

Ballinderry Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Archaeological Impact Assessment

Client: Consdorf Investments ICAV

Licence No: n/a

Archaeologist: Liam Coen

Author: Liam Coen

Report Date: 14th March 2022

Our Ref: 2019_01

Ballinderry Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

SITE NAME	Ballinderry Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
CLIENT	Consdorf Investments ICAV
INVESTIGATION TYPE	Archaeological Impact Assessment
LICENCE NO	N/A
PLANNING REF	N/A
TOWNLAND	Ballinderry
IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR	644506, 751534
RMP NO	N/A
RPS NO	N/A
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANT	Archer Heritage Planning Ltd.
ARCHAEOLOGIST	Liam Coen
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SUMMARY

A desk-based study and field survey was carried out on a site located in the southern outskirts of the town of Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (ITM 644506, 751534). The site covers an area of c. 3.9 hectare. This Archaeological Impact Assessment report sought to identify and describe known and potential archaeological or cultural heritage constraints within and/or immediately adjacent to the site. The following factors were identified in the course of desktop study:

- The site is large in scale occupying an area of roughly 3.9 Ha directly south of Mullingar.
- There are no recorded monuments situated within the site boundaries however there are a large number of ringforts, enclosures and earthworks in the surrounding area.
- No potential archaeological features were recorded in aerial photos of the subject site.
- Geophysical survey (19R0208) and test trenching (19E0656) of the site revealed no archaeological features. Test trenching and excavation on the N52 bypass to the south revealed 5 Fulacht Fia.
- During the field survey the remains of a curving laneway in the centre of the site were visible.
- There are no Protected or Recorded structures on the site or in the immediate environs

These factors indicate that there is moderate potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains at this site.

RECOMMENDATION

The site is large in scale with moderate potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains. Development at this location may have a permanent negative effect on archaeological remains which may be present. It is recommended that groundworks at this location be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

NOTE: All conclusions and recommendations expressed in this report are subject to the approval of The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the relevant local authorities. As the statutory body responsible for the protection of Ireland's archaeological and cultural heritage resource, the DHLGH may issue alternative or additional recommendations.

Revision	Status	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	Final	14th Mar '22	LC (Archer)	AOC (Archer)	CMG

1. INTRODUCTION

This archaeological impact assessment undertaken on Ballinderry Rd, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (ITM 644476, 751538 Figure 1) has been prepared by Archer Heritage Planning Ltd for Consdorf Investments ICAV. The desk-based study and field survey for this assessment was undertaken in November 2018 by Liam Coen of Archer Heritage Planning Ltd. Geophysical survey (19R0208) and test trenching of the site took place in November 2019 (19E0656) revealing no archaeological features. This report aims to identify and describe known and potential archaeological and cultural heritage constraints within the site and offer recommendations for the mitigation of such impacts.

1.1 Proposed Development

The development consists of 130 no. dwellings in a mix of terraced, semi-detached and apartment/duplex units ranging in height from 2 – 2.5 storeys and associated open space and car parking areas. In addition to proposed dwellings the development also consists of a new vehicular entrance off Ballinderry Road and the construction of a section of new Link road, incorporating footpaths and cycle tracks. The proposed development also provides for pedestrian connectivity via the provision of 2 no. pedestrian / cycle connections to the existing development to the north as well as alterations to site levels; landscaping; boundary treatments (including the construction of retaining walls); the construction of a pumping station and all associated site development works.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

This site is off the L1132 Ballinderry Road on the southern edge of the town of Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. The site is currently in rough pasture and is bounded to the north by a residential development, to the east by the Ballinderry Road and to the south and west by the continuation of the pasture fields.

3. METHOD STATEMENT

The following sources were consulted in the preparation of this report:

- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)/ Sites and Monuments Record¹
- Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland
- Aerial photography
- Historical maps
- Documentary research

¹ Archive Unit National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht ,

- Relevant on-line databases (e.g. Excavation Bulletin; NRA Archaeological Database).

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Brief archaeological & historical background

A large number of bronze and gold artefacts from the early to late Bronze Age have been recorded from the Mullingar area. A number of bronze horse pendants as well as gold bracelets, boxes, lunulae, torcs and dress-fasteners, extend the sequence of artefacts to the Iron Age. No settlement sites for these periods have been located in or around Mullingar, though it is clear that activity was taking place nearby (Bradley 1984).

During the early historic period, a large secular or royal fort existed at Mullingar that was given to the church of Lynn. A number of bronze artefacts, glass beads and two ecclesiastical bells found at Mullingar suggest a high status and complex settlement. A number of Anglo-Saxon coins associated with gold and silver ornaments found at Marl Valley, which may be close to Mullingar, may belong to a Scandinavian-type burial of the tenth century AD.

In the medieval period, the barony of Magheradernon was granted by Hugh de Lacy to William le Petit, one of his retainers. An earthen motte surmounted by a timber castle was built at Mullingar perhaps before 1192 and its presence is reflected in the current street name of Castle Street. A later stone castle was located on the site of the nineteenth-century county jail. The earliest known date for the incorporation of the town is the later thirteenth century when officials of the corporation are mentioned (Bradley 1984).

Two large monastic houses were established outside the settlement in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. Excavation and other archaeological assessments at the site of the Augustinian friary have found extensive remains of the medieval cemetery (Ó'Riordáin 1997; Gracie 1998). Records document the granting of funds to repair both religious houses in the mid-fifteenth century. The two established religious houses were dissolved under Henry VIII in the 1540s (Lewis 1837).

No recorded archaeological monuments occur inside or adjacent to the proposed development site. However, the Record of Monuments and Places for County Westmeath records numerous archaeological sites in the surrounding area (Figure 2). These include an earthwork (019:047), standing stone site (019:048), holy well (019:055), friary (019:057) and the town of Mullingar itself (019:089). Within the wider area at Farranistick, there are two Bronze Age cooking sites or *fulachta fiadh* (019:005 & 019:008).

4.2 Record of Monuments & Places

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is a statutory inventory of archaeological sites protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 (Section 12, 1994 Act), compiled and maintained by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI). The inventory concentrates on pre-1700 AD sites and is based on a previous inventory known as the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) which does not have legal protection or status (see www.archaeology.ie).

There are no recorded monuments located within the application area. The site is located in a landscape which contains a high number of ringforts, earthworks and enclosures.

SMR No	Class	Townland	ITM	Distance to site
WM019-075 -	Ringfort- rath	Ballinderry	644090, 751237	380m (SW)
No description available				
WM019-074 -	Ringfort- rath	Lynn	643642, 751293	750m (W)
Monument placed on the Register of Historic Monuments on the 01/03/1984. Extract from Iris Oifigiúil 10th April 1984. Situated on top of a natural ridge with good views in all directions, stream 70m to N and River Brosna 430m to W. Depicted as a circular-shaped enclosure with some tree planting / landscaping around the perimeter of the monument on the 1837 ed. OS 6-inch map. House 40m to NNE that is annotated as Mount Lynn House on the revised 1911 ed. OS 25-inch map. Lynn House located 145m to SSE. Sometime between 1837 and 1911 the N perimeter of the monument has been cut into by the landscaping of Mount Lynn House and the E and S edges of the monument have also been cut into by the construction of field boundaries and a pavilion. Present remains consist of a large roughly circular-shaped area (diam. 46m N-S; 48m E-W) enclosed by a low earthen bank mainly reduced to a scarp with wide flat-bottomed fosse and traces of an external bank best visible from S-W-WNW. No entrance feature visible. The interior rises considerably towards the centre following the natural slope of the hillock on which the monument stands.				
WM019-076-	Castle - tower house	Boardstown	645054, 751498	435m (E)
No description available				
WM019-073-	Earthworks	Ballinderry	643882, 752120	750m (NW)
No description available				
WM026-008	Earthwork	Lynn	643580, 751006	920m (SW)
No description available				
WM019-082 -	Ringfort rath	Ardmore	645610, 751561	990m (E)

Table 1: Archaeological sites within 1km of the proposed development

4.3 Cartographic Sources

Analysis of historic mapping can show human impact on landscape over a prolonged period. Large collections of historical maps (pre- and early Ordnance Survey maps as well as estate or private maps) are held at the Glucksman Map Library, Trinity College and other sources (UCD Library, Ordnance Survey Ireland, local libraries and published material). The development of the site and its vicinity recorded through the eighteenth to twentieth century cartography are described in Table 2 below (Figure 2 & 3). **No potential archaeological features were recorded within the subject site.**

Map	Date	Description
Historic 6inch	1837	The area in question is depicted as a single large field on the west side of the Ballinderry Road. A high point of 344ft is marked in the centre of the field. A curving laneway runs from a small division in the SE corner towards the centre of the field. The townland bdy between Ballinderry and Newtown forms the southern field bdy. A large house and garden is shown directly across the road from the field with a smaller building to the N outside the current site.
Historic 25inch	1874-76	The laneway is now shown as a curving field boundary; two smaller fields have been created in the NE and NW of the current layout.
Cassini	1911-13	No change.

Table 2: Cartographic sources relating to the site

4.4 Aerial photography

Aerial photography (or other forms of remote sensing) may reveal certain archaeological features or sites (earthworks, crop marks, soil marks) that for many reasons may not be appreciated at ground level. Online orthostatic photographs of the site were examined (Ordnance Survey Ireland 1995, 2000 & 2005; Google/Bing Maps 2018).

Aerial Photograph	Date	Description
OSi	1995	Black and white photograph. The site is shown in its current layout with the housing to the north and NE under construction.
OSi	2005	The small field to the NW can be seen
OSi Digital Globe	2013	The laneway depicted on the 1 st ED is clearly shown as two banks curving around the existing short N/S hedge.
Bing maps	2018	The remains of the laneway are clear, a sloping area in the NE of the site is visible

Table 3: Aerial Photographs

4.5 Previous Archaeological Excavations

Geophysical survey was undertaken across the site in Sept 2019 by J Leigh under detection device consent 19R0208 issued by the DCHG (Leigh 2019). Linear trends and responses in the south of the data appeared to correlate with a low linear mound, observed during site work. Although it is possible that this represents a former field boundary division or farm trackway, an archaeological interpretation must be considered. It is possible that a series of linear bank and ditch features, forming a broad boundary-type feature is represented here. The responses appear to meet the tree and hedge line which runs through the field. Further isolated responses in the data were evident. There was no clear pattern and form, and these most likely represented more deeply buried ferrous debris or recent agricultural activity.

Test trenching of the site under licence number 19E0656 took place in November 2019; a total of 22 test trenches with a combined length of 1623 linear metres were excavated within the site (8% of the development area, 2921.4m²). Trenches were spaced 10-15m apart and located in order to test the general archaeological potential of the site and to test various geophysical anomalies. Testing was undertaken from 16-18 October 2019 in overcast conditions. Excavation proceeded in level spits of 0.2m. Each trench was inspected for archaeological remains and all trenches were reinstated on completion. The results are listed in Table 6 below. Topsoil thickness varied substantially between northern, southern and south eastern parts of the field ranging from 0.20-0.60m. Subsoil was a dark yellow brown mixture of clay and silt, with frequent angular stones and concentrations of shale stone.

No archaeological features or objects were recorded in any of the trenches (see Figure 5).

There have been a number of excavations in the wider area; in particular test trenching and excavations were carried out in 2004 on a small number of sites on the N52 Bypass to the south of the subject site under licence 04E 250 (Site A: O'Hara & Tooher 2004) and Licence ref.: 04 E249 (Site B: O'Hara 2004). The latter revealed five new sites (all Fulacht Fia) one in Marlinstown, one in Boardstown and three in Newtown.

Excavation No.	RMP	OS Ref	Location	Ex. Bulletin Ref.	Author
04E0202	N/A	643487, 751558	Ballinderry	2004:1758	D. Sweetnam
No archaeological significance.					
04E0687	N/A	643720, 752821	Boardstown	2004:1718	P. Stevens
<p>An excavation was undertaken in May and June 2004 at this site on the outskirts of Mullingar town. The site was discovered during testing of the N52 Mullingar bypass road scheme by Rob O'Hara (No. 1755 below, 04E0249).</p> <p>Excavation revealed two phases of activity, which consisted of several intermittent spreads of burnt-mound-type material in a flat, low-lying boggy area of very stony shattered limestone bedrock with intermittent patches of glacial boulder clay. These were cut by stone-lined drains and overlain by topsoil that contained some small amounts of early modern debris. Overlooking the site was a small regular-shaped hill to the north-east (outside the road-take), possibly of artificial or glacial origin, which may have been the location of settlement activity.</p> <p>Phase 1 consisted of intermittent patches of burnt-mound material spread over an area measuring roughly 3.4m east-west by 3m. These features were largely thin spreads of charcoal-rich deposits of fire-cracked stone (predominately sandstone) located in hollows where they overlay subsoil, which were surrounded on all sides by rocky natural outcrops. Two further spreads were excavated during testing. These were to the south and measured 0.3m east-west by 0.16m and 0.1m in depth.</p> <p>Phase 2 was represented by two undated but probably post-medieval stone-lined drains crossing perpendicular to each other and cutting Phase 1.</p>					
04E0689/690/691	N/A	644900, 750514	Newtown	2004:1768/69/70	R. O' Hara/ P. Stevens
<p>Excavation of site Newtown 3 in Newtown townland, on the outskirts of Mullingar, was undertaken in May 2004 in advance of the proposed N52 Mullingar bypass. The site lay very close to Newtown 2 (No. 1769 above) and was discovered during testing of the road scheme by Rob O'Hara (No. 1755 above, 04E0249).</p> <p>The natural topography of the site was an undulating landscape with boggy hollows and drumlins. The site was</p>					

positioned midway down the east-facing slope overlooking a peat bog to the east and contained two phases of archaeological activity.

Phase 1 consisted of a burnt mound or fulacht fiadh consisting of a limestone-dominated mound of fire-cracked stone and charcoal-stained silt over a single trough, with parallel stake-holes at one end, two early informal hearths or fire-spots and a later stone-lined hearth pit with adjacent post-holes.

The trough, an irregular elongated oval shape in plan with concave unlined sides and an irregular sloping flat base, measuring 3.35m (northwest/south-east) by 1-1.7m in width and 0.65m in depth, contained two parallel post-holes in the north-western walls. It was initially backfilled by a redeposited natural with a tiny chert artefact and animal-bone fragment and sealed by stony fills of charcoal-rich burnt-mound material (limestone 95%, sandstone 5%).

A stone-lined pit was revealed 5m south-west of the trough, cutting through the burnt mound though stratigraphically contemporary. This feature was oval, with a concave profile and flat base, 1.42m by 1.2m, and 0.6m in depth. It contained a primary fill of ash and cinders, lying on the base and mixed around a loosely arranged two-course limestone lining, and was backfilled by burnt-mound material. Two large post-holes, 0.5m in diameter and depth, adjoined the hearth pit to the north and west and appear to be contemporary. The function of these structural posts is unknown and appears unusual, considering the heat produced by the hearth; however, they might have formed part of a spit or held an item or vessel over the fire.

The burnt mound measured 16m (north-south) by 11m and 0.1-0.35m in depth and spread down the east-facing slope, mostly towards the boggy ground immediately outside the area of the road-take. It consisted of a composite accumulation of fire-cracked stone (predominantly limestone, 95%, and sandstone, 5%) with small amounts of animal bone and some chert debitage.

Phase 2 consisted of a number of post-medieval features: an undated linear stone-lined drain running along the contour of the slope north-east/south-west, a parallel drain and a series of parallel furrows cut perpendicular to the ditches.

Table 4: Previous archaeological investigations in the wider area

4.6 Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was established on a statutory basis under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999. Its purpose is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. It is intended to provide a basis for recommendations of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) to Local Authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in Records of Protected Structures (RPS).

There are no Protected or Recorded structures on the site or in the immediate environs on the Mullingar Development Plan 2014-2020.

4.7 Site Visit

The site was visited by Liam Coen of Archer Heritage Planning Ltd on 30th Nov 2018 in dry, overcast conditions (Plates 1–4). The site is comprised of a single field on a slope with the lower portion being very waterlogged and marshy. The remains of a former laneway curves around a steep hill with a possible bank approximately 3 m in height rising up to a hill in the corner of the field (NE corner of field)

next to existing houses. Trees are planted along the line of the laneway from about halfway; generally small whitethorn trees. The laneway consists of two banks approximately 5 to 6 m apart.

5. IMPACTS

A desk-based study and field survey was carried out on a site located in the southern outskirts of the town of Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (ITM 644476, 751538). The site covers an area of c. 3.9 hectare. This Archaeological Impact Assessment report sought to identify and describe known and potential archaeological or cultural heritage constraints within and/or immediately adjacent to the site. The following factors were identified in the course of desktop study:

- The site is large in scale occupying an area of roughly 3.9 Ha directly south of Mullingar.
- There are no recorded monuments situated within the site boundaries however there are a large number of ringforts, enclosures and earthworks in the surrounding area.
- No potential archaeological features were recorded in aerial photos of the subject site.
- Geophysical survey (19R0208) and test trenching (19E0656) of the site revealed no archaeological features. Test trenching and excavation on the N52 bypass to the south revealed 5 Fulacht Fia.
- During the field survey the remains of a curving laneway in the centre of the site were visible.
- There are no Protected or Recorded structures on the site or in the immediate environs

These factors indicate that there is moderate potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains at this site.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The site is large in scale with moderate potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains. Development at this location may have a permanent negative effect on archaeological remains which may be present. It is recommended that groundworks at this location be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

NOTE: All conclusions and recommendations expressed in this report are subject to the approval of The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the relevant local authorities. As the statutory body responsible for the protection of Ireland's archaeological and cultural heritage resource, the DHLGH may issue alternative or additional recommendations.

7. REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliography

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7.2 Web references

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Aerial Photography <http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html> [accessed 30th Nov 2018]

Online Excavations bulletin www.excavations.ie [accessed 29th Nov 2018]

Online Archaeological Survey of Ireland www.archaeology.ie [accessed 29th Nov 2018]

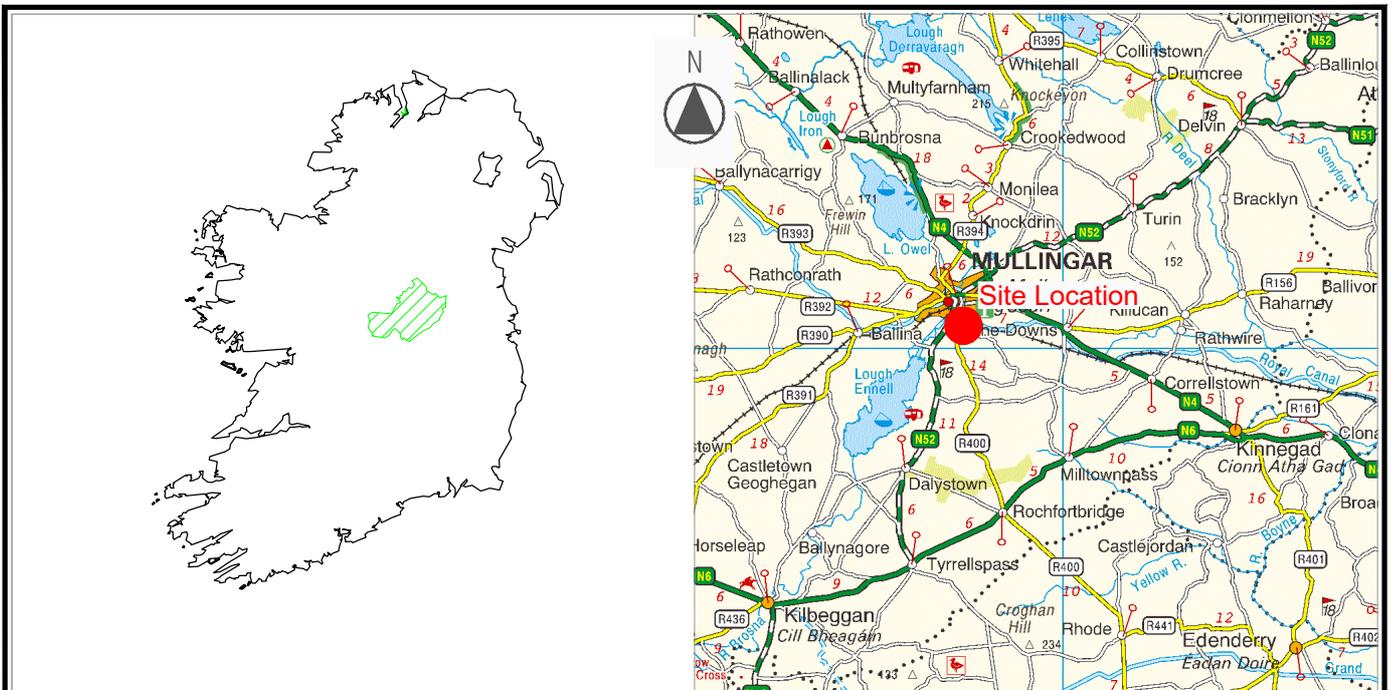
<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?county=WM&name=ballinderry&town=&townland=&type=quick&page=1#>

<http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/media/MLAP%20Volume%202%20Book%20of%20Maps.pdf>

<http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/media/MLAP%20Volume%201%20Written%20Statement.pdf>



Liam Coen BA 14th March 2022



Unit 8 Beat Centre
 Stephenstown,
 Balbriggan,
 Co. Dublin

Ballinderry Rd., Mullingar
 Archaeological Impact Assessment

Client: Bennett Properties Ltd.

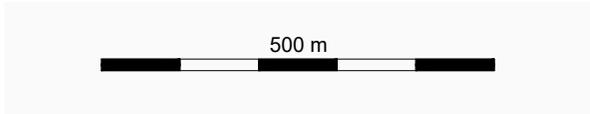
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Date: April 2021

Origin: www.archaeology.ie

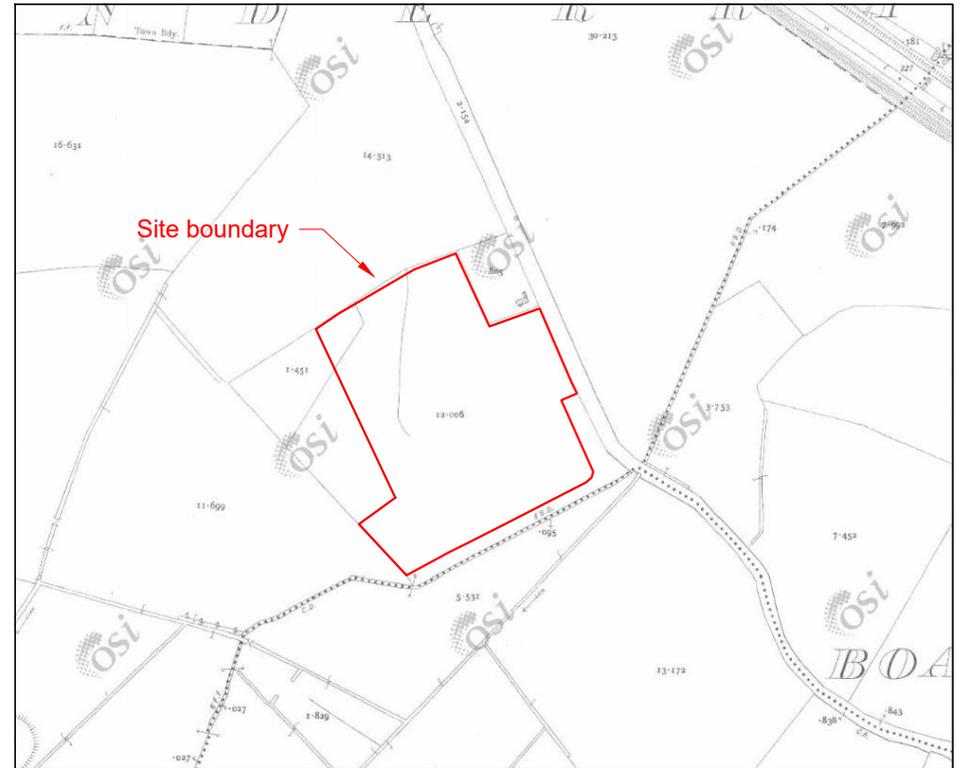
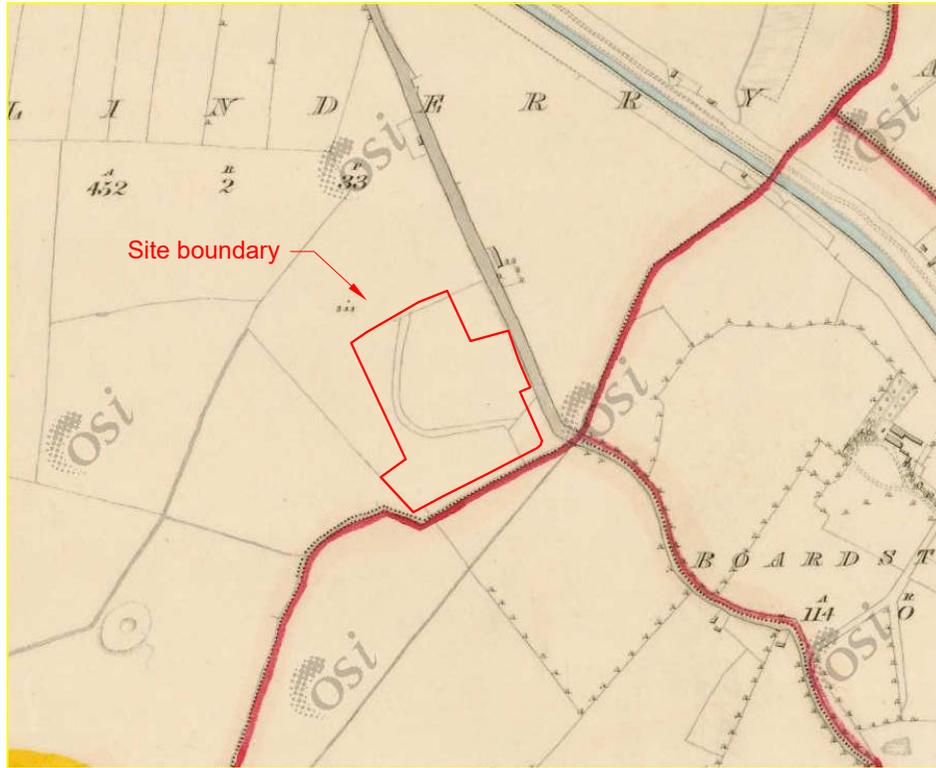
Ref: 2019_01

Figure 1: Site location



	Unit 8 Beat Centre Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin	Ballinderry Rd., Mullingar Archaeological Impact Assessment	Scale: 1:10000 A4 Date: April 2021
		Client: Bennett Properties Ltd.	Origin: www.archaeology.ie Ref: 2019_01

Figure 2: Surrounding RMP/SMR sites



(l) 1st Edition OS Map (1844)

(r) 3rd Edition OS Map (1906-09)

	Unit 8 Beat Centre Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin	Ballinderry Rd., Mullingar	Scale: Not to scale
		Archaeological Impact Assessment	Date: April 2021
		Client: Bennett Properties Ltd.	Origin: OSI
			Ref: 2019_01

Figure 3: Extracts from early historical maps



(l) Aerial photograph 1995

(r) Digital globe



Unit 8 Beat Centre
Stephenstown,
Balbriggan,
Co. Dublin

Ballinderry Rd., Mullingar
Archaeological Impact Assessment

Client: Bennett Properties Ltd.

Scale: Not to scale

Date: April 2021

Origin: OSI

Ref: 2019_01

Figure 4: Aerial photography

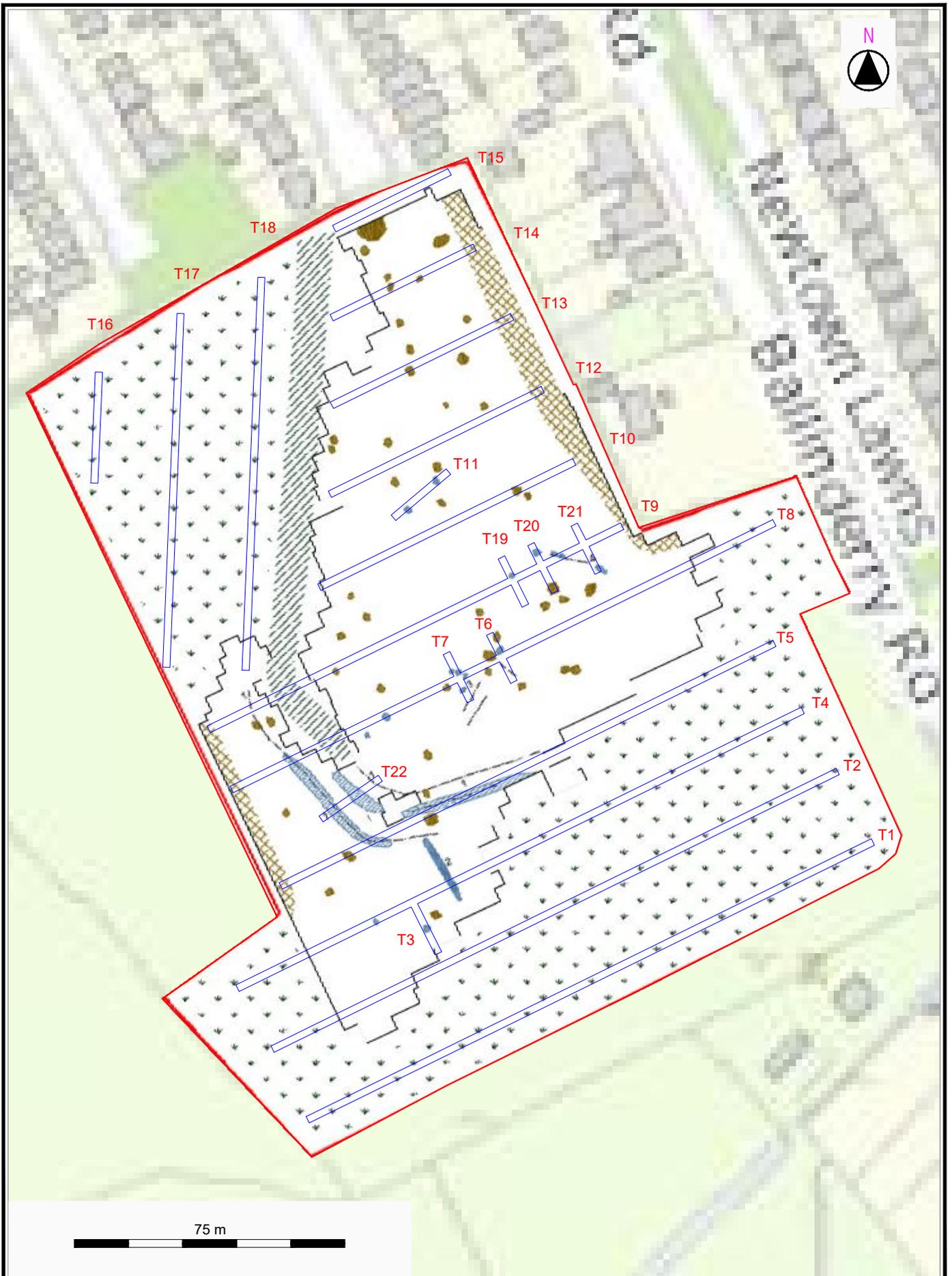


Figure 5: Results of geophysical survey and location of test trenches



Plate 1: Looking north from centre of site



Plate 2: Looking NE from centre of site



Plate 3: Bank of laneway



Plate 4: Terminus of laneway