raised bog by causing it to lose water when drainage ditches are dug or the edge of the bog is compromised by cutting. This is being addressed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service that operates a voluntary scheme for buying turbary rights on cSACs.

Industrial peat cutting on Blackwater Bog by Bord na Mona which is included in the Buffer Zone, has affected the drainage of Fin Lough. This has reduced the extent of open water in the site and large areas of the former lake basin are now overgrown by reed swamp and scrub woodland. To maintain the extent, bio-diversity and species richness of Fin Lough, it is necessary to establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities. The potential impacts of drainage on the hydrology of Fin Lough are currently not well understood and it will be beneficial to address this issue by conducting a future survey to determine the hydrological regime on this site.

**Quarrying**
Quarrying for aggregate on the eskers is an on-going issue as many of those within the nominated Site are not supported by conservation designations. The lack of protection for these has resulted in quarries developed to extract the gravel. Approximately 33 pits in the esker system that lie both within the core zone and the buffer zone, some of them excavated in recent years, were identified by Tubridy’s 2006 Report, of which three are large scale operations, (these lie in the buffer zone). Quarrying in the core zone is not compatible with the maintenance of esker geodiversity and biodiversity and, as the eskers hold a considerable amount of water, quarrying has the potential to upset the fragile hydrological balance of the nominated Site. Quarrying in the buffer zone has to balance the effect on geodiversity/biodiversity with the needs of local employment. The recommendations of Tubridy’s Report are being addressed in the Bio-diversity Action Plan for County Offaly and the County Offaly Development Plan (2009-2015).

**Recreation**
The River Shannon is now a high amenity area popular with pleasure boat cruisers and anglers. Waterways Ireland and the relevant local authorities are working together to address problems of localised water problems including pollution from chemical toilets and oil spillage from boats as well as physical disturbance caused by boat wakes on the callows. Bye-laws have been implemented which apply speed restrictions on boats along the Shannon navigation. However, river traffic control should be implemented as the 9th century wooden bridge at Clonmacnoise is suffering from boats dropping anchor and dragging on the bridge timbers when boat users are waiting to get a berth during peak times.
Widespread development on floodplains (such as infill of wetland sites and general loss of wetland sites through reclamation), particularly with respect to potential effects on water quality and flooding behaviour, is a potential environmental problem within this district. It is essential that annual winter and spring flooding is maintained for the preservation of wetlands and fen, which have recognised international importance as waterfowl habitat. The Office of Public Works is embarking on a comprehensive flood management plan for the Shannon District under the forthcoming EU Floods Directive.

Burials
The current graveyard, opened in 1955, is almost full necessitating the provision by Offaly County Council of a new site for interments. However, the land surrounding the monastic core is deemed not suitable for burial as it is in an archaeologically sensitive zone. The land close to the River Shannon is also considered unsuitable as it is subject to periodic water-logging which poses a health hazard. New ground for burial must be sought for the residents of the parish, but the site must be acceptable to them as a burial place. Plans are in train for the provision of a new burial site and consultation between Offaly County Council and the local community is underway.

(ii) Environmental pressures (e.g., pollution, climate change, desertification)
The nominated Site is one that was heavily influenced by climate and environmental pressures – in this case the effect of climate change and glaciation on the land that has given rise to landforms and geological exposures that now harbour a variety of stunning habitats. The Site is still subject to climate change, in this instance that of global warming. This has the potential to impact on the Site and its flora and fauna (particularly the globally threatened Corncrake that nests in the Shannon Callows) through increased risk to flooding (see 5c). The precise nature of this impact cannot be qualified at this time and the Office of Public Works is currently producing flood risk maps for Ireland that will allow an assessment of the risk to the nominated Site of different severities of flood events. These maps should be available within the next three years.

(iii) Natural disasters and risk preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)
The nominated site is not in an earthquake zone, nor is there any volcanic activity in the area and there are no risks from landslides due to the flat topography. Risks to the vegetation of the site from fire are very low due to the temperate climate. Fire risks at the Clonmacnoise Visitor Centre are managed by fire alarms and fire suppressants.

Annual flooding of the callows by the River Shannon is natural part of the hydrological cycle of the site and is significant for the maintenance of the callows. The monastic site is situated on a slight rise above the flood plain of the River Shannon and is rarely affected by flooding from the river. The most recent major flood occurred in the area in the winter of 1999 but did not affect the monastic site at this time. However, climate change may be causing increase in flood levels.
Extensive cutting of the bogs since the 1950’s (especially Blackwater Bog to the south east of the site) has probably lowered the water table and the monastic site may now be less prone to flooding than in the past. The grave slabs are stored on trays which can be easily removed if they are threatened. There is also a mechanism to protect the high crosses in the Visitor Centre should a flooding risk arise.

iv) Visitor/tourism pressures
There are established pressures on the nominated Site and in particular on its surroundings, from increased visitors. The pattern of visiting is strongly focussed on the summer months and is accounted for in the main by coach parties of foreign tourists who stop off at Clonmacnoise en route from Dublin to Galway/West Ireland. The anticipated trends in visiting Ireland are upward, pointing to the continued need for an active approach to visitor management.

Whilst the maintenance of existing facilities is important, the way in which these are promoted and the evaluation of the need for additional or improved facilities is one of the most critical areas for ensuring the sustainable use of the nominated Site by visitors. The main principle of visitor management is that visitor numbers should be matched to the carrying capacity of the nominated Site and should take account of the following elements:

- **Impacts on geological/geomorphologic features**: these are generally robust and unlikely to be damaged by visitors, but the possibility of such damage should always be considered.

- **Impacts on wildlife**: these may arise from direct erosion of vegetation or disturbance to sensitive species by walkers, anglers or pleasure boat cruisers.

- **Quality of visitor experience**: overall visitor numbers affect the experience of the nominated Site.

- **Impacts on traffic/local infrastructure**: The means by which visitors reach Clonmacnoise and the capacity of the transport network to get them there are increasingly important considerations.

When the new Visitor Centre at Clonmacnoise was opened in 1993, it was built to accommodate 75,000 visitors per annum. Current visitor numbers are almost double this figure leading to crowding, in spite of a system of only pre-booked coaches being allowed entry. This undoubtedly diminishes the tourist experience, especially in the high season. Coaches in particular place considerable pressure on the road infrastructure which is not geared to carry a high volume of traffic and disturbs life for the local inhabitants.

Moreover, the pattern of visiting means that economic benefits to the local community and the wider region, is minimal. Visitors spend only a few hours at the monastic core before boarding a bus and continuing their overland journey. They seldom explore the natural landscape which is accessible on foot using the pilgrim’s routes.
Although tourism does not currently seem to have had any adverse effects on the physical fabric of the monastic core, this situation needs close monitoring and the Draft Development Plan for Clonmacnoise (2003) recommended an independent study of visitor impact on the monastic site. It is apparent that a new visitor management regime is needed for the nominated Site. This objective is provided in the WHS Management Plan and involves the construction of an additional visitor centre located elsewhere in the region that will act as a hub from whence visitors to Clonmacnoise can be conveyed either by road or river in a managed fashion. This will greatly enhance the visitor experience, improve the quality of life for local inhabitants by reducing traffic congestion and stimulate economic growth by advertising other attractions in the Midlands. This will increase tourist spending by encouraging people to remain in the area for more than a few hours, therefore increasing the number of tourist nights which will benefit local accommodation establishments and nearby hotels.

*(v) Number of inhabitants within the property and the buffer zone*

Estimated population located within:

- Area of nominated property: less than 200 persons
- Buffer zone: less than 500
- Total: approximately 700

Year: Census of Population, 2006
5. Protection and Management of the Property

5.a Ownership

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is the State body responsible under the World Heritage Convention for policy relating to the built and natural heritage of the site. The Office of Public Works is responsible for the management of the monastic core site. The nominated Site covers 2,903 hectares and encompasses a variety of ownerships public and private, large and small scale.

The majority of the Site (2679.35ha) is owned by private individuals. Other significant landowners comprise the State, State Agencies and Religious organisations. Amongst the main institutional landowners, the following are significant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landowner</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on behalf of the Irish people</td>
<td>16.5 (Rocks of Clorhane) 10.51 Monastic Core, The Nun’s Church and St Cáiran’s Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Ireland Roman Catholic Church</td>
<td>Temple Connor 0.02 Mass Shelter 0.0025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Taisce (Mongan Bog)</td>
<td>129.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bord na Mona (Fin Lough)</td>
<td>28.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>185.38 ha (6.4% of the nominated Site)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.b Protective designation

The protection and conservation of the nominated Site is controlled by a range of national legislation, local mechanisms, international guidelines, and statutory and non-statutory guidance. These legislative provisions include, amongst others, the National Monuments Acts 1930–2004, the Wildlife Act 1976 and 2000, Planning and Development Acts, various EU Directives and international charters.

Figure 7 Map of Protection Status

The relict monastic city of Clonmacnoise is a national monument and is accordingly offered the highest national statutory designations under the National Monuments Act (1930-2004, as amended). Clonmacnoise was designated a National Monument in 1877. It is located in County Offaly, and therefore policies derived from the Offaly County Development, developed by the Local Authority following extensive public consultation, have the most direct impact on the landuse and management in the area immediate to and surrounding the site. However, due to its strategic location on the River Shannon, the neighbouring counties of Roscommon and Westmeath, in which part of the core zone is situated, have an impact on the setting and landscape around Clonmacnoise if development policies are conflicting.
Offaly County Council recognises that Clonmacnoise is one of Ireland’s foremost national monuments and is of international importance as a spiritual, historic, archaeological and cultural centre. The unique atmosphere and attractiveness of Clonmacnoise derives not only from the Monastic site itself but its relationship to the River Shannon and the callows together with the sense of enclosure provided by the eskers. The effect is heightened by the unfolding of the site as it is approached either from the river or any of the three approach roads.

Offaly County Council is conscious of the fact that the interaction of all these elements contributes significantly to the impact of the area and that it is necessary to preserve and protect these fully in order to retain the unique and special character of Clonmacnoise. In addition to the Monastic site, the area surrounding Clonmacnoise, including Mongan Bog, Fin Lough and Clonmacnoise Callows, are areas of international importance.

At regional level, Clonmacnoise is situated within the Midlands Regional Authority and guidance for planning is derived from the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (MRPG) 2004 – 2010. Clonmacnoise is located within the Western Development Area as defined by the MRPG. The revitalisation of this area is recognised as presenting challenges due to declining populations in tandem with declining traditional peat based industries such as Bord na Mona and the Electricity Supply Board (ESB).

The area is considered to have high potential for dedicated amenity and leisure especially when combined with the range of heritage facilities and heritage towns. The MRPG recommends that the heritage and amenity of the area be utilised to its fullest and that the co-ordinated promotion and marketing of the inland waterways, cycling and walking trails and historical assets of the area is essential. The guidelines also recognise the importance of the natural resources of the area including the waterways and boglands and the rich historical resources associated with this area.

Within the nominated Site are 3 National Monuments in State ownership: Churches, Two Round Towers, Crosses, and slabs at Clonmacnoise (NMR 81); Land at Clonmacnoise (9 Acres, 7 roods and 37 perches) (NMR 601) and the Clonfinlough Stone (NMR 336). In addition, there is one Monument Protected by Preservation Order (County Offaly): the Ecclesiastical Remains, Clonmacnoise (Preservation Order TPO 12.01). Within the proposed Site there are 650 Recorded Monuments in the RMP (see appendix).

There are 4 cSACs in the nominated Site: the Middle Shannon Callows (000216); Fin Lough (000576); Mongan Bog (000580) and the Pilgrim’s Road Esker (001776).

SPAs in the nominated Site are Mongan Bog (004017) and the Middle Shannon Callows (004096).

Mongan Bog (119 ha) was inscribed as a Statutory Nature Reserve in 1987. In addition 127 ha of Mongan Bog (416) is also a Ramsar Site. It is also listed as a biogenetic reserve.
5.c Means of implementing protective measures

An established framework of legislation and planning policy exists within which the management of the World Heritage Site will take place. The framework stems from European Union, Republic of Ireland national, regional and local government. Supporting the statutory system are conventions, codes of practice and guidance. Some of these protective measures are administered by the Irish Republic national government and some by local authorities.

International

The World Heritage Convention (adopted by UNESCO in 1972) was ratified by the Irish government in 1991. The Convention provides for the identification, protection, conservation and presentation of cultural and natural sites of outstanding universal value, and requires a World Heritage List to be established under the management of an inter-governmental World Heritage Committee. Implementation of the World Heritage Convention is overseen by UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is responsible for the Irish Republic’s general compliance with the Convention, and for nominating sites in Ireland. The World Heritage Convention provides international guidance on conservation of World Heritage Sites. These guidelines provide directions that will inform the management of the nominated Site and outline obligations for the State Party, such as the preparation of a Management Plan for the site and periodic reporting, under the World Heritage Convention. International charters set out recognised standards for the built heritage community, working towards the conservation and protection of cultural heritage sites.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), an association of professionals throughout the world, set out general principles for the preservation of historic monuments and heritage in 1964. This document is known as the Venice Charter. Since then many additional charters have been formulated and ratified to cover other aspects of cultural heritage, such as authenticity, preservation, protection and management. The Council of Europe also plays a role in producing guidance documents for the preservation of cultural heritage. ICOMOS Ireland, the national body, promotes ICOMOS’ international charters, supports the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and promotes responsible custodianship of World Heritage Sites. It is available for consultation by Government Departments on matters relating to cultural heritage, and the international charters and conventions.

The Valetta Convention. The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage requires that archaeological heritage is taken account of in the development process. This convention also includes the setting and context of archaeological sites as part of the archaeological heritage that requires protection. Ireland ratified this Convention in 1997, and as such is legally bound by it.

The Nara Declaration on Authenticity builds on the Charter of Venice, 1964, and recognises that in a world undergoing increasing globalisation and homogenisation the
search for cultural identity can sometimes be pursued through aggressive nationalism and the suppression of the cultures of minorities. All cultures and societies are rooted in tangible and intangible expression which constitutes their heritage and these should be respected. It is essential that authenticity is achieved in conservation practice to illuminate the collective memory of mankind.

**The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** resulted from the Earth Summit held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Ireland signed the Convention in 1992 and ratified it in 1996. Subsequent agreements, EU Directives and Ireland’s National Biodiversity Plan have reinforced this message and the commitment to halt the loss of biodiversity.

**The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).** Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are areas of special importance to wildlife habitats and species. The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) lists priority habitats and species that must be conserved. Under the Habitats Directive, each State Member is required to designate SACs, because they support habitat and plant and animal species that are rare or threatened in Europe and that require particular measures, including the designation of protected sites to conserve them. While cSACs are fully protected under the EU Habitats Directive, the term ‘candidate’ refers to the fact that the sites are currently under consideration by the European Commission.

Irish habitats include raised bogs, active blanket bogs, turloughs, sand dunes, machair (flat sandy plains on the north and west coasts), heaths, lakes, rivers, woodlands, estuaries and sea inlets. The 25 Irish species, which must be afforded protection, include: Salmon, Otter and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. Part IV of the 1997 European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, subsequently amended by the Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000 requires local authorities in respect of development requiring planning permission to ensure that an appropriate assessment of the implications of a proposed development within an SAC be undertaken.

**The Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).** Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are areas of European importance, designated under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by reason of the bird species and populations that they support. A network of protected sites is required to protect wild birds at their breeding, feeding, roosting and wintering areas. The Birds Directive addresses the conservation of all wild birds throughout the European Union, including marine areas, and covers their protection, management, control and exploitation. It places a broad requirement on countries to take necessary measures to maintain the populations of all wild birds at levels determined by ecological, scientific and cultural needs. The Birds Directive requires designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the following:

- Listed rare and vulnerable species such as: Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Peregrine Falcon, Corncrake and Terns.

- Regularly occurring migratory species such as: Ducks, Geese and Waders.

- Wetlands, especially those of international importance, which attract large numbers of migratory birds each year. (Internationally important means that 1%
of the population of a species uses the site or more than 20,000 birds regularly use the site).

The Special Protection Areas (SPAs) have been selected because they support populations of birds of particular species that are rare or threatened in Europe and require particular measures, including the designation of protected areas, to conserve them.

Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive provides that Member States classify the most suitable territories as SPAs. This Article was implemented in Ireland in the first instance by the E.C. (Conservation of Wild Birds) Regulations 1985 (S.I. No. 291 of 1985). The enforcement provisions for SPAs were changed by the Habitats Directive. This is implemented in Ireland by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 94/1997) and its amendments in 1998 and 2005 (S.I. No. 233/1998 and No. 378/2005). Article 6 of the Habitats Directive requires an appropriate assessment of any works, plans or projects. In order to protect ecologically important sites, certain activities may be restricted within designated areas. These activities (known as notifiable activities, damaging activities or operations requiring consent) have been identified as having the potential to destroy or significantly alter damage or interfere with the ecology of a site. The list of such activities varies depending on the habitats and species present.

Statutory Nature Reserves (SNR) have been given a priority designation in association with the EU Habitats Directive. These Reserves provide the strictest means in Ireland for the protection of wildlife sites. The Reserves comprise state-owned land, inland waters or foreshore areas which form the habitat of a species or community of flora or fauna of scientific interest or form part of an ecosystem of scientific interest, which would benefit from protection measures, established under the Wildlife Act, 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000. Nearly all damaging activities can be legally prevented in them.

Natura 2000 Network is a network of important ecological sites across the European Union. It is comprised of areas known as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservations (SACs). The total land and freshwater area within the Natura network in Ireland is some 11,644km². The designation of an area as a site in the Natura 2000 Network does not mean the limitation of activities within the site and surrounding area if these are environmentally sustainable and do not affect the integrity of the area or its habitats, or the objectives of species conservation.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Sites) of International Importance was established at Ramsar on 2nd February 1971, as amended by the Protocol at Paris on 3rd December 1982. Ireland ratified this convention on 15 November 1984. The aim of the convention is to secure the designation by each contracting state of wetlands in its territory for inclusion in a list of wetlands of international importance, especially for waterfowl habitat. This entails the commitment of each contracting state to a policy of protection and management of the designated wetlands, and of formulating and implementing planning so as to promote the conservation of designated wetlands and, as far as possible, the wise use of wetlands in its territory. Ireland presently has 45 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance, with surface areas of 66,994 hectares. Protection derives from other designations of the sites as SPAs or Nature Reserves. It obliges the
State to recognise and conserve any internationally important wetlands. The Convention notes the presence of rare, vulnerable, endemic or endangered plants or animals as a factor in determining international importance. Mongan Bog is a Ramsar Site.

**Biogenetic Reserves** are designated by the Council of Europe and are natural habitats, which are especially valuable for nature conservation in Europe. There are currently 14 Biogenetic Reserves in Ireland, one of which, Mongan Bog, is in the nominated Site. It is an objective of Offaly County Council to protect this habitat.

**The Water Framework Directive** (more formally the Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy) is a European Union directive which commits European Union member states to achieve good qualitative and quantitative status of all water bodies (including marine waters up to kilometer from shore) by 2015. It is a framework in the sense that it prescribes steps to reach the common goal rather than adopting the more traditional limit value approach. The directive defines ‘surface water status’ as the general expression of the status of a body of surface water, determined by the poorer of its ecological status and its chemical status. Thus, to achieve ‘good surface water status’ both the ecological status and the chemical status of a surface water body need to be at least ‘good’. Ecological status refers to the quality of the structure and functioning of aquatic ecosystems of the surface waters. Good ecological status is defined locally as being lower than a theoretical reference point of pristine conditions, i.e. in the absence of anthropogenic influence. Article 14 of the directive requires member states “to encourage the active involvement of interested parties” in the implementation of the directive.

**The Nitrates Directive** (91/676/EEC) – Council Directive of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources was adopted in 1991 and has the objective of reducing water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources. The Directive has been implemented in Ireland since 1991 by way of extensive monitoring of nitrate levels in waters, the assessment of the trophic status of waters, the development and dissemination in 1996 of a Code of Good Agricultural Practice to Protect Waters from Pollution by Nitrates and a range of other measures which operate to protect water quality from pollution by agricultural sources.

Ireland’s national Nitrates Action Programme was given statutory effect by the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2006 which were made on 19 July 2006. These Regulations provide strengthened statutory support for the protection of waters against pollution from agricultural sources e.g. by phosphorus or nitrogen. The Regulations require the avoidance of careless practices by farmers, which create a risk of causing pollution and provide for inspections by local authorities. Implementation of the Action Programme is supported by an enhanced package of financial supports for farmers by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) and by the cross-compliance inspections carried out by that Department. There is cross reporting of breaches between local authorities and DAFF.
The Nitrates Directive requires application of a general land-spreading limit of 170kg per hectare for nitrogen from livestock manure [this is considered to be equivalent to the output from two dairy cows]. However Member States can apply for a derogation to allow higher amounts in appropriate cases i.e. where soil or climactic conditions are such that the higher amount will not cause water pollution. In keeping with a commitment in Sustaining Progress, an application for a derogation was made by Ireland for the benefit of some 6,000 dairy farmers operating at levels above 170 kg per hectare. Approval was sought for land spreading rates of up to 250kg N per hectare per annum. The directive also limits the application of fertiliser and the storage of manure within 5m of a watercourse.

The EU Commission granted Ireland a derogation on the 22 October 2007, which allowed land-spreading rates of up to 250kg of Nitrogen per hectare per annum for specific circumstances. Revised Good Agricultural Practice Regulations will be made shortly, following a consultation process, to give statutory effect to the operation of the derogation. These Regulations will also provide for better farmyard management and strengthened enforcement provisions in order to achieve compliance with a judgment of the European Court of Justice in relation to the Dangerous Substances Directive.

**National Legislation**

**National Monuments Acts 1930–2004** The National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004 provide for the protection of archaeological heritage. The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments. As well as extending protection to all known sites, the National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004 extends protection to all previously unknown archaeological items and sites that are uncovered through ground disturbance or the accidental discovery of sites located underwater. Where necessary, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will issue preservation orders to ensure protection is afforded to sites believed to be under threat.

The monastic core of Clonmacnoise is a National Monument in State ownership, as defined in the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended) and is afforded the highest level of statutory protection.

**Planning and Development Acts 2000–2006** Ireland has a modern and effective planning legislative code that offers comprehensive environmental and conservation protection. The nominated Site is protected under the Planning and Development Acts 2000–2006 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and through the exercise of the functions of the relevant planning authorities, i.e. Offaly, Roscommon and Westmeath County Councils, in their democratic and consultative County Development Plan process. All of the State, Semi-State and Non-Government Organisations having an interest in the built and natural heritage are invited and facilitated to participate in both the County Development Plan process and the planning
application and appeals processes. County Draft Development Plans are drawn up after an extensive consultation process and local community input. The resultant Draft Development Plan is put on public display for a specified period of time. The local authority is required to consider the comments received in this open and transparent process.

Wide-ranging planning objectives incorporate arrangements for taking into account the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service, the National Museum of Ireland and other statutory agencies with regard to the identification and preservation of archaeological monuments and sites in the county. The archaeological structures, natural features, diverse habitat and vegetation in the nominated Site combine to produce some of the most spectacular scenery in Ireland. All Councils recognise the importance to the overall landscape of these features and strives to protect and enhance these assets via a number of objectives in their respective County Development Plans (Offaly County Draft Development Plan 2009–2015; County Roscommon Development Plan 2008-2014; County Westmeath Development Plan 2008-2014).

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (MRPG) 2004 – 2010 has several objectives pertinent to Clonmacnoise and its environs. It recognises that common heritage themes should be utilised to promote and market an identity for the region, for its internal population and in terms of the tourist industry, while heritage elements should be protected through a co-ordinated effort between all four county planning authorities to ensure consistency of approach. The leisure and amenity potential of the inland waterways of the region should be investigated and promoted where appropriate, particularly in line with the tourism industry. The prominence of boglands in the social, economic and cultural development of the region and as a defining element in its identity should be recognised and promoted, and alternative uses for cutaway and cutover boglands should be investigated, particularly in relation to the alternative and renewable energy industries. The development of these strategies is significant and could assist greatly in appropriate management of the environment around Clonmacnoise and in sustainable tourism initiatives.

Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1999. The purpose of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

The Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife Amendment Act 2000 provides for a range of measures including the statutory designation of Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and to introduce statutory designation for sites under geological or geomorphological grounds. Certain plant, animal and bird species are protected by law. This includes plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order, 1999 (or other such Orders) and animals and birds

**National Biodiversity Plan 2002-2006.** Ireland’s National Biodiversity Plan was launched in April 2002 and sets out the framework through which Ireland will provide for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity over a five-year period. It includes 91 actions and outlines specific actions for Local Authorities including the following:

- Each Local Authority to prepare a Local Biodiversity Plan in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- Each Local Authority to designate a contact officer for natural heritage conservation matters in its area.

A new National Biodiversity Plan is currently being prepared. The Biodiversity Action Strategy for Offaly was adopted by Offaly County Council in June 2005. This policy document sets out the process and principles for the biodiversity action plan in Offaly. In addition, *State of the Wild in Offaly* was published in 2007. This publication sets out the baseline data known about each of the flora and fauna species groups in Offaly. The Roscommon Biodiversity Action Plan is an integral part of the Roscommon Heritage Plan (2004-2008) and the Roscommon County Development Plan (2008-2014). A Biodiversity Plan is currently under construction by Westmeath County Council.

**Environmental Protection Agency Act (1992)** has established an independent body the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with responsibility for licensing, monitoring and providing technical advice/setting standards in respect of large-scale industrial or other potentially polluting processes. The European Communities (Environment Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 1999 re-state and extend certain existing provisions, including those relating to the classes of development which require an environmental impact statement. This amendment outlines the procedures to be followed in the case of a proposed development on an environmentally sensitive site or likely to have significant effects on the environment in another member state of the European Communities (Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 93 of 1999). An environmental impact assessment is required under statutory regulations for a number of activities and developments over specific thresholds, i.e. intensive farming of previously uncultivated areas, forestry, poultry rearing, and pig rearing.

**The Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS)** is a five year management plan developed for farmers by approved REPS planners and rewards farmers for farming in an environmentally friendly way. There are a number of core measures relating to nutrient management and soil management as well as a range of supplementary measures such as planting of traditional Irish orchards or heritage buildings.
National Parks and Wildlife Services Farm Plan. This scheme is for landowners in Commonage, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). NPWS operates a scheme to pay farmers and landowners for losses incurred through restrictions caused by the designation of lands as SAC, SPA or NHA, or to pay for certain actions benefiting nature agreed in a farm plan. This scheme is for farmers/landowners who are not in REPS. Farming prescription for some habitats have been agreed with farming organisations such as the Irish Farmers Association; however agreement has yet to be reached on certain habitats relevant to Clonmacnoise such as callows habitats.

Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC) Irish Peatland Conservation Plan 2005 recognises the importance of raised bogland as a major natural and archaeological resource and its critical role in employment provision in the Irish Midlands. The development of the region’s peat resources will be promoted and facilitated. The Council also recognises the potential for the utilisation of protected peatland areas for tourist, amenity, educational and research purposes. The Council recognises that the boglands require a strategy to set out the possible land uses that can compliment and enhance both the employment and tourism sectors and the environment alike.

National Heritage Plan 2002. A key objective of the National Heritage Plan (2002) seeks to “place heritage at the heart of public life”. The plan recognises that heritage is communal and we all share a responsibility to protect it. The aim of the Heritage Plan for Roscommon 2004-2008 “is to create and promote an increased knowledge, awareness and appreciation of the natural, built and cultural heritage of County Roscommon, and to conserve it for future generations.” A Heritage Forum was established in June 2003 to oversee the preparation and implementation of the Roscommon County Heritage Plan. It is composed of representatives from local government, local development, state agencies, landowner representatives, community and voluntary sector and heritage groups.

The County Offaly Heritage Plan 2007-2011, is the second Heritage Plan to be prepared and published for the County and it outlines a five-year, specific action plan of work to be carried out in County Offaly, overseen by the Offaly Heritage Forum. The programme delivery is co-coordinated by the Offaly Heritage Office and lists a number of actions to be undertaken over the Heritage Plan Period. The Council will continue to work with the Heritage Forum in relation to achieving its targets over the County Development Plan period (2009-2015). The County Westmeath Heritage Plan ran from 2002-2007 and is now under revision.

National Guidance
Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines published by the DoEHLG in 2004 give guidance to planning authorities on the application of Part IV of the Act and deal with protected structures and Architectural Conservation Areas in considerable detail. The guidelines are in two parts. Part 1 deals with the legislative and administrative provisions for protecting the architectural heritage under the Act. Part 2 contains detailed guidance notes on identifying and protecting elements of a building. Guidance is given on a range
of subjects including the content of planning applications, the concepts of curtilage and attendant grounds and meeting the requirements of the Building Regulations.

Architectural Heritage Protection for Places of Worship published by the DoEHLG gives guidelines on the protection of places of worship.

Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage published by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands in (1999) gives guidance to Local Authorities in dealing with all aspects of archaeological heritage.

Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation published by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands in (1999) gives guidance to Local Authorities in dealing with all aspects of archaeological heritage.

Review of Archaeological Policy and Practice in Ireland, Identifying the Issues currently under construction by the DoEHLG, gives guidance to Local Authorities in dealing with all aspects of archaeological heritage.

5.d Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located

The Republic of Ireland has a comprehensive system of legislation to ensure the effective use of land, control of development and protection of the environment, referred to in section 5(c). This is exercised by regional and local planning authorities and other agencies. From central government and supporting agencies to local government, policies and plans are in place which have relevance to the nominated Site and effectively legislate for the protection of the area’s unique cultural and natural heritage and are therefore of relevance to the nominated World Heritage Site’s vision and aims. The development plans referred to have involved the community through public participation in the planning process. Opportunities are being taken as they arise with the drafting of new plans to include provision for the nominated World Heritage Site in the most appropriate way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Offaly Development Plan</td>
<td>Modifications Stage, due for adoption in 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Roscommon Development Plan</td>
<td>Adopted 2008</td>
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<td>County Westmeath Development Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>The County Offaly Heritage Plan 2007-2011</td>
<td>Adopted 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Roscommon Heritage Plan</td>
<td>Adopted 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Westmeath Heritage Plan</td>
<td>Under revision, due to be adopted 2009</td>
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The Offaly Biodiversity Action Strategy | Adopted 2005
---|---
The Roscommon Biodiversity Action Plan | Currently in draft form
The Westmeath Biodiversity Action Plan | Currently in draft form
Mongan Bog Management Plan 2005-2010 | NPWS
Management Plan for the Middle Shannon Callows SPA | NPWS currently in draft form
Management Plan for Fin Lough 2006-2011 | NPWS

5.e Property management plan or other management system

A Draft Management Plan for Clonmacnoise was published in 2003 by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, after public consultation, setting out a number of key issues and objectives. As part of the WHS nomination, this Plan is being revised in a World Heritage Site Management Plan 2010-2015. This is being prepared in draft for consultation before being finalised in late 2009 then adopted and owned by the WHS Partners. The adopted Management Plan will be included in the nomination to UNESCO. The Management Plan follows an accepted format beginning by establishing a Vision for the nominated WHS, followed by a series of aims, objectives and actions in pursuit of this Vision:

*To protect, conserve and promote an appreciation of the Monastic City of Clonmacnoise and its Cultural Landscape by putting in place a management framework that promotes sustainability and equality of opportunity of access and enjoyment, while ensuring its Outstanding Universal Value is preserved for present and future generations.*

The main draft objectives and actions proposed for the management plan are as follows:

**Overarching Objectives**

Objective 1 To sustain the Outstanding Universal Values of the World Heritage Site (WHS) by putting in place an effective management framework

A1. Appointment of a Site Management Team with overall responsibility for the day-to-day management issues arising in relation to the World Heritage Site

A2. Provision of adequate funding, resources and logistical support to continue conservation works as necessary, to effectively manage the site,
to protect the natural and built heritage and to promote appreciation of the WHS.

A3. Establishment of a Clonmacnoise WHS Implementation Group to oversee the implementation of the objectives and actions set out in the plan, to review and update the management plan and oversee the compliance of the site with World Heritage Convention requirements and periodic reporting

A4. Production of an annual report by the Implementation Group

Objective 4 To further promote the importance of WHS to ensure that there is a continued unified approach by government departments, agencies and statutory bodies with responsibilities for making and implementing national policies and undertaking activities that may impact on Clonmacnoise and its environs.

A5. Adoption of the Management Plan as a framework for the policies, future plans and decisions regarding the WHS.

A6. The State to ensure compliance with all relevant statutory provisions for the protection of the site.

A7. Encourage the relevant local authorities to recognise the status of this Management Plan in its County Development Plans.

A8. Promote awareness of, via state agencies, local authorities and other statutory bodies, of the implications and responsibilities of WHS designation.

Objective 5 To increase awareness of and access to the Site and its knowledge resources, educational opportunities and Outstanding Universal Values.

A9. Include Clonmacnoise on Ireland’s World Heritage Website which is due to be launched in 2009, to provide relevant information on the significance of the site, periodic updates on the implementation of the plan and provide detailed visitor information.

A10. Continue to support lectures on the conservation works and history of the site.
A11. Contribute to sustainable tourism by promoting public awareness of other heritage sites of importance in the Irish Midlands area in order to broaden the experience of visitors.

**Conservation of the Site**

**Objective 6** To preserve the cultural heritage of the site and sustain its Outstanding Universal Value

A12. Conserve the structure, character and fabric of the Site’s historic landscape, and, where appropriate, restore historic features to the highest standards of conservation.

A13. Ensure that a programme of recording the condition and integrity of all national monuments in State care is undertaken. To review the condition and vulnerability of all archaeological sites and monuments not in State care and prepare a Management Plan for each in consultation with individual landowners.

A14. Prepare a formal, structured maintenance programme for all conserved structures.

A15. Ensure that heritage objects from the site are cared for appropriately

**Objective 7** To increase public accessibility to the cross-slab collection for research purposes, whilst balancing the requirements of the curation and conservation of it, its research importance, with the need to conserve the Site’s historic assets that contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value.

A16. Computerisation of the current catalogue, incorporating relevant conservation data on each slab where this is available, and consider high-definition digital scanning of the cross-slab collection.

**Objective 8** Identify and monitor the nature conservation interest of the Site and develop policies, projects and management regimes that ensure the continued conservation of habitats vital to species of nature conservation interest.

A17. Continue to monitor and identify potential threats to the natural heritage of the Site and to ensure that appropriate plans and strategies are drawn up and implemented to mitigate for these threats.
A18. Ensure that areas of Special Areas of Conservation for designation under the European Habitats Directive are monitored through the National Monitoring Programme.

A19. Maintain close co-operation between the guide service, conservation teams, other relevant parties and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

**Access, Visitor Management, Research and Education**

Objective 9 To develop an integrated approach to the management of visitors on the Site that delivers an exceptional and sustainable visitor experience and develops potential benefits for the local community without compromising the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site.


A21. Enhance the visitor experience by the provision of improved orientation, signage, information, and high quality visitor facilities and services.

Objective 11 To increase understanding of, and appreciation for Skellig Michael and its environs.

A22. To afford all necessary available resources to undertake the task of disseminating the results of excavations undertaken at Clonmacnoise to a larger and more diverse audience to raise awareness of the Site’s Outstanding Universal Value.

A23. Maintain and improve the educational programmes and facilities on the Site.

Objective 12 To develop a research framework for the WHS

A24. Promote, facilitate and encourage appropriate research to improve understanding of the historical and environmental values of the Site that would assist the implementation of the Management Plan, and ensure that all parties undertaking such research disseminate the results to the relevant bodies and individuals.

The Management Plan expands on issues covered briefly in the Nomination Document and will provide a handbook for Partners. The Management Plan will be reviewed on a five year cycle.
5.f Sources and levels of finance

Finance for the day to day management and maintenance of the Clonmacnoise monastic site is provided through Exchequer funding. Annual Funding is provided to the OPW for conservation works on properties identified by OPW as priority, including Clonmacnoise. The DoEHLG also administers a grant scheme for the restoration and conservation of buildings of significant architectural heritage merit and which are in public ownership or open to the public generally. The Department also funds a scheme of grants for the conservation of protected buildings, which is administered by the local authorities. This scheme is aimed at assisting owners and occupiers to carry out conservation works on structures of architectural significance which are listed in the Record of Protected Structures contained in the Local Authority Development Plan. Natural Heritage Designated areas may attract payments to farmers through the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service Farm Plan Scheme.

5.g Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques

The World Heritage Site Bid team is hosted within the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The WHS team has access to a range of skills and activities across the WHS Officer Working Group. The DoEHLG includes housing, local government, heritage and planning, corporate services, environment, water and natural heritage, local and government audit services and Met Eireann. The DoEHLG is working in conjunction with the Office of Public Works (OPW) on the WHS nomination.

The OPW has considerable experience in undertaking repair works to monuments to the highest standards of conservation practise. All conservation works are undertaken with due

5.h Visitor facilities and statistics

Within the nominated Site the focal point for visitors is the monastic core at Clonmacnoise and its Visitor Centre. Clonmacnoise has been publicly accessible for 400 years and is therefore a long-established visitor attraction. From the 1930s to the 1960s a voluntary information service was provided by the Molloy family who lived close to the Site. Members of this family published guide booklets on the monuments at Clonmacnoise and conducted guided tours of the Site on a voluntary basis. The monuments attracted considerable tourism and in the early 1960s a large car park was provided and Lakelands Regional Tourism began to provide an information service during the summer season. A part-time caretaker was also employed at this time. As part of its brief to promote tourism, Bord Fáilte provided a jetty on the River Shannon in the mid-1960s in order to allow the monastic site to be approached from the river.
In 1973 a guide service was established for the busier summer months and a full-time caretaker was employed. These measures provided the public with information on the Site, helped to control access, reduced the risk of deliberate damage and provided structured opening hours. The guide service at the time operated from a caravan in the car park. In 1976 a farm house, adjacent to the car park and Site entrance was acquired and converted into an admissions office and information point. A year-round guide service was provided in 1980 to cope with increasing visitor numbers. Provision was also made for the local population to gain access to the Site to visit graves outside of opening hours.

In 1986 in terms of security and conservation, it was decided to build a new visitor centre to house some of the cross slab collection and the three high crosses which were under threat from continued long-term exposure to the elements. The new visitor centre, opened in 1993, was built to blend in sensitively with the landscape and reflects the vernacular architecture of the area. It is a single-storey stone built staggered rectangular development terminating in three circular chambers to accommodate the three high crosses. The centre houses a reception area, an audio-visual room, exhibition space, tea room and toilets.

Access to the monastic site at Clonmacnoise is through the Visitor Centre and guided tours, but because Clonmacnoise is a living spiritual and religious site, people have access to the Old Burial Ground and New Graveyard at all times. Access to the Nun’s Church and St Cairán’s Well is not restricted.

Figures for visitors to the Visitor Centre and monastic core in selected years are available from 1976-2008 and are set out in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of visitors per annum</th>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>142,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>140,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>144,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>156,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>144,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>159,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>161,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>166,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>157,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>169,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>169,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 (as of September)</td>
<td>143,140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Monastic City of Clonmacnoise is situated in some of Ireland’s most dramatic and breathtaking natural scenery which attracts many casual visitors by car, cycling and walking. However, the road network is at times overburdened by the volume of traffic,
particularly coaches, visiting Clonmacnoise. The Site is not well served by public transport. The accessibility of the Site is in need of review and will be tackled in the WHS Management Plan.

The raised bogs, River Shannon and its callows, eskers and fenland, fall within Offaly County Council’s area of high amenity. There are field study trips, particularly to Mongan Bog with permission from An Taisce, from schools, colleges and universities, and other special interest groups from Ireland and abroad. There is no designated parking for visitors to Mongan Bog. Fin Lough is on land belonging in the main to Bord na Mona.

The Pilgrim’s Road and the Eiscir Riada are signposted as designated heritage trails. The Pilgrim’s Way from Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise was a part of the Pilgrim Paths Project, set up by the Heritage Council in 1997, in association with local communities, with the objective of developing a network of walking routes along medieval pilgrimage paths. Work on the Pilgrim’s Way was completed in 2007. Maintenance of the trails is the responsibility of Offaly County Council. An interpretation board about the endangered bird species that inhabit the River Shannon callows can be seen off the Pilgrim’s Road.

The Clonfinlough Stone is signposted and served by an informal car park. St Cairan’s Well and the Nun’s Church can be accessed by foot from the Visitor Centre, or visited by car, although parking is minimal in both places. The Rocks of Clorhane are publicly accessible via a footpath and served by a small parking area on the R444 road. An interpretation board erected by Dúchas (the former heritage service for Ireland) offers interpretation on the geological and natural heritage of this area.

The Partnership envisages some increase in public use of the Site by car, cycle and on foot following a successful WHS nomination. Echoing the objectives of the Midlands Tourism Association that recommends the heritage and amenity of the area be utilised to its fullest through co-ordinated promotion and marketing of the natural, cultural and historical assets in a manner that is socio-economically sustainable and that benefits the wider Midlands region, the Partnership is addressing the issues of visitor access, protection, conservation and interpretation of key features within the nominated Site in the WHS Management Plan.

5.i Policies and programmes related to the presentation and promotion of the property

The proper presentation and promotion of the nominated Site through appropriate marketing and educational outreach programmes had a high priority within the Clonmacnoise Draft Management Plan (2003) and has high priority in the Draft WHS Management Plan, being one of the key aspirations: Enhance the visitor experience and achieve new standards of excellence in visitor management by promoting sustainable
tourism that engenders equality of opportunity of access and enjoyment but which preserves the authenticity and integrity of the Site.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government co-operates and works in partnership with the Office of Public Works (which manages the monastic core and its Visitor Centre, the Nun’s Church and St Cairán’s Well) and State-funded tourism agencies in their marketing activities. These agencies include Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland Ltd., and the Midlands and East Coast Regional Tourism Authority, within whose functional area Clonmacnoise is located.

Educational activities concentrate on promoting awareness of the need for conservation of the natural and cultural heritage, while being relevant and enjoyable for the students that visit. School children are admitted free of charge to the Clonmacnoise Visitor Centre and in 2002 over 4,000 availed of this scheme.

The new Visitor Centre, opened in June 1993, provides a range of information by means of didactic panels, static displays and audio-visual material, about the natural heritage of the Site and the history of the monastic city. Guides are on hand to assist visitors in their understanding of the Site and a range of books published on the monastic city and its environs are on sale in the reception area of the Visitor Centre, including that produced by the Office of Public Works 1998 (reprinted in 2005).

Further information panels are positioned within the monastic core, the Pilgrim’s Route is signposted and an interpretation panel has been erected at the Rocks of Clorhane and on the callows explaining the habitats and the flora and fauna they support. The part of Mongan Bog, owned by An Taisce, is open by appointment for research.

Visitor information is available on the Heritage Ireland website, [www.heritageireland.ie](http://www.heritageireland.ie), maintained by OPW and in the OPW Heritage Sites of Ireland information booklet. Information is also available through Fáilte Ireland’s website[http://www.discoverireland.ie](http://www.discoverireland.ie)

5.j Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance)

Staffing levels are considered sufficient to ensure the ongoing preservation, protection and management of the Clonmacnoise heritage site. A regular visitor guide service is in operation at the Clonmacnoise heritage site, which is currently managed by the Office of Public Works. 18 educational guides and a site supervisor are in place during the peak visitor season (Mid- May to Mid September) and 7 permanent guides and a site supervisor operate for the remainder of the year. The role of these guides is protect the site, interpret the history and regulate the number of visitors to the site. Three maintenance staff and a cleaner are also employed to work at the site.

Conservation works are undertaken by a highly skilled team comprising of stonemasons, a conservation architect and other conservation specialists. Archaeological advice is
provided by the National Monuments Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. When required, experts from the private sector are commissioned to undertake specialist work on and off site.
6. Monitoring

6.a Key indicators for measuring state of conservation

Sections 2(a) and 4(a) of this nomination give an indication of the present state of conservation of the Site. They form a baseline against which to monitor changes. In addition, one of the key actions over the life of the WHS Management Plan is to develop a useful and comprehensive set of performance indicators.

**Qualitative analysis**
This could be based on a system of annual returns, where the DoEHLG circulates pre-agreed forms to the Partners and key agencies, which are then returned and analysed by the DoEHLG and published in an annual report to the Partnership. For longer term objectives or initiatives the qualitative performance measuring and reporting intervals will have to be longer, as part of the five yearly WHS Management Plan review.

**Quantitative analysis**
In relation to users and visitors of the nominated Site, a Marketing Strategy will be necessary to establish current baseline performance information that can then be used to set targets and make comparisons with subsequent performance figures. Suggested quantitative indicators for the nominated Site are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Indicator (Units of measurement)</th>
<th>Ideal Status</th>
<th>Location of Records</th>
<th>Periodicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of natural landscape features</td>
<td>Turbary on Mongan Bog</td>
<td>No increase</td>
<td>An Taisce, NPWS</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage of Fin Lough</td>
<td>No increase</td>
<td>Bord na Mona; NPWS</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Shannon</td>
<td>No decrease in water quality</td>
<td>DoEHLG; The Shannon International River Basin District (IRBD) Project</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrub maintenance at Rocks of Clohane</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>NPWS</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel extraction and grazing on the eskers within the core zone</td>
<td>No increase</td>
<td>Offaly County Council</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming in the callows with corncrake friendly methods</td>
<td>Reported operating successfully by parties to this scheme</td>
<td>NPWS</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the Preservation of the</td>
<td>No decrease in</td>
<td>DoEHLG; OPW;</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>relict Monastic Site</strong></td>
<td>fabric and integrity of the buildings</td>
<td>Archaeological Survey of Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of the setting of the World Heritage Site</strong></td>
<td>Achievement of agreed work programme (no units)</td>
<td>Offaly County Council; Roscommon County Council; Westmeath County Council; Midlands Regional Authority</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitors to the Site</strong></td>
<td>Visitor numbers to Clonmacnoise</td>
<td>Within capacity of the Site</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor Interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Implementation of World Heritage Interpretation Programme</td>
<td>Progress with agreed work programme</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor Experience</strong></td>
<td>Visit satisfaction of visitors to the Site</td>
<td>No decrease in visitor satisfaction</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Use</strong></td>
<td>Number of educational visits to Clonmacnoise</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport</strong></td>
<td>Visitor numbers by mode of transport</td>
<td>Decrease in growth of coach and car borne visits</td>
<td>Biannual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong></td>
<td>Usage of Pilgrim’s</td>
<td>Stability (or)</td>
<td>Biannual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clonmacnoise World Heritage Site Draft Nomination Form</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Road</strong></td>
<td>increasing where capacity exits</td>
<td>Council, Midlands Regional Authority; Fáilte Ireland; Shannon Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Usage of Rocks of Clorhane</strong></td>
<td>Stability (or increasing where capacity exits)</td>
<td>NPWS; Offaly County Council, Fáilte Ireland; Shannon Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism impact of World Heritage</strong></td>
<td>Number of overseas visits</td>
<td>Within capacity of Site</td>
<td>OPW; Offaly County Council, Midlands Regional Authority; Fáilte Ireland; Shannon Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of visits prompted by World Heritage Site Status</strong></td>
<td>Within capacity of Site</td>
<td>OPW; Offaly County Council, Midlands Regional Authority; Fáilte Ireland; Shannon Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>Number of peer-reviewed papers published (3 year average of papers)</td>
<td>Stable or increasing</td>
<td>World Heritage Site Steering Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conferences and seminars (numbers held and numbers attending)</strong></td>
<td>At least one national event every 5 years</td>
<td>Offaly County Council Roscommon County Council Westmeath County Council Midlands Regional Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of World Heritage Site logo</strong></td>
<td>Use of logo outside UNESCO guidelines</td>
<td>No instances</td>
<td>World Heritage Site Steering Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inappropriate promotion of World Heritage in tourism literature (number of reported instances)</strong></td>
<td>No instances</td>
<td>World Heritage Site Steering Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staffing</strong></td>
<td>Employment of full-time World Heritage Site Manager for Ireland</td>
<td>Post maintained</td>
<td>DoEHLG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### 6.b Administrative arrangements for monitoring property

The responsibility for co-ordinating the monitoring of the nominated Site will be undertaken by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG). The frequency of monitoring and the various indicators and the responsibility for doing so is indicated in section 6 (a) above. It is envisaged that a monitoring report will be published at a frequency of no less than every five years.

The following table which also sets out their responsibility within their organisation and their contact details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>Position within Organisation</th>
<th>Contact email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Brian Lucas</td>
<td>Principal, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Brian_lucas@environ.ie">Brian_lucas@environ.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Anne Costello</td>
<td>WHS Project Manager, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</td>
<td><a href="mailto:anne_costello@environ.ie">anne_costello@environ.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Paul McMahon</td>
<td>Senior Conservation Architect, Office of Public Works</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Paul.mcmahon@opw.ie">Paul.mcmahon@opw.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tom Moore</td>
<td>Manager, Clonmacnoise Visitor Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Heather King</td>
<td>Archaeologist, National Monuments Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</td>
<td><a href="mailto:heatherking@eircom.net">heatherking@eircom.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Rebecca Jeffrey</td>
<td>Research Section, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Rebecca.Jeffrey@environ.ie">Rebecca.Jeffrey@environ.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Gordon Daly</td>
<td>Chief Planning Officer, Offaly County Council</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gdaly@offalycoco.ie">gdaly@offalycoco.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Flanagan</td>
<td>Chief Planning Officer, Roscommon County Council</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fflanagan@roscommoncoco.ie">fflanagan@roscommoncoco.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry McCague</td>
<td>Chief Planning Officer, Westmeath County Council</td>
<td><a href="mailto:terrymccague@westmeathcoco.ie">terrymccague@westmeathcoco.ie</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6.c Results of previous reporting exercises

Reports on the state of conservation and previous records referred to in 4(a) are held with several bodies (including the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Trinity College, Dublin, Offaly County Council, The Geological Survey of Ireland, the Office of Public Works and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government). Addresses for these public bodies are provided in 7(d).
### 7. Documentation

#### 7.a Photographs, slides, image inventory and authorization table and other audiovisual materials

See separate enclosure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Id. No.</th>
<th>Format (slide/print/video)</th>
<th>Caption</th>
<th>Date of Photo (mo/yr)</th>
<th>Photographer /Director of the video</th>
<th>Copyright owner (if different than photographer/director of video)</th>
<th>Contact details of copyright owner (Name, address, tel/fax and e-mail)</th>
<th>Non exclusive cession of rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1.</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Aerial view of Clonmacnoise and environment</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Con Brogan</td>
<td>DOEHLG</td>
<td>Con Brogan National Monuments Service, DOEHLG, <a href="mailto:con.brogan@environment.ie">con.brogan@environment.ie</a> Tel.353-1-8883087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2.</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Aerial view of Monastic Site</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3.</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Aerial view of site</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4.</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Doorway to Cathedral</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5.</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>High Cross and Tower</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6.</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>View from interior of Nuns</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.b Texts relating to protective designation, copies of property management plans or documented management systems and extracts of other plans relevant to the property

(See separate Appendix B- Draft Management Plan)

7.c Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property

There are numerous local and national records relating to the nominated Site held by local and national agencies. These are listed below. Recording is carried out by the
Clonmacnoise World Heritage Site Draft Nomination Form

responsible government agencies and by individual geologists, botanists, ecologists and archaeologists, and has included aerial mapping using GIS (Geographical Information Systems), Lidar, ground photography, documentary record, photogrammetry, drawn survey, archaeological excavation and database record.

National Monuments
A National Monument in the Republic of Ireland is a monument considered by the State to be of “national importance” as defined by Section 2 of the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended). “National Monument” status is conferred under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004. National Monuments in State care are owned by or in the guardianship of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In policy terms they come under the auspices of the National Monuments Service, of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) and are managed and presented by the Office of Public Works.

Under the provisions of Section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930 (as substituted by Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004) the prior, written consent of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is required for any works in respect of a national monument of which the Minister or a local authority are the owners or the guardians or in respect of which a preservation order is in force that would:

- demolish, remove, disfigure, deface, alter, or in any manner injure or interfere with the National Monument or,
- involve excavating, digging, ploughing or otherwise disturbing the ground within, around or in proximity to the National Monument or,
- renovate or restore the National Monument or,
- involve selling the National Monument or any part of it for exportation or to export it or any part of it.

The National Monuments in State ownership in the nominated WHS are: Churches, Two Round Towers, Crosses, and slabs in the Townland of Clonmacnoise (NMR number 81) and Land at Clonmacnoise (9 Acres, 7 roods and 37 perches), Townland of Clonmacnoise (NMR number 601). National Monuments in the Guardianship of the State: Clonfinlough Stone, Townland of Clonfinlough (NMR number 336). In addition, the Ecclesiastical Remains in the Townland of Clonmacnoise have been protected by Preservation Order (TPO 12.01) since 19 October 2001.

Register of Historic Monuments
Under Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has established a record of historic monuments known as the Register of Historic Monuments. The entry in the Register of the name, location and a brief description of all the historic monuments and archaeological areas in State, known to the Minister and which, in the Minister’s opinion should be entered, is undertaken by the National Monuments Service. The archaeological
area at Clonmacnoise was entered in the Register of Historic Monuments on 2 August 1996 under Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1987.

**The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)**
Under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has established a record of historic monuments known as the Record of Monuments and Places. RMP, compiled by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, part of the National Monuments Service, is issued on a county by county basis and comprises lists and maps of all recorded monuments with known locations. They are updated versions of the previous non-statutory Sites and Monuments Records (SMR). The inventory concentrates on pre-1700 AD sites. The RMP for the Nominated WHS is available for viewing by members of the public in the planning authority offices and public libraries of Offaly, Roscommon and Westmeath. A monuments database containing details of the record holdings of the ASI is available to view publicly on the Department’s dedicated website www.archaeology.ie

**The Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI)**
The ASI compiles the record of all archaeological monuments in the State and is responsible for the publication of Archaeological Inventories. The record database is accessible via the National Monuments Service website: www.archaeology.ie. The Archaeological Inventory of County Offaly [Arch. Inv. Offaly] (1997) is the first published overview of Offaly antiquities since the edition of the Ordnance Survey letters of John O’Donovan in 1933 by Fr. O’Flanagan. The starting point was the sites and monuments Record (SMR) of 1988 after which a more comprehensive survey was undertaken by the Office of Public Works. This had followed on work done by Offaly County Council and Roscrea Heritage Society in South Offaly.

**The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)**
The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is a section within the DoEHLG. The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS). Volumes have been published in book form on Counties Offaly and Roscommon, amongst others. See website: http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/

**National Monuments Photographic Unit**
The photographic unit within the National Monuments Service was formally set up in 1955 within the then National Monuments Section of the Office of Public Works (OPW). The photographic unit’s aims are to maintain a permanent photographic record of Ireland’s built heritage, to record conservation works at National Monument sites, illustrate Archaeological Inventory publications and provide an in-house photographic service to the Heritage and Planning Unit. The archive is now approaching approximately
500,000 images. This collection comprises photographs for the National Monuments Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Historic Properties section of the OPW.

**Underwater and Marine Archaeology**

Ireland has a rich underwater material cultural heritage. An Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU) was established within the National Monuments Service to quantify the underwater resource, undertake survey and enforcement and to assess development impacts in order to manage this aspect of Ireland’s heritage.

**Studies of Individual Features and Buildings**

A number of archaeological surveys and excavations have been carried out since 1979 and some of the most important ones, published and unpublished, are listed below:


Corcoran, E., ‘Monitoring near St Ciaran’s well 2002’ in Bennett, I., (ed.), *Excavations 2004: summary accounts of archaeological excavations in Ireland*, Bray,


**Clonmacnoise Studies Vols. 1 and 2**

Edited by archaeologist, Heather King, who has undertaken extensive archaeological excavation at Clonmacnoise, the articles considerably advance knowledge of the cultural, ecclesiastical, archaeological, and natural history and heritage of the nominated WHS.

**National Museum of Ireland**

The National Museum of Ireland is the repository of the national collection of archaeological objects. There is a county museum at Roscommon, but not in counties Westmeath or Offaly. All archaeological objects that come to light should, by law, be deposited with the National Museum, as they belong to the State (Under the National Monuments Amendment Act 1994). A number of objects and artefacts from Clonmacnoise are on display in the National Museum including the 11th century Clonmacnoise Crozier. The museum also has a collection of late 19th and early 20th century photographs of Clonmacnoise.

**Clonmacnoise Cross-slab Collection**

Comprising over 600 cross-slabs dating from the 8th-12 century, with the exception of a representative example on display in the Clonmacnoise Visitor Centre, the collection has been photographed and catalogued and placed into a secure storage facility on site. George Petrie began recording the inscribed slabs in 1872 and later R.A.S. Macalister catalogued almost all of the known slabs in two volumes dated 1909 and 1949. The collection is not accessible to the general public but it is made available to researchers on special request.
The Royal Irish Academy
The Royal Irish Academy houses the Lebor na hUidre (The Book of the Dun Cow). Digital scans of the pages have been published on the web by ISOS (Irish Script on Screen).

Conservation Areas
The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is a section of the DoEHLG that manages the Irish State’s nature conservation responsibilities under National and European law. The NPWS is charged with the conservation of a range of ecosystems and populations of flora and fauna in Ireland. A particular responsibility of NPWS is the designation and protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). Natural Heritage Areas are the primary National designation and under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000), NHAs will be legally protected from damage from the date they are formally notified. In the interim, County Development Plans are the primary protection mechanism for NHAs. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated under the European Union (EU) Habitats Directive and deal specifically with the protection of habitats. Special Protected Areas (SPAs) fall under the aegis of the EU Birds Directive, and deal with the protection of areas important for birds. The conservation areas in the nominated WHS are:

- Mongan Bog cSAC 000580 and Nature Reserve
- River Shannon Callows cSAC 000216
- Fin Lough cSAC 000576
- Pilgrims Road Esker cSAC 001776
- Middle Shannon Callows, SPA 004096,
- Mongan Bog SPA 004017.

Natural Landscape Surveys and Reports
Peatlands Survey
The databases held by Archaeological Survey of Ireland include the results of the extensive peatlands surveys that commenced in 1991. The objective of the survey of peatlands within the State is to identify and evaluate their archaeological potential. The surveys also inform decisions regarding management of the archaeological resource, in particular the formulation of strategies to adequately record sites before peat extraction.

Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC)
The IPCC maintains detailed records on more than 800 sites of conservation value in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. A full list of these sites on which information is available is published in IPCC’s Irish Peatland Conservation Plan 2005. See their website: http://www.ipcc.ie/index.html

Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)
The GSI has surveyed and holds data in GIS format on the geology of the area surrounding Clonmacnoise, including the eskers and rocks of Clorhane. The solid geology data is available from their website: www.gsi.ie
7.d Address where inventory, records and archives are held

Offaly County Council
Áras an Chontae,
Charleville Road,
Tullamore,
Co. Offaly
Heritage Services
Tel: 057 9346839
Fax:057 9346868

Roscommon County Council
The Courthouse
Roscommon
County Roscommon
Tel: 090-6637100
Fax: 090-6637108
Email: info@roscommoncoco.ie

Westmeath County Council
County Building
Mount Street
Mullingar
Co. Westmeath
Tel: 044 93 32000
Fax: 044 41 322

National Museum
Archaeology
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Natural History
Merrion Street,
Dublin 2
Tel: +353-1-6777444
Fax: +353-1-6777450

Office of Public Works
51 St. Stephen’s Green,
Dublin 2
Email: info@opw.ie
Phone: 353-1-6476000
7.e Bibliography

Natural Heritage


Clonmacnoise World Heritage Site Draft Nomination Form


Guest, B., (undated) ‘Conservation Plan for the Middle Shannon Callows SPA’ (draft 2), NPWS, Dúchas The Heritage Service.


**Geology**


**Cultural Heritage**

*Primary Sources:*


Secondary Sources:


Garnermann, W., and O’Meara, T.J., (2007) *An Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of County Westmeath*, Dublin


8. Contact Information of responsible authorities

8.a Preparers
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Tel: +353-1-8880000  
Fax:  
E-mail: brian_lucas@environ.ie

8.b Official Local Institution/Agency
As above

8.c Other Local Institutions
Office of Public Works, 51 St. Stephens Green, Dublin 2

Clonmacnoise Visitor Centre, Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, Ireland

8.d Official Web address
http://www.environ.ie
http://www.clonmacnoisewhsbig.org

Contact Name: Anne Costello
E-mail: Anne_Costello@environ.ie
9. Signature on behalf of the State Party