

**Stratigraphic**  
**Report of Phase 2 Excavations,**  
**A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road,**  
**Area 13 Site 114B**

**Townlands:** Plaster  
**Parish:** Ballymascanlan  
**County:** Louth  
**Country:** Republic of Ireland  
**Chainage:** 12665 - 12707  
**NGR:** 307027E, 311835N  
**Director:** Sinclair J. Turrell  
**Submitted:** May 2007



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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/NI 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.*

*This site was located to the west of Site 114A, situated on gently sloping ground at the foot of a slope. There was a linear ditch running east to west between the two baulks for 33.5m, with two cultivation furrows running parallel to the west. Around halfway along the length of this ditch was another, perpendicular to the first, running for 7m into the southern baulk. East of the angle formed by these two ditches was a smaller linear feature running parallel to the main ditch. There was a faint, right-angled return west of this feature, which seemed to indicate some small structure, within the angle of the larger ditches. A corresponding return was not present to the east of the feature, however, although the test trench here had cut into the subsoil and may have removed any remaining traces. Both the larger and smaller east to west ditches appeared to cut through a stone spread to the east of the cutting. Subsequent excavation of the larger ditches produced post-medieval pottery and a flat, metal knife blade.*

*North of these ditches were a series of oval or circular features, in a range of sizes, some with stony, silty fills, with some of the smaller ones having charcoal-rich fills. Excavation showed that some of these are probably natural features, while others seem to be stone sockets resulting from former field clearance, the furrows indicating that cultivation had formerly been attempted here. Some of the smaller features seem to have been deliberately cut, perhaps as postholes, and a small fragment of coarse pottery indicated that some of these may be archaeological in nature. However, no structure could be inferred from them.*

*An hourglass-shaped feature in the northeastern corner of the cutting proved to be some sort of grain dryer, the deeper, northern, chamber containing much charcoal, with the surrounding subsoil displaying signs of oxidation.*

*It seems, then, that the ditches are post-medieval field boundaries, possibly with a light structure, such as a shed or a byre, in the corner of one of these fields. The date of the oven/dryer is uncertain,*

*these simple structures being in use from the late medieval period onwards. Some of the smaller pits here may indicate that, earlier, possibly prehistoric, activity also took place here.*

## **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 114B that followed the recommendations of McConway and Dawkes (2005).

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 114B between 9 September and 4 October 2005 in advance of groundwork. Staff of ADS carried out archaeological work on behalf of the developers under the direction of Sinclair Turrell. This section of the project occurs in Plaster Townland, Ballymascanlan Parish, Co. Louth, Republic of Ireland. The site is at National Grid Reference 307027E, 311835N (centre point), Ordnance Datum (OD) of approximately 33.5m between road scheme chainage 12665 and 12707.

### **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)<sup>1</sup>. 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

The site was located to the west of Site 114A, situated on gently sloping ground at the foot of a south-facing slope, with pasture to the north. It was situated within an angle formed by Thistle Crossroads and had the N1 to the southeast and an unclassified road to the northeast. Beyond the unclassified road was a small valley with a stream running through it from northwest to southeast (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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) shows that there are nine known prehistoric and historic sites in a 1km radius of the site the area. These include the following sites listed by their RMP number, the Buckley and Sweetman reference number (1991), location and their description (Fig. 3).

<b>RMP:</b>	LH004-039 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: Survey No. 632)
<b>Townland:</b>	Faughart Upper
<b>Parish:</b>	Ballymascanlan
<b>Barony:</b>	Lower Dundalk
<b>County:</b>	Louth
<b>Country:</b>	Republic of Ireland
<b>NGR:</b>	306490E, 312230N
<b>Description:</b>	Ringfort situated beside a stream in a low-lying hollow. An artificially raised circular earth and stone platform (diam. 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 stonewall 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: 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: 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:** LH004-068 (01) (02) (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: (01) Survey No. 971; (02) 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. diam 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:** Aghaboy  
**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) Survey No. 826; (02) 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.
- RMP:** LH004-122 (Buckley and Sweetman 1991: Survey No. Not Listed)  
**Townland:** Aghaboys  
**Parish:** Ballymascanlan  
**Barony:** Lower Dundalk  
**County:** Louth  
**Country:** Republic of Ireland  
**NGR:** 307130E, 310650N  
**Description:** Enclosure (possible), no further information.

**Sites known from the current project.** Current work has identified ten 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, 2005). These are:

**Site 111.** is an extensive site, laying next to recorded monument (LH 004:041) a Megalithic Tomb (Figs 3 and 4). Site 111 was located on a south-southwest facing slope close to the top, of the slope. It was situated in the corner of a field immediately north of Aghnaskeagh road. Estimates are that about 60% of the site lay within the road take while 40% was outside. This 40% has been preserved in situ. A number of trees were growing on the site; these contribute to the heavy disturbance recorded during the excavation (Ronayne 2005a).

The road follows a natural route way through mountainous terrain that may have been in use from the prehistoric period. There are numerous monuments recorded near the route that date from the Neolithic period to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD.

A large spread of stones (30 by 25m), interpreted as a collapsed cairn, was identified. It lay to the immediate north of a beech-lined avenue and in the immediate vicinity of a recorded monument (LH

004-041), a 'megalithic structure'. The Louth Survey described the site' an unclassified 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'.

The site was known locally as a children's burial ground.

**Site 111A.** At Site 111A thirteen features of archaeological potential were uncovered. After investigation, none were thought to be archaeological as all features appeared to be formed as a result of root action, land clearance, drainage or agricultural activities. The excavated features are not of any archaeological significance, nor do they form part of a more extensive archaeological landscape (Ronayne 2005b).

**Site 112.** 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 (O Connor 2005).

**Site 113.** This site was identified as "an extensive spread of charcoal-enriched black silt and burnt stone." This measured up to 33m (north to south) and 15m (east to west) and was interpreted as "evidence for a large fulacht fiadh, or burnt mound with evidence for additional or satellite burnt mounds within Field 9" (Powell 2005).

Recent excavations have revealed that although burnt mound material was present at the site, along with associated pits and a possible well, only secondary traces of burnt mounds remained. This was probably due to later agricultural activity in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the ground was levelled, drained and ploughed. This probably occurred at a time when land pressure increased.

No troughs or hearths, feature types often associated with burnt mounds, were found during the course of the excavation, however a subcircular unlined well dug to a natural spring would attest to the possibility that the burnt mound material found on the site are the remains of fulacht fiadh. It is thought that the burnt mound material found at the site may be the truncated remains, with material

continuing under the western baulk towards the Ballymascanlan Stream, of three burnt mounds, probably dating to the Bronze Age.

It is hoped that charcoal samples taken from the burnt mound material will firmly establish the date of the archaeological activity found on the site.

**Site 114A.** The site was located on well-drained soil and situated on a small plateau on a gentle, east-facing slope of a low hill. The main features here were a cluster of three rectangular structures, together with a variety of pits and small miscellaneous features. The site had been disturbed by recent agricultural activity, mainly in the form of cultivation furrows (in Turrell 2005).

Structure 1, probably a dwelling house, was orientated east to west, measured 8 by 7m and was defined by two narrow slot trenches running parallel, some 6m apart, with three pairs of large, regularly spaced, external postholes. There were no slot trenches associated with the gable ends of this structure, that to the east being represented by a number of smaller postholes. The gable end was less well defined to the west but may have been represented by a line of stones. There were two large postholes in the interior aligned with the central pair of external posts and it may be that the structure was partitioned here. Two small postholes in the southwest corner of the structure may be doorjambs, showing that there was an entrance here. The slot trench was narrow and several stake holes were found within it, indicating that the walls were probably of wattle construction. The fill of the slot trench contained much charcoal and the sides of the trench appeared oxidised in places, suggesting that the structure may have been destroyed by fire. The southeast corner of this structure had been disturbed by the test trench and an engineering test pit had been cut into the centre of the structure.

Structure 2, also probably a house, was orientated north to south, measured 8.5 by 6.5m and was situated 3m north of Structure 1. It was defined on three sides by a slot trench, up to 0.6m wide, filled with a packing of redeposited natural subsoil and stones. Several depressions in base of the packing indicated the former presence of posts and it is likely that this structure had walls of upright planks. There was no slot trench on the northern side of the structure, which was defined by two large corner postholes and some smaller central ones. There were some postholes more or less orientated on the centre line of the structure, suggesting a row of supporting posts here. There was no evidence for an entrance but, since there is a continuous and well-defined slot trench on the other three sides, this is likely to have been to the north.

Structure 3, measuring 6 by 4m, was situated 1.5 west of Structure 1, on virtually the same alignment. It was defined on three sides by a slight slot trench with postholes in the corners. There appeared to be a central partition, represented by a posthole at the midpoint of the long side connected to another

post hole by a short length of perpendicular slot trench, with a further post hole an equal distance beyond this. There was no slot trench on the northern side of this structure. This structure, perhaps contemporary with Structure 1, may have been a shed or byre, with an internal partition dividing it into two stalls.

There was a group of pits to the west of these structures, including two circular pits with a charcoal-rich fill, which may have been cooking pits. Just north of these were two large, deep pits, with a homogenous silty fill, perhaps storage pits. There were a number of small pits, stake holes and short lengths of slot trench between structures 1 and 2, probably indicating some sort of domestic activity in this area. A third group of pits was situated to the south and south east of Structure 1. Some of these may relate to prehistoric activity, although others may be connected with modern cultivation.

There were a series of parallel cultivation furrows criss-crossing the site. The main band of furrows ran north to south, although east to west furrows were also noted. These furrows were quite variable in width and depth and this, together with the presence of some large boulders embedded in the subsoil, suggested lazy bed cultivation rather than ploughing. In addition to these furrows, the two sondages also contained several irregular, loamy spreads, the result of tree root activity.

Finds included several sherds of prehistoric pottery together with some flints flakes, including a possible thumbnail scraper, and the bulk of the features here are likely to be Neolithic in date. It is not possible at present to reconstruct the particular phases of activity, although it may be that structures 1 and 3, at least, are contemporary.

**Site 115.** Three cuttings were opened up in order to investigate features found during Phase 1 testing. The majority of these features were either modern or natural in origin. Two pits in Cutting C, to north of the site were, however, of archaeological interest, at least one of them being of probable prehistoric date (Turrell 2006a).

**Site 116.** This site is located on a small natural rise in the underlying bedrock, which slopes in all directions, but, more steeply to the west and northwest where a small stream is located at the base of a large slope. Site 117, originally identified during testing as a separate site, was eventually amalgamated into Site 116 when the extent of topsoil removal around Site 116 was increased and was, therefore, excavated as part of Site 116. Sites 118 and 119 were located to the west of Site 116; both were excavated (Dawkes and Bowen 2006).

It is probable, though not yet definite, that the site would have originally been a bi-vallate ringfort which was enlarged and altered over time. The first phase comprises of inner ditch (018) and outer

ditch **(430)** which were subsequently re-cut by ditches **(313)** and **(025)** respectively during the second phase. During the third phase the site was enlarged with two new ditches **(729)** and **(024)** forming a single large enclosure, although it is possible that the inner ditch **(313)** may have been extant in some form at this time. This larger enclosure was then altered with a large stone faced, rubble cored wall, **(2107)**, built upon the partially infilled ditch **(729)**. At this time the inner ditch was definitely infilled as a souterrain **(027)**, the entrance of which was built into wall **(2107)** was dug through both infilled ditches **(313)** and **(025)**.

The various phases on the site were formed by five individual enclosures, the smallest of which consisted of a small ditch **(018)** which encircled the top of the natural rise enclosing an oval shaped area with a maximum diameter of 29m north to south (incomplete). A small 5m wide entrance gap was excavated at the north, but no corresponding feature could be located to the south as this area of the site was beyond the limit of the excavation. This ditch had been allowed to silt up and was then re-cut [ditch **(313)**] with the inner edge being lined with stones to act as a revetment for a bank which ran along the inner edge of the ditch.

Enclosing the inner ditch and sited 5m from it was ditch **(430)**. This ditch enclosed an area approximately 40m in diameter and had been dug into the natural bedrock or subsoil to a depth of 1.4m and had a maximum width of 3m. There was no evidence for an entrance, although as this ditch extended beyond the limits of the CPO to the south it is likely to be sited there. The edges of this ditch were steeply sloped, almost vertical in places. On the western side the ditch appears to have filled more rapidly, possibly as a result of slippage of the accompanying bank which would have rested upon a much greater slope at this point. On the east side of the site this ditch was filled from its outer edge, the fills being a series of tip lines of re-deposited subsoils and gravels. These are most likely the result of the construction of another large ditch **(025)**, which for most of its length runs along the same line as ditch **(430)** (and cut into the fills of the earlier ditch **(430)**), except for the east side of the site. Rather than follow the line of the earlier ditch **(430)** the site was extended to the east by 5m with the excavated material from ditch **(025)** used to fill the still open ditch **(430)**.

Ditch **(025)** enclosed an area measuring 45m (east to west) in diameter and was up to 3m in width and a depth of 1.2m. There was no entrance evident in the ditch; however, the southern edge extended beyond the limits of the CPO. A small, probable iron smelting furnace was found dug into the basal fill of the ditch located on the southeast side of the site, while sometime after back filling there were several large pits, two souterrains and a well, all dug through the fills.

The final ditches, **(729)** and **(024)** enclosed an area measuring 55m across east to west, with an entrance located at the northwest and a second probable entrance at the southwest. These two ditches

formed a single enclosure. Ditch (729) was the larger of the two ditches, sited on the western edge of the site, measuring up to 2.5m in width and dug into the subsoil to a maximum depth of 1.3m. One definite terminal was found in the northwest, with a second in the southeast, although it is possible that this was due to a rise in the natural bedrock, which may have proved to difficult to dig through. The second ditch that formed this enclosing phase on the site, (024), was much smaller in size than ditch (729), with a maximum depth of .5m and a width of 1.2m. A single terminal was found at the northwest extent of this ditch forming a 5m wide entrance with the terminal of ditch (729), while the southeast extent of the ditch ran beyond the limits of the excavation.

The final enclosing feature on the site was a large, rubble cored, stone faced wall (2107) which was only extant on the western edge of the site, measuring 2.5m in width and surviving to a maximum of 4 courses. This had been built upon the fills of the partially infilled ditch (729). It began at the terminal of this ditch and ran from northwest, through to west and then beyond the limits of the excavation in the southwest. There was no trace of this wall found on the north or east of the site.

Built into this large stone bank was the entrance to an earth cut souterrain (027), with a second entrance located within the main portion of the site. This souterrain comprised a single stone lined passageway, which ran for 16m eastwards from the stone bank before turning sharply and running 15m southwards to the second entrance. There was no chamber within the souterrain. There were no capstones still *in situ* and only one possible capstone was discovered within the backfilled passageway. Resting on the floor of the souterrain was a large iron plough coulter and plough sock, while within the fills were several millstone fragments, a small clay crucible, several pins and a quantity of potsherds.

A total of 772 burials were excavated from the site, in addition to a large amount of disarticulated human remains. These appear to include all range groups, male and female, and a concentration of babies, which suggests that the site may have served as a cillin. A preliminary estimate breaks the burial down to 528 adults, 151 juveniles and 93 infants although this is likely to change once the consultant osteoarchaeologist examines the bones in post-excavation analysis. Of this the vast majority, 643 were in simple earth cut graves, 81 were in stone lined graves, 32 in long cists, a further 8 which re-used a already occupied cist and 8 which used a natural crevice in the bedrock. The burials were mainly concentrated at the northeast quadrant of the site, with others found sparsely across the rest of the site. In general, the burials were laid east to west but in some case they were north to south but this may have been due to space restrictions and the nature of the underlying bedrock preventing a true east to west burial.

Several initial radiocarbon dates have been obtained for a number of skeletons on the site. The earliest of these had a date range of AD 390 to 550 while the latest dated AD 790 to 1000. These suggest that the cemetery was very long lived, and as the skeletons appeared on site to post date the earlier enclosing phases it is possible that the original foundation may date to the Late Iron Age with settlement and occupation continuing into the early medieval period. However given that there is up to a 200 years date range for each skeleton then it is entirely possible that the cemetery could have had a much shorter life span.

The finds from the site ranged from numerous sherds of pottery, metal pins (iron and bronze/copper) blue glass beads, spindle whorls, bone combs and pins, iron knives, a lead ingot, several millstone fragments, a small clay crucible and iron slag.

**Site 117.** A subcircular pit F3/009 that measured 3m in diameter and was filled with charcoal-enriched silt F3/008, orange clay F3/007 and dark brown sandy silt F3/006.

**Site 118.** The site comprised of an area measuring 21m north to south by 18.30m east to west. The site was situated in a low-lying area at the bottom of a large slope, which lies further to the north. Therefore, the site was very water logged. The area of archaeological interest was located at the north end of the site. Three field boundaries or ditches and two pits were found. None of the features could be deemed definitely archaeological. They all appear to be post medieval/modern constructions. Sherds of post medieval pottery were found in the upper fills of two of the field boundaries/ditches (Bowen 2006).

The lack of artefacts retrieved from the site hinders close preliminary dating of the features investigated. The three ditches or field boundaries are not stratigraphically linked. The two pits are discreet features from each other but there is a stratigraphic link between the pits and two of the ditches. One pit cuts one of the ditches and the other pit is cut by the north most ditch.

All the features on this site appear to be because of agricultural practices possibly associated with the nearby old farmhouse.

**Site 120.** Site 120 was discovered during the test excavations, which revealed two features along the northern limits of Area 13 that required further investigation (McConway and Dawkes 2005a). Excavations revealed approximately 320 features, including 26 agricultural furrows and 19 post-medieval or modern pits. Many of the features found to be archaeological were visible as obvious charcoal rich deposits, although the majority were only discovered after site, which extended over an area measuring 150m N-S by 60m E-W, was manually cleaned back. It would appear that the vast



majority of the features have been truncated by later agricultural activity on the site. The southern portion of the site was excavated in an area not tested in Phase 1 due to problems with access (O Connor 2007, in prep.).

Preliminary findings from the site indicate prehistoric activity on the site. The discovery of cremations and large charcoal rich pits suggest a possible mortuary site. One definite structure and portions of two possible structures may indicate an earlier habitation site, although the features may be of a similar date; a secure chronology of the site will not be possible until post-excavation analysis of finds and samples has been undertaken.

**Site 121.** The features here seem to relate to modern agricultural activity with field clearance before cultivation. Two pits and two possible oven/dryers were of uncertain date but C<sup>14</sup> dating of charcoal samples taken from them should resolve this question (Turrell 2000b).

## **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 13 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 13, at Plaster townland, between road scheme chainages 12150 – 12800. Cia McConway and Giles Dawkes carried out the testing under project sub number A002/004 in November 2004 (McConway and Dawkes 2005).

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 100 by 40m 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 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 instance, 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***

The director (Sinclair Turrell) would like to acknowledge site supervisor Rupert Flood and site assistants Warren Baillie, Peadar Quine, Vinnie O' Hora, Andrew Smith, Michael Seiler and Claire Nugent.

### 3 Excavation Records-Phase 2

Testing in Area 13 was carried out under number A002. Two areas of archaeological potential were identified. At this location, the test excavations revealed five features that required further investigation (McConway and Dawkes 2005). In the first area, later Site 114A, feature 7/001, consisted of a series of small patches of charcoal-rich black silts. Northeast of this (later Site 114B) were a further four archaeological deposits. F7/006 was rectangular, 0.5m by 0.3m, truncated by the northern baulk and filled by a light grey/brown silty clay with charcoal flecks (F7/002). This appeared to cut F7/004, an irregular spread of dark grey/brown silty clay, measuring 0.6m by 0.3m. Situated 2.8m northeast of these was F7/005, irregular in plan, 0.45 by 0.3m and filled by a dark grey/brown, silty clay with charcoal flecks (F7/003). Situated 1.5m southeast of this feature was F7/008, subrectangular in plan, 0.75 by 0.35m and filled by a charcoal-rich, brown silt (F7/008).

#### 3.1 Results of the excavation

##### 3.1.1. Introduction

At the time of excavation the site, measuring 20 by 20m, had been stripped of all of the stony silty loam topsoil (**001**), which was up to 0.4m thick. The subsoil consisted of very stony orange-brown sandy silt subsoil, which contained patches of extremely compact, light yellow marl (**002**). The line of the original test trench could be seen bisecting the site diagonally from northwest to southeast, sometimes cutting into the subsoil. The site was cleaned back by hand and the features excavated. Later the site was extended by 20 by 10m to the west and 20 by 5m to the south in order to investigate features here (Fig 5).

##### 3.1.2. Ditches

The most prominent feature after the cleaning of the site was a linear feature running east to west along the southern edge of the site (Fig. 5). Near the southwest corner of the site was another linear feature, perpendicular to the first. The site was subsequently extended to the west and the south in order to investigate these features more fully. Excavation showed these features to be three conjoined ditches, probably serving as drains and field boundaries.

The easternmost ditch was 17m long, up to 0.6m wide and 0.34m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat base, truncated to the east by the site boundary (**004**) (Plate 1). The two sections excavated through the ditch revealed two fills. The lower fill was a dark orangey brown, stony, sandy, silty clay loam, up to 0.18m thick, with occasional charcoal flecks (**011**)/(**039**). Above this was a dark brown silty clay loam, up to 0.25m thick, containing animal bone and shell, as well as a modern knife blade (**003**)/(**038**).

The ditch was slightly cut at its western terminal by another ditch running southwards at right angles to it. This ditch was 8m long, 1.2m wide and 0.25m deep, truncated by the southern limit of excavation. It had sloping sides and a sloped, slightly concave base **(063)**. The single fill was slightly sandy, brown clayey silt **(061)**. Some post-medieval pottery was found in this fill.

The line of Ditch 004 was continued westwards by Ditch **(055)**. This was 22m long, 1.1m wide and up to 0.36m deep with sloping sides and a sloped, concave base. Where it was sectioned there was a 0.12m thick, charcoal-rich, burnt deposit at its base, composed of grey, ashy clayey silt **(062)**. Above this was a grey-brown, silty clay, with occasional stones and charcoal flecks, up to 0.35m thick **(054)**. This fill also contained some post-medieval pottery, together with a fragment of flint.

There was what appeared to be a pit at the junction of the three ditches, cut by **(055)** and **(061)**. This was rounded in plan, 1.1 by 1.1m and 0.3m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat base **(067)**, filled by an orangey-brown sandy silt **(066)**.

### **3.1.3. Plough furrows**

A number of plough furrows ran across site, the most prominent of these in the western extension (Fig. 5). Several more fragments of furrow were found towards the north of the site but these were much smaller and less distinct.

The two furrows in the western extension ran east to west, parallel to Ditch 055, situated around 1.5m apart. The northernmost was 16.53m long, 0.5m wide and 0.19m deep, with sloping sides and an uneven base **(050)**, filled by brown, silty clay loam **(051)**. To the south, **(052)** was 10.38m long, 0.98m wide and 0.05m deep, with shallow sides and a flat base, also filled by a brown, silty clay loam **(053)**.

Towards the north of the site, **(008)** was orientated north to south, 1.5m long, 0.35m wide and 0.08m deep with a flat, rounded profile, filled by a loose, brown, loamy silt **(007)**. South of this, perhaps a continuation, **(030)** was oval in plan, 0.42 by 0.3m and 0.05m deep, with shallow sides and a flat base. The fill was dark brown sandy silt in which two pieces of metal were found **(029)**. Finally, **(046)** was oval in plan, 0.8 by 0.6m and 0.25m deep, with a shallow profile and filled by a stony, orange brown silty loam **(045)**.

#### **3.1.4. Possible structure**

Along the southern edge of the site, there were two narrow linear features at right angles to each other, one cut through a stony spread (Fig. 5). These may have represented the foundation trenches of a small structure. In order to better investigate this area the site was extended to the south.

Feature **(006)** was orientated more or less east to west and was 7m long, 0.6m wide and 0.25m deep, truncated to the east by a test trench and the site limit. The sides were gently sloped and the base was flat, becoming shallower towards the east. It was filled by loose, orange-brown sandy silt, containing a moderate amount of small stones **(005)**. Some animal bone and a fragment of flint were found in this deposit. It was partly cut through a compact orange-brown/brown loam, densely packed with stones **(024)/(041)/(049)** and containing some modern pottery, together with animal bone, a flint and some possibly prehistoric pottery. This layer was somewhat variable in colour, being lighter towards the base, but was essentially one deposit. The stony layer filled a linear depression, 10m long, up to 2.5m wide and 0.37m deep, truncated to the east by the limit of the excavation **(040)/(042)**. It was not clear whether this represented a deliberate cut or a natural gully. Whatever the case, it appears to have been deliberately infilled with stones.

At the western end of the linear feature **(006)** was another similar feature, perpendicular to the first, orientated north to south. This was 5m long, 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep, with steep sides and a narrow, rounded base, truncated to the south by the limit of the site **(065)**. It was filled by loose, dark brown silty clay loam, containing frequent stones **(058)**. Finally, there was a small spread of charcoal-rich, dark brown silty clay **(057)** within a shallow, sub rectangular cut, 0.5 by 0.3m and 0.13m deep **(068)**, to the east of the area bounded by the two trenches. .

It is not clear what these features represent. They may be the foundation trenches for a small rectangular structure, the return of the trench to the east being beyond the limit of the site or perhaps having been removed by the test trench, which was cut deeply into the subsoil at this point. Although no dating material was obtained from these features, they have a loose, loamy fill and are cut through a stony layer that contained, amongst other finds, a sherd of modern pottery. They therefore seem to be modern in date and to have no connection with the rectangular Neolithic houses on Site 114B, a short distance to the west.

#### **3.1.5. Pits and postholes**

A number of small pits or possible postholes were noted, concentrated mainly in the centre and northeastern corner of the site (Fig. 5). Pit **(015)** was oval in plan, 0.8 by 0.6m and 0.27m deep, one side steeply sloped, the other sloping gently down to form the base. It was filled with compact,



yellow-brown sandy silt, containing a moderate amount of stones **(016)**. Within this was a U-shaped deposit of compact dark brown loam, 0.35 by 0.3m and 0.19m thick **(014)** (Plate 2). This feature may be a posthole. North of this, **(013)** was oval, 0.35 by 0.4m and just 0.04m deep, with steep sides and a flattish, uneven base, which displayed signs of burning. It was filled by loose, dark brown/black humic loam, containing some small pieces of charcoal **(012)** (Plate 3).

To the west of this was a group of three closely spaced features (Fig. 5). Pit **(034)** was subrectangular in plan, 0.4 by 0.23m and 0.09m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. It was filled by greyish-brown silt, with a few charcoal flecks **(033)**. Immediately west of this was a larger, kidney-shaped feature **(032)**, 1.24 by 1.04m and 0.28m deep. It had sloped sides, a slightly concave base and was filled by greyish-brown silt with occasional charcoal flecks and some coal fragments **(031)** (Plate 4). This deposit contained many stones, some of them quite large. Finally, just west of this was sub circular feature, 0.4m in diameter and 0.27m deep with sloped sides and a rounded base **(019)**. It was filled by moderately compact, stony, slightly sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks **(018)** (Plate 5). Within this on the western side was a small, U-shaped deposit, 0.16m by 0.24m and 0.1m thick, composed of charcoal-rich, dark brown silt **(017)**. This feature may be a posthole.

Although these five features form a right-angled alignment they are probably not connected and no particular structure or activity could be inferred from them.

### **3.1.6. Keyhole kiln**

This feature was located in the northeastern corner of the site (Fig. 5). It was figure-of-eight-shaped in plan, formed of two conjoined chambers. The length was 2.6m in length and it was orientated north to south. The sides were steep sides while the base was rounded to the north, sloping gradually upwards to the south. The northern component was 0.75m wide and 0.56m deep, while the smaller southern part was 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep. The 'waist' of the feature was 0.45m wide **(028)**. The subsoil into which the northern chamber had been cut was heavily oxidised. The lowest fill was very charcoal-rich, compact black-grey silt, 0.13m thick in the northern chamber and 0.05m thick to the south **(027)**. Above this was a 0.15m thick, orange-brown silty loam **(026)**. The uppermost fill was brown silt, 0.35m thick, containing frequent stones **(025)**. Some of these stones were quite large, up to 0.40m in diameter and concentrated in the northern chamber, where they were densely packed (Fig. 6; Plate 6)

This feature appears to be a keyhole kiln, probably used for drying grain, with the northern chamber acting as the fire pit. These kilns normally had a stone-lined flue but it is not clear whether the large stones were originally part of the structure or have simply been used to fill the pit in.

### **3.1.7. Natural depressions**

A number of features consisted of no more than shallow spreads of, sometimes stony, topsoil (Fig. 5). These features may simply be natural depressions in the subsoil or may possibly have been caused by agriculture. They were (cut-fill) (010)-(009), (020)-(021), (035)-(036), (037) and (043)-(044). These are not described here but details can be found in Appendix I.

### **3.2 Summary**

Most of the features here seem to relate to modern agricultural activity with a T-shaped series of ditches dividing the area up into three fields. Two of the fields had been ploughed in the past while the corner of the third contained what appeared to be a light structure, perhaps a shed or byre. In the northeast corner of site was a keyhole kiln, probably used for drying grain. Two of a number of small pits investigated may have been postholes; one of these contained a small fragment of possibly prehistoric pottery.

#### **4 Discussion and Conclusion**

Keyhole kilns were used for the drying of grain, in order to reduce its moisture content and facilitate milling. This process was particularly necessary for oats, the husks of which were otherwise difficult to remove. They were in use from the late medieval period and, in the west of Ireland, continued in use up to the early twentieth century. This type of kiln began to be replaced by more advanced types from the 1760's onwards (Rynne 2006, 198). A keyhole kiln of comparable size was also found on Site 121.

Although this site was some 40m from the Neolithic Site 114A, with the possible exception of a posthole, no structures were found here which could be definitely ascribed to this period. A few pieces of flint were found in some features but along with modern finds. It may be, therefore, that these flint pieces were mixed in with topsoil and later incorporated into the fill of these features. With the excavation of this site all archaeological questions may be considered resolved.

## **5 Recommendations**

### **5.1 Finds**

Four flint pieces and a sherd of possibly prehistoric pottery were recovered from the excavations. All other finds, including metal and pottery were post-medieval in date (Appendix II). The possible prehistoric material will be analysed by the appropriate specialist. Should additional artefacts be recovered from the processed samples they will be analysed by the appropriate specialists.

### **5.2 Samples**

#### ***5.2.1 Macrobotanical analysis***

The single best source of evidence for answering economic questions related to subsistence, fuel use and material culture is macrobotanical, that is, materials that can be seen with the naked eye. Such materials can be quantified and ultimately compared with faunal and other tangible aspects of an archaeological assemblage including information recovered through pollen and other microbotanical analyses. Burned macrobotanical materials are best recovered through flotation of a soils sample. In the case where unburnt materials are suspected in the sample, they can be picked from the overall sample before flotation. If the intent is for the recovered remains to be used for radiocarbon analysis then all botanical materials recovered from the samples should undergo species identification before such analysis.

#### ***5.2.2 Microbotanical analyses: pollen and phytolith***

Several types of analyses of samples that are botanic in origin can yield information that is important to the understanding or confirmation of the function of a site or its features. At this site, materials for analyses can be recovered as sub samples from the bulk soil samples.

The site director has selected one sample for microbotanical analyses (Appendix III, Samples 7 and 8) This is a sample of the charcoal from the keyhole-shaped kiln. If carbonised grain could be obtained from this sample, it would confirm that this feature functioned as a grain dryer and also indicate the particular grain involved.

#### ***5.2.3 Radiocarbon analysis***

The site director does not propose that any samples be radiocarbon dated. No prehistoric structures were identified here and dating of individual features is not considered worthwhile.

## 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

<b>Form</b>	<b>Number (after voids)</b>
Context Sheets	62
Photographs (Rolls)	3
Sections and Plans	Sections: 31. Plans: 2
Finds	15
Samples	11

#### **6.1.1 Context sheets**

Sixty-two context sheets are archived at the ADS Dublin facility.

#### **6.1.2 Miscellaneous written records**

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

#### **6.1.3 Drawings**

Two plans, pre-excavation and post-excavation. Thirty one section drawings.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I Context log

Ctx	Type	Grid E/N	Description/Finds	L x W x D (m.)	Fill of	Filled by	Interp.
001	Dep	All	Loose, brown silty loam, occ. charcoal flecks, freq. large stones	Max . 0.40m deep			Topsoil
002	Dep	All	Compact orange-brown, sandy silt with patches of compact, light yellow marl, freq. grit and gravel with med. stony patches.				Natural subsoil
003	Dep	100/100	Mod. compact dark brown silty clay loam, occ. small stones. Bone, shell, metal.	0.80 x 1.60 x 0.16	004		Upper fill of ditch (same as 038)
004	Cut	100/100	Linear, gradual sloping sides with a flat base.	17 x 1.7 x 0.6		003/011/038/039	E-W aligned ditch
005	Dep	100/90	Friable, orangish brown, sandy silt, occ. small stones. Bone/lithics.	6.95 x 0.50 x 0.25	006		Fill of possible construction trench
006	Cut	100/90	Linear, gradual sloping sides with a flat base.	7.00 x 0.60 x 0.25		005	Possible construction trench
007	Dep	110/115	Loose, brown, loamy silt, mod. small stones and occ. flecks of charcoal.	1.50 x 0.35 x 0.08	008		Fill of plough furrow
008	Cut	110/115	Sub-rectangular, gentle sloping sides that gradually taper to a rounded base.	1.50 x 0.35 x 0.08		007	Plough furrow
009	Dep	110/110	Friable, dark brown sandy silt, occ. large stones, mod. charcoal pieces. Metal.	2.00 x 0.85 x 0.23	010		Fill of pit or a natural depression?
010	Cut	110/110	Sub-oval, gentle sloping sides, concave base.	2.00 x 0.85 x 0.23		009	Field clearance of large stones?
011	Dep	100/100	Mod. compact, dark-brown, silty clay loam, freq. small stones, occ. flecks of charcoal. Lithics.	0.55 x 0.17 x 0.10	004		Basal fill of ditch, same as 039.
012	Dep	100/110	Loose, dark brown silty loam, occ. charcoal flecks and pieces.	0.35 x 0.30 x 0.04	013		Fill of pit
013	Cut	100/110	Oval, gradual sloping sides with an uneven burnt base.	0.35 x 0.30 x 0.04		012	Small pit

Ctx	Type	Grid E/N	Description/Finds	L x W x D (m.)	Fill of	Filled by	Interp.
014	Dep	110/100	Compact, dark-brown, silty loam, freq. small rounded stones, mod. flecks of charcoal.	0.30 x 0.35 x 0.19	015		Fill of possible posthole
015	Cut	110/100	Oval, sharp sloping sides, but with a gradual sloping base from the W-E.	0.80 x 0.60 x 0.27		014/016	Possible posthole
016	Dep	110/100	Compact, yellowish brown, sandy silt, mod. rounded stones, occ. flecks of charcoal.	0.80 x 0.60 x 0.27	015		Possible posthole packaging.
017	Dep	110/110	Mod., dark-brown, silt, freq. flecks of charcoal, occ. pebbles.	0.24 x 0.16 x 0.10	019		Charcoal rich fill of posthole.
018	Dep	110/110	Mod., brown, silt, occ. flecks of charcoal, freq. stones. (East side may contain re-deposited natural). Prehistoric Pottery.	0.44 x 0.39 x 0.24	019		Basal fill of posthole.
019	Cut	110/110	Sub-circular, sharp break of slopes, with gradual sloping sides, concave base.	0.44 x 0.40 x 0.27		017/018	Posthole.
020	Cut	100/110	Circular, gradual sloped sides, with gradual sloping sides, with a flat base.	0.80 x 0.51 x 0.08		021	Natural depression.
021	Dep	100/110	Compact, brown, clayey silt, freq. stones, occ. flecks of charcoal.	0.80 x 0.51 x 0.08	020		Natural deposit
022			Not recorded-modern topsoil.				
023			Not recorded-modern topsoil.				
024	Dep	110/90	Friable, orangish brown, sandy silt, occ. small stones. Lithics.	1.70 x 5.00 x 0.37	040/042		Fill of ditch (same as 041).
025	Dep	110/115	Compact, brown, silt, freq. large boulders (0.10m-0.35m).	2.15 x 0.70 x 0.35	028		Fill of kiln/dryer.
026	Dep	110/115	Friable, orangish brown, silty loam, occ. large stones.	1.75 x 2.21 x 0.31	028		Fill of kiln/dryer.
027	Dep	110/115	Compact, grey, silt, freq. flecks of charcoal.	2.07 x 1.86 x 0.19	028		Fill of kiln/dryer.
028	Cut	110/115	Sub-rectangular, sharp vertical sides with a gradual break of slope to an uneven base.	2.60 x 0.75 x 0.56		025/026/027	Possible kiln/dryer.

Ctx	Type	Grid E/N	Description/Finds	L x W x D (m.)	Fill of	Filled by	Interp.
029	Dep	110/110	Compact, dark brown, silty sand, freq. stones, occ. pieces of charcoal. Metal.	0.42 x 0.30 x 0.05	030		Fill of plough furrow
030	Cut	110/110	Oval, gradual sloping sides with a flat base.	0.42 x 0.30 x 0.05		029	Plough furrow
031	Dep	110/110	Mod., greyish-brown, silt, freq. boulders, occ. flecks of charcoal	1.25 x 1.04 x 0.25	032		Fill of pit.
032	Cut	110/110	Sub-circular, gradual break of slope, with a concave base.	1.24 x 1.04 x 0.28		031	Pit.
033	Dep.	110/110	Mod., greyish brown, silt, occ. charcoal flecks and mod. small stones.	0.24 x 0.23 x 0.06	034		Fill of pit.
034	Cut	110/110	Sub-rectangular, gradual sloping sides, with a concave base.	0.48 x 0.23 x 0.09		033	N-S orientated pit.
035	Cut	100/110	Irregular U-shaped, gradual sloping sides with an uneven base.	1.95 x 1.00 x 0.12		036/037	Possible pit.
036	Dep	100/110	Mod. compact, brown, silt, freq. stones, occ. flecks of charcoal.	1.95 x 0.80 x 0.12	035		Fill of pit.
037	Dep	100/110	Mod. compact, light brown, loam, occ. small stones, occ. flecks of charcoal.	1.95 x 0.80 x 0.09	035		Fill of pit.
038	Dep	100/100	Mod. compact, dark brown, silty clay loam, occ. small stones. Animal teeth/ bone.	1.40 x 0.17 x 0.25	004		Fill of ditch (same as 003).
039	Dep	100/100	Compact, orangish brown, sandy clay, occ. small stones.	0.55 x 0.17 x 0.10	004		Basal fill of ditch (same as 011).
040	Cut	110/90	Curvi-linear, gradual slope with vertical sides that break to a gradual flat uneven base.	10.00 x 2.5 x 0.37		024/041/049	Ditch (same as 042).
041	Dep	110/90	Mod. compact, orangish-brown, silty clay loam, freq. large stones (0.08m-0.40m). Pottery.	1.70 x 5.00 x 0.37	040/042		Fill of ditch (same as 024).
042	Cut	110/90	Curvi-linear, gradual slope with vertical sides that break to a gradual flat uneven base.	10.00 x 5.00 x 0.37		024/041/049	Ditch (same as 040).
043	Dep	100/100	Compact, brown, clayey silt, freq. large stones.	1.60 x 0.70 x 0.30	044		Fill of natural depression.

Ctx	Type	Grid E/N	Description/Finds	L x W x D (m.)	Fill of	Filled by	Interp.
044	Cut	100/100	Sub-rectangular, gradual sloping sides, with a concave base.	1.15 x 0.90 x 0.29		043	NW-SE Natural depression.
045	Dep	100/110	Compact orange-brown, silty loam with freq. large stones.	0.80 x 0.60 x 0.14	046		Fill of plough furrow.
046	Cut	100/110	Irregular, steep sloping sides with an uneven base.	0.80 x 0.60 x 0.25		045	Plough furrow.
047			Not recorded-topsoil.				
048			Not recorded-topsoil				
049	Dep	110/90	Mod. compact, orange-brown, clay, sterile deposit. Pottery.	10.00 x 5.00 x 0.40	040/ 042		Variation in the natural. (variation of 024).
050	Cut	80/90	Linear, steep sides with a flat base.	16.53 x 0.5 x 0.19		051	Plough furrow.
051	Dep	80/90	Friable, brown, silty clay loam, freq. large sized stones at the base.	16.53 x 0.65 x 0.19	050		Fill of plough furrow.
052	Cut	90/90	Linear, gradual sloping sides with a flat base.	10.38 x 0.98 x 0.05		053	Plough furrow.
053	Dep	90/90	Friable, brown, silty clay loam.	10.38 x 0.98 x 0.05	052		Fill of plough furrow.
054	Dep	80/90	Mod. compact, grey brown, silty clay, mod. small stones, occ. flecks of charcoal. Pottery/ lithics.	22.00 x 0.97 x 0.36	055		Fill of ditch.
055	Cut	80/90	Linear, gradual sloping sides with a concave base.	22.00 x 1.10 x 0.36		054/062	Ditch
056			Not recorded-modern topsoil.				
057	Dep	110/90	Mod. compact, dark brown, silty clay, mod. flecks of charcoal.	0.50 x 0.30 x 0.13	068		Charcoal spread.
058	Dep	100/90	Friable, dark brown, silty clay loam, mod. large stones.	5.00 x 0.40 x 0.30	065		Fill of poss. construction trench
059			Not recorded-animal burrow.				
060			Not recorded-animal burrow.				
061	Dep	100/90	Mod. compact, brown, clayey silt with small sand particles, occ. small rounded stones, occ. flecks of charcoal. Pottery.	8.00 x 1.20 x 0.25	063		Fill of possible boundary ditch.
062	Dep	80/90	Mod. compact, grey, ashy clayey silt, freq. flecks of charcoal.	1.00 x 0.49 x 0.12	055		Fill of ditch.

Ctx	Type	Grid E/N	Description/Finds	L x W x D (m.)	Fill of	Filled by	Interp.
063	Cut	100/90	Linear, sharp break of slope at top with gradual sloping sides and a concave base.	8.00 x 1.20 x 0.25		061	NNW-SSE Boundary ditch.
064			Not recorded				
065	Cut	100/90	Curvi-linear, sharp break of slope with vertical sides that break to a gradual uneven base.	5.00 x 0.40 x 0.30		058	Possible construction trench.
066	Dep	100/100	Compact, orange brown, sandy clay, mod. stones.	1.10 x 1.10 x 0.30	067		Fill of pit.
067	Cut	100/100	Sub-rectangular, gradual sloping sides, with a flat base.	1.10 x 1.10 x 0.30		066	Pit.
068	Cut	110/90	Sub-rectangular, gradual sloping sides, with a flat base.	0.50 x 0.30 x 0.13		057	Pit.

**Appendix II Finds list**

<b>No</b>	<b>Ctxt</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	024	Flint fragment
2	009	Metal - poss. knife
3		Void
4	005	Animal bone
5	005	Flint fragment
6	018	Pottery - poss. prehistoric
7	029	2 pieces metal
8	031	Coal fragments
9		Void
10		Void
11		Site A
12		Site A
13	054	Stoneware
14	054	Flint fragment
15	003/038	Animal bone
16	003	Metal - knife blade
17	011	Flint fragment
18		Site A
19		Site A
20		Site A
21	061	Pottery - post-med
22	024	Pottery - blackware
23	024	Pottery - poss. prehistoric

**Appendix III Sample list**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Cntxt</b>	<b>Cut</b>	<b>Bags</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1	012	013	1	Soil charcoal sample
2	017	019	1	Soil charcoal sample
3	014	015	2	Soil charcoal sample
4	016	015	1	Soil charcoal sample
5	029	030	1	Soil charcoal sample
6	005	006	1	Soil charcoal sample
7	027	028	1	Soil charcoal sample
8	027	028	1	Soil charcoal sample
9				
10				
11	062	055	1	Soil charcoal sample
12	003	004	1	Soil and shell sample
13				
14	057	068	2	Soil charcoal sample

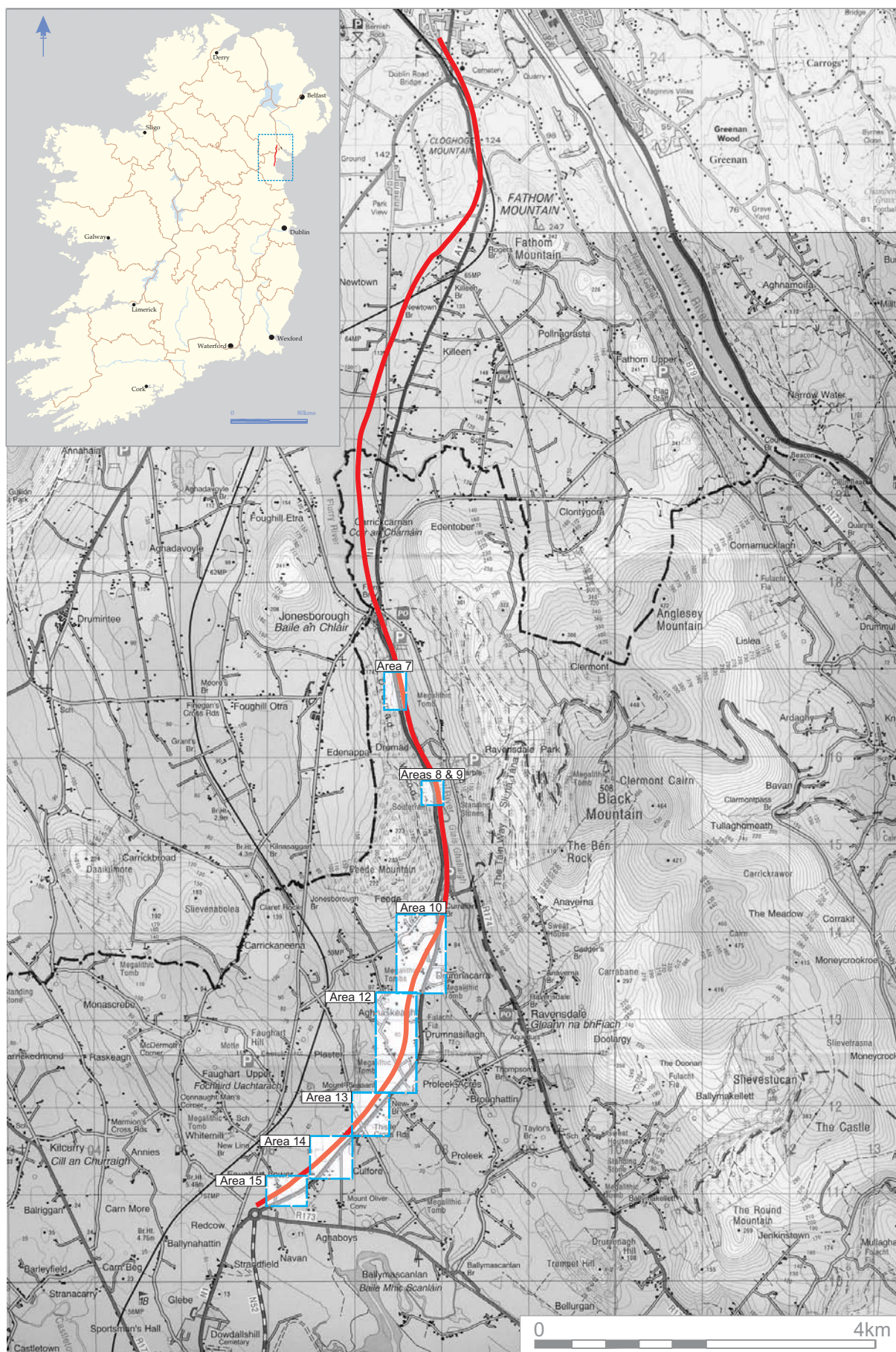
## Appendix IV Photographic log

Colour Print 3		
No.	Description	Plan (Section) no.
1	Film ID	
2	Pre-ex, (004), (003), (011), grid 100/100 (west)	1
3	Pre-ex, (013), (012), grid 100/110 (northeast)	1
4	Pre-ex, (019), (017), (018), grid 110/110 (south)	1
5	Post-ex, (013), grid 100/110 (north)	3
6	Mid-ex, (015), (014), (016), grid 110/100 (north)	1
7	Pre-ex, (021), (020), grid 100/110 (southwest)	1
8	Pre-ex, (021), (020), grid 100/110 (southwest)	1
9	North facing sect. of (015), (014), (016), grid 100/100	(8)
10	Possible stakehole <i>in situ</i> at the base of (028), grid 110/115	(9)
11	East facing sect. of (030), (029), 110/110	(10)
12	SW facing sect. of (028), (025)-(027), grid 110/215	(9)
13	SW facing sect. of (028), (025)-(027), grid 110/215	(9)
14	South facing sect. of (032), (031), (034), (033), grid 110/110	(11)
15	Void	
16	Void	
17	Void	
18	Void	
19	Void	
20	Void	
21	Void	
22	Void	
23	Void	
24	Void	
25	Void	
26	Void	
27	Void	
28	Void	
29	Void	
30	Void	
31	Void	
32	Void	
33	Void	
34	Void	
Colour Print 4		
No.	Description	Plan (Section) no.
1	W/SW facing sect. of (028), (025)-(027), grid 110/215 (northern half)	(9)
2	W/SW facing sect. of (028), (025)-(027), grid 110/215 (southern half)	(9)
3	Detail of northern half of (028), grid 110/215	(9)
4	Detail of floor in the northern half of (028), grid 110/215	(9)
5	Detail of southern half of (028), grid 110/215	(9)
6	Overall shot of (028), grid 110/215	1
7	West facing sect. of (004), (038), (039), grid 100/100	(12)
8	S/SE facing sect. (040/042), (041), grid 110/90 (test trench to the west)	(15)



9	South facing sect. of (035), (036), (037), grid 100/110	(13)
10	W/SW facing sect. of (040), (024), grid 110/90	(14)
11	SW facing sect. of (044), (043), grid 100/100	(16)
12	W/SW facing sect. of (046), (045), grid 100/110	(17)
13	Void	
14	Void	
15	Void	
16	Void	
17	Void	
18	Void	
19	Void	
20	Void	
21	Void	
22	Post-ex. of (028), (025), (026), (027), grid 110/115	1 (9)
23	Post-ex. of (028), (025), (026), (027), grid 110/115	1 (9)
24	Not recorded-topsoil (SW facing sect. of (047))	1 (9)
25	East facing sect. (040/042), (049), (041), grid 110/90 (southern half)	(15)
26	East facing sect. of (004), (003), (011), grid 100/100 (northern half)	1
27	Shot of southern half of site (west)	
28	Shot of southern half of site (west)	
29	Pre-ex, (west extension)	1
30	Pre-ex, (north) taken from cherry picker	
31	Pre-ex, (north) taken from cherry picker	
32	Pre-ex, (north) taken from cherry picker	
33	Pre-ex, (north) taken from cherry picker	
34	Pre-ex, (north) taken from cherry picker	
35	Pre-ex, (north) taken from cherry picker	
36	Pre-ex, (north) taken from cherry picker	
37	Pre-ex, (north) taken from cherry picker	
<b>Colour Print 5</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Plan (Section) no.</b>
1	Pre-ex, west extension, (north) taken from cherry picker	
2	114A	
3	114A	
4	114A	
5	Ditch (055), (054) (west)	1 (24/29)
6	Plough furrow, (050), (051), grid 80/90 (west)	(21)
7	Plough furrow, (050), (051), grid 80/90 (west)	(21)
8	Plough furrow, (052), (053), grid 90/90 (west)	(22)
9	Film ID	
10	114A	
11	114A	
12	114A	
13	Pre-ex of south extension (south)	
14	114A	
15	114A	
16	114A	
17	114A	
18	SSE facing sect. (063), (061), grid 100/90	(26)

19	SSE facing sect. (063), (061), grid 100/90	(26)
20	114A	
21	Mid-ex of (063)-grid 100/90, (055)-grid 80/90, (004)-grid 100/100, looking NW.	
22	Mid-ex of (063)-grid 100/90, (055)-grid 80/90, (004)-grid 100/100, looking NE.	
23	114A	
24	114A	
25	East facing sect. (055), (054), (062), grid 80/90	(24/29)
26	114A	
27	114A	
28	North facing sect. of (065), (058), grid 100/90	(28)
29	114A	(18)
30	114A	
31	114A	(17)
32	North facing sect. of (063), (061), (066), (055), (054), grid 80/90	(24/29)
33	East facing sect. (006), (005)-furrow, (042), (024)-ditch, grid 110/90	(19/30), (19/15)
34	114A	
35	South facing sect. of (068), (057), grid 100/90	(31)
36	114A	
37	114A	



**Fig. 1** Location plan for A1/N1.



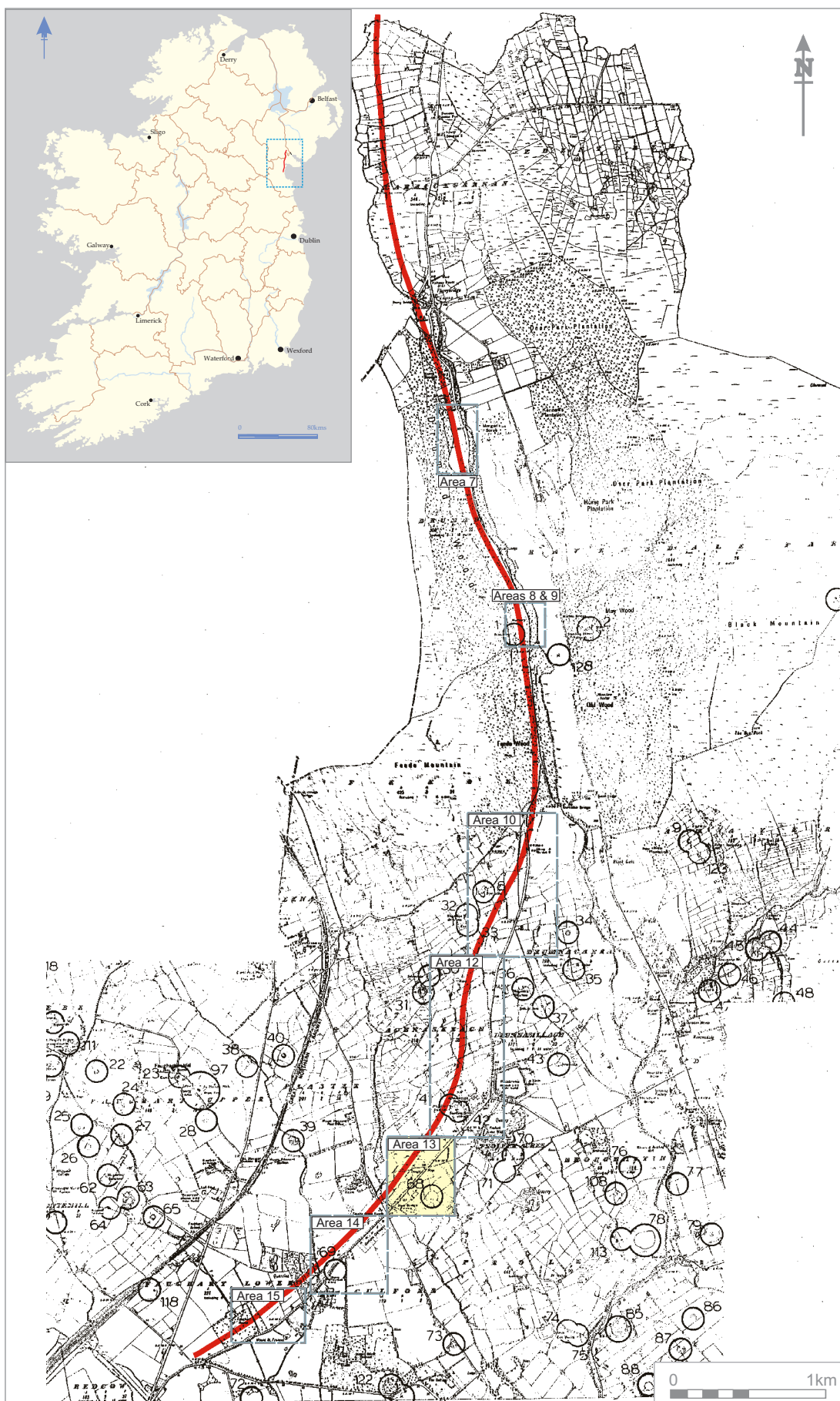


Fig. 2 Extract from RMP Maps of Louth, Sheets 1 & 4. A1/N1 in red. Scale as indicated.

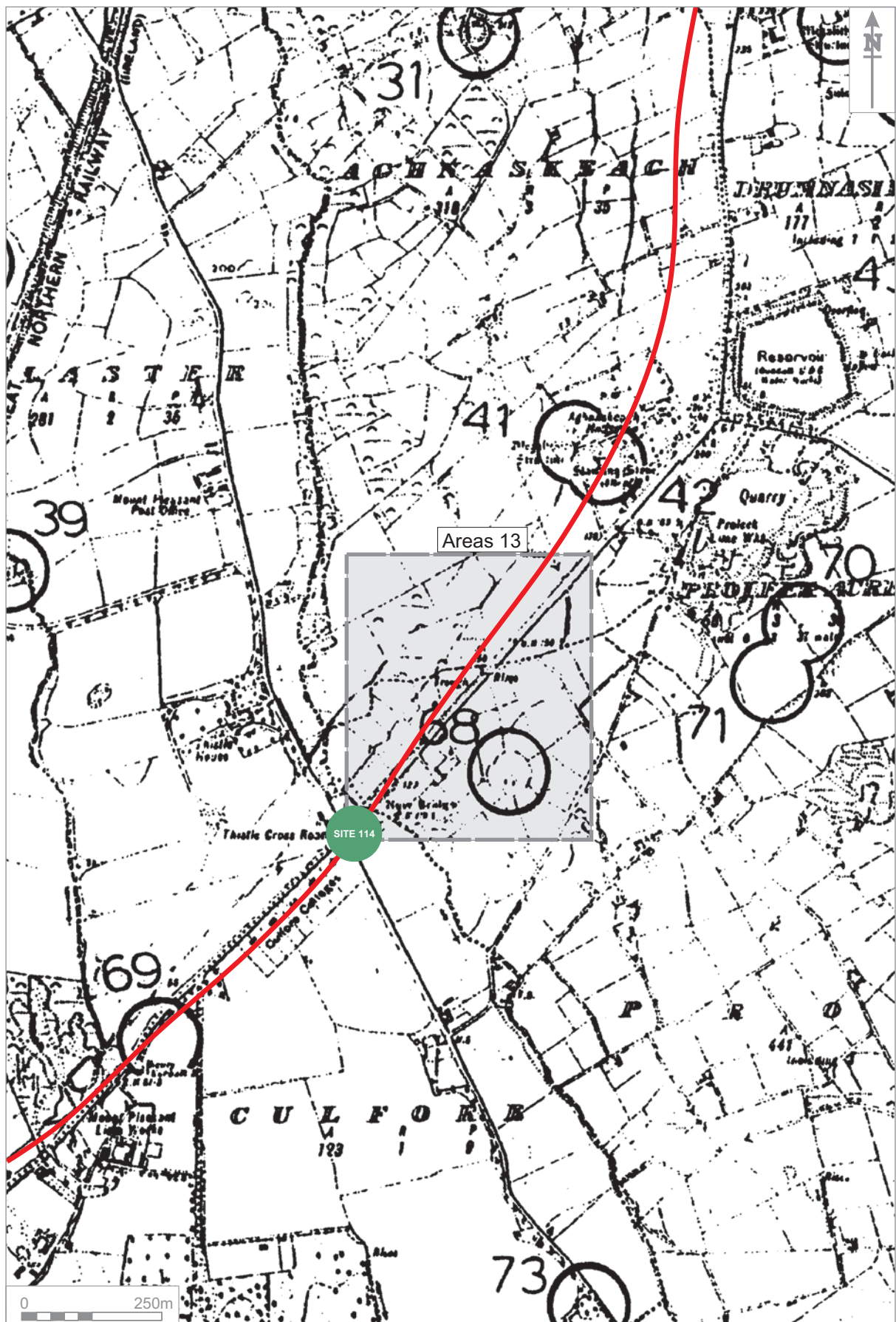
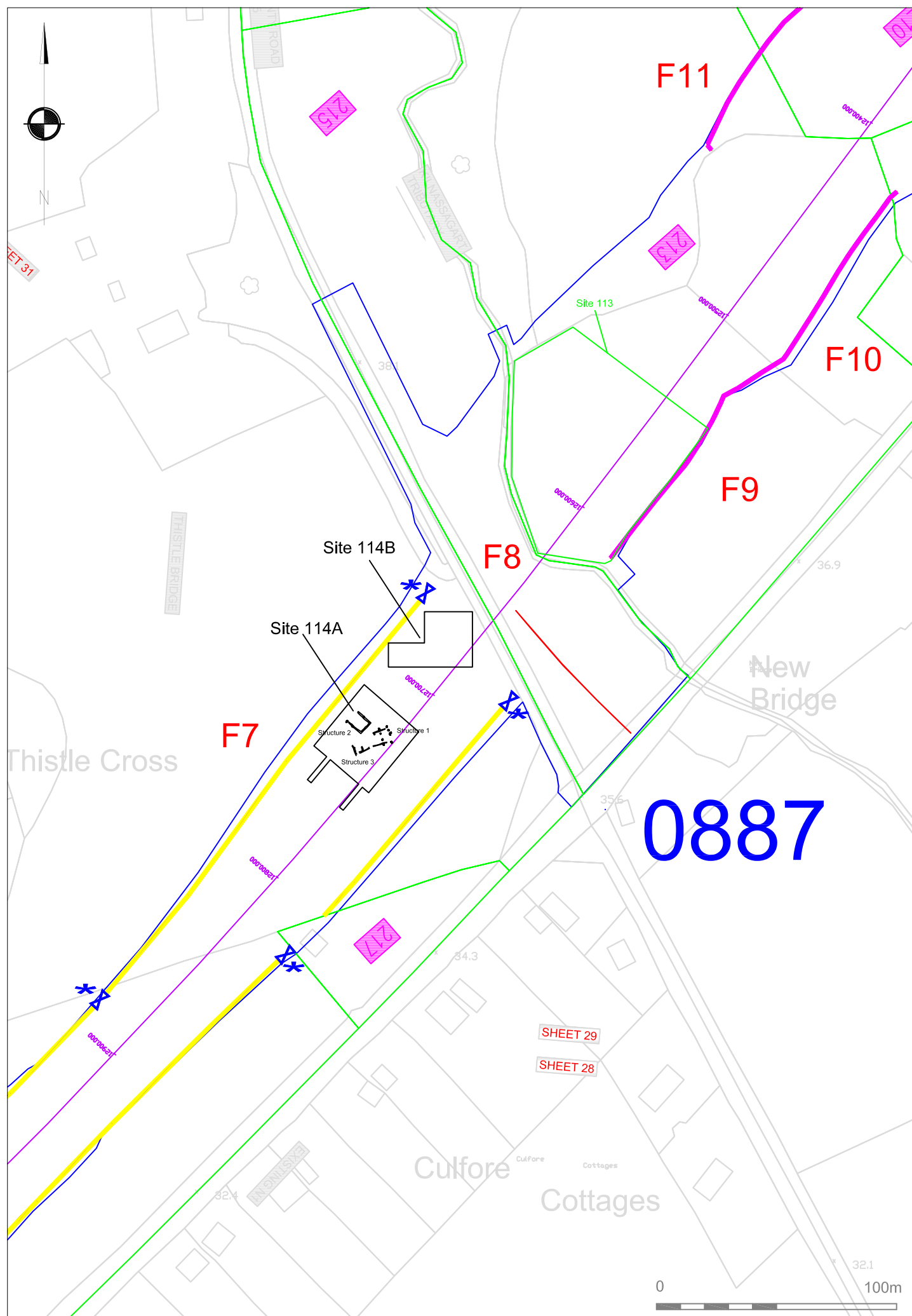


Fig. 3 Location of Area 13 and Site 114 on RMP Map of Louth, Sheet 4. A1/N1 in red. Scale 1:10,000.



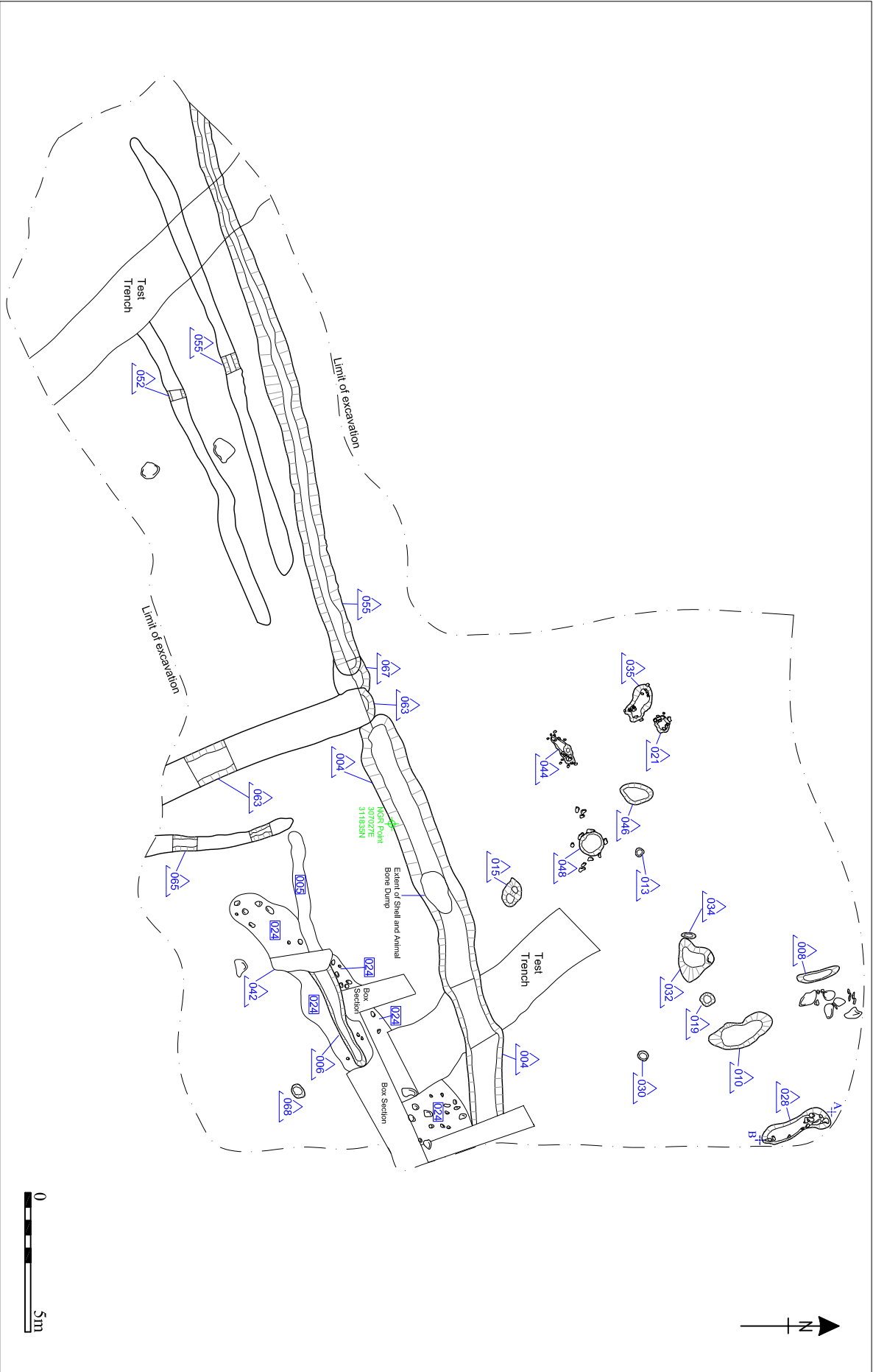
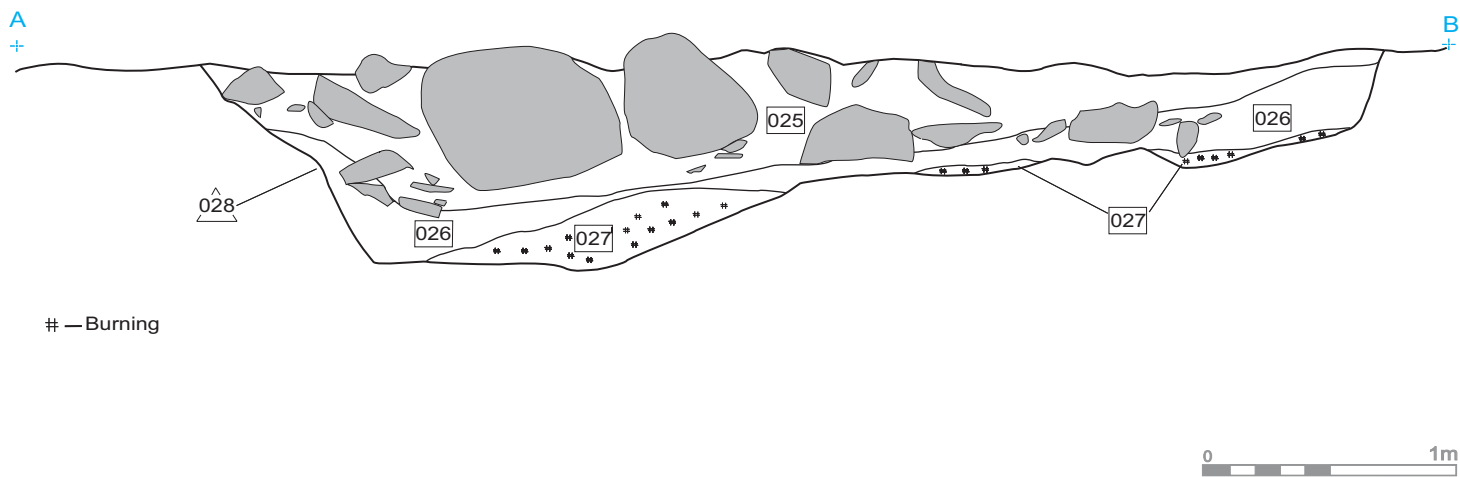


Fig. 5 Post-excavation plan of Site 114B. Scale 1:200.



**Fig. 6** South West facing section of [028]





**Plate 1** Ditch 004.



**Plate 2** Pit 015.



**Plate 3** Pit 013.





**Plate 4** Pit 032.



**Plate 5** Pit 019.



**Plate 6** Keyhole kiln 028.