

**Interim Report of Phase 2 Excavations,
A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road,
Area 10 Site 105**

Townland: Drumnasillagh
Parish: Ballymascanlan
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
Chainage: 10420
NGR: 307818E, 313833N
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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.

At this site (105) an area 20 by 20m was stripped down to the stony subsoil to reveal two plough furrows, several shallow pits, perhaps the result of spade cultivation, and a linear feature, perhaps a ditch or possibly the result of mechanical ridging. These features all had a similar fill and some contained sherds of modern pottery. Some burnt areas, noted during the testing phase, proved to be no more than thin spreads of charcoal-rich topsoil.

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 that followed the recommendations of the assessment of Features 12 and 13 (McConway and O'Rourke 2005).

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.

This report describes the results of excavations carried out between May 19 and 27 2005 in advance of groundwork. The staff of ADS carried out archaeological work on behalf of the developers under the direction of Sinclair J. Turrell. This section of the project occurs in Drumnasillagh Townland, Ballymascanlan Parish, Co. Louth; at National Grid Reference 307818E, 313833N (centre point), Ordnance Datum (OD) of approximately 90m and road scheme chainage 10420.

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; Plate 1)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

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

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 undulating to Dundalk Bay.

This site was situated in pastureland with a slight east-facing slope, close to the existing A1 (Figs 1-5; Plates 1 and 2).

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 SMR shows that there are fourteen known prehistoric and historic sites in the area. These include the following seventeen sites, listed by townland, the SMR number, the Buckley and Sweetman page number their reference number (1991) and the description (usually shortened) presented in Buckley and Sweetman (1991) (Fig. 3).

SMR:	LH004-008 (01), (02) (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: (01) 171 Survey No. 618; (02) 122 Survey No. 321)
Townland:	Drumnasillagh
Parish:	Ballymascanlan
Barony:	Lower Dundalk
County:	Louth
Country:	Republic of Ireland
NGR:	307670E, 313830N
Description:	(01) Ringfort oval area (int. diams. 50m NNW-SSE, 29m WSW-ENE) enclosed by much altered and gasped bank (W 5m, H c. 1.1m). From NNE-E the bank is replaced by a modern stone wall. Original entrance not identifiable. No visible fosse. Souterrain [(02) below) in interior.

- NGR: 307670E, 313840N
 Description: (02) Souterrain situated in the interior of a ringfort [(01) above] (CLAJ 1909, 137-8). Now inaccessible.
- SMR: LH004-009 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 158 Survey No. 549)
 Townland: Anaverna
 Parish: Ballymascanlan
 Barony: Lower Dundalk
 County: Louth
 Country: Republic of Ireland
 NGR: 308980E, 314200N
 Description: Ringfort subcircular area (int. diams. 24m E-W, 21m N-S) enclosed by earthen bank on W (W 4m; H 0.05m internally, 1.7m externally), and on E by bank obscured by modern field walls.
- SMR: 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: 307550E, 313300N
 Description: (01) Ringfort oval area (int. diams. 44m NNW-SSE, 24m WSW-ENE) enclosed by earthen bank (W 5m, H 1.3m externally) with traces of stone facing. Souterrain [(02) below] in NW quadrant of interior.
- NGR: 307330E, 313310N
 Description: (02) Souterrain lintels showing on surface of interior of ringfort [(01) above] (CLAJ 1908, 29)
- SMR: 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 (diam. 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.
- SMR: LH004-032 (01), (02), (03) [Buckley and Sweetman 1991: Cairn 25, Survey No. 67; (01) is three tombs 25, Survey Nos 39-41; (02) 63, Survey No. 137; (03) 94 Survey No. 249]
 Townland: Aghnaskeagh
 Parish: Ballymascanlan
 Barony: Lower Dundalk

County: Louth
 Country: Republic of Ireland
 NGR: 307550E, 313690N
 Description: Cairn 'Cairn A', excavated by E. E. Evans in 1934 (*CLAJ* 1935, 234-55).
 NGR: 307550E, 313690N
 Description: (01) Survey No. 39 is a Megalithic tomb: This monument was excavated in 1934 by E.E. Evans (*CLAJ* 1935, 234-55). It comprises an oval cairn (above) 17.5m long by 11m wide, orientated NNE-SSW incorporating a portal-tomb to the E and six Bronze Age cists to the W. The tomb, facing N, is represented by portal stones, each 2.7m high, and a back stone standing 2m to the S. The chamber area contained four pockets of cremated bone with some Neolithic and Bronze Age pot sherds and a blue glass bead. The cists [No. (02) below] yielded cremations and food vessels. Evidence of iron-smelting was recovered from a furnace area [No. (03) below] immediately N of the cairn.
 Survey No. 40 is a Megalithic tomb, which lies 40m to the S of No. 39 (above), excavated in 1935 by E. E. Evans (*CLAJ* 1937, 1-18). It comprises the remains of a cairn, 15m long, orientated NNW-SSE, and narrowing from about 8m wide at the S to 6m at the N. The cairn, revetted on the E and W with dry walling, incorporates four small chambers, two opening at the E and two at the W. Although Evans considered that the NW chamber may have opened to the N, the morphological evidence indicates that it probably opened to the W. Finds from the chambers included cremated bone, Neolithic pot sherds and flints, including two hollow scrapers. The chambers are clearly comparable to the subsidiary chambers found in court-tombs and hence the monument is assigned to that class; the finds are consistent with this view.
 Survey No. 41 A very ruined Megalithic tomb. 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' (6" sheet 4, revision 1862). The tomb must remain unclassified pending further investigation but interpretation as the remains of a large wedge-tomb would be consistent with the surviving stones.
 NGR: 307550E, 313690N
 Description: (02) Cists. Six short cists, aligned NW-SE, were found during excavations by E. E. Evans of Cairn A at Aghnaskeagh. These secondary burials, dating to the Bronze Age, were W and SW of the megalith (individual descriptions omitted).
 NGR: 307550E, 313690N
 Description: (03) Iron working furnace. Excavated by E. E. Evans in 1934. At NE end of cairn [No. (01) above] was a primitive furnace, 'stoke hole' and flue used in iron working. The structure consisted of an unlined furnace, using fused clay as walling. This type of bowl furnace probably had courses of stone added as heightening. Extending from the bowl was a flue (L c. 2m, W c. 0.3m) roughly D-shaped in section. The door of the furnace faced SW, obviously to catch the prevailing wind, and led to a small 'stoke hole' and a paved pathway (L c. 1.7m) of granite slabs. The excavator has suggested that smelting took place at the mouth of Cist 3 [No. (02) above].
 SMR: LH004-033 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 25, Survey No. 40)
 Townland: Aghnaskeagh
 Parish: Ballymascanlan
 Barony: Lower Dundalk
 County: Louth
 Country: Republic of Ireland
 NGR: 307570E, 313650N

Description: Court tomb: This monument, which lies 40m to the S of Survey No. 39 [LH004-032 (01) above] was excavated in 1935 by E. E. Evans (*CLAJ* 1937, 1-18). It comprises the remains of a cairn, 15m long orientated NNW-SSE, and a narrowing from about 8m wide at the S to 6m at the N. The cairn, revetted on the E and W with dry walling, incorporates four small chambers, two opening at the E and two to the W. Although Evans considered that the NW chamber may have opened to the N, the morphological evidence indicates that it probably opened to the W. Finds from the chambers included cremated bone, Neolithic pot sherds and flints, including two hollow scrapers. The chambers are clearly comparable to the subsidiary chambers found in court-tombs.

SMR: LH004-034 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 171 Survey No. 617)

Townland: Drumnacarra

Parish: Ballymascanlan

Barony: Lower Dundalk

County: Louth

Country: Republic of Ireland

NGR: 308220E, 313590N

Description: Ringfort subcircular area (int. dims. 26.5m N-S, 24m E-W) enclosed by earthen bank (W 3.3m, H 0.9m) with internal and external stone facing. No visible trace of fosse. Entrance gap (W 5.6m) at SW.

SMR: LH004-035 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: 171, Survey No. 616)

Townland: Drumnacarra

Parish: Ballymascanlan

Barony: Lower Dundalk

County: Louth

Country: Republic of Ireland

NGR: 308270E, 313360N

Description: Ringfort subcircular area (int. dims. 35.5m N-S, 32.5m E-W) enclosed by a bank (W 5m, H 0.6m internally, 1.1m externally) with internal and external stone facings and a basal course of large stones. Probable entrance gap (W 1.5m) at ESE. No visible trace of fosse.

SMR: 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.

SMR: 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.
- SMR: 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'.
- SMR: 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).
- SMR: 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'. Site 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.
- SMR: LH004-123 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: Survey No. Not Listed)
 Townland: Anaverna
 Parish: Ballymascanlan

Barony: Lower Dundalk
County: Louth
Country: Republic of Ireland
NGR: 309050E, 314090N
Description: Sweathouse, no further information.

Sites known from the current project. Current work has identified six 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 Lynch).

These are:

Site 104 This site was composed of three areas of activity, termed the northwest, the middle-north and the east. In the northwest area, the archaeological remains appeared to represent repeated episodes of burning. Here the archaeology consisted of a posthole, two charcoal spreads and three pits. They were all discreet features as there were no stratigraphic links between any of the features to indicate either their chronology or contemporaneity. The three pit features would appear to be a series of hearths (Ó Baoill 2005).

The area of the site designated middle-north contained a stratified sequence of archaeological deposits consisting of two deliberately scarped features in the natural associated with a large area of burning. It would appear that some sort of communal activity, either cooking or perhaps ritual, was taking place at this location. There appeared to be an effort to mask the burning activity by laying down various layers of redeposited natural on top of the charcoal within the cut. Later, the digging of a linear feature damaged the earlier features. This cut, both in orientation and dimensions, has all the appearance of an early medieval grave but no remains were recovered from its basal fill. However, attributes of the feature including the digging of the berm or ledge at its south side, the orientation of the feature, the presence of a cairn of stones that slumped into the main cut and the possible stone marker socket all suggest a burial.

In the east area, there were two features, an irregularly shaped oblong cut and a circular pit. They were both discreet features, as there was no stratigraphic link between either of the features to illuminate either chronology or contemporaneity.

The excavations found no evidence for a 'ring ditch' or 'ploughed out barrow', suggested from the Phase 1 archaeological testing. However, there was evidence of small scale, multi-period activity across the site. The lack of artifacts retrieved from site hinders close preliminary dating of the features investigated.

It is hoped that more information may be gained when the radiocarbon dates from the various samples taken are analysed.

Site 106 was where Phase 1 testing revealed two potentially significant features; Feature 10 was a spread of charcoal flecked silty soil with stone inclusions, Feature 11 was 13m north of Feature 10 and consisted of a circular spread of ash and charcoal that continued into the northern baulk. In order to investigate the deposits an area measuring 20 by 20m was stripped of topsoil after which several additional potentially significant features were exposed in plan. In the course of the excavation, twenty-seven contexts consisting of ten cuts and sixteen fills or deposits were investigated. All of the excavated features appear to be related to post medieval agriculture, these include a wall foundation, burnt tree bowls, agricultural furrows and a field drain (Powell 2005a).

Site 107 consisted of a single large pit were excavated at this site. Both are thought to have resulted from modern farming activities associated with an adjacent farmhouse (Powell 2005b).

Site 108 this was Feature 8 from testing (McConway and Lynch 2005). Initially the site consisted of a concentrated charcoal spread 0.66m by 0.8m. Following surface stripping five pits, two of which may be hearths, and one stakehole were discovered and excavated.

Site 109 was the designation for a cluster of features found in testing. Feature 7 was the northernmost feature in the cluster of features. It was identified as two teardrop shaped spreads of charcoal flecked soil 0.75m c 0.5m. 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 2.60m by 1.00m. The eastern edge of this spread continued into the baulk. Feature 5 lay 30m to the southwest of feature 6 and consisted of a subcircular silty soil with charcoal inclusions 0.34m by 0.24m. Feature 4 lay 40m to the west of Feature 5 and consisted of two apparently discreet spreads of charcoal 0.50m by 0.20m. 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 0.50m by 0.55m.

Site 110 was composed of testing Feature 2; it consisted of a small spread of burnt clay and charcoal 0.5m by 0.2m.

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 2002, 236). 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 10 was considered an area of high archaeological potential, situated in good farmland within an archaeologically sensitive landscape. The potential for uncovering settlement sites was investigated and evaluated under Phase 1 of the contract by means of test excavation and a metal detecting (Project Sub No: A002/008) and wade survey (Project Sub No: A002/007) of the stream.

The Phase 1 report discusses the archaeological findings within Area 10, at Drumsillagh and Aghnaskeagh townland, between chainages 10000-10925 (McConway and Lynch 2005). Patricia Lynch carried out testing in this area under project sub number A002/002 from November 15-23 2004.

The dispersed nature of the discoveries made during testing required the division of the original Area 10 into several sites; A1/N1-104 (Ó Baoill 2005), A1/N1-105 (reported here), A1/N1-106 (Powell 2005a) and A1/N1-107 (Powell 2005b). At this location, Site 105, the test excavations revealed two features that required further investigation (McConway and Lynch 2005, Fig. 5). The features found in testing were:

- **Feature 12** was located around 45m to the northwest of Feature 11 and consisted of a teardrop shaped spread of charcoal and ash 1.12 by 0.52m.
- **Feature 13** was located 20m to the east of Feature 12 and consisted of a rich brown silty soil with charcoal inclusion 1.10 by 1.90m.

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 be opened up on plan in order to fully investigate and record any discovered features.

2.2.4 Phase 2 archaeological excavations

Phase 1 testing revealed two significant features in this part of Area 10, one a teardrop-shaped spread of charcoal and ash (McConway and Lynch 2005, Feature 12), the other, 20m to the east, a rich brown silty soil with charcoal inclusions (McConway and Lynch 2005, Feature 13). In order to investigate the deposits an area measuring 20 by 20m was stripped of topsoil, using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. In the course of the excavation, thirty-two contexts consisting of eleven cuts and twenty-one fills or spreads were investigated (Appendix I).

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 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. 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 & 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

ADS staff involved in the excavation were the Director Sinclair Turrell; Supervisor Mary O'Brien; Site Assistants Feilim MacGabhann, Brendan Malone, Colm O'Brien and Emma Taylor and General Operative Oisín O'Brien.

3 Phase 2 Excavation Records

3.1 Results of the excavation

After mechanical stripping substantial pockets of topsoil remained, trapped between the many large stones that projected from the subsoil. This topsoil (**001**), which was removed by hand, was up to 0.3m thick in places and contained some patches of burning within it, as well as several sherds of 19th century pottery. The subsoil (**002**) was very compact, orange-brown, silty clay, very stony, sometimes with boulders embedded in it and patches of angular green shale jutting from the surface in places. Several features were revealed, mostly patches or spreads of charcoal-rich soil, concentrated on the southern and eastern edges of the site, some of which proved to be no more than very thin surface spreads. There were also two parallel linear features in the southwestern corner of the site, running southwest to northeast and a slightly more substantial linear feature on the same alignment, in the southeastern corner (Figs 5 and 8).

3.1.1 Spreads

There were two large spreads of charcoal-rich soil. (**017**) was a friable, grey/black, silty clay loam, very stony and with frequent small flecks of charcoal (Fig. 6). A sherd of white-glazed pottery was found in this deposit, which filled an oval hollow, 2.9m long, 1.8m wide and 0.22m deep, with no visible cut and with several large stones projecting from the base. This feature was cut by pit (**019**) (Fig. 6). Another spread, measuring 2.5 by 1.1m and 0.15m deep, consisted of a series of thin lenses of sandy, silty topsoil (**028**)-(b>032) (Fig. 7), some of which were charcoal-rich. This is probably agricultural soil filling a natural

hollow or a tree hole. A patch of soil in the northeastern corner, measuring 3.6 by 2.8m, **(020)** proved to be nothing more than a thin (0.16m) spread of silty clay loam, with some occasional stones and charcoal flecks, a remnant of the agricultural topsoil.

3.1.2 Pits

Eight pits were investigated, most of them very shallow features. Contexts **(008)**, **(010)**, **(012)**, **(025)** and **(027)** may be grouped together, since they were all of a similar shape and size, being sub-oval or sub-rectangular in plan, mostly with steep sides and flat bases (Figs 8 and 9; Plates 5, 6 and 7). They ranged from 0.6m to around 0.8m in diameter, with a depth of 0.08 to 0.17m and all had a similar fill, consisting of dark brown/grey, sandy, silty clay loam, which contained some occasional small stones and charcoal flecks **(007)**, **(009)**, **(011)**, **(024)**, **(026)** (Fig. 9). A small sherd of red glazed earthenware was recovered from **(009)** and some white glazed pottery from **(024)**. Because all these pits are similar in shape, have been cut to around the same level and have identical fills, it may be reasonably inferred that they are all modern in origin. The pits have angular cuts and **(025)** has two outlying depressions which look like spade cuts. It is possible that these features are the result of spade cultivation.

Feature **(014)** was of irregular shape measuring 2 by 0.7m and 0.09m deep (Fig. 5; Plate 8). It was filled with a dark brown, silty clay loam, which contained some small stones and a few flecks of charcoal **(013)**. The base of this feature displayed some small depressions, which may have been spade marks.

Feature **(016)** was oval in plan with steep sides and a rounded base. It measured 0.65 by 0.6m and was 0.25m deep, filled by a dark grey/brown, stony, silty clay loam **(015)**. The fill was dominated by a large piece of shale (Fig. 10; Plate 9) and it is possible that this feature is simply a pocket of soil around this stone, rather than a pit.

The deepest pit was **(019)**, oval in plan, measuring 1 by 0.8m and 0.28m deep with steep sides and a rounded base, cut through the modern spread **(017)** (Fig. 6). The fill was a friable, grey/brown, slightly sandy, silty clay loam, containing some small to medium sized stones.

3.1.3 Linear features

There were two parallel linear features in the southwestern corner of the site, on a southwest - northeast alignment. One **(004)** was 4m long and the other **(006)** was 2.5m long, both truncated by the western baulk (Fig. 8; Plates 3 and 4). They were both 0.5m wide and 0.08m deep and were both filled by a

friable, dark brown, silty clay loam, which contained some small stones **(003)** and **(005)**. These features are clearly the remnants of two plough furrows.

There was another linear feature in the southeastern corner of the site, also on a southwest - northeast alignment and truncated by both the southern and eastern baulk (Fig. 8). The feature **(023)** was 3.9m long, 0.75m wide and 0.3m deep, with steep sides and a rounded base, partly cut through a patch of redeposited natural subsoil **(022)** (Fig. 11). The fill was a friable, brown/grey, silty clay loam, which contained which contained some small to medium sized stones and occasional small charcoal flecks **(021)**. This feature is on the same alignment as the two plough furrows and could be a field boundary ditch. However, since the fill is loamy rather than silty, it may possibly be the product of mechanical ridging before potato cultivation.

3.2 Summary

An area 20 by 20m was stripped down to the stony subsoil to reveal two plough furrows, several shallow pits, perhaps the result of spade cultivation, and a linear feature, perhaps a ditch or possibly the result of mechanical ridging. The exposed features all had a similar fill and some contained sherds of modern pottery. Some burnt areas, noted during the testing phase, proved to be no more than thin spreads of charcoal-rich topsoil.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

The burnt areas noted in Phase 1 testing are simply thin spreads of burnt topsoil lying in hollows in the stony, uneven subsoil. All of the features here have similar loamy fills and are probably all connected to recent agricultural activities, with traces of plough furrows, probable spade cultivation and perhaps mechanical ridging as well. No archaeological features were revealed during the excavation and all of the questions surrounding this site can be considered resolved.

5 Recommendation

Five contexts **(001)**, **(009)**, **(014)**, **(017)** and **(024)** produced finds (Appendix II). With the exception of four flint nodules found in cut **(014)**, a small pit that is likely the result of spade cultivation; all of the finds are modern. No further analysis of the finds is recommended.

No further archaeological work either in the field or post excavation analyses is recommended for Site 105.

6 References

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Appendices

Appendix I Context list

Context	Type	Description
(001)	Deposit	Topsoil.
(002)	Deposit	Subsoil.
(003)	Deposit	Fill of furrow (004)
(004)	Cut	Long furrow.
(005)	Deposit	Fill of furrow (006)
(006)	Cut	Short furrow.
(007)	Deposit	Fill of hallow pit feature (008).
(008)	Cut	Shallow pit.
(009)	Deposit	Fill of shallow pit(010).
(010)	Cut	Shallow pit.
(011)	Deposit	Fill of pit (012).
(012)	Cut	Pit.
(013)	Deposit	Fill of shallow feature (014).
(014)	Cut	Shallow feature.
(015)	Deposit	Fill of shallow pit (016).
(016)	Cut	Small pit.
(017)	Spread	Burnt spread, cut by (019).
(018)	Deposit	Fill of pit (019).
(019)	Cut	Pit.
(020)	Spread	Redeposited topsoil.
(021)	Deposit	Fill of linear feature (023).
(022)	Spread	Redeposited natural.
(023)	Cut	Linear feature.
(024)	Deposit	Fill of modern pit (025).
(025)	Cut	Modern pit.
(026)	Deposit	Fill of small pit (027)
(027)	Cut	Small pit.
(028)	Spread	Non archaeological.
(029)	Spread	Non archaeological.
(030)	Spread	Non archaeological.
(031)	Spread	Non archaeological.
(032)	Spread	Non archaeological.

Appendix II Finds

Context	Type	Find type	Description
(001)	Topsoil	Pottery	One sherd of unglazed red earthenware.
		Pottery	One sherd of glazed red earthenware.
		Pottery	One sherd of blackware (rim).
(009)	Shallow modern pit	Pottery	Fragment of red earthenware.
(014)	Pit from spade cultivation	Pottery	Two sherds of unglazed red earthenware (one rim).
		Pottery	Two sherds blackware (bases).
		Pottery	Two sherds glazed white earthenware.
		Pottery	Three sherds glazed red earthenware (one base)
		Glass	Transparent green bottleneck.
		Glass	Opaque, thick green bottle base.
		Lithics	Four pieces of flint.
(017)	Burnt spread	Pottery	Fragment of white, glazed crockery.
(024)	Modern pit	Pottery	One sherd of white, glazed crockery

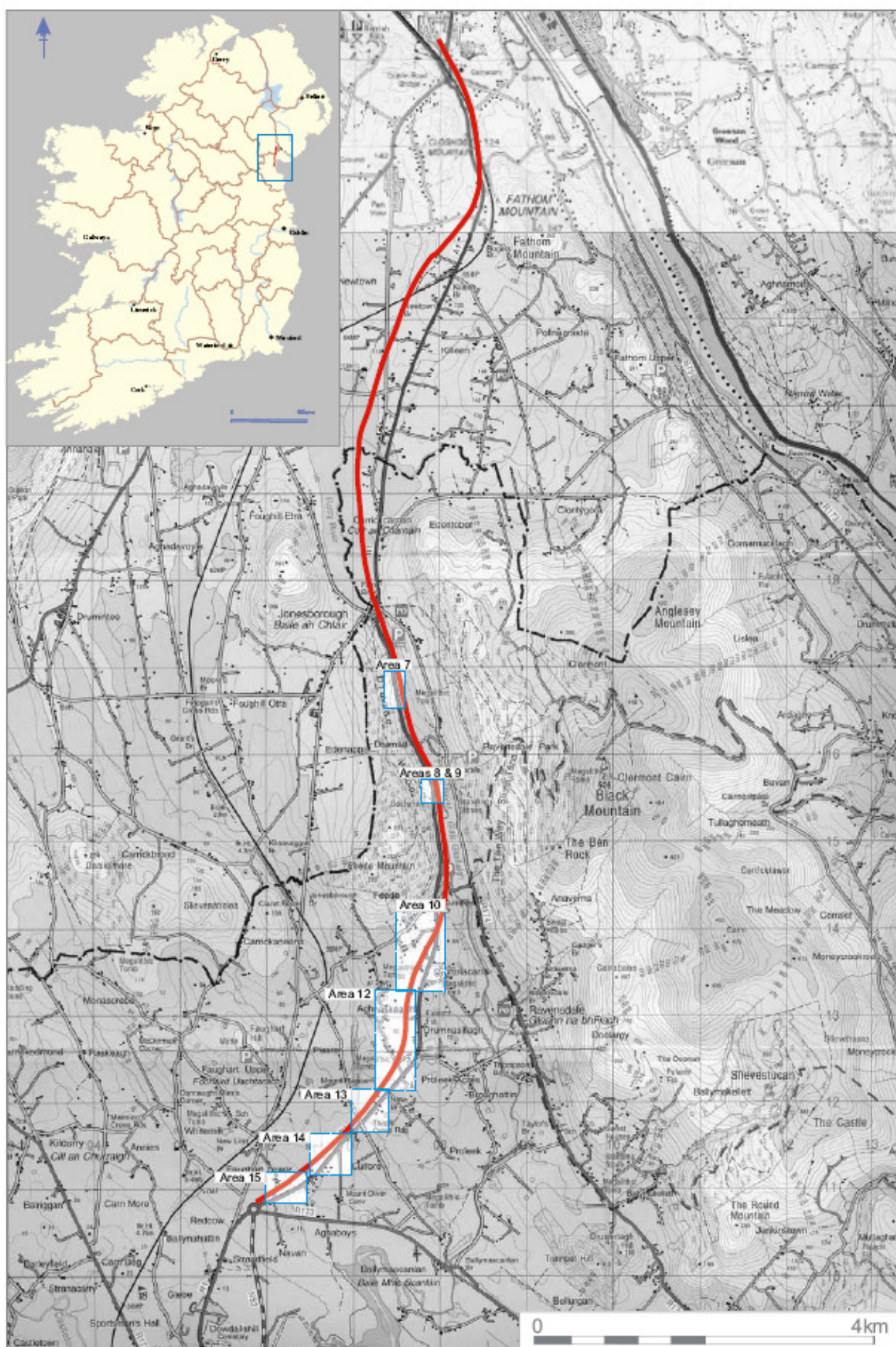


Fig. 1 Location plan for A1/N1.

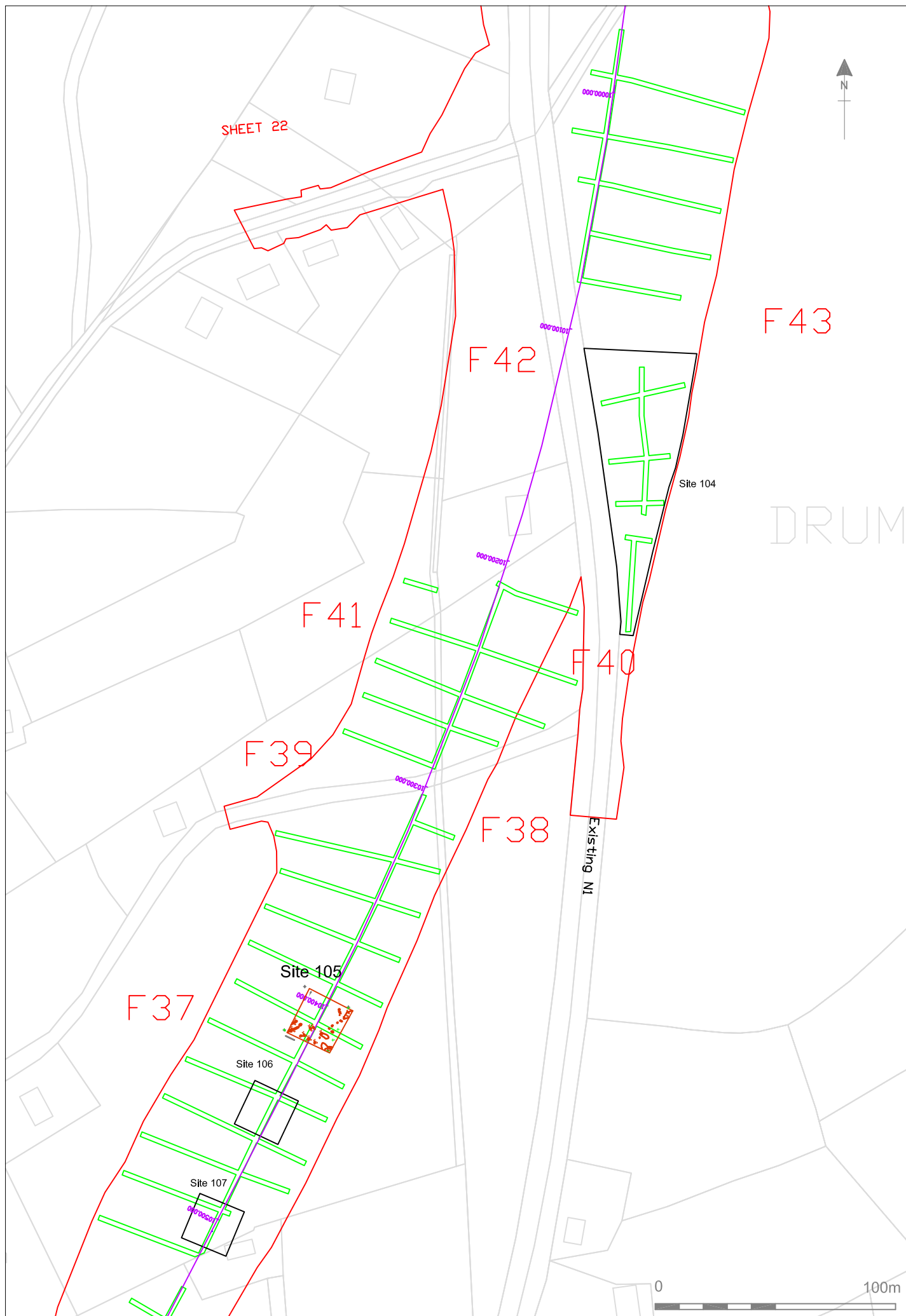


Fig. 4 Plan showing southern stretch of Area 10 and Site 105.

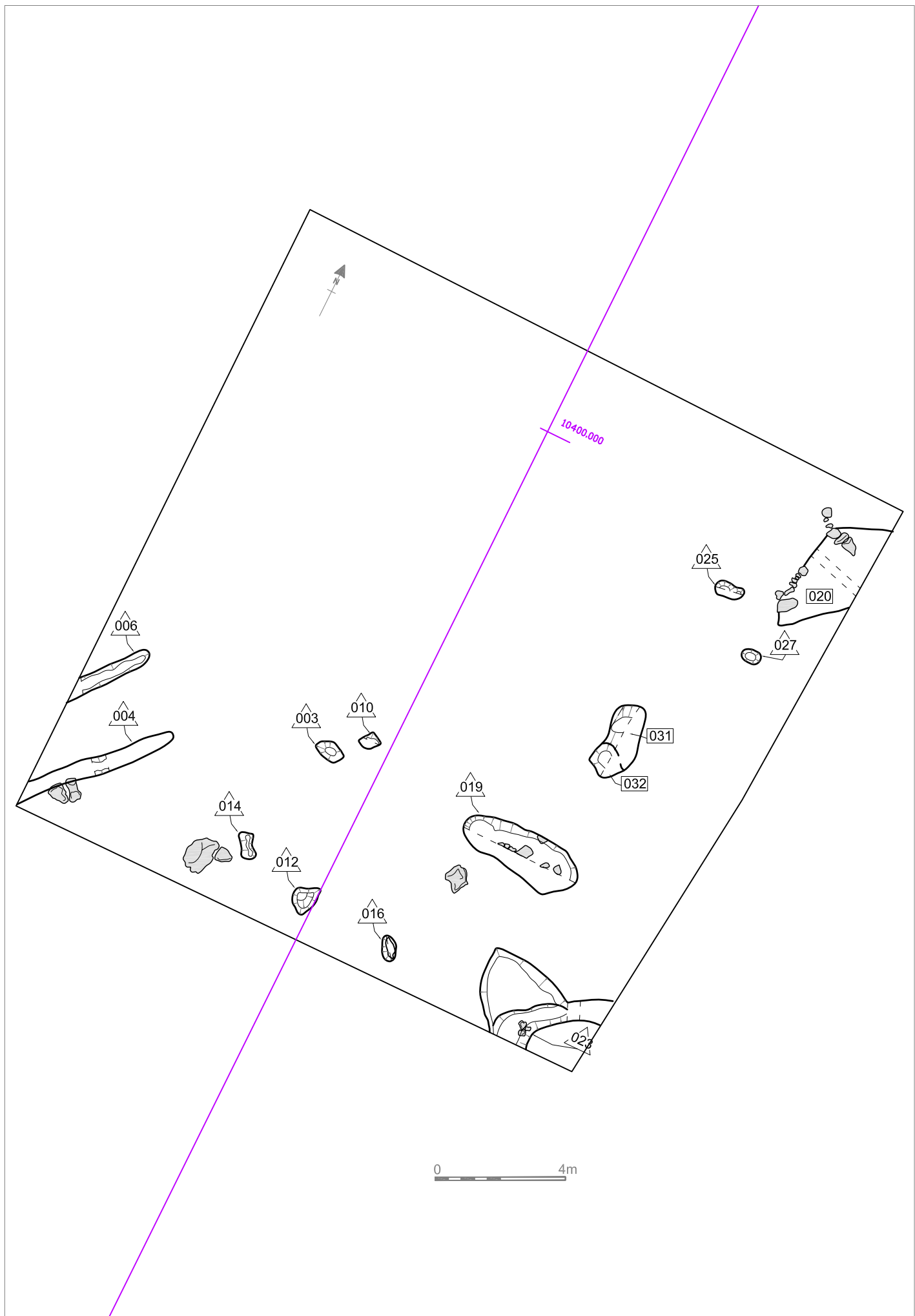
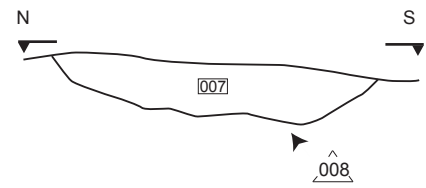
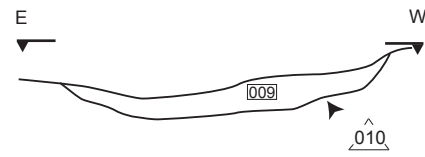


Fig. 7 Post-excavation plan of Site 105. Scale 1:50.

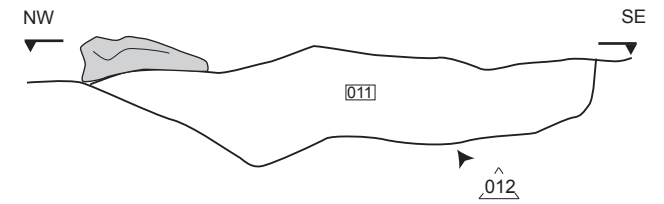
Section through Cut 008



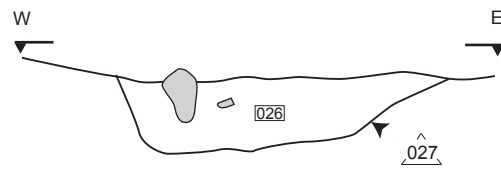
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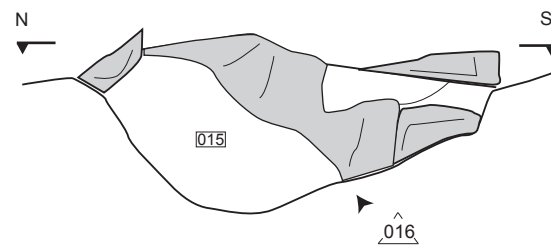
Section through Cut 012



Section through Cut 027



Section through Cut 016



Section through Cut 023

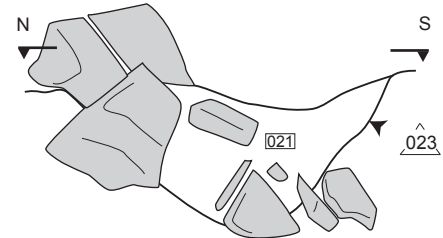


Fig. 8 Sections.



Plate 1 Pre-excavation of Area 10 looking west.



Plate 2 Pre-excavation of Area 10 looking east.



Plate 3 Plough furrow (004).



Plate 4 Plough furrow (006).



Plate 5 Shallow pit (008).



Plate 6 Modern pit (010).