

## A Signage and Way-finding Plan for Roscrea

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Prepared for



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Tipperary County Council

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Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>A quick summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Why this strategy now?</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1	How we made the strategy .....	3
2.2	Relevant Tourism and Planning strategies.....	4
<b>3</b>	<b>Who has been involved?</b> .....	<b>7</b>
3.1	Contributors .....	7
3.2	Who is the signage for?.....	8
<b>4</b>	<b>What’s on offer to the visitor now</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Getting here</b> .....	<b>12</b>
5.1	Getting to Roscrea by road.....	12
5.2	The M7 motorway.....	13
5.3	The N62 National Road.....	14
5.4	Getting to Roscrea by train.....	15
5.5	Getting to Roscrea by bus .....	15
5.6	Arrival .....	16
<b>6</b>	<b>We’re here - now where are we, what’s to see?</b> .....	<b>18</b>
6.1	Arrival and destination .....	18
6.2	Walking Roscrea .....	18
<b>7</b>	<b>Making it happen</b> .....	<b>19</b>
7.1	What will the signs look like? .....	19
7.2	Sign content.....	20
7.3	Where will the signs go?.....	22

Sheet 1 – Getting to Roscrea from the N62 and M7

Sheet 2 – Arriving at Roscrea and finding a place to stop

Sheet 3 – Organising Roscrea’s stories into Ireland’s Ancient East Themes

Sheet 4 – Route Analysis; Decision points and key destinations

Sheet 5 – Design Inspiration

Sheet 6 – Sign family

Sheet 7 – Proposed sign positioning

Sheet 8 – Pedestrian mapping for signs

Sheet 9 – Graphic palette

**Appendix A Workshop Outcomes report**

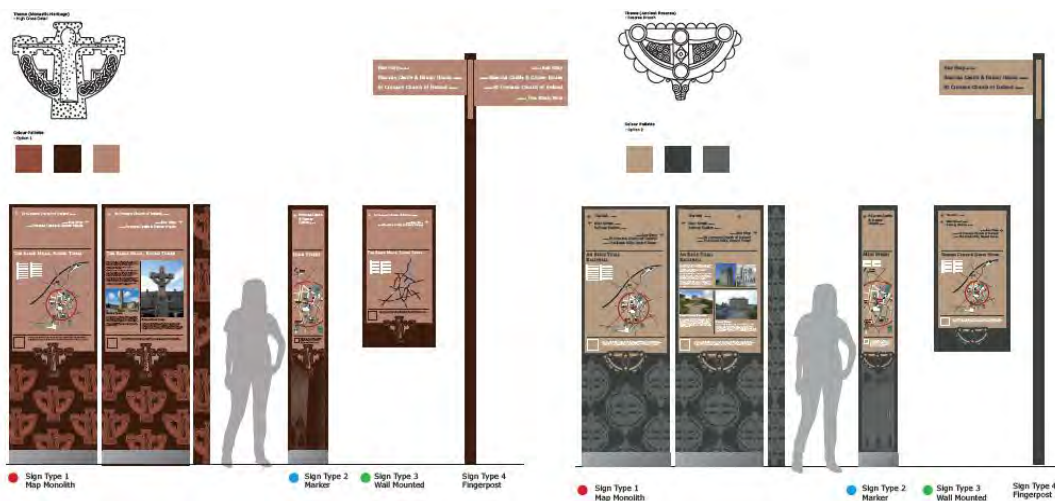
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# 1 A quick summary

This Signage and Way-finding strategy for Roscrea is supported by statutory planning policy and county tourism strategy. It was commissioned by Tipperary County Council, the Roscrea Enhancement Committee and developed in close consultation with a range of organisations and interested individuals in the town. A public workshop was held to capture a range of inputs and the proposals were displayed in the town and online for wider feedback.

A careful analysis has been carried out of visitor expectations, thematic approaches to story-telling in light of the *Ireland's Ancient East* initiative, the nature of visitor journeys to the town and the range of destinations and services within Roscrea. Based on this wide-ranging analysis, 10 key locations within the town have been identified as being most suitable for pedestrian way-finding structures, subject to ongoing archaeological appraisal. The aim of these new signs is to encourage visitors to explore the various heritage features in the town, and to spend more time enjoying the streets, shops, restaurants, pubs and cafés. The signs will contain information on walking distances, interpretive images and text, and clear mapping to create for visitors a mental map of the place and to illustrate how compact central Roscrea is on foot. The current high quality audio guides and printed brochures, developed locally and available to visitors remain in place to provide deeper insights for visitors as they explore and enjoy Roscrea.

Four types of structure are proposed – map monolith, marker, wall-mounted sign and fingerpost sign. These structures have been designed to provide both orientation and interpretation to visitors. Two design and colour scheme options have been developed - using the 9<sup>th</sup> century Roscrea brooch or St. Cronan's high cross as a recurring thematic motif.



Following consultation with TII/NRA, recommendations are also included in this document for improvements to the tourist motorway signage from the M7 and at Exit 22, along the approach road from Exit 22 and along the N62 approaching the town from Birr. This includes a rationalisation of the different types of signs that have emerged over time, and creation of a high-quality arrival experience by using standard Traffic Sign Manual tourist and arrival signs accompanied by environmental improvements.

This written report is accompanied by a series of sheets (1-9) which contain mapping and graphics at a larger scale than shown in this report.

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## 2 Why this strategy now?

In 2012, North Tipperary County Council, in conjunction with The Heritage Council, local interest groups and numerous stakeholders came together to commission an Enhancement Plan for Roscrea Town Centre. Section 7 of the Roscrea Enhancement Plan - *Initiatives and Projects* - identified the development of a Signage Strategy as a priority project.

Roscrea Castle had almost 30,000 visitors in 2014<sup>1</sup>, but the town is not fully capitalising on its breadth of heritage. The Ireland's Ancient East initiative gives a new momentum to towns such as Roscrea to provide visitors with an opportunity to explore the layers of history made real by exploring streets, spaces and buildings. Higher dwell time and visitor spend can be gained by engaging visitors with Roscrea's stories and enabling pleasant walks between various features of interest.

### 2.1 How we made the strategy

The project included the following steps:

- **Meetings** with the Project team and Enhancement committee over the course of the project
- **Walkabout** with Enhancement committee, February 2016
- **Review** of previous way-finding and interpretive work; Council signage audit, Town Enhancement Plan, Roscrea Local Area Plan, heritage documents, existing audio and physical trails, on line resources
- **Strategic conversations**; We spoke with Transport Infrastructure Ireland/NRA, Fáilte Ireland, The Office of Public Works, Sport Ireland, and other consultants working in Roscrea including Nic de Jong (public realm designers). Traffic management consultants, Roadplan, have been appointed to carry out a Traffic Management Strategy but the project timescales did not allow for detailed cross-referencing of emerging strategies at this point – this report sets out where final sign locations and content will need to align with the emerging Traffic Strategy .
- **Public Workshop** at the Muintir na Tíre Hall - April 28th
- **Public Presentation** of draft documents and discussion in Damer Hall - June 15th
- **Online display** of draft proposals on Tipperary Co. Co. website July-August
- **Poster presentation** of draft proposals in Roscrea Credit Union – July-August
- Incorporation of feedback
- Preparation of final documents



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<sup>1</sup> Strategic Tourism Marketing, Experience and Destination Development Plan 2016-2021

## 2.2 Relevant Tourism and Planning strategies

### 2.2.1 Ireland's Ancient East

*Ireland's Ancient East* offers the visitor an opportunity to explore the layers of history easily accessed across the eastern half of Ireland. Itineraries are suggested, but the idea is that most visitors will self-navigate and focus on what appeals to them the most. Sense of place is communicated by way of stories that engage and resonate, rather than just by historical fact. These stories could be told in person, by way of interpretive boards, by way of journeys and vistas, or by encountering foods or businesses local to a particular place. A sense of travelling through lush, green landscapes is also an important part of the experience, and therefore it is important that approach roads to settlements are of a high quality with tree planting etc. and opportunities are taken to provide or improve green spaces within towns.



The key themes for the geography of Ireland's Ancient East (which have been tested in key markets and form the basis for how the region will be marketed abroad by Tourism Ireland) include:

- Sacred Ireland
- Castles and Conquests
- Ancient Ireland
- Big houses and hard times
- High kings and heroes
- Vikings
- The sport of kings (horse-racing)
- Maritime Gateway
- Ireland's mystical waterway (the Shannon)

An initial analysis has been carried out of the stories Roscrea can tell to bring some of these themes to life - this is set out at a larger scale on **Sheet 3** to the rear of this report. The most resonant themes are *Sacred Ireland* and *Castles and Conquests*, although Roscrea also has great stories to tell about *Vikings*, and *Big houses and Hard times*.



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### 2.2.2 The Roscrea Town Enhancement Plan

North Tipperary County Council in conjunction with The Roscrea Enhancement Group and local interest groups are committed to ensuring that Roscrea fulfils its potential as a heritage town and operates as an economically viable centre of commercial and social activity. Collectively, these organisations determined the need for a *Town Centre Enhancement Plan* which demonstrates the effective presentation, management and sustainable development of Roscrea’s public realm.



The project was funded by the Heritage Council under grants for County Heritage Plan Projects 2012. Landscape Architects and Urban Designers, The Paul Hogarth Company, were appointed to assist in the preparation of the plan. This plan is a key action towards the fulfilment of objectives and policies set out in the Roscrea Local Area Plan (2012-2018), in particular, Objectives TC1 (Town Centre Strategy - Partnership) and TC2 (Public Realm), as well as Policy TC2 (Public Realm Plan).

### 2.2.3 Tipperary Tourism Strategy 2016-2021

The Tipperary County Tourism Strategy recognises Roscrea as a “Priority Level 1 Gateway Town”<sup>2</sup>, i.e. a town that has a critical mass of accommodation and services to act as an overnight base for visitors from which to explore the surrounding areas.

The strategy suggests that Roscrea could form part of a “Hidden Ireland” experience as one of the county’s signature experiences – an experience of “authentic historic Ireland”, aimed at the overseas Culturally Curious market segment, as identified by Fáilte Ireland. As well as the heritage offer, the town is also described in the report as having a good authentic shopping offer, several options for food, but in need of a new way-finding and signage.



### 2.2.4 Roscrea Local Area Plan, 2012-2018

The Roscrea Local Area Plan sets out ideas and proposals to guide the physical land use development of the town. The vision statement acknowledges that Roscrea can benefit greatly from tourism and aims to position the town as a nationally important place of heritage value.

In order to preserve the character and identity of Roscrea, a number of *Architectural Conservation Areas* were designated in the town centre as part of the statutory planning document for the town.

The most relevant to visitors are:

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<sup>2</sup> Table 4.2, page 37

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- Main Street ACA - this includes the length of Main Street, from the northern Y-junction of Grove Street and Green Street to junction with Castle Street, Limerick Street to the south.
  - Rosemary Street ACA - This ACA runs from the north end of Rosemary Street (where it joins Main Street) to Rosemary Square to the south.

It is the policy of the Council to protect the views and prospects of *special amenity value or special interest*, specifically those listed below. Protection of these views includes the ongoing enhancement of what's in the view by way of appropriate planning, building/public realm improvements and interpretation. This will enable visitors to fully experience the appealing character of the heritage town.

- Views into and out of the Architectural Conservation Areas.
- View from Main Street towards Round Tower
- View from Castle Street towards St. Cronan's Church
- View from Main Street down Castle Street
- View from The Mall towards Sacred Heart Convent
- View from Carroll's Row towards Franciscan Friary
- View of Damer House from The Mall
- View of Roscrea Castle from Rosemount
- View of Damer House from Goal Road
- View of Damer House from The Mall
- View of Glebe House from The Mall
- View of St. Cronan's Church from Carroll's Row
- View of The Malting from Ballyhall
- View of the Malting from The Mall
- View looking up Abbey Street
- View looking up Church Street towards St. Cronan's Church

Appealing views between features of interest are important to provide assurance to visitors that their exploration of the town will be pleasurable. The quality of views can be reduced by the incremental increase over time of above ground services, traffic infrastructure and vehicles themselves. The sharp camber of Main and Castle St means that in many cases parked cars perpendicular to the footpath block potentially appealing views. These issues can be addressed by the emerging public realm and traffic management plans for the town.

Bearing all the above in mind – the key underpinnings of this strategy are:

- **The right sign in the right place** – understanding visitor flow; arrival, key orientation points, destinations, views and routes
- **Clarity of communication** with visitors – understanding the type of visitor likely to arrive, what they are interested in, the kind of experience they are after
- Signs that are **uniquely Roscrea** – reflecting the essence of the place through innovative design
- **Clear and organised story-telling** – chiming with the broader Ireland's Ancient East themes, particularly *Sacred Ireland*, but also *Castles and Conquests*, *Big houses and hard times* and *Vikings*
- Recognising the importance of projects that improve **walkability** and **enhancement of views** in the town – ensuring that the journey is as pleasurable as the destination

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## 3 Who has been involved?

### 3.1 Contributors

A broad range of people have contributed to the development of this strategy – many thanks to all involved.

Name	ORGANISATION
Pamela Aitken	Roscrea Heritage Society
Seamus Browne	Roscrea Chamber of Commerce
James Byrne	Gleann Glas
Marion Carey	Tipperary County Council
Caroline Creamer	Ard Ross Residents
Ruairi Deane	Fáilte Ireland
Eileen Doherty	Tidy Towns/Enhancement Committee
Conor Fitzpatrick	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Bri Greene	Roscrea Heritage Society
John Hanamy	Age Friendly Roscrea/Roscrea Credit Union
Mary Haugh	Youthreach
John Jones	Tipperary County Council (Town Engineer)
Anne Keevey	Age Friendly Roscrea
Mary Kelly	Roscrea Heritage Society (Heritage Plan), Green Schools
John Lupton	Roscrea Enhancement Group
Cormac MacDonnell	Sport Ireland
Michael Madden	Roscrea Chamber of Commerce, Enhancement Group signage sub-committee
Rita McLoughney	
Cathal McNicholas	Climb Ireland, Enhancement Group Trail Development Committee
Trisha Purcell	North Tipperary Leader Partnership
Brian Redmond	Roscrea Heritage Society
Jacinta Rigney	OPW Roscrea
Sandra Smith	North Tipperary Leader Partnership
Marie Warren	Slí Dála B&B
PJ Wright	Tidy Towns





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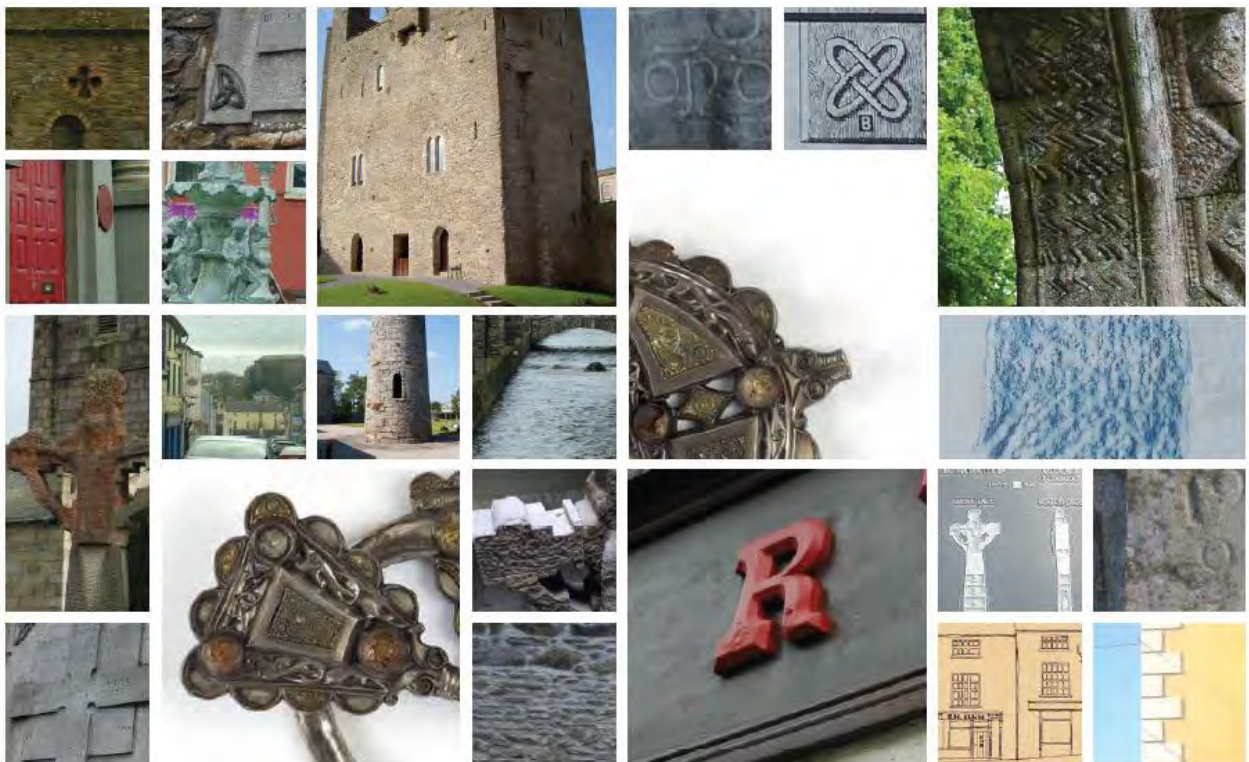
## 3.2 Who is the signage for?

This strategy includes proposals for both road and pedestrian signs. The new road signage will provide visitors with certainty as they make their way along key roads to Roscrea. Recommendations in relation to sign de-cluttering and environmental improvements will provide a high-quality approach to the town, reassuring visitors that they are arriving at a town of heritage significance.

The new pedestrian signs within in Roscrea will assist visitors in finding their way around the town and deepen their experience of the visit. High quality graphics will provide a “mental map” of the town and will highlight key streets, spaces, and buildings as orientation markers.

The proposed pillar signs will not only direct visitors to the key heritage features of the town, but also communicate the stories that can be accessed and experienced along the way. There are also opportunities for thematic linkages with the Butler Trail and inclusion of Roscrea into an expansion of the trail.

The new signage and content will chime with the themes of *Ireland's Ancient East*, focusing primarily on the theme of *Sacred Ireland* and *Castles and Conquests*, given the town's layers of ecclesiastical heritage and the key attraction of Roscrea Castle. This new way of communicating what is great about Roscrea will enable visitors to experience up close the layers of history of the town, open up the key streets and encourage longer dwell time and more visitor spend.



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## 4 What's on offer to the visitor now

### 4.1.1 Trails

Several trails are currently available to the visitor to the town;

- Audio Trails (narrated by George Cunningham, created by Aileen O'Meara): Monaincha Trail and Roscrea Heritage Trail – these are promoted by way of leaflets, as a QR code on signage at the castle and can also be accessed at [www.heritagetrails.ie](http://www.heritagetrails.ie)
- Roscrea Heritage Walk (a leaflet and lectern style boards at key heritage locations throughout the town)
- Poetry Trail at the Library Field
- A looped walk is planned to link the centre of Roscrea to the important monastic site of Monaincha
- Slí na Sláinte walk (note this is not currently on the [Irishtrails.ie](http://Irishtrails.ie) website)



A lot of great work has gone into these initiatives, which are full of local knowledge and expertise, particularly the two Audio Guides and the printed brochure, "Roscrea *Walking Tour companion*", to accompany the Heritage Walk. As part of this signage strategy, these existing resources will be retained, enhanced where necessary and promoted as insightful and detailed resources for the visitor. It would be worth considering organising free town wi-fi to make the audio guides freely accessible.

The physical signage for the Roscrea Heritage walk will be removed and replaced with a new approach to interpretation and mapping as set in Section 7 of this report.

### 4.1.2 Pedestrian signs and maps

A detailed pedestrian signage audit was carried out as part of the signage strategy development - the key conclusions of the audit are:

- There is no cohesive pedestrian wayfinding scheme currently in the town
- While maps are presented to the visitor to navigate the features of the Heritage Walk, these have no information on distances and are all north facing which can be confusing to the visitor.
- Two maps at the castle entrance - a key location for visitors - relate to the broader road network around Roscrea rather than the town itself.
- A standalone town map at the top of the Mall (Roscrea Tourism Ltd.) shows the location of heritage features, B&Bs, hotels, schools, emergency services, restaurants and activities, however, its location in a corner would be easily missed.

- There are no “you are here” markings to orientate visitors
- There is no orientation mapping at the train station
- A high-quality metal interpretive sign at St. Cronan’s High Cross is easily missed due to its location on a narrow footpath on a blind bend on a busy road, and its location is a little too high.
- *Heads up* mapping needs to be introduced to help orientate users and help build a mental map of the town
- There is a potential to highlight journey times, as the town destinations are all walkable distances – this would increase visitor movement around the town
- The physical condition of pedestrian routes (width, clutter, levels, crossing points) needs improving



### 4.1.3 Road signage

A road signage audit was carried out focusing on the key visitor approach routes and consultation took place with Transport Infrastructure Ireland/NRA.

The total number of “white on brown” tourism signs agreed at the motorway planning stage has not yet been implemented. The motorway signage currently in place can be improved – in some, *Roscrea* is further down the list of destinations than it should be, in others, the symbols need to be changed to reflect the key destination of Roscrea Castle. For visitors, specific signed attractions, such as a castle, are more enticing than more generalised “heritage town” signs.

Generally, along the immediate approaches to the town, less signs and a higher quality environment would provide visitors with an assurance that they are approaching a town of heritage significance. Sign text size and use of imagery needs to take account of readability when travelling at speed. A good rule of

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thumb is to think of the road sign's job as being to orientate the visitor to the town, and then to confirm that they have arrived in Roscrea. The most effective way to do this is by using standard *Traffic Signs Manual* sign designs and one or two internationally recognised standard symbols. Beyond this, information about the place and its attractions is most effectively conveyed by other means – a visually appealing approach environment, websites, brochures, events, interpretive boards within the town (and indeed in other nearby towns pointing visitors to Roscrea), information provided in businesses, cafés etc.

There is an opportunity to take advantage of Roscrea being the closest heritage town to the busy Barack Obama plaza. The town does not have a presence in the visitor information presented there at the moment, despite its proximity.

#### 4.1.4 Cycle signage

There is no dedicated cycle signage at present. Current street designs are not particularly welcoming to visitors on bikes. However, proposals for a greenway linking the town to Birr could very quickly increase the demand for cycle friendly streets and orientation. The Dept. of Transport *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* sets out the appropriate ways to ensure that street design facilitates cyclists of all ages. *Sustrans* also has a large amount of guidance on encouraging cycling, including cost effective approaches to making the built environment more conducive to cycling. It is likely that specific cycle signage will only be required in the event of formal cycle routes being developed.

#### 4.1.5 Non-signage way-finding – other relevant projects in the town

Plans are afoot in Roscrea for an *Ambassador Program*, which would aid visitors as they navigate the town. This is a very appealing and friendly way for visitors to meet local people, get immediate relevant directions if needed and access the stories of the place first hand.

The *Roscrea Age Friendly Town* initiative is progressing ideas for making the town more pedestrian friendly. Walkability studies have been carried out and the group is working with the County Council to improve footpaths and crossings in the town. While beneficial to older people, such improvements are also beneficial to visitors, as they can access the heritage in the town more easily and pleasurably.

Several *Council led projects* are contributing to the enhancement of the town for visitors and better intuitive wayfinding – these include public realm improvements (Nicolas de Jong consultants) and a Traffic management strategy (Roadplan consultants).

The Tidy Towns group and Enhancement Group are progressing a range of projects which *improve the built environment of the town* and therefore make walking and exploring more appealing for the visitor.



# 5 Getting here

## 5.1 Getting to Roscrea by road

See **Sheet 1 – Getting to Roscrea** for mapping of the proposals to help visitors find their way to the town. The overall approach assumes that a sign’s role is to direct people to a place and tell them when they’ve arrived – the character of the place does the rest. The strategy suggests the designating of the public car park beside Tesco as a “Visitor Car Park” or “Castle Car Park” to provide visitors with a specific signed arrival point. In terms of the approach roads to the town:

- A quality sense of arrival should be provided by landscape and urban design rather than signs
- Where signage is needed – use a clear standardised approach as set out in the Traffic Signs Manual. Visitors recognise and keep an eye out for standard brown on white “tourism signs” and standard white on green “arrival signs.”

**getting to roscrea**

Note: all strategy recommendations are subject to detailed locating/removal and design of signs in line with traffic management requirements, underground services and County Council engineer's approval.

**road to birr**

- Replace signage with environmental improvements, e.g. tree planting
- Large detailed signs are less effective than simple "arrival signs" - consider removal
- This kind of sign tends to be the most effective for visitors - signs should "bring someone to a place, then tell them they've arrived"

**car park**

- Introduce new black on white signs at first large roundabout for "Town Centre" and white on brown signs for "Roscrea Castle" and "Shane Blues Museum" - standard "Town Centre" sign too low. Remove Orange sign

**roscrea town centre**

- Replace enhance signage with new planting environmental improvements

**OVERALL APPROACH**

- A sign's role is to direct people to a place and tell them they've arrived - the character of the place does the rest.
- preference for environmental improvements over non-engineered solutions,
- quality sense of arrival through landscape and urban design rather than signs,
- where signage is used - clear and standardised design approach.

**exit 22**

- Replace this sign with one with "Roscrea Castle" signed on top, followed by "Birr Castle" and "Shane Blues Museum"
- Include here new white on brown sign for "Roscrea Castle" with standard castle symbol over the current one for "Birr Castle"
- This is a "green bypass sign" - Roscrea is also entitled to a secondary line on green "Heritage Attraction" sign. It is proposed that this would include sign for "Roscrea Castle" and the standard castle symbol. Location to be agreed with TII. Signed attractions need to be more effective than signed towns on doublet signs.

**m7 motorway**

See **Sheet 1** for a larger version of this map

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## 5.2 The M7 motorway

The An Bord Pleanála report at the time of grant of permission for the M7 stated that two information signs similar to those at Cashel on the M8 were to be incorporated into the scheme to highlight the amenities of Roscrea as a heritage town. It is worth noting that on the M8, the first brown (tourist) sign directs visitors to the Rock of Cashel, and a second directs visitors to the town. Specific signed attractions tend to resonate more with visitors than general town signs.



### THE APPROACH FROM DUBLIN TO EXIT 22

At the moment, Roscrea has one tourist “town bypass” sign on the Dublin approach to Exit 22 on the M7.

**This strategy proposes that a second “heritage attraction” sign is erected on the Dublin approach to Exit 22 on the M7. This would sign “Roscrea Castle” and include a standard Traffic Signs Manual castle symbol. The exact location is to be agreed with TII/NRA.**



### THE APPROACH FROM LIMERICK TO EXIT 22

The approach from Limerick includes a large sign for Birr, Slieve Bloom and Roscrea. Roscrea should be the top cited destination as it is first of these three to be encountered. The Heritage Town symbol is not well understood, and it is more effective to sign a specific attraction rather than a heritage town.

**This strategy proposes that this sign is replaced by a new sign with “Roscrea Castle” as the first signed location (with a standard castle symbol) followed by “Birr Castle” and then the “Slieve Bloom Mountains”.**



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The white on brown signs for “Roscrea Castle” and black on white signs for “town centre” will continue along all the junctions from Exit 22 until Rosemary Square. The Slieve Bloom Mountains will also need to be signed to the destination from their first sign off the motorway. The first roundabout currently doesn’t have a town centre sign, and the existing one is located too low on the pole. See Section 5.6 for road signage proposals within the town.

No other signs are necessary along the road linking Exit 22 with Roscrea, bar a Traffic Signs Manual standard green “arrival sign” which assures the visitor they are in the right place.

If the Butler Trail is extended to include Roscrea, the town could consider the merits of including a Butler Trail banner welcome sign. These have recently been erected on approaches to Cahir, Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir.

There are number of other welcome signs along the road linking the M7 to Roscrea, but collectively these contribute to visual clutter and are not effective at the road speeds along this route. A better approach to creating a welcoming sense of arrival to visitors and communicating the sense of Roscrea as a special place would be provided by environmental improvements such as tree planting and public realm threshold projects as set out in the Roscrea Town Enhancement Plan.

### 5.3 The N62 National Road

This busy road brings potential visitors from the Birr direction and is therefore an important approach road. Several signs are encountered on the approach to the town:



The cumulative effect of this signage is cluttered, and it is recommended that any non-essential signs are removed to improve the visual quality of the arrival to the town. All that is necessary here to assure visitors they have arrived is the existing standard *white on green* arrival sign.

The current *white on brown* tourist sign is too large for this location, easily missed due to the other signs around it, and the number of symbols is too many to be effectively read at driving speed. Removing this sign would improve the visual character of the approach road. It could be replaced with a white on brown sign for Roscrea Castle. Removing the Visit Roscrea, Tidy Towns and Lions International signs would also improve the character of this approach.

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## 5.4 Getting to Roscrea by train

The train station is full of character and a lovely way to arrive at Roscrea. However, there is no orientating information at the station, and on leaving the station, the footpath is not continuous and there are no pedestrian signs to direct the visitor to the town centre. This strategy proposes a wall mounted map at the station and a pillar sign at the station exit – see **Sheet 7**. It would be important to prioritise improving footpath continuity from the train station to the town as part of the town’s emerging public realm and traffic management strategies.



## 5.5 Getting to Roscrea by bus

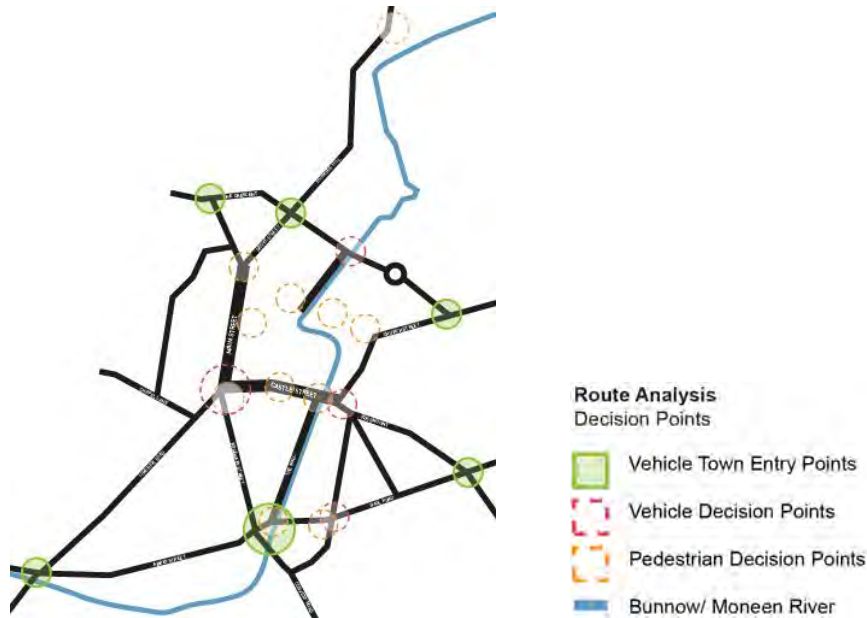
Many bus and coach users will disembark at Castle St. just outside the Castle entrance. This is a great place to start the Roscrea experience, however, as numbers increase, space might become tight. It is recommended that the public car park beside Tesco is designated as a “visitor car park”, and that this will become the main arrival point for coaches. It is likely that the Bus Eireann stop will remain on Castle St, and the proposed public realm improvements for the street can incorporate a better arrival and waiting context. A new *Ireland’s Ancient East* information sign has been erected here – telling visitors about the town’s Heritage Trail and stating that further information is available locally. Other attractions with a 1 hour drive of Roscrea are described.



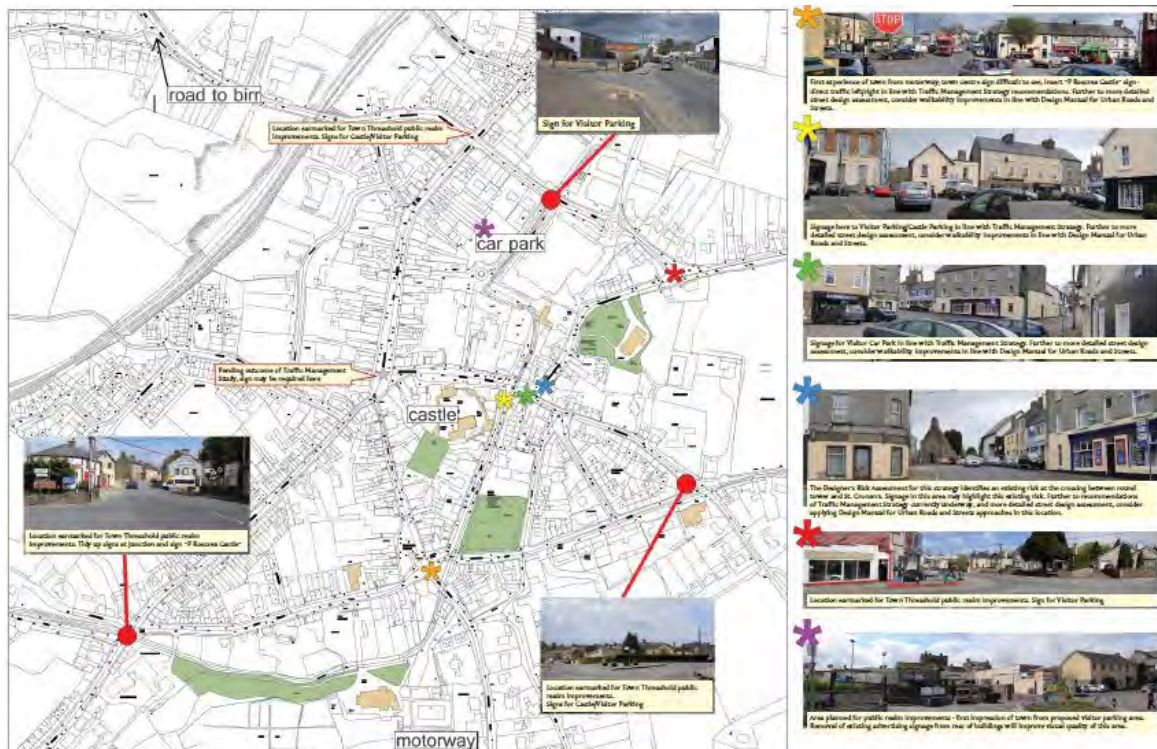


## 5.6 Arrival

An analysis of visitor decision making was carried out to identify vehicle town entry points, and key vehicle and pedestrian decision points – a larger version of this map is shown on **Sheet 4**.



**Sheet 2** maps the proposals for new sign locations within the town. Note that the current Traffic Management Plan will determine the ultimate location and orientation of signs, in line with new traffic flows.



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The overall approach proposed is to direct visitors to a “Visitor Car Park” at the existing public car park beside Tesco, using standard blue *P for parking* symbols. This will allow visitors to quickly find parking, and encourage them to explore several sites within the town. This could also be called the “Castle Car Park”, as there is no dedicated car park for the town’s key attraction.

The Roscrea Local Area Plan has identified several pedestrian linkage projects which will connect the proposed visitor car park to the key heritage features in the town. Making these as appealing as possible will provide a good first impression of Roscrea for visitors.

*Excerpt from Roscrea Local Area plan*



1. Lane between Grove Street and Lourdes Road
2. Maiden's Lane, connecting Main Street and the Public Car Park
3. Lane between Main Street and the Public Car Park, beside Garda Station
4. Main Street into Roscrea Shopping Centre

Signage for drivers will be required at several junctions as indicated on **Sheet 2**. It will be important to co-ordinate the detail of new signs with the emerging traffic management strategy.

The biggest improvement to the arrival experience for visitors will take place when the plans as set out in the Enhancement Plan for *town centre thresholds* are realised. The planned improvements at these locations include upgrades of existing surface materials, and the incorporation of shared surface solutions where appropriate.

It would be preferable for the surface improvements to take place in advance of the new signs being erected as the current extensive carriageway surfaces at some thresholds – particularly at Rosemary Square - make it difficult for the arriving driver to orientate themselves. The link between Rosemary Square, the Mall and Carroll's Row is also particularly difficult for the pedestrian to navigate, creating an unwelcoming first impression of the town from the M7 approach.



## 6 We're here - now where are we, what's to see?

### 6.1 Arrival and destination

An analysis was carried out of the relationship between transport arrival points and the key destinations and spaces around the town. A larger version of the graphic below is included on **Sheet 4** to the rear of this report. It was important to identify the key spaces; Market Square, Rosemary Square, the Glebe park etc. as these can be good orienting features for visitors. As well as the key heritage features, we have included Main Street, Castle Street and Rosemary St as destinations in their own right, bearing in mind the appealing vernacular architecture and the concentration of shops, restaurants, pubs and cafés along these routes.

Route Analysis  
Key Destinations and Spaces

-  Transport Points
-  Destinations
-  Key Spaces
-  Bunnow/ Moneen River



### 6.2 Walking Roscrea

It is an objective of the Council, subject to resources, to up-grade and extend the public footpath network and provide traffic calming measures as may be appropriate.<sup>3</sup>

The Town Enhancement Plan has set out excellent proposals for the key public areas in the town. Initial projects are underway and these will transform the comfort of walking around the town for both visitors and residents. These improvements will not only to aid intuitive way-finding but also provide a better setting for heritage features and give effectiveness to the ACA designation of the streets.



<sup>3</sup> Objective INF6: Pedestrian Infrastructure, Roscrea Local Area Plan

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## 7 Making it happen

### 7.1 What will the signs look like?

Starting with the character of Roscrea - the colours, textures and heritage – a suite of sign types have been developed. It is proposed to install 12 signs in total:

#### 5 map monoliths - to provide orientation and interpretation of nearby features at:

- The visitor car park
- Roscrea Castle entrance
- Rosemary Square
- Outside the Black Mills visitor centre
- Market square (corner of Main and Castle St.)



#### 6 marker signs – to provide orientation and interpretation of nearby features at:

- Main St (Barracks Hill)
- Outside Abbey Hall
- Carroll's row/Glebe Park
- Ballyhall Rd.
- Outside the train station
- Castle St.



#### 1 wall mounted sign

- at the train station

#### Finger post signs

- Given the compact nature of Roscrea, it is not anticipated that finger post signs are necessary in the first phase of signage installation, however a design is provided if reinforcement of routes is required for visitors

#### 7.1.1 Sign Family

The design of the sign family has been developed to ensure the delivery of the information required is the driving factor in the sign form. See **Sheet 6** at the rear of this report for larger images.

Using a monolith type sign as the primary sign type allows for interpretive content to be shared with visitors along with directional information. The monolith signs are in two sizes; a wide monolith with a full map and a smaller thinner monolith.

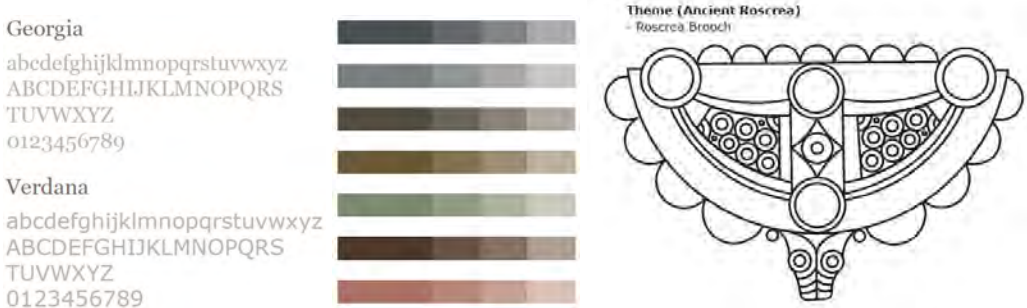
These signs will contain “heads up” maps with “you are here” indicated. The use of heads up mapping aids visitor orientation by reinforcing the mental map of the town and explains intuitively what the town has to offer. The maps will contain information on the walking distance to various features.

The sign family also includes a wall mounted sign, and a fingerpost type to ensure information can be still be delivered in the areas where the space is more limited or where a reinforcement of the route is required.

Finger post signs will also be required for the proposed longer distance walk from the town centre to Monaincha. If this walk becomes a national looped walk, it would be more appropriate to use the standard National Trails office signage and mapping.

### 7.1.2 Graphic templates

The graphic style has been developed to enhance the local identity and build on the interpretive stories, using these as pattern and motifs. See **Sheet 9** for a larger version of the graphic palette proposed.



### 7.1.3 Materials

Sign designs are proposed to be powder coated metal frames and posts, with engraved patterns for the base. The information panels are to be reverse applied graphics to toughened glass panels, the signs will have a non-glare finish.

## 7.2 Sign content

### 7.2.1 Directional information



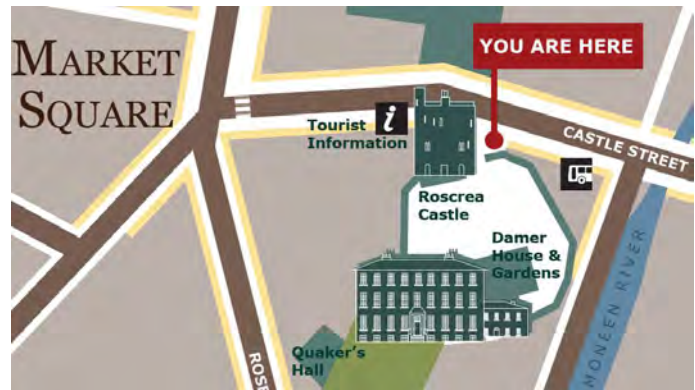
The signs will have directional legends highlighting the destinations to be visited and distances in minutes. The directional legends are placed at the top of the signs, and destinations are grouped by direction and set out by distance.

The aim is to highlight only the primary destinations with a directional legend. It is important not to sign everything from everywhere, as this can lead to information overload and confusion. By editing the information and highlighting the primary destinations the information is clearer and coherent for the user. Mapping on the signs is used to convey the locations of secondary destinations.

## 7.2.2 Maps

The monolith and marker signs will contain maps at relevant scales and with relevant extent of detail. See **Sheet 8** to see the details of proposed mapping.

The maps are aimed at pedestrians so the mapping will be edited down to highlight the points that are useful for pedestrians – with “you are here” identification, a 3-minute walking radius, and highlighting building features, paths, road crossings, public transport nodes, tourist information, areas of retail and refreshments, toilets, visitor parking, playgrounds and open spaces. The maps will be orientated heads up to aid the user to build up a mental map of the town.



## 7.2.3 Interpretative content

Interpretative content will highlight particularly interesting stories and features, both historical and more recent, along with descriptive text and imagery. In this way, the unique stories of the town are more evident to visitor and visitors are encouraged to get a better understanding of the town and hopefully stay longer.



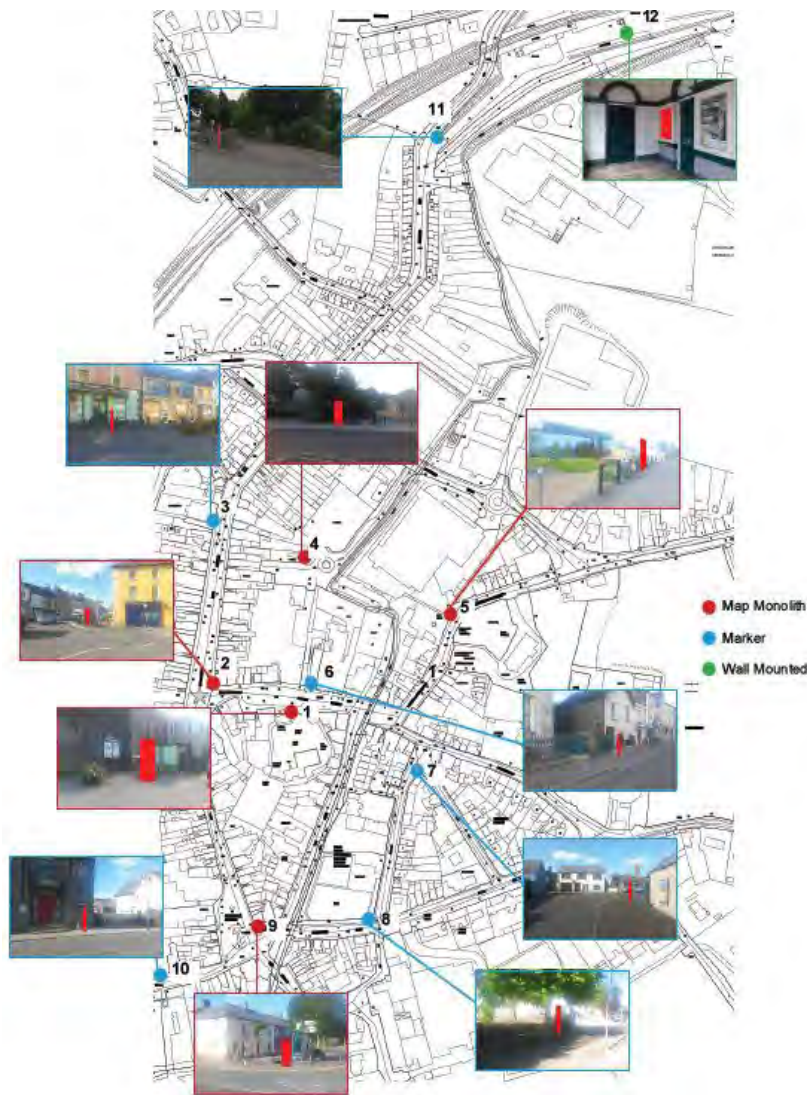
Outline content aligned with Ireland’s Ancient East themes is set out on **Sheet 3**. It is proposed that the development of the final stories and interpretive material is carried out in conjunction with local experts and interested local groups such as Roscrea Heritage Society and contributors to the Roscrea online heritage resource. The design of the signage allows for many of the other stories and places of the town to be shared with visitors. There are also potential links with the wider Butler Trail given the family’s links with the town.

All interpretive content in relation to the properties under their management will need to be approved in advance by the OPW.

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### 7.3 Where will the signs go?

Following an analysis of arrival points and destinations, the layout of the town, and the key features of interest for the visitor, 10 key locations have been identified that would be appropriate for the locating of new pillar and monolith signs. A larger scale map showing proposed locations is shown on **Sheet 7**.



An Archaeological Assessment is underway and detailed locations are subject to final approval by the Office of Public Works, detailed underground services check and adjustments to align with any planned public realm works.

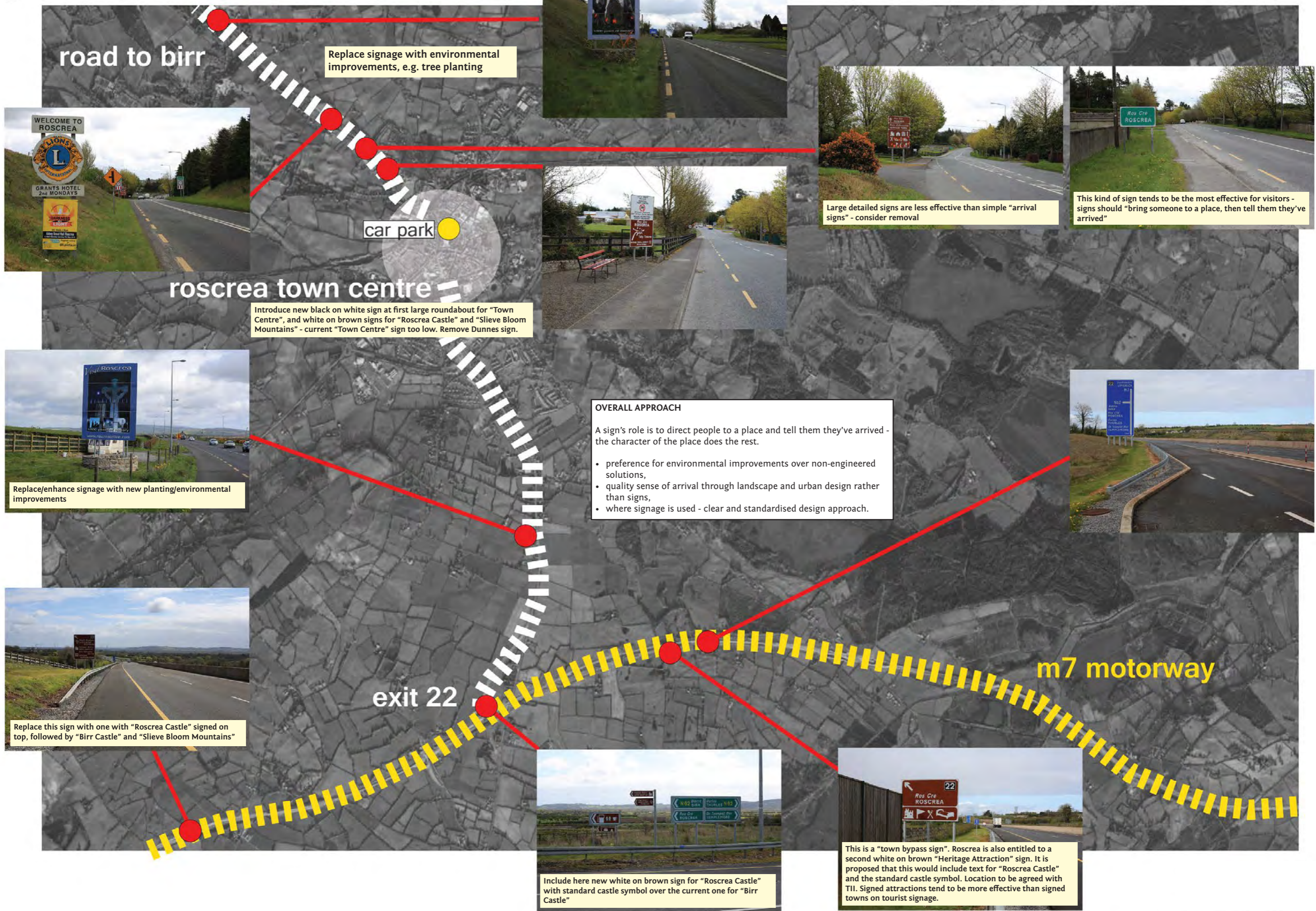
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**Sheets 1-9**



# getting to roscrea SHEET 1

Note: all strategy recommendations are subject to detailed locating/removal and design of signs in line with traffic management requirements, underground services and County Council engineer's approval.



road to birr

Replace signage with environmental improvements, e.g. tree planting



Large detailed signs are less effective than simple "arrival signs" - consider removal

This kind of sign tends to be the most effective for visitors - signs should "bring someone to a place, then tell them they've arrived"



car park



roscrea town centre

Introduce new black on white sign at first large roundabout for "Town Centre", and white on brown signs for "Roscrea Castle" and "Slieve Bloom Mountains" - current "Town Centre" sign too low. Remove Dunnes sign.

**OVERALL APPROACH**  
 A sign's role is to direct people to a place and tell them they've arrived - the character of the place does the rest.

- preference for environmental improvements over non-engineered solutions,
- quality sense of arrival through landscape and urban design rather than signs,
- where signage is used - clear and standardised design approach.



Replace/enhance signage with new planting/environmental improvements



Replace this sign with one with "Roscrea Castle" signed on top, followed by "Birr Castle" and "Slieve Bloom Mountains"

exit 22

m7 motorway



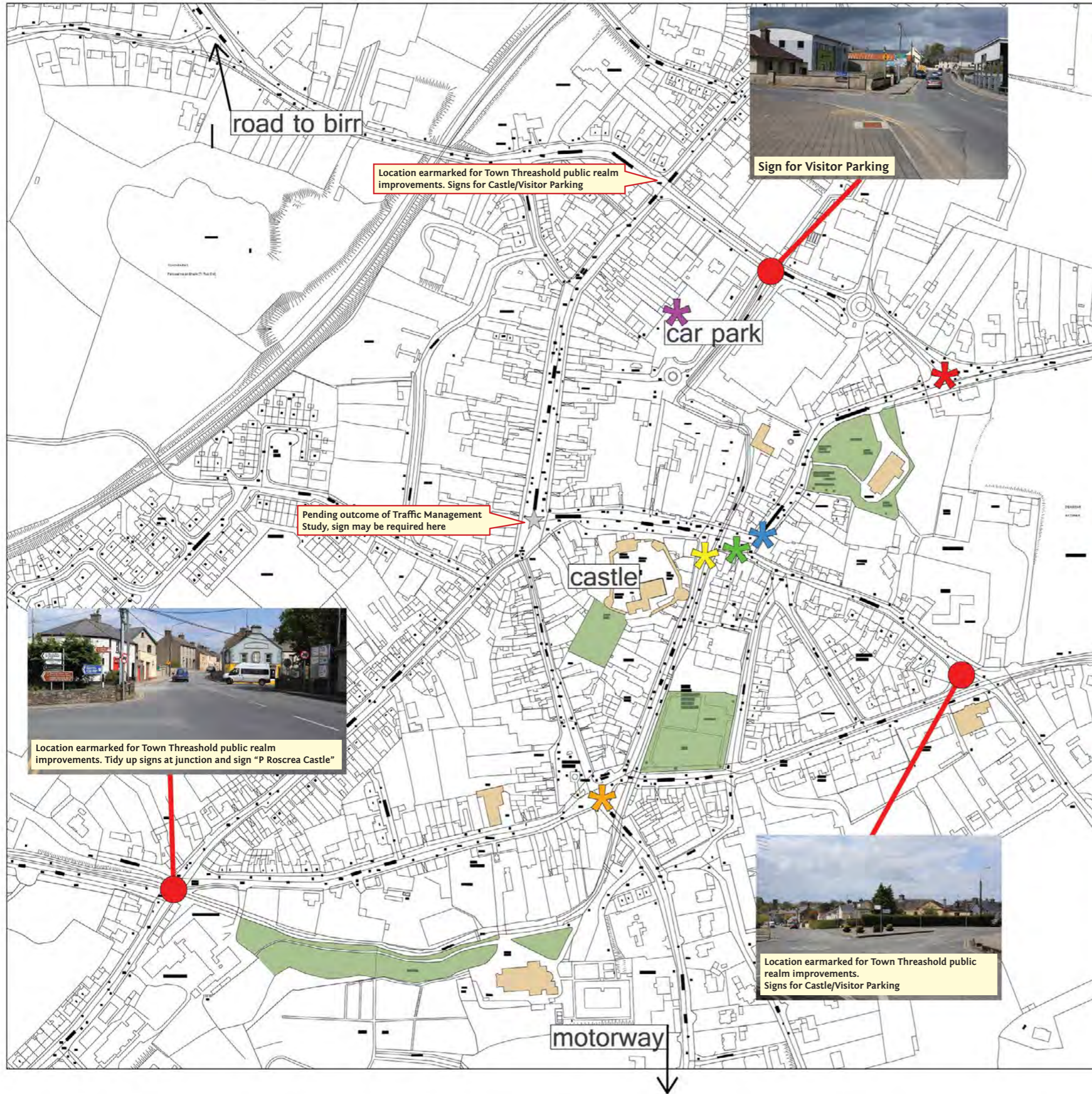
Include here new white on brown sign for "Roscrea Castle" with standard castle symbol over the current one for "Birr Castle"



This is a "town bypass sign". Roscrea is also entitled to a second white on brown "Heritage Attraction" sign. It is proposed that this would include text for "Roscrea Castle" and the standard castle symbol. Location to be agreed with TII. Signed attractions tend to be more effective than signed towns on tourist signage.

# Proposed road sign locations within town pending outcomes of Town Traffic Management Strategy

Note: all strategy recommendations are subject to detailed locating/removal and design of signs in line with traffic management requirements, underground services and County Council engineer's approval.



First experience of town from motorway; town centre sign difficult to see, insert "P Roscrea Castle" sign - direct traffic left/right in line with Traffic Management Strategy recommendations. Further to more detailed street design assessment, consider walkability improvements in line with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.



Signage here to Visitor Parking/Castle Parking in line with Traffic Management Strategy. Further to more detailed street design assessment, consider walkability improvements in line with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.



Signage for Visitor Car Park in line with Traffic Management Strategy. Further to more detailed street design assessment, consider walkability improvements in line with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.



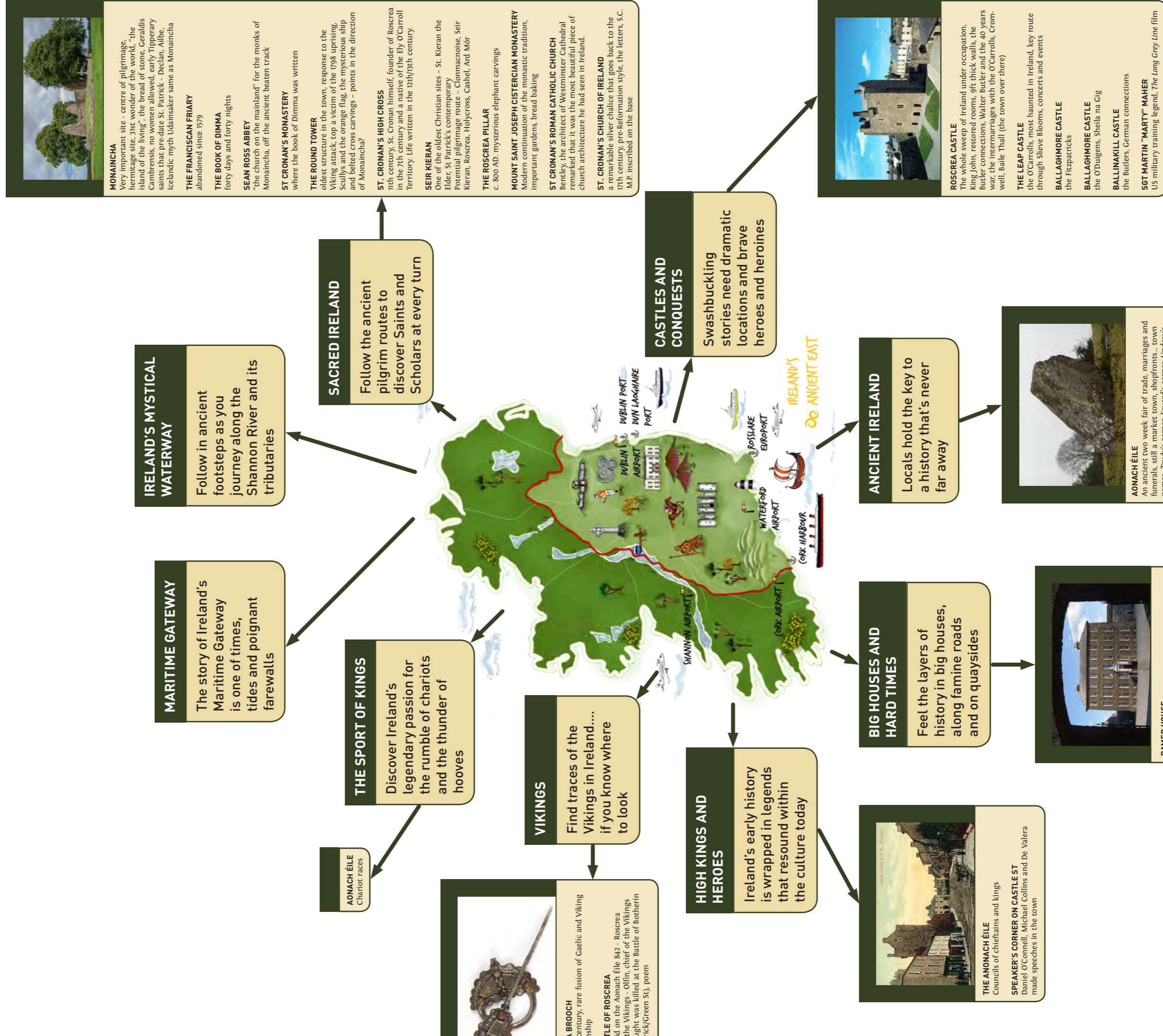
The Designer's Risk Assessment for this strategy identifies an existing risk at the crossing between round tower and St. Cronan's. Signage in this area may highlight this existing risk. Further to recommendations of Traffic Management Strategy currently underway, and more detailed street design assessment, consider applying Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets approaches in this location.



Location earmarked for Town Threshold public realm improvements. Sign for Visitor Parking



Area planned for public realm improvements - first impression of town from proposed visitor parking area. Removal of existing advertising signage from rear of buildings will improve visual quality of this area.



**MONAINCHA**  
Very important site - centre of pilgrimage, hermitage site, 31st wonder of the world, "the island of the living", the bread of stone, Geraldus Cambrensis, no women allowed, early Tipperary saints that pre-date St. Patrick - Declan, Ailbe, Icelandic myth Udaínsaker same as Monaincha

**THE FRANCISCAN FRIARY**  
abandoned since 1579

**THE BOOK OF DIMMA**  
forty days and forty nights

**SEAN ROSS ABBEY**  
"the church on the mainland" for the monks of Monaincha, off the ancient beaten track

**ST CRONAN'S MONASTERY**  
where the book of Dimma was written

**THE ROUND TOWER**  
oldest structure in the town, response to the Viking attack, top a victim of the 1798 uprising, Scullys and the orange flag, the mysterious ship and belted cross carvings - points in the direction of Monaincha?

**ST. CRONAN'S HIGH CROSS**  
11th century, St. Cronan himself, founder of Roscrea in the 7th century and a native of the Ely O'Carroll Territory. Life written in the 12th/13th century.

**SEIR KIERAN**  
One of the oldest Christian sites - St. Kieran the Elder, St. Patrick's contemporary  
Potential pilgrimage route - Clonmacnoise, Seir Kieran, Roscrea, Holycross, Cashel, Ard Mór

**THE ROSCREA PILLAR**  
c. 800 AD, mysterious elephant carvings

**MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CISTERCIAN MONASTERY**  
Modern continuation of the monastic tradition, important gardens, bread baking

**ST CRONAN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Bentley, the architect of Westminster Cathedral remarked that it was the most beautiful piece of church architecture he had seen in Ireland.

**ST. CRONAN'S CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
a remarkable silver chalice that goes back to the 17th century, pre-Reformation style, the letters, S.C. M.P. inscribed on the base



**ROSCREA CASTLE**  
The whole sweep of Ireland under occupation, King John, restored rooms, 9ft thick walls, the Butler connections, Walter Butler and the 40 years war, the intermarriages with the O'Carrolls, Cromwell, Baile Thall (the town over there)

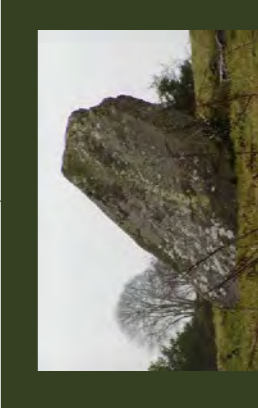
**THE LEAP CASTLE**  
the O'Carrolls, most haunted in Ireland, key route through Slieve Blooms, concerts and events

**BALLAGHMORE CASTLE**  
the Fitzpatricks

**BALLAGHMORE CASTLE**  
the O'Duigens, Shella na Gig

**BALLINAKILL CASTLE**  
the Butlers, German connections

**SGT MARTIN "MARTY" MAHER**  
US military training legend, *The Long Grey Line* film



**AONACH ÉILE**  
An ancient two week fair of trade, marriages and funerals, still a market town, shopfronts... town names: Trudy's corner, Fayerd's corner, Lindsey's corner

**TIMONEY STONES**

**THE SLI DÁLA**  
One of the great five roads of Ireland, pilgrimages, coming and going, Barnagatta (Carroll's Row) - coaches and horses ....

**ST. THOMAS SEAT**  
Ancient judgment seats of the Brehons of Ireland, the Ink Bottle

**STONE HEAD OF KILLAVILLA**  
Norman or ancient?



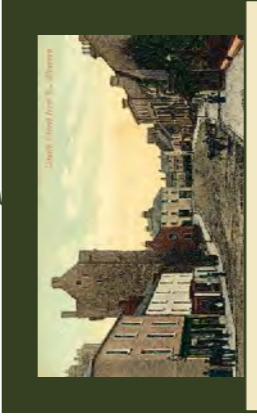
**DAMER HOUSE**  
Rare Queen Anne staircase, furnished rooms, rent collecting, children's interactive exhibit, John Damer owned whole town, family never lived in house

**GLOSTER HOUSE**  
The Medhops and the Lloyds, gardens

**FANCROFT MILL HOUSE AND GARDENS**

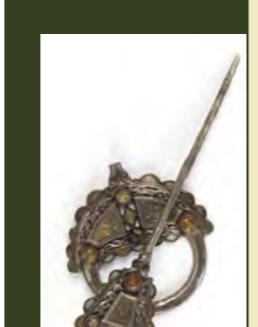
**ASHBURY HOUSE, TENNIS COURTS**

**DAISY BATES**  
Local emigrant to Australia - chronicler of Aboriginal culture



**THE ANONACH ÉILE**  
Councils of chieftains and kings

**SPEAKER'S CORNER ON CASTLE ST**  
Daniel O'Connell, Michael Collins and De Valera made speeches in the town



**BROOCH**  
5th century, rare fusion of Gaelic and Viking ship

**TITLE OF ROSCREA**  
found on the Aonach Éile 842 - Roscrea the Vikings - Oflin, chief of the Vikings might was killed at the Battle of Botherin (Green St), poem

# Roscrea

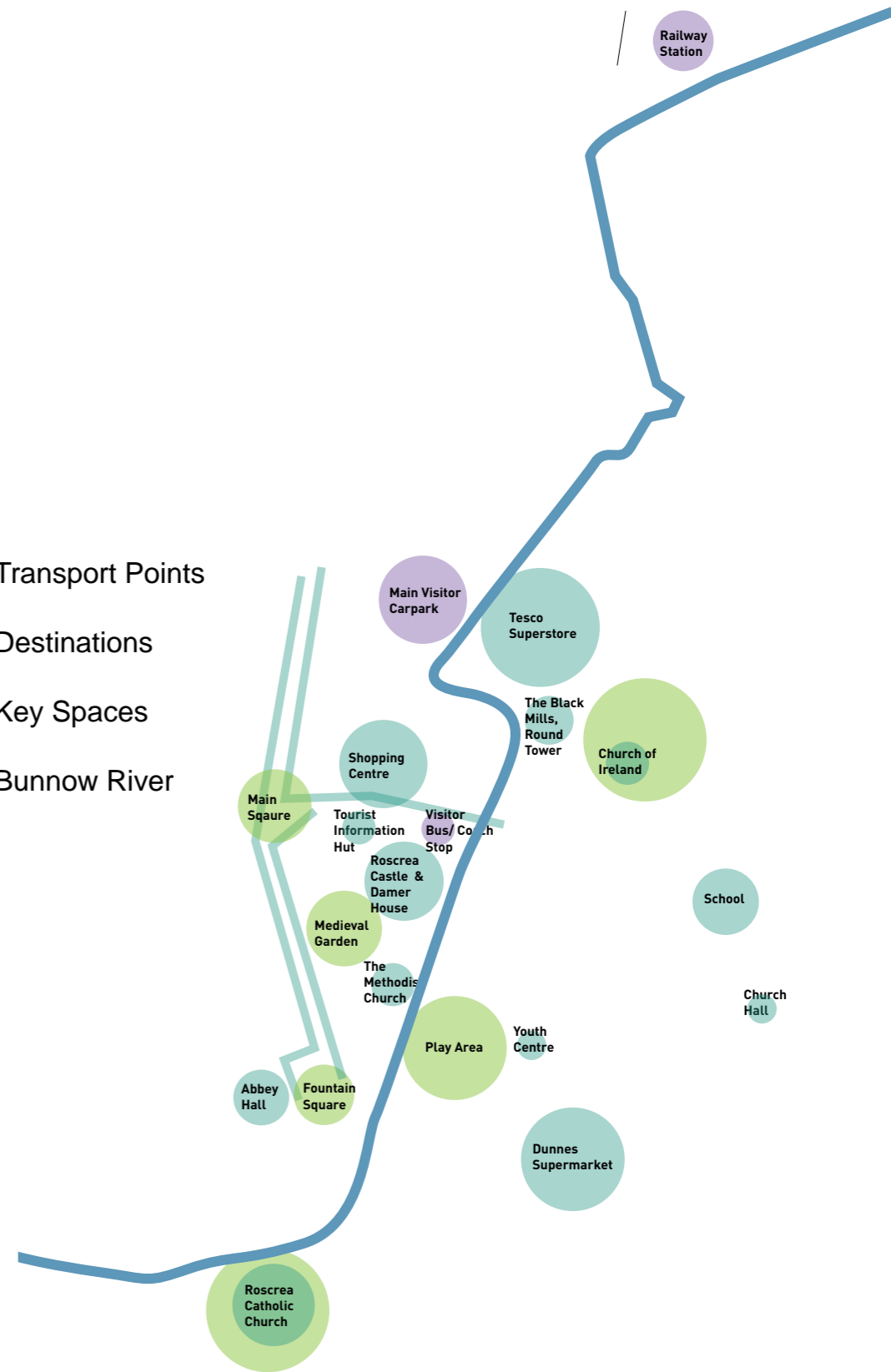
## Route Analysis

Decision Points and key destinations

- Vehicle Town Entry Points
- Vehicle Decision Points
- Pedestrian Decision Points
- Bunnow River

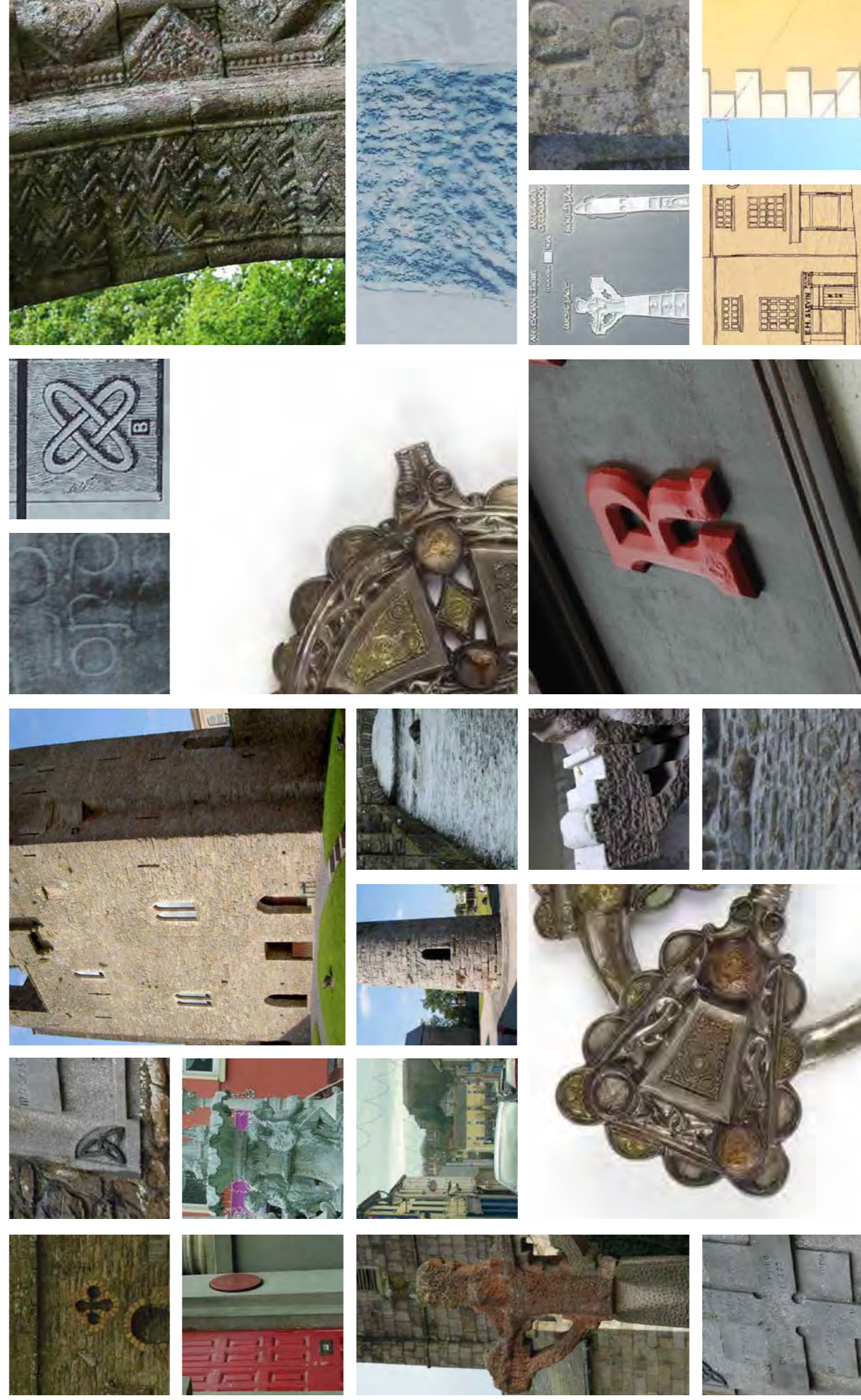


- Transport Points
- Destinations
- Key Spaces
- Bunnow River



Design inspiration to be referenced in the sign solutions

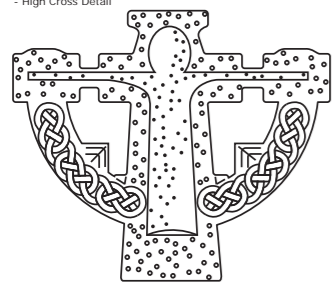
- 1. Ancient Roscrea
- 2. Monastic Heritage
- 3. Architectural and Industrial Heritage



# Roscrea

## Sign Family

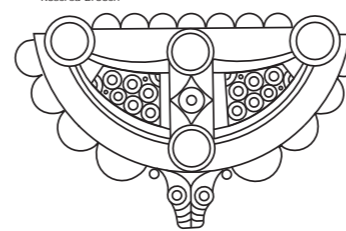
Theme (Monastic Heritage)  
- High Cross Detail



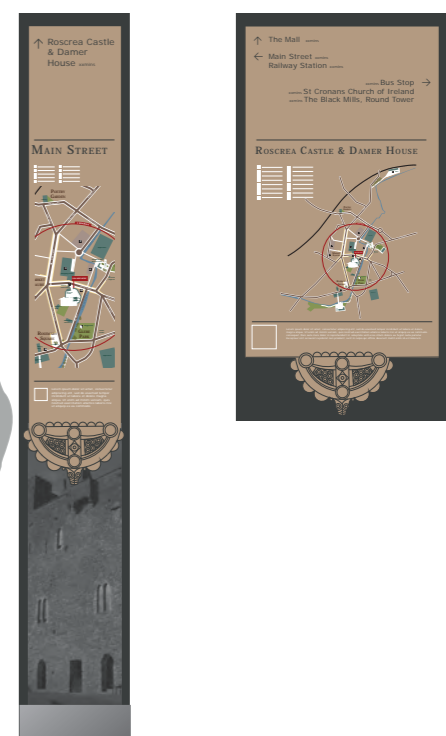
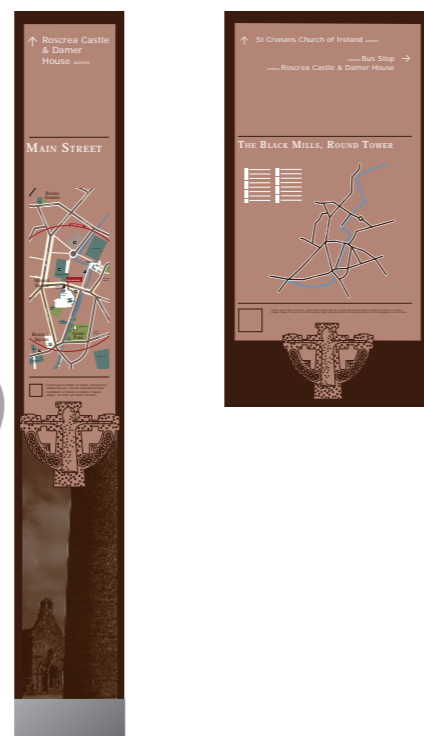
Colour Palette  
- Option 1



Theme (Ancient Roscrea)  
- Roscrea Brooch



Colour Palette  
- Option 2



● Sign Type 1  
Map Monolith

● Sign Type 2  
Marker

● Sign Type 3  
Wall Mounted

Sign Type 4  
Fingerpost

● Sign Type 1  
Map Monolith

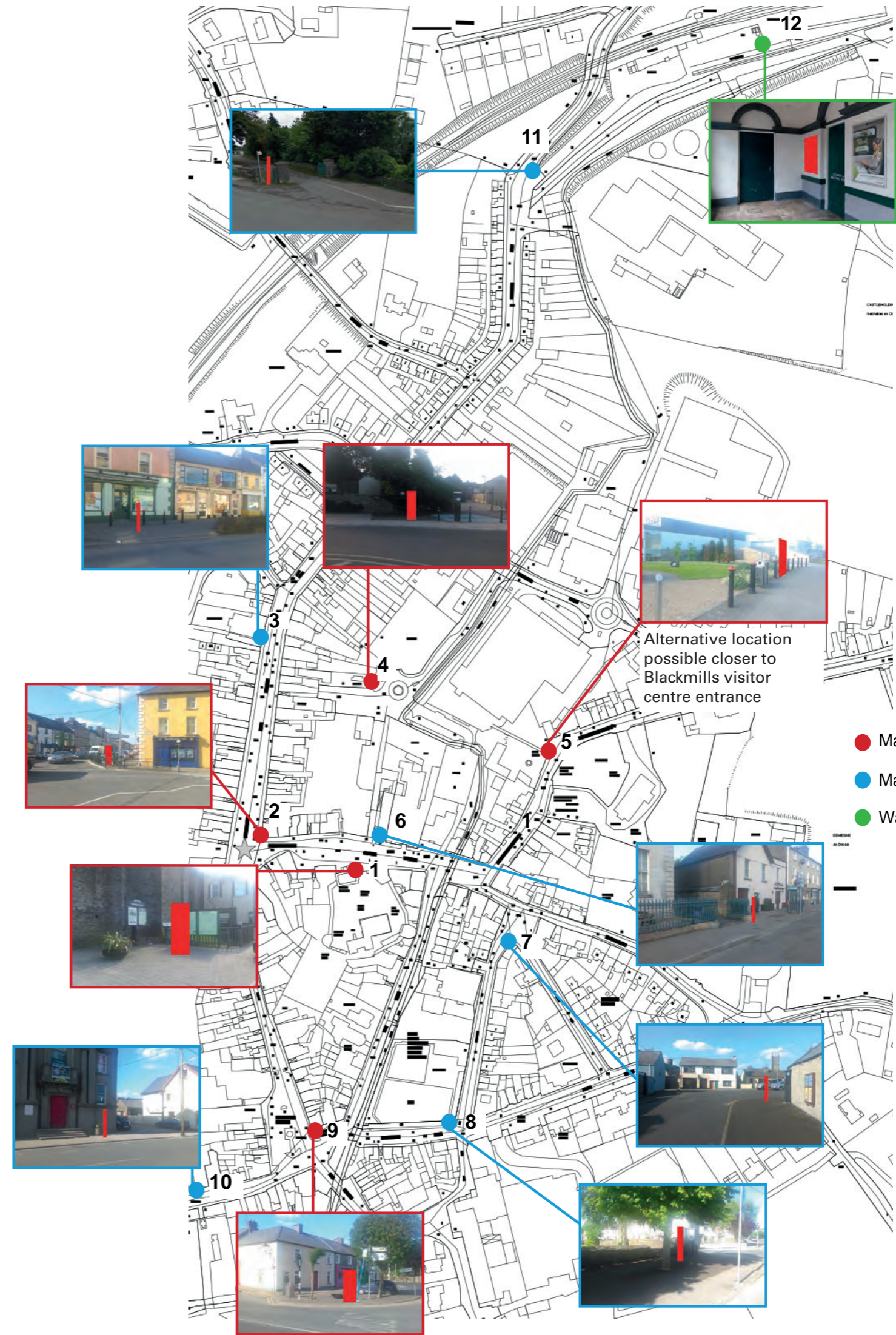
● Sign Type 2  
Marker

● Sign Type 3  
Wall Mounted

Sign Type 4  
Fingerpost

# Roscrea

## Sign Positioning










Proposed Sign Positioning. Locations subject to detailed positioning in line with traffic management requirements, underground services and agreement with the Office of Public Works, Irish Rail and Tipperary County Council

# Roscrea

Pedestrian mapping for the signs

Key

-  Visitor Parking
-  Playground
-  Bus Stop
-  Visitor Toilets
-  Tourist Information Centre
-  Railway Station
-  Retail & Refreshments





# Roscrea

Graphic Palette

## Georgia

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPS  
TUVWXYZ  
0123456789

## Verdana

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPS  
TUVWXYZ  
0123456789



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**APPENDIX A: Workshop Outcomes Report**



## Roscrea Signage and Way-finding Strategy

### **Workshop Outcomes Report**

May 11th 2016



Table of Contents

- 1      Background ..... 2**
- 1.1    Introduction ..... 2
- 1.2    Workshop Attendees ..... 2
- 2      Roscrea – what stories does it have to tell visitors?..... 3**
- 2.1    The mind map..... 3
- 3      Mapping some locations where stories are revealed ..... 5**
- 4      Next Steps ..... 8**

# 1 Background

## 1.1 Introduction

The Roscrea Enhancement Committee and Tipperary County Council are working on a new signage and way-finding strategy for Roscrea. This plan will include new ways for visitors to find their way to the town, new ways for people to find their way around the town, and new ways to access the stories the town has to tell.

A public workshop was held Thursday 28th April, 6.30pm at the Muintir na Tíre hall on Chapel Lane, Roscrea where participants were invited to share thoughts and ideas in relation to the town's signage and signage to the town.

## 1.2 Workshop Attendees

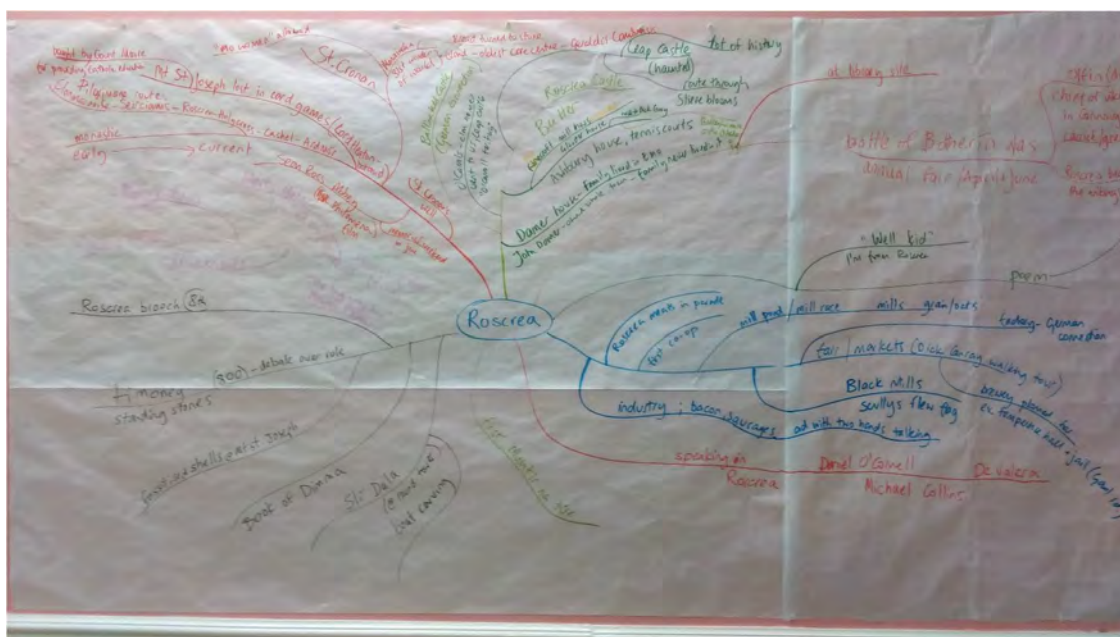
Name	ORGANISATION
Eileen Doherty	Tidy Towns/Enhancement Committee
PJ Wright	Tidy Towns
Caroline Creamer	Ard Ross Residents
Anne Keevey	Age Friendly Roscrea
Jacinta Rigney	OPW Roscrea
James Byrne	Gleann Glas
Pamela Aitken	Roscrea Heritage Society
Bri Greene	Roscrea Heritage Society
Sandra Smith	North Tipperary Leader Partnership
Mary Haugh	Youthreach
Trisha Purcell	North Tipperary Leader Partnership
Rita McLoughney	St. Cronans Centre
Brian Redmond	Roscrea Heritage Society
John Hanamy	Age Friendly Roscrea/Roscrea Credit Union
Marion Carey	Tipperary County Council
Seamus Browne	Roscrea Chamber of Commerce
Marie Warren	Sli Dala B&B

**Workshop facilitator:** Deirdre Black, *Deirdre Black Associates*

## 2 Roscrea – what stories does it have to tell visitors?

### 2.1 The mind map

Responding to the question of “*what stories does Roscrea have to tell its visitors?*” the participants voiced their ideas and these were captured graphically on the mind map.



The following is a summary of the topics of discussion during the 30-minute mind-mapping exercise:

#### Ancient Roscrea

- Roscrea Brooch (8<sup>th</sup> century)
- Timoney Standing Stones (c. 800 AD) – some debate over their role
- Fossilized shells at Mount St. Joseph
- Book of Dimma
- Slí Dála
- The Round tower and its boat carving
- Roscrea defeated the Vikings - Olfen, chief of the Vikings in Connaught was killed at the Battle of Botherín Glas (Carrick/Green St), there's a poem about it

#### Some notable Roscrea people

- Daisy Bates – heroine of the aborigines (Australia)
- Tess Truman (US president's wife)
- Barack Obama relatives
- Marty Maher – famous soldier, trained US presidents, *The Long Grey Line* (film)

### **Monastic heritage**

- From early to present
- St Cronan, St. Cronan's well
- Monaincha – 31<sup>st</sup> wonder of the world, on island, bread turned to stone, oldest care centre, mentioned by Geraldus Cambrensis, no women allowed
- Pilgrimage route – Clonmacnoise, Seirciarais, Roscrea, Holycross, Cashel, Ard Mór
- Sean Ross Abbey (Philomena film), memorial weekend in June
- Mount St Joseph, lost in card game by Lord Heaton (botanist), bought by Count Moore to provide Catholic education

### **Big houses and families**

- Damer house – family lived in Emo, John Damer owned whole town, family never lived in house
- Roscrea Castle and Butler connection
- Leap Castle – O'Carroll clan territory, family went to US, castle haunted, route through Slieve Blooms
- Ballinakill Castle (German connection)
- Fancroft mill house and gardens
- Glouster House
- Ashbury house, tennis courts
- Ballaghamore Castle (Sheila na Gig)

### **Politics and civic movements**

- Daniel O'Connell, Michael Collins and De Valera made speeches in the town
- First Muintir na Tire established in Roscrea, first co-op

### **Agricultural and industrial heritage**

- Roscrea bacon and sausages (ad with two hens talking)
- Roscrea meats in parade in town
- Mill pond and mill race (grain and oats)
- Fair/markets (talk to Dick Conroy)
- Brewery planned for ex. Temperance hall/goal (Goal Rd.)
- Factory – German connection

### **Roscrea expressions**

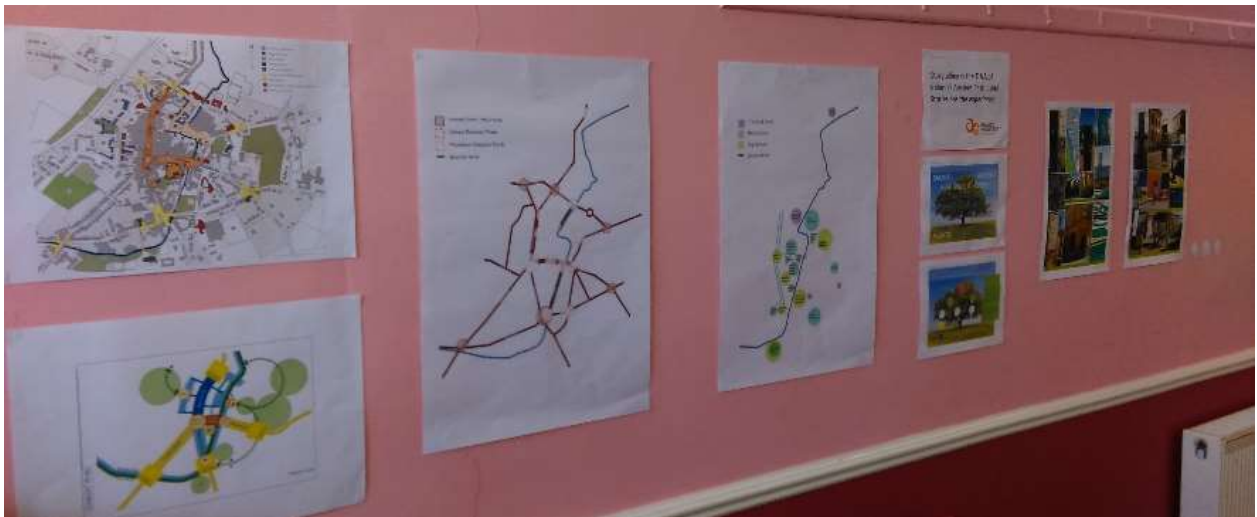
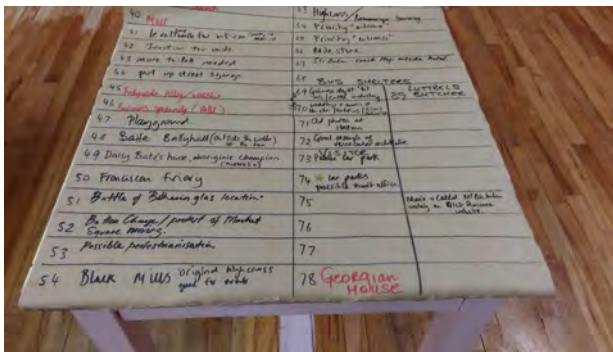
- "Well Kid"

### **General notes:**

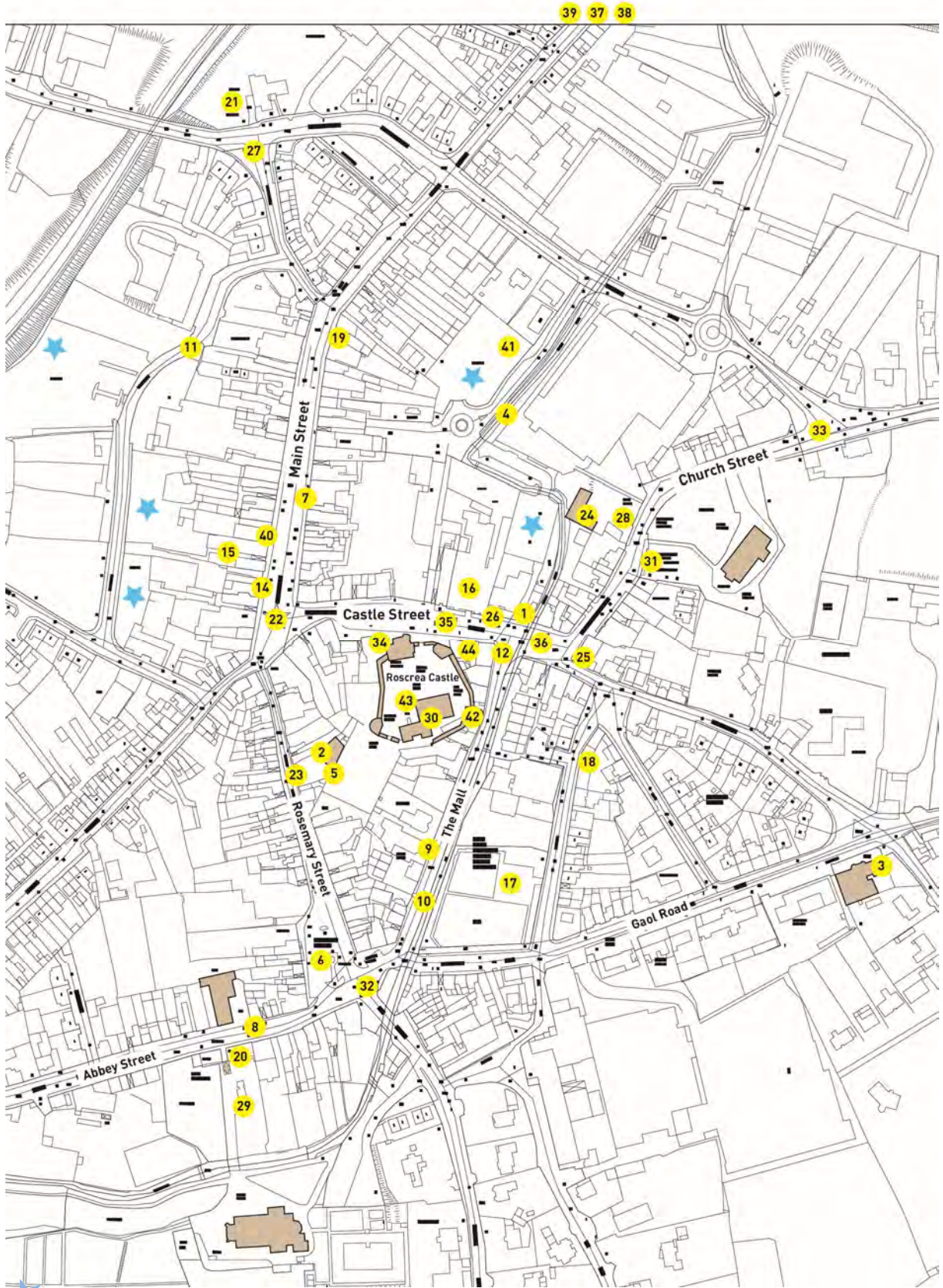
- Huge amount of reference information in the many published documents on Roscrea's heritage, speak to George Cunningham
- Talk to Dick Conroy for further information
- Marie and Cathal McNicholas working on Visit Roscrea website

### 3 Mapping some locations where stories are revealed

After the mind map, the workshop participants looked at areas within Roscrea from the point of view of the visitor, in terms of visitor arrival points, visitor journeys and ways for visitors to access the stories of the town.







★ Existing car parks

New number	
1	Masonic Hall
2	Quaker's Hall – link from Rosemary St to Castle St?
3	Former Gaol/Temperance Hall - future distillery
4	Mill race/Mill pond
5	Possible museum?
6	Horse fairs in the past
7	Involve butchers in Roscrea bacon/sausage story telling?
8	Possible bus drop off, need nearby toilets
9	Methodist church
10	The Mall
11	Level looped walk for infirm – Gantly rd-Main St
12	Junction too wide
13	More toilets needed
14	Put up street signage
15	Freshfield's alley/Walsh's
16	Business opportunity (Hotel)
17	Playground
18	Ballyhall (outside the walls of the town)
19	Daisy Bates' house Aboriginie champion (Australia)
20	Franciscan Friary
21	Battle of Botherín Glas location
22	Baton charge – protest of Market Square moving
23	Possible pedestrianisation
24	Black Mills – original high cross – good for events
25	"Speaker's Corner" – O'Connell, De Valera, Michael Collins made speeches
26	Mile marker
27	Daisy Bates' garden
28	Round Tower
29	Geneology Centre
30	Damer House – location for Roscrea brooch replica?
31	High cross/Romanesque doorway
32	Priority "town entrance"
33	Priority "town entrance"
34	Milestone
35	Slí Dála – coach stop outside hotel
36	Bus shelters
37	Train station - Guinness depot until 70's/cattle industry
38	Weddings and music at the train station/funerals/films delivered
39	Put up old photos at station
40	Good example of vernacular architecture
41	Possible visitor car park
42	Possible Tourist Office
43	Georgian house
44	Luttrel's Butcher

## **4 Next Steps**

The outcomes of the workshop have been shared with all participants and with Tipperary County Council. These will now be incorporated into the Signage and Way-finding strategy being drawn up by Deirdre Black Associates.

A full draft of the Signage Strategy will be presented in Damer House Roscrea in June, and all participants will be invited when the date is fixed.

Many thanks to all who took the time to take part in the event.