

Chapter 7

Natural & Built Heritage

7.1 Introduction

Arklow is a coastal town with a strong maritime tradition. The Irish name for the town, *An tInbhear Mór* or 'the broad estuary' is a reference to its location at the mouth of the Avoca river. The Vikings settled on the North side of Arklow in the ninth century, giving the town its current name, with the suffix "Lo", denoting a low lying meadow. This low-lying floodplain of the river is now known as Arklow Town Marsh, a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) of ecological importance. The Normans settled in Arklow in the 12th Century, building Ormonde castle, the remains of which are located on Parade Ground. The castle replaced earlier Viking fortifications and was finally destroyed by Cromwellian troops in the 1640's. The town of Arklow was granted to Theobald Fitzwalter around 1185, and it, along with a large amount of the hinterland remained in the hands of his family, the Butlers, throughout medieval times. In 1264 the Dominicans were granted a large tract of land, now known as the townland of Abbeylands, upon which they founded the Abbey of the Holy Cross. The Abbey was subsequently destroyed in 1796, with the site currently maintained as Abbeylands Park. The small elevated park on Main Street was also formerly a graveyard. Two memorials, one on Parade Ground and one on Coolgreany Road commemorate the Battle of Arklow on 9th June 1798. This was a significant historical event, where English crown forces defeated Irish insurgents.

The environs area outside the town boundary is located to the north, south and west of the town and includes agricultural fields interspersed with woodland, coastal habitat, and bisected by the Avoca river valley. The Avoca River played a vital role in the historical development of Arklow's seafaring economy and maritime heritage, providing a transport conduit for the import and export of minerals to service the upstream mining activities around Avoca and the later establishment of the chemical industry. By the late 19th Century Arklow was a thriving port town with its own shipbuilding industry.

7.2 Heritage – Natural and Built

Heritage is defined under the Heritage Act 1995 as items such as monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscape, seascapes, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways. The County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2009-2014 provides an agreed framework around which actions to conserve natural, built and cultural heritage, and increase appreciation and enjoyment of it can be advanced. The development plan will support the objectives and actions contained in the County Heritage Plan.

The protection and enhancement of heritage assets through the Plan will help to safeguard the local character and distinctiveness of Arklow Town and its environs, providing local economic, social and environmental benefits.

Strategic Objectives:

- To safeguard local natural and built heritage assets;
- To enhance the quality of the natural and built environment, to enhance the unique character of the town and environs as a place to live, visit and work;
- To promote greater appreciation of, and access to, local heritage assets.

7.3 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity

There are a good variety of natural habitats present in the Arklow Town and environs area, including three proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA); Arklow Town Marsh, Arklow Sand Dunes and Arklow Rock. The marsh is the principal wetland habitat in the area, providing an important flood control role and supporting a variety of plant and animal life, in particular reed species and bird life. The Arklow Sand Dunes, located to the immediate north of the town, are also afforded pNHA status for the plant and animal communities that this habitat supports, while Arklow Rock - Askinnity is afforded pNHA status also. Outside of the designated wildlife sites, there are other habitats, which are locally important as wildlife habitats, and which collectively, have the potential as "green corridors" linking designated sites, to strengthen the overall biodiversity value of the wider town and environs area.

Biodiversity – or biological diversity - is the term given to the variety of life on earth. It includes the habitats and ecosystems, which support this life and how life-forms interact with each other and the rest of the environment. Biodiversity covers plants, animals and micro-organisms both on land and in water. It relates to both wildlife and domesticated crops and animals. The biological diversity we see today is the result of millions of years of evolution. Ireland's national policy is set out in the National Biodiversity Plan. The Plan contains 91 Actions aimed at securing the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Ireland, and where possible its enhancement, and also to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity globally.

7.3.1 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity objectives

- BD1** To ensure that consideration is given to the impact of proposals for new developments on bio-diversity, and that appropriate mitigation schemes are proposed as relevant.
- BD2** To maintain the favourable conservation status of all proposed and future Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) in the plan area in particular the Arklow Marsh which has been designated a 'Conservation Zone'.
- BD3** To protect features such as native hedgerows, trees and watercourses, and the locally important biodiversity areas from inappropriate development, and to strengthen through development management the role of these sites as "green corridors" to enhance overall biodiversity.
- BD4** To ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the protection of trees of amenity and environmental value in the design of new developments, and discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development.
- BD5** To require the planting of native and locally characteristic species of trees and shrubs in all new developments.
- BD6** To encourage the retention and enhancement of hedgerows and traditional stone walls in the plan area.
- BD7** Any programme, plan or project carried out on foot of this development plan, including any variation thereof, with the potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site(s) shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6 (3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive 1992 and 'Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities' DoEHLG 2009.

7.4 Water Systems

The natural water systems (aquifers, rivers, lakes and coastal waters) are fundamental to the survival of the natural habitats and the species therein.

The EU Water Framework Directive is an important piece of EU environmental legislation, which aims at improving our aquatic environment. It requires governments to take a new holistic approach to managing their waters. It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters. The directive aims to achieve good ecological status in all waters by 2015, protect high ecological status in our pristine waters and must ensure that status does not deteriorate in any waters. Local Authorities are charged with implementing the Water Framework Directive objectives. River Basin Management Plans list the current status of our waters and detail the measures required to bring those failing back to good status and maintain the high status of our pristine sites.

7.4.1 Water Systems Objectives:

- WS1** To co-operate with statutory bodies and all stakeholders to reduce the pollution of the Avoca River and facilitate the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board in implementing the recommendations of the "Restoring the Avoca River" Report.
- WS2** To implement the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin and Sub-Basin Management Plans and the EU Groundwater Directive to ensure the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters in the plan area, including rivers, lakes, ground water coastal and estuarine waters, and to restrict development likely to lead to deterioration in water quality.
- WS3** To resist development that would interfere with the natural water cycle to a degree that would interfere with the survival and stability of natural habitats.
- WS4** To prevent development that would pollute water bodies and in particular, to regulate the installation of effluent disposal systems in the vicinity of water bodies that provide drinking water or development that would exacerbate existing underlying water contamination.
- WS5** To minimise alterations or interference with river/stream beds, banks and channels, except for reasons of overriding public health and safety (e.g. to reduce risk of flooding); a buffer of 10m along watercourses shall be provided free of built development with riparian vegetation generally being retained in as natural a state as possible. In all cases where works are being carried out, to have regard to Regional Fisheries Board "Requirements for the protection of fisheries habitat during the construction and development works at river sites."

- WS6** To promote the development of riparian walks and parks, subject to the sensitivity and /or designation of the riverside habitat, particularly within 10m of the watercourse.

7.5 Recreational use of natural resources

The Council recognises the importance of natural areas within the Plan area in providing for passive and active activities for the local community.

7.5.1 Recreational use of natural resources Objectives

- RN1** To facilitate the use of natural areas for active outdoor pursuits, subject to the highest standards of habitat protection and management and all other normal planning controls.
- RN2** The Council shall seek to promote access to amenity areas of the plan area for the benefit of all, on the basis of co-operation with landowners, recreational users and other relevant stakeholders groups to promote “agreed access” on public and privately owned land in the plan area on the basis of sustainability, consultation and consensus.

7.6 Prospects

The prospect listed in this plan is considered to be of the highest amenity value in the plan area. It is not the intention that where the prospect occurs in a settlements that the lands would not be prohibited from development. Any application for development in such locations will be required to provide an assessment of the prospect and an evaluation of how the development would change or interfere with the prospect.

7.6.1 Objectives

- VP1** Protect and preserve the prospect of special amenity from the R750 towards the sea from the coast road.

7.7 Agriculture Lands

Agriculture lands serve a number of purposes, they provide for agriculture uses, have an important natural, recreation and amenity value and can also facilitate strategic projects such as roads. The Agricultural lands form a part of a unique natural setting, which provides a backdrop of the built environment. It is an objective of the Council in relation to this agricultural zone is to facilitate the continued use of these lands for agricultural purposes subject to general environmental considerations and to control non-agricultural development.

A limited type of residential development may be considered in this zone. However unless a convincing case of need is established permission for dwellings will not be granted except to the immediate family members of families (i.e sons and daughters) of persons who are householders and residing in the immediate area and to farmers and to the immediate members of their families.

7.7.1 Agriculture Lands Objectives:

- AG1** Single residential development on these lands will be strictly controlled, the applicant will be required to illustrate housing and local need and where residential development is permitted the applicant will be subject to an occupancy clause (duration of 7 years).
- AG2** To encourage sustainable agricultural activities, protect the rural character of these lands and prevent developments, which would cause environmental pollution or injury to general amenities.
- AG3** To ensure that the agricultural development complies with the measures set out in the Easter River Basin Management Plan.

Built Heritage – Architecture and Archaeology

7.8 Architectural Heritage

Arklow has a wealth of buildings of architectural merit, including one of Wicklow’s most impressive churches St. Saviours Church, erected in 1899, one of Wicklow’s few post-Disestablishment Church of Ireland churches. Despite growth over the years, the town centre has generally retained its compact form and essential architectural qualities, while the main street still retains its medieval layout. There are a number of areas of dereliction in the town centre area and especially in the backlands behind the principal streets, which are a source of concern and require objective initiatives in this plan. Individual developments, which may involve the demolition of buildings of architectural and historic interest, can have a negative visual impact as can the cumulative impact of a number of small-scale developments. Inappropriate alterations such as the removal of historic sash windows, alteration to traditional shopfronts, the addition of inappropriate signage and lighting, or

the unsympathetic extension of structures can detract from the character of individual buildings and have a cumulative negative impact on the streetscape.

7.8.1 Architectural Objectives

AH1 To consolidate and safeguard the historical and architectural character of Arklow Town Centre through the protection of individual buildings, structures, shopfronts and elements of the public realm that contribute greatly to this character.

AH 2 To conserve buildings and features of historical and vernacular interest through ensuring that adequate consideration is given to their protection as part of development proposals and that mitigation measures are put in place as required.

7.9 Protected Structures

There are currently 39 buildings on the Record of Protected Structures in the Arklow Town and environs area, the compilation of which has been informed by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) Wicklow County Survey. These structures are deemed to be of special architectural historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

The placing of a structure on the RPS seeks to ensure that the character of the structure is maintained and any changes or alterations to it are carried out in such a way as to retain and enhance this character. Works to a protected structure that would materially affect the character of the structure, require planning permission. Protection extends not only to the protected structure itself but also to the relevant structures within the curtilage and to specified features in the grounds of such structures. A declaration under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, can be sought from the Council to list the type of works that do not affect the character of a specified protected structure and therefore do not require planning permission. Any works that would materially affect the character of a structure require planning permission.

7.9.1 Protected Structures Objectives

RPS 1 To safeguard the character of Protected Structures and encourage appropriate alterations to these buildings to render them viable for modern use, subject to best conservation practice (in accordance with Architectural Heritage Protection guidelines produced by the DoEHLG). (Arklow RPS & deletions to the RPS are set out in Appendix 1 of the Draft Plan)

7.10 Archaeological Heritage

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment Act) 1994. Structures, features objects or sites listed in this record are known as Recorded Monuments. The historic core of Arklow is as a Zone of Archaeological Potential, containing known recorded monuments. Other recorded monuments occur in the townlands of Kilbride, Bogland and Rock Big. Burial grounds are an important part of local heritage, often containing the standing remains of sites of earlier structures and also a great diversity of animal and plant life. The relevant structures are listed below in table 7.1.

7.10.1 Archaeological Heritage Objectives

AR1 To safeguard archaeological heritage by ensuring that development in the vicinity of a recorded monument which are listed in table 7.1 below shall be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that there will be no damage to the monument itself, its setting or its cultural and educational value.

AR2 Any development that may due to its size, location or nature have implications for archaeological heritage shall be subject to an archaeological assessment.

AR3 To ensure that provision is made through the development control process for the protection of previously unknown archaeological sites and features where they are discovered during development works.

Table 7.1 Recorded Monuments

RMP Number	Townland/Location	Classification
40:29	Abbeylands/ Arklow/ Ferrybank/ Marsh/ Sheephouse/ Tinnahask lower/ Yardland	Historic Town, Castle (in ruins), site of church and graveyard
40:21	Kilbride	Kilbride Church (in ruins), Grave Yard, Mausoleum
45:3	Bogland	Church and Graveyard site
45:4	Rock Big	Site of St. Iver's Holy Well
45:6	Rock Big	Lady's Holy Well
45:7	Rock Big	Site of St. Patrick's Holy Well
45:5	Rock Big	Ecclesiastical Remains/Chapel site

7.11 Maritime Heritage

Arklow's coastal location has greatly influenced its socio economic development. While historically dependant on fishing, improvements to Arklow port meant that by the late 19th century it had an extensive fleet to service the trade in ore from Avoca mines, the export of quarried stone from Arklow Rock, and chemicals for the Arklow Manure Company and Kynoch's munitions factory. The town at one time had the largest fishing fleet based in the Irish Sea and a thriving shipbuilding industry with a shipyard noted for building timber boats such as Francis Chichester's Gypsy Moth III and the TSV Asgard II. This maritime tradition provided the main source of employment and influenced the location of houses, the development of local schools, shops and services. While much declined in recent years, the presence of the port and associated maritime heritage contributes greatly to the character of the town. The collection held by Arklow's Maritime museum traces this aspect of the town's history and is of National significance, while the Arklow Maritime Memorial Park highlights this aspect of the town's heritage.

7.11.1 Maritime Heritage Objectives

- MH1** To support facilities such as the Arklow Maritime Museum which increase public awareness and appreciation of the town's maritime heritage.
- MH2** To support initiatives to highlight Arklow's Maritime heritage in the public realm.
- MH3** To ensure that any development projects in and around the Arklow quays respect any valuable structures or items of Arklow's maritime heritage.

Avoca River Valley

Arklow Sand Dunes

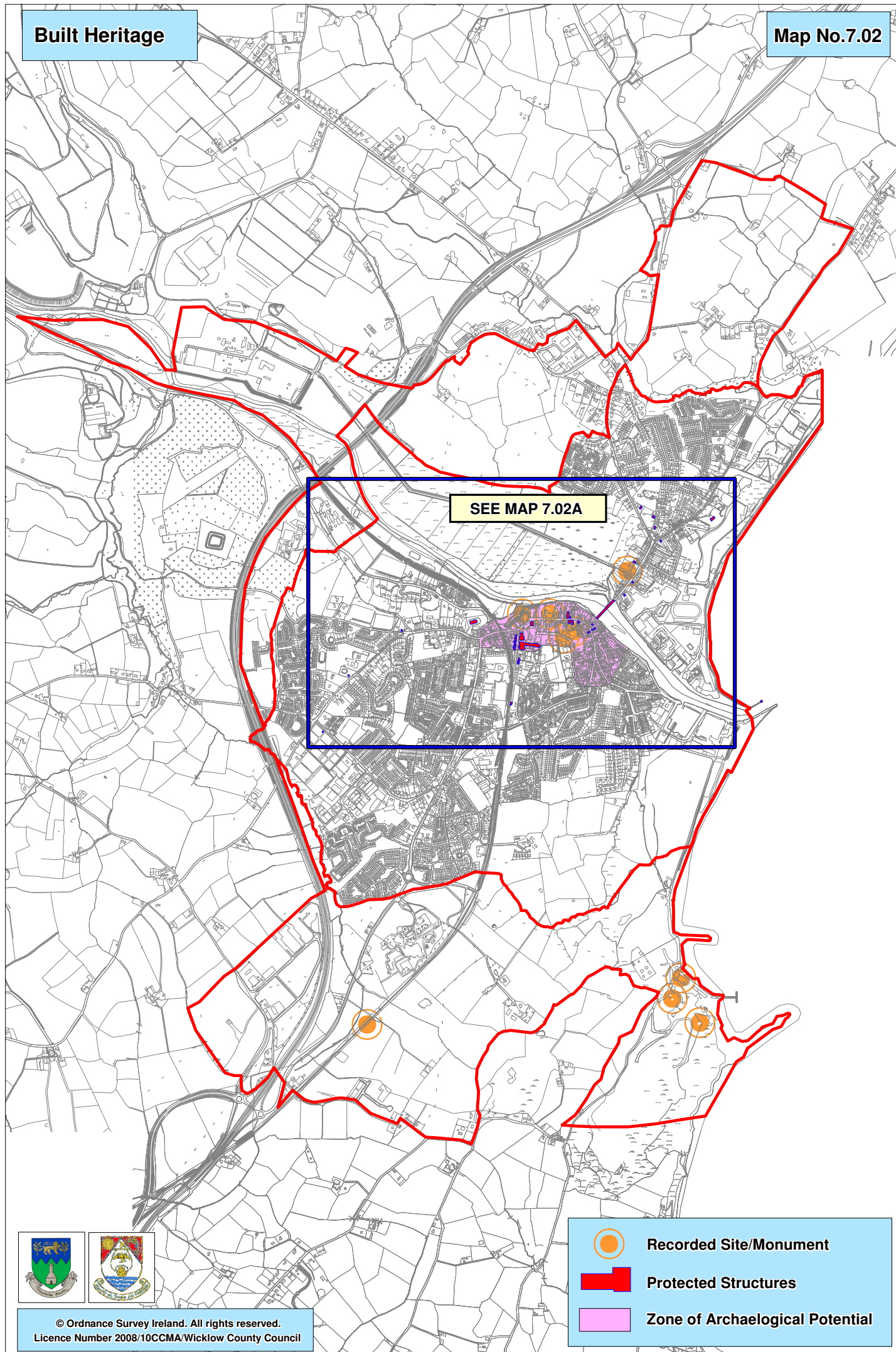
Arklow Town Marsh

Arklow Rock-Askintinny



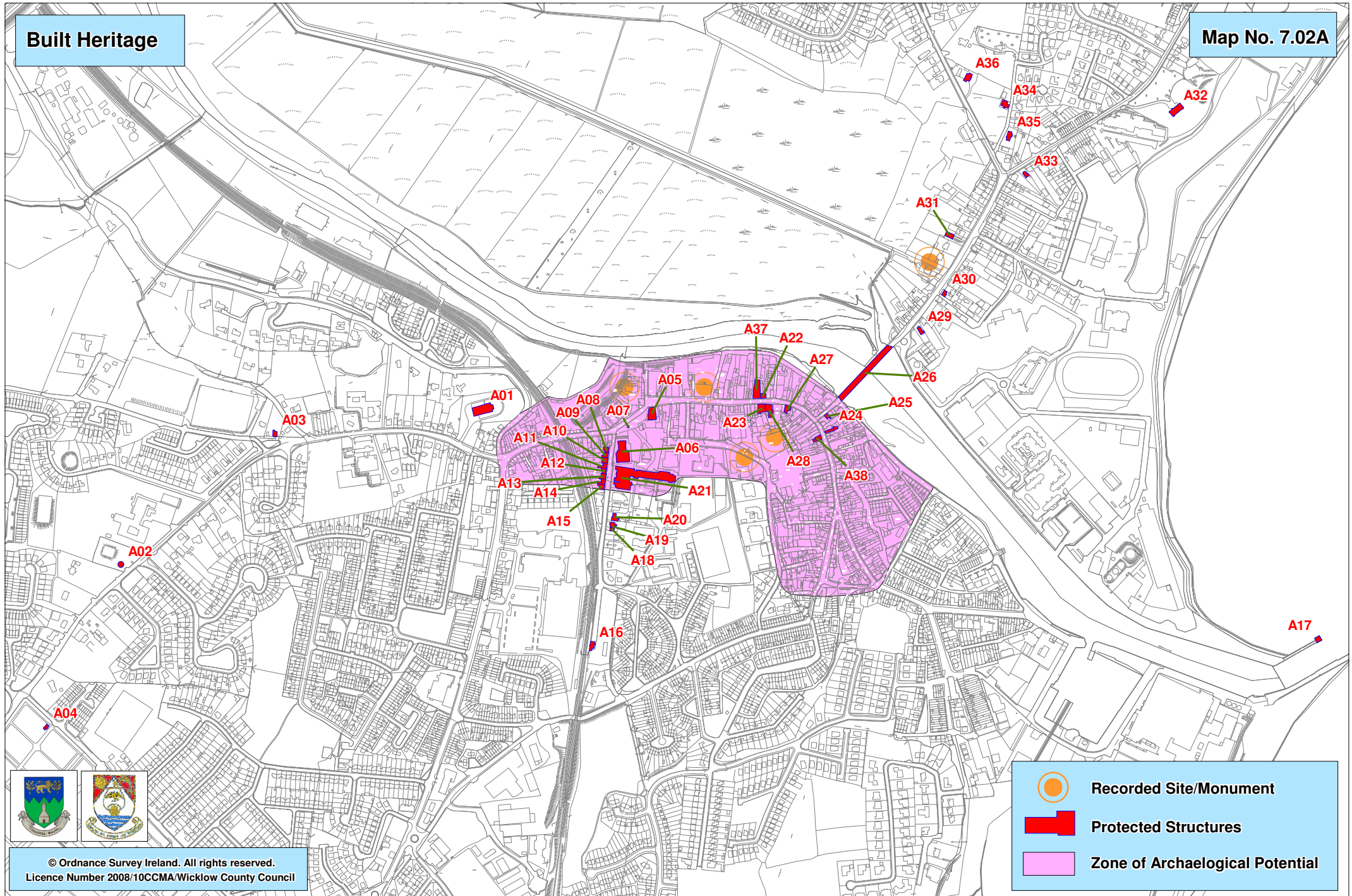
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- Rivers
- Green Routes
- Proposed Natural Heritage Area
- ▲▲▲▲▲ Prospect of Special Amenity



Built Heritage

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7.12 Development Management Standards

7.12.1 Agricultural Developments in Agricultural Lands:

- Waste Management and storage associated with agricultural buildings shall comply with the Department of Agriculture , Fisheries and Food best practice guidelines on good farming practices, protection of water from nitrate pollution and farm pollution control;
- Where possible new buildings shall be located within or adjoining the existing farmyard complex;
- Buildings shall be of minimum scale and external finishes shall be dark green, dark brown or grey in colour;
- Screening and landscaping proposals shall be required where buildings will be exposed to public view.

17.2.2 Residential Development in Agricultural Lands

- Dwellings shall normally be required to be sites as unobtrusively as possible from a landscape point of view and locate close to existing farm dwellings and buildings;
- Access shall be designed to avoid traffic hazard and shall not be located directly onto national or regional routes;
- Site suitability shall have regard to proximity to the family home, prominence in the landscape, impact on waterlines, safety and adequacy of access, water supply and suitability of wastewater treatment systems;
- Where waste water treatment systems are required, they shall comply with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency: Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving Single House (EPA 2009) and any subsequent revisions and any new legislative requirements.