

**Archaeological Assessment Report to accompany a Part 10 Planning
Application for a road improvement scheme on the R585 at Dromdeegy,
Co. Cork.**

For

Cork County Council

By

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INTRODUCTION

Cork County Council has identified the need to carry out road safety and realignment improvement works to the R585 regional road at Dromdeegy, Dunmanway, Co. Cork (Figure 1 & 2).

The existing road is considered substandard because of its inadequate width and poor horizontal and vertical alignment geometry.

The realignment works will run over a length of approximately 410metres with tie-in to the existing road at both ends. As well as improving the alignment, the overall cross section width of the road is to be improved thereby providing improved driver visibility (Figure 4).

The proposed overall road improvement works will consist of the following:

- Alteration to existing road alignment to improve road safety.
- Site clearance.
- Relocation of overhead line.
- Constructing earth berms and fencing.
- Signage, road lining & road studs.
- All ancillary works required to deliver the proposed scheme

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report is prepared as an archaeological assessment to evaluate the likely impacts of the proposal on the potential archaeological resource of the area.

STUDY AREA

The project study area is located circa 6.5km north of Dunmanway Town Centre in the townlands of Dromdeegy and Cooranig. (See Figure 1 & 2) The R585 is a regional road which runs from Kealkill Village to its Junction with the N22, National Primary Road, east of Crookstown in the Municipal District (MD) area of Dunmanway.

The project will on lands in the ownership of the Local Authority



Figure 1. Site Location

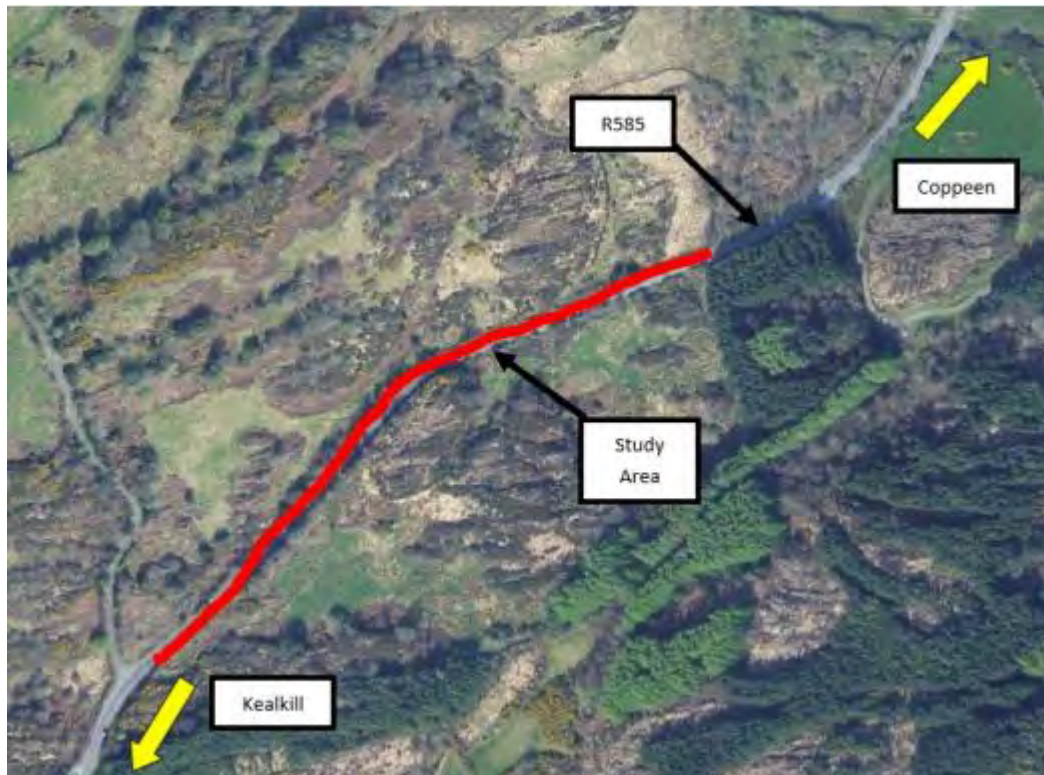


Figure 2. Aerial view of the proposed re-alignment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

In the area under review the R585 runs westwards from Shanlaragh Crossroads towards the mountainous pass known as the Cousane Gap. Before entering the upland area of the Sheehy mountains, the road runs through undulating terrain where several rocky ridges are interspersed with poorly drained low-lying hollows, streams and some areas of improved agricultural land. The Caha River flows from northwest – southeast to the east of the site under review.

The length of road scheduled for improvement (Plates 1-2) runs slightly uphill from east to west through rocky outcrops (Plate 3) interspersed with boggy hollows. A stream flows from west to east on the southern side of the road and this stream has been piped and culverted in recent years (Plates 4-5). A rock outcrop on the southern side of the road has been cutaway (Plate 6) and the rock derived from this cutting has been spread over the surface to create a hardcore layer (Plates 7-8). The proposed road realignment will utilise this layer of stone as its foundation and therefore no significant sub-surface excavations are likely to occur or be warranted in association with the project.



Plate 1. Looking E along the R585. The proposed work is largely to the right of the photos where the red and white plastic barrier stands



Plate 2. Looking W along the R585 towards the junction of the L85422 (right background)



Plate 3. One of several rock outcrops adjoining the roadside



Plate 4. A stream flows on the southern side of the proposed realignment



Plate 5. The stream has in part been piped.



Plate 6. Cutaway rock outcrop at the south-eastern side to facilitate the road realignment



Plate 7



Plate 8

Plate 7 & 8. Rock derived from cutting of the nearby outcrops has been spread over the surface to create a hardcore layer

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE IN THE VICINITY

There is no known Recorded Monument within the boundary of the road-take nor in the adjoining lands. There are several archaeological monuments in the wider vicinity, these are shown on Figure 3) they are also listed in the table below. Each entry contains, the Recorded Monument number, classification, a brief description of the monument and the distance to the nearest point of the proposed road works.

The monuments are described as follows; the description are largely derived from *Archaeological Inventory of County Cork* (Power *et al.* 1994).

Monument ID	Classification	Townland	Distance from the road	Description
CO093-044	Ringfort	DROMDEEGY	0.6km to the north-west	Circular area (31m N-S; 32m E-W) defined by stone bank (H 1.4m). Bank spread widely; line of contiguous orthostats along centre line bank to W. Interior used as dumping ground for field clearance debris. Circular hut site (CO093-044001-) in SW quadrant (diam. 5m) defined by stone bank (H 0.5m).
CO093-044001	Hut-site	DROMDEEGY	0.6km to the north-west	Hut site recorded within ringfort (CO093-044). Circular hut site in SW quadrant (diam. 5m) defined by stone bank (H 0.5m)
CO093-045	Redundant record	DROMDEEGY	0.6km to the north	Listed as a 'potential site – aerial photo' in the SMR (1988) and as a 'natural feature' in the RMP (1998). This

				is natural out-cropping rock and as such does not constitute an archaeological monument
CO093-045	Barrow	DROMLOUGH	0.5km to the north	In rough grazing 54m E of Caha River. Circular area (6.7m N-S; 6.6m E-W) enclosed by fosse (D 0.45m) with external earthen bank (H 0.40m). Entrance (Wth c.1m) with causeway across fosse at SE. Interior level with small depression (diam. 1m; D 0.25m) in SE quadrant.
CO093-047	Ringfort	DROMLOUGH	0.6km to the north-east	In pasture, atop crest of hillock. Circular area (23m N-S; 23.5m E-W) enclosed by earthen stone-faced bank (int. H 0.3m; ext. H 2m). Large slabs, set on edge, act as external facing
CO093-069	Ringfort	COORANIG	0.7km to the south-east	In pasture, on NW-facing slope. Circular area (29m N-S; 29m E-W) enclosed by low, broad-based bank of stone (H 0.9m); overgrown. Field fence running N-S crosses W half of interior.
CO093-068	Ringfort	COORANIG	1km to the south-west	In pasture, on W-facing slope. Circular area

				(33.5m N-S) enclosed by earthen bank (H 0.9m) N->S; scarp (H 0.5m) S->N; external fosse (D 0.4m) to NE. Shallow traces of fosse to E and SE. Break in bank to N (Wth 3.5m) and S (Wth 3.5m). Locally known as 'lios'
CO093-068	Redundant record	COORANIG	1.3km to the south-east	Listed as a 'potential site – aerial photo' in the SMR (1988) and as a 'natural feature' in the RMP (1998). This is natural feature and as such does not constitute an archaeological monument.
CO093-067	Standing stone	AN TÓCHAR	1.2km to the south-west	In pasture on NW-facing slope. Rectangular stone aligned NNE-SSW (H 1.27m; 0.9m x 0.3m).
CO093-040001	Redundant record	TULLAGH (Carbery East (W.D) By.)	1.3km to the north-west	Rock outcrop; sandstone.
CO093-040002	Fulacht fia	TULLAGH (Carbery East (W.D) By.)	1.3km to the north-west	Burnt material visible in section in bank of stream: discovered recently during land drainage.
CO093-042	Standing stone	FARRANNAHINEENY	1.3km to the north-west	In pasture on S-facing slope. Rectangular stone aligned ESE-WNW (H 1.1m; 1m x 0.25m).
CO093-041	Burial ground	FARRANNAHINEENY	1.43km to the north-west	Marked 'Kill Burial Gd. for Children' on OS

				6-inch map (1842). In scrub. Irregular area defined by overgrowth. Rock outcrop to S. No grave markers noted
CO093-041	Souterrain	KEELARAHEEN	1.4km to the south	Discovered October 1989 when roof of chamber collapsed. In pasture on S-facing slope. At least three earth-cut chambers arranged in linear pattern N-S.
CO093-035	Redundant record	MONEYREAGUE	1.5km to the west	Listed as a 'potential site – aerial photo' in the SMR (1988) and as a 'non-antiquity' in the RMP (1998). As a non-antiquity it does not constitute an archaeological monument.
CO093-036	Redundant record	MONEYREAGUE	1.6km to the north-west	Circular haggard to rear of old farmyard, small section of stone wall survives.

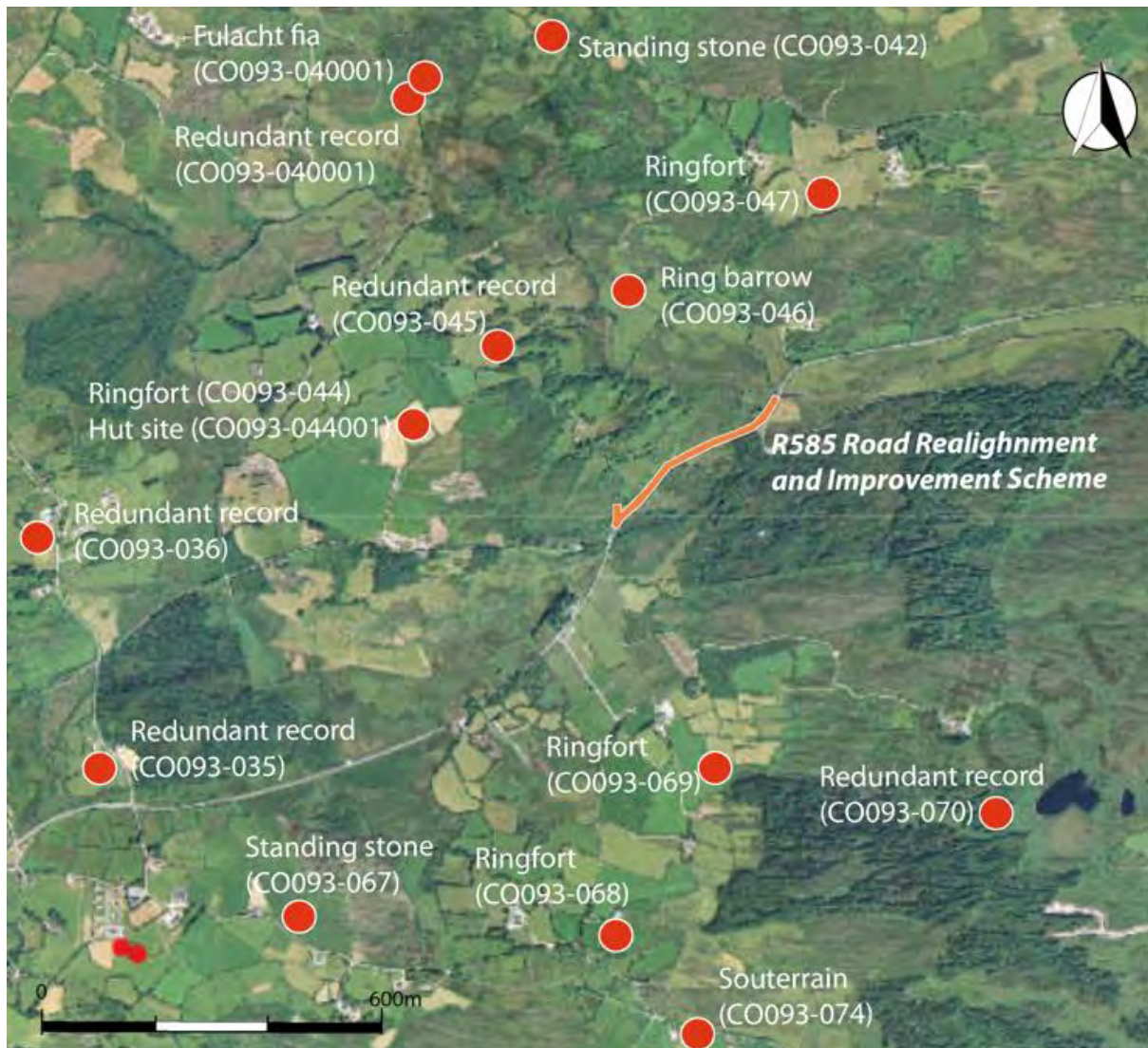


Figure 3. Archaeological site in the wider vicinity of the road; the red dots represent the location of each monument

GENERAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL OF THE AREA THROUGH WHICH THE R585 ROAD REALIGNMENT AND IMPROVEMENT SCHEME IS PROPOSED

The section of road proposed for realignment and improvement is located in an area of West Cork where archaeological sites and monuments are known, particularly those dating from the late prehistoric period (O'Brien 2012). While the development will not have any direct impact on known Recorded Monuments, the road is in an area of marginal agricultural land where rock outcrops and poorly drained hollows and streams characterise the landscape, such locations may contain sub-surface remains of Bronze Age *fulacht fiadh* or burnt mounds (Hawkes 2018). The nearest known *fulacht fiadh* is located 1.4km to the north of the

roadway in Tullagh townland (CO093-04002 on Figure 3; that site is apparent as a black spread of burnt material in the bank of a stream. The stream banks on the site under review were examined and no such material was identified.

Prehistoric monuments of a funerary/ ritual nature are also recorded in the wider area – these include a ring barrow (CO093-046) and two standing stones (CO093-042 and CO093-067), Figure 3.

Ring-barrows are a type of monument which mainly fulfilled a funerary role but also one related to ceremony and ritual. They were constructed by creating a circular ditch to define an intended burial or ritual space and were predominantly used during the Bronze Age and Iron Age but some have been dated to earlier and later periods in Ireland (Waddell 2000; O'Brien 2012; McGarry 2009). The manner in which human remains were deposited in ring-ditches varies considerably, however, burials comprising both inhumations and cremations have been found, with the latter representing the dominant burial rite (O'Sullivan and Downey 2012).

The spread of human settlement across the south-west region after 1500 BC is reflected in the proliferation of new types of ritual monument, many of which were built with free-standing upright stones. These are different to wedge tombs of the Early Bronze Age in terms of ritual space however their use retained elements of the older religious beliefs. Collectively known as the 'stone circle complex' they include two types of axial stone circles, as well as short stone rows, stone pairs, single monoliths, boulder burials and radial cairns.

Two standing stones are recorded in the wider vicinity of the road; one situated 1.4km to the north in the townland of Farrannahineeny (CO093-042), and the other 1.3km to the south-west in the townland of Tóchar (CO093-067).

Single standing stones are numerous in the Cork region, with 1,372 examples recorded (O'Brien 2012, 178). They are particularly numerous in areas of West Cork, where stone circles and rows also occur.

The most numerous monuments in the immediate landscape of the road in question is the Ringfort, of which there are four recorded examples (CO093-044; CO093-069; CO093-047 and CO093-068), Figure 3. Situated on elevated south-facing slopes, a favoured

landscape location. Ringforts, generally date to the Early Medieval period (AD 400-1100) and are usually situated on gentle slopes with good views of the surrounding countryside and although they tend to have a dispersed distribution in the landscape, they are occasionally found in close proximity (Stout 1997).

Ringforts are enclosed spaces defined by its principal enclosing feature, which was most commonly a *ráth or ringfort*—a perimeter earthen bank with an external ditch (Kelly 1997, 363–4). Stone walls were also used as an enclosing element, and in Old Irish such stone-built enclosures were known as a *caiseal* (see CO093-069; *Cooranig townland*). Whether we term them ringforts, raths, cashels or settlement enclosures, it is clear that tens of thousands survive in the modern landscape even though many have been partially or completely destroyed since the 1960s and often the only indication of the former presence of a ringfort is preserved in placename elements such as *Dún, Rath, Cashel* or *Lios*.

Structure often found within early medieval ringforts are souterrains, one of which is recorded 1.4km south of the road in the townland of Keelaraheen (CO093-074). It was found in 1989 when the roof of the chamber collapsed revealed earth-cut passages. Souterrains are man-made subterranean structures composed of various passages, chambers and connected creepways. They are entered through a narrow opening at ground level and vary greatly in size and complexity (O’Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, 223). Their main function appears to have been associated with refuge and for storage; the latter interpretation on account that the chambers maintain a constant temperature being ideally suited to store food such as meat and dairy products. Although there is no direct dating for many sites, O’Sullivan and Sheehan propose a construction period of sometime after the fifth or sixth centuries based on the re-use of ogham stones in souterrains at many locations.

There are five sites listed in the wider landscape as ‘redundant records’ (CO093-04001; CO093-045; CO093-035; CO093-036 and CO093-070), Figure 3. These were at one time recorded as ‘potential’ archaeological monuments on the Sites and Monuments Record (1988) and later on the Record of Monuments and Places (1998), but have since been reclassified as redundant records and therefore not archaeological monuments. In some cases, they are in fact areas of natural rock-outcropping.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed road realignment will have no material effect on the archaeological resource of the site or area. All of the known archaeological monuments are at distances of greater than 600m, consequently there will no direct impact on any of these.

The possibility always exists that unidentified or unrevealed archaeological features may lie beneath the surface and there is a chance that the works may have an impact on such if they do exist. IN this case however the presence of rock close to the surface and the already cutaway rock that has been spread over the surface to form a hardcore layer where the road alignment is projected will ensure that no subsurface impact will occur. Similarly, the culverting of the adjacent stream means that additional drainage works on the adjoining watercourses are unlikely to be required. The existing situation on this length of proposed realignment negates the need for specific archaeological mitigation in the case of the proposed works.

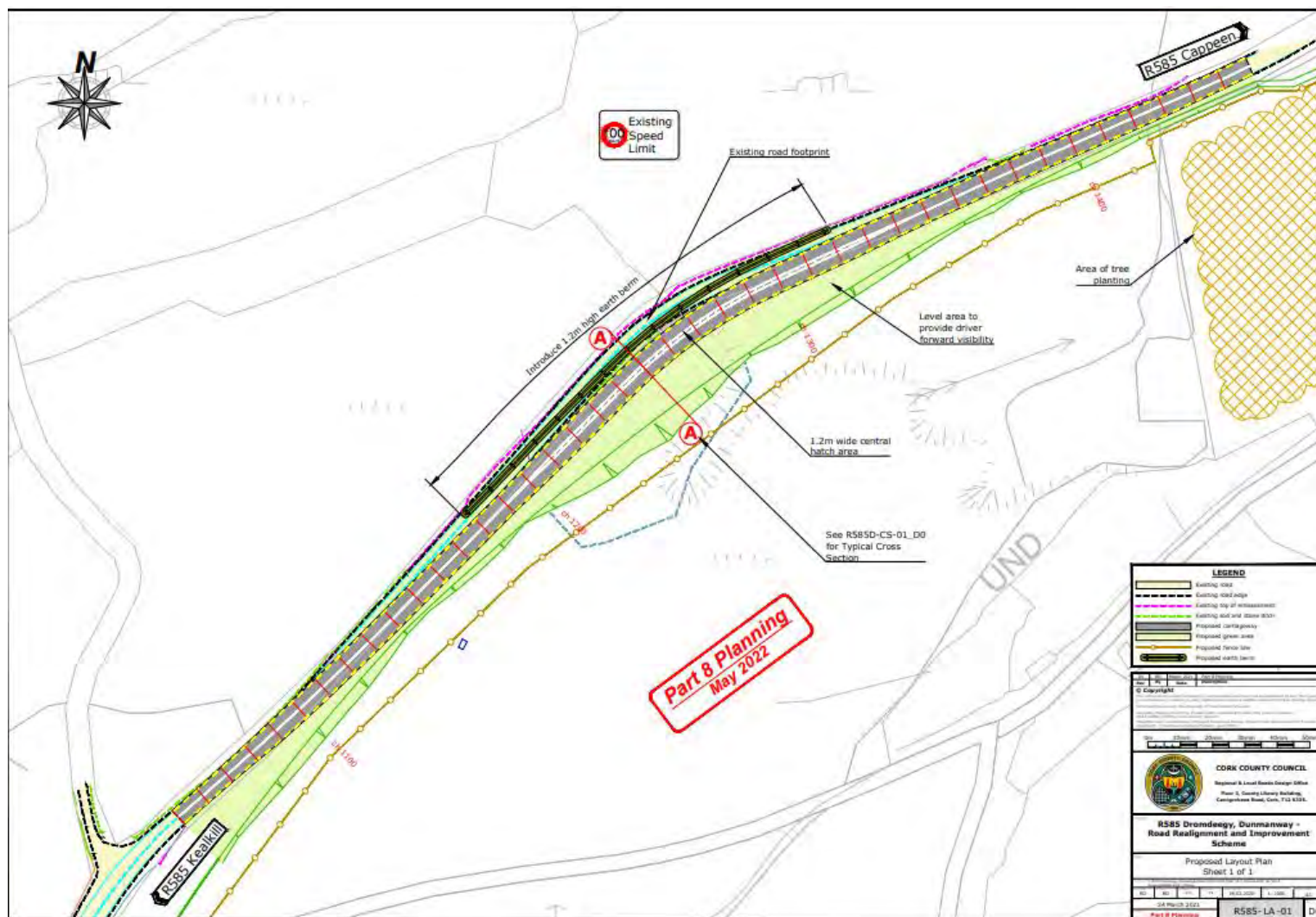


Figure 4. Proposed road realignment

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