



M1 DUNDALK WESTERN BYPASS

SITE 128: FAUGHART LOWER 1, 2 & 3
CHAINAGE 25,415 – 25,570
NGR 305326/310851

FINAL REPORT

ON BEHALF OF
LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL and the
NATIONAL ROADS AUTHORITY

LICENSEE: SHANE DELANEY MA
LICENCE NUMBER: 03E1397

JULY 2009

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. (IAC Ltd.) funded by Louth County Council and the National Roads Authority, undertook an excavation in the townland of Faughart Lower c.2km north of Dundalk in advance of the construction of the Dundalk Western Bypass (DWB) (Figure 1).

Resolution excavation of Site 128, Faughart 1, 2 & 3, was completed between Chainage 25.415 – 25.570 (NGR 305326/310851). Topsoil stripping of the area commenced on the 28th of August 2003 and the fieldwork was completed on the 19th of September 2003. Archaeological fieldwork was directed by Shane Delaney of Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. (IAC Ltd.).

The archaeological excavations followed a detailed programme of archaeological test trenching carried out in order to define the location, nature and extent of potential archaeological remains along the route of the Dundalk Western Bypass. Site 128, at Faughart 1, 2 & 3 was identified during archaeological test trenching, revealing a burnt mound which was situated on the edge of wetland formed by the convergence of two streams. Two further areas of potential archaeology were also investigated on higher ground to the east. These proved to be a possible hut site, a number of undated features probably representing field clearance and evidence of modern agricultural activity. The timbers from the wood-lined trough were sent for species identification prior to radiocarbon 14 dating and were identified as hazel and alder. A radiocarbon date was obtained from wood samples retrieved from the timbers (**C49**) and returned a Middle Bronze Age date for the site (Cal.1390BC-1120BC).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The archaeological excavation at Site 128, Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3, County Louth was carried out on behalf of Louth County Council and the National Roads Authority in advance of the construction of the M1 Dundalk Western Bypass.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report provides comment and analysis on the excavation carried out in the townland of Faughart Lower at Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3 (Site 128), c.2km to the north of Dundalk, Co. Louth as part of an archaeological mitigation programme associated with the Dundalk Western Bypass (DWB). Archaeological fieldwork was directed by Shane Delaney of Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. (IAC Ltd.) and was funded by Louth County Council and the National Roads Authority.

1.1 Site location

Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3 were located in Faughart Lower townland (Figure 1), to the west of the Faughart Road (R97), c.2km north of Dundalk (Louth OS sheet 004). The site is located on low-lying ground to the east of the main Dublin/Belfast railway embankment. The site is:

- Site 128, Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3, Excavation Licence 03E01397, Ch. 25,415 – 25,570, NGR, 305326/31085.

The site was identified as a result of archaeological test trenching undertaken by IAC Ltd. in March 2002 (Licence Ref.: 02E0658). The main feature of the site (the burnt spread) was situated on the edge of wetland, formed where two streams converge (to form the Raskeagh Stream) to the east of the railway embankment. This appears to follow the stream pattern prior to the construction of the railway embankment. This shallow stream valley is flanked by higher ground to the north and south. The stream follows a general east-west route. It is overlooked from higher well drained ground along its northern edge.

1.2 The scope of the project

General

Louth County Council proposed to construct a motorway called the 'Dundalk Western Bypass – Northern Link'. The scheme also included ancillary roads and other structures.

The Dundalk Western Bypass – Northern Link connected the existing Dunleer-Dundalk Motorway, which terminated in the area of the N52 Ardee Road, to the N1 Ballymascanlan Roundabout in an arc situated c.2.5km - 3km to the west and north of Dundalk.

The scheme was divided into two sections. Section 1 (7.8km main centre line chainage (Ch)) ran from Ch16.000 to Ch23.870 (the Armagh Road, R177). Work on the southern end of Section 1 was previously commenced so that the main cutting and rough surfacing for the road had been completed to chainage point Ch17.100. The chainage zone Ch16.000 – 17.100 had therefore not been investigated archaeologically under the present contract. Section 2 (2.08km main centre line chainage) ran from the Armagh Road Ch23.870 to the Ballymascanlan Roundabout, Ch25.950.

Therefore the archaeological potential of the route represented a distance of 8.49km (Ch17.100 – 25.950). The route corridor varied between 60m and 200m (not including side roads) and was on average 100m wide. The archaeological site area was thus approximately 85 hectares.

Specific

Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3 (Site 128) site lies between Ch25,415 and Ch25,570.

An area approximately 80m x 40m was opened over Faughart Lower 1 & 2 and 43m x 25m opened over Faughart Lower 3 (Figure 3).

1.3 Circumstances and dates of fieldwork

The excavations were undertaken to offset the adverse impact of road construction on known and potential subsoil archaeological remains in order to preserve these sites by record.

Topsoil stripping of the area commenced on Thursday the 28th of August 2003 and the fieldwork was completed on the 19th September 2003. The order and date of the excavation is as follows:

After initial bulk stripping the area of excavation was hand cleaned in order to identify potential archaeological remains. All features were subsequently fully excavated and recorded by hand, using the single context recording system with plans and sections being produced at a scale of 1:50 and 1:20 (sections were recorded generally at 1:10) and photographs where necessary. All works were carried out in agreement with the Project Archaeologist and the National Monuments Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (formerly *Dúchas*-The Heritage Service). Samples were taken of the timber from the wood-lined trough and charcoal for species identification and radio carbon dating analysis.

It was agreed in advance that adequate funds to cover excavation, post-excavation, conservation and dating analysis would be made available by Louth County Council. Dating of the site involved pottery analysis through typological study and radiocarbon analysis. The site archive, and any finds, samples *et cetera* were kept in safe storage by IAC Ltd. during the post-excavation stage.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following archaeological and historical background refers to the wider archaeological landscape through which the DWB passes.

The town of Dundalk lies at the northern end of Dundalk Bay and is the administrative centre of County Louth, located in the north-east of Leinster. The area spans two geographical areas. To the west, the rural landscape surrounding the urban district consisted of undulating topography, with low drumlins rising to 30-40m from the coastal plain. As is the case with much of Louth, this covers thick strata of Ordovician and Silurian slates, with some rock outcrops (Gosling 1993, 237) notable. To the east of the urban district, the flat, low lying coastal plain is comprised of recent estuarine and alluvial clays and silts, shaped by the sea level changes following the end of the Ice Age period in Ireland c.10,000 years ago.

At the time of the earliest habitation in Ireland, (Early Mesolithic Period c.7000BC), the sea submerged the area of the town to a depth of 4-5m, although it continued to retreat to its present level until the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age period (c.2400BC), replacing the submerged area with salt marshes and tidal flats. At various stages from the 17th century onwards, these areas were improved by reclamation projects.

The proposed route for the Dundalk Western Bypass–Northern Link is located within an area that avoids the major recorded archaeological monuments in the vicinity. This is a particularly rich archaeological landscape but the great majority of known sites lie beyond the perimeter of the original study area. It is important to note, however, that a significant number of sites in this part of Co Louth survive as crop marks, where the above ground indication of the monument has been destroyed. The recognition of such monuments has often been the result of chance discovery from ploughing and construction work, or by observation from the air where the distinctive traces of the buried features can sometimes be observed. The strong tradition of arable agriculture in the locality has been largely responsible for this occurrence.

2.1 Prehistoric Period (7000BC-AD500)

The archaeological record provides evidence that the locality was occupied from the Late Mesolithic period (c.4200BC) onwards, with the excavation of Mesolithic shell midden sites with flint material at Rockmarshall, c.5km from the town of Dundalk.

Above ground, a large, granite standing stone known locally as *Dealg Fhinn* (LH 007-118-06) is the only remaining visible reminder of the prehistoric occupation of the area. Another standing stone, on the Bellew's Bridge Road, was removed at the beginning of the twentieth century. The pollen record for this area during the prehistoric period indicates that the indigenous forestry was not cleared and replaced by cereals until farming in Ireland was well into its second millennium (3000BC - 2500BC).

2.1.1 The Neolithic Period (c.4000-2500BC)

The vast majority of the archaeological evidence for this period is to be found at the 4-5m (25ft) contour, which reflects the coastline during the maximum post-glacial marine transgression, and it has been suggested that this settlement location would have

facilitated the exploitation of the higher ground for farming and the lower ground for summer grazing (Gosling 1993, 242). There is a concentration of Megalithic tombs in the Flurry Valley to the northeast of the site at Donaghmore 4 (with the nearest example located at Faughart Lower (LH004-062), c. 6 km to the northeast) and scattered throughout the Cooley peninsula. The tomb at Faughart Lower appears to be a small passage tomb with a wedge-shaped chamber and is incorporated into a field boundary. The north, south and east sides each consist of a split boulder. Two imbricated stones represent an entrance opening to the southwest and the chamber is covered by a single roof stone. Archaeological discoveries elsewhere on the DWB scheme revealed Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age habitation activity at Site 115, Newtownbalregan 5 (Bayley, D. forthcoming (c)), located c.4.3km south-west of Site 1129 and the truncated remains of a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age House identified at Site 101, Littlemill 1 (O Donnachada, B. forthcoming (d)), located c.6.05km to the southwest of the site. A collection of pits dating to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age were identified at Site 103, Littlemill 4 & 5 (O Donnachadha, B. forthcoming (c)), c.6.01km southwest of Site 109 (Donaghmore 4) and a number of Neolithic huts with associated pits were excavated at Site 124, Carn More 1 (Delaney, S. forthcoming (b)), located 1.5km west of the site. A middle Neolithic to Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Beaker settlement was also identified at Site 108, Donaghmore 1 (O Donnachadha, B. forthcoming (e)) which is located 5.2km to the southwest.

2.1.2 The Bronze Age (c.2500-500BC)

From the relatively scant prehistoric archaeological evidence, there are indications that the area was not densely settled until the beginning of the Bronze Age (2400 BC). The vast majority of the archaeological evidence for this period is to be found at the 4-5m (25ft) contour, which reflects the coastline during the maximum post-glacial marine transgression, and it has been suggested that this settlement location would have facilitated the exploitation of the higher ground for farming and the lower ground for summer grazing (Gosling 1993, 242). Bronze Age activity is distributed fairly evenly across the study area. These are indicated in the antiquarian drawings of Wright at the Castletown/Kilcurry confluence.

Site 128 at Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3 consisted of a burnt mound. Over 4500 burnt mounds have been recorded in the country making them the most prevalent prehistoric monuments in Ireland (Waddell, 1998, 174). *Burnt Mounds* generally consist of low mounds of burnt stone, commonly in a horse-shoe shape and are found in low-lying marshy areas or close to streams. The number of these sites are ever increasing as a result, in most instances, of development-led archaeological investigations. In some cases burnt mounds can occur in clusters, with a complex of 18 previously unrecorded sites excavated in 2001 on the N11 Newtownmountkennedy to Ballynabarney road scheme by Archaeological Development Services Ltd. (ADS Ltd 2001) in Co. Wicklow. In Co. Louth, there are 18 recorded burnt mounds noted in the Records of Monuments and Places, a figure which must be regarded as a minimum representative of the original number (Buckley & Sweetman, 1991). This is further supported by the discovery of 4 burnt mounds as part of the DWB scheme at Newtownbalregan 1.1, Newtownbalregan 5 and Site 102 at Littlemill 2.

Although burnt mounds of shattered stone occur as a result of various activities that have been practised from the Mesolithic to the present day, those noted in close proximity to a trough are generally interpreted as Bronze Age (c.2400-c. 500BC) cooking sites which were probably associated with a mobile or nomadic population, and are

referred to as burnt mounds or *fulachta fiadh*. The timbers from the wood-lined trough at Faughart Lower were subject to radiocarbon dating analysis and the data returned indicated that the site dated to the Middle Bronze Age period c.1390-1120BC (3011+/-36 BP).

Other Bronze Age discoveries along the DWB consist of an Early Bronze Age Beaker (2400-2200BC) habitation at Site 112, Newtownbalregan 2 (Bayley, D. forthcoming (e)), located c.4.6km southwest of Site 128. A number of Bronze Age ring-barrows, a cist and a cairn were excavated at Site 127, Carn More 5 (Bayley, D. forthcoming (g)), located c.1.5km west of Site 128.

2.1.3 The Iron Age (500BC-500AD)

There is a marked lack of known Iron Age (500BC-AD500) activity. The ring barrow identified at Site 131, Donaghmore 7 (Ó Donnachadha, B. forthcoming (g)) is the sole example of a definitive Iron Age site identified through the DWB archaeological investigations. The site consists of a small ring barrow and a single piece of unworked flint was found in the barrow with remains of three charred wooden planks found within the barrow ditch. These were taken for specialist analysis and were submitted for Carbon 14 dating. The dates returned confirmed that the ring barrow belongs to the Iron Age period, specifically the mid-Iron Age based on Cal 120BC-60BC. .

2.2 Early Medieval Period (AD500-1169)

The study area lies within a rich early medieval landscape. By far the most numerous type of monument to be recorded within the study area is the 'enclosure' site. This tends to be equated with the dispersed farmstead of the pre-twelfth-century era, known as the ringfort or rath. Such sites are classically identified as circular enclosures of c.30m internal diameter with a series of earthen banks and fosses outside to define the boundary and protect the complex. Site 13 on the DWB for example was identified as a possible ringfort in the EIS (March 2000). These were the homes of farmers who practiced a mixed-farming economy. Ringforts are one of the most common site types in north Co. Louth. Many have had their surface remains destroyed, with the banks ploughed back into the soil. To the north of the northern end of Section 1 there is a concentration of ringforts or earthworks.

Site 114 at Newtownbalregan 6 (Bayley, D. forthcoming (d)) consists of a ringfort and souterrain. The ringfort or rath is considered to be the most common indicator of settlement during the early medieval Period (c.500AD – c.1100 AD). The most recent study of the ringfort (Stout 2000) has suggested that there are a total of 45,119 potential ringforts or enclosure sites throughout Ireland. They are typically enclosed by an earthen bank and exterior ditch, and range from 25m to 50m in diameter. The smaller sized and single banked type (univallate) were more likely to be home to the lower ranks of society while larger examples with more than one bank (bivallate/trivallate) housed the more powerful kings and lords. At Site 124, Carn More 1 (Delaney, S. forthcoming (b)), (Area 1) a ringfort identified in the RMP as LH004-067 was excavated in advance of the motorway's construction, with the RMP originally listing the monument as a circular enclosure.

Souterrains are artificial underground structures, usually built of dry stone walling and comprising of passages and chambers with creeps connecting them. Souterrains are generally regarded as having had a defensive or protective function, as evidenced by the complex construction of many of the sites, with narrow winding passages, deliberate

obstructions and small chambers. Raiding was endemic to early medieval society, and souterrains are thought to have served to house portable valuables and non-combatants during a raid. There is a previously recorded souterrain located 30m to the east of the CPO line at Ch17.640 (LH007-071).

The historical sources for the early medieval period indicate that the main population group in north Louth was the *Conaille Muirtheimne*. They controlled the areas of *Cuaigne* (Cooley) and *Mag Muirtheimne* (Plain of *Muirtheimne*)-corresponding to the area south of Dundalk, roughly equating with the modern baronies of Lower and Upper Dundalk. It has been suggested (Gosling 1993, 46) that the ancient boundaries of this kingdom may coincide with the dense concentration of souterrains in north Louth. Though nominally a branch of the *Ulaid*, who had their capital at *Eamain Mhaca* or Navan Fort, Co. Armagh, the *Conaille Muirtheimne* appear to have been subject to the kingdom of *Brega* at the time of its greatest political cohesion, during the first half of the 7th century A.D. Their earliest appearance in the annals is in 688 A.D. as allies of the Knowth branch of the *Síl nÁeda Sláine* at the battle of *Imblech Pich* (Emlagh, Co. Meath), which was a key event in the political fragmentation of the *Síl nÁeda Sláine* dynasty. They were subsumed by the *Airgialla* in the early 12th century.

The *burnt mound* identified at Site 102, Littlemill 2 was Carbon 14 dated to Cal. 890AD - 1250AD (968 $\pm$ 85BP). Site 102, Littlemill 2 is roughly circular in shape and it is suggested that these sites which are identified as Early Medieval and Medieval in dating, tend to be circular to oval in shape with no evidence for pit lining (O'Neill, pers.comm, 2007). The example at Littlemill 2, however is lined with a wooden planks.

2.3 Medieval Period (AD1169-1700)

The motte and bailey at Castletown (LH 007-118-07) located c. 4.5km southwest of Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3, represents the initial phase of Anglo-Norman activity in the area. The decision to create a motte and bailey as an initial Anglo-Norman base was the easiest way to construct a headquarters, in contrast to the construction of stone castle structures that required substantial time, materials and organisation. It is not the case however that these constructions were always replaced by a stone structure. Although there are some suggestions that John de Courcy was responsible for this development, it is generally accepted that it represents the initial headquarters of the de Verdon family in their new territory. The Anglo-Normans were responsible for the construction of a network of towns throughout Ireland with Louth being the most urbanised county.

The land in Castletown and around Dundalk was granted to the Anglo-Norman Bertram de Verdon following his arrival in 1185, and corresponds to the modern barony of Upper Dundalk (Gosling, 1993, 252). The de Verdon estate passed onto the Bellews with many of the tower houses constructed at this time. The Bellews contributed two large examples in 1472 and 1479, of which only the later survives, in the grounds of St. Louis convent (LH007-11801). The earlier tower house is known to have stood at Castletown cross (LH007-11803), but no trace of the tower house survive above ground. In 1429, Henry IV introduced a £10 subsidy was given to encourage the King's 'liege men' to build tower houses in Louth, as well as the rest of the Pale, which was so successful that twenty years later a limit was imposed on their construction. In County Louth, as well as Kildare and Meath, the towers were mostly concentrated along the borders of the Pale (Davin 1982). The surviving tower house at Castletown (LH007-11801) most likely functioned as the centre of the Bellew manor of Dundalk during the 15th century.

Garstin's map of 1655 shows it protected by a bawn wall, which also enclosed outhouses.

For information of the Anglo-Norman land ownership we are dependent on documentary sources, and in Louth this information is recorded in the 'Dowdall deeds'. The lack of documentary sources and archaeological excavations in the area, have led to large gaps in the record regarding the size of the Anglo-Norman settlement and how it was laid out. By the 13th century it seems that Castletown had its own church and burgesses. Garstin's map does point out the existence of burgage plots and streets in the vicinity of Mill road and Castletown cross. A watermill, most likely attached to the manor, is known from documentary sources although its precise location is not known. The Anglo-Normans were responsible for the network of towns throughout the country, with Louth being the most heavily urbanised county (Barry 1987, 118).

At this time however the new town of Dundalk, which lies roughly c. 2km to the east of Castletown, developed as the major urban centre. This was due to its market centre and port in addition to its more strategic sitting along with the fact that it was on the major routeway linking Dublin with Ulster. It is probable that another factor influencing the move of the de Verdons was the nature of the topography of the general area. The unsatisfactory nature of the river at the Castletown location must have made it inaccessible to shipping even in the late 12th century. The new town also had the advantage of considerable natural defences. The site of the new town, which was to grow into the modern town of Dundalk, was thus better situated than Castletown from a commercial and defensive perspective. As Dundalk developed and became the focus for Anglo-Norman settlement in the area, Castletown fell into decline and Dundalk became the economic pulse of the Lordship. The precise date for the foundation of the *newtown* was established is unclear. Certainly by the late 13th century surviving property deeds make the distinction between the late 12th century settlement at Castletown and the Newtown or '*nove ville de Dundalc*'.

As a result of the low-lying nature of the surrounding land and the shape of the gravel ridge on which the Newtown (Dundalk) was located, the town developed a markedly linear aspect which can still be seen to this day.

2.4 Post-medieval (1700-1900)

Post-medieval archaeological remains identified in the study area relate to industrial structures particularly mills and kilns surrounding the Castletown and Kilcurry River waters, with these structures usually being served by a mill race. A mill and associated race occur near to the Castletown-Kilcurry confluence. A quarry for limestone is also situated to the north of the road-take. Small scale extraction cuts are also known sunk into natural rock outcrops such as the one at Ch19,200.

Site 102 at Littlemill 2 (O Donnachadha, B. forthcoming (f)) contained the remains of a post-medieval structure, which cartographic evidence demonstrates supports its existence at this location since the first edition OS map dating to 1836. It is probable that this structure was a small vernacular style residence accompanied by a small farmyard as was typical of the area and indeed most of Ireland during the 19th century.

At Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4 (Delaney, S. forthcoming (d)), the subsurface remains of a north-south oriented masonry structure was recorded. The foundations measured 21m in length and 6.5m in width and consisted of two rooms. The building appears to have been

of 19th century construction based on the artefactual evidence and identifiable construction methods, however, the structure is not depicted on the 1835 or the 1908-9 1:10, 560 scale Ordnance Survey editions. Anecdotal evidence from a local landowner notes that a structure formerly located at this site was demolished around the mid 20th century; it is likely the building dates from the later 19th century and fell out of use at the same time as the Scotch Green Mill.

Site 118, Balregan 5 & 6 (Delaney, S. forthcoming (e)), contained the remains of a post-medieval water mill, which even in its ruinous condition showed a complete example of this form. Millrace, millpond, main sluices, internal wheel race and a number of main rooms along with the access road and access road and yard for the mill buildings were present.

3 THE EXCAVATION

3.1 Introduction

The excavation of Site 128, Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3 was undertaken as part of the archaeological mitigation for the DWB in the townland of Faughart Lower.

3.2 Methodology

Topsoil stripping of the area commenced on 28th August 2003 and the fieldwork in the areas below was completed on 19th September 2003, using a team of one Supervisor and four Assistant Archaeologists.

The topsoil was removed by a machine equipped with a flat toothless bucket under strict archaeological supervision. After initial bulk stripping the area of excavation was hand cleaned in order to identify potential archaeological remains. All features were subsequently fully excavated and recorded by hand, using the single context recording system with plans and sections being produced at a scale of 1:50 and 1:20 (sections were recorded generally at 1:10) and photographs where necessary. All works were carried out in agreement with the Project Archaeologist and The National Monuments Section of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (formerly *Dúchas*-The Heritage Service).. All contexts are described in Appendix 1.

3.3 Legends and Brackets

In the following text, the authors have used three types of brackets:

- { } = These enclose Subgroup numbers.
- ( ) = These enclose Deposit numbers.
- [ ] = These enclose both Cut and Masonry Structure numbers.

CONTEXT KEY;

- prof = profile
- NSEW = Compass points, Eg; 'N-S' = North-South oriented feature
- All dimensions are given in metres
- d/l/w = depth/width/length
- s/m/lg = small/medium/large
- ang/sub-ang/rou/sub-rou = refer to stones, Eg; 's sub-ang' = small sub-angular stone
- mixed = ang + sub-ang + rou + sub-rou
- Dk/Lt = dark/light
- mod = moderate/moderately
- freq/occ = frequent/occasional
- ch = charcoal
- Hb/Ht = Human bone/teeth
- Ab/At = Animal bone/teeth
- frags/fls = fragments/flecks
- vert = vertical
- constr = construction
- sk = skeleton
- t'd/unx/s'd = truncated/unexcavated/segmented
- w/- = with
- pres = preservation

PERIOD KEY:

- PH: Prehistoric
- EM: Early Medieval
- MD: Medieval
- PM: Post-medieval
- MOD: Modern

4 EXCAVATION RESULTS

STRATIGRAPHY

4.1 GROUP 1: The Natural Drift Geology

4.1.1 SUBGROUP {1000}: Natural Drift Geology

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
2	Deposit	-	-	Natural subsoil	A mixture of compact yellow-grey sandy clay with frequent small, medium and large stone inclusions and loose grey river gravels.	Site

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The natural drift geology (**C2**) was a mixture of compact yellow-grey sandy clay with frequent small, medium and large stone inclusions and loose grey river gravels. The landscape comprised of two zones. Zone 1 on the higher ground was well drained and overlooked zone 2, a wetland area within a shallow stream valley below. This stream had been canalised in modern times, most probably during the construction of the railway embankment. This upland area was intensively tilled to the west (above Sites 1 & 2) and was pasture to the east (Site 3). Ploughing had resulted in a mixture of disturbed topsoil and subsoil slumping down slope sealing some of the peat by up to 1m.

On Site 1, the subsoil was largely comprised of loose grey river gravels. These extended under the peaty wetland along the base of the slope upon which Sites 2 and 3 were located. This area, at the base of the slope, was possibly the remains of a shallow lake, drained as a consequence of the canalisation of the stream to the south. This low-lying area surrounding the stream was extremely waterlogged and peaty and the peat was generally 0.30-0.60m deep.

4.2 GROUP 2: PREHISTORIC ACTIVITY

SITE 1: Burnt Mound

4.2.1 SUBGROUP {1001}: Burnt mound, trough and hearth

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
46	Fill	C47, C48	-	Burnt spread	Black, ch rich sandy peaty silt, freq heat shattered s,m,l mixed	1
47	Cut	-	C46	Trough	Linear, t'd on W, irreg prof & base, 0.5d x 2.5l x 1.5w, NW-SE.	1
48	Cut	-	C46	Pond	Sub-circ, vert sides slightly undercut on NW side, poss t'd on SE, flat base, 0.4d x 5.6l x 2.2w, SW-NE.	1
49	Timber s	54	-	Remnants of fire	Parallel timbers/branches, 2 layers, signs of charring + burning.	1
54	Cut	-	C49	Fire pit	Circ, shallow U-shaped profile, uneven base, 0.9d x 1.1l x 0.94w E-W.	1

Finds:

Find number	Context number	Material	Period	Comment (pot fabric & form etc)
1	49	45 Charred timbers and fragments		

Interpretation:

The subgroup {1001} consisted of two cut features, a trough [C47], and a probable pond [C48], and 45 charred timbers in two layers (C49), forming a hearth. The trough and hearth were sealed and filled by a deposit (C46), of charcoal-rich peaty silt and heat-shattered stone. [C47], the smaller of the two cuts lay to the west of (C49), and [C48] was to the east. To the south of {1001} was a canalised stream following the course of a post-medieval field boundary. Before canalisation this stream would have meandered through the wetland, repeatedly shifting its course and may have defined the southernmost extent of (C46).

[C47] was the smaller of the two cuts and comprised a shallow (0.1m) funnel-shaped trough expanding to a deeper (0.5m) circular cut at its east end. The wider opening was at the western end, and sloped gently from west to east. There were also narrow depressions along both the northern and southern edges of the trough cut, indicating the possible presence of a timber plank lining in antiquity to consolidate the potentially unstable sides of the cut. The sides consisted of the soft peat through which [C47] was cut. The deeper end of the trough cut through the peat and into the natural gravels below.

The feature [C48] appears to have been used as a pond perhaps acting like a cistern to supplement the water in the trough [C47]. The cut formed a large sub-circular shaped feature, truncated on the eastern edge by modern disturbance and the pond was cut through the peat and into the natural gravels. The west side of this pond appeared to be undercut slightly but this was likely to be a result of the soft, unsupported peat slumping. There was no evidence for a timber lining within the pond cut.

A hearth (C49) consisted of a platform of two layers of charred timber in the base of shallow hollow [C54]. These timbers were only partially carbonised and represent a short lived burning episode where the timbers became waterlogged and failed to burn

through. The hearth was probably used to heat stones before they were placed in the trough in order to raise the water temperature.

The timbers were sent for species identification (Appendix 2.1) prior to C14 dating and were identified as hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). A radiocarbon date was obtained from wood samples retrieved from the timbers (C49). The wood samples returned a date of 3011+/-36 BP (WK – 18554) (Appendix 2.2). The 2 Sigma calibrated results from this sample produced a date of Cal. 1390-1120 BC.

SITE 2: Pit and Possible Hut

4.2.2 SUBGROUP {1002}: Pit

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
19	Fill	C52	-	Fill of pit/Natural silting	Yellow brown, loose sandy silt, freq s ang & sub-ang.	2
52	Cut	-	C19, C53	Pit	Sub-circ, U-shaped prof, slightly conc base, 0.7d x 3.4l x 2.1.4w, N-S	2
53	Fill	C52	-	Fill of pit/Natural silting	Mid brown grey, loose silty clay occ m mixed	2

Finds:

Find number	Context number	Material	Period	Comment (pot fabric & form etc)
1	19	Flint	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Parallel sided blade

Interpretation:

The large pit [C52] naturally silted up with erosion from the sides and base (C53), and washed-in material (C19). The latter yielded a parallel sided flint blade which is characteristically prehistoric (Appendix 2.3). (C19) was cut by the foundation trench [C45], which contained flint debitage in a secure context (C18). Nothing was recovered that indicates a function for this pit.

4.2.3 SUBGROUP {1003}: Hut

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
18	Fill	C45	-	Natural silting	Mid grey brown silty clay, occ m, mod ch.	2
38	Fill	C42	-	Occupation debris	Dk brown silty sand, occ ch fl, occ s mixed	2
42	Cut	-	C38	Posthole	Oval, E side stepped, V-shaped prof, 0.8d x 0.29l x 0.2w NE-SW.	2
45	Cut	-	C18	Foundation trench	C-shaped, U-shaped prof, slightly conc base, 0.3d x 3.9l x 0.55w.	2

Finds:

Find number	Context number	Material	Period	Comment (pot fabric & form etc)
1	18	Struck flint flake		
2	18	Core fragment		
3	18	Burnt bone		

Interpretation:

The subgroup {1003} consisted of a possible temporary hut structure and comprised of a posthole [C42], naturally silted up with washed-in occupation debris (C38), and located in the centre of an area bounded by a curvilinear foundation trench [C45], which naturally silted up with (C18). The subgroup {1003} probably represents the foundations

of a small hut, the walls of which were probably set in the trench (however there was no evidence for this), with the roof supported by a post in [C42].

4.2.4 SUBGROUP {1004}: Hearth

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
15	Fill	C33	-	Natural silting	Very dk brown, silty sand, freq ch, mod s stones.	2
33	Cut	-	C15	Possible hearth	Sub-oval, shallow U-shaped prof, conc base, 0.15d x1.5l x0.6w E-W.	2

Finds:

Find number	Context number	Material	Period	Comment (pot fabric & form etc)
1	15	Burnt bone		

Interpretation:

The shallow cut [C33] was filled with a charcoal-rich deposit (C15). The fill was a mixture of *in-situ* debris from a fire, and washed-in material from the slope above the feature. Traces of reddening around the cut indicate that it may have been a relict hearth. Burnt bone recovered from the fill suggested a probable domestic function for the fire, but nothing was recovered to indicate either a date or an association with other features in the area.

4.2.5 SUBGROUP {1005}: Pit

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
16	Fill	C34	-	Natural silting	Mid dk brown, loose sandy silt, freq s mixed, occ m mixed	2
34	Cut	-	C16	Pit	Circ, U-shaped prof, conc base, 0.23d x 0.65 dia	2

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The pit [C34] in the subgroup {1005} had naturally silted up. Nothing was recovered from the fill to indicate either a function or a date for the feature.

4.2.6 SUBGROUP {1006}: Pit

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
17	Fill	C37	-	Natural silting	Red brown, loose sandy silt, occ m mixed, freq s mixed	2
37	Cut	-	C17	Posthole or pit	Circ, profile vert in N, steep elsewhere, conc base, 0.16d x 0.52 dia	2

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The pit [C37] in the subgroup {1006} had naturally silted up. Nothing was recovered from the fill to indicate either a function or a date for this feature.

GROUP 2 Discussion: Prehistoric Activity

Group	Subgroup	Subgroup type	Period by finds	Period by interpretation	Group Interpretation
2	1001	Burnt Mound, trough & hearth	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age
2	1002	Pit	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age
2	1003	Hut site	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age
2	1004	Hearth	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age
2	1005	Pit	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age
2	1006	Pit/posthole	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age

Group 2 relates to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age and Middle Bronze Age activity associated with the burnt mound {1001}, the possible hut site {1003} and an earlier pit {1002}.

Subgroup {1001} on Site 1 consisted of a trough, hearth and associated burnt mound. Similar burnt mounds were in use as recently as the medieval and post-medieval period, such as the burnt mound excavated at Site 102 at Littlemill 2 (O Donnachadha, B. forthcoming (f)) which was dated by C14 dating to between 890-1250 AD but the bulk of recorded examples have returned Bronze Age dates (Buckley 1990). The timbers were sent for species identification (Appendix 2.1) prior to C14 dating and were identified as hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). A radiocarbon date was obtained from wood samples retrieved from the timbers (C49). The wood samples returned a date of 3011+/-36 BP (WK – 18554) (Appendix 2.2). The 2 Sigma calibrated results from this sample produced a date of Cal 1390-1120 BC.

Although no definite stratigraphic relationship was established between this feature and the trough, both were located beneath the burnt mound material and it is probable that the features were contemporary with one another. It is also probable that the possible hut in subgroup {1003} located within Site 2 was probably associated with the nearby burnt mound activity particularly as this structure was stratigraphically later than the pit in subgroup {1002}, which contained a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint blade (Appendix 2.3).

The view of the drained wetland from the entrance of the possible hut in subgroup {1003} indicates that this structure may have functioned as a base for herders to monitor their livestock, or a base for hunters to watch for prey. Flint debitage recovered from the fill (C18) of the foundation trench [C45] may indicate the latter. If the hut was used as a base for either hunting or herding, the butchered carcasses could have been prepared and cooked in the trough located within Site 1 and in the subgroup {1001}. The features in the three subgroups {1004}, {1005} and {1006} are believed to be also Bronze Age in date due to their physical proximity to the potential hut site.

The recovery of a probable Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint blade (parallel sided blade struck from a prepared uniplane core) from the fill of the pit in subgroup {1002}, along with the stratigraphic location of the pit, places this feature in an earlier phase of activity than both the burnt mound in subgroup {1001}, and the hut in subgroup {1003}.

The flint items recovered from the fills of the ditch in subgroup {1016} are consistent with butchering and hide preparation. These appear to have been washed into {1016} from the slope above the ditch, and may be detritus from the Middle Bronze Age activity associated with the subgroups {1002} and {1003}. The ditch {1016} represents a later

phase of activity and is associated with a post-medieval field boundary (the present-day hedge-line), and does not follow the contours of the slope.

4.3 GROUP 3: Undated and Unphased Activity

SITE 3

4.3.1 SUBGROUP {1007}: Truncated posthole

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
3	Fill	C4	-	Natural silting	Dk brown grey, loose sandy silt, freq ch fl & frags, freq s mixed.	3
4	Cut	-	C3	Posthole	Circ, U-shaped prof, slightly conc base 0.09d x 0.55l x 0.37w, N-S.	3

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The subgroup {1007} consisted of a possible truncated posthole [C4], which had naturally silted up with washed-in debris (C3). This fill was similar to that of the small pit [C6] in subgroup {1008}, and may indicate a possible association with it. No finds were recovered from the fill of this posthole to indicate a date.

4.3.2 SUBGROUP {1008}: Pit

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
5	Fill	C6	-	Natural silting	Dk brown peaty silt, mod ch, occ s,m mixed, occ s burnt mixed	3
6	Cut	-	C5	Pit	Oval in plan, broad U-shaped prof, 0.18d x 1.20l x 0.9w N-S.	3

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The small pit [C6] in the subgroup {1008} was filled with washed-in debris (C5). This fill was similar to that found in the posthole [C4], and may have been contemporary. No finds were recovered from the fill to indicate either a date, or a function. This pit was cut by the later drainage ditch [C14] in subgroup {1016}.

4.3.3 SUBGROUP {1009}: Pit

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
11	Fill	12	-	Natural silting	Dk black brown silt, occ ch, occ s ang.	3
12	Cut	-	11	Pit	Sub-rect, U-shaped prof, flat base 0.08d x 1.25l x 0.62w NE-SW.	3

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The small pit [C12] in the subgroup {1009} had naturally silted up. Nothing was recovered from the fill to indicate either a date or a function for this feature, and there was nothing to suggest an association with any other features on site.

4.3.4 SUBGROUP {1010}: Burnt spreads

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
25	Spread	-	-	Debris from fire	Dk grey black, loose sandy silt, freq burnt m mixed, freq ch fls & frags	3
29	Spread	-	-	Debris from fire	Mid brown, loose sandy silt, mod s sub-ang, occ ch flakes.	3

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The subgroup {1010} consisted of two spreads of burnt material which filled a natural depression. It is possible they represented the remains of a bonfire associated with tree clearance. However, nothing was recovered to confirm either a date or a function.

4.3.5 SUBGROUP {1011}: Three pits

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
20	Fill	C30	-	Natural silting	Dk brown sandy silt, occ ch, occ s, l mixed	3
21	Fill	C31	-	Natural silting	Very dark brown silty clay, occ ch.	3
22	Fill	C32	-	Natural silting	Very dark brown silty clay, occ ch.	3
30	Cut	-	C20	Possible pit	Oval, U-shaped prof, irreg conc base, 0.16d x 0.35l x 0.3w NW-SE.	3
31	Cut	-	C21, C35	Pit	Linear, V-shaped prof, irreg conc base, 0.32d x 1.45l x 0.62w NE-SW.	3
32	Cut	-	C22	Possible pit	Sub-circ, 2 sides steep, 1 gradual, irreg base, 0.13d x 0.36l x 0.33w NW-SE	3
35	Fill	C31	-	Natural silting	Orange brown, silty clay, occ ch fl, freq s stones.	3

Finds:

None

Description:

The subgroup {1011} comprised of three pits, [C30], [C31] and [C32]. All three had naturally silted up with broadly similar material that contained nothing to indicate either a date or a function.

GROUP 3 DISCUSSION: Undated and unphased activity

Group	Subgroup	Subgroup type	Period by finds	Period by interpretation	Group Interpretation
3	1007	Truncated posthole	None	None	Undated features
3	1008	Pit	None	None	Undated features
3	1009	Pit	None	None	Undated features
3	1010	Burnt spreads	None	None	Undated features
3	1011	Three pits	None	None	Undated features

Summary:

The majority of the undated features in Sites 2 and 3 are likely to be associated with field clearance, probably in the post-medieval period. Although nothing diagnostic was recovered from the subgroups {1007}, {1008}, {1009}, {1010} or {1011} the broad similarity in their dimensions and fills suggests a similar or contemporary use. These features probably represent the removal of vegetation in advance of agricultural works, and may be contemporary with both the field boundary in the subgroup {1016} and the dated post-medieval activity at Site 3.

4.4 GROUP 4: Post – Medieval Activity

SITE 1

4.4.1 SUBGROUP {1012}: Furrow

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
50	Fill	C51	-	Nat silting	Lt brown, firm silty clay.	1
51	Cut	-	C50	Mod plough furrow	Linear, 0.15d x 1.3l x 0.3d E-W.	1

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The furrow [C51] in the subgroup {1012} had naturally silted up. The shape and dimensions of the feature indicate it was probably machine-cut.

SITE 2

4.4.2 SUBGROUP {1013}: Field boundary

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
36	Fill	C40	-	<i>In-situ</i> burning	Mixed orange silt/black brown clay, occ s,m mixed	2
39	Fill	C40	-	Natural silting	Mixed peat & silt, silt at base, peat above, then peat/silt mix.	2
40	Cut	-	C36,C39	Field boundary	Linear, U-shaped prof, concave base, 0.2dx7lx1.8w NW-SE.	2

Finds:

Find number	Context number	Material	Period	Comment (pot fabric & form etc)
1	36	Horse shoe	post-medieval	
2	36	Clay pipe	post-medieval	
3	36	Pottery	post-medieval	
4	36	Metal object	post-medieval	
5	36	Animal bone		
1	39	Flint Flake		
2	39	Flint Flake		
3	39	Post-medieval pottery	post-medieval	
4	39	Burnt Flint		

Interpretation:

The field boundary [C40] in the subgroup {1013} naturally silted up with (C39), and was sealed by the remains of a hedge burnt *in-situ* (C36), when the boundary was removed. Most of the finds recovered from this layer were post-medieval in date. Some flints, probably prehistoric, were recovered from the ditch but are likely to have been washed in.

SITE 3

4.4.3 SUBGROUP {1014}: Furrow

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
7	Fill	C8	-	Natural silting	Mid-light brown, loose sandy silt, freq s, mod m, freq ch at base	3
8	Cut	-	C7	Furrow	Oval, v-shaped prof, sloping base (W-E), 0.2d x 1.8l x 0.6w E-W.	3

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The field clearance pit [C8], in the subgroup {1014} had naturally silted up by (C7). The shape of the profile indicates that this was cut with a shovel, and it is probably post-medieval in date.

4.4.4 SUBGROUP {1015}: Furrow

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
9	Fill	C10	-	Natural silting	Ok brown silt, occ s mixed	3
10	Cut	-	C9	Plough furrow	Irreg linear, one side steep, sloping base 0.29d x 5l x 0.95w NW-SE.	3

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The furrow [C10], in subgroup {1015} had naturally filled up with silt. The dimensions and shape indicate that this was spade-cut and post-medieval in date.

4.4.5 SUBGROUP {1016}: Ditch

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
13	Fill	C14	-	Natural silting	Lt grey-yellow brown sandy silt, mod s mixed	3
14	Cut	-	C13, C23, C24	Drainage ditch	Linear, U shaped prof, SE side irreg + stepped, NW side steeply sloping, conc base, slopes from NE- SW, 1d x 10.5l x 1.85w E-W.	3
23	Fill	C14	-	Natural silting	Lt yellow grey brown, firm sandy silt, freq gravel, mod s, m mixed, occ ch	3
24	Fill	C14	-	Natural silting	Mid grey brown, mod firm silty sandy clay, mod s, m mixed, occ ch fls	3

Finds:

Find number	Context number	Material	Period	Comment (pot fabric & form etc)
1	13	Side scraper		
2	13	Burnt flint flake		
3	13	Flint flake		
4	13	Flint flake		
5	13	Retouched fragment		
6	13	Burnt flint flake		
7	13	Flake		
1	23	Burnt flake		
2	23	Animal tooth		

1	24	Burnt Flint flake		
2	24	Burnt Flint flake		
3	24	Burnt Flint flake		
4	24	Animal tooth		
5	24	Flint flake		

Interpretation:

The drainage ditch [C14], in the subgroup {1016} was filled with three distinct episodes of natural silting. The cut was not deep enough to indicate any defensive purpose and there was no evidence of a bank. All three fills comprised waterlain sediments indicating [C14] was used as a drainage ditch. The ditch was oriented directly downslope of the hill channelling towards the canalised 19th century stream channel. The finds recovered from these fills could be associated with [C14], but are equally likely to have been washed in from the slope above the ditch.

4.4.6 SUBGROUP {1017}: Field boundary

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
26	Fill	C27	-	Nat silting	Brown sandy silt.	3
27	Cut	-	C26	Field boundary	Linear, U-shaped prof , flat bottomed, 0.5d x 23l x 1.8w3 NW-SE.	

Finds:

None

Interpretation:

The field boundary [C27], in the subgroup {1017} naturally filled up with silt. The shape and dimensions indicate that [C27] is post-medieval, as does its alignment parallel to the edges of the present-day field.

GROUP 4 DISCUSSION: Post-medieval activity

Group	Subgroup	Subgroup type	Period by finds	Period by interpretation	Group Interpretation
4	1012	Furrow	None	Post-medieval	Post-medieval features
4	1013	Field boundary	Post-medieval	Post-medieval	Post-medieval features
4	1014	Furrow	None	Post-medieval	Post-medieval features
4	1015	Furrow	None	Post-medieval	Post-medieval features
4	1016	Drainage ditch	Post-medieval	Post-medieval	Post-medieval features
4	1017	Field Boundary	None	Post-medieval	Post-medieval features
4	1018	Topsoil	None	Post-medieval	Post-medieval features

Summary:

Dated post-medieval activity on this site consists entirely of agricultural activity, both field clearance and ploughing. The finds recovered from the former field boundary {1013}, including post medieval pottery, horse shoe and clay pipe, and are likely to indicate the date at which the present-day field layout was constructed. Much of the undated activity from Group 3 may also be associated with this post-medieval activity.

4.5 Group 5: Topsoil

4.5.1 SUBGROUP {1018}: Topsoil

Contexts:

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Description	Area
1	Deposit	-	-	Topsoil	Compact dark brown silty peat, freq s,m, mixed	

Finds:

General mixed finds included transfer-printed wares, blackware etc.

Interpretation:

The topsoil was fairly uniform in colour and compaction over Sites 2 and 3; however it did vary in depth across the entire area. The deepest areas were at the base of the slope upon which Sites 2 and 3 were located where deposits were up to 1m deep. This was due to a combination of ploughing and erosion from the high ground to the northeast. The shallowest areas were generally the areas of high ground where depths were no more than 0.25m. Topsoil over Site 1 was similar, although the peat content was much higher.

4.6 SYNTHESIS

Open Area 1: Geology and Topography

The natural drift geology (C2) was a mixture of compact yellow-grey sandy clay with frequent small, medium and large stone inclusions and loose grey river gravels. The landscape comprised of two zones. Zone 1 on the higher ground was well drained and overlooked zone 2, a wetland area within a shallow stream valley below. This stream has been canalised in modern times, most probably during the construction of the railway embankment. This upland area was intensively tilled to the west (above Sites 1 & 2) and was pasture to the east (Site 3). Ploughing had resulted in a mixture of disturbed topsoil and subsoil slumping down slope sealing some of the peat by up to 1m.

On Site 1, the subsoil was largely comprised of loose grey river gravels. These extended under the peaty wetland along the base of the slope upon which Sites 2 and 3 were located. This area, at the base of the slope, was possibly the remains of a shallow lake, drained as a consequence of the canalisation of the stream to the south. This low-lying area surrounding the stream was extremely waterlogged and peaty and the peat was generally 0.30-0.60m deep.

Open Area 2: Possible Prehistoric Activity

Subgroup {1001} on Site 1 consisted of a trough, probable pond, hearth and associated burnt mound. Similar burnt mounds were in use as recently as the medieval period, such as the burnt mound excavated at Site 102 at Littlemill 2 (O Donnachadha, B. forthcoming (f)) which was dated by C14 dating to between 890-1250 AD, but the bulk of recorded examples have returned Bronze Age dates (Buckley 1990). The charred timbers from the hearth in subgroup {1001} on Site 1 returned a Middle Bronze Age date (1390-1120BC) making the site broadly contemporary with the Bronze Age activity at Site 127, Carn More 5 (03E0873), a site c. 300m to the southwest.

Open Area 3: Undated and unphased activity

A number of intrusive finds were recovered from a drainage ditch {1016} to the east of Site 3. The flint items recovered from the fills of this ditch are consistent with those usually found associated with a prehistoric settlement. They appear to have been washed into the ditch, and may be detritus from the activity associated with {1003} and {1002}. Ditch {1016} represents later activity and was associated with the post-medieval field boundary (the present-day hedge-line), and did not follow the contours of the slope.

The majority of the undated activity in the areas of Site 2 and 3 were possibly associated with field clearance, probably in the post-medieval period. Nothing diagnostic was recovered from the subgroups {1007}, {1008}, {1009}, {1010}, {1011}, {1004}, {1005}, or {1006}. These features probably represented the removal of vegetation during agricultural works and field clearance with the removal of root bowls and stone clearance, and may be contemporary with both field boundary {1016} and the dated post-medieval activity in Site 3.

Open Area 4: Post-Medieval activity

Dated post-medieval activity on this site consists entirely of agricultural activity, both field clearance and probable spade cut cultivation. The finds recovered from the former field boundary {1013}, included post-medieval pottery, horse shoe fragments and clay pipe and are likely to indicate the date at which the present-day field layout was constructed. Much of the undated activity from Group 3 is probably associated with this post-medieval activity.

Open Area 5: Topsoil

The topsoil was fairly uniform in colour and compaction over Sites 2 and 3; however it did vary in depth across the entire area. The deepest areas were at the base of the slope upon which Sites 2 and 3 were located where deposits were up to 1m deep. This was due to a combination of ploughing and erosion from the high ground to the northeast. The shallowest areas were generally the areas of high ground where depths were no more than 0.25m. Topsoil over Site 1 was similar, although the peat content was much higher.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Realisation of the original research aims

This section examines the extent to which preliminary assessment of the results of the excavations reveals how the original research aims have been or can be answered.

Original Research Questions (**ORQ**) were prepared after the results of the test-trenching exercise were known and before the rescue excavations began. The following are the Original Research Questions relating to each of the excavations in the Faughart Lower townland and Responses (**R**) based on preliminary assessment of the site data.

Site 128, Faughart Lower 1, 2 and 3

1. **ORQ:** *How many 'burnt mounds' are present on this site? Are there associated structures, troughs, areas of burning or other features? If so what are the forms and functions?*

R: The area stripped back only revealed one burnt spread (that indicated by the linear testing). This very thin layer of heat shattered sand stone sealed a trough, a hearth platform and a probable pond. The trough (2.50m x 1.50m x 0.50m) was not lined and there was no indication to suggest that it had been. The hearth platform was an arrangement of long timbers placed sided by side in two layers (1m x 1m x 0.10m). The platform was set on peat and had become waterlogged preventing it from fully combusting. A pond feature (5.60m x 2.20m x 0.40m) was recorded to the north of the hearth; this appeared to link with the area of wetland and may have acted as a reservoir for the burnt mound trough if the water table was low.

A possible hut site was recorded to the east (in the area of Faughart Lower 2). This comprised of a horseshoe-shaped gully with an opening to the west and probable central posthole (3.90m in diameter). It was located up slope of the wetland on firmer more well drained soil. The burnt area flagged up during the testing proved to be from modern disturbance probably relating to field clearance (it contained a horseshoe, clay pipe and china ware).

The area of Site 3 to the east on more elevated ground revealed a number of dispersed and amorphous pits/scoops, which may be related to agricultural practices such as stone clearance and/or cultivation. None of these scoops produced artefacts of fills of an archaeological nature. In the south-west corner of the area stripped, a linear cut feature (possible a drain) was excavated. This produced a number of struck flint items, however these may be intrusive. It is suggested that this may be an old field boundary that was subsumed into the present field pattern. This linear cut truncated a small heat affected pit.

2. **ORQ:** *Are there areas where different activities were undertaken?*

R: At site 1, under the burnt mound material evidence was revealed for a hearth, a trough and a pond. The pond may have had an industrial function although there is no evidence for this.

At Site 2 there is evidence for a possible circular hut site. There is no evidence to suggest what this may have been used for, or even if it had been contemporary with the burnt mound.

3. **ORQ:** *What is the dating sequence for the burnt areas and how does the site change through time?*

R: The trough was sealed by a very thin layer of burnt material. This did appear to have been truncated through ploughing but it may originally not have been much thicker. If it wasn't originally a thick spread of material it may represent a site that was not used very often, or was abandoned through waterlogging, which may explain the intact timber platform hearth. No dating sequence can be suggested. The timbers (**C49**) were sent for species identification (Appendix 2.1) prior to C14 dating and were identified as hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). A radiocarbon date was obtained from wood samples retrieved from the timbers (**C49**). The wood samples returned a date of 3011+/-36 BP (WK – 18554) (Appendix 2.2). The 2 Sigma calibrated results from this sample produced a date of Cal. 1390-1120 BC.

4. **ORQ:** *What is the nature of the site at Faughart Lower 3? Are there any buildings present, if so what were the functions and constructions methods? Are there different phases of construction and use? If there are no buildings what was the site used for?*

R: Faughart Lower 3 turned out to be non-archaeological. A north-south cut feature was located in the south-west of the area but this probably relates to an earlier field boundary and would have drained into the stream valley. This did cut an earlier pit with evidence for burning, possibly a hearth.

5. **ORQ:** *What are the dates of occupation and how does the site change through time?*

R: Faughart Lower 3 does not appear to represent settlement evidence.

6. **ORQ:** *Are there areas where different activities were undertaken?*

R: The features at Faughart Lower were sterile and probably non-archaeological. The ditch feature did contain some struck flint (these are probably intrusive and were found in all three fills). The ditch cut an earlier pit with evidence for burning but nothing to suggest a date.

7. **ORQ:** *What is the nature of the finds and environmental evidence? Are there finds associated with the site use? Are there waterlogged deposits and is there wood or organic survival?*

R: The burnt mound produced a spread of heat shattered sandstone and charcoal. This filled both the trough and the probable pond. The timbers that made up the hearth platform are semi carbonised and were identified as hazel and alder and dated to the Middle Bronze Age period (1390-1120BC) (Appendix 2.2).

5.2 Conclusions

Although similar burnt mounds were in use as recently as the medieval period as at Site 102 at Littlemill 2 (890-1250AD) (O Donnachadha, B. forthcoming (f)), the bulk of recorded examples have returned Bronze Age dates (Buckley 1990). The charred timbers from the hearth in subgroup {1001} on site 1 returned a Middle Bronze Age date (1390-1120BC) making the site broadly contemporary with the Bronze Age activity at Site 127, Carn More 5 (03E0873), a site c. 300m to the south-west. This site comprised of a burial arrangement based on the general flat cemetery model from that period.

Burnt mounds are generally associated with cooking and the preparation of meat (or perhaps the ceremonial or ritual preparation of meat). Generally these rarely produce any direct artefactual evidence for function and this was the case with this site. Although no definite stratigraphic relationship was established between the hearth containing the charred timbers and the trough, both were located beneath the burnt mound material and it is probable that the features were contemporary with one another. It is also probable that the possible hut in subgroup {1003} located in Site 2 was associated with the nearby burnt mound activity particularly as this structure was stratigraphically later than the pit in subgroup {1002}, which contained a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint blade (Appendix 2.3). It may have been used as part of a temporary settlement for either hunters or herders the butchered carcasses could have been prepared and cooked in the trough of {1001}.

The structural remains were ephemeral and indicated a temporary structure. The view of the wetland from the entrance of the probable hut suggests two possible functions for the hut site; a temporary shelter for herders to monitor their livestock and water them, or a temporary shelter for hunters to exploit wild fowl etc. The recovery of a Neolithic flint blade (parallel sided blade struck from a prepared uniplane core) from the fill of {1002} suggests the latter and therefore represents an earlier phase of activity also associated with the wetland.

The archaeological features discovered at site 128, Faughart 1, 2 & 3 are all characteristic of burnt mound or *fulacht fiadh* activity. The dates of *fulachta fiadh* have been established from radiocarbon and thermoluminescence dates, small finds, pollen studies and references in early Irish literature. The majority of dates range from a period beginning at c.1400 BC and range to the early medieval period in Ireland meaning, that *fulachta fiadh* were likely to have been a Bronze Age innovation. Recent scientific dating of a randomly excavated sample has shown a predominance of second millennium BC dates for their use.

Fulachta fiadh generally consist of a low mound of burnt stone, commonly in horseshoe shape, and are found in low lying marshy areas or close to water, often near a stream, or by a lake or river, or in marshy ground and sometimes the remains of a wooden hut are found nearby. Site 128 is located within close vicinity of a small water course and the possible trough at the site was found to fill naturally with water when excavated.

The shape of *fulachta fiadh* is usually determined by their location and by the amount of damage or erosion that the monument has suffered. "*They vary in size, ranging from a few shovel full of burned material, well trodden into the ground to a large mound up to 2m high*" (Coffey 1984). Often these sites have been ploughed out and survive as a spread of heat shattered stones in charcoal-rich soil with no surface expression in close proximity to a water trough - a rectangular pit, sometimes lined with wooden planks or stone slabs and there are generally hearths nearby. Troughs are usually found during archaeological excavation under the open part of the horseshoe-shaped mound. Water was heated in the trough by rolling hot stones into it from a fire close by. The hot stones often shattered on contact with the water and the mound was formed as a result of shoveling the broken stones out of the trough so that it could be used again.

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Title: Site 128, Faughart Lower 1, 2, 3

Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

Scale: N.T.S.

Date: 15/11/07

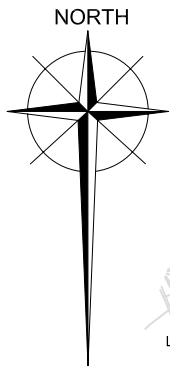
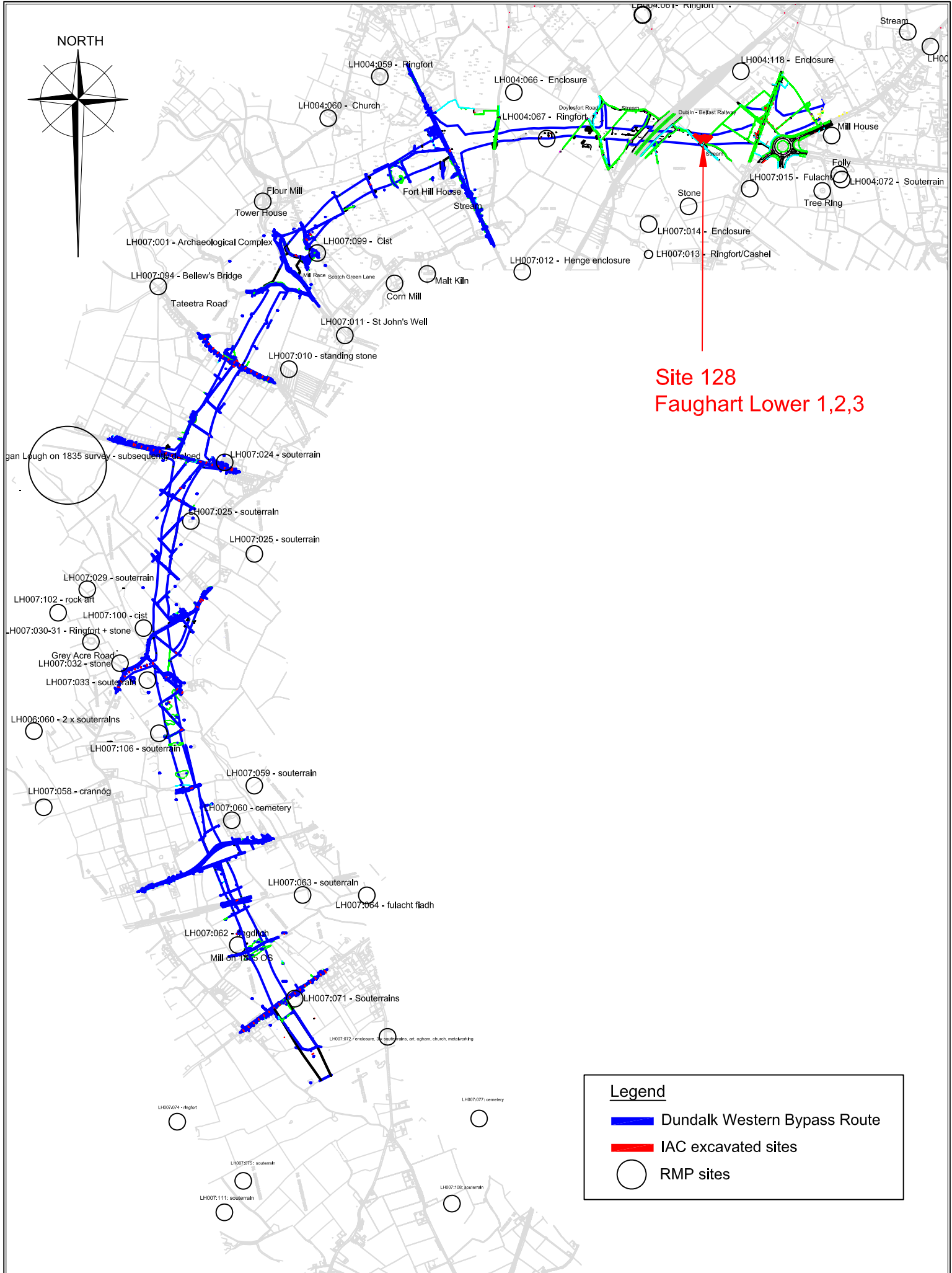
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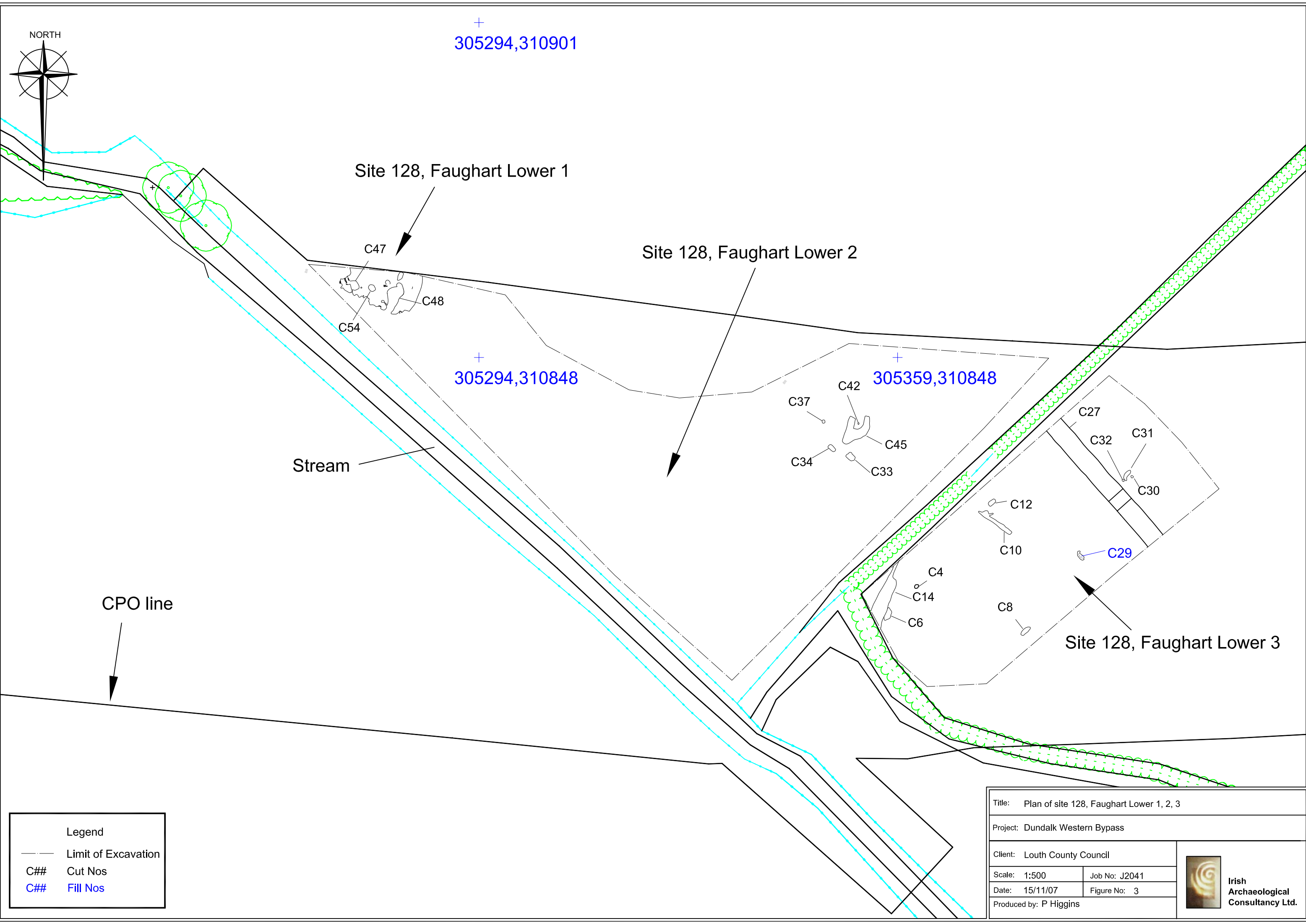
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Archaeological
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Title: Site location with RMP sites shown
Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass
Client: Louth County Council

Scale: 1:30000
Date: 15/11/07
Produced by: P Higgins
Job No: J2041
Figure No: 2



Legend

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Limit of Excavation

C##Cut Nos

C##Fill Nos

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Project: Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

Scale: 1:500

Date: 15/11/07

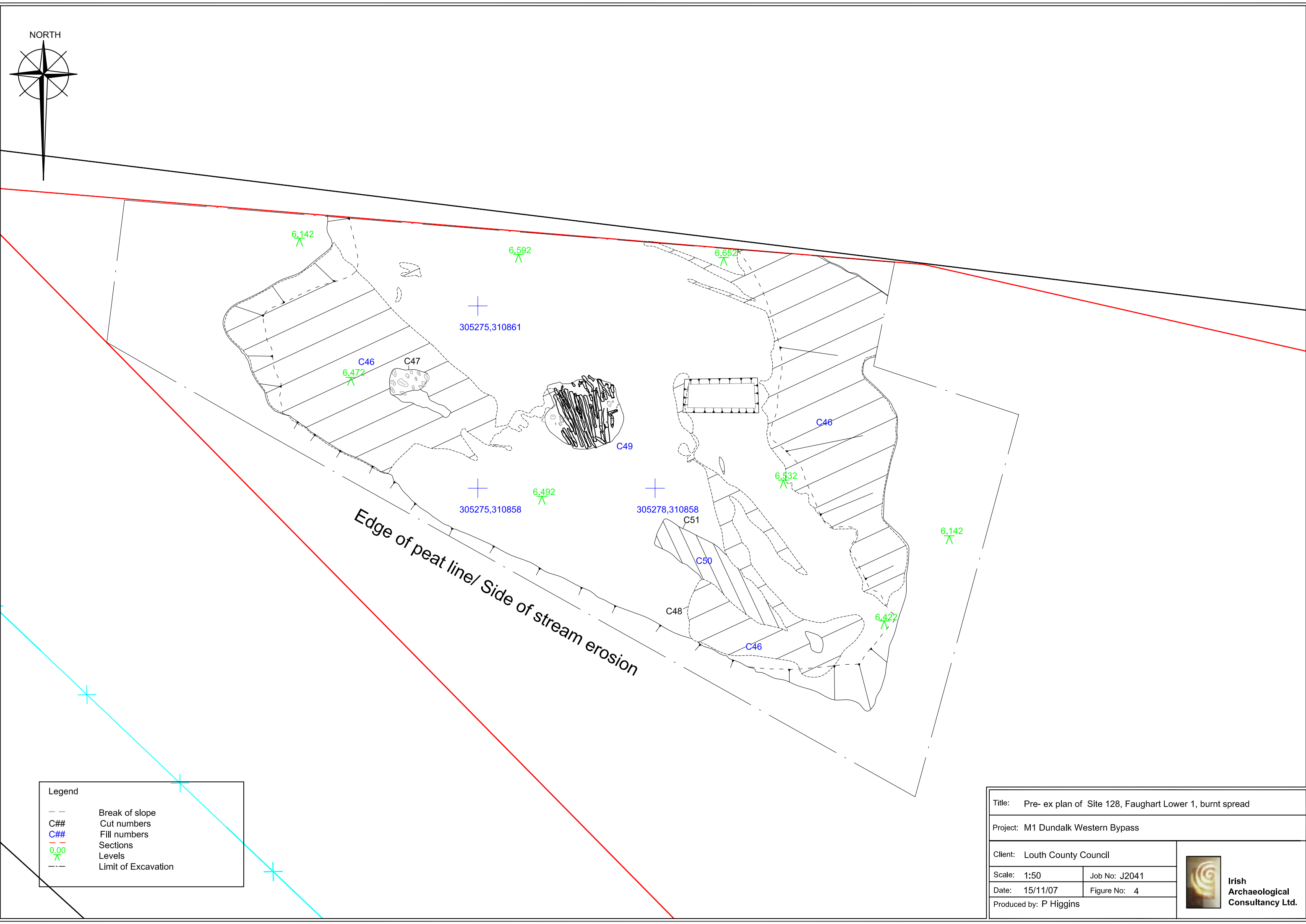
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Job No: J2041

Figure No: 3



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- Legend
- Break of slope
  - C## Cut numbers
  - C## Fill numbers
  - Sections
  - 0.00 Levels
  - Limit of Excavation

Title: Pre- ex plan of Site 128, Faughart Lower 1, burnt spread

Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

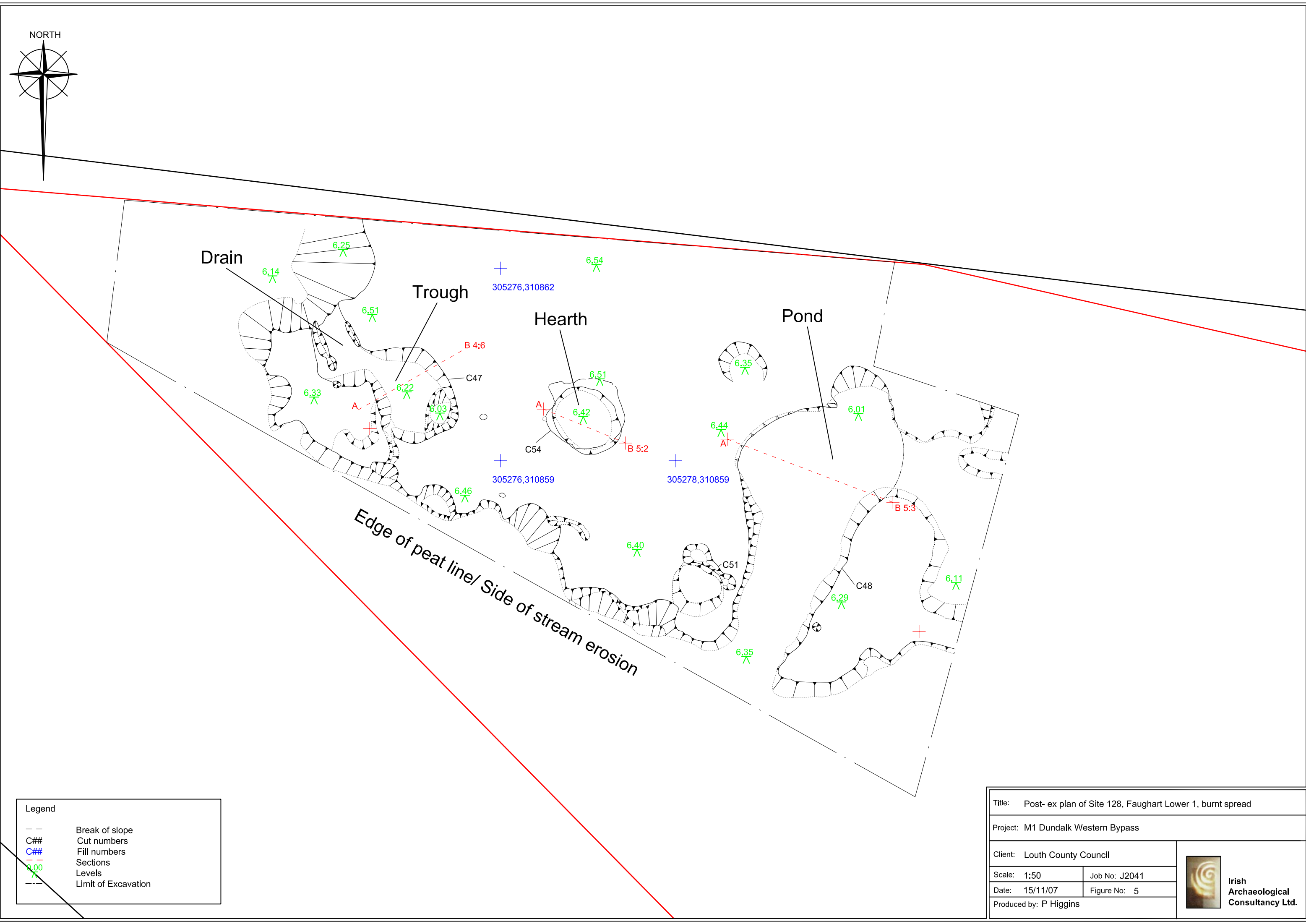
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Date: 15/11/07 Figure No: 4

Produced by: P Higgins



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Legend

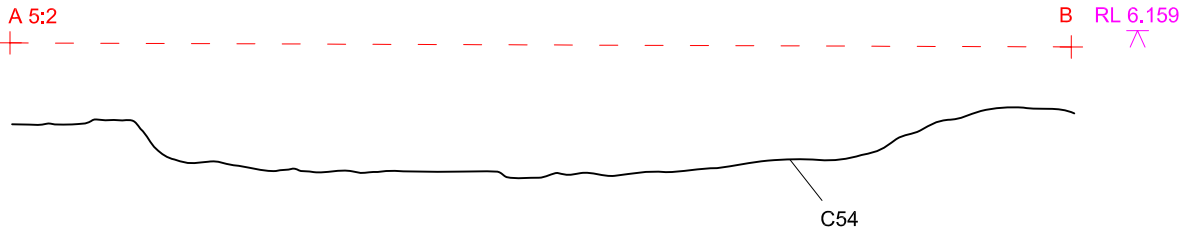
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- C## Cut numbers
- C## Fill numbers
- Sections
- 6.00 Levels
- Limit of Excavation

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Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass	
Client: Louth County Council	
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Date: 15/11/07	Figure No: 5
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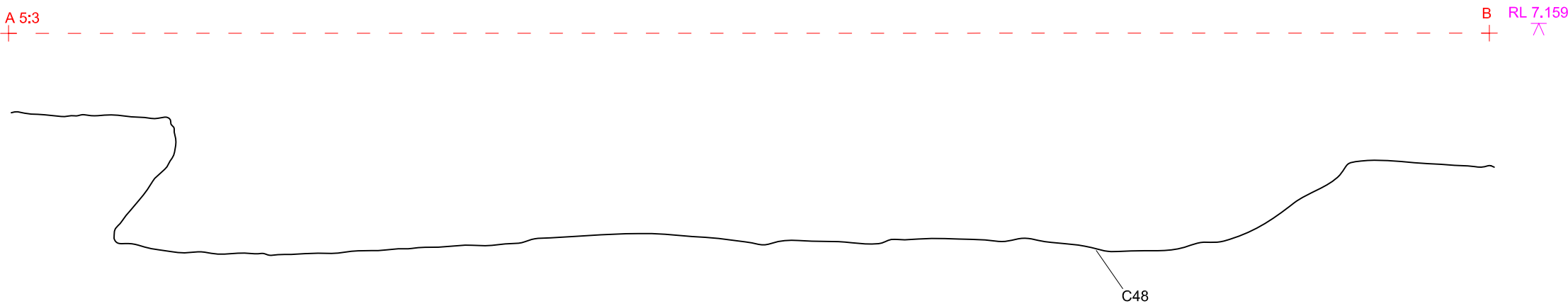


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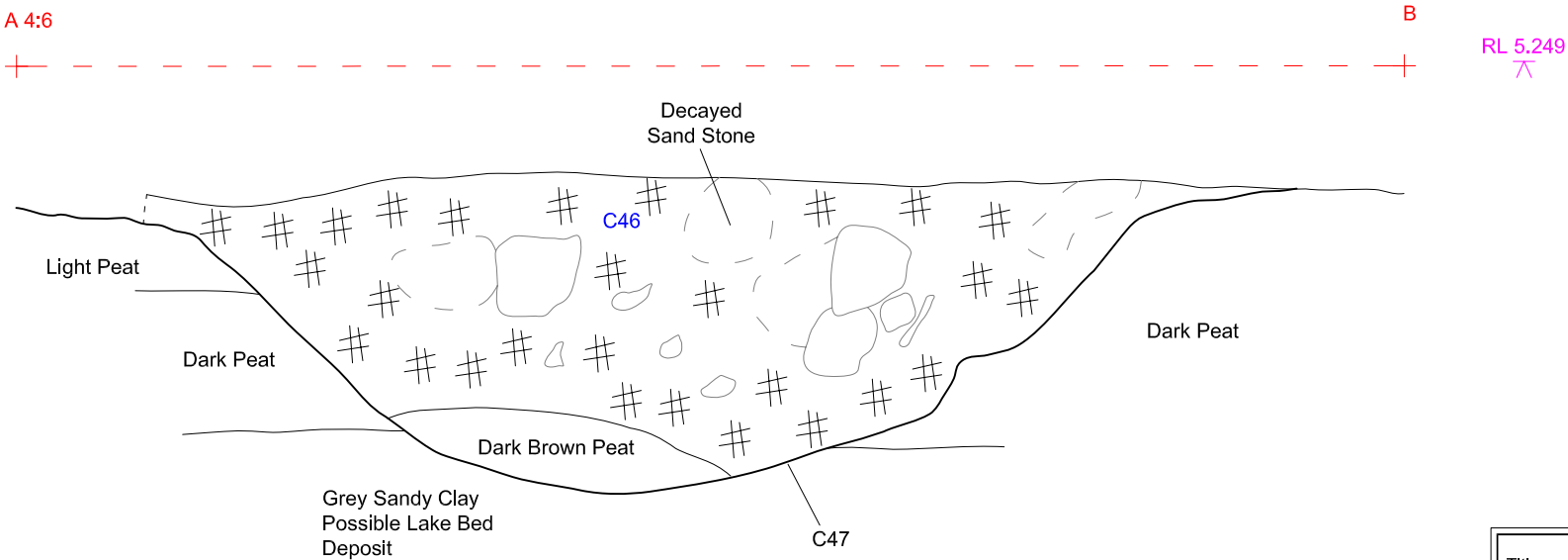
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South West Facing Profile of C54



Faughart Lower 1
South West Facing Profile of C48



Faughart Lower 1
South East Facing Section of Trough C47

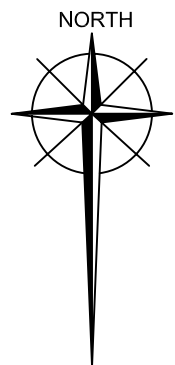
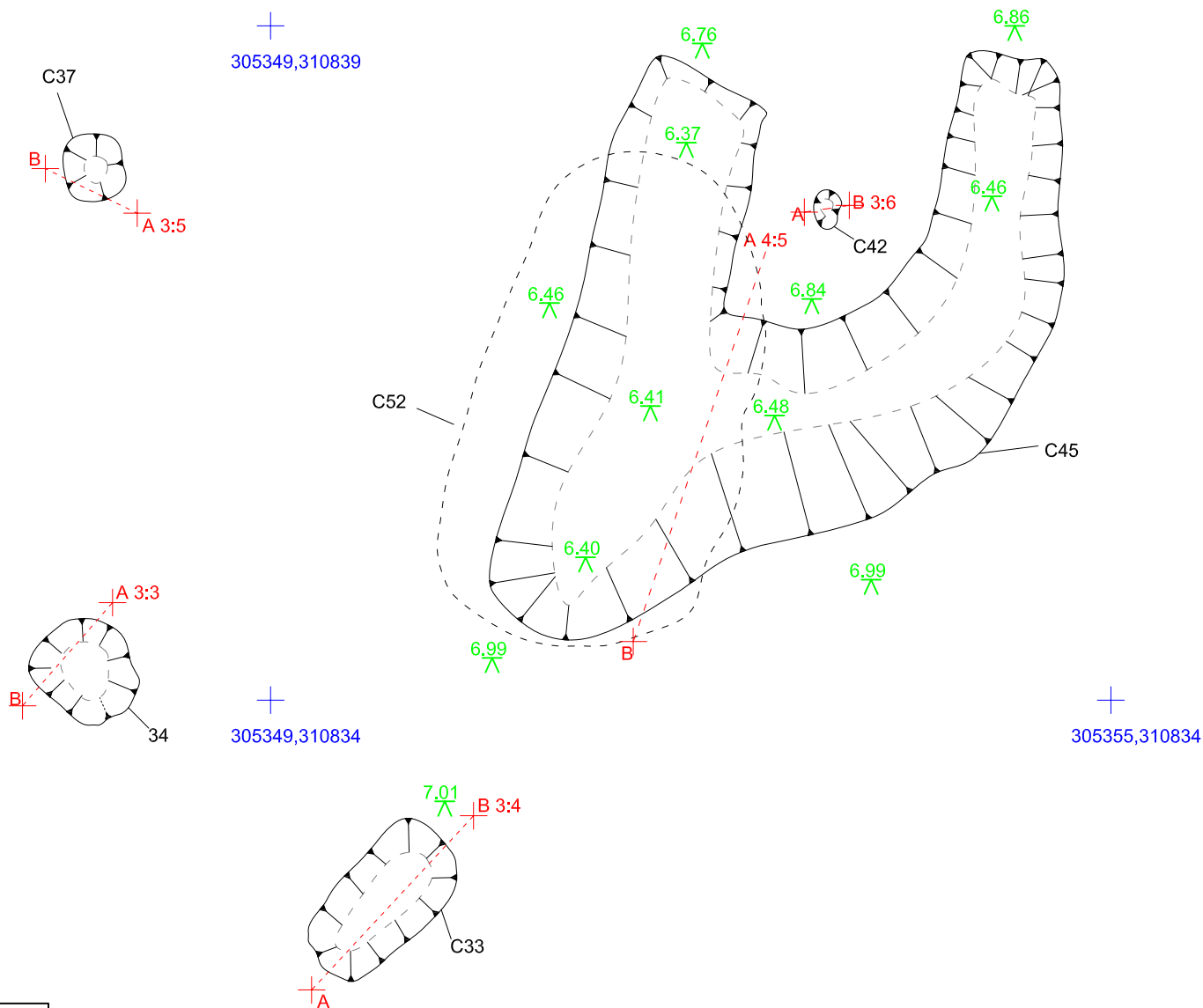


- Legend
- C## Cut numbers
  - C## Fill Numbers
  - Stone
  - # Charcoal
  - ###.## Reduced Levels

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Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass	
Client: Louth County Council	
Scale: 1:10	Job No: J2041
Date: 15/11/07	Figure No: 6
Produced by: P Higgins	



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Legend

- — Break of slope
- C## Cut numbers
- C## Fill numbers
- Sections
- 0.00 Levels
- Limit of Excavation



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Title: Post- ex plan of Site 128, Faughart Lower 2, Hut site

Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

Scale: 1:50

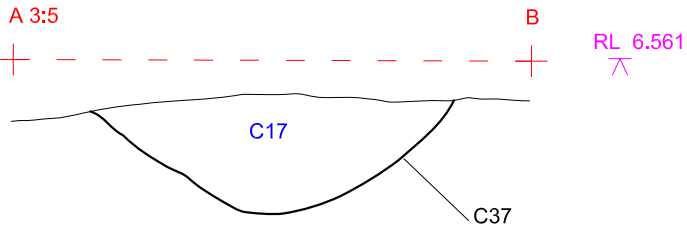
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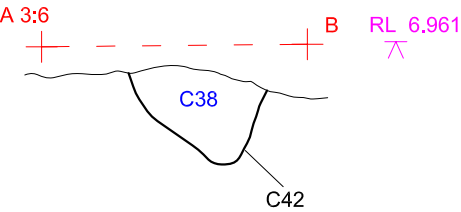
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Figure No: 7

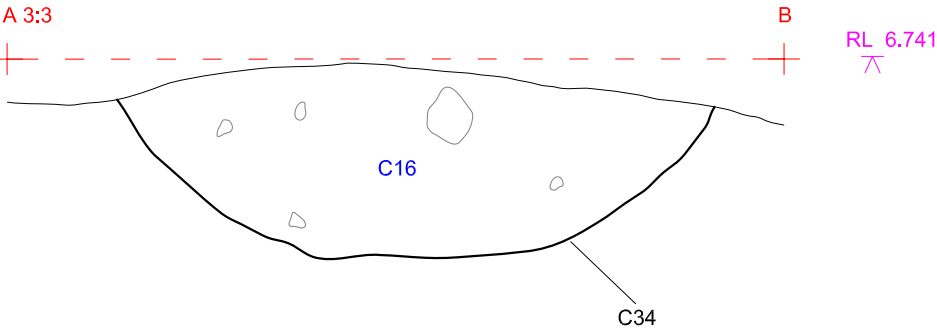
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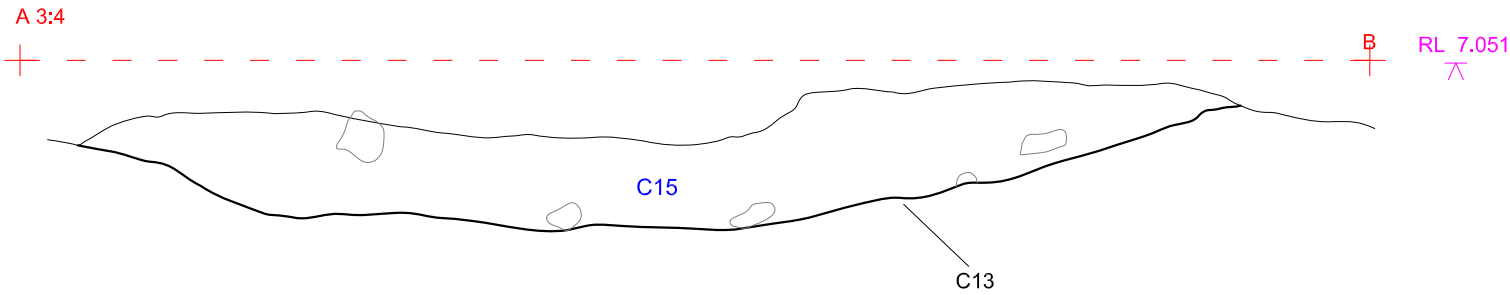
North West Facing Section of C42



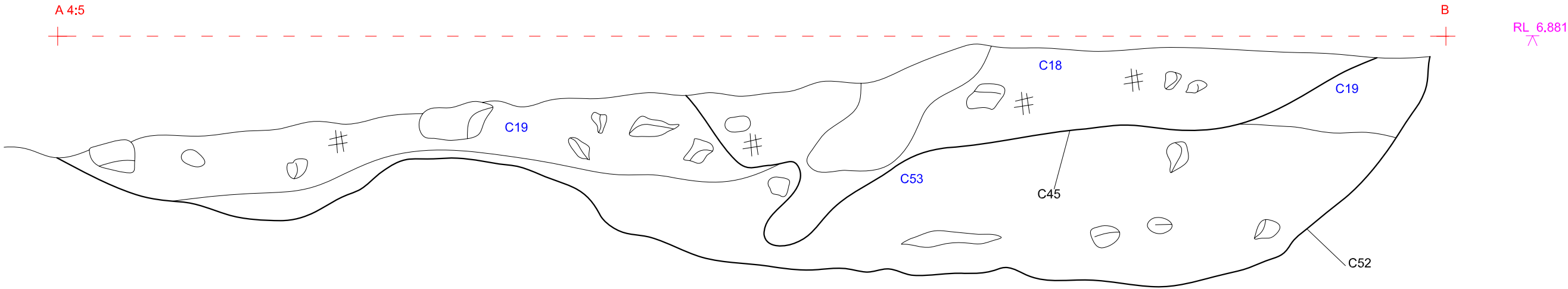
Faughart Lower 2
South West Facing Section of C34



Faughart Lower 2
South Facing Section of C13



Faughart Lower 2
West Facing Section of C45 and C52



Legend

- C## Cut numbers
- C## Fill Numbers
- Stone
- # Charcoal
- ###.## Reduced Levels
- Triangle symbol

Title: Site 128, Faughart Lower 2, Sections

Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

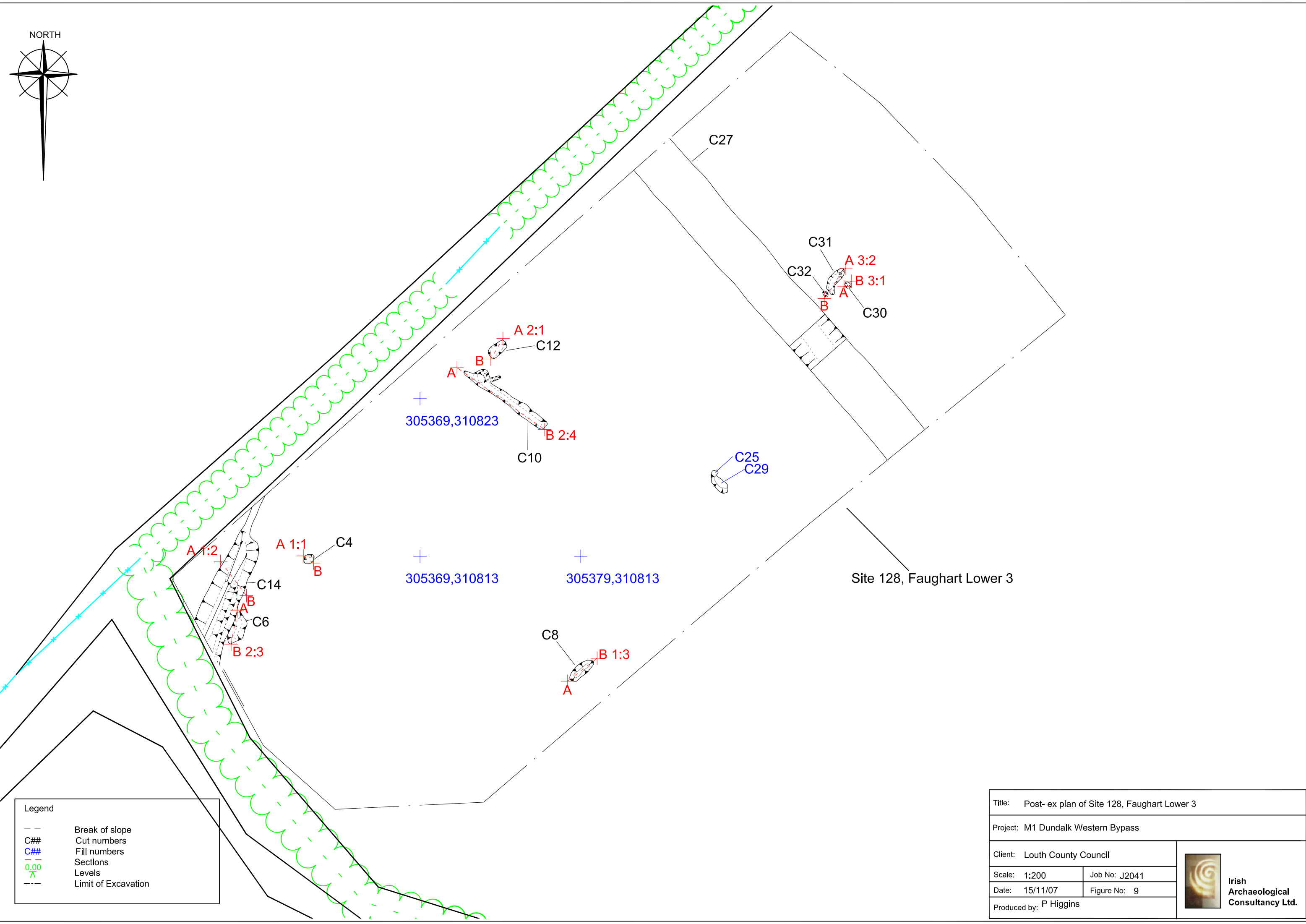
Scale: 1:10 Job No: J2041

Date: 15/11/07 Figure No: 8

Produced by: P Higgins



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Legend

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Break of slope

C##

Cut numbers

C##

Fill numbers

0.00

Sections

^

Levels

Limit of Excavation

Title: Post- ex plan of Site 128, Faughart Lower 3

Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

Scale: 1:200

Date: 15/11/07

Produced by: P Higgins

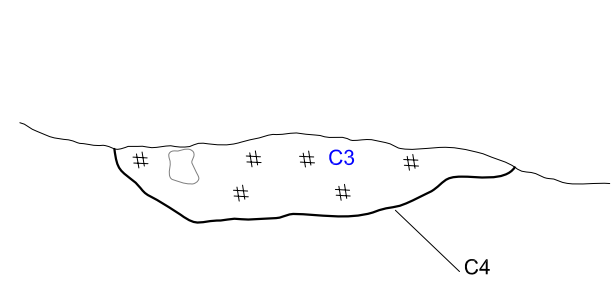
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Figure No: 9

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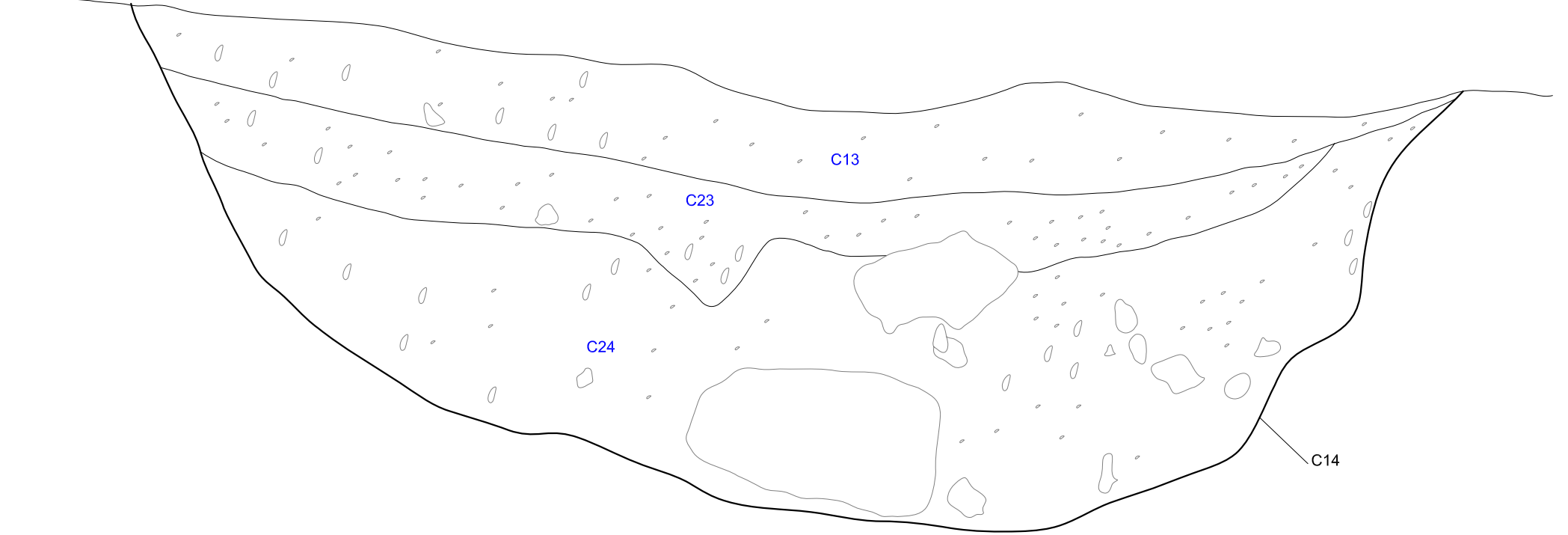
Faughart Lower 3
South West Facing Section of C4

A 1:1 B RL 6.622



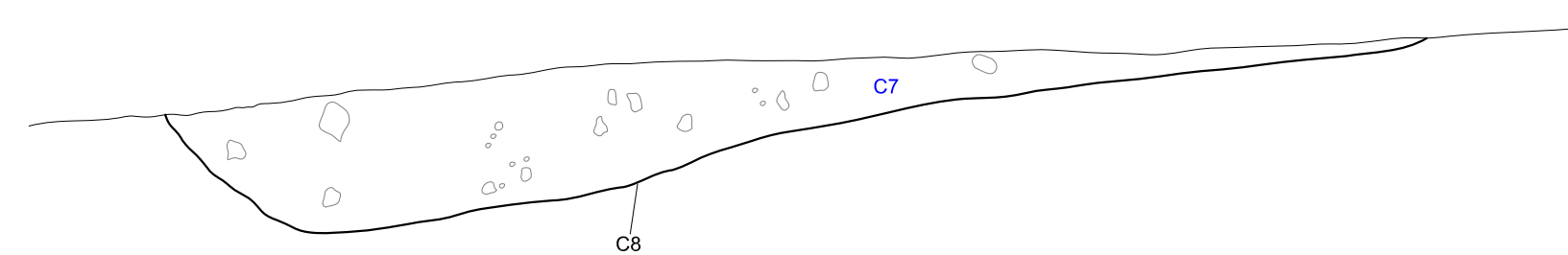
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South West Facing Section of C14

A 1:2 B RL 6.032



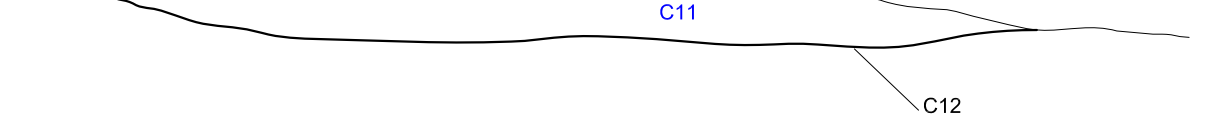
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South East Facing Section of C8

A 1:3 B RL 6.782



Faughart Lower 3
North West Facing Section of C12

A 2:1 B RL 7.092

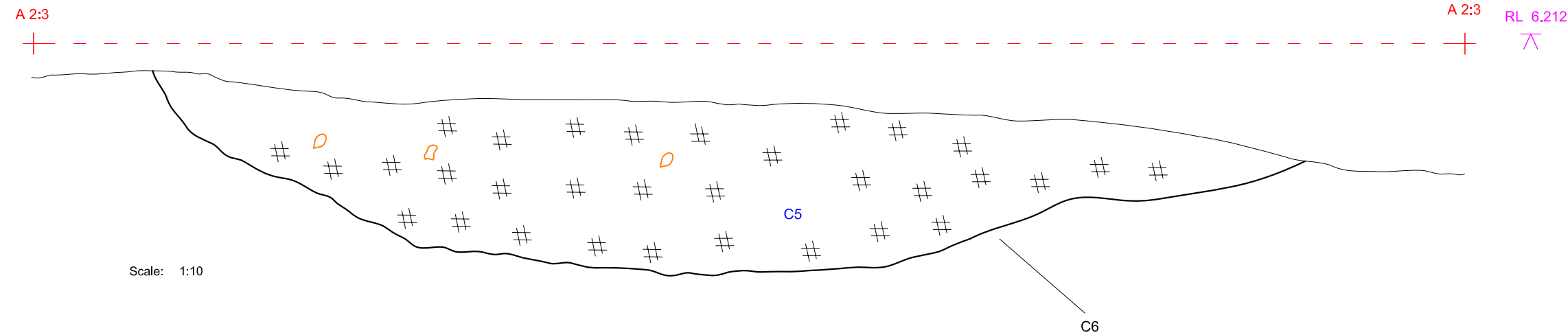


Legend

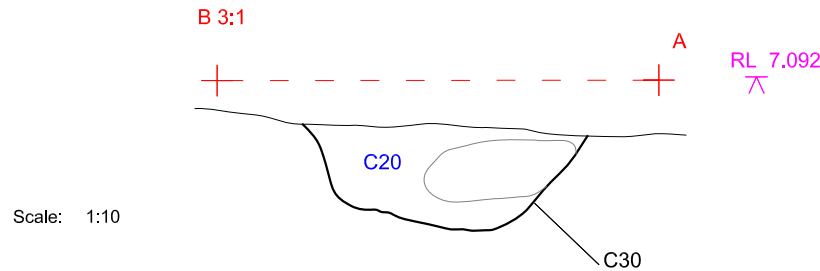
- C## Cut numbers
- C## Fill Numbers
- Stone
- Charcoal
- Reduced Levels

Title: Site 128, Faughart Lower 3, Sections	
Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass	
Client: Louth County Council	 Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.
Scale: 1:10	Job No: J2041
Date: 15/11/07	Figure No: 10a
Produced by: P Higgins	

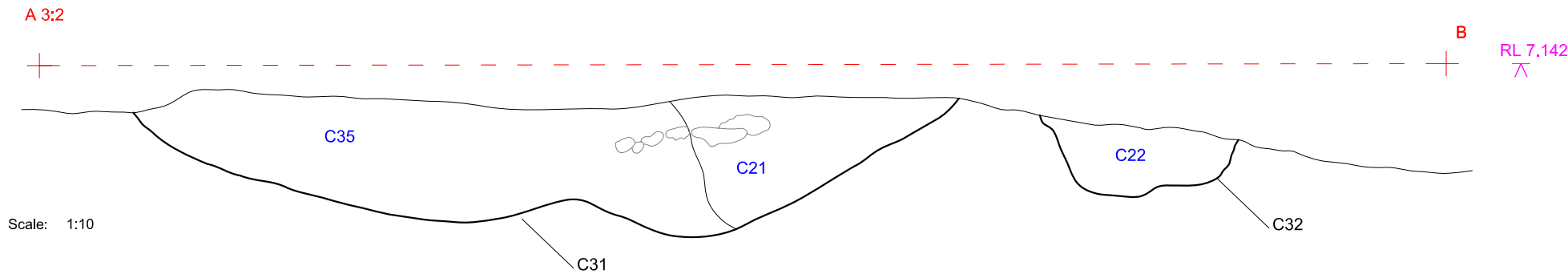
Faughart Lower 3
West Facing Section of C6



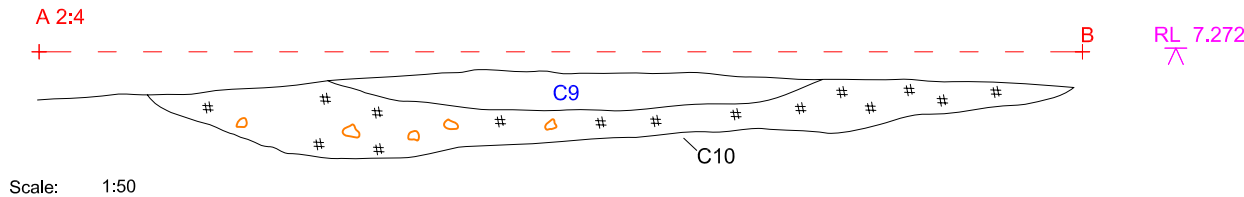
Faughart Lower 3
North West Facing Section of C30



Faughart Lower 3
North West Facing Section of C31 and C32



Faughart Lower 3
North West Facing Section of C10



- Legend
- Burnt Stone
  - C## Cut numbers
  - C## Fill Numbers
  - Stone
  - # Charcoal
  - ###.## Reduced Levels

Title: Site 128, Faughart Lower 3, Sections

Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

Scale: As Shown

Job No: J2041

Date: 15/11/07

Figure No: 10b

Produced by: P Higgins



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Plate 1: Pre-excavation, Faughart Lower 1 burnt mound facing north



Plate 2: Carbonised timber hearth platform (C49), upper layer



Plate 3: Carbonised timber hearth platform (C49), lower layer



Plate 4 : Excavated trough [C47],
with drain in foreground



Plate 5: Excavation of pond [C48], with drain to the south (left) of baulk



Plate 6: Post excavation, Faughart Lower 1 looking west



Plate 7 :Mid excavation, Faughart Lower 2 looking southeast



Plate 8 : Post excavation, Faughart Lower 2 looking northwest



Plate 9 : Mid excavation of (C36/C40) Faughart Lower 3



Plate 10: North facing section of [C14], Faughart Lower 3



Plate 11: West facing section of [C6], Faughart Lower 3

APPENDIX 1: CATALOGUE OF PRIMARY DATA

Context register

C	Type	Fill of	Filled with	Interpretation	Group	Period	Area
1	Deposit	-	-	Topsoil	4	PM	Site
2	Deposit	-	-	Natural	1	Natural	Site
3	Spread	C4	-	Natural silting	3	Natural	3
4	Cut	-	C3	Posthole	3	Undated	3
5	Fill	C6	-	Natural silting	3	Undated	3
6	Cut	-	C5	Industrial pit	3	Undated	3
7	Fill	C8	-	Natural silting	4	PM	3
8	Cut	-	C7	Pit	4	PM	3
9	Fill	C10	-	Natural silting	4	PM	3
10	Cut	-	C9	Plough furrow	4	PM	3
11	Fill	C12	-	Natural silting	3	Undated	3
12	Cut	-	C11	Pit	3	Undated	3
13	Fill	C14	-	Natural silting	4	PM	3
14	Cut	-	C13, C23, C24	Drainage ditch	4	PM	3
15	Fill	C33	-	Natural silting	2	Undated	2
16	Spread	C34	-	Natural silting	2	Undated	2
17	Spread	C37	-	Natural silting	2	Undated	2
18	Fill	C45	-	Natural silting	2	Ph	2
19	Spread	C52	-	Natural silting	2	Ph	2
20	Fill	C30	-	Natural silting	3	Undated	3
21	Fill	C31	-	Natural silting	3	Undated	3
22	Fill	C32	-	Natural silting	3	Undated	3
23	Fill	C14	-	Natural silting	4	PM	3
24	Fill	C14	-	Natural silting	4	PM	3
25	Spread	-	-	Debris from fire	3	Undated	3
26	Fill	C27	-	Natural silting	4	PM	3
27	Cut	-	C26	Field boundary	4	PM	3
28	Non archaeological	-	-	-	-	-	-
29	Spread	-	-	Nat silting	3	Undated	3
30	Cut	-	C20	Pit	3	Undated	3
31	Cut	-	C21, C35	Pit	3	Undated	3
32	Cut	-	C22	Pit	3	Undated	3
33	Cut	-	C15	Fire setting	3	Undated	2
34	Cut	-	C16	Pit	3	Undated	2
35	Fill	C31	-	Natural silting	3	Undated	3
36	Fill	C40	-	In situ burning	4	PM	2
37	Cut	-	C17	Pit	3	Undated	2
38	Fill	C42	-	Occupation debris	2	PM	2
39	Spread	C40	-	Natural silting	4	PH	2
40	Cut	-	C36, C39	Field boundary	4	PM	2
41	Non archaeological	-	-	-	-	-	-
42	Cut	-	C38	Posthole	2	PH	2
43	Non archaeological	-	-	-	-	-	-
44	Non archaeological	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	Cut	-	C18	Foundation trench	2	PH	2
46	Fill	C47, C48	-	Burnt spread	2	PH	1
47	Cut	-	C46	Trough	2	PH	1
48	Cut	-	C46	Pond	2	PH	1
49	Timbers	C54	-	Remnants of fire	2	PH	1
50	Fill	C51	-	Natural silting	4	PM	1
51	Cut	-	C50	Modern plough furrow	4	PM	1
52	Cut	-	C19, C53	Pit	2	PH	2
53	Spread	C52	-	Natural silting	2	PH	2
54	Cut	-	C49	Fire pit	2	PH	1

Finds Register

Find number	Context number	Material	Period	Comment (pot fabric & form etc)
13:1	13	Modified scraper		
13:2	13	Burnt flint flake		
13:3	13	Flint flake		
13:4	13	Flint flake		
13:5	13	Flint retouched fragment		
13:6	13	Burnt flint flake		
13:7	13	Struck flint flake		
15:1	15	Burnt bone		
18:1	18	Flint flake		
18:2	18	Core frag		
18:3	18	Burnt bone		
19:1	19	Flint blade		
23:1	23	Burnt flint flake		
23:2	23	Animal tooth		
24:1	24	Burnt Flint flake		
24:2	24	Burnt Flint flake		
24:3	24	Burnt Flint flake		
24:4	24	Animal tooth		
24:5	24	Flint flake		
36:1	36	Horse shoe	Post-Medieval	
36:2	36	Clay pipe	Post-Medieval	
36:3	36	Pottery	Post-Medieval	
36:4	36	Metal object	Post-Medieval	
36:5	36	Animal bone		
39:1	39	Flint Flake		
39:2	39	Flint Flake		
39:3	39	Post-Med pottery	Post-Medieval	
39:4	39	Burnt Flint		
46:1	46	Wood	Middle Bronze Age	

APPENDIX 2: SPECIALIST REPORT

Appendix: 2.1 RADIOCARBON DATING REPORT

The University of Waikato Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory

One C 14 date was established for the site at Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3

The un-calibrated result is as follows:

Wk18554 Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3; 03E01397: **(C49)**, hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) (1.2g)

d 14 C	-313.5+/-3.1
d 13 C	-25.6+/-0.2
d 14 C	-312.6+/-3.1
% modern	68.7+/-0.3
Result	3011+/-36 BP

The calibrated results were processed using the Intcal 04 calibration curve. The result (95.4% probability) was as follows:

Wk18554 Faughart Lower 1, 2 & 3; 03E01397: **(C49)**, hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) (1.2g)

Cal BC 1390-1120BC (95.4% probability)

Intcal 04 reference: Reimer, P. J., Baillie, M. G. L., Bard, E., Bayliss, A., Beck, J. W., Bertrand, C. J. H., Blackwell, P. G., Buck, C. E., Burr, G. S., Cutler, K. B., Damon, P.E., Edwards, R. L., Fairbanks, R. G., Friedrich, M., Guilderson, T. P., Hogg, A. G., Hughen, K. A., Kromer, B., McCormac, G., Manning, S., Bronk Ramsey, C., Reimer, R. W., Remmele, S., Southon, J. R., Stuiver, M., Talamo, S., Taylor, F. W., van der Plicht, J., Weyhenmeyer, C. E., IntCal04 Terrestrial Radiocarbon Age Calibration, 0 - 26 ka cal BP, *Radiocarbon* 46 (nr 3, 2004).

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Report on Radiocarbon Age Determination for Wk- 18554

Submitter Li Johnston
Submitter's Code Faughart 46/16
Site & Location Dundalk Western Bypass, Ireland
Sample Material Corlus avellana
Physical Pretreatment Possible contaminants were removed. Washed in ultrasonic bath.
Chemical Pretreatment Sample washed in hot 10% HCl, rinsed and treated with hot 1% NaOH. The NaOH insoluble fraction was treated with hot 10% HCl, filtered, rinsed and dried.

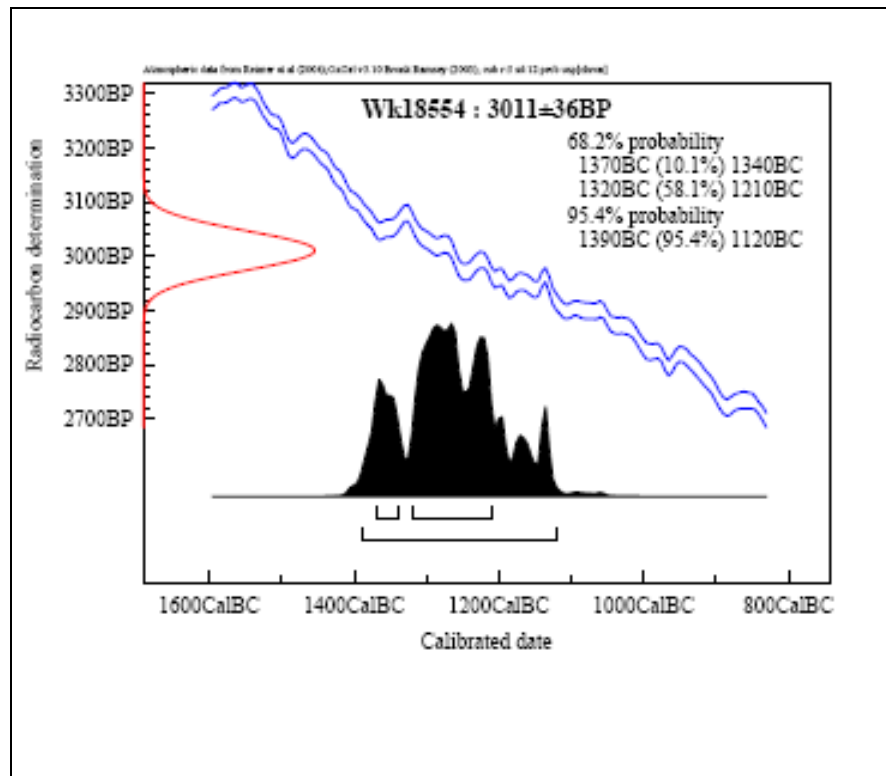
$\delta^{14}\text{C}$	-313.5 ± 3.1	‰
$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	-25.6 ± 0.2	‰
D^{14}C	-312.6 ± 3.1	‰
% Modern	68.7 ± 0.3	%

Result 3011 $\pm$ 36 BP

Comments

3/5/06

- Result is *Conventional Age* or % Modern as per Stuiver and Polach, 1977, Radiocarbon 19, 355-363. This is based on the Libby half-life of 5568 yr with correction for isotopic fractionation applied. This age is normally quoted in publications and must include the appropriate error term and Wk number.
- Quoted errors are 1 standard deviation due to counting statistics multiplied by an experimentally determined Laboratory Error Multiplier of 1.
- The isotopic fractionation, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$, is expressed as ‰ wrt PDB.
- Results are reported as % Modern when the conventional age is younger than 200 yr BP.



APPENDIX 2.2: SPECIES IDENTIFICATION OF WOOD SAMPLES

**SPECIES IDENTIFICATION OF WOOD SAMPLES FROM
EXCAVATIONS AT FAUGHART LOWER 1, 2 & 3 (03E1397),
DUNDALK WESTERN BY-PASS, CO. LOUTH**

ELLEN O CARROLL

FEBRUARY 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

Twenty two timbers were submitted for analysis. The timbers were excavated from a platform area associated with a *Fulacht fiadh* and excavated at Faughart Lower 1, Co Louth. Faughart Lower 1 was located in Faughart Lower townland, to the west of the Faughart Road (R97), c. 2km north of Dundalk (Louth OS sheet 004). The site was located on low-lying ground to the east of the main Dublin/Belfast railway embankment. It was situated at the base of a river terrace at the junction with a floodplain. The burnt mound consisted of a trough (2.50m x 1.50m x 0.50m). Adjacent to this was a platform of semi-charred and waterlogged timbers (1m x 1m x 0.10m). These timbers appear to represent a platform on which a fire was set. A pond feature (5.60m x 2.20m x 0.40m) was located to the north of the hearth platform; this appeared to be linked to the former stream channel (or area of inundation) by a channel.

The wood samples identified and analysed were taken from (C49), the hearth platform. The wood was sent for species identification prior to ¹⁴C dating and also to give an indication of the range of tree species, which grew in the vicinity. Charcoal and wood analyses may also provide information on the utilization of certain species for various functions.

2 METHODS

The process for identifying wood, whether it is charred, dried or waterlogged is carried out by comparing the anatomical structure of wood samples with known comparative material or keys (Schweingruber 1990). Thin slices were taken from the transversal, tangential and longitudinal sections of each piece of wood and sampled using a razor blade. These slices were then mounted on a slide and glycerine was painted onto the wood to aid identification. Each slide was then examined under a microscope (Leica GZ 6) at magnifications of 10x to 120x. By close examination of the microanatomical features of the samples the species were determined. The diagnostic features used for the identification of wood are micro-structural characteristics such as the vessels and their arrangement, the size and arrangement of rays, vessel pit arrangement and also the type of perforation plates. It is important to note that only in some cases were all the characteristic features described above present in the archaeological samples.

3. QUANTIFICATION/RESULTS

Table 1: Results from wood identifications

Site no.	Context No and type	Sample No	Identification	Weight and comment
Faughart Lower 1 03E1397	C49, Wood from platform	2	All hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) rods	16 timbers- 200 grammes +. Average age of rod was 7- 8 years and average diameter was 2 cm.
Faughart Lower 1 03E1397	C49, Wood from platform		All alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>)	6 timbers. Average age 6 years and average diameter was 3cm

4. PROVENANCE

The wood samples were retrieved from an excavated wooden platform of semi-charred and waterlogged timbers (1m x 1m x 0.10m). These timbers appear to represent a platform on which a fire was set. They were charred suggesting they were waterlogged during use and could not burn, which resulted in their preservation. The platform was associated with a *fulacht fiadh* which was truncated by a thin layer of burnt stones and charcoal. It was situated at the base of the river terrace at the junction with the floodplain (the river is now a ditched stream). The burnt mound consisted of a trough (2.50m x 1.50m x 0.50m) with no evidence for lining.

The wood samples were identified as hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). They comprised wooden rods averaging between 2 and 3 cm in diameter and between 6 and 8 years in age. It is interesting to note that the two samples of wooden rods were confined to one particular species in each case, which suggests that the wood was cut from an area of woodland and laid accordingly. This in turn suggests that any available wood was used in the construction of the platform and availability of a certain timber type was the main factor in the construction of the platform.

Sixteen rods were identified as hazel. The age of the hazel rods (7-8 years) indicates that the hazel was selected from coppice woodland, as hazel was generally coppiced on a 7-year cycle. Hazel was very common up to the end of the 17th century and would have been used for the manufacture of many wooden structures such as wattle walls, posts, trackways and baskets. McCracken (1971, 19) points out that "it was once widespread to a degree that is hard to imagine today". With the introduction of brick, steel and slate the crafts associated with hazel became obsolete, and today the woods that supplied hazel have diminished rapidly. Hazel is normally only about 3-5m in height and is often found as an understory tree in deciduous woods dominated by oak. It also occurs as pure copses on shallow soils over limestone as in The Burren in Co. Clare and survives for 30 to 50 years. Its main advantage is seen in the production of long flexible straight rods through the process known as coppicing.

The alder selected at the site averaged 6 years in age and measured c. 3cm in diameter. The alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) would have been very accessible, as it prefers wet habitats along streams and riverbanks. It is a widespread native tree and grows regularly in and on fen peat. It is an easily worked and split timber and does not tear when worked. The alder would have been selected for use in the wooden platform possibly due to its accessibility close to the river edge. Alder is commonly identified from wood remains associated with *fulacht fiadh* and burnt mounds.

5. CONSERVATION

The wood samples presented for analysis are suitable for conventional ¹⁴C dating. The best material to send for dating is shorter-lived species such as alder and hazel therefore the samples identified above are ideal for ¹⁴C dating purposes.

6. COMPARATIVE MATERIAL

In recent years a considerable amount of structural as well as non-structural wood has been recovered from archaeological deposits in Ireland. Wood was a vital and widely used raw material from prehistoric to medieval times although its importance is rarely reflected in the analysis of archaeological assemblages mainly due to its perishable

nature. It is important to note that people in prehistoric, Early Christian and medieval communities were mainly dependant on woodland resources for the construction of buildings and for the manufacture of most implements. The woods in a surrounding catchment area were exploited and often managed to provide an essential raw material for the community. The economic importance of wood cannot be overestimated.

A study of the range of species on an archaeological site offers an indication of the composition of a local woodland in its period of use. When some trees are felled the stool left in the ground will produce several new stems, which will grow rapidly. This type of management is known as coppicing. In many woodland areas a number of species of wood are suitable for the production of crops of long narrow stems used for fences, brushwood, hurdle trackways and wattle walls.

From the preliminary studies mentioned above it is clear that oak was the most common species used for wall-posts and planks, hazel was preferred for wattle structures and species such as ash, willow, alder, birch and holly were utilised for a variety of other structural requirements. The work carried out on species selection suggests that availability around a given catchment area was probably the main factor which influenced choice of timber.

The wood assemblage from Faughart 1, although as yet undated, is probably associated with the later pre-historic period (Bronze age) and represents the remains of a platform possibly used for burning.

The author has carried out identification of wood associated with similar type wooden platforms at Derragh 1 (01E0315), Ballyhowley, Meeltran and Derragh 2 (00E0239) in Co. Mayo. These platforms were also associated with *fulachta fiadh* and comprised a variety of timbers including hazel, alder, oak, ash and willow. It is clear therefore that these platforms were constructed using whatever available timber was closest to hand and this is borne out in comparative work from Co. Mayo.

7. DISCUSSION

Alder and hazel rods made up the constructional material of the wooden platforms. The platform does not appear to have been a very substantial construction as the rods were only 2 –3 cm in diameter and may have only been in use for a short period of time. The peoples who used this platform appear to have been collecting wood based on availability rather than a clear selection policy. The hazel identified above is indicative of a dryland terrain and would have grown in drier conditions preferring free-draining soils and nutrient rich clays. The hazel as indicated by the 7-8 year age may have been taken from a nearby coppice wood as this is the favoured rotation of coppice clear felling. The alder may have been retrieved from the nearby wetter area of the floodplain.

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APPENDIX 2.3: LITHIC REPORT

**M1 DUNDALK WESTERN BYPASS
CHIPPED STONE ASSEMBLAGE**

**CATALOGUE, ANALYSIS AND REPORT
FAUGHART LOWER 1, 2 & 3: 03E1397**

**DR EIMEAR NELIS MA PHD MIAI
AUGUST 2006**

Introduction

A small assemblage of 18 flint artefacts was recovered during excavations at Site 128, Faughart Lower (03E1397) (Delaney 2004). The basic composition of the assemblage is given below (Table 1).

Unique No	Context	Basic Character	Classification	Condition	Cortex	Fragment size (mm)	Length (mm)	Breadth (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Mass (g)
03E1397:13:1	13	Modified	Scraper	Fresh	Secondary	-	30	26	10	4.95
03E1397:13:2	13	Flakes	Platform shatter medial	Burnt	Secondary	26	-	-	-	5.42
03E1397:13:3	13	Modified	Utilised: cutting	Fresh	Secondary	-	37	26	8	6.98
03E1397:13:4	13	Flakes	Bipolar flake complete	Patinated	Tertiary	-	26	16	4	2.46
03E1397:13:5	13	Modified	Retouched frag: indeterminate	Patinated	Tertiary	17	-	-	-	.51
03E1397:13:6	13	Flakes	Indeterminate shatter	Burnt	Tertiary	11	-	-	-	.28
03E1397:13:7	13	Flakes	Platform complete	Fresh	Secondary	-	21	22	4	2.45
03E1397:18:1	18	Flakes	Platform shatter distal	Fresh	Secondary	22	-	-	-	3.61
03E1397:18:2	18	Cores	Dual platform	Fresh	Secondary	-	31	43	35	59.56
03E1397:19:1	19	Flakes	Platform blade shatter medial	Fresh	Secondary	40	-	16	5	4.03
03E1397:23:1	23	Flakes	Indeterminate shatter	Burnt	Secondary	25	-	16	4	2.28
03E1397:24:1	24	Flakes	Indeterminate shatter	Burnt	Secondary	22	-	10	8	1.75
03E1397:24:2	24	Flakes	Indeterminate shatter	Burnt	Secondary	15	-	18	9	2.03
03E1397:24:3	24	Flakes	Platform shatter proximal	Patinated	Secondary	17	-	24	4	1.76
03E1397:24:5	24	Flakes	Platform blade shatter proximal	Fresh	Tertiary	25	-	14	3	1.77
03E1397:39:1	39	Flakes	Core rejuvenation	Fresh	Secondary	-	35	25	7	5.46
03E1397:39:2	39	Flakes	Indeterminate shatter	Fresh	Tertiary	25	-	-	-	1.37
03E1397:39:4	39	Angular shatter	Burnt shatter	Burnt	Secondary	29	-	-	-	3.26

Table 1: Dundalk Western Bypass: Faughart Lower (03E1397): showing basic composition of the flint assemblage.

No unworked material was included within the assemblage, which was mainly comprised of flakes and blades (13/18 pieces); most of the remaining artefacts are modified tools (3/18 pieces), with a single piece of angular shatter and a single core also being found (Table 1).

The assemblage was recovered from a small number of archaeological contexts, relating to Groups 2 (C18, C19) and Group 4 (C13, C23, C24, C39) (Table 2). Group 2 features related to prehistoric activity (Delaney 2004, 11) and included a burnt mound, and a possible hut and pit, of which the pit may be the earliest feature (ibid); from these, three artefacts were recovered. The remaining majority of the assemblage was associated with Group 4 activity, in particular, the fills of post-medieval features (15 pieces).

For the most part, it was not possible to determine the source of the raw material, but two artefacts were recognizably derived from beach pebbles, both of which derived from Group 4 activity: these included one of the modified tools, a scraper (03E0397:13:1),

recovered from C13, the fill of the drainage ditch C14, and a piece of burnt angular shatter (03E1397:39:4), found in C39, the fill of the field boundary C40.

**Assemblage summary and discussion
(including provenance and date range)**

Group 2

Of features relating to this group, lithic artefacts were recovered from C18 (2 pieces: 1 flake fragment, 1 core), the fill of the possible hut foundation trench C45 (Table 2). The flake fragment is the distal fragment of a decortical flake, with a strongly hinged termination. The core carries two distinct platforms, of which one platform is dominant and carries multiple facets, indicating complexity and an intense effort to control flake production; the piece is small and heavily reduced, and bears numerous hinged terminations, and it is therefore possible that it was considered further unworkable and abandoned. The quality of material in both artefacts is similar, and both pieces carry evidence for strongly hinging terminations, possibly indicating a similar knapping technique (arguably, a flawed technique); however, the flake fragment and the core are not conjoinable and, therefore, while it is possible that the flake fragment has been produced by the core, this cannot be established and need not necessarily be the case.

In addition, a single piece of debitage was found in C19, the fill of a large pit C52. It has been postulated that this was a blade struck from a uniplane core (Delaney 2004, 12), but the presence of two non-parallel flake scars on the dorsal face suggest that the core technology may have been more complex than this. The piece is incomplete, and therefore the precise nature of its technology cannot be established, but it does seem to be the product of careful and controlled reduction. None of the artefacts recovered from Group 2 features can be closely dated, although all suggest prehistoric activity during either the Neolithic or Bronze Age periods. The artefacts attest to a degree of complexity within the reduction strategy, and a degree of intensity with regard to the utilization of raw material can also be inferred. Such factors are more suggestive of a need to make the most of available resources, rather than being helpful in elucidating their chronological context, but such methods tend to be found after the Early Neolithic, and not later than the Early Bronze Age.

Context No	Description	Unworked	Core	Flake Debitage	Angular shatter	Modified	TOTAL
13	Group 4: Subgroup 1016: Fill of drainage ditch C14	-	-	4	-	3	7
18	Group 2: Subgroup 1003: Fill of Hut foundation trench C45	-	1	1	-	-	2
19	Group 2: Subgroup 1002: Fill of pit C52	-	-	1	-	-	1
23	Group 4: Subgroup 1016: Fill of drainage ditch C14	-	-	1	-	-	1
24	Group 4: Subgroup 1016: Fill of drainage ditch C14	-	-	4	-	-	4
39	Group 4: Subgroup 1013: Fill of field boundary C40	-	-	2	1	-	3
	TOTAL	-	1	13	1	3	18

Table 2: Dundalk Western Bypass: Faughart Lower (03E1397): showing distribution and basic composition of the flint assemblage.

Group 3

The remaining artefacts were recovered from Group 3 features, specifically the fills of post-medieval features. Most of the assemblage was found in the fills of the post-medieval drainage ditch C14 (12 pieces: C13: 7 pieces; C23: 1 piece; C24: 4 pieces). These were mainly comprised of flake debitage (9 pieces: 8 shattered, 1 complete), but also included all of the modified tools within the assemblage (3 pieces: C13). In addition, three flint artefacts were found in C39, the fill of the post-medieval field boundary C40. These include a piece of burnt angular shatter and two flakes (1 complete, 1 shattered); the complete flake is a core rejuvenation flake, removed from an intensively worked core and aimed at producing a clean, plain core for further reduction. These artefacts are thought to have been residually redeposited into this fill (Delaney 2004, 16).

Seven burnt and fragmentary flakes were found in C13 (2 pieces), C23 (1 piece) and C24 (2 pieces). The burnt flake fragments were damaged beyond further recognition, and therefore little information regarding their technology remained. From C24, the remaining, unburnt fragments exhibited traits which indicated platform reduction, with both pieces carrying small platforms with evidence for core edge preparation (Table 1). From C13, a bipolar flake was the only evidence for this reduction technique at the site, with the surviving platforms from the remaining pieces found in this context tending to be small, extensively prepared types.

It is probable that the Group 4 assemblage has been residually redeposited into the fills of C14 and C40. Where technical traits remain they indicate a carefully controlled reduction technique such as those found in relation to Group 2 prehistoric activity. It is therefore probable that the Group 4 lithic assemblage is largely or entirely the result of prehistoric lithic activity which has been residually redeposited during the post-medieval period, and it is possible that these artefacts are contemporary with some or all of those found in Group 2 prehistoric features. Modified tools and cores are often helpful in clarifying the chronological context of a given assemblage, but at Faughart Lower only the core has been recovered from an apparently *in situ* prehistoric context. The modified tools, on the other hand, were recovered from the post-medieval fill C13. They are comprised of a small minimally retouched scraper (03E1397:13:1), an edge retouched fragment (of indeterminate use) (03E1397:13:5), and a utilised flake, which seems to have been used for cutting (03E1397:13:3). Therefore, while the core points to an intensive, complex technology, possibly occurring at some point during the Middle to Late Neolithic, none of the modified tools are sufficiently diagnostic (in terms of morphology or typology) to point to a particular period of use. Only the scraper is a distinguishable tool type, and this too is minimally retouched and irregular in form. All of the modified tools have minimalist retouch and expediency in production in common; as such, their period of production and use could range from any period from the Neolithic through to the Historic Period, and since they have been residually redeposited into C13, it is probable that they yield from multiple knapping events, conceivably over a protracted period of time.

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Delaney, S. 2004. *M1 Dundalk Western Bypass: Site 128: Faughart Lower: 03E1397: Stratigraphic report*. Dublin: IAC Ltd.