

Archaeological Assessment

Proposed Residential Scheme, Monacnappa, Blarney, County Cork



Prepared by:

John Cronin & Associates
Unit 3a Westpoint Trade Centre
Link Road
Ballincollig
Cork

On behalf of:

Mr Eoin Sheehan
c/o Coakley O'Neill Town Planning Ltd
NSC Campus
Mahon
Cork

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1. Introduction

John Cronin & Associates (JCA) have been commissioned by Mr Eoin Sheehan to assess the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed strategic housing development (SHD) at Monacnappa, Blarney, Cork (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1: General location of subject site (Source: <https://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>)

The proposed development site consists of a large open field measuring *circa* 7.3 hectares in size, located to the northwest of Blarney town, bordering the Sunberry Drive and Castlewen housing estates to the east. The field is accessed from the southeast corner via a trackway off Sunberry Heights. The development site is entirely contained within the townland of Monacnappa.

The proposed development will consist of a strategic housing development of

The proposed development will consist of a strategic housing development of 143no. residential units (8no. 1-bed; 38no. 2-bed; 71no. 3-bed; and 26no. 4-bed units), comprising 105no. houses (3no. detached; 42no. semi-detached; and 60no. terraced units) and 38no. apartments. The proposed development will also consist of the demolition of an existing garage and southern boundary wall, to be replaced with a new southern boundary wall, as well as the lowering of the existing eastern boundary wall and pier, at no. 1 Sunberry Drive; a crèche; all associated ancillary site development and landscaping works, to include bin stores, bicycle and car parking, ground works and retaining structures, foul drainage, stormwater drainage, water supply, service ducting and cabling, public

lighting, relocation of existing ESB substation, and all boundary treatments. The proposed development is to be accessed via the existing Sunberry Heights/Sunberry Drive off the Blarney Relief Road (R617). An upgrade is proposed to the existing Sunberry Heights/Sunberry Drive and the existing access to the proposed strategic housing development, including the widening of the footpath at the junction with the Blarney Relief Road (R617), raised platforms, security barriers and fencing as necessary, road markings, and road resurfacing to facilitate improved pedestrian/cycle connectivity.

The study area for this assessment comprised the internal area of the proposed development site combined with the lands extending for *circa* 500m from the outer boundaries of the site. There are no recorded archaeological sites situated within the lands comprising the proposed development area. There are three recorded archaeological monuments within the study area.

This report has had regard to the Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds (CSR) and the views examined within that report. This assessment concurs with the findings of the LVIA that the proposed development will not compromise the *Blarney Architectural Conservation Area* or the landscape and heritage character of the area on which the local tourism economy relies, particularly in respect of Blarney Castle and the wider Blarney Estate as per planning guidance set out under 3.2.23 and 3.2.24 of the Blarney Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan Jan 2015 (Volume 1).

2. Methodology

This report is based on a programme of desktop research, site inspection and desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of the proposed development site.

Desktop study

A desktop study assessment has been carried out in order to identify all known archaeological assets within the study area. The principal sources reviewed for this assessment of the known archaeological resource are the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). Between 1984 and 1992, the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) issued a series of county SMRs which lists known archaeological sites and places and this record formed the basis for the statutory RMP established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Similar in format to the SMRs (comprising a list and set of maps), the RMPs were issued for each county in the State between 1995 and 1998. Archaeological monuments included in the statutory RMP are legally protected and are generally referred to as 'Recorded Monuments'.

The ASI has continued to record and add entries to the SMR and has developed an online database and web viewer known as 'Historic Environment Viewer'. This has been developed to enhance the user's experience by facilitating access to the database of the National Monuments Service's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in a seamless one stop point of access for both data resources (Source: www.archaeology.ie).

In addition, the following sources were consulted as part of the desktop study:

- *Cartographic Sources* - The detail on cartographic sources can indicate past settlement and land use patterns in recent centuries and can also highlight the impact of modern developments and agricultural practices. This information can aid in the identification of the location and extent of unrecorded, or partially levelled, features of archaeological or architectural heritage interest. The cartographic sources examined for the study areas include the Down Survey (1650s), the 1st edition of the 6-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) maps (surveyed and published in the 1830s-40s) and the 25-inch OS maps (surveyed and published 1887-1913).
- *Aerial photography* - In parallel with the cartographic study, a review publicly-accessible aerial photographic sources from the Ordnance Survey, Google and Bing Maps was undertaken.
- *Development Plans* - The local authority development plans relevant to the study area was consulted as part of this assessment. These plans outline the local authorities' policies for the conservation of the archaeological and architectural heritage resource and include the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and any designated Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The relevant development plan for the study area is the *Cork County Development Plan* (2014). At the time of writing (September 2021), Cork City Council have issued a "Proposed Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028" for public consultation.

- *Database of Irish Excavation Reports* - The Database of Irish Excavation Reports contains summary accounts of all archaeological excavations carried out in Ireland from 1969 to 2021.
- *Placenames Database of Ireland* - The Placenames Branch (Government of Ireland) provides a comprehensive management system for data, archival records and place name research conducted by the State. Its primary function is to undertake research in order to establish the correct Irish language forms of the place names of Ireland and to publish them on a public website (www.logainm.ie).

Field survey

An archaeological inspection of the landholding of the proposed development site was undertaken by suitably qualified archaeologist (John Cronin) on the 19 of May 2020 in bright weather conditions that provided excellent landscape visibility. This survey entailed the field walking of the lands that contain the layout of the proposed development and encompassed all areas to be impacted by the proposed development. The subject site was accessible and was assessed in terms of landscape, land use, vegetation cover, presence or lack of both known and potential archaeological sites. A photographic record of the site inspection was compiled, and extracts are presented in **Appendix 2** of this report.

3. Context

Location

The subject site is located in the townland of Monacnappa, Blarney, Cork to the northwest of the Blarney town (**Figure 2**). The proposed development area is currently accessed via a trackway off Sunberry Drive leading to the southeast corner of the site which consists of a large, irregularly shaped, open and sloping (to south) arable field. It is bounded to the east by the Sunberry Drive and Castleowen housing estates, by further arable farmland to the north and west of the enclosing treelines, and by an area of woodland to the south. The northern area of the subject site is within a geological region of continental red-bed facies of sandstone, conglomerate & siltstone, while the southernmost area is within a geological area of marine formation of mudstone, sandstone & thin limestone. The soil profiles of the entire site are composed of fine loamy drift with siliceous stone.



Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing the general location of the proposed development site (Source: <https://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>)

Legal & Policy Framework

The management and protection of cultural heritage in Ireland is achieved through a framework of national laws and policies which are in accordance with the provisions of the Valetta Treaty (1995) (formally the *European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, 1992*) ratified by Ireland in 1997; the *European Convention on the Protection of Architectural Heritage* (Granada Convention, 1985), ratified by Ireland in 1997; and the *UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003*, ratified by Ireland in 2015.

The locations of World Heritage Sites (Ireland) and the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites submitted by the Irish State to UNESCO were reviewed. There are no World Heritage Sites or sites on the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites (Ireland) located within the study area. The nearest site on the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites to the subject site is Caherconree stone fort (part of the Western Stone Forts group), located 95km west-northwest.

The national legal statutes and guidelines relevant to this assessment include:

- National Monuments Act (1930) (and amendments in 1954, 1987, 1994 and 2004);
- Heritage Act (1995);
- National Cultural Institutions Act (1997);
- Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (1999);
- Planning and Development Act (2000);
- *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht (2011); and
- *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage*, Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, 1999.

Archaeological Heritage

The administration of national policy in relation to archaeological heritage management is the responsibility of the National Monuments Service (NMS) which is currently based in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The National Monuments Act of 1930, and its Amendments, are the primary means of ensuring the satisfactory protection of the archaeological resource. They include a number of provisions that are applied to secure the protection of archaeological monuments. These include the designations of nationally significant sites as National Monuments, the Register of Historic Monuments (RHM), the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), and the placing of Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders on endangered sites.

Section 2 of the National Monuments Act, 1930 defines a National Monument as ‘*a monument or the remains of a monument, the preservation of which is a matter of national importance*’. The State may acquire or assume guardianship of examples through agreement with landowners or under compulsory orders. Archaeological sites within the ownership of local authorities are also deemed to be National Monuments. There are **no** National Monuments located within the study area or within 10km of its boundaries.

The National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 made provision for the establishment of the RMP, which comprises the known archaeological sites within the State. The RMP, which is based on the earlier Register of Historic Monuments (RHM) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), provides county-based lists of all recorded archaeological sites with accompanying maps. All RMP sites receive statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1994 and the NMS must be given two months’ notice in advance of any work proposed at their locations. There are **no** recorded archaeological sites within the proposed development site, while there are two examples within the surrounding study area. These recorded archaeological sites are listed in **Table 1** and mapped in **Figure 3** below. Blarney Castle, a late-medieval tower house is a recorded monument (RMP Reference CO062-177----) and a protected structure, is located 650 metres to the south of the development site. Views from Blarney Castle have not been designated as protected or scenic views in the current County Development Plan (the relevant planning policy document for this area).

The *Cork County Council Development Plan (2014)* outlines a number of objectives in relation to the protection and promotion of the archaeological resource within the county. Of particular relevance to the present study are the following objectives relating to the protection of individual archaeological monuments and the requirement for infrastructure schemes to have regard to the protected archaeological resource:

Objective HE 3-1: Protection of Archaeological Sites

a) Safeguard sites and settings, features and objects of archaeological interest generally.

b) Secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional cases preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments including the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) (see www.archeology.ie) and the Record or Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, as amended and of sites, features and objects of archaeological and historical interest generally. In securing such preservation, the planning authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht as outlined in the Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage.

HE 3-6: Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes

Have regard to archaeological concerns when considering proposed service schemes (including electricity, sewerage, telecommunications, water supply) and proposed roadwork's (both realignments and new roads) located in close proximity to Recorded Monuments and Places and their known archaeological monuments.

An architectural conservation area (ACA) has been in operation in Blarney for many years and Cork City Council's *Proposed Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028* intends to expand the designated area. Neither the existing or the draft ACA encompasses the lands subject of this development proposal.

It is also noted that Objective GO-06 of the *Blarney Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan (2015)* states:

Ensure adequate regard is given to assessing the visual impacts of new developments in close proximity to Blarney Castle and Estate so as to ensure that such developments do not compromise the landscape heritage character of the area

(The Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the proposed development (prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds) deals with the visual impacts of the proposed development.)

Archaeological & historical background

There are **no** recorded archaeological sites situated within the lands comprising the proposed development area. However, as stated above, there are **three** recorded examples located within *circa* 500m of the subject site (**Figure 2 & Table 1**). It is recognised that the potential exists for

the presence of unrecorded sub-surface archaeological features and artefacts within the proposed development site.

Table 1: List of known archaeological monuments within approximately 500 metres of the Application Site

SMR Number	Class	Townland	ITM Reference	Distance
CO062-065----	Mill - woollen	Monacnapa	561204, 575848	290m
CO062-201----	Church	Monacnapa	560904, 575874	55m
CO062-178----	Designed landscape - tree-ring	Monacnapa	560648 575492	500m

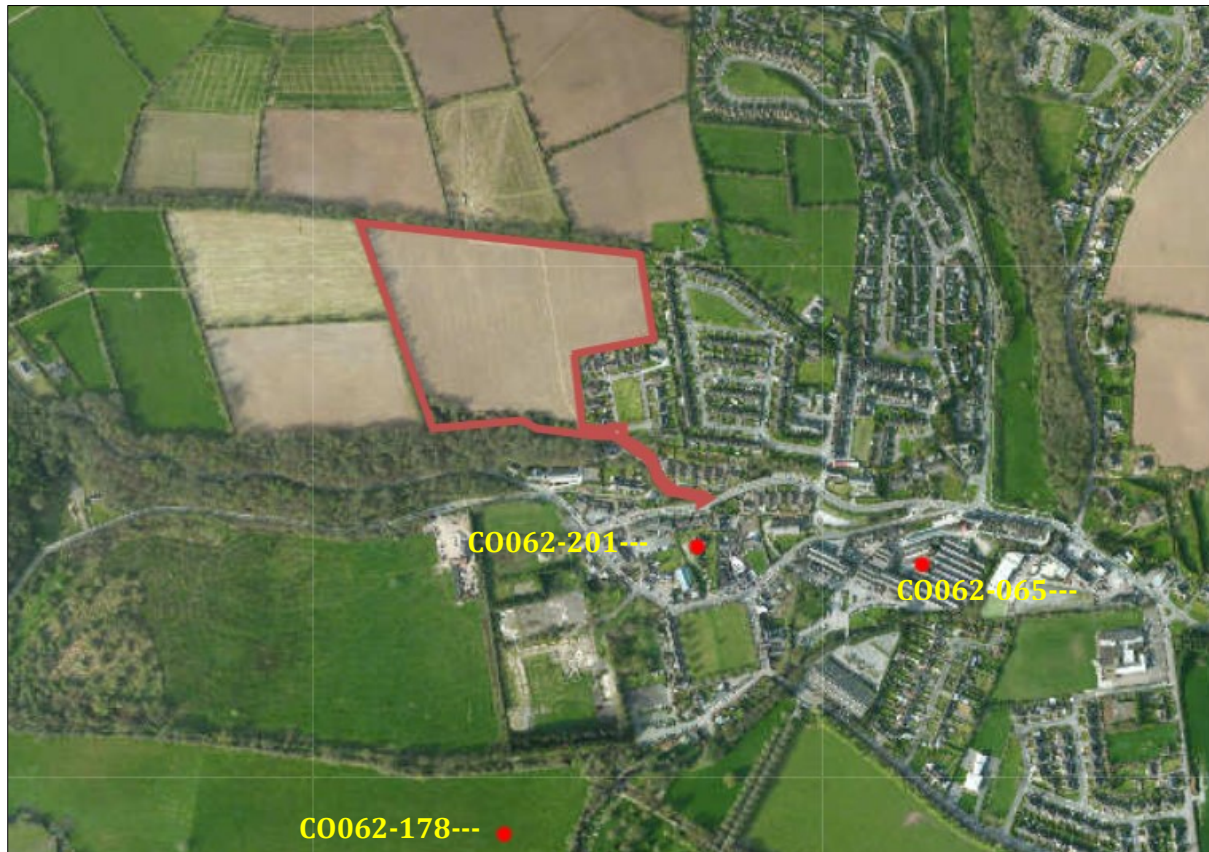


Figure 3: Recorded archaeological sites located within 500m of the proposed development site (Map Source: www.archaeology.ie)

Early Prehistoric

Traditionally, the earliest recorded evidence for human settlement in Ireland dates to the Mesolithic period (7000–4000 BC) when groups of hunter-gatherers arrived on the island, however recent evidence in the form of a butchered bear patella found in Alice and Gwendoline Cave near Ennis in Co. Clare now suggests that humans were present in Ireland during the Paleolithic period between 12,800 to 12,600 cal BC (Dowd and Carden, 2016, 161). While the Mesolithic settlers did not construct any settlements or monuments that leave any above ground traces, their presence in an area can often be identified by scatters of worked flints in ploughed fields or shell middens adjacent to the coastline. **There are no recorded sites dating to the Mesolithic period within the study area.** The Neolithic period (4000-2400 BC) began with the arrival and establishment of agriculture as the principal form of economic subsistence, which resulted in more permanent settlement patterns. As a consequence of the more settled nature of

agrarian life, new site-types, such as more substantial rectangular timber houses and various types of megalithic tombs, begin to appear in the archaeological record during this period. **There are no recorded sites dating to the Neolithic period within the study area.**

Late Prehistoric periods

Metalworking arrived in Ireland with the advent of the Bronze Age period (c. 2400–500 BC). This period was also associated with the construction of new monument types such as standing stones, stone rows, stone circles and *fulachta fia*. *Fulacht fia* translates as cooking places of the wild (or of deer), they are often interpreted as the remains of cooking sites and are the most numerous archaeological site type in Ireland, radiocarbon dating of excavated examples has generally produced dates in the Bronze Age (c. 2400-500BC). A number of alternative interpretations have been forwarded as to the function of these archaeological sites, such as their potential uses as bathing, saunas, garment washing and dyeing, leather processing and even brewing sites. The development of new burial practices saw the construction of funerary monuments such as cairns, barrows, boulder burials and cists. The later first millennium BC and the early centuries AD comprise the Irish Iron Age, which is the most obscure period in the Irish archaeological record. While there is general agreement that the introduction of an iron technology was a significant factor in the eventual demise of bronze working on a large scale, but how, why and when this came about in Ireland is far from clear **There are no recorded sites dating to the late prehistoric period within the study area.**

Early Medieval

This period began with the introduction of Christianity in Ireland and continued up to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans during the 12th-century (c. 400–1169 AD). The establishment of the Irish church was to have profound implications for political, social and economic life and is attested to in the archaeological record by the presence of church sites, associated places for burial and holy wells. The early medieval church sites were morphologically similar to ringforts but are often differentiated by the presence of features such as church buildings, graves, stone crosses and shrines. This period saw the emergence of the first phases of urbanisation around the large monasteries and the Hiberno-Norse ports. However, the dominant settlement pattern of the period continued to be rural-based in sites such as ringforts, which comprise roughly circular enclosures delimited by roughly circular earthen banks formed of material thrown up from a concentric external ditch. Ringforts are one of the most numerous monuments in the Irish landscape and the early medieval terms for these sites – rath/lios/dun these still form some of the most common place-name elements in the country. Archaeological excavations indicate that the majority of ringforts were early medieval farmsteads with internal timber buildings and were surrounded by associated field systems. **There are no recorded sites dating to the early medieval period within the study area.**

Late and Post Medieval

The arrival and conquest of large parts of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans in the late 12th-century broadly marks the advent of the Irish late medieval period, which continued up until the beginning of the post-medieval period in c. 1550. Within the late medieval period, towns, markets, and fairs were established and change and reform was attempted in the Irish church. By the 15th-century the native Irish chieftains and lords began to establish tower houses and smaller castles as centres of territorial control. The post-medieval period (1550+) saw the development of high and low status stone houses throughout the Irish country. During this period any given settlement cluster is likely to have consisted primarily of single-storey thatched cottages with associated farm buildings while two-storey farmhouses became more common in the 19th-century. In the

latter half of the 20th-century, there was a radical change in the nature and character of Irish domestic architecture manifested by the replacement of older stone-built structures with modern bungalows of concrete blockwork construction. The **three recorded sites** located within the study area: church (CO062-201----); woollen mill (CO062-065----); and tree ring (CO062-178----), **date to the post-medieval period.**

The following description of Blarney is provided in Samuel Lewis' 1837 'A Topographic Dictionary of Ireland':

BLARNEY, a village, in the parish of GARRYCLOYNE, barony of EAST MUSKERRY, county of CORK, and province of MUNSTER, 5 miles (N. W, by W.) from Cork; containing 417 inhabitants. It is situated on a river of the same name, over which is a handsome bridge of three arches, on the road from Cork to Kanturk, and comprises 57 houses, which are small but well-built and slated. The noted castle of Blarney was built in 1446, by Cormac Mc Carthy, surnamed Laidir, who was descended in a direct line from the hereditary kings of Desmond or South Munster, and was equally distinguished by his extraordinary strength and feats of chivalry as by elegance and grace both of body and mind. It is situated on an isolated rock of limestone rising boldly over the junction of the rivers Blarney and Comane, and is the third castle occupying the site: the first was rather a hunting post of Dermot Mc Carthy, King of South Munster, and was built of timber; the second was built in the year 1200, and the present structure was raised on its foundations, which are still visible. In the reign of Elizabeth it was the strongest fortress in Munster, and at different periods withstood regular sieges, but was treacherously taken by Lord Broghill in 1646, and the army of King William demolished all the fortifications, leaving only the tower remaining. Donogh Mc Carthy, who commanded the forces of Munster, was first summoned to parliament in the reign of Elizabeth by the title of Baron of Blarney; and Chas. II., in 1658, conferred the title of Earl of Clancarthy on the head of this family, the last of whom was dispossessed after the siege of Limerick; and the estate, comprising all Muskerry, was forfeited to the crown for the earl's adherence to the cause of Jas. II. On the sale of the forfeited lands in 1692, the Hollow Sword Blade Company purchased all the land around this place, and more than 3000 acres in the parish were allotted to a member of the Company, and are now held by his descendant, George Putland, Esq., of Dublin. Justin Mc Carthy, of Carrignavar, the only lineal descendant of that family, holds a part of the ancient inheritance. The castle was purchased in 1701 by Sir James Jefferyes, governor of Cork, who soon after erected a large and handsome house in front of it, which was the family residence for many years, but is now a picturesque ruin. The top of the castle commands a very fine view over a rich undulating tract intersected by the rivers Blarney, Comane, and Scorthonac, and bounded on the north-west by the lofty chain of the Boggra mountains. On the east is the Comane bog, many years since an impenetrable wilderness, and the last receptacle for wolves in this part of the country: that river, which takes its name from its serpentine course, flows through the bog and joins the river Blarney under the walls of the castle; and their united waters receive a considerable accession from the Scorthonac, a rapid stream which rises in the Boggra mountains. The interest which both natives and strangers take in the castle arises more from a tradition connected with a stone in its north-eastern angle, about 20 feet from the top, than from any other circumstance: this stone, which bears an inscription in Latin recording the

erection of the fortress, is called the “Blarney stone,” and has given rise to the well known phrase of “Blarney,” in reference to a notion that, if any one kisses it, he will ever after have a cajoling tongue and the art of flattery or of telling lies with unblustring effrontery. Few, however, venture upon this ceremony, from the danger in being lowered down to the stone by a rope from an insecure battlement 132 feet high. The “groves of Blarney” are of considerable extent and very interesting; and beneath the castle are some spacious natural caves, one of which was converted into a dungeon by some of its early proprietors: it is entered by a very strong door, near which is a solitary window scarcely admitting a ray of light, and there are several massive iron rings and bolts yet remaining. Stalactites and stalagmites of beautiful formation and very compact are found in these caves. The village, though now of little importance, was once the most thriving in the county, and between the years 1765 and 1782, when the linen manufacture was carried on, had not less than 13 mills in operation, erected by St. John Jefferyes, Esq., at an expense of about £20,000. The cotton trade was afterwards introduced and flourished for a time, but has decayed; and the only establishments now in operation are a spinning mill belonging to M. Mahony, Esq., in which about 120 persons are employed in spinning and dyeing woollen yarn for the extensive camlet manufactory in Cork; and a paper-mill, erected by G. Jenkins, Esq., which employs about 170 persons. St. John Jefferyes, Esq., the proprietor of the village, has it in contemplation to rebuild it on an enlarged and improved plan. Just above it stands the parish church, which was repaired and enlarged in 1835, and is a very neat edifice. Fairs are held on Sept. 18th and Nov. 11th; here is a station of the constabulary police; and petty sessions are held on alternate Tuesdays. A national school, capable of accommodating 500 children, was built in 1836, at an expense of £300, of which the Commissioners gave £90, the parishioners £11, and the Rev. M. Horgan, P.P., gave the remainder; and there is a dispensary.

The Excavations Database

The Excavation Database contains summary accounts of all the archaeological excavations carried out in Ireland (North and South) from 1969 to 2021. The database gives access to almost 6000 reports and can be browsed or searched using multiple fields, including year, county, site type, grid reference, license number, Sites and Monuments Record number and author. A review of the townland of Monacnappa in which the subject site is located and the four surrounding townlands located within study area (Knockacorballly, Knocknasuff, Shean Lower and Shean Upper) has revealed that one licenced archaeological excavation has taken place. Seven further licenced archaeological excavations have taken place within townlands associated with the search term ‘Blarney’. These have resulted in the identification of archaeological finds, features and deposits dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods. Summaries of these archaeological excavations are presented in **Appendix 1**.

Cartographic review

The detail on historic cartographic sources demonstrates the nature of past settlements and land use patterns in recent centuries and can also highlight the impacts of modern developments and agricultural practices. This information can aid in the identification of the location and extent of

unrecorded or partially levelled features of archaeological or architectural heritage interest. The cartographic sources examined for the study areas include the Down Survey map (surveyed in the 1650s) (see **Figure 4** below), the first edition of the 6-inch OS maps (surveyed and published in the 1830s-40s) (see **Figure 5** below) and the 25-inch OS maps (surveyed and published 1887-1913) (see **Figure 6** below).

The 17th century Down Survey map refers to the general area in which the subject site is located as 'Blarny'. The scale of this map does not allow a fuller interrogation of the subject site. The first edition 6-inch O.S. map shows the current field as being formed of several smaller fields with a cluster of farm buildings and a farmyard in the centre, served via an access track running to the east. These farm buildings or access track are not visible on the 25-inch OS map. There are no internal townland boundaries located within the landholding although the northern boundary of the site is comprised of a narrow band of trees running west to east with the boundary to Knockacorballly townland to the north. Further details on these areas and the layout of the field boundaries within the proposed development site are provided in the field survey section of this report (**Section 4**), which also provides details on the review of consulted aerial images. The review of the historic mapping indicates that the proposed development site has been occupied by farmland since at least the 17th century.



Figure 4: Down Survey (c.1650s) showing general location of the proposed development site

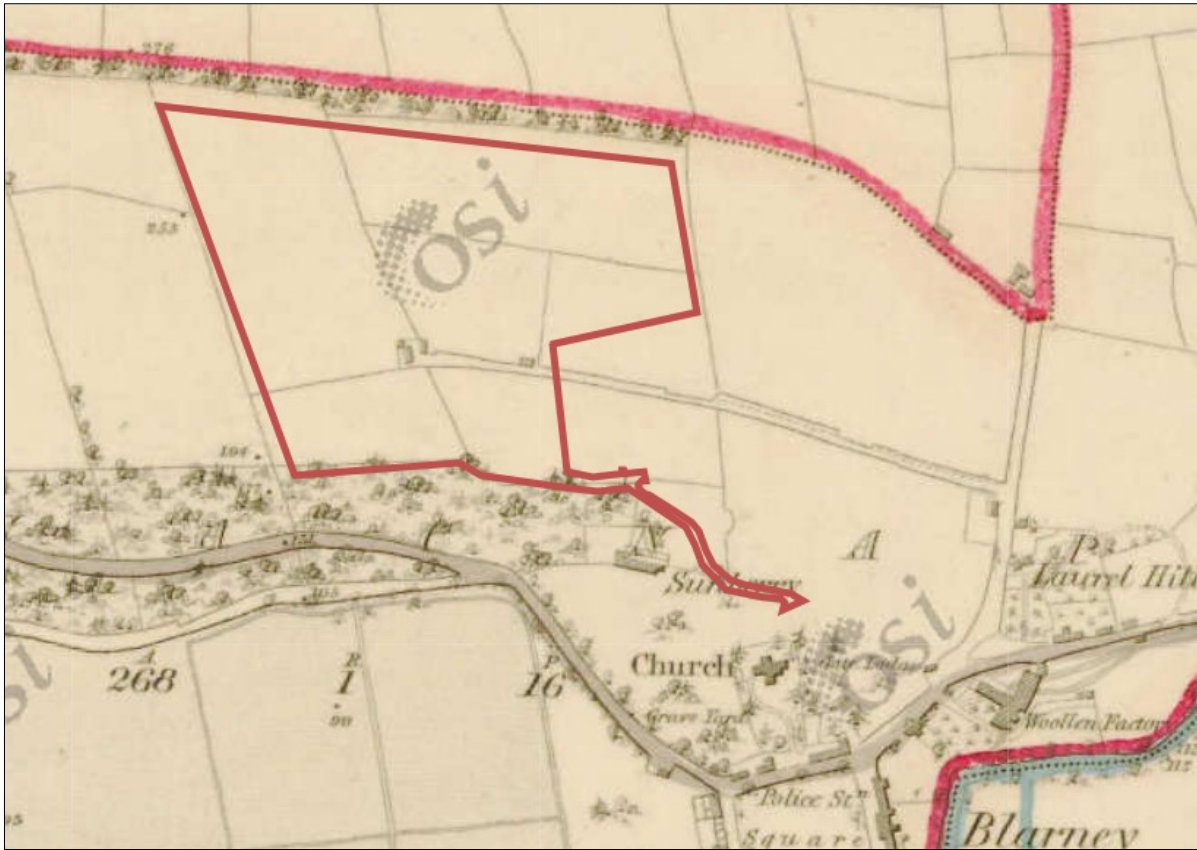


Figure 5: Extract from 1st edition 6-inch OS map showing general location of the proposed development site (outlined in red) (Source: www.archaeology.ie)

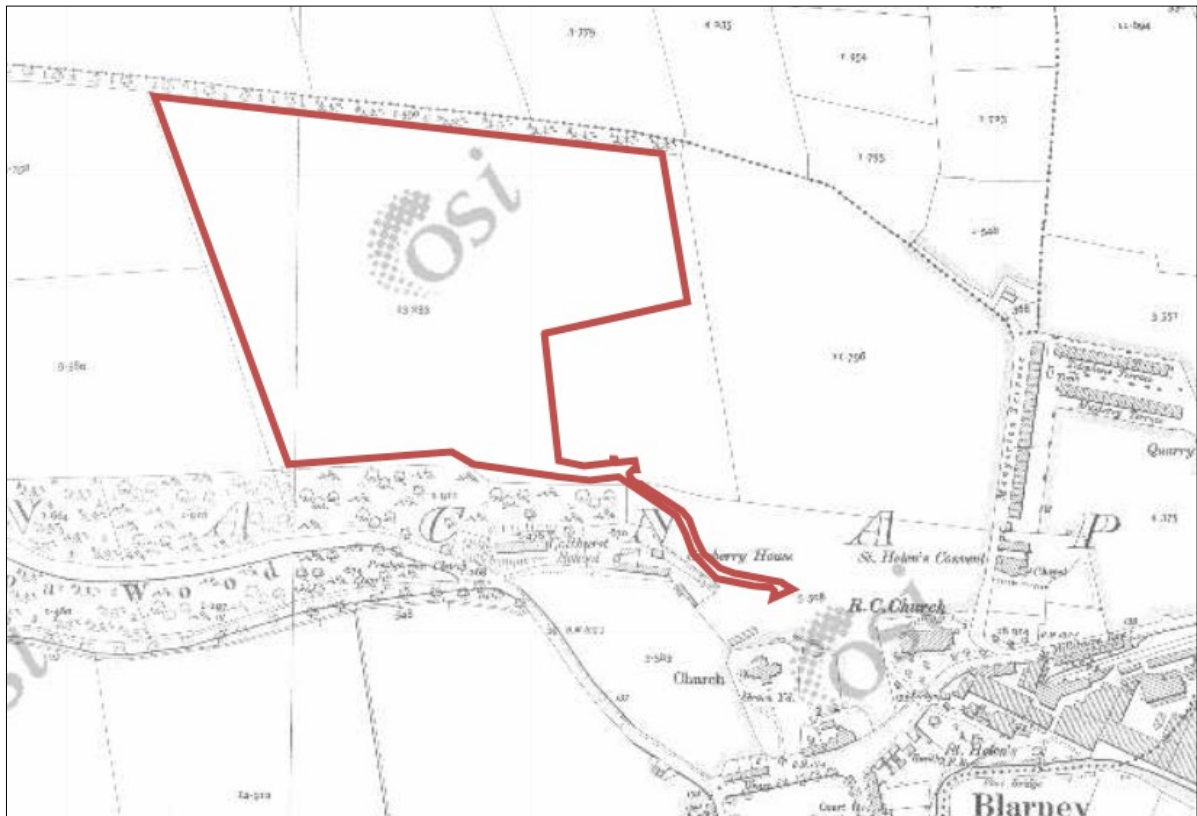


Figure 6: Extract from 25-inch edition OS map showing general location of the proposed development site (outlined in red) (Source: www.archaeology.ie)

Placenames

The proposed development is located entirely within the townland of Monacnappa. A further four townlands are located within the *circa* 500m study area (Knockacorbally, Knocknasuff, Shean Lower and Shean Upper). Townlands are the smallest unit of land division in the Irish landscape and many preserve early Gaelic territorial boundaries that pre-date the Anglo-Norman conquest. The layout and nomenclature of Irish townlands was recorded and standardised by the work of the Ordnance Survey in the 19th century. The Irish translations of the townlands names often refer to natural topographical features but name elements may also give an indication of the presence of past human activity within the townland, e.g. dun, lios or rath indicate the presence of a ringfort while temple, saggart, termon or kill record an association with a church site. The Irish origins and translations for the townlands within the study area were sought from www.logainm.ie.

Table 2: Translation of Townland names (source www.logainm.ie):

Townland	Irish root	Translation and notes
Knockacorbally	Cnoc an Chorrbaile	cnoc <i>hill</i> baile <i>townland, town, homestead</i>
Knocknasuff	Cnoc na Subh	cnoc <i>hill</i> 'Cnoc na subh, hill of the strawberries' - (1840-Note)
Monacnappa	Móin an Chnaipe	móin (also: mónaidh) bogland 'móin a chnaipe, Bog of the button' - (1840-Note)
Shean Lower	An Sián Íochtarach	sián <i>fairy mound</i> 'siadhán, fairy fort' - (1840-Note)
Shean Upper	An Sián Uachtarach	sián <i>fairy mound</i> siadhán, fairy fort' - (1840-Note)

4. Description of site

An archaeological field survey of the subject site was undertaken on Tuesday 19 May 2020. Bright weather conditions provided excellent landscape visibility (see **Appendix 2** for extracts from the photographic record of the field survey).

The site consists of a large, open arable field which slopes steeply downwards to the south. The field is irregular in shape and is accessed at the southeast corner via Sunberry Drive. It is bounded to the east by the Sunberry Drive and Castleowen housing estates and an area of woodland to the south. Tree-lined hedgerows form the northern and western boundaries with a townland boundary behind the northern hedgerow.



Figure 6: Recent aerial image centred over the subject site (Source: www.archaeology.ie)

The first edition six-inch-to-one-mile Ordnance Survey (OS) map shows the application site as comprising four complete smaller fields and as a portion of two larger fields. The first-edition map shows a small cluster of buildings in the centre of the lands. No surface trace of these farm structures was observed during the site inspection. Intensive ploughing of the lands in recent decades would have removed any surface trace of such structures which were not shown on later OS map editions. Recent aerial images (see **Figure 6** above) show the field as an open arable field with nothing of archaeological potential apparent; this is confirmed during the walkover survey when nothing of archaeological interest was observed.

It was noted during the site inspection that the mature woodland belt to the south of the application site screens and blocks views towards Blarney Castle to the south (see **Plate 5 in Appendix 2**). It is only as one reaches the upper section of the lands that the parapet and upper section of Blarney Castle comes into view. No development is proposed within this upper section of the subject lands.

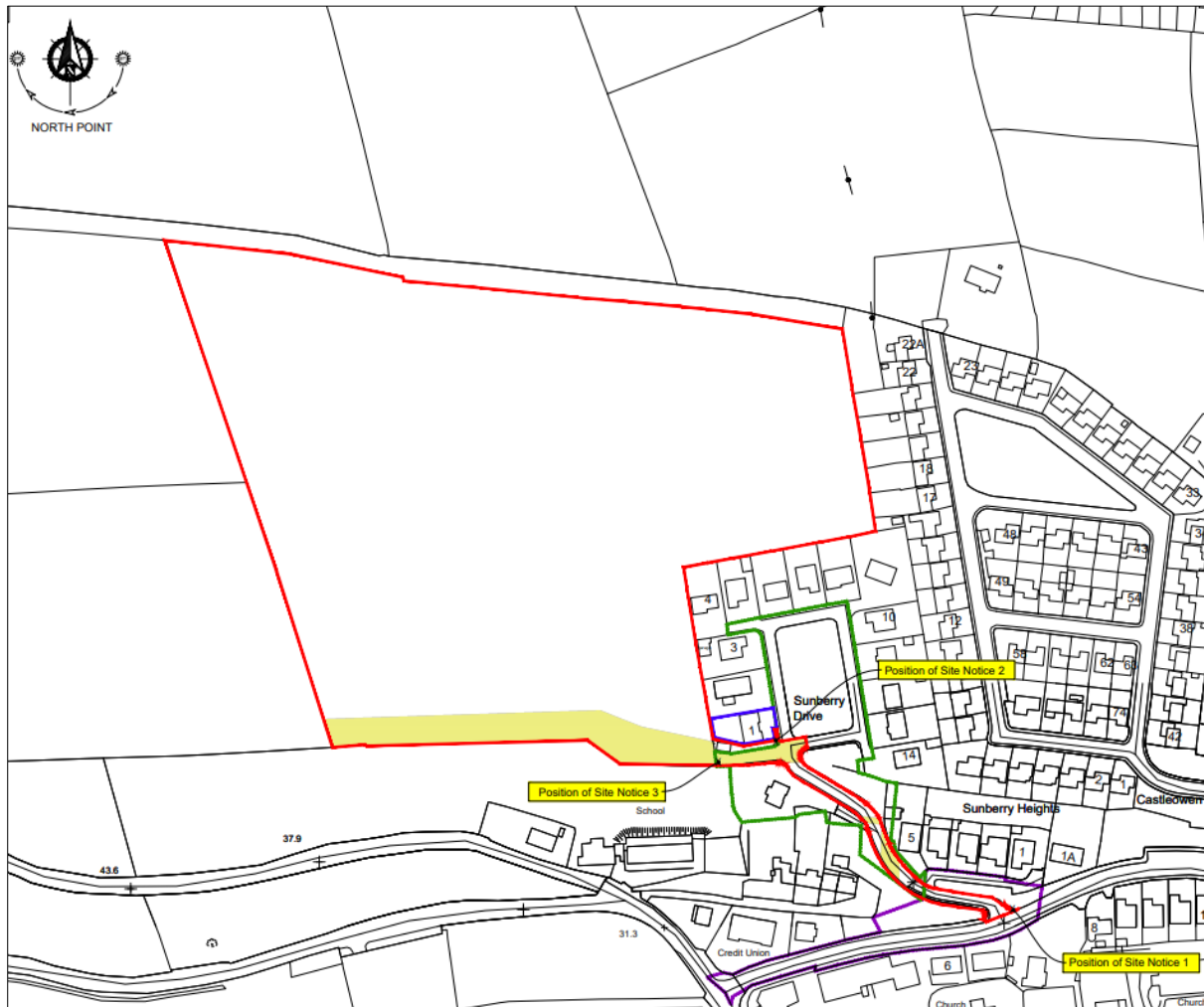


Figure 7: Graphic depicting the red-line boundary of the proposed SHD site

5. Assessment of impacts

For the following reasons it can be asserted that the proposed development site is of **low** archaeological potential:

- There are no recorded archaeological monuments located within the subject site and there are only three recorded monuments within 500 metres of the subject site (all of which are post-1700 in origin). The proposed development site is located approximately 650m to the north of Blarney Castle (Tower house - CO062-177----) and its associated archaeological features.
- Nothing of archaeological potential was identified in the historic cartographic sources (though a farmstead was depicted on the first edition OS map). It is clear from map regression that the area has retained its agricultural character with a number of field boundaries evidently altered across the subject site over time.
- The lands are sloped and have been intensively ploughed in recent decades. The archaeological potential is consequently low.

Notwithstanding these observations, the site does retain the **potential** to contain previously unrecorded features, finds and deposits of archaeological consequence sub-surface.

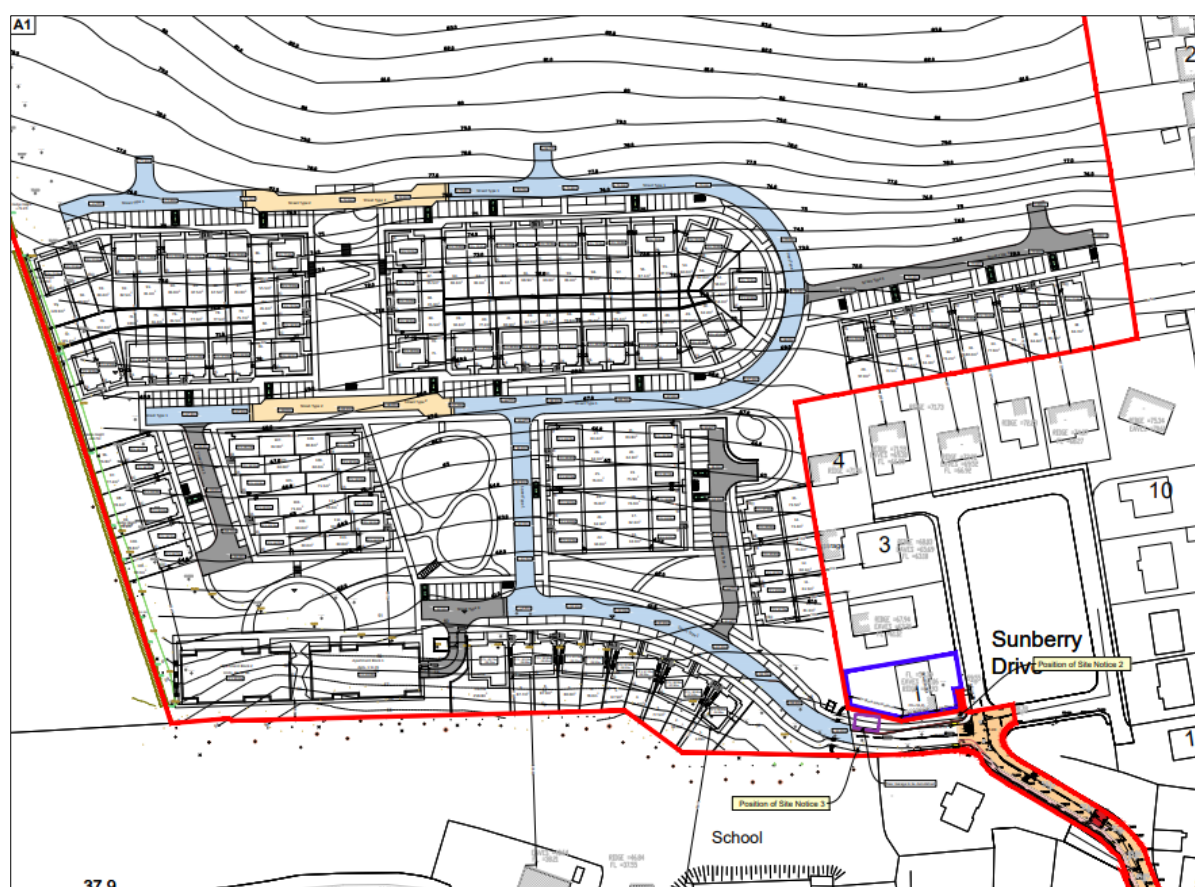


Figure 8: Site layout plan for the proposed development, no development is proposed for the northernmost, upper portion of the site

At a landscape level, the generated viewpoints of the proposed development and conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds has been noted. The view from Blarney Castle (“View 3” in the LVIA) shows that while upper portions of the proposed development will be visible, the visual effect is mitigated by the selection of traditional dark coloured slate materials for roof finishes. It is noted from the LVIA that:

The cut and fill strategy for the site also means that only a small proportion of house elevations will appear in the view. The development is otherwise screened by existing tree cover which will be augmented by tree planting measures throughout the site and along site boundaries thus ensuring the longevity of the local green infrastructure.

With regard to Objective GO-06 of the *Blarney Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan* Jan 2015, we note that the design strategy for the site includes the following key elements:

- Exclusion of development from the upper part of the site.
- Retention of site boundary vegetation and avoidance of impacts on trees along site boundaries.
- Cut and fill operations to optimise integration of the proposed development in the hillside setting.
- Provision of short, medium and long-term remedial mitigation measures in the form of tree planting across the site, on open spaces, along streets, within gardens and along embankments arising from cut and fill operations. The planting will supplement existing green infrastructure in providing a natural framework within which the development will be integrated as it matures.

The proposed development not give rise to any negative impact on the Blarney Architectural Conservation Area (as outlined by Cork County Council and as proposed by the “Proposed Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028” prepared by Cork City Council.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

This archaeological assessment was undertaken in order to assess the potential impacts on both the recorded and unrecorded archaeological heritage resource should a proposed strategic housing development proceed at the subject lands in Monacnappa, Blarney, Cork. The assessment has concluded that the proposed development will not give rise any significant direct or indirect archaeological impacts. Based on a combination of desk-based research and field survey, the evidence suggests that the site is of **low** archaeological potential.

Furthermore, the development will not give rise any negative impacts on the setting of Blarney Castle as there is no intervisibility between proposed construction areas and the castle. No development is proposed for the upper (northern) portions of the site where the parapet and upper section of Blarney Castle is visible.

The author concurs with the conclusion of the LVIA prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds, specifically that the proposed development will not compromise the Blarney Architectural Conservation Area or the landscape and heritage character of the area on which the local tourism economy relies, particularly in respect of Blarney Castle and the wider Blarney Estate as per planning guidance set out under 3.2.23 and 3.2.24 of the Blarney Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan.

Recommendations

Given that the site is of low archaeological potential, it is recommended that an **archaeological watching brief** be instigated during site development works; such works should be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist to assess if sub-surface archaeological remains exist within the proposed development site.

Consultations have been undertaken between John Cronin & Associates and the Cork City Council Archaeologist, Ms Ciara Brett, in relation to the archaeological potential of the subject site and the required level of archaeological mitigation (phone conversation, 26 February 2021). It was agreed that an archaeological watching brief is the appropriate level of archaeological mitigation in this case.

In the event that any sub-surface archaeological artefacts, features or deposits are identified within the site, ground works should be suspended in the area pending consultation and agreement with Cork City Council and the National Monuments Service on the appropriate mitigation strategy. Mitigation may include preservation *in situ* where feasible or full archaeological excavation and recording where archaeological remains cannot be preserved *in situ* due to ground reduction.

7. References/sources

Published works

Aalen, F.H.A. *et al* (1997) *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*. Cork University Press, Cork

Lewis, S. (1837) *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*. Lewis and Son, London.

Internet resources

Blarney Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan (accessed 12/09/21):
<http://corklocalareaplans.com/blarney-macroom-municipal-district/>

Cork City Council's "Proposed Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028" (accessed 12/09/21):
<https://www.corkcity.ie/en/proposed-cork-city-development-plan-2022-2028/draft-plan-documents/phase-2-draft-development-plan-2022-2028/volume-3-specific-built-heritage-objectives/>

Cork County Development Plan 2014 (access 15/05/2020): <https://www.corkcoco.ie/.../cork-county-development-plan-2014>

Database of Irish Archaeological Excavations (accessed 15/05/2020)
<http://www.excavations.ie/>

Government of Ireland's Historic Environment Viewer (accessed 16/04/2020)
<http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>

Placenames database (accessed 15/05/2020) <https://www.logainm.ie/en/>

Trinity College Dublin's Down Survey resource (accessed 15/05/2020)
<http://downsurvey.tcd.ie>

Appendix 1: Summaries of Archaeological Excavations

These summaries of archaeological excavations have been sourced from the Database of Irish Excavation Reports (www.excavations.ie).

<i>Location</i>	<i>Licence</i>	<i>Description</i>
Stoneview, Blarney, Cork	06E0332	<p>A programme of archaeological investigations was carried out in advance of a large residential development to the north-east of Blarney village. There are thirteen RMP sites within the proposed development area. There is now no visible trace of six fulachta fiadh and the site of a stone row located within the former Blarney golf-course, constructed in the 1990s. No archaeological investigation was carried out at the time of construction. Three monuments on the site, including two mounds of field-clearance material and a rock outcrop known locally as the 'Fairy Queen Grave', have been designated as non-archaeological by the Cork Archaeological Survey. A geophysical survey of all the remaining monuments within the development site was carried out by Target Geophysics (06R0070) and identified potential archaeological remains of only one of the recorded monuments (C0062-199, a levelled fulacht fiadh).</p> <p>Two programmes of test-trenching were carried out in all areas to be impacted on by the proposed development. Phase I identified the remains of thirteen features of potential archaeological origin. Phase II identified the remains of a further 28 features, including the disturbed remains of fulachta fiadh noted within the zone of potential archaeological potential for sites C0062-192, C0062-211 and C0062-212 and the relatively intact remains of fulachta fiadh at sites C0062-199 (identified by geophysics) and C0062-213. Nothing of an archaeological nature was identified during testing of the remaining RMP sites within the development.</p> <p>Excavation of the features to be impacted on by the infrastructural element of the development was carried out over fourteen weeks. Five areas were opened. The majority of features excavated in Areas 1, 2 and 4 were non-archaeological in origin. Two heat-shattered stone spreads, separated by a stream, were identified in Area 3. Excavation of the spread north of the stream exposed an earth-cut trough (1.2m by 2m) cut by a later stone-lined rectangular trough (0.6-1.1m by 4.42m, 0.22m deep). A hearth site (0.9m by 0.5m, 0.18m deep), set within a rough stone kerb to the south of the troughs, was associated with the earlier trough. Two further hearths were identified. South of the stream an area of compacted stones (c. 7.5m by 2.5m) formed a trackway of probable 19th-century date. Excavation of the southerly spread of heat-shattered stone exposed two subcircular troughs (1.8m by 2m; 1.2m by 1.8m). A cluster of close-set post-holes was exposed close to one of the troughs.</p>

<i>Location</i>	<i>Licence</i>	<i>Description</i>
		The removal of a large spread of heat-shattered stone in Area 5 exposed seven cut features, which included troughs, a roasting pit and a possible shelter. Post-holes along two sides of a shallow sub-rectangular feature (1.6m by 2.4m) cut into the slope of the hill suggest use as a shelter. Stake-holes within an oval cut (2.2m by 3.65m) with an oxidised base may have been for a spit. A circular pit (c. 1.3m diameter) with an oxidised base may have been for roasting. Two, of four, troughs were rectangular (c. 2.3m by 1.3m). The remaining two were irregularly shaped cuts. All were filled with a deposit of charcoal-enriched heat-shattered stone. A small area of burnt bone post-dated the fulacht fiadh features.
Badger Cave, Blarney, Cork	07E0672	Badger Cave is located outside and to the west-north-west of the bawn wall of Blarney Castle. It consists of one main passage (35m long) with two short connecting fissures (7m and 13m long respectively) extending from the south-eastern wall. The developer wanted to enable visitor access to the cave, which required the excavation of a pathway, 23m long by 1m wide by 0.8m deep, through the main cave passage. Due to the proximity of the cave to Blarney Castle, the work was monitored. Approximately 50% of all excavated deposits were wet-sieved through 3mm sieves outside the cave. Over 340 animal bones were recovered, but specialist analysis indicated they were natural occurrences and of relatively recent origin. The only find of archaeological significance was the proximal end of a flint flake, which has been identified as probably Neolithic in date.
Knockacorbally, Blarney	08E0789	Monitoring of topsoil removal associated with the construction of two reservoirs at Knockacorbally, Blarney, Co. Cork, was undertaken over one day. Topsoil measuring c. 0.3m in thickness was removed over an area measuring c. 100m east-west by 50m. Natural subsoil and bedrock was exposed throughout the site and no archaeological finds, features or deposits were uncovered
Curraghnalaght, Blarney, Cork	14E0164	Pre-planning test trenching of this site was undertaken in advance of applying to build a dwelling house in a field adjoining a ringfort. Seven test trenches were excavated across the site. The ditch of the ringfort was revealed in one of the trenches extending 4.6m into the previously agreed 20m buffer zone between the monument and the proposed development. The development was moved 25m from the edge of the ringfort to accommodate a buffer zone of 20.4m.
Curraghnalaght, Blarney, Cork	17E0326	Four trenches were excavated across the proposed development site following a geophysical survey. No features or finds of archaeological significance were revealed.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Licence</i>	<i>Description</i>
Curraghnalaght, Coolowen, Blarney, Cork	17E0415	Monitoring of topsoil removal associated with the construction of a dwelling house at Curraghnalaght, Coolowen, Blarney, Co. Cork was undertaken in September 2017 on foot of a condition of planning permission. The site is not located within any zones of notification, however, the nearest monument is located c. 74m to the south-west and consists of a cropmarked enclosure (CO062-233). No finds or features of archaeological significance were uncovered on the site during monitoring.
Curraghnalaght, Coolowen, Blarney, Cork	18E0376	Monitoring of ground reduction for an extension to a house was carried out. No features or finds of archaeological significance were revealed.
Coolowen, Blarney, Cork	19E0232	Testing was undertaken at Coolowen, Blarney, Co Cork on May 13 2019 to fulfill a request for further information from Cork County Council. The planning reference number is 19/04018. Cork County Council requested that pre-development testing be undertaken at the single house site to ensure there is no sub-surface archaeology within the proposed development site associated with CO062-232 Earthwork and CO062-204 Enclosure. There are four archaeological sites, enclosure CO062-233, enclosure CO062-204, earthwork CO062-232 and ringfort CO062-194, located to the west (on the other side of a public road) in Curraghnalaght townland and a fifth site, a standing stone CO062-193, is located 130m to the north. A total of five test trenches were excavated by machine using a flat grading bucket on the footprint of the proposed foundations of the house. Subsoil was recorded in all the trenches at a depth of 0.3-0.4m below ground level. It was an orange-brown sandy clay with stone inclusions. No archaeological features, stratigraphy or artefacts were recorded in any of the five trenches.

Appendix 2: Photographic record



Plate 1: Proposed entrance from Sunberry Drive



Plate 2: View north-north-west across interior of subject site – note sloped nature of the site



Plate 3: View north-east across interior of subject site – note sloped nature of the site



Plate 4: View along mature tree belt that defines the southern boundary of the site



Plate 5: View south towards Blarney Castle from the centre of the site – the mature tree belt along the southern boundary of the site acts as a visual buffer



Plate 6: View SE towards Blarney town centre from the centre of the site