

**Final Report of Phase 2 Excavations,
A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road,
Area 12 Site 112**

Townland: Aghnaskeagh
Parish: Ballymascanlan
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
Chainage: 12100
NGR: 307391E, 312306N
Director: John O'Connor
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Contents

Figures	1
Plates	1
<i>Abstract</i>	2
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Site description	3
1.2.1 Topography.....	3
1.2.2 Geology	4
1.2.3 Archaeological and historical background	4
2 A Description of the Works Carried Out.....	10
2.1 Reason for the excavation	10
2.2 Excavation methods.....	10
2.2.1 Phasing	10
2.2.2 Desk top study	10
2.2.3 Phase 1 archaeological testing.....	10
2.2.4 Phase 2 archaeological excavations.....	11
2.2.5 Health and safety documents.....	12
2.2.6 Staff involved	13
3 Excavation Records-Phase 2	13
3.1 Results of the excavation.....	13
3.1.1 Introduction	13
3.1.2 Linear Features	13
3.1.3 Stake-Holes.....	14
3.1.4 Pits	14
3.1.5 Natural Features.....	15
3.2 Summary	15
4 Discussion and Conclusion.....	16
5 Recommendation.....	17
6 Quantification of the Materials and Records.....	17
6.1 Quantity of the record.....	17
6.1.1 Context sheets.....	17
6.1.2 Miscellaneous written records	17
7 References	18
Appendices	20
Appendix I Context log	20
Appendix II Finds list.....	21
Appendix III Sample list	22

Appendix IV Photographic log.....	23
Appendix V Site matrix.....	24

Figures

- Fig. 1 Location of site.
- Fig. 2 Extract of RMP Map of Louth, Sheets 1&4.
- Fig. 3 Location of Area 12 and Site 112 on RMP Map of Louth, Sheet 4.
- Fig. 4 Plan showing southern stretch of Area 12 and Site 112
- Fig. 5 Pre-excavation plan of Site 112.
- Fig. 6 Section Drawings, 1-6
- Fig. 7 Section Drawings, 7
- Fig. 8 Post-excavation plan of Site 112.

Plates

- Plate 1 Mid-ex photo of furrow (023) showing fill (022). Looking Southeast
- Plate 2 Mid-ex photo of furrow (021) showing fill (020). Looking West
- Plate 3 Mid-ex photo of stake-hole (004) showing fill (003). Looking West
- Plate 4 Mid-ex photo of pits (006) and (007) showing fills (009)-(014). Looking Southwest
- Plate 5 Mid-ex photo of pit (016) showing fill (015). Looking South
- Plate 6 Post-ex photo of pit (016). Looking Southeast
- Plate 7 Mid-ex photo of pit (019) showing fills (017) and (018). Looking East
- Plate 8 Mid-ex photo of root-bole (033) showing fills (026)-(029). Looking West

Abstract

Louth County Council, the Roads Service NI (Department for Regional Development) and the National Roads Authority are currently proposing a Road Scheme, the A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Road. The route consists of 14.2km of 2-lane dual carriageway with 5.7km of associated link roads from Cloghoge roundabout, south of Newry to the Ballymascanlan interchange north of Dundalk. As part of the road development, a number of archaeological and historic sites were within the construction zone of the road scheme and were determined eligible for excavation before the construction began.

Thirteen features of archaeological potential were uncovered on this site of which six were discovered to be of natural origin, formed either by root action or the removal of stones embedded in the subsoil. Of the remainder, two linear features and two pits could be dated to the recent past and were likely to be the result of farming activities. The remaining features, a stake-hole and the large pit formed by two smaller pits were undatable but, given the nature of the surrounding features, there is no reason to believe that they are not contemporary. The excavated features are not of any archaeological significance, nor do they form part of a more extensive archaeological landscape.

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. 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 fieldwork at Site 112 that followed the recommendations of McConway and Lynch (2005a) following the discovery in testing of Feature 15/001.

The proposed scheme involves a 14km route with 5.7km 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.

This report describes the results of excavations carried out at Site 112 from 13 to 17 June and again from 07 to 08 and 19 July 2005 in advance of groundwork. Staff of ADS carried out archaeological work on behalf of the developers under the direction of John O'Connor. This section of the project occurs in Aghnaskeagh Townland, Ballymascanlan Parish, Co. Louth; at National Grid Reference 307391.28E, 312306.26N (centre point), Ordnance Datum (OD) of approximately 50.28m and road scheme chainage 12100.

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 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

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

undulating to Dundalk Bay. This site was situated on pastureland with a slight east-facing slope, close to the existing A1 (Figs 1-4).

1.2.2 Geology

Vaughan in Buckley and Sweetman (1991, 8-10) indicates that the bedrock geology of the site area is composed of Silurian Greywacke. Silurian rocks were deposited in deep water in active tectonic zones. Each layer in the Silurian strata represents materials displaced and then redeposited by earthquakes, which would cause sediments to slump from the off shore slopes of the continental shelf that would then be deposited as a future greywacke bed.

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. There are numerous monuments (following) 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 RMP shows that there are twelve known prehistoric and historic sites in the area. These include the following 12 sites, listed by townland, the RMP number, the Buckley and Sweetman page number their reference number (1991) and the description (usually shortened) presented in Buckley and Sweetman (1991) (Fig. 3).

RMP:	LH004-030 (01), (02) (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: (01) 158 Survey No. 546; (02) 100 Survey No. 262)
Townland:	Aghnaskeagh
Parish:	Ballymascanlan
Barony:	Lower Dundalk
County:	Louth
Country:	Republic of Ireland
NGR:	(01) 307550E, 313300N (02) 307330E, 313310N
Description:	(01) Ringfort of oval area (internal. diameter. 44m NNW-SSE, 24m WSW-ENE) enclosed by earthen bank (W 5m, H 1.3m externally) with traces of stone facing. A souterrain [(02) below] is located in the NW quadrant of interior. (02) Souterrain lintels showing on surface of interior of ringfort [(01) above] (CLAJ 1908, 29)
RMP:	LH004-031 (01), (02) (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: (01) 158 Survey No. 547; (02) 100 Survey No. 263)
Townland:	Aghnaskeagh
Parish:	Ballymascanlan
Barony:	Lower Dundalk
County:	Louth
Country:	Republic of Ireland
NGR:	307300E, 313200N

Description: (01) Ringfort circular area (diameter 32m) enclosed by earthen bank (W 6.5m, H 1.2m externally) and external fosse (W 7m) with traces of outer bank, obscured by later field boundaries. Remains of souterrain [(02) below] in SE quadrant of interior.

NGR: 307300E, 313200N

Description: (02) Souterrain situated in ringfort [(01) above]. Stone-lined depression, running E-W with slight turn to S at W end, located in SE quadrant of ringfort is probably the remains of a partially collapsed souterrain.

RMP: LH004-036 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 28, Survey No. 44)

Townland: Drumnasillagh

Parish: Ballymascanlan

Barony: Lower Dundalk

County: Louth

Country: Republic of Ireland

NGR: 307950E, 313240N

Description: Court tomb is incorporated in a roughly trapezoidal cairn some 30m long and 20m wide at the WSW, narrowing to 7.1m wide at the ESE. There is a well-defined court at the W leading to the gallery area, which is covered by cairn material. The court, 7.5m wide and 6m deep, embraces almost three-quarters of a circle and is represented by 14 orthostats, 7 at either side. Two large slabs lie at the inner end of the court. A single façade stone stands beyond the N arm of the court. Two kerb stones are exposed at the E end of the cairn and a field wall runs along its southern side.

RMP: LH004-037 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 88, Survey No. 234)

Townland: Drumnasillagh

Parish: Ballymascanlan

Barony: Lower Dundalk

County: Louth

Country: Republic of Ireland

NGR: 308080E, 313120N

Description: *Fulacht fiadh* situated in a small swampy valley, between ridges of light soil to E and W. Immediately to E of mound is a small stream, probably the original source of water for the trough. The site consists of an irregularly shaped mound (max. dims. 15m by 9m, H 0.6m) of burnt stone and charcoal with trough depression to E. To W and S are low irregular banks extending from the mound, comprised of mound material. However, their exact relationship to the mound is indeterminate.

RMP: LH004-039 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: Survey No. 632)

Townland: Faughart Upper

Parish: Ballymascanlan

Barony: Lower Dundalk

County: Louth

Country: Republic of Ireland

NGR: 306490E, 312230N

Description: Ringfort situated beside a stream in a low-lying hollow. An artificially raised circular earth and stone platform (diameter 20m) enclosed at base by fosse (W 6.1m, D 0.7m) with slight traces of an external bank. Causeway (W 3m) across fosse at SE. Along the upper edge of the platform are the remains of a stone wall, now partly collapsed downslope. In the NE quadrant of the interior is an oval depression (L 5.5m, W 2.5m, D 0.4m) of unknown significance.

RMP: LH004-041 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 25, Survey No. 41)
Townland: Aghnaskeagh
Parish: Ballymascanlan
Barony: Lower Dundalk
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
NGR: 307490E, 312470N
Description: Possible wedge tomb described as a Megalithic tomb. This tomb is very ruined. The remains consist of two orthostats, 2.4m apart and aligned WSW-ENE, with a large, horizontally-laid stone set beside and perpendicular to one of the orthostats; the two latter stones are incorporated in a roadside fence. The OS field trace records that there was formerly 'a large flat stone resting on 2 others'.

RMP: LH004-042 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 75, Survey No. 179)
Townland: Aghnaskeagh
Parish: Ballymascanlan
Barony: Lower Dundalk
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
NGR: 307540E, 312450N
Description: Standing stone: Formerly located a short distance SE of megalithic tomb (LH002-041).

RMP: LH004-043 (01), (02) (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: (01) 195, Survey No. 760; (02) 123, Survey No. 322)
Townland: Drumnasillagh
Parish: Ballymascanlan
Barony: Lower Dundalk
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
NGR: 308180E, 312750N
Description: (01) Enclosure polygonal enclosure (max. dims. 27m E-W, 26m N-S) Known locally as 'Jameson's Fort'. May be modified ringfort. Souterrain [(02) below] in interior of enclosure.
NGR: 308190E, 312740N
Description: (02) Souterrain situated in enclosure [(01) above] and consisting of a section of passage (L 5.2m, W 1m, H 1.3m) running N-S.

RMP: LH004-068 (01) (02) (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: (01) 256, Survey No. 971; (02) 66, Survey No. 155)
Townland: Proleek
Parish: Ballymascanlan
Barony: Lower Dundalk
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
NGR: 307380E, 311870N
Description: (01) Ecclesiastical enclosure, early medieval circular area (max. diameter 76.5m) bounded by modern field fence. Probable ancient entrance at west. Two long cists [(02) below] discovered in interior (CLAJ 1933, 100).
NGR: 307380E, 311870N
Description: (02) Long cists, two stone lined long cists, aligned E-W, one containing a skull, the other fragments of unidentified human bones. Discovered in the interior of a large enclosure [(01) above] (CLAJ 1933, 100).

RMP: LH004-069 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: Survey No. Not Listed)
Townland: Aghaboys
Parish: Ballymascanlan
Barony: Lower Dundalk
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
NGR: 306770E, 311410N
Description: Enclosures no further information.

RMP: LH004-070 (01) (02) (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: (01) 203, Survey No. 826; (02) 138, Survey No. 385)
Townland: Proleek Acres
Parish: Ballymascanlan
Barony: Lower Dundalk
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
NGR: 307910E, 312120N
Description: (01) Earth work marked as oval earthwork and labelled 'fort' on 1835 edition of OS 6" sheet. No visible surface trace. Souterrain [(02) below] in interior.
NGR: 307910E, 312120N
Description: (02) Souterrain situated in the interior of earthwork [(01) above] shown as broad oval and marked 'fort' on 1835 edition of OS 6" map. The souterrain consists of two passages forming an L-shaped plan. Passage 1 (L 9m, W 1.2m) extends SE-NW, at NW end turning at almost right angles into Passage 2 (L 11m, W 1.5m) running N-S (*CLAJ* 1942, 149-50).

RMP: LH004-071 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: Survey No. 530)
Townland: Proleek Acres
Parish: Ballymascanlan
Barony: Lower Dundalk
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
NGR: 307840E, 312030N
Description: Souterrain (possible) (*CLAJ* 1942, 149-150), no further information.

Sites known from the current project. Current work has identified 7 archaeological sites within 1km of this location (Figs 2 and 3). Positive results of trial pits excavations along the route were reported in 2005 (McConway and Dawkes 2005a and 2005b; McConway and Lynch 2005a). These are:

Site 109 (Powell 2005a) was the designation for a cluster of features found in testing (McConway and Lynch 2005a). Feature 7 was the northernmost feature in the cluster; it consisted of two teardrop shaped spreads of charcoal flecked soil. These features lay beside one another and continued into the northern baulk. Feature 6 lay 25m to the southeast of Feature 7 and consisted of a spread of brown/grey silt; the eastern edge of this spread continued into the baulk. Feature 5 lay 30m to the southwest of Feature 6 and consisted of a sub-circular silty soil with charcoal inclusions. Feature 4 lay 40m to the west of Feature 5 and consisted of two apparently discreet spreads of charcoal. Feature

3 lay 20m south of feature 4 and was the southernmost feature in the cluster of Features 3 –7. It consisted of a roughly oval spread of charcoal flecked brown/grey soil.

Site 110 (Powell 2005b) at this location, testing had discovered a single feature (Feature 2 from testing). After clearing the feature measured 0.95m east to west by 0.60m north to south; it was dish-shaped in profile with a maximum depth in the centre of 0.08m. There was no cut per se as the feature consisting of a burnt patch of clay with charcoal inclusions. The excavated feature appears related to agricultural practice, in particular tree clearing.

Site 111 is an extensive site, lying next to recorded monument (LH 004:041) a Megalithic Tomb (Figs 3 and 4). F18/001 lay to the immediate north of a beech-lined avenue and in the immediate vicinity of a recorded monument, a ‘megalithic structure’. The area was noticeably stony underfoot and many larger boulders protruded through the dense grass cover.

This feature consisted of a stony surface measuring approximately 30m north to south by 25m and was identified lying immediately under the topsoil and overlying subsoil. These stones were embedded within a friable mid brown/grey soil and appeared delineated with an interrupted kerb of larger boulders. F18/001 has been interpreted as a collapsed cairn associated with the recorded megalithic tomb. It is likely, given local tradition that the area may also have been used as an infant burial ground.

In the area to the immediate south of the beech lined avenue it was noted that large boulders protruded through the grass in the northwest corner of the field, although these may be associated with collapse from a stone field wall. Three areas of archaeological deposits were identified in Field 17. F17/001 consisted of an isolated spread of grey/brown silt, F17/002 was a roughly circular and measured 3.5m in diameter. F17/011 was a spread of black charcoal rich silt and burnt and heat shattered stone that was uncovered 75m to the southwest of F17/001. As uncovered, this deposit measured 3.5 by 2.5m and continued into both the northern and southern baulks. This deposit has been interpreted as being burnt mound or *fulachta fiadh* material. F17/003 was a circular feature that was uncovered around .27m east of F17/001 and lay within a small cluster of archaeological deposits. It consisted of a spread of orange/brown redeposited subsoil identified as F17/004, which itself measured 3.3m in diameter. A fifth feature was identified within this cluster. F17/006 was an irregular feature consisting of charcoal rich black silt F17/005, at least 5m east to west and continuing into the western baulk.

Site 113: (Powell 2005c) Archaeological testing in Field 9 uncovered an extensive *fulachta fiadh* complex. In Field 9, lying to the immediate north of the Ballymascanlan River an extensive spread of

charcoal-enriched black silt and burnt stone F9/001 was uncovered. This spread measured up to 33m east to west and 15m north to south. To the north was a small spread of similar burnt material F9/002 measuring 2m east to west by 3m north to south. Further north a flat stony platform, not investigated by the trenches during the testing, was evident and may also represent an addition burnt mound.

Site 114 Testing uncovered two areas of archaeological deposits in Field 7. The first area was identified as a series of small patches of charcoal rich black silts F7/001. The second lay 40m north of this and consisted of four archaeological deposits. F7/006 was rectangular in shape and as uncovered measured 0.5 by 0.3m and continued into the northern baulk. It consisted of light grey/brown silty clay with charcoal flecks F7/002. F7/006 appeared to cut through the northern edge of F7/004; it consisted of an irregular spread of dark grey/brown silty clay with charcoal flecks F7/003. F7/004 measured 0.6 by 0.3m. Lying 2.8m northeast of F7/004 and F7/006 was another irregular feature F7/005. This feature F7/003, consisted of dark grey/brown silty clay with charcoal flecking and measured 0.45 by 0.30m. Lying 1.5m southeast of F7/005 was a sub-rectangular Feature F7/008. This feature consisted of charcoal rich brown silt F7/008 and measured 0.75 by 0.35m.

Site 115 A small group of archaeological deposits was uncovered by testing within a 20m stretch of the road along the southern limits of Field 6. This group consists of a linear pit, F6/001, possibly the terminal of a gully. The feature was filled with grey silty clay F6/002. Other features in the local area included a sub-circular pit F6/003 filled with charcoal-enriched black silt F6/004 and a sub circular pit F6/005 filled by charcoal-enriched black silt F6/006. Two other features were uncovered 25 and 45m north of this group. These were a sub-circular pit F6/007 filled with charcoal flecked grey silt F6/008 and a sub-circular pit F6/009 filled with stony charcoal-enriched black silt F6/010.

Site 120 Two isolated features were uncovered during testing in Field 14, along the northern limits of Area 13. This consisted of a sub-rectangular pit F14/001 which measured 7m north-south and 5.5m east-west. The pit fill F14/002 was charcoal-enriched silt and burnt stone. The second feature was a sub-circular pit F14/003 that measured 1.4m in diameter and was filled with charcoal-enriched black silt F14/004.

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

Area 12 is in a zone of fertile soils within an archaeologically sensitive landscape in close vicinity to a number of known archaeological sites (Figs 2 and 3; Section 1.2.3). This area was considered to have high archaeological potential and was investigated and evaluated under Phase 1 of the Contract by means of test excavation.

The Phase 1 report discusses the archaeological findings within Area 12 at Aghnaskeagh townland, at road scheme chainage 12100. McConway and Lynch carried out the testing under project sub number A002/003 from the 15th through 26th of November 2004 (McConway and Lynch 2005a).

The purpose for and the methodology employed in the Phase I testing included:

- To fully expose, investigate, record and resolve archaeological deposits uncovered in and all deposits associated with these.

- Resolution of the archaeological features described above was carried out by a licenced director, a supervisor, two assistants and four general operatives.
- A 20 by 20m area was appropriately opened over the features under archaeological supervision to the latest archaeological horizon or to the upper surface of natural geology, whichever occurs first. The area will be manually cleaned and examined for further archaeological deposits.
- All archaeological deposits were surveyed in to a site grid and in relation to their position on the road.
- All deposits were recorded and investigated by methods appropriate to their nature and complexity using best archaeological practice.
- Methods used included sectioning, planning and photographing the deposits, investigating the stratigraphic relationship with other deposits if appropriate, compiling a written record of the deposits via a context sheets

As it was determined likely that additional subsurface archaeological deposits would be associated with the known features it was also recommended that an appropriate area around each feature be topsoil stripped. All features exposed from the stripping were to be fully investigated. If it became apparent that these features form part of a more extensive archaeological landscape then it was recommended that an appropriate area should be opened up on plan in order to fully investigate and record any discovered features.

2.2.4 Phase 2 archaeological excavations

Recording strategy. Recording was by means of ‘best archaeological practise’. The primary records of these excavations consist of written and drawn records, photographs, survey data, finds and samples. The stratigraphic record was primarily made on context record sheets, of the standard type used by ADS. These are supplemented by information from the site diary and notebooks. 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.

All Phase 2 archaeological excavations were carried out in accordance with the Specification for Archaeological Rescue Excavation on Known Sites document (ADS 2005). Field methods included:

- An appropriately sized area around each of the deposits was fenced off and access to these areas by machinery and personnel denied until they have been resolved.
- The removal of topsoil was by judicious use of a machine fitted with a toothless bucket under the constant supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist.

- All trenches were excavated to the latest archaeological horizon or to the upper surface of natural geology, whichever occurred first. If archaeological features were revealed these deposits were in the first instant, cordoned off using high visibility tape and access to these areas by machinery denied.
- All deposits were hand investigated using methods appropriate to their composition, nature and date and time was allowed for the archaeologist to undertake the appropriate level of recording.
- The level of recording depended on the nature and extent of the archaeological remains encountered. All deposits were recorded on plan (in relation to the site grid), photographed and if appropriate, their location surveyed in advance of hand excavation.
- Excavation of deposits was carried out by sectioning using methods appropriate to their composition and nature.
- Contexts were sampled for palaeobotanical material, radiocarbon dating, soil micromorphology, petrology, wood identification, etc.
- All sections and cut features were photographed and drawn.
- The position of all finds and samples were recorded in three-dimensions (when practicable) in relation to the site grid.
- Sampling strategies depended upon the dimensions, make up and complexity of the archaeological remains encountered.
- A day book was maintained where all archaeological features were recorded in writing utilizing ADS context sheets, scaled field illustrations and by both slide and digital photography.
- All finds were logged according to context, bagged and catalogued.
- A contract conservator was on call if necessary.
- All finds are stored in our post excavation unit at Kells, Co. Meath and will ultimately be stored in whatever facility the State will provide.
- Excavation or preservation by record was carried out on archaeological deposits that will be impacted on by the construction of the road scheme.

2.2.5 Health and safety documents

It is the policy of ADS to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Acts and the Construction Safety, Health and 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

The director (John O'Connor) would like to acknowledge site supervisors James McKee and Deirdre Malone and site assistants Tara Clark and Andrzej Zanko, Caroline Cosgrove and Stefano Uberti.

3 Excavation Records-Phase 2

Testing in Area 12 was carried out under number A002/003. One area of archaeological potential was identified. At this location, the test excavations revealed a single feature that required further investigation (McConway and Lynch 2005). This feature, F15/001 consisted of a deposit of heavily charcoal-flecked silt and redeposited subsoil-mix F15/002.

3.1 Results of the excavation

3.1.1 Introduction

A mechanical excavator cleared an area measuring 20 by 20m back around F15/001. This was then divided into four 10 by 10m grids [Grids 1-4] for ease of recording. Each of these grids was then cleaned back by hand to determine the extent of potential archaeology on the site. The site grid was then tied into the national grid.

Potential features were uncovered in three of the four grids [1-3] however, nothing was found in Grid 4. In all thirteen potential archaeological features were revealed (Fig. 5). Six of these features [(008), (009), (030), (031), (032) and (033)] turned out to be natural features, either root boles or stone sockets. Two linear features, (021) and (023) were discovered to be the result of relatively modern farming activity. One small stake-hole, (004), was also discovered. The remaining four features [(006), (007), (016) and (019)] were irregularly shaped pits. A trench 1.3m wide and containing two water mains cut across the site in an east-northeast to west-southwest direction.

3.1.2 Linear Features

Two inter-cut linear features, (021) and (023) were revealed at the northern edge of the site. The earlier of the two features consisted of a 2.3m long rectangular cut (023), with a U-shaped profile that was 0.58m wide and no deeper than 0.09m. The cut had a narrow, flat base and ran from northwest to southeast. It was filled with loose, brown clayey-silt (022), which contained frequent pebble and gravel inclusions (Fig. 6.1; Plate 1). A small sherd of white glazed pottery was discovered in this fill (Appendix II; Find #3). This feature was cut to the southeast by a second linear feature (021), which had a U-shaped profile and measured 3.4m from east to west. It varied in width from 0.52 to 1m

north to south and had a maximum depth of 0.04m. It was filled by a loose, dark brown and red variegated clayey-silt (**020**) with cobble sized stone inclusions (Fig. 6.2; Plate 2). Fragments of red plastic were recovered from the base of the fill.

3.1.3 Stake-Holes

One small stake-hole (**004**) was uncovered in the southeast corner of the site. This sub-circular feature had a U-shaped profile, measured 0.36 by 0.30m and was 0.24m deep. The fill (**003**) consisted of moderately loose grey/brown silty-clay with occasional charcoal flecks, which were poorly sorted, occurring in pockets near the top of the deposit. Occasional small pebbles were located throughout the deposit (Fig. 6.3; Plate 3).

3.1.4 Pits

Two inter-cut pits, (**006**) and (**007**) were located c.2.5m northwest of the stake-hole (**004**). Both pits were cut through the natural subsoil (Fig.6.5; Plate 4). The earlier of the pits (**007**) measures 3.04m north to south by 1.62m east to west with a maximum depth of 0.31m. The base is irregular in plan and deepest to the south. The basal fill (**013**) consisted of mid-brown sandy-clay with moderate charcoal flecking. The secondary fill (**014**) was reddish brown sandy-clay with occasional inclusions of small sub-rounded stones and charcoal flecking. The uppermost fill (**012**) was a friable dark brown sandy loam containing frequent inclusions of small and medium sized sub-rounded stone as well as frequent charcoal flecks. This pit has been cut to the northeast by the smaller pit (**006**), which measures 2.9m north to south by 0.9m east to west and has a maximum depth of 0.19m. The basal fill (**010**) of this pit consisted of loose mid-brown silty clay, with a moderate amount of large sub-angular stones. Above this was a layer of moderately loose mix of mid-brown silty-loam, dark brown silty-clay and yellow/brown silty-clay (**011**). These lower fills were sealed by a deposit of loose, dark brown silty-clay (**009**) containing moderate amount of large sub-angular stones as well as frequent charcoal flecking. No datable evidence was retrieved from either of these pits.

A small circular pit (**106**), which measured 0.47m in diameter and was 0.14m deep, was located 7m north of (**006**). This pit was cut through (**027**) one of the fills of the root bole (**033**). The pit had steep sides and a flat circular base. It had only one fill (**015**), which consisted of moderately loose yellow/brown silty-clay with frequent inclusions of sub-angular pebbles and occasional charcoal flecks (Fig. 6.4; Plates 5 and 6). Within this fill, there was one large angular stone, 0.2 by 0.17 by 0.08m. The broken stem of a clay pipe was recovered from within the fill (Appendix II; Find #4).

The fourth pit (**019**) was located in the northeast corner of the site and measured 3.5m northwest to southeast by 1.4m northeast to southwest by 0.38m deep. It was roughly rectangular in plan with rounded corners and sides steeper to the south than the north. The base was narrow but almost level.

The basal fill **(018)** of the pit consisted of loose brown silty-clay and frequent angular stones (Fig. 6.6; Plate 7). One sherd of willow pattern pottery and the broken stem of a clay pipe were recovered from this fill (Appendix II; Finds # 1 and 2). The upper fill **(017)** was similar in composition although it was redder in colour and stonier, containing the occasional cobble-sized stone.

3.1.5 Natural Features

Three features, **(030)** **(031)** and **(032)** all located in the western part of the site, were the result of stones being dislodged from the subsoil, probably by the excavator when stripping the topsoil from the site. These three shallow depressions, each about 0.11m deep, were filled with identical deposits of very loose dark brown clayey-silt similar in composition to the topsoil. Root fragments and decayed stones were evident within the fills. To the east of these was a large spread of dark brown sandy clay **(008)** lying within a naturally formed hollow between the subsoil and bedrock **(005)**. The deposit measured 4.1m northeast to southwest by 3.8m northwest to southeast and had a maximum depth of 0.62m. In the northern corner of the site there was another feature **(025)** resulting from the removal of a stone. This sub-circular feature, measuring 1m in diameter and 0.09m in depth was filled with loose brown clayey silt **(024)** similar to the topsoil.

The largest of the natural features **(033)** was located in the centre of the site and was originally identified in the testing as F15/001. It consisted of a large, roughly circular root-bole that measured 5.45m northwest to southeast by 5.32m northeast by southwest and had a maximum depth of 0.49m. The primary fill **(029)** consisted of light brown hardened clay with occasional inclusions of small cobbles and more frequent smaller pebbles and gravels (Fig. 7; Plate 8). Above this was a small deposit of grey hardened clay **(034)**. These were sealed by the largest fill **(027)**, which consisted of loose orange/brown silty-clay with occasional small stone and gravel inclusions. In the centre of the feature was a deposit of loose dark brown clayey-silt with high concentrations of charcoal and occasional cobble sized stone inclusions **(026)**. This was in turn cut by the pit **(016)**. A thin band of loose grey gravels **(028)** was found around the eastern edge of the feature overlying both **(027)** and **(026)**.

3.2 Summary

Thirteen features of archaeological potential were uncovered on this site. Upon investigation, six of these were discovered to be of natural origin, formed either by root action or the removal of stones. Of the remainder, two linear features and two pits could be dated to the recent past and were likely to be the result of farming activities. The remaining features, a stake-hole and the large pit formed by two smaller pits, were undatable but, given the nature of the surrounding features, there is no reason to believe that they are not contemporary

4 Discussion and Conclusion

Seven man-made features were recorded on the site. Four of these can be dated to the early modern period by finds recovered from the fills. One of these features, the northwest to southeast running plough furrow (023) was cut by a second furrow (021), which runs from west to east and is therefore obviously later in date. The pit (019) to the east of these features is of a similar date, although there was no evidence from either of its fills as to its purpose. The fourth feature to yield datable evidence was the small pit (016) cut into one of the fills of the large root-bole (033). Again, the pits purpose could not be determined from the sterile fill of this feature. It was also impossible to determine a functional relationship between this feature and the others.

The large cut feature in the centre of the site (033) was initially thought to be a large charcoal-filled pit. However, on investigation it was determined that the 'cut' was actually the root-bole of a tree. From the nature of the fills it was evident that this tree had either fallen naturally or been toppled by man. In either case, the root-mass was burned *in situ*, presumably to clear the field of this obstruction. This would explain the mixed nature of the fills as fire-hardened clay from around the roots fell into the root-bole along with charcoal from the burning. As mentioned above the small circular pit (016) was dug through the upper fill of this feature, although how soon after the burning is unknown.

The two pits (006) and (007) to the south of (033) are obviously contemporary to each other, although their relationship both functionally and chronologically to the rest of the site remains unknown. No finds were retrieved from any of the fills and while some of the deposits were charcoal flecked there was not enough evidence to state that any burning had taken place within the pits. Nor indeed is there any evidence of rubbish having been dumped in them. All that can be said with any certainty is that (006) cuts through the fills of (007) and is therefore the more recent of the two.

The final feature discovered on the site was the solitary stake-hole (004). Located in the southeast corner of the site it is 2.5m from the two pits (006) and (007). The inclination of the axis of the stake-hole would indicate that it was angled towards these pits and it is therefore possible that the three features are related, although this cannot be proved.

The shallow nature of many of the features uncovered on this site together with the evidence of ploughing would indicate that many of the features have been truncated. It is also likely, therefore, that other features have been completely ploughed out. However given the evidence available on the site it would appear that those features which survived are related to relatively modern farming activity and of no archaeological significance.

5 Recommendation

The excavated features do not form part of a more extensive archaeological landscape nor are they significant by themselves. No further work is recommended at Site 112 nor is there reason to perform post-excavation analyses.

6 Quantification of the Materials and Records

6.1 Quantity of the record

The site archive comprises those items listed in Table 1:

Table 1 Records Inventory

Form	Number (after voids)
Context Sheets	34
Photographs (Rolls)	2
Sections and Plans	15 Sections and 5 Plans
Finds	4
Samples	2

6.1.1 Context sheets

34 context sheets are archived at the ADS Dublin facility and are in queue for entry into the project database.

6.1.2 Miscellaneous written records

Site Diary/ Daybook (with supplementary notes and correspondence). Miscellaneous administrative notes and correspondence.

6.1.3 Drawings

15 section drawings and 5 plans are archived at the ADS Dublin facility.

7 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.

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- 2005a *A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road Volume 1 Archaeological Assessment Area 13*. Archaeological Development Services Ltd for Department for Regional Development, Roads Service. Belfast.
- 2005b *A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road Volume 1 Archaeological Assessment Area 14*. Archaeological Development Services Ltd for Department for Regional Development, Roads Service. Belfast.

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- 2005a *Final Report of Excavations at the A1/N1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road Area 10, Site 109*. Archaeological Development Services Ltd for Department for Regional Development, Roads Service. Belfast.
- 2005b *Final Report of Excavations at the A1/N1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road Area 12, Site 110*. Archaeological Development Services Ltd for Department for Regional Development, Roads Service. Belfast.

2005c *Final Report of Excavations at the A1/N1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road Area 13, Site 113*
Archaeological Development Services Ltd for Department for Regional Development, 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.

Appendices

Appendix I Context log

Context	Type	Description
001	Deposit	Topsoil
002	Deposit	Natural subsoil
003	Deposit	Fill of stake-hole (004)
004	Cut	Cut for stake-hole, filled by (003)
005	Deposit	Natural bedrock
006	Cut	Cut for pit, filled by (009), (010), (011)
007	Cut	Cut for pit, filled by (012), (013), (014)
008	Deposit	Natural deposit
009	Deposit	Fill of (006)
010	Deposit	Fill of (006)
011	Deposit	Fill of (006)
012	Deposit	Fill of (007)
013	Deposit	Fill of (007)
014	Deposit	Fill of (007)
015	Deposit	Fill of (016)
016	Cut	Cut for small oval pit
017	Deposit	Secondary fill of linear feature (019)
018	Deposit	Primary fill of linear feature (019)
019	Cut	Cut for linear feature, filled by (017) and (018)
020	Deposit	Fill of (021)
021	Cut	Cut for linear feature, filled by (020)
022	Deposit	Fill of (023)
023	Cut	Cut for linear feature, filled by (022)
024	Deposit	Fill of (025)
025	Cut	Cut for sub-circular pit, filled by (024)
026	Deposit	Charcoal-rich deposit, fill of (033)
027	Deposit	Redeposited subsoil, fill of (033)
028	Deposit	Redeposited natural, fill of (033)
029	Deposit	Light brown clayey silt fill of (033)
030	Deposit	Grey/black clayey silt deposit.
031	Deposit	Grey/black clayey silt deposit.
032	Deposit	Grey/black clayey silt deposit.
033	Cut	Cut for large root bole, filled by (026), (027), (028), (029)
034	Deposit	Grey clay deposit, fill of (033)

Appendix II Finds list

Find No.	Context	Description
1	018	1 sherd of willow-pattern pottery
2	018	1 broken, undecorated clay pipe stem, 55mm long 9mm diameter
3	022	1 small sherd of white glazed pottery
4	015	1 broken, undecorated clay pipe stem, 38mm long 6mm diameter

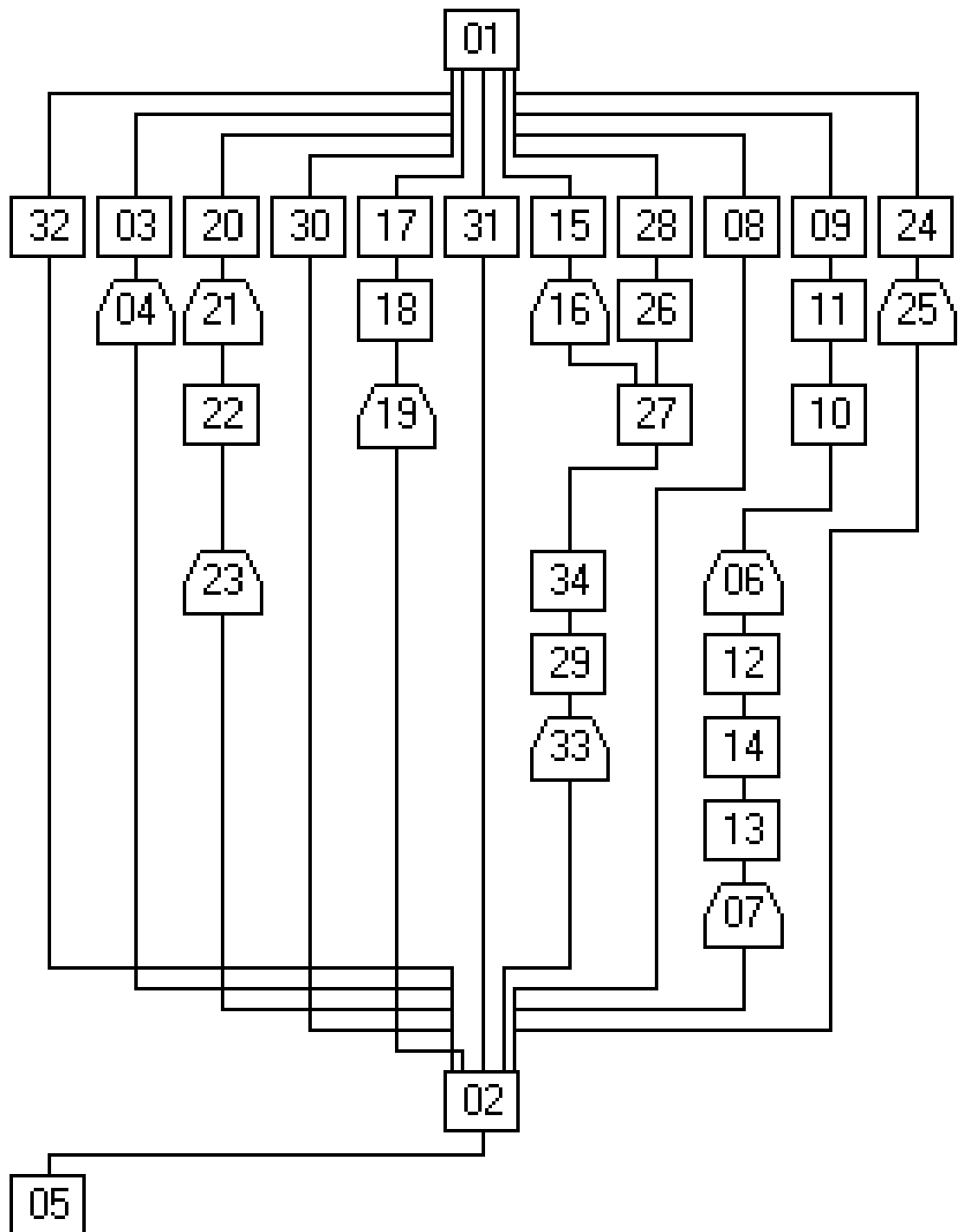
Appendix III Sample list

Sample	Context	Bags	Reason for Sample
1	009	1	Macrobotanical analysis
2	026	1	Macrobotanical analysis

Appendix IV Photographic log

Film	Frame	Description	Date
5	8	Mid-ex photo of S# 1 showing contexts (003) and (004). Looking West.	14/06/05
5	9	Mid-ex photo of S# 4 showing contexts (005) and (008). Looking West.	14/06/05
5	10	Mid-ex photo of S# 3 showing contexts (006) and (007). Looking Southwest.	14/06/05
5	11	Post-ex photo of (004). Looking North.	14/06/05
5	12	Post-ex photo of (006) and (007). Looking Southwest.	14/06/05
5	13	Mid-ex photo of S# 7 showing (016) and (015). Looking South.	15/06/05
5	14	Mid-ex photo of S# 8 showing (019) and (018). Looking East.	15/06/05
5	15	Post-ex photo of (016). Looking Southeast.	15/06/05
5	16	Mid-ex photo of S# 9 showing contexts (021) and (020). Looking West.	16/06/05
5	17	Mid-ex photo of S# 9 showing contexts (021) and (020). Looking West.	16/06/05
5	18	Mid-ex photo of S# 10 showing contexts (023) and (022). Looking Southeast.	16/06/05
5	19	Mid-ex photo of S# 15 showing contexts (033) and (026)-(029). Looking West.	16/06/05
5	20	Mid-ex photo of S# 11 showing contexts (025) and (024). Looking East.	16/06/05
J1	1	Test Shot.	08/07/05
J1	2	Pre-Ex photo of (030). Looking Northwest.	08/07/05
J1	3	Mid-ex photo of S#12 showing context (032). Looking Northwest.	08/07/05
J1	4	Mid-ex photo of S#13 showing context (31). Looking Northwest.	08/07/05
J1	5	Mid-ex photo of (031) and (032). Looking northwest.	08/07/05
J1	6	Mid-ex photo of (031) and (032). Looking South.	08/07/05
J1	7	Mid-ex photo of S# 13 showing context (031). Looking West.	08/07/05
J1	8	Mid-ex photo of (031). Looking South.	08/07/05
J1	9	Post-ex photo of (032). Looking West.	08/07/05
J1	10	Post-ex photo of (031). Looking West.	08/07/05
J1	11	Post-ex photo of (031) and (032). Looking West.	08/07/05
J1	12	Post-ex photo of (030), (031) and (032). Looking North.	08/07/05
J1	13	Post-ex photo of (030). Looking West.	08/07/05
J1	14	Examples of the stone bank/ field boundary.	08/07/05
J1	15	Examples of the stone bank/ field boundary.	08/07/05
J1	16	Mid-ex photo of S# 15 showing contexts (033) and (026)-(029). Looking West.	08/07/05
J1	17	Mid-ex photo of S# 15 showing contexts (033) and (026)-(029). Looking West.	08/07/05
J1	18	Mid-ex photo of (033) and (026)-(029). Looking East.	08/07/05
J1	19	Mid-ex photo of S# 15 showing contexts (033) and (026)-(029). Looking West.	12/07/05
J1	20	Post-ex photo of (033). Looking West.	19/07/05
J1	21	Post-ex photo of (033). Looking North.	19/07/05
J1	22-27	Site 111.	20/07/05
J1	28-37	Site 120.	21/07/05

Appendix V Site matrix



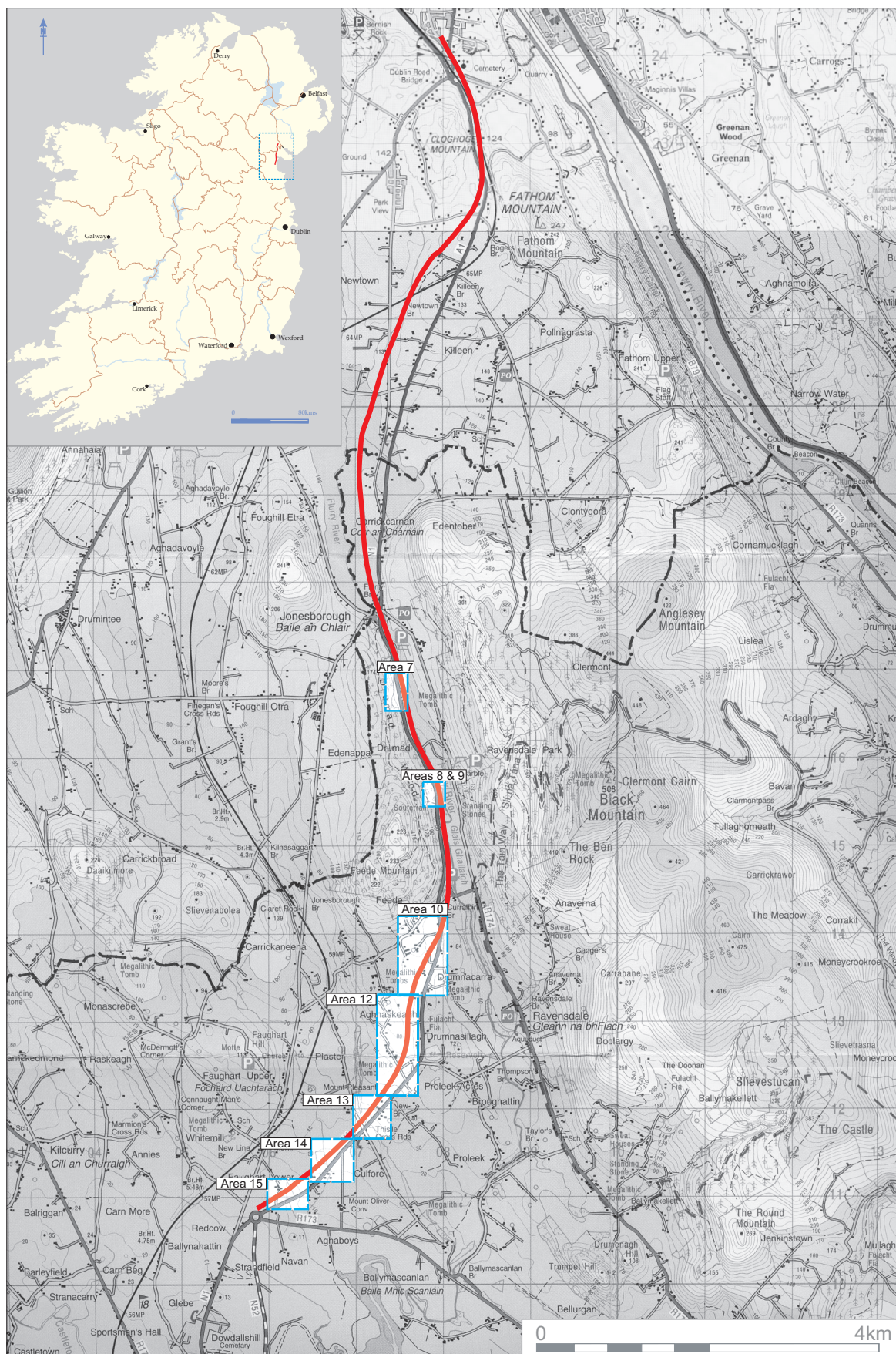


Fig. 1 Location plan for A1/N1.

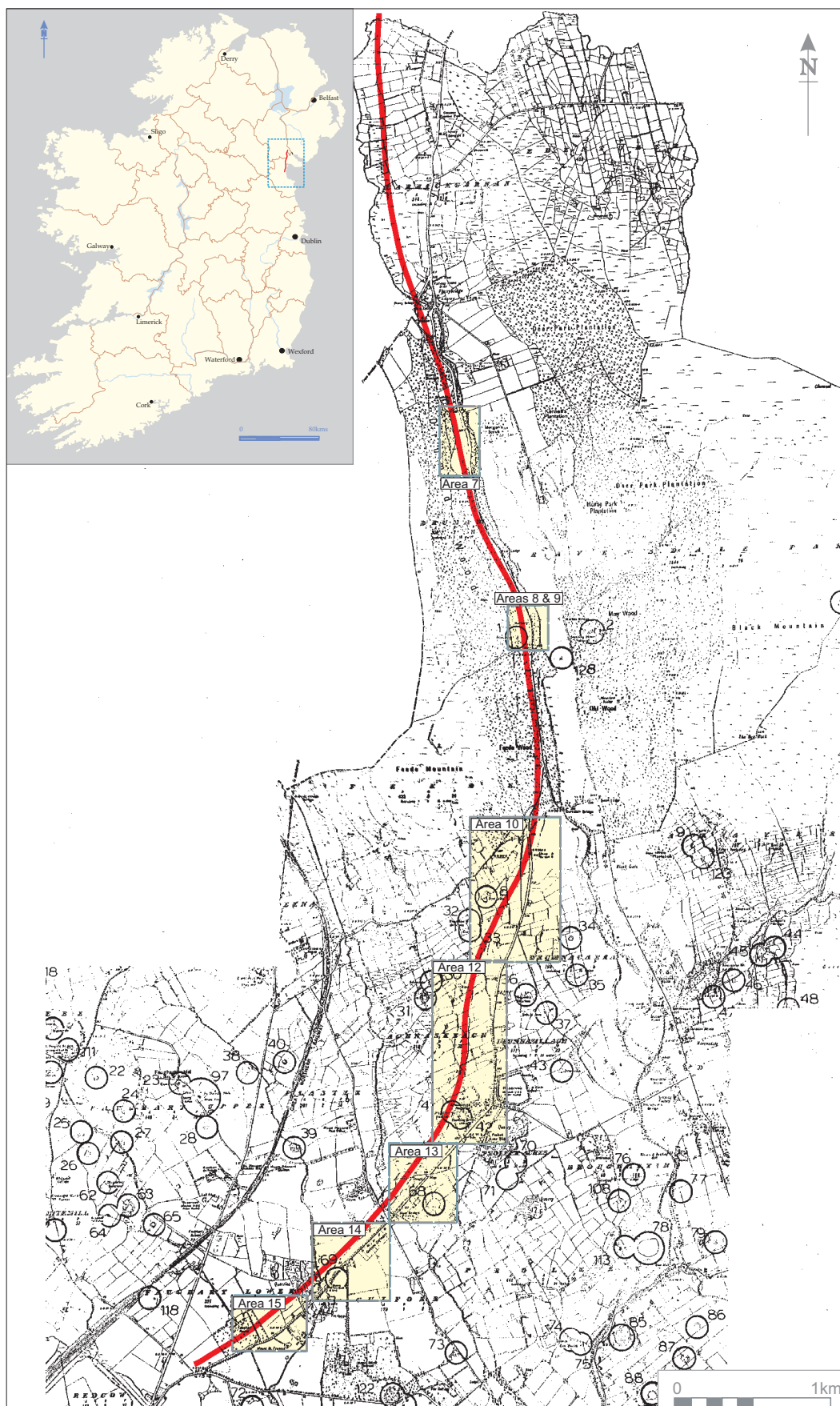
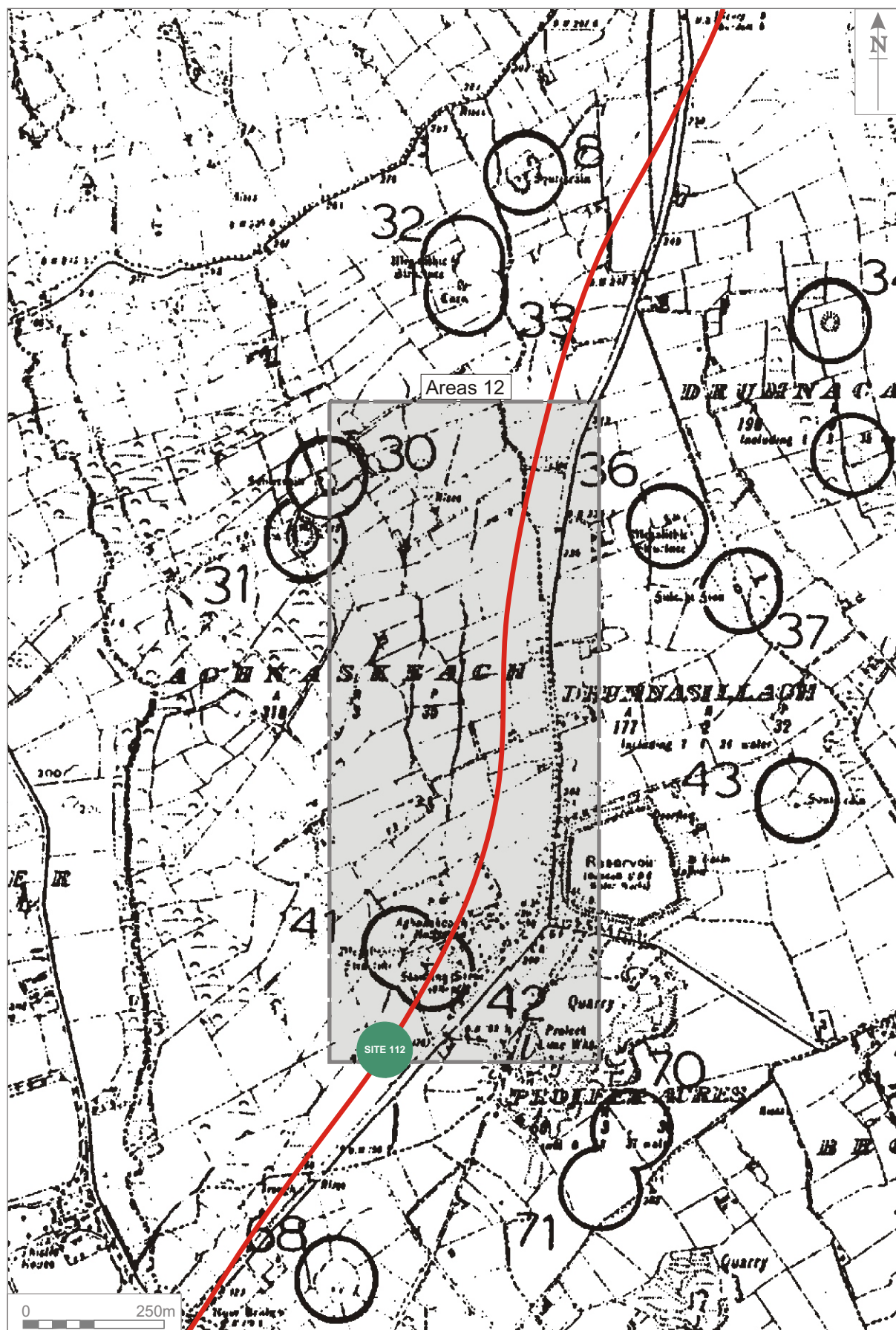


Fig. 2 Extract from RMP Maps of Louth, Sheets 1 & 4. A1/N1 in red. Scale as indicated.



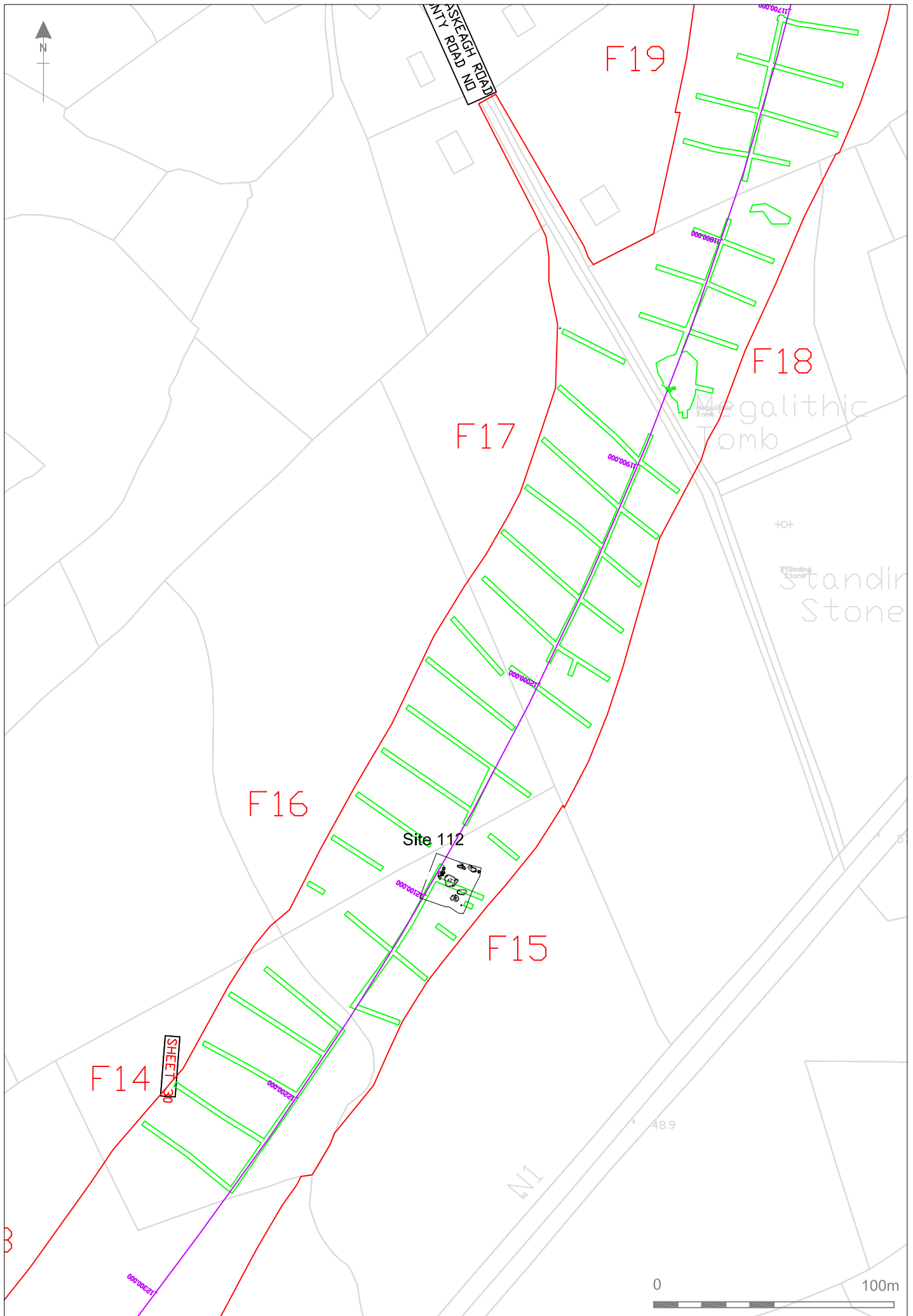


Fig. 4 Plan showing southern stretch of Area 12 and Site 112.

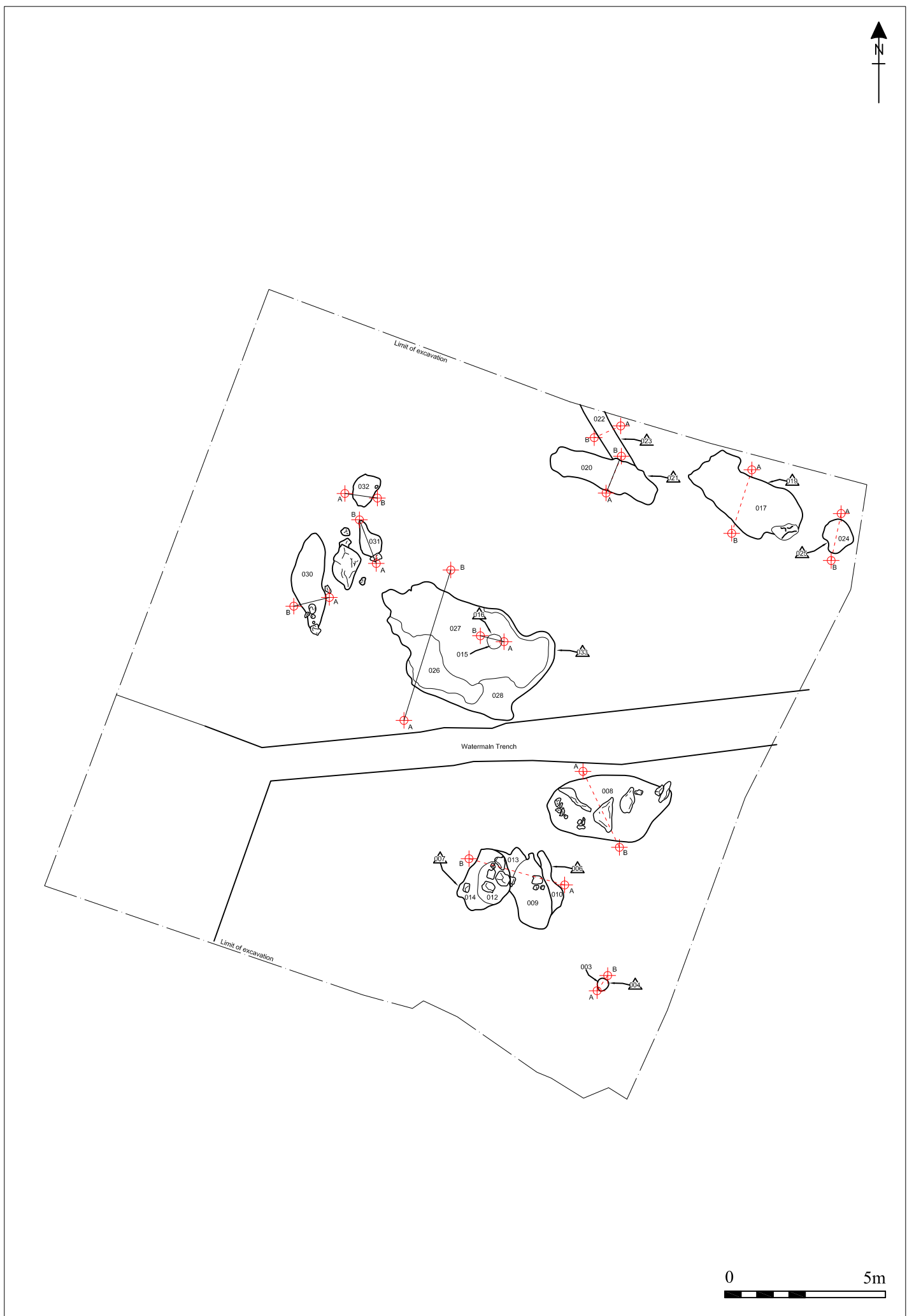
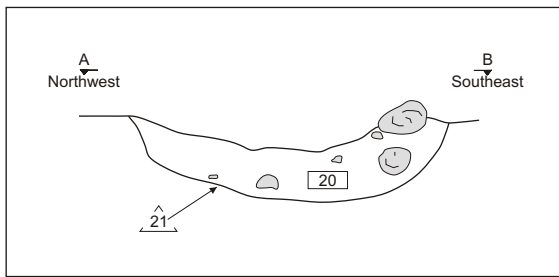
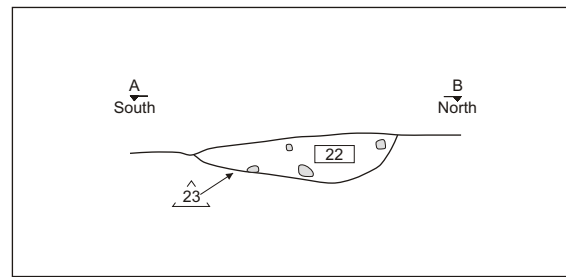


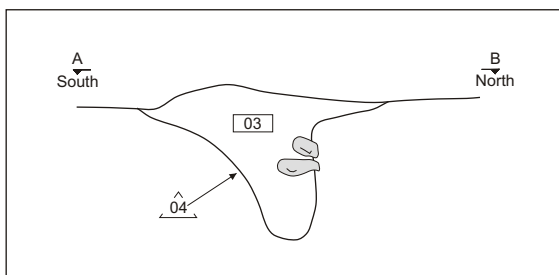
Fig. 5 Pre-excitation plan of Site 112. Scale 1:150



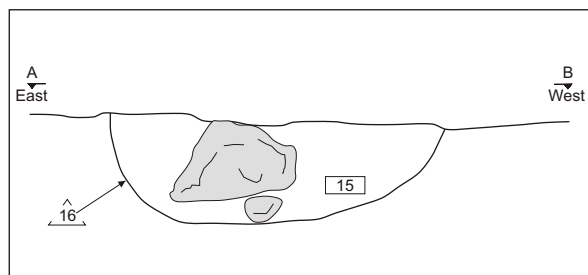
Northwest facing section.



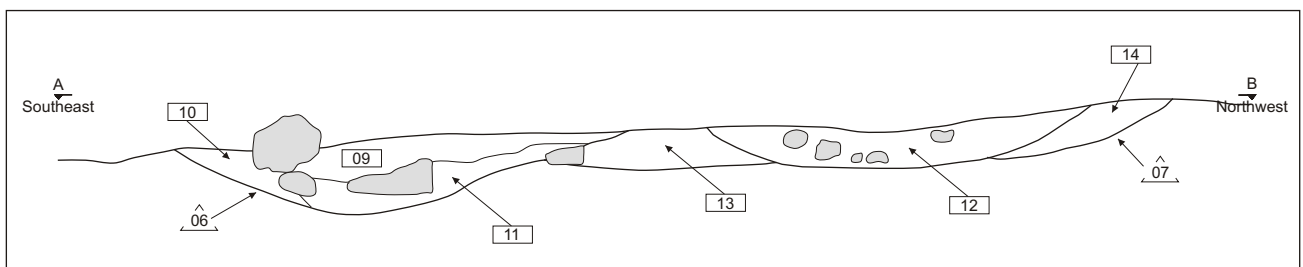
East facing section.



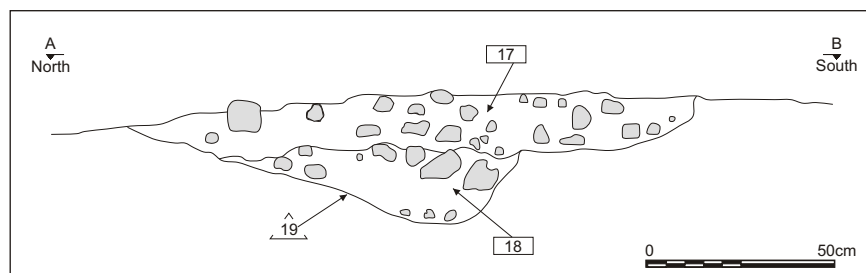
East facing section.



North facing section.



Northeast facing section.



West facing section.

Fig. 6 Sections.

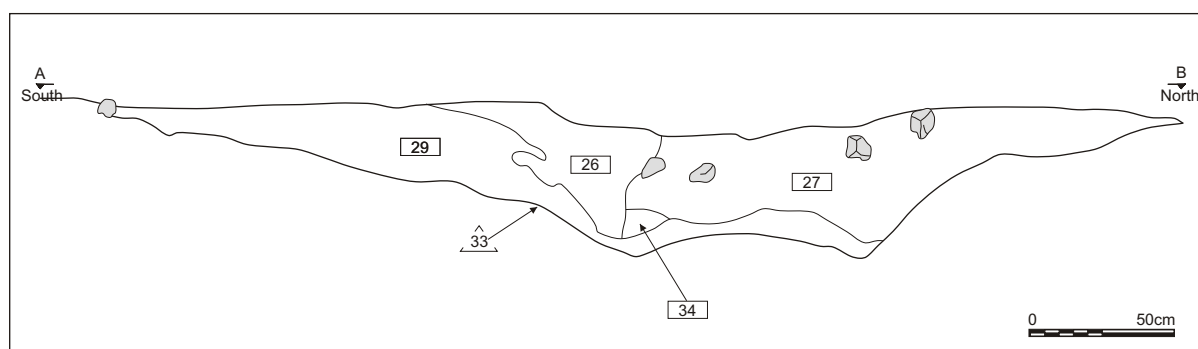


Fig. 7 East facing section.

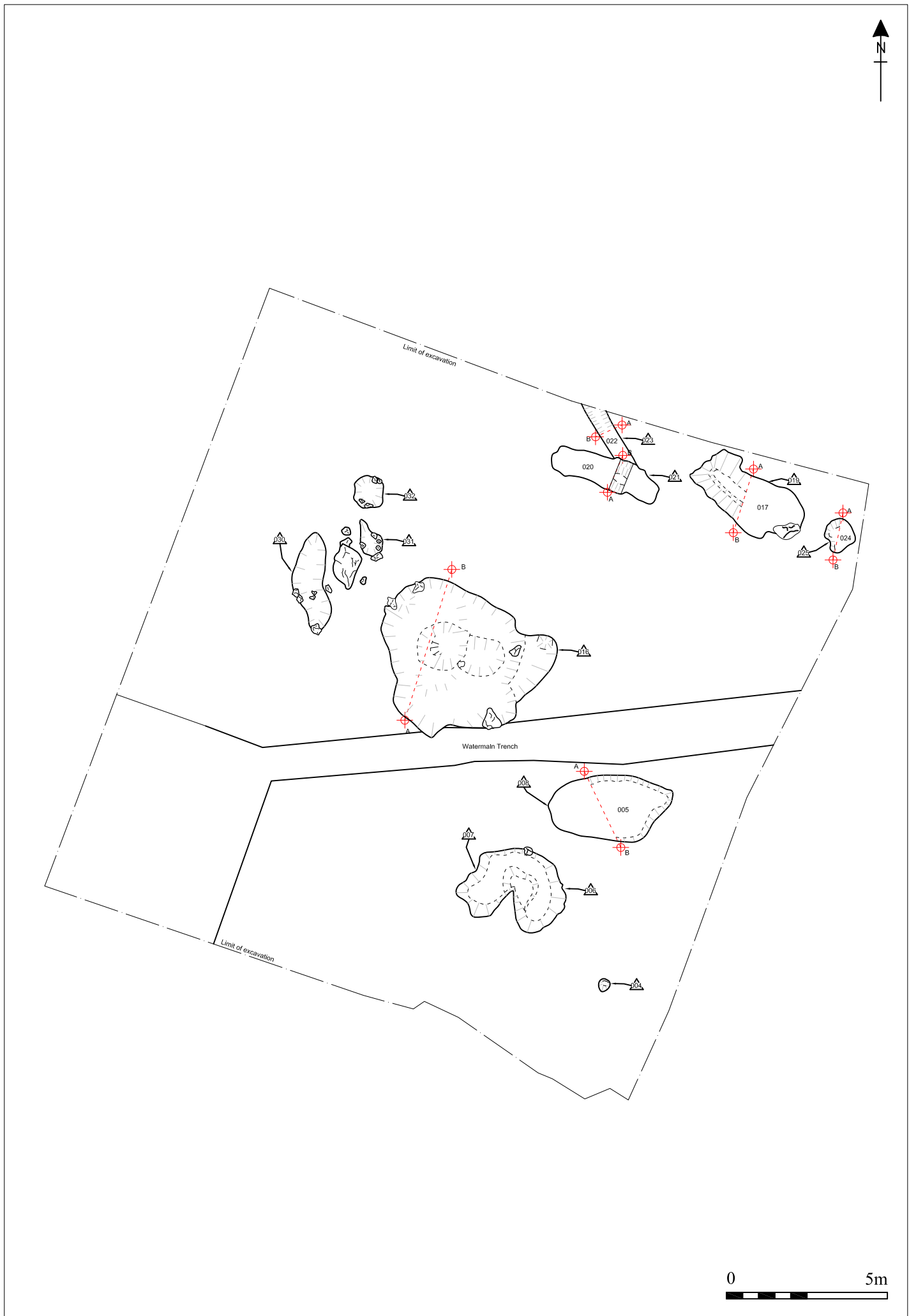


Fig. 8 Post-excavation plan of Site 112. Scale 1:150



Plate 1 Mid-ex photo of furrow (023) showing fill (022). Looking Southeast.



Plate 2 Mid-ex photo of furrow (021) showing fill (020). Looking West.



Plate 3 Mid-ex photo of stake-hole (004) showing fill (003). Looking West.



Plate 4 Mid-ex photo of pits (006) and (007) showing fills (009)-(014). Looking Southwest.



Plate 5 Mid-ex photo of pit (016) showing fill (015). Looking South.

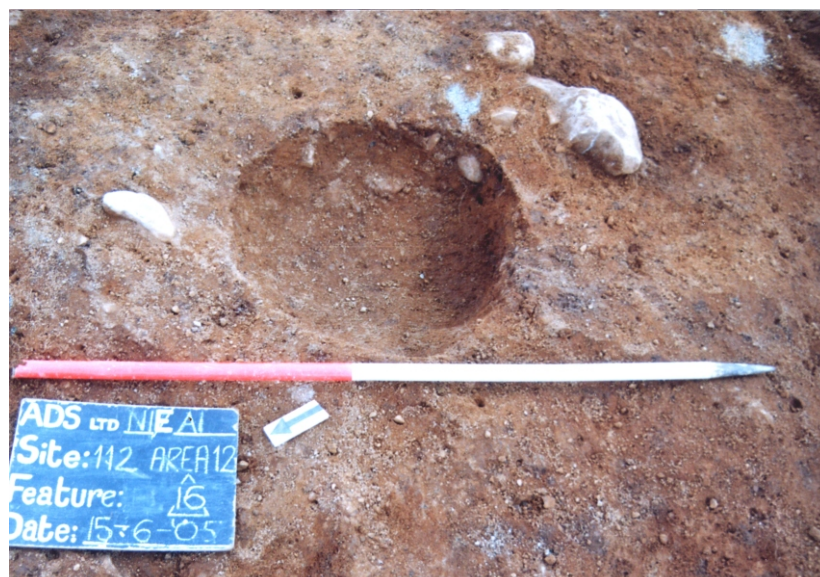


Plate 6 Post-ex photo of pit (016). Looking Southeast.



Plate 7 Mid-ex photo of pit (019) showing fills (017) and (018). Looking East.



Plate 8 Mid-ex photo of root-bole (033) showing fills (026)-(029). Looking West.