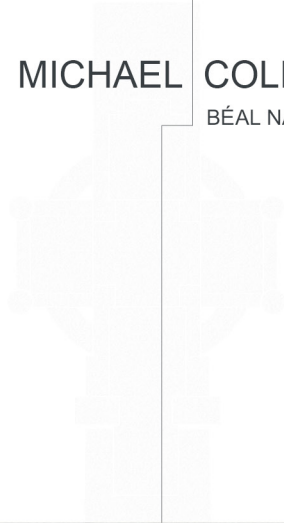


# MICHAEL COLLINS CENTENARY

BÉAL NA BLÁTH, COUNTY CORK, 2022.



# HISTORIC ANALYSIS

Michael Collins was one of the most influential individuals in Ireland's quest for freedom. Known as *'The Big Fella'*, he was a soldier, a rebel, a politician and a revolutionary hero. Collins' funeral on the 28th of August 1922 drew as many as 500,000 people from all walks of life, who lined the streets of Dublin to honour his memory - testament to the respect and admiration Collins had gained in striving for Irish Independence throughout his life.

The ambush site at Béal na Bláth is one of the most famous and emotive sites in Irish history. The refurbishment of the monument site aims to reveal the site's heritage value in the most sensitive and appropriate manner while conserving its authenticity.



Michael Collins met with local officers in the Eldon Hotel, just hours before the fatal gunshot wound. From here the convoy began their return journey to Cork city, detouring to avoid the many roadblocks that had been put in place by the IRA.

• Skibbereen



Rosscarbery



On the journey out, Collins met with some of his old friends for lunch. On the return journey he did not stay long, but visited his nieces on Pearse Street where he bought a newspaper in the McCarthy's paper shop, before proceeding on to Bandon.



Sam's Cross  
Woodfield

Collins stopped at the Four Alls Public House to have a drink with his brother before continuing along his journey. When leaving, and after getting into the car, it is alleged that his brother Johnny said, *'You'd better put up that hood - you could be shot before night!'*

Clonakilty



had  
ends  
rney  
sited  
and  
local  
efore



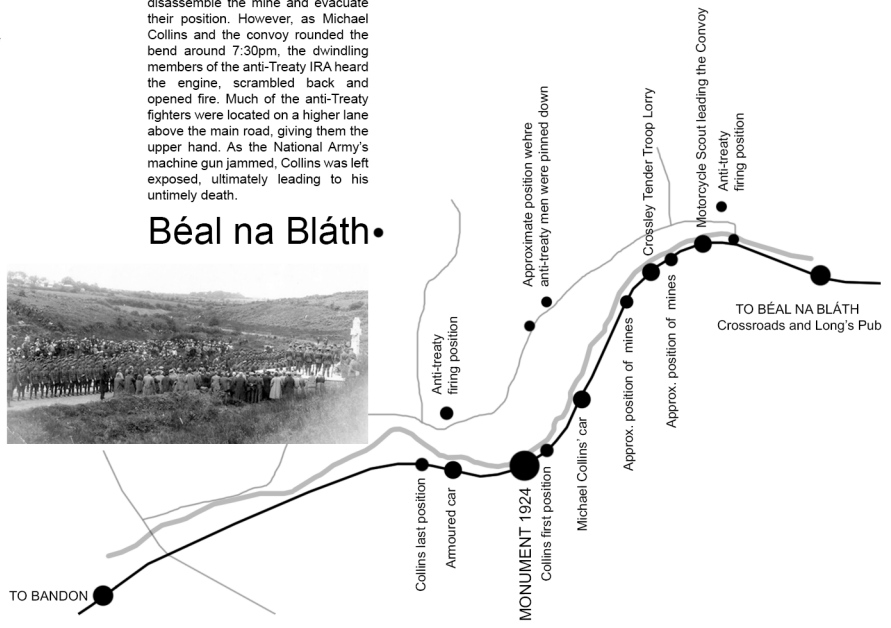
## Bandon

The convoy stopped in Lee's Hotel (present day Munster Arms Hotel) for tea to meet his Officer Commanding Seán Hales. It was from here that a message had been received by the ambush party that Collins was spotted in Bandon, but it was deemed unlikely that the convoy would return to Cork via Béal na Bláth. An image of Collins, alongside his comrade Emmet Dalton, was taken outside the hotel when they were departing by vehicle. This is the last known image captured of Michael Collins.

## Ballinascarty

As it was late in the evening, the ambush party had begun to disassemble the mine and evacuate their position. However, as Michael Collins and the convoy rounded the bend around 7:30pm, the dwindling members of the anti-Treaty IRA heard the engine, scrambled back and opened fire. Much of the anti-Treaty fighters were located on a higher lane above the main road, giving them the upper hand. As the National Army's machine gun jammed, Collins was left exposed, ultimately leading to his untimely death.

## Béal na Bláth



# DESIGN STRATEGY

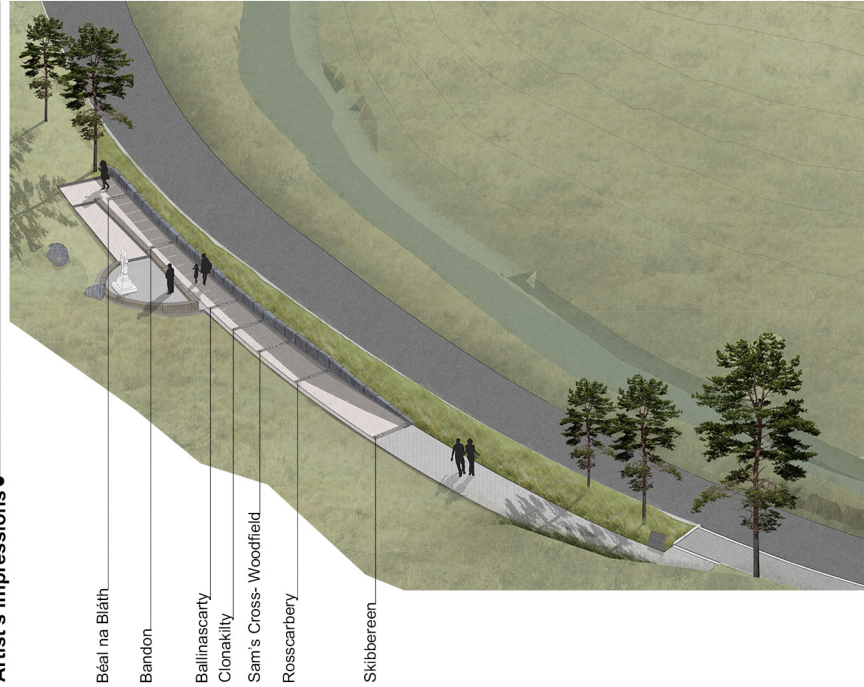
The overall refurbishment of the site encompasses the retention of the memorial cross and surrounding landscape in order to conserve and enhance the overall heritage curtilage of the area.

The creation of a new universally accessible path leading to the monument aligns with the original country road as it was when Michael Collins died in an ambush here at Béal na Bláth on 22 August 1922. Located along this path are slate tiles with inscriptions of West Cork placenames. These have been carefully selected to connect with his early years and final, fateful journey and are placed in proportion to the geographical distances between them.



Site Plan ●

## Artist's Impressions ●



Béal na Bláth  
Bandon  
Ballinascarty  
Clonakilty  
Sam's Cross- Woodfield  
Rosscarbery  
Skibbereen

Hugging this new path are a series of large stones of Valentia slate standing as a permanent tribute to his life. There are a series of notches taken from the tops of these stones and as the August sun sets, shafts of light shine through these notches, and move along the path to a turning point beyond the original monument cross.



Scots Pine trees bookend the ramp and are an old Irish symbol of renewal and rebirth. Additionally, Yew hedging planted throughout the scheme represents death and the afterlife. Finally the old white marker stands in its original position near where Michael Collins was mortally wounded. The sensitive conservation design approach to the overall site aims to safeguard this nationally significant area by ensuring all new work is reversible for future generations.



# CONSTRUCTION

Prior to any construction taking place, a multidisciplinary team was assembled to analyse and review how best to conserve and enhance the site for future visitors. A subsequent Design Code was established to ensure that any new design would be appropriate and sensitive in preserving this nationally significant historical landmark.

The construction of the Michael Collins Centenary Project commenced in June 2022. The materials chosen are sensitive and appropriate to the context and aim to give the visitor a more authentic experience, highlighting the movements of Michael Collins and his convoy on that fateful date in August 1922, when he was shot and killed.



● Monument Pre-Construction

● Construction Process





Michael Collins Centenary Project, Béal na Bláth  
completed in August of 2022

---

This project was undertaken by  
Cork County Council in consultation with the Michael Collins Béal na Bláth Committee  
to commemorate the centenary of Michael Collins's death.  
Supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media,  
the Department of Defence and the Department of the Taoiseach.

Designed by  
Cork County Council, Capital Projects Implementation Unit Architect's Team  
& Scott Tallon Walker Architects