

transport21
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M1 DUNDALK WESTERN BYPASS

SITE 119: BALREGAN 3 & 4
CHAINAGE 22.690 – 22.740
NGR: 302806/310094

FINAL REPORT

ON BEHALF OF
LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL and the
NATIONAL ROADS AUTHORITY

LICENSEE: SHANE DELANEY MA
LICENCE NUMBER: 03E0158

JULY 2009

IAC Irish Archaeological
Consultancy

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. (IAC Ltd.), funded by Louth County Council and the National Roads Authority, undertook an excavation under licence to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Irish Antiquities Division of the National Museum of Ireland in the townland of Balregan c. 2km northwest of Dundalk in advance of the construction of the M1 Dundalk Western Bypass (DWB). The excavation was undertaken to ensure any previously unrecorded subsoil archaeological remains were preserved by record in advance of the construction phase of the motorway.

The site was identified during archaeological test trenching undertaken by IAC in March 2002 (Delaney 2002, License Ref.: 02E0373). Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4 was located near the base of a gently sloping valley on the eastern side of the Kilcurry River, overlooking a millpond associated with an adjacent mill. The mill, known as Scotch Green Mill, was located 50 metres to the southeast and was also subject to archaeological investigations as part of the DWB Scheme as Site 118, Balregan 5 & 6 under Licence 03E0159. Resolution of Balregan 3 & 4 began on 14th May 2003, directed by Shane Delaney, and was completed by 23rd May 2003.

At Site 119, Balregan 3, 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 appeared to have been of 19th century construction based on the artefactual evidence and identifiable construction methods, however, the structure was not depicted on the 1835 or the 1908-9 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 that the building dates from the later 19th century and fell out of use at the same time as the adjacent Scotch Green Mill.

The structure may have functioned as a store/warehouse given its proximity to the principal mill. A concrete path which bordered to the millpond and was associated with the structure was located immediately to the south.

There were no upstanding remains of the building as the majority of the building had been demolished and the foundations had been robbed out. The entire extent of the site at Balregan 3 had been covered by collapse/dumped material up to 1m deep.

Site 119, (Balregan 4) was identified during archaeological test testing. Upon further investigation this site proved to be a probable tree bole.

The site yielded no materials, finds or features of archaeological significance.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report refers to the archaeological excavation of two areas at Site 119 (Balregan 3 & 4), in the townland of Balregan, c.2km to the northwest of Dundalk, Co. Louth. The work was carried out as part of the archaeological mitigation program 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

Sites 119, Balregan 3 & 4, were located in Balregan townland, to the west of the R109, c. 2km northwest of Dundalk (Louth OS sheet 007). The details are:

- Site 119, Excavation Licence 03E0158, route chainage (Ch) 22.690–22.740, NGR 302806/310094

The site was identified during archaeological test trenching undertaken by IAC in March 2002 (Delaney 2002; License Ref.: 02E0373). The site was located near the base of a gently sloping valley on the eastern side of the Kilcurry River, and to the north of a millpond associated with an adjacent 19th century mill to the east. The ground level was between 6.5m OD and 8m OD.

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 connects the existing Dunleer-Dundalk Motorway, which terminates 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

The investigations at Site 119 (Balregan 3 & 4) were located within the townland of Balregan and lay between Ch22.690 – 22.740. Balregan 1 & 2 is located 120m to the south and Balregan 5 & 6 is located 50m to the southeast.

Background historical research was undertaken as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (Valerie J. Keeley Ltd, 2002). This study identified a recorded archaeological site, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places as (LH007-099) namely; a cist located c .50m to the east of the fence line at Ch22.700 (Figure 2). This site was also located within Balregan townland

An area of 60m x 50m was investigated during the archaeological resolution at Balregan 3 and 4. At Site 119 Balregan 3, the excavation revealed the masonry foundations of a rectangular shaped structure, subdivided into two rooms. The foundations of the building were north-south oriented and the surviving material was located in the remains of the north, east and partly the west elevations of the northern room. The investigation yielded no material of archaeological significance and the building is believed to be industrial in nature, associated with the adjacent Scotch Green Mill (Site 118, Balregan 5 & 6) and dating to the 19th century. At Site 119, Balregan 4, a circular depression identified during archaeological test trenching proved to be a tree bole and not of archaeological origin.

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 the sites by record.

Archaeological excavation of Balregan 3 & 4 began on 14th May 2003 and was completed by 23rd May. Two trenches were excavated over the suspected archaeological remains using a 20 tonne excavating machine equipped with a toothless bucket under strict archaeological supervision.

The buried remains of a large stone built structure were located in the area stripped to the south. This was recorded and a plan was drawn at a scale of 1:50, with sections produced at 1:20. The area was thoroughly photographed. All works were carried out in agreement with the Project Archaeologist and *The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government*.

It was agreed in advance that adequate funds to cover post-excavation would be made available by Louth County Council. The site archive, and any finds, samples *et cetera* will be 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 north end of Dundalk Bay and is the administrative centre of County Louth, the northernmost county in Leinster. The area spans two geographical areas. To the west, the rural landscape surrounding the urban district is one of undulating topography, with low drumlins rising to 30-40m from the coastal plain. As with much of Louth, this covers thick strata of Ordovician and Silurian slates, with some outcrops (Gosling 1993, 237). 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 after the last glaciation.

At the time of the earliest habitation in Ireland (Early Mesolithic period: c. 7000BC), the sea submerged the area surrounding present day Dundalk to a depth of 4-5m, although it continued to retreat to its present level until the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Period (c. 2500BC), replacing the submerged area with salt marshes and tidal flats. At various stages from the 17th century onward, 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 County 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-AD400)

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, (O Sullivan 2002, 10-11) c. 5 km north east of the town of Dundalk.

Although we can say with confidence that substantial Neolithic activity is evidenced by the archaeological record from c. 4000BC onwards, which had many similar features with contemporary sites in Britain and near Europe, uncertainty still remains concerning the circumstances of the arrival of Neolithic customs and traditions within Ireland and how the new economy altered the environment.

2.1.1 Neolithic Period (c. 4000BC – c. 2500BC)

The origins of Neolithic activity in Ireland are disputed. Pollen records reveal forest clearances occurring before our earliest dated Neolithic sites or monuments; however this may be a reflection of some modern dating methods being too crude to discriminate between early and late Neolithic settlement rather than an indication of the true chronology (Mitchell & Ryan 1997). A debate ensues over whether the culture

evident in Ireland during the Neolithic was a product of a migrating people into Ireland or an indigenous development from Mesolithic populations. The introduction of certain flora and fauna species, landscape management techniques, traits in architectural construction and domestic crafts, bearing with a striking resemblance to contemporary evidence in Britain has lead some authors to suggest colonisation from outside of Ireland (Mitchell & Ryan, 1997). Recent studies (Cooney 2000, 13) have suggested that a combination of small-scale movement across the Irish Sea by migrating communities and developments within the existing Mesolithic populations within Ireland resulted in the innovative beginnings of this era.

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 north east of the site at Balregan 3 & 4 (with the nearest example located at Faughart lower (LH004-062), c. 3km to the N) and the remainder scattered throughout the Cooley peninsula.

Archaeological discoveries elsewhere on the DWB scheme revealed settlement evidence from the Neolithic period, with a the truncated remains of a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age house identified at Site 101, Littlemill 1 (O'Donnchadha, forthcoming d)), located c. 4.5km to the south of Site 118 (Balregan 3 & 4). Other Neolithic settlement activity identified as part of the Dundalk Western Bypass consisted of a Neolithic occupation at Site 120, Fort Hill (Bayley, forthcoming (a)) located 0.8km to the northeast, Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age hearths and pits at Site 113, Newtownbalregan 5 (Bayley, forthcoming (c)) located 1.4km to the south, a collection of pits possibly Neolithic/Early Bronze Age in dating at Site 103, Littlemill 4/5. (Ó Donnchadha, forthcoming (c)), a number of Neolithic huts with associated pits were excavated at Site 124, Carn More 1 (Delaney, forthcoming (b)) located 2km to the east of Balregan 3 & 4. Several pits containing Early Neolithic pottery were identified at Site 132; Faughart Lower 5 (Delaney, forthcoming (c)) located 3km to the east of Balregan 3 & 4. A middle Neolithic to Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Beaker habitation site was identified at Site 108, Donaghmore 1 (Ó Donnachada, forthcoming (e)) located 3.1km to the south of Balregan 3 & 4.

2.1.2 The Bronze Age Period (c. 2500BC – c. 500BC)

Bronze Age discoveries along the DWB consist of an Early Bronze Age Beaker (c. 2400 - c. 2200BC) habitation site at Site 112, Newtownbalregan 2 (Bayley forthcoming (e)), located c. 2km south of site 118, Balregan 3 & 4. 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. 2.8km east northeast of Site 119.

Burnt mounds or *fulachta fiadh* are the most prevalent prehistoric monument in Ireland (Waddell, 1998, 174), with over 4500 burnt mounds recorded to date. The quantity of this site type is ever increasing as a result in most instances of development led archaeological investigations. In County Louth, there are 18 recorded burnt mounds/*fulacht fiadh* 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/*fulachta fiadh* as part of the DWB scheme at

Site 111, Newtownbalregan 1.1, located 2.2km to the south, Site 113, Newtownbalregan 5 located 1.4km to the south and at Site 128, Faughart 1, 2 and 3 located 3km east northeast of Site 118, Balregan 3 & 4 and at Site 102 at Littlemill 2, however the example at Site 102, Littlemill 2, located 4.8km south of Site 118 proved to be Early Medieval in dating (Cal 890-1250AD; Donnachada, forthcoming (f)). A further 6 burnt mounds/*fulachta fiadh* were excavated by Archaeological Development Services Ltd (ADS Ltd.) as part of the archaeological resolution of the Dunleer/Dundalk Motorway.

Burnt mounds/*Fulachta fiadh* tend to yield very few artefacts, even fewer of which have been useful in accurately and precisely dating this site type (Cherry 1990). Burnt mounds/*Fulachta fiadh* are also known to occur in Scotland, Wales and England where they are variously referred to as 'burnt mounds', 'boiling mounds' or 'pot-boiler sites' (Buckley & Sweetman, 1991).

2.1.3 The Iron Age (c. 500BC – c. 500AD)

There is a marked lack of known Iron Age (c. 500BC - c. 500AD) activity within the surrounding area. The ring barrow identified at Site 131, Donaghmore 7 (Ó Donnachada, 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 (WK 18564). The dates returned confirmed that the ring barrow belongs to the Iron Age period, specifically the mid-Iron Age (Cal 120BC-60AD).

2.2 Early Medieval Period (AD400-1100)

The early medieval period is depicted in the surviving sources as entirely rural characterised by the basic territorial unit known as *túath*. Byrne (1973) estimates that there were probably at least one hundred and fifty kings in Ireland at any given time during this period, each ruling over his own *túath*. During this sometimes violent period, roughly circular defensive enclosures known as ringforts were constructed to protect farmsteads. Although most of the ringforts that have been excavated are shown to date to this period, some have earlier origins and may have been originally constructed during the Iron Age, or even earlier.

Site 114 at Newtownbalregan 6 (Bayley, forthcoming (d)) located c. 1.6km north of Site 118; Balregan 3 & 4 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. 400AD – 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 forthcoming (b)), a ringfort was identified in Area 1 and is listed in the Records of Monuments and Places as LH004-067 was excavated in advance of the motorway's construction.

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 E of the CPO line at Ch17.640 (LH007-071), in Littlemill townland. A further two enclosures with associated souterrains were also excavated by Archaeological Development Services Ltd (ADS Ltd) in advance of the construction of the Dunleer/Dundalk Motorway

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 *Cuailgne* (Cooley) and *Mag Muirtheimne* (Plain of Muirtheimne) –corresponding to the area S 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, Armagh; the *Conaille Muirtheimne* appear to have been subject to the kingdom of *Brega*, which had its capital at *Cnógbha* or Knowth in Co. Meath at the time of its greatest political cohesion, during the first half of the 7th century AD. Their earliest appearance in the annals is in 688 AD, 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* or Oriel in the early 12th century.

The *fulacht fiadh* identified at Site 102, Littlemill 2 (Ó Donnachada, forthcoming (f)) was Carbon 14 dated to Cal 890AD -1250AD (968 +/- 85BP). Site 102, Littlemill 2 was roughly circular in shape and it is suggested that these sites which are identified as early medieval and medieval in date, tend to be circular to oval in shape with no evidence for pit lining.

2.3 Medieval Period (AD1169-1700)

The motte and bailey at Castletown (LH 007-118-07) 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 which 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 a network of towns throughout the country with Louth being the most urbanised county.

The land in and around Castletown and Dundalk was granted to the Anglo-Norman Bertram de Verdon after he arrived in 1185, and corresponds to the modern barony of Ferrard (Gosling, 1993, 252). The de Verdon estate passed onto the Bellews. It was at this time that many of the tower houses were constructed, and the Bellews contributed two large examples in 1472 and 1479, of which only the later survives, in the grounds of St. Louis convent. The earlier tower house is known to have stood at Castletown cross. In 1429 a subsidy was given to encourage the King's 'liege men' to build towers 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 later castle 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 has led to large gaps in the record as to the size of the Anglo-Norman settlement and how it was laid out. By the 13th century it seems that Castletown had a 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 a mile to the east of the motte, developed as the major urban centre. This was due to its market centre and port 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 as well as a defensive point. As Dundalk developed and became the focus for Anglo-Norman settlement in the area, Castletown went into decline and Dundalk became the economic pulse of the Lordship. When exactly 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 Period (1700-1900)

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

2.5 Site Specific

The area was adjacent to Scotch Green Mill, which was built around 1800. Scotch Green Mill was not marked on Taylor and Skinner's map of 1783 but was marked on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1835. The detail of the mill buildings was not marked on the 1908-9 OS survey, only the land extent. The mill was associated with a large millrace, tapping into the waters of the Kilcurry River and it is the millrace specifically which was impacted on directly by the motorway's construction.

An examination of the archives of the Valuation Office of Ireland indicated that the mill (Site 118, Balregan 5 & 6) had gone out of use by 1882, when the site was described as 'Flour mill not used' and valued at £90.00. A note accompanying an entry in the valuation records dated 1864 stated that water was scarce for about three months each year and the rateable value for the site also decreased between 1860 (£120.00) and 1864 (£100.00), indicating a downturn in its production. The mill is described as a corn flour mill in 1864 and as 'house and mill offices' in 1860.

The site was described in 1891 and 1905 as 'vacant flour mill' and in 1915 as a 'vacant dilapidated flour mill'. Its rateable value in 1891 was £50.00 and this continued to be its value until 1938 when it was deemed to no longer be a rateable property. This would indicate that a significant change had taken place at the site such as the loss of its roof, whereby the building would no longer be of value. The site continued to be described as a 'vacant dilapidated flour mill' after 1938.

No buildings were marked on the above Ordnance Survey editions in the location of the masonry wall (building) located during testing in 2002 and no mention of this building were revealed during examination of the Valuation Office records.

3 THE EXCAVATION

3.1 Introduction

The excavation at Site 119, Balregan 3 and 4, was undertaken as part of the archaeological mitigation for the DWB in the townland of Balregan.

3.2 Methodology

Archaeological excavation of Balregan 3 and 4 began on 14th May 2003 and was completed by 23rd May. Two trenches were opened over the suspected archaeological remains using a 20 tonne excavating machine equipped with a toothless bucket under strict archaeological supervision. These trenches measured 20m x 20m (Balregan 3) and 20m x 30m (Balregan 4). All features were subsequently fully recorded with plans and sections produced at a scale of 1:50 and 1:20. The site was thoroughly photographed. 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.

3.3 Geology, topography and landscape

Geology and topography

The DWB in this area crossed a zone of prime agricultural land, with soils in the category of 'Wide Use Range' being very suitable for grassland and tillage enterprises. In general terms the ground conditions comprised typically 3m to 5m of glacial till over bedrock. The glacial nature of the sand and stone-strewn natural subsoil ensures the area is well drained. Bedrock consists of Silurian siltstones, mudstones and sandstones, and locally Dinatian limestone.

The main focus of the site was situated on well drained ground made up of glacially mixed gravels and was located approximately 5-10m OD.

Landscape

The site was located to the east of the floodplain of the Kilcurry River and the Scotch Green Mill race and buildings. The field was under use as pasture at the time of the excavation.

4 EXCAVATION RESULTS

4.1 Balregan 3 (Figure 5)

Balregan 3 was identified as a wall during the linear testing programme. An area measuring approximately 20m x 30m was excavated over the area of potential and revealed a large post-medieval building. The location and siting of this building was probably associated with Site 118 (03E0159) Scotch Green Mill.

The building was constructed on a terrace cut into the gently rising valley-side to the north.

The building was orientated north to south and measured 6.5m wide x 21m long. It was built of roughly coursed greywacke masonry bonded with a pinkish lime mortar. The walls were generally 0.55m thick and a buttress c.1m long was incorporated into the north-eastern corner. Red brick was noted in repairs in the northern gable wall.

To the south of the building, occupying a 2m space between the south facing gable and the edge of the millpond, a concrete platform was exposed. This may have been a consolidation layer for the millpond edge, perhaps acting as a quay for unloading produce. The occurrence of slate in the demolition material indicates the likelihood of the building possessing a slate roof. Evidence for an external, gravelled surface was noted in the section of the excavation trench on the eastern side.

No external doorways were identified due to the scale of demolition of the structure.

Internally the building was divided into two main rooms. The northern room survived in better condition and measured 6.5m wide x 8.5m long, indicating an internal measurement roughly 5.5m wide x 7.5m long. The walls survived up to 1m high and were internally faced with a white plaster. A suspended timber floor was indicated from voids within the eastern and western walls (long axis). The north facing gable wall had been repaired with red brick and the general area had been sealed with building rubble including red brick, mortar and roof slates.

The southern room had been completely demolished and the foundations robbed out. The room measured 12.5m long x 6.5m wide (presumably 11.5m x 5.5m internally). The southern room was approximately 6.50m x 12.50m and appeared to have a rubble based floor (however most of this structure was robbed out).

The function of the building was probably for the storage of processed goods or goods being delivered to the mill for processing. There was no evidence for a fireplace. The building also does not appear to belong to the first phase of the mill.

The building was deliberately demolished and the foundations of the southern room were completely removed. The demolition rubble contained numerous fragments of slate, glass, stone, black ware pottery, red brick and a pink lime mortar. Primary demolition and robbing layers were covered with dumps of dark brown soils containing modern materials. The dumping filled in the terrace cut and landscaped the field. Anecdotal comment from the landowner suggests that this demolition occurred in the middle of the 20th century, perhaps when the mill finally went out of use.

4.2 Balregan 4 (Figure 5, Figure 6)

Balregan 4 had been identified as a charcoal rich feature, possibly a pit, during the linear testing programme in 2002. An area measuring approximately 20m x 20m was stripped back over the potential site to reveal any archaeology there. Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded from the exposed area. There were charcoal rich smears within the topsoil and it is suggested that the possible pit revealed during testing relates burnt out tree bole / tree clearance.

4.3 Significance of the Data

The date of this site is post medieval based stratigraphic and artefactual evidence. The site is significant in terms of the industrial archaeological heritage of the locality.

<i>Period;</i>	Post medieval period
<i>Rarity;</i>	Post-medieval water mills are not uncommon particularly close to a market town or distribution centre. Storage buildings associated with mills are also not uncommon.
<i>Documentation;</i>	No building is shown at the location for the building discussed on the 1837-8 or 1908-9 OS maps. It is suggested that the absence of the structure on the 1908-9 edition may not be significant (the actual mill building itself is also not marked). The landowner describes a building in this location being demolished in the mid 20 th century.
<i>Group value</i>	The excavated building almost certainly represents a storage building associated with Scotch Green Mill. However, it is equally clear that the building does not belong to the first phase of the mill.
<i>Survival/Condition;</i>	The structure was fragmentary and only the lower courses of the northern room survived.
<i>Fragility/Vulnerability;</i>	Subject to development under the M1 Dundalk Western Bypass
<i>Diversity;</i>	The site appeared to represent the construction, use and disuse of a storage building associated with Scotch Green Mill.
<i>Potential;</i>	The site holds potential for study in clarifying the construction dates, use and disuse of the building, along with determining its association with Scotch Green Mill.

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 Balregan townland and Responses (**R**) based on preliminary assessment of the site data.

Site 119, Scotch Green Mill-Site specific research questions

ORQ 1: *How many buildings are present, what were the construction methods and are there different phases of construction and use?*

R: The remains of a single rectangular shaped, north-south oriented structure, subdivided into two rooms were present. This structure was constructed of masonry and mortar and the surviving portions were located exclusively in the northern room, with the foundations and structural remains robbed out in the southern extent of the northern room and the entirety of the structural remains and foundations robbed out in the southern room. The northern room was plastered on the interior and had a timber floor, as evidenced by the presence of timber joist slots in the surviving portions of the south facing section of the northern elevation wall in the northern room. A projecting ante (buttress) protruded from the north-eastern corner of the building. The northern elevation (gable) demonstrated evidence for subsequent repairs to the greywacke masonry with the insertion of red brick indicating the sole example of subsequent phasing in the structure.

ORQ 2: *What are the functions of the buildings?*

R: The building was located next to a mill complex (Site 119, Balregan 5 & 6 – Scotch Green Mills) and it is suggested that the structure was part of that complex. A possible concrete quay (relating to the mill pond) was recorded to the south of the building and this may infer it was a storage building for any goods off loaded there to be processed at the mill.

ORQ 3: *Are there internal-external areas where different activities were undertaken?*

R: Externally there is a possible gravel surface to the east and a concrete slipway to the south. Internally there are two rooms, but the absence of a fireplace/hearth would imply the function of both was for storage.

ORQ 4: *What is the nature of the finds and environmental evidence? What type of evidence is present here and do they give indications for specific activities?*

R: The only finds returned were from the general demolition backfill. These comprised black ware, chinaware and some iron fragments. These suggest a date

generally of 19th to 20th century but are not necessarily indicative of any particular function.

ORQ 5: *Is there evidence for burial, ritual or other archaeological activity relating to site use prior to the construction of the buildings in the post-medieval period?*

R: There was no evidence in the areas investigated for burial, ritual or other archaeological activity relating to site use prior to the construction of the buildings in the post-medieval period.

5.2 Conclusions

Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4, revealed the subsurface remains of a rectangular shaped, north-south oriented structure which it is thought was associated with the adjacent post medieval water mill known as Scotch Green Mill (Site 118; Licence No. 03E0159). There were insufficient structural remains to identify door or window apertures and there was no evidence to support the presence of a fireplace or hearth. It is suggested that the structure may have functioned as an outlying storage facility associated with Scotch Green Mills. The discovery of a concrete platform, which appears to consolidate the northern edge of the millpond to the south of the Balregan 3, is suggestive of formalising the edge of the millpond as a quayside. This possibly infers that goods may have been off loaded in this location for storage in the structure identified at Balregan 3, for future processing at Scotch Green Mills (Site 119, Balregan 5 & 6).

Balregan 4 was identified as a site of non-archaeological significance following archaeological investigation of the site. Charcoal enriched soils had been identified in a possible pit, however the site was identified as a burnt-out tree-bole, and therefore of no archaeological significance.

The results from the excavation at Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4, add to the existing body of data concerning post medieval industrial activity in County Louth. Post medieval water mills are not uncommon, particularly close to a market town or distribution centre and storage buildings associated with mills are also not uncommon. The significance of this structure lies in its contribution to the history of the area within which it is located.

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Irish
Archaeological
Consultancy Ltd.

Title: Location of Site 119, Balregan 3 and 4

Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

Scale: N.T.S.

Date: 22/11/07

Produced by: P Higgins

Job No: J2041

Figure No: 1

NORTH



LH007:001 - Archaeological Complex

LH007:094 - Bellew's Bldge

Tateetra Road

Flour Mill
Tower House

LH004:060 - Church

LH004:059 - Ringfort

LH004:066 - Enclosure

LH004:067 - Ringfort

Fort Hill House

LH007:099 - Cist

LH007:011 - St John's Well

LH007:010 - standing stone

LH007:024 - souterrain

LH007:025 - souterrain

LH007:025 - souterrain

LH007:029 - souterrain

LH007:102 - rock art

LH007:100 - cist

LH007:030-31 - Ringfort + stone

Grey Acre Road

LH007:032 - stone

LH007:033 - souterrain

LH006:060 - 2 x souterrains

LH007:106 - souterrain

LH007:058 - crannóg

LH007:059 - souterrain

LH007:060 - cemetery

LH007:063 - souterrain

LH007:064 - fulacht fiadh

LH007:062 - ringditch

Mill on 1845 OS

LH007:071 - Souterrains

LH007:072 - enclosure, souterrains, art, ogham, church, metalworking

LH007:074 - Ringfort

LH007:075 - souterrain

LH007:111 - souterrain

LH007:077 - cemetery

LH007:108 - souterrain

LH007:109 - souterrain

LH007:110 - souterrain

LH007:112 - souterrain

LH007:113 - souterrain

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LH007:331 - souterrain

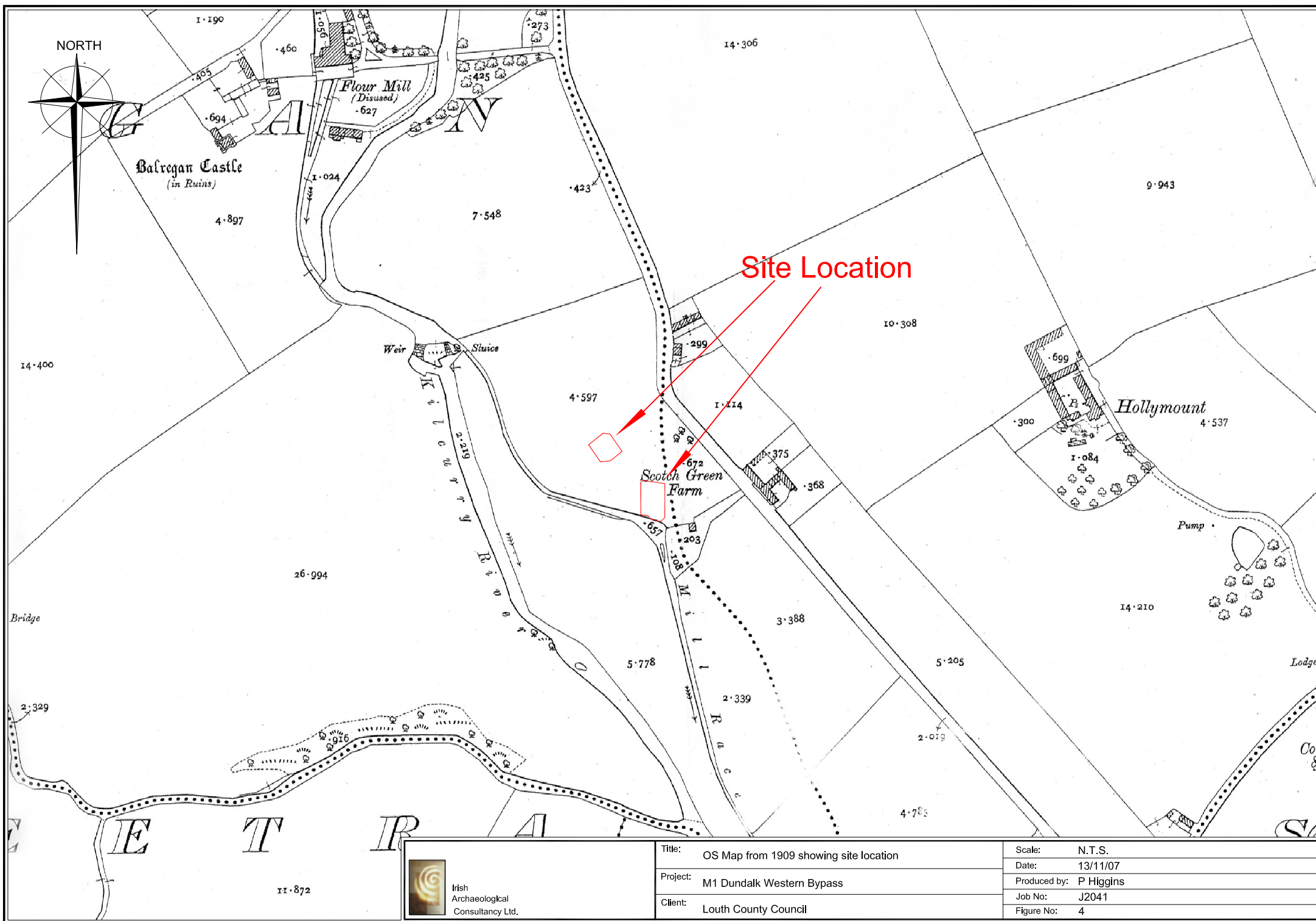
LH007:332 - souterrain

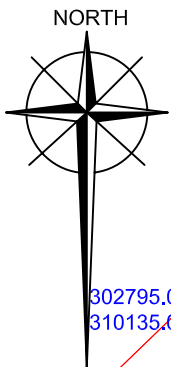
LH007:333 - souterrain

LH007:334 - souterrain

LH007:335 - souterrain

LH





302795.0E
310135.0N



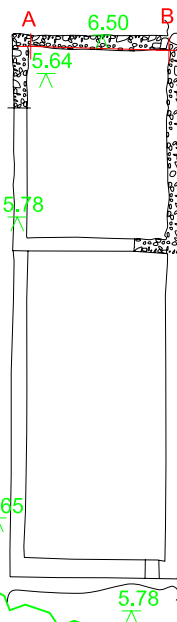
Balregan 4

16 + 720

302835.0E
310135.0N



Balregan 3



Wall

Robbed
out
Masonry

Concrete
path



302830.0E
310070.0N

Mill pond

Legend

- C## Cut number
- - - Section line
- - - Limit of excavation
- ^ OD Levels

Title: Site 119, Balregan 4 - Overview Plan

Project: M1 Dundalk Western Bypass

Client: Louth County Council

Scale: 1:300

Date: 14/11/07

Produced by: P Higgins

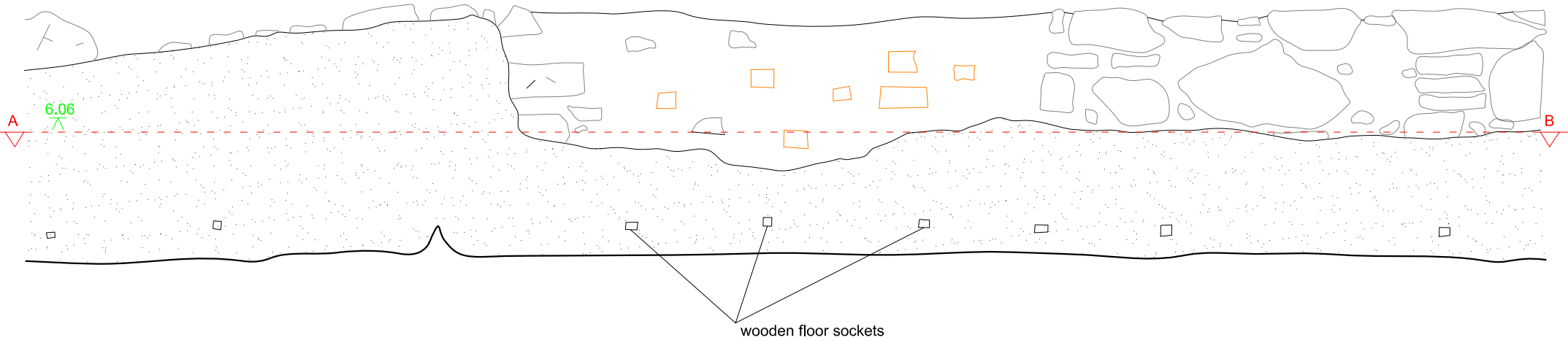
Job No: J2041

Figure No: 5




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Balregan 3&4
 South facing section of north wall




Legend




Brick



Plaster



Section line



OD Level



Irish
 Archaeological
 Consultancy Ltd.

Title:	Site 119 Balregan 4 Section illustrating height of wall and wooden floor sockets
Project:	M1 Dundalk Western Bypass
Client:	Louth County Council

Scale:	1:20
Date:	07/11/07
Produced by:	P Higgins
Job No:	J2041
Figure No:	6

PLATES



Plate 1 - Overhead view of site (Studiolab)



Plate 2 – Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4, looking south east



Plate 3 – Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4, looking west



Plate 4 – Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4, looking south



Plate 5 – Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4, looking west



Plate 6 – Site 119, Balregan 3 & 4, looking East

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

C	Type	Fill of	Filled by	Interpretation	Description
1	Topsoil	N/A	N/A	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay
2	Subsoil	N/A	N/A	Natural Subsoil	Mid yellow grey sandy clay with frequent mixed stones
3	Cut	N/A	N/A	Foundation cut	Terrace scarped into valley side
4	Deposit	N/A	N/A	Foundations of structure	Roughcast greywacke foundations
5	Deposit	N/A	N/A	Structural remains	Remains of Post-Medieval Structure
6	Cut			Robber's Trench	Robbed out structural material and foundations
7	Deposit			Concrete Platform	Concrete Platform