6.3 Cultural Heritage

6.3.1 Introduction

The existing landscape is the product of human activity over thousands of years. It contains settlements and remains of every period, from the camps of the first settlers in Ireland, some 9,000 years ago to remains of early twentieth century activities. These remains vary enormously in their state of preservation and in the extent of their appeal to the public. The Cultural Heritage assessment reviews the Built Heritage (Listed Buildings), Archaeology (Raths, Cashels, Souterrains etc.), and Industrial Heritage (Railways, Mills, Bleach Greens etc.) of the area within the three route corridors. Essentially the aim of this section of the report is dual: to assess the archaeological impact of the various route options in absolute terms and also to assess the relative merits of each route in terms of this impact.

Details of construction may be of significance where the routes cross known sites or pass over ground with considerable post-glacial deposits of peat, alluvium etc. Cuttings will generally mean destruction of any remains, requiring archaeological recording, while 'fill' operations, such as embankments may allow burial of material, allowing preservation in-situ.

The objective at this stage is to undertake sufficient assessment to identify the archaeological features and historic buildings and sites, and the effects upon them, associated with the route options under consideration.

6.3.2 Approach and Methods

In accordance with DMRB 11.3.2.8 (Stages of Archaeological Assessment) and 11.3.2.13 (Stages of Assessment for the Built Heritage), the steps taken include :

- Consultation with EHS – Built Heritage to confirm that the information obtained at Stage 1 on the location of designated archaeological sites, listed buildings and industrial heritage sites within the study area is still valid and that there have been no new additions;
- Where the desk study undertaken at Stage 1 indicates that significant archaeological remains may be affected by route options, commission a study from an experienced archaeologist. Its aims should be to identify and evaluate all remains within the study area recorded in the MBR, or in other published sources and to assess the likely impacts of route options;
- Commission a walkover survey of the route options by a heritage expert, to identify any important buildings, sites or areas which are not already designated, and to assist in the assessment of impacts on them; and
- Obtain EHS – Built Heritage 'in-confidence' views on the impacts of route options on archaeological remains and listed buildings.

This culminated in the production of an updated constraints map showing all archaeological and industrial heritage sites, along with the various listed buildings in the vicinity of the approved route options (Figures 6.3.1). A statement describing the archaeological value and constraints associated with historic buildings within the study area, and which assesses the significance of the route options, is also given.

A cultural heritage specialist reviewed the archaeological, industrial heritage and built heritage information collated at Stage 1 and conditions for the approved route options. Every feature of an archaeological nature within c. 500m of any of the route options was considered, and this defines the study area. To search for new sites and other evidence of archaeological information which has not yet been officially recorded, the specialist examined recent colour aerial photography and 1:9,000 Black & White aerial photography (11 June 1968) for areas of cultural heritage interest, including potential archaeological sites. This was carried out using conventional and stereoscopic methods. The relevant EHS databases were consulted for sites on and adjacent to the proposed routes. They were primarily consulted using computerised databases and the '*Maps in Action*' system, as well as older hard copy files and maps. The specialist also carried out targeted site visits to clarify specific issues and included those areas that could be accessed or viewed from the public roads.

6.3.3 Location and Physical Setting

The Toome to Castledawson route options are all located in the barony of Loughinsholin in County Londonderry. The routes collectively pass through Tamnadeese and Annaghmore in the parish of Magherafelt, then through Tamniaran (Red Route also 'scrapes' Leitrim) in the parish of Ballyscullion, then finally The Creagh (Etre and Otre) in the parish of Artrea.

The eastern two-thirds of the study area has seen major phases of water-based changes, due to the floodplain of Lough Beg (partly reflected by diatomite deposits); the floodplain of the Moyola River (forming large areas of alluvial ground in the centre-west stretch); and the formation of large areas of lowland bog in the central area, around the upper part of The Creagh and Leitrim. All these types of soil or subsoil reflect land that at some time in the past was either long-term or intermittently subject to the influences of flooding and water. The only major exception to this is the large block of better land (largely gley and some brown earth soils) that the western quarter of all the route options would pass through. However, it is noteworthy that even these lands are largely composed of poorly drained heavy 'gley' soils, presumably on boulder clay subsoil.

The only other 'dry' areas are the various small 'islands' (such as 'Rice's Island') of very good soil (brown earths or shallow brown earths) that rise above the vast areas of various types of' 'wet' lands in the centre of this stretch. These would represent the most attractive lands along the entire Toome to Castledawson stretch, although the island-like nature of these areas may have made exploitation and communication more challenging.

The majority of the eastern stretch was either permanently or seasonally effected by water and would generally have been unsuitable for conventional settlement from the beginning of settled farming in the Neolithic (c. 4000BC) until a few centuries ago. The land at the western end is not of this directly water-influenced type, but is still a very heavy poor draining land, of a type known to have been shunned in

prehistoric times for permanent farming settlement. Only specialised wetland exploitation (from the Mesolithic period, when this was part of the staple economy, to later times, when it was not a major economic component) would have been possible until recent centuries. This is borne out by the almost total lack of non-wetland archaeological sites in the study area. The only exception in the general area, the graveyard site (LDY 42:40) is located near the one area where one of the routes would pass through one of the 'islands' of good land noted above. The presence of all this wetland, the Moyola River and the proximity of Lough Beg (prior to reclamation works) made this attractive in one period: the Mesolithic (7000BC-3500BC), when fishing, fowling and hunting were the staples of the economy. The small areas of dry land would have been enough for the very low population supported by this type of economy to have settled on and exploited the surrounding area.

The fact that many deposits such as peat, diatomite, alluvium etc have been put down gradually in the period subsequent to the first arrival of humans in Ireland c. 9000 or more years ago complicates matters. Ancient shorelines, land surfaces etc are deeply buried by many metres of later natural post-glacial deposits. In layman's terms, this means that, unlike standard dryland greenfield sites where archaeological features normally are uncovered directly below the topsoil, normally within one metre from the modern surface, sites or finds may be very deeply buried.

6.3.4 Archaeological Heritage

With reference to Figure 6.3.1, it is evident that relatively few known archaeological heritage sites in the area. However consultation with EHS – Built Heritage (Historic Monuments) has indicated that the area includes a wide range of archaeological site types, from Mesolithic findspots to Plantation defences and more recent artefacts. Parts of the route options would cover terrain very similar to that on the Toome bypass, where Mesolithic and Neolithic artefacts were recovered, and where Bronze Age structures were also discovered. In general, on moving away from the floodplains/palaeo channels of the Lower Bann/Lough Neagh system, there is an increased incidence of Early Christian monuments. EHS has stated that recent experience of similar schemes across Northern Ireland indicates that buried archaeological remains from just about every period presently known in Ulster may be uncovered.

This section essentially describes those sites that would be directly affected or immediately adjacent to each of the approved route options.

The approved route options would have very little impact on known archaeological sites, with only one site being potentially affected. All routes may potentially affect a large enclosure (LDY 42:10), situated to the east of the Bells Hill Road, south of the Castledawson bypass.

The western edge of this enclosure may be affected by the westbound onslip/offslip road at the Bells Hill Road junction. The site is probably an example of a type of landscaping feature of relatively recent origin (later 18th-early 19th Century) known as a 'tree ring'. It has an internal diameter of c. 78m, making it too large to be a rath or ringfort, and was very clear on the aerial photographs examined. It seems to consist of the ephemeral remnants of a very slight, eroded, narrow bank and ditch but the remains are so meagre that its origin at first seemed very uncertain. In recent generations it was known as the 'grove' and was once used for exercising horses. It was not noted on 1st edition OS map, although omissions are common on this edition. The OS 2nd edition map simply shows this as a large circular field on Bell's Hill, close to a hamlet of houses along a road. It is of similar diameter, similar slight construction and similar hilltop location as two other examples (both recorded as planted on 2nd edition) in the general area (LDY 42:11 and LDY 42:12). The name 'grove' suggests that this example too was once planted. It seems very likely that these three large enclosures are all remnants of tree rings that perhaps acted as outlier crest landmarks related to the demesne landscape of Moyola Park to the north and east of Castledawson. They all were treeless or had far fewer trees by the 4th edition OS map. As such, the importance of any indirect impact on the setting of this enclosure (a tree ring that has lost its trees) is very minor.

6.3.5 Industrial Heritage

With reference to Figure 6.3.1, it is evident that there are very few industrial heritage sites within the study area, however those that could be potentially affected or close to the route options are discussed below.

The Red Route and the Red Variant may have some effect on Slugawn Bridge (IHR 2233) along the B182 Deerpark Road. It was noted on OS maps of 1832, 1854, 1909, and 1933, suggesting that the bridge dates from the early 19th Century or before. It is a tiny but pretty tunnel-like bridge under the road, through which an unnatural looking channel (Slugawn Drain) runs. It may be feasible to retain this structure, however this would be an issue for further consideration if the Red Route or the Red Variant were to be selected as the preferred route. It appears at this stage that the point of entry of the stream, and view of the bridge from the east would remain exposed, while the stretch of stream on the immediate west side of the road should also remain. As this is not in the top grade of industrial heritage remains, the impact on any perceived 'setting' is deemed a very minor issue.

The Blue Route would pass close to a road-bridge (IHR 2234) and level crossing/milepost (IHR 2195:23), as shown on Figure 6.3.1. The bridge, known as *Donnelly's Bridge*, is described as '*carrying road from Maghera to Toome over an un-named local stream/ drain*' and is at the junction of the Blackpark Road with the existing A6 Hillhead Road. It is shown on OS maps of 1832, 1854, 1909, and 1933, indicating that the bridge dates from the early 19th Century or before. However, the site visit suggests that it no longer exists and only a pipe was observed here. The level crossing/ milepost also appeared on the early OS maps, at the crossing of the Deerpark Road with the former railway line. None are shown on the map of 1832, as the railway had not yet been built. The crossing is shown or indicated on maps of 1854 and 1909, but the milepost 'MP' is only specifically indicated on the 1933 map. Nothing remains of the crossing, other than the milepost although some of the old railway line can be seen to the west. The Blue Route would pass to the immediate south of the milepost and should not be directly affected, despite its proximity. A few other minor sites are located in the area but would not be directly affected, as shown on Figure 6.3.1.

In terms of the Brown Route, no specific industrial heritage sites would be directly affected. Mileposts (IHR 2195:24 and 25) in The Creagh (the former appears on the 2nd and 3rd edition maps only while the latter only appears on the 4th edition) are relatively close to but would not be affected by this route. The setting of these minor sites, if they survive, is not a material issue.

6.3.6 Built Heritage

With reference to Figure 6.3.1, it is evident that there are very few listed buildings in the study area.

There would be only one listed structure in proximity to the Red Route and the Red Variant or, indeed, any of the other approved route options for this stretch. This is the B1/ Q listed Thatch Bar (HB/8/13/1) at 116 Hillhead Road. It is a very attractive single-storey thatched building with cube porch and is believed to date from c. 1820-39. The earthworks associated with the Hillhead Road junction for the Red Route or the Red Variant would be in immediate proximity to the northern edge and front elevation of the building, and would be a concern. It is anticipated at this stage that the building itself should remain, however if either of these options were to be selected as the preferred route, further assessment would be required in relation to the impact on its setting.

A connector road leading between the Hillhead Road towards Knockloughrim and a proposed junction for the Blue Route or the Brown Route would pass to the west of the Thatch Bar. This connector road would be at a considerably greater distance from the listed building than the Red Route and the Red Variant, and the indirect impact may be acceptable.

6.3.7 Scheduled and State Care Sites

There would be no 'Scheduled' or 'State Care' sites along or within 500 metres of the approved route options. The nearest are a scheduled rath (LDY 42:06), west of Castledawson and the scheduled site of Toome Castle (ANT 42:12). In the case of the rath, the town intervenes between the site and the approved route options while, in the case of Toome Castle, it is largely a subsurface structure. Both are well removed from any of the route options. Consequently, the issue of scheduled and state care sites is irrelevant.

6.3.8 Historic Gardens and Demesnes

Consultation with the EHS gardens register has confirmed that there would be no private parks or demesnes along or adjacent to any of the approved route options. With reference to Figure 6.3.1, the nearest would be Moyola Park (L-016), north of Castledawson. The 6-inch OS maps do not appear to indicate any lesser supplementary sites adjacent to any of the route options.

6.3.9 Battlefields

Consultation with the EHS Battlefields register has confirmed that there would be no recorded battlefields along or adjacent to any of the four route options. The nearest would be the unlocated 1642 battle at Toome.

6.3.10 Defence Heritage Sites

Consultation with the EHS Defence Heritage register has confirmed that there is one such recorded site within the study area, namely Toome Airfield (LDY 85).

With reference to Figure 6.3.1, the Red Route, the Red Variant, or the Blue Route would not directly impact on this site; however the Brown Route would have a direct impact on it, as described below.

Toome Airfield originated as a military airfield in World War II, and construction commenced in 1942. Bizarrely, the HQ and much else beside was placed on the other side of the Moyola River from the airfield. The first RAF airmen were posted here in 1943. Eight Wellingtons arrived from Nutt's Corner and remained from July to September 1943. The station was formally handed over by the RAF to the USAAF as station 236 in July 1943. Its main function appears to have been as a training school for bomber combat crews (training at its peak over 100 crews at any given time). Toome Airfield's subsidiary function under the Americans was for temporary storage of up to 50 aircraft on behalf of the air depot at Langford Lodge. For this purpose 5 MAP multiple standings were built. Toome was transferred back to the RAF in November 1944, but was not used again by flying units until after the war, and bomber command let it be used for sheep grazing. It was used for storage until 1947. In 1953, the airfield became a satellite of Cluntoe runway. The runway was re-surfaced but was simply held in reserve. The runway was then handed over to the admiralty as a repair facility for naval gun turrets until 1959. From 1961 onwards, the site was gradually returned to its owners. Features relating to this airfield were once spread to the north, south and particularly to the west of the runways, including turning features, hard standing, technical and instructional areas of buildings, bomb stores and defensive features, living sites, HQ etc. Most of the hard standings were broken up, along with almost all the living accommodation. The two most easterly hangers were removed but the other two were used for brick manufacture. The control tower was converted to a dwelling. The bomb storage area and the teaching building still stand.

The Brown Route would require demolition of the control tower. It also would only just miss the signal square to the north. A site visit revealed a couple of WW II buildings still standing slightly to the west. The Brown Route would impact on at least the more northerly of the pair. To the west of the airfield, it would pass through the former sites of some of the hard standing/ turning areas, although it is not clear if any of this remains below the ground surface. Given the fragmentary survival at this site and existing re-development, impact on the setting of the airfield or its component parts is not likely to be a major issue. However, it may be possible to avoid the control and signal tower and other buildings and record any other subsurface features that may survive. Should the Brown Route be selected as the preferred route option, it may be beneficial to commission a brief survey by a specialist in this type of remains to check there are no other features that may be impacted on.

6.3.11 Vernacular Buildings

No vernacular buildings have been noted along or adjacent to any of the route options, other than the listed Thatch Bar discussed above.

6.3.12 Archaeological Potential

The following is a general summary describing the potential for the various route options to reveal unknown archaeological sites and material and is based primarily on an environmental deterministic approach. Specific known sites have already been discussed above.

The main observation regarding this stretch between Toome and Castledawson is that, apart from its western extremity and small islands of good land in the central area, this area is almost totally composed of water-influenced post-glacial diatomite, peat, and alluvial land. This is reflected in the fact that very few known archaeological sites of any date are located along the 500m wide corridors centred on each of the route options. One of these sites is a crannog. The others sites comprise an unlocated 'fort' of unknown form and two burial grounds (one unlocated). The indications are that these very sparse sites are most likely to be of Early Christian origin. The land would have been marginal from prehistoric until recent times. Prehistoric farmers seemed especially focussed on the very best-drained available lands to the exclusion of other land and this probably explains the total absence of known prehistoric sites. Stray finds noted in the OS Memoirs indicates passing occupation throughout prehistory but this must have been of a specialised wetland exploitation nature, for example the use of wetlands for hunting and the construction of cooking sites known as 'burnt mounds'. The only prehistoric period when this land may have been attractive was the Mesolithic era, when the fishing/ fowling/ hunting economy may have extensively exploited the wetlands. However, the deep post-glacial strata that may bury the remains of this period and lack of understanding of the extremely complex geomorphology of this area makes it hard to elaborate on this potential. Late Mesolithic finds have been made under diatomite along the shore of Lough Neagh at Toome Bay in the townland of Intake.

6.3.13 Summary

Red Route and Red Variant: In terms of direct impact, no conventional archaeological sites would be directly affected. However, the Red Route and the Red Variant would have an impact on the setting of the listed Thatch Bar (HB/8/13/1) on the Hillhead Road.

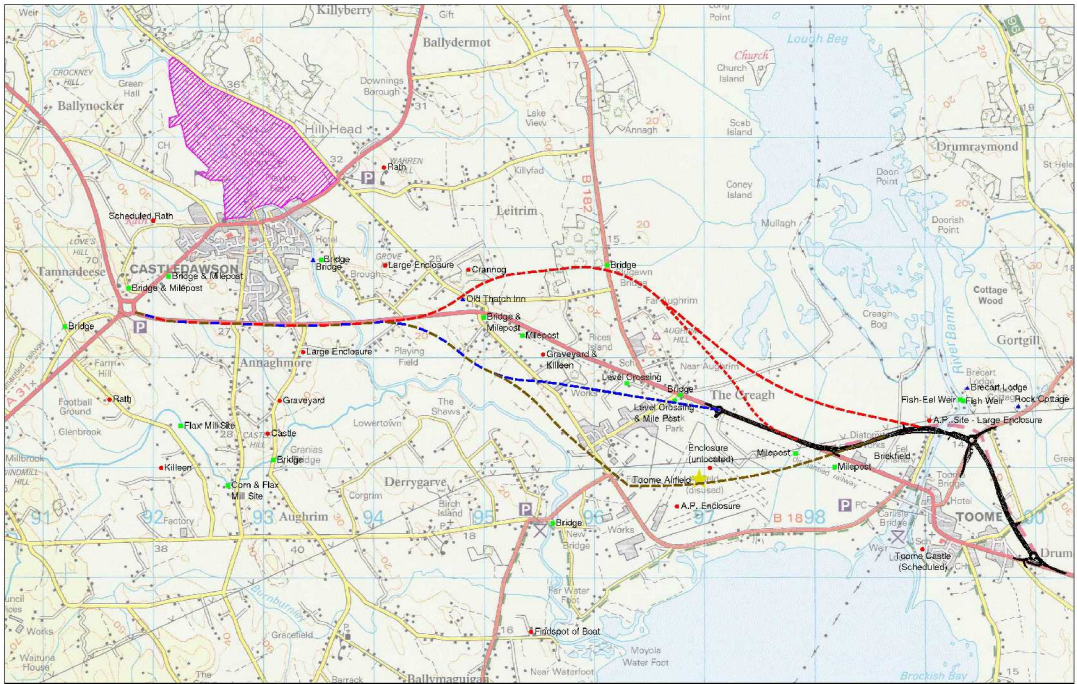
Blue Route: There are no important issues relating to this route option.

Brown Route: The main impact would be on the fragmentary remains of the WWII Toome Airfield. The present alignment would destroy the control tower (now a house), impinge on the signal square, and threaten at least one of a pair of WW II buildings just to the west and possibly other subsurface or unrecognised features. However, a slight alteration of the route could remove some of these difficulties.

The Blue Route would be the lowest impact option.

The impact on at least the upstanding fabric of the WWII airfield by the Brown Route may be avoidable if the horizontal geometry of the Brown Route were altered slightly.

It is hard to see how, without adjustment, the Red Route and the Red Variant could avoid major impact on the setting of the listed Thatch Bar.



FERGUSON McILVEEN

Scott Wilson

Noted:

- INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE SITE
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE SITE
- LISTED BUILDING / STRUCTURE
- DEMESNE (MOYOLA PARK GARDENS)
- DEFENCE HERITAGE SITE (TOOME AIRFIELD)
- RED ROUTE
- RED VARIANT
- BLUE ROUTE
- BROWN ROUTE

Scale 1:25,000

A6 TOOME TO CASTLEDAWSON DUALLING

CULTURAL HERITAGE
CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

Figure 6.3.1