

**Interim Final Report of
Phase 2 Excavations
A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road
Area 8, Site 102**



Ministerial Direction no:	E3787
Chainage:	8570-8590
NGR:	307866E, 315693N
Townland:	Drumad
Parish:	Ballymascanlan
County:	Louth
Country:	Republic of Ireland
Director:	S.J. Turrell/C Farrimond
Submitted:	September 2005

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Abstract

Archaeological Development Services Ltd, having been commissioned by DRD Roads Service, undertook archaeological assessment along the proposed A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road. Archaeological evaluation was carried out along a number of locations highlighted in the Environmental Impact Assessment as areas of high archaeological potential. This report discusses the archaeological findings at Site 102 in Area 8, which is located in Drumad Townland.

At this site, testing had revealed three linear features

- *(045) Was located along the east of Test Trench 11, measured 2.5m wide and lay close to the present N1. It consisted of grey sand and redeposited subsoil mix.*
- *(043) Was a linear spread of grey sand, 10m wide was uncovered to the immediate south of (045). These deposits may be part of a larger feature but their relationship was unclear having been cut through by a stone filled drain.*
- *(044) A stone field drain.*

In the testing nothing dateable was recovered from the upper surface of either (043) or (045) and it is uncertain whether they were associated with the present N1 (an infilled sheugh?) or modern agricultural practices. Upon returning to the site it was determined, that the site represented modern field drains with no archaeological or historic interest and that the information potential of the site had been exhausted in the test excavations. No further excavations were conducted.

1 Description of the Site and Location

1.1 Introduction

The National Roads Authority (NRA) for the Republic of Ireland and Department for Regional Development (DRD) for Northern Ireland are the authorities in charge of the proposal to construct a new road between Newry and Dundalk. The proposed scheme involves a 14 km route with 5.7 km of associated link roads (Fig. 1). Upgrading the key transport corridors and associated trunk road links will provide a strategic framework for infrastructure investment, improvement of public transport, future urban and economic development especially for large-scale sites to accommodate industry and commerce and assisting tourist travel around the region.

As part of the road works, Archaeological Development Services Ltd (ADS) was commissioned to perform an archaeological assessment along the proposed Link Road and to mitigate the impacts of any construction on archaeological resources. The following report details the results of the resolution of Site 102 that followed the discovery of three filled linear features, uncovered during Phase 1 test trenching (McConway and O'Rourke 2005).

This report describes the results of a site evaluation carried out on May 13, 2005. The staff of ADS carried out archaeological work on behalf of the developers under the direction of Sinclair Turrell and Chris Farrimond.

Area 8, Site 102 is in Drumad Townland, Ballymascanlan Parish, Co. Louth, Republic of Ireland at National Grid Reference 307866E, 315693N (centre point), Ordnance Datum (OD) of approximately 91m and at road scheme Chainage 8570–8590.

1.2 Site description

1.2.1 Topography

The existing landscape character of the study area is a result of previous glacial, geological and human impacts (Figs 1, 2 and 3)¹. The study area is contained within a mountainous backdrop known as the Ring of Gullion. Slieve Gullion defines the western extent of the study area and lies at the centre of the Ring of Gullion. To the north lies Camlough Mountain and Fathom Mountain. The eastern boundary is defined by the western edge of the Carlingford Mountains and specifically Black Mountain. The southern edge of the Ring of Gullion is contained within the study area and includes

¹ This information has been taken directly from the A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road Environmental Statement/Environmental Impact Statement Non-Technical Summary prepared by RPS Ireland Environmental Sciences

Feede Mountain and Slievenabolea. Between the mountains of the Ring lies a broad gently undulating agricultural landscape. South of Feede Mountain the study area levels off gently undulating to Dundalk Bay.

1.2.2 Geology

Buckley and Sweetman (1991, 10) identify the dominant bedrock in the site area as granophyre, which is part of the Carlingford Igneous Complex. Granophyre refers to fine-grained granitic material, commonly though not always with graphic intergrowths. Granophyre contains quartz and feldspar crystals, in a fine-grained microgranite. Granophyre is a characteristic result of metamorphic recrystallization in the presence of active fluids, completely changing the texture of a rock while the basic chemical composition changes very little. In composition, granophyre is typical granite, but the texture has been metamorphosed. At Slieve Gullion in Northern Ireland, there was a transformation of very old granodiorite (granite with roughly equal amounts of potassium and soda feldspar) into newer granophyre while in the Northwest Scottish Highlands old Torridonian sandstone has also been found transformed into granophyre.

1.2.3 Archaeological and historical background

The road follows a natural route way through mountainous terrain that may have been in use from the prehistoric period. The previously known monuments recorded near the route date from the Neolithic period to the 11th Century AD (Buckley and Sweetman 1991).

Previously known sites within 1km of the current site. A search of the “Archaeological Survey of County Louth” (Buckley and Sweetman 1991) and of the SMR shows that there are three sites within 1km of this location, all are in the Republic of Ireland (Fig. 3).

A known souterrain (LH 004-001) lies approximately 120m to the southwest of Site 102. Although the proposed road will not directly affect this monument, it has been fenced off from the road take. Two other monuments are in the near vicinity of this site (LH 004-002 and LH 004-128) both are on the opposite (east) side of the Flurry River.

SMR:	LH004-001 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 122 Survey No. 319)
Townland:	Drumad
Parish:	Ballymascanlan
Barony:	Lower Dundalk
County:	Louth
Country:	Republic of Ireland
NGR:	307830E, 315510N
Description:	Souterrain situated on a slight hummock on the W slope of valley. The souterrain consists of a drystone built, slightly corbelled passage (L 19m, W c. 1.3m, H c. 1.7m) curving gently ENE-W. A creep (L 0.7m, W 0.7m, H 1.1m) in the middle of the N

wall of the passage gives access to a subrectangular chamber (L 3.8m, W 2.1m, H 1.5m).

- SMR: LH004-002 (01), (02) (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: (01) 71 Survey No. 174, (02) 81 Survey No. 219)
- Townland: Ravensdale Park
- Parish: Ballymascanlan
- Barony: Lower Dundalk
- County: Louth
- Country: Republic of Ireland
- NGR: 308320E, 315560N
- Description: (01) Stone circle (possible) eight regularly spaced stones enclosing an oval area (7m by 4m), reputedly exposed by Lord Clermont *c.* 1840 (*CLAJ* 1906, 96). The OS 25" sheet (1907) shows five stones, concentric with the circle to the E. The sites of four standing stones lie 40m SW of the monument. Tempest (*CLAJ* 1942, 128-32) suggests that the origins of the monument may be doubtful owing to the small area of the circle, the surface mobility of the stones and their regular spacing. This may be partly explained by the original lowering of the ground level around the stones to reveal them and their constant resettling by estate workers. Borlase (1897, vol 2, 421) records the location of the site, or one exactly similar, as being at Dromiskin. This was also a Clermont estate, and thus confusion may have arisen. The site has been suggested as part of landscaping by Lord Clermont, but equally may be part of a genuine prehistoric site, though Davies (*UJA* 1939, 13) does note that it does not conform to any known circle type.
- NGR: 308290E, 315550N
- Description: (02) Standing stone (possible) (*CLAJ* 1942, 130-2).
- SMR: LH004-128 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: Survey No. Not Listed)
- Townland: Ravensdale Park
- Parish: Ballymascanlan
- Barony: Lower Dundalk
- County: Louth
- Country: Republic of Ireland
- NGR: 308110E, 315360N
- Description: Court tomb no further information.

Sites within 1km, known from the current project. Current work has identified one archaeological site within 1km of this location.

Site 103 was close to a known souterrain at the edge of forestry in a dip on an east-facing slope, providing natural drainage from the hills above. An area measuring 40 by 30m was stripped of topsoil revealing a modern field drain running east to west, cut through stoney material that had been used to infill a natural hollow before 19th century cultivation. This dumped material, which was heavily silted, also contained some burnt stoney material, which may be originally be derived from earlier, possibly even prehistoric, activity.

2 A Description of the Works Carried Out

2.1 Reason for the excavation

The principal objectives of the Roads Service in implementing the scheme are to improve the conditions for road users by reducing journey times between the major commercial centres, together with an improvement in road safety. The specific objectives are:

- To contribute to the improvement of the Regional Strategic Transport Network and major transport links with Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland;
- To reduce vehicle operating times and costs;
- To facilitate freight transport;
- To improve road safety and improve pedestrian and cycle access and safety.

2.2 Excavation methods

2.2.1 Phasing

The road works have been divided into 2 phases: Phase 1 included (a) the archaeological evaluation of known sites, possible sites and areas of archaeological potential and (b) the recording and evaluation of standing buildings/structures at identified locations. Phase 2, reported here, includes the resolution of any sites identified by the works.

2.2.2 Desk top study

A desktop study of archaeological and cultural heritage sites was reported in the Environmental Impact Statement for the project (RPS 2002a, 236; 2002b). A particular emphasis was paid to sites with 1km of what was then the proposed route alignment.

2.2.3 Phase 1 archaeological testing

Archaeological testing in Area 8 evaluated the potential for uncovering previously unrecorded subsurface archaeological deposits along the road take (McConway and O'Rourke 2005). Area 8 is a pasture located to the south of An Grianán (Figs 1-4). It was considered an area of archaeological potential that was evaluated under Phase 1 of the Contract by means of test excavation. The Phase 1 report discusses the archaeological findings within Area 8, at Drumad Townland, between chainages 10000-10925. Patricia Lynch carried out testing in this area under project sub number A002/002 from the 18th through 23rd of November 2004 (McConway and O'Rourke 2005).

Area 8 lies directly east of Drumad Wood, testing consisted of a centre line trench 398m long north to south by 2m wide that ran to the west of and roughly parallel with the present N1. Set perpendicular to this base trench were 21 offset trenches, of varying lengths, each set 20m apart and 2m wide (McConway and O'Rourke 2005; Figs 4 and 5 in the current work). The test work uncovered field

drains along the northern edge of the site and a number of small charcoal spreads scattered elsewhere in the fields.

2.2.4 Phase 2 archaeological excavations

Recording strategy. Recording was by means of ‘best archaeological practise’ with the primary records of these excavations consisting of written and drawn records, photographs, survey data, finds and samples.

The stratigraphic record from project sites was primarily made on context record sheets, of the standard type used by ADS. These are supplemented by information from the site daybook, photographs, notebooks, plans and sections. However, the primary records from this site include the test records and the daybook entries of the directors (Sinclair Turrell and Chris Farrimond) who conducted the Phase 2 resolution of the features.

Field surveying equipment consisted of an Ashtech DGPS surveying suite, which allowed real-time data collection with horizontal accuracy of 0.005m +1ppm and vertical accuracy of 0.010m +2ppm.

The Method Statement for the project indicated that the initial activity upon returning to the site for Phase 2 excavations should be to “... fully expose, investigate, record and resolve archaeological deposits uncovered in Phase 1 and all deposits associated with this” (ADS 2005, 47). After this initial activity it was determined that further evaluation was unnecessary at this site (Section 3.1).

2.2.5 Health and safety documents

It is the policy of ADS to comply with the Health & Safety at Work Acts and the Construction Safety, Health & Welfare Regulations and to ensure so far as reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare of all employees whilst at work, and to provide such information, training and supervision needed for this purpose. To comply with these acts and regulations the works were conducted following the procedures and principles laid out in the company health and safety document (ADS 2003). Special attention to health and safety will be paid in areas close to rivers, streams, woodland, marshy ground and overhead power lines. ADS can confirm that the excavation crews all hold a valid safe pass certificate.

2.2.6 Staff involved

Two licenced directors, a supervisor and two assistants carried out the evaluation of the features discovered in testing. The ADS staff that returned to the site for Phase 2 excavations were Directors John Turrell and Chris Farrimond; Supervisor Mary O’Brien and Site Assistants Feilim MacGabhann, and Brendan Malone.

3 The Excavation-Phase 2

3.1 Introduction

Area 8 was considered an area of archaeological potential and was evaluated under Phase 1 of the Contract by means of test excavation.

At Site 102 testing had revealed three linear features

- **(045)** was located along the east of Test Trench 11, measured 2.5m wide and lay close to the present N1. It consisted of grey sand and redeposited subsoil mix;
- **(043)** was a linear spread of grey sand, 10m wide was uncovered to the immediate south of **(045)** and
- **(044)** a stone field drain.

In the testing nothing dateable was recovered from the upper surface of either **(043)** or **(045)** and it is uncertain whether they were associated with the present N1 (an infilled sheugh?) or modern agricultural practices.

Upon returning to the site and the uncovering of the features found in testing it was determined that the site represented modern field drains with no archaeological or historic interest and that the information potential of the site had been exhausted in the test excavations.

3.2 Summary

Site 102 consists of three linear, modern field drains. No Phase 2 excavations were conducted.

4 Recommendation

No further archaeological work is recommended for Site 102.

5 References

ADS

- 2003 Archaeological Development Services Ltd Health and Safety Manual. Compiled by Fergus Cooney.
- 2005 Archaeological Method Statements To facilitate Phase 2 works On the A1/N1 Newry – Dundalk Link Road Project Number A002/000, April 2005.

Buckley, V. and P. Sweetman

- 1991 *Archaeological Survey of County Louth*. The Office of Public Works, Dublin.

Louth County Council

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McConway, L. and M. O'Rourke

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Roads Service. Belfast.

RPS Ireland Environmental Services (RPS)

2002a *A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road Environmental Statement Environmental Impact
Statement*, Volume 1 Main Text.

2002b *A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road Environmental Statement Environmental Impact
Statement*, Volume 2 Appendices.

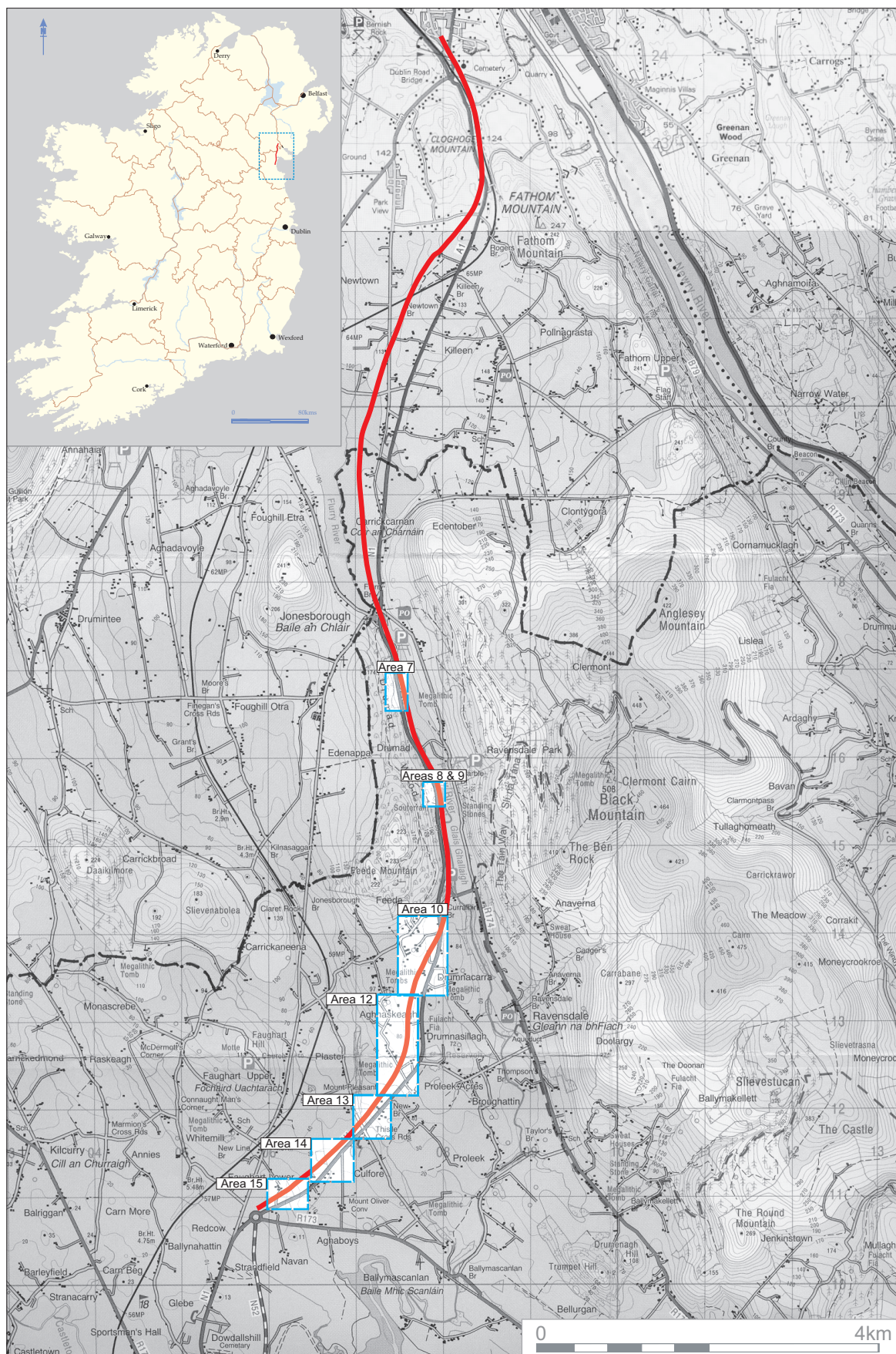


Fig. 1 Location plan for A1/N1.

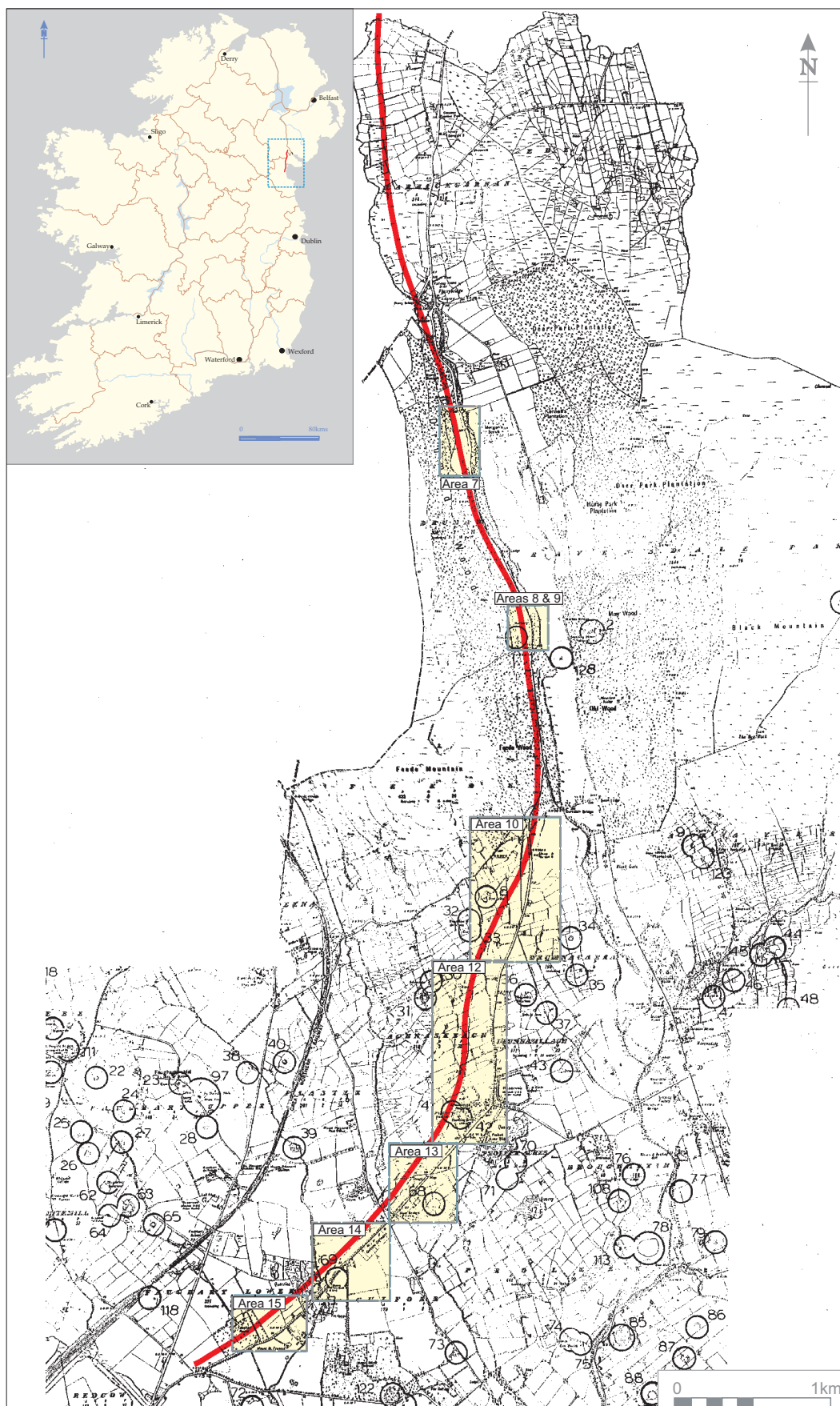


Fig. 2 Extract from RMP Maps of Louth, Sheets 1 & 4. A1/N1 in red. Scale as indicated.

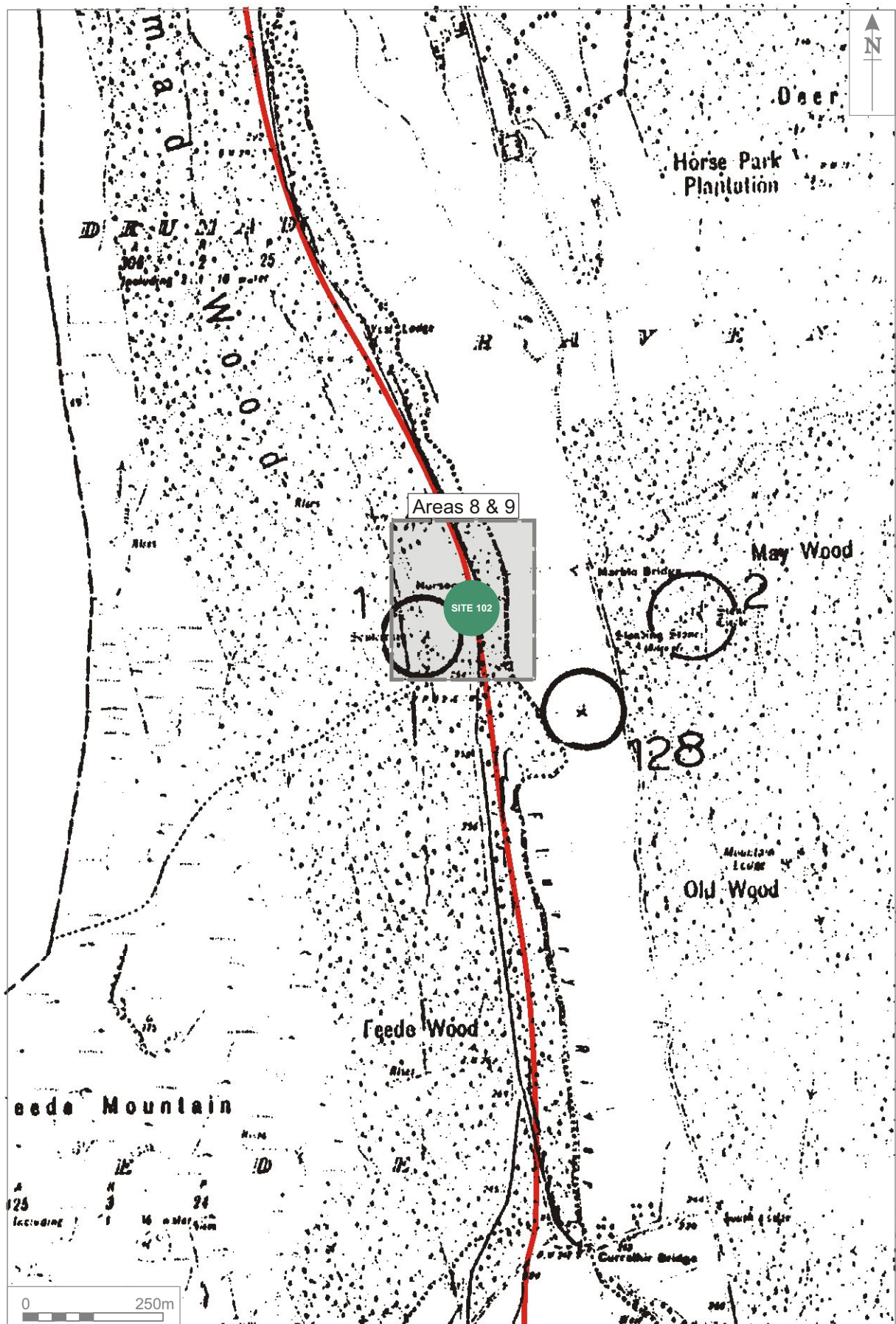


Fig. 3 Location of Areas 8 & 9 and Site 102 on RMP Maps of Louth, Sheets 1 & 4. A1/N1 in red. Scale 1:10,000.

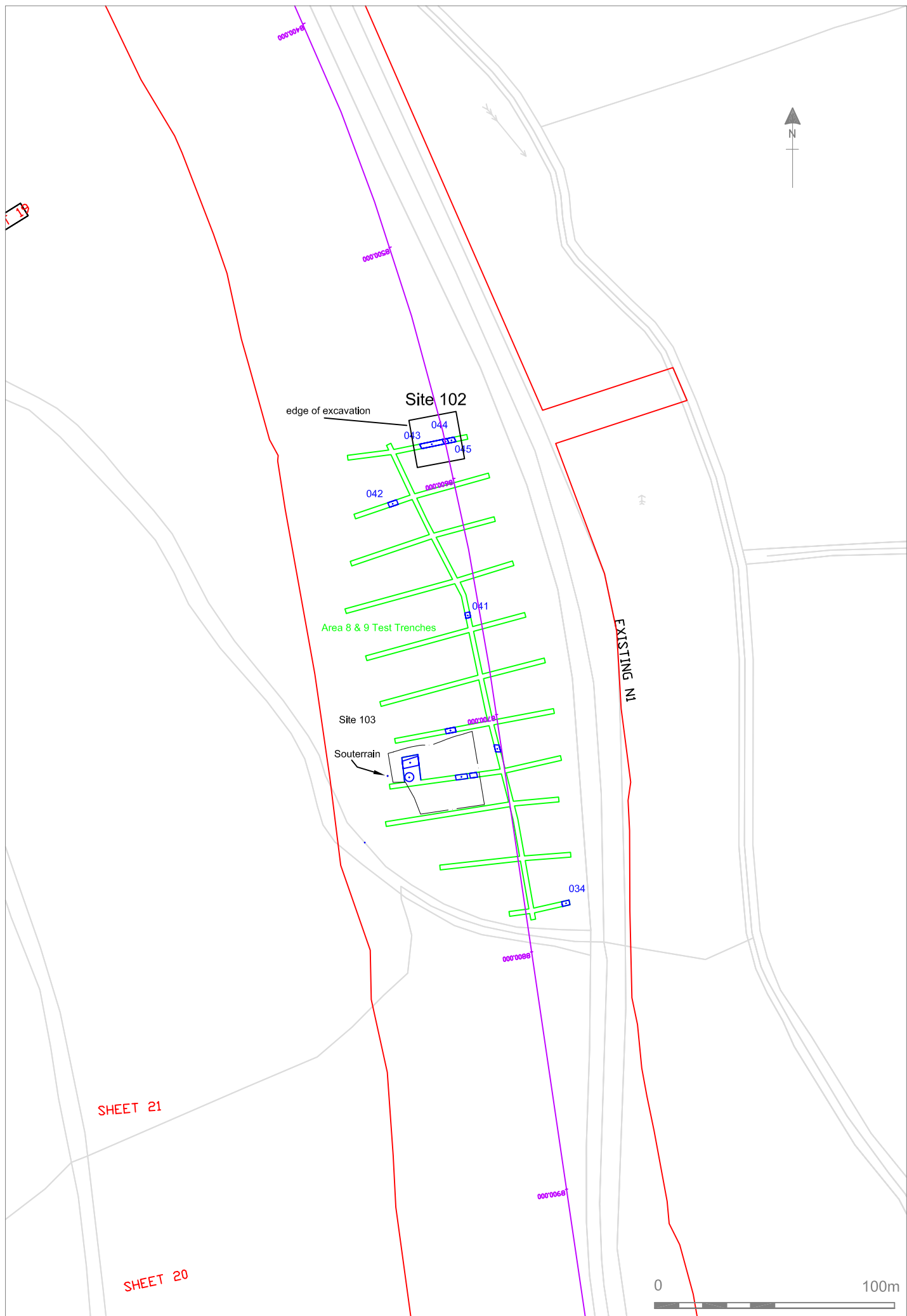


Fig. 4 Plan showing Areas 8 & 9, Site 102 and location of recorded souterrain (LH 041-001).