

Archaeological Impact Assessment Report
Lawn Road,
Gorteendrunagh, Castlebar,
Co. Mayo

Part 1 – Archaeological Information

Licence Number:24E0613

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PROJECT DETAILS

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This final report details the results of test excavations carried out at the site of a proposed development at Lawn Road, Gorteendrunagh, Castlebar, Co. Mayo (ITM 515137, 790010). The assessment was carried out at the pre-planning stage for Mayo County Council.

The site is located within the historic town of Castlebar (MA078-003-) and is situated c. 130 m southeast of Ringfort MA078-025 and c. 212m northwest of Earthwork MA078-026. There are no Protected Structures located within the site as listed in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. However, there is one structure NIAH Reg. No. 31209098, listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) located c. 25m southwest of the site. It is a gateway from circa. 1838, which comprises a pair of drag-edged limestone ashlar piers on chamfered plinths with cut-limestone shallow pyramidal capping (buildingsofireland.ie)

Derek Gallagher of ACSU carried out archaeological testing under licence number 24E0613, issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland. The trenches were positioned to access the archaeological potential across the footprint of the proposed development.

A total of 15 test trenches were excavated. Each trench measured 1.8m in width, and in total, 597m of linear trenches were excavated. Trench 3 was not excavated as a mound of spoil, overgrown with vegetation, left from previous development, was located in the way of the test trench. Trenches 10, 15, 16 and 17 were not excavated due to overhead electricity wires. Topsoil was mainly a peaty clay with large stone boulders. The natural varied from orange boulder clay to bedrock to compact gravel. Two archaeological areas were identified on the site: a burnt mound spread (C5) recorded in Trenches 7, 8 and 20, and a burnt mound spread (C3) and a possible pit (C4) recorded in Trenches 11, 18 (C3) and 19 (C4). Preservation in situ (avoidance) under a 10m buffer zone is not an option therefore, it is recommended that:

1) Monitoring of topsoil stripping should be carried out in Area A (measuring 35m by 35m) at the location of the identified burnt mound spread C5. The identified features and any additional features exposed within this area should be preserved by record (full excavation) prior to construction commencing.

2) Monitoring of topsoil stripping should be carried out in Area B (measuring 35m by 25m) at the location of the identified burnt mound spread C3 and the possible pit C4. The identified features

and any additional features exposed within this area should be preserved by record (full excavation) prior to construction commencing.

3) Monitoring of groundworks should be carried out in Area C (measuring 35m by 25m) in the southwest corner. This area was beneath the overhead electricity wires, where it was not possible to excavate a test trench.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This final report details the results of archaeological test trenching at Lawn Road, Gorteendrunagh, Co. Mayo (ITM 515137, 790010; Figures 1–2). The site lies east of Lawn Rd and north of Station Road in the townland of Gorteendrunagh. The site is located within the historic town of Castlebar (MA078-003-) and is situated c. 130m southeast of Ringfort MA078-025 and c. 212m northwest of Earthwork MA078-026 (Figure 2). There are no Protected Structures located within the site as listed in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, however, there is one structure NIAH Reg. No. 31209098, listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) located c. 25m southwest of the site. It is a gateway from circa. 1838, which comprises a pair of drag-edged limestone ashlar piers on chamfered plinths with cut-limestone shallow pyramidal capping (buildingsofireland.ie).

The work was carried out in relation to a proposed development, which is currently in the pre-planning phase at the request of the client and will consist of a large-scale housing development with green areas, private gardens, car parking, bicycle parking, potential creche, pedestrian and cycle lanes, and all ancillary works (Figure 6). An Archaeological Impact Assessment was carried out by TVAS Ireland Ltd and recommended archaeological test trenching of the site. The author stated that there was moderate archaeological potential due to two probable early medieval enclosures close by and the discovery of *fulacht fia* in development-led investigations (McNamara 2023). The test testing was carried out in Jully 2024 by Derek Gallagher under licence number 24E0613 issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

2. SOILS, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The survey area consisted of a long narrow field, aligned northeast to southwest, which lies between Lawn Road and McHale Road (Figure 2).

The site has an elevation of between 41m and 45m Ordnance Datum (OD).

The underlying geology consists of dark fine-grained limestone and shale of the Allie Limestone Formation. (Geological Survey Ireland).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 Archaeological & Historical Background

The proposed development site lies in the townland of Gorteendrunagh, in the civil parish of Aglish in the Barony of Carra. The townland derived its name from the Irish goirtín drunnach, which means little field of strife (logainm.ie). The first written reference to Gorteendrunagh was in 1614 when Gortneharagh was referenced in the Calander of Patent Rolls of James I (ibid).

Early Prehistory (7500-2200 BC)

The earliest settlers in Ireland are thought to have arrived around 7500 BC in a period known as the Mesolithic. These people were hunter-gatherers whose existence was based almost entirely on a foraging economy. As they tended not to produce the kinds of permanent structures seen later, it is often more difficult to find evidence of Mesolithic settlement. The main indicators of Mesolithic activity in Ireland take the form of flint scatters and middens (mounds of domestic refuse), which consisted largely of marine mollusc shells. Middens occur most frequently along the coast and near water sources, including rivers and lakes. A number of middens have been recorded along the Mayo coastline, which may date back to the Mesolithic period. They include dense oyster midden (MA076-046), which is located on the north shore of Inishcottle Island c. 22km west of Castlebar town. Midden MA066-002 is located along the coast at Mullranny. Two middens (MA095-033 and MA095-001) lie next to each other in Dooghmakeon Strand, in the townland of Dooghmakeon southwest of Louisburgh (heritagedata.maps.arcgis.com).

In the Neolithic period (4000-2500BC), with the introduction of farming, communities became more settled and less nomadic. Their economy was focused on cereal cultivation and rearing livestock. People changed from being food collectors, scavengers, hunters, and fishers to cultivating land, growing crops, and managing, breeding, and controlling stock. This required forest clearance and working poorer soils. Pottery was also being produced and is found in significant quantities on archaeological sites. Field boundaries were built, and territorial markers were also constructed to allow future prospectors to see that the land was taken. Megalithic tombs acted as both a territorial marker and as a ritual monument within the community. There are four types of tombs: court cairn, portal, passage, and wedge. The court, portal, and passage-style tombs belong solely to the Neolithic period, while the wedge tomb transitions from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age

Eighty-five of the 400 plus court-tombs known in Ireland are located in Mayo. About 30 of these tombs are situated in the hinterland of Bunatrahir and Killala Bays in north Mayo. Others are scattered throughout the

county in the hinterland of Ballina and in places like Killasser in east Mayo, Ballycroy and Belmullet in the north-west, Claremorris, Cong, Achill, Newport and Louisburgh. There are seven known portal tombs in the county (two in Ballyknock near Ballycastle; one in Claggan, near Ballycroy; one at Gortbrack North and another at Knocknalower, near Belmullet, one in Achill and another in Killasser); one identified passage-tomb at Carrowreagh near Bonniconlon (alias Bunnyconnellan), with other possible ones in the Cong/Ballinrobe region.

The blanket bog that covers parts of Ireland developed from the late 3rd millennium BC onwards and, in places, covered the field systems, habitation sites, and tombs of the early farmers. Extensive pre-bog field systems with stone walls have been discovered embedded in the bog in many parts of Ireland, notably at Behy, Glenulra, and Belderrig, west of Ballycastle in County Mayo. The Behy/Glenulra region, known as the 'Céide Fields', contains a 1,500-hectare archaeological site, the most extensive Stone Age monument in the world.

Bronze Age (2200–800 BC)

The Bronze Age (c. 2400-800BC) is marked by the use of bronze – the first metal in Ireland. Changes in society were visible, especially in burial practices. The megalithic tombs were replaced by individual burials, with cremated or inhumated bones in cists, often with pottery as grave goods. Burials are often found on high ground, and megalithic structures were frequently reused in Bronze Age burial practices. Different forms of burial were seen. Barrows were also being constructed during this period, as well as ceremonial monuments such as henges. Fulachta fiadh are Bronze Age cooking sites characterised by a crescent-shaped mound of burnt stone. Groups of these monuments are often found in damp areas, where the trough used for cooking would naturally fill with water. Stones were heated on a fire and then thrown into the trough until the water was hot enough to cook with (although alternative uses such as bathing have also been suggested for these monuments). After use, the stones were removed from the trough and placed around its edge until the characteristic crescent-shaped mound was formed.

County Mayo has many known monuments from the Bronze Age: 34 wedge tombs, 12 stone alignments/rows, 24 stone circles, and close to 300 ancient cooking sites known as fulachta fiadh. A number of Bronze Age gold artefacts have been found in the vicinity of Croagh Patrick, including two early Bronze Age lunulae and a Late Bronze Age penannular bracelet from Kilmeena and a bracelet and dress-fastener from Kilbride (Corlett 1998)

Iron Age (800BC-500AD)

The Iron Age in Ireland has been referred to as the Dark Age in Irish archaeology due to this period being poorly represented in the Irish archaeological record. However, this is increasingly changing with development-led excavations, community research projects (Drumanagh Promontory Fort, Loughshinny, Co. Dublin), and research projects such as the Late Iron Age and 'Roman' Age Ireland adding significantly to our knowledge of the period. It has been recognised in Europe that there were two stages to the Iron Age, a Hallstatt stage followed by the Le Tene phase. In Ireland, there is little evidence for a Hallstatt phase; however, the Le Tene is well represented. Trade existed between the east coast of Ireland, and by the 4th century AD, the Irish, known as Scotti, were raiding the island of Britain. There was a continuation of some of the major sites of the late Bronze Age (Emain Macha), and more defensive settlements were constructed across Ireland, such as hillforts and coastal promontory forts (Ryan, 1994).

An unaccompanied inhumation, adjacent to a standing stone, at Kiltullagh Hill on the border of counties Mayo and Roscommon was radiocarbon dated to AD 418-422 (Corlett, 1998).

Early Medieval Period (500-1100AD)

The Early Medieval Period saw a 'townless, coinless and with the exception of the awkward ogham script …. illiterate' society (Ryan, 1994). Tribal kingdoms, known as túath, of which there were c. 150, comprised inhabitants living in defended homesteads known as ringforts, many of which are still traceable in the fields around the Boyne landscape today. The number of ditches and banks surrounding a ringfort is thought to be a testament to the status of the occupiers (Edwards, 1990). In the early Medieval period, control of trade led to the emergence of new political leadership in Ireland. As a result, an ancient political order broke down, and new aggressive dynasties expanded, taking over the older tribal kingdoms (Ryan, 1994).

Ringforts represent individual-defended family homesteads and primarily date to the period 500 - 1000 AD. Though the origins and demise of ringforts are obscure, they are considered to be the most common indicator of settlement during the early medieval period. The most recent study of the ringfort (Stout, 1997) has suggested that there are a total of 45,119 potential ringfort or enclosure sites throughout Ireland. The ringfort is usually defined as a broadly circular enclosure delimited by a bank and ditch, and it is primarily located on the upper slopes of low hills. The average diameter is about 25m to 35m. The most common structures found within ringforts are the remains of buildings, generally houses, which are either circular or rectangular.

Crannogs are forms of settlement that were usually built on lakes or sheltered bays and can be described as circular or oval in shape. They were built of stone, timber and soil and were man-made islands. While there is c. 1200 such monuments registered currently in Ireland, the number is more likely to be 2000. They vary in sizes and forms; most appear to be built of stone boulders, cobblestones, branches and timber, organic debris and lake marl and measure on average between 18-25m, but smaller mounds measuring c. 8-10 were also recorded. Their function is likely a defensive refuge. However, functions may have varied, and it was suggested some were used as royal residences, metalworking and craft centres, storage of valuables or island hermitages and/or ecclesiastical communities' settlements (O'Sullivan, 1998).

The tuatha Cera comprised the modern barony of Carra, Co. Mayo. Cera was a local kingdom whose kings descended from Máel Cothaid, a king of Uí Fhiachrach and Connacht, who lived in 603. A king of Cera, belonging to this line, is recorded in 1032, and Fir Chera was recorded as a lineage in 1094. The last king of Cera Giolla an Ghoill Mac Neill, was replaced in the late twelfth century by King Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair's sons Áed and Tairrdelbach in Cera, from which they too were eventually driven out by the Anglo-Normans (Mac Cotter, 2008)

The presence of crannogs at Curragh (MA078-065001) and in Lough Lannagh (MA078-019), a ringfort at Gorteendrunagh (MA078-025), further ringfort enclosures at Garryduff (MA078-018) and Mooneenbradagh (MA078-004), and the ecclesiastical site of Turlough, where there is a round tower (MA070-144002-heritagedata.maps.arcgis.com), focuses attention on the early medieval period (c. 500-1100 AD), where settlement occurred as dispersed defended homesteads on lakes and across the wider landscape. These sites and the less well-defined 'enclosures', which are generally accepted as being from the same period, reveal a well-settled landscape at this time, where the ecclesiastical site at Turlough would have been a focal point.

Late Medieval Period (1100-1600)

The Medieval Period in Ireland saw the decline of the Viking Age and the conquest of the Normans. Diarmait MacMorrough, the deposed King of Leinster, sought help from Henry II. Henry II permitted some of his subjects to go and help, and an advance party of Anglo-Normans arrived in Ireland from South Wales, with followers from France and Flanders in 1169 AD. A year later, a stronger party arrived under Richard de Clare (Strongbow), Earl of Pembroke. The Anglo-Normans colonised Ireland at an alarming rate. Ireland was designated a lordship, and Henry II assigned the lordship to his youngest son, John. From there, the outlines of a royal administration were developed (Ryan, 1994).

The first settlement of note in the Castlebar area can be traced to the thirteenth-century de Barra (Barry) family. The family were Norman settlers and the castle they constructed here in 1235 lent its name to the town that grew up around it. The de Barra castle and lands fell to the de Burgo (Burke) family, who were themselves forced to fight to save their lands against the encroachment of later English influence (www.irishhistory.com/connacht/co-mayo/castlebar/history-of-castlebar-co-mayo).

Castlebar came under the control of the Bingham family. Sir John Bingham was granted the castle at Castlebar in 1586. On 26 March 1613, King James I granted the loyal John Bingham a charter of incorporation, establishing a governance system consisting of a portreeve (mayor) and a fifteen-member corporation. The corporation was entitled to send two members to the Irish Parliament until 1800 (ibid).

In 1691, the town, being the main British outpost in Connaught next to Galway, was made a garrison town. Over the years, several regiments of the British Army were posted here, including the Welsh and Scottish Fencibles, the 69th Regiment, and later the Connaught Rangers. The present barracks were built in 1834, with the entrance pillars at Rock Square completed in 1831. A Portion of the barracks was burned during the Irish Civil War in 1922 (http://www.castlebar.ie).

3.2 Previous Archaeological Investigations

No previous archaeological investigations were carried out within this site.

Listed below are the nearest previous archaeological investigations undertaken in the environs of the site (see Figure 2), which further demonstrate the overall archaeological potential of the site and its surrounding townlands (Table 1). The following information was taken from the *Summary Accounts of Archaeological Excavations in Ireland* (www.excavations.ie).

Table 1: Previous archaeological investigations within the environs of the site

Excavations.ie reference	Licence No.	Site-Type	Investigation Type
2008:891	08E0371	No archaeological significance	Test trenching
2006:1418 Castlebar & environs sewerage scheme	05E1238	Monitoring	Monitoring
1996:300 Gorteendrunagh	96E0389	Mound	Test trenching

Excavations.ie reference	Licence No.	Site-Type	Investigation Type
2009:622 Moneenbradagh	09E0204	No archaeological significance	Test trenching
2018:568 Saleen, Mayo	18E0455	Burnt spread	Test trenching and excavation
2011:445 - Castlebar	10E0185	Urban -No archaeological significance	Monitoring
2018:696 Castle St. Car Park, Castlebar	18E0164	No archaeological significance	Test trenching
2016:323 Market St., Castlebar	16E0607	Post-medieval urban deposits	Test trenching
2007:1226 Shamble St/Market St, Castlebar	06E1124	Urban -No archaeological significance	Test trenching
2007:1227 Market St., Castlebar	06E1124ext	Urban -No archaeological significance	Test trenching
2017:198 Main Street, Castlebar	17E0119	Urban -No archaeological significance	Test trenching
2023-014 Drumconlon, Mayo	23E0101	No archaeological significance	Test trenching

In 1996, pre-development testing (96E0389) was carried out to the southwest of the site, where a link road was to be constructed at the northern end of Davitt House. The proposed link road was next to Earthwork MA078-026 to the north of an elongated mound. The elongated mound was tested. Three cuttings were excavated through the mound. Modern finds were found within the mound, and it became immediately obvious that the mound was made up of recently dumped material (Walsh, 1996).

In cutting 4, five areas of burnt stone with charcoal were uncovered. including a rectangular trough from a levelled fulacht fiadh of probable Bronze Age date. An 8m-wide corridor of the proposed roadway was also tested. An area of burnt stone and charcoal was uncovered along this corridor (Ibid).

Monitoring of groundworks for pipelaying for the Castlebar and environs sewerage scheme in 2006 under licence (05E1238) uncovered a number of features. Within the centre of town, several 18th-century streetscape features were recorded, including small sections of wall foundations, stone-lined drains, pavings, culverts and part of an 18th-century brewery in the form of a maltings floor and a series of sunken, small wooden vats.

A fulacht fiadh was uncovered in the townland of Ballynacarriga, and on the opposite side of the road, a short stretch of timbers laid transversely across the upper surface of the bog was interpreted as a bog trackway. A second fulacht was revealed in the road adjacent to this field.

In the townland of Knockacroghery, the fragmentary remains of a clinker-built boat were discovered. Excavation revealed that it was the keel portion of a boat built of oak plank and held by iron nails. The planks were held in place by clenched plates on the inner surface. The construction techniques used to build the boat are the same as those used on Viking boats. The boat dated to AD1400 - 1500 and this is the first evidence that boat-building techniques that were developed by the Vikings were copied and used up until the late medieval period in the west of Ireland. (Nolan 2006).

Southeast of the proposed development site, in the townland of Saleen, a burnt stone spread was identified in testing. Excavation revealed a 6m by 3m spread; however, no trough or other underlying features were recorded (Murphy, 2018).

3.3 Recorded Monuments

The site is within the historic town (MA078-003-) and is situated c. 130m southeast of Ringfort MA078-025 and c. 212m northwest of Earthwork MA078-026.

Below (Table 2) is a list of the recorded monuments located in the environs of the site (Figure 2). These descriptions are derived from the National Monuments Service Archaeological Survey Database (https://heritagedata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/).

Table 2: Recorded Monuments in the environs of the site

MAO78-003----	**Historic Town**	
CARROWNCURRY, CURRAGH, GARRYDUFF, GORTEENDRUNAGH, KNOCKACROGHERY, KNOCKAPHUNTA, KNOCKTHOMAS No description provided		
MAO78-025	**Ringfort - rath**	**Gorteendrunagh**
Ringfort-rath		
MAO78-026	**Earthwork**	**Gorteendrunagh**
Earthwork		
MAO78-065001	**Crannóg**	**Gorteendrunagh**
Crannóg		
MAO78-065002	**Earthwork**	**Gorteendrunagh**
Earthwork		
MAO78-064001	**Church**	**KNOCKACROGHERY**
Church		
MAO78-064002	**Graveyard**	**KNOCKACROGHERY**
Graveyard		
MAO78-064003	**Enclosure**	**KNOCKACROGHERY**
Enclosure		
MAO78-030	**Ringfort-rath**	**RINSHINNA**
Ringfort-rath		

3.4 Protected Structures and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The NIAH identifies, records, and evaluates Ireland's post-1700 architecture to protect and conserve our built heritage. It is administered by the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. The NIAH also forms the basis of a list of structures that should be included in the Record of Protected Structures compiled by local authorities.

A Protected Structure is one that a planning authority thinks is of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical point of view. It is recognised as important and protected from harm under legislation. Every local authority in Ireland must keep a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) in its development plans.

There are no Protected Structures, as listed in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, on or near the site. However, there is one structure, NIAH Reg. No. 31209098, listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), located c. 25cm southwest of the site. It is a gateway from circa 1838, comprising a pair of drag-edged limestone ashlar piers on chamfered plinths with cut-limestone shallow pyramidal capping (buildings of Ireland.ie).

3.5 Finds listed within the Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

The Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland were requested to assess the area's archaeological potential. These files list all archaeological artefacts in the care of or known to the museum. Such a record can provide evidence for human settlement or activity in the absence of physical remains or documentary references. There are no stray finds recorded for the townland of Gorteendrunagh.

3.6 Cartographic Evidence

A review of available historic mapping for the area was carried out to include the Down Survey map of County Mayo (1656), Taylor and Skinner's Maps of the Roads of Ireland surveyed in 1777 and the 6-inch (surveyed 1837, published 1839-Figure 3) and the 25-inch (surveyed 1895, published 1898 -Figure 4) Ordnance Survey maps. Potential archaeological or cultural heritage features are often marked on such maps, which provide a useful resource for identifying sites, particularly those without above-ground remains.

The Down Survey map of County Mayo shows 'Castlebare' as a well-established town with a castle and church, and other buildings, east of a river with Sallin to the south and Eglillicoyne to the northeast.

Taylor and Skinner's Maps of the Roads of Ireland, surveyed in 1777, shows the town of Castlebar along the river. The buildings are more discernible with a streetscape. East of the town are demesnes labelled 'Ld. Lucan Soho' and 'Ellision Esq'.

The site is illustrated spanning a number of fields in the first edition 6-inch OS. Map (surveyed 1837, published 1839- Figure 3). At the southwestern tip, there are a large number of trees which border a large site to the west, which contains a large country house and is labelled 'The Lawn'. A winding pathway is depicted from the northeast of the house down to the east of the field and into the south of the current study site, where it meets and enters a main road, currently known as Station Road. 'Gate Lodge' is depicted at the southeast of the site amongst trees. A Ringfort (MA078-025) is shown east of the country house, in the next field. Another enclosure (MA078-026) is depicted in the field next to the gate lodge at the northeast corner. No features nor anomalies of archaeological significance were noted.

On the third edition 25-inch O.S. map (surveyed 1895, published 1898 – Figure 4), the northern half of the site has been turned into one large field. A path and earthwork can be seen leading from the house on 'The Lawn' down to the 'Lodge'. The two enclosures are depicted. Enclosure MA078-026 is now part of a larger field and stands in the centre rather than the northeast corner. No features nor anomalies of archaeological significance were noted.

No monuments or features of archaeological significance were noted on the examined mapping.

3.7 Aerial Photography

A review of available aerial photography for the area was also undertaken as part of this assessment. Aerial photographs dating between 1995 and 2012 from the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSi) and Google Earth imagery dating between 2009 and 2020 were assessed. Unrecorded archaeological sites can often be identified in aerial photographs as cropmarks or differential growth in a field, particularly during periods of drought, such as those experienced in the summer of 2018.

A large rectangular area had been cleared of topsoil and subsoil in the southern area of the site prior to 1995. The estate along McHale Road (Figure 5) was well established by 1995, and there were a small number of buildings on the southwest tip of the proposed development site.

No cropmarks, features or anomalies of archaeological significance were noted.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Test Excavation

Test excavation was carried out in accordance with the *IAI Code of Conduct for Archaeological Assessment Excavation* (Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland 2006a). All trenches were excavated to natural by a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist (Derek Gallagher).

All spoil from the trenches was also examined for artefacts.

4.2 Conditions

The weather throughout the test excavations was changeable, with spells of heavy rain and overcast conditions. However, a safe means of access to the site was maintained at all times. No livestock were present in the field(s) during the test trenching.

4.3 Constraints on Methods

Overhead powerlines are located at the northeast and south of the site. Two large spoil heaps overgrown with vegetation were located at the southern end of the field, where works were previously carried out.

4.4 Palaeo-environmental Sampling

No samples were taken.

4.5 Finds Retrieval

No finds were recovered

5. TEST EXCAVATION RESULTS

Table 3: Trench descriptions

Trench Number	Length (m)	Trench depth (m)	Description
1	27	0.24m	A northeast to southwest-aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 6). There was no topsoil. Grass over gravel that had been previously laid down. The gravel sat on orange natural clay (C2). Old concrete blocks were dumped at the southwestern end of the trench. No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified in the trench.
2	17	0.06 to 0.1m	A northwest-to-southeast aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 7). Grass over construction gravel, sitting on orange clay (C2). A northwest-to-southeast stone drain ran across the trench.
3	-	-	Not excavated as too near overhead powerlines (Plates 1 & 2).
4	63	0.13m	A north-northeast to south-southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plates 8 & 9). Sod onto bedrock and gravel. No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified in the trench.
5	48	0.44m	Northeast to southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 10). Dark brown silty clay topsoil (C1) onto bedrock. Jumped over part of trench due to services. No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified in the trench.
6	54	0.14 to 0.4m	Northeast-to-southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 11). Dark brown peaty clay topsoil (C1) onto compact grey gravel natural (C2). No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified in the trench.
7	54	0.24 to 0.4m	Northeast to southwest-aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 12). Mid-brown silty clay topsoil (C1) over grey and orange natural clay (C2) sitting on natural boulders. Burnt mound material (C5) at the northern end of the trench.
8	49	0.25m	Northeast to southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 13). Dark brown peaty clay topsoil (C1) over burnt spread material (C5).
9	55	0.3 to 0.4m	Northeast to southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 15). Dark brown peaty clay topsoil (C1) over natural boulders.

Trench Number	Length (m)	Trench depth (m)	Description
			No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified in the trench.
10	-	-	Not excavated due to overhead electricity wires (Figures 5 & 6, Plates 1 & 2).
11	32	0.5 to 0.6	Northeast to southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 16). Dark brown peaty clay topsoil (C1) over natural boulders and burnt mound spread (C3).
12	8	0.8	East to west aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 17). Light brownish orange silty clay topsoil (C1) onto bedrock (C2). No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified in the trench.
13	47	0.6	North to south to southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 18). Mottled light orangish brown and grey to dark brown silty clay topsoil (C1) onto compact orange and brown gravel and stone. No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified in the trench.
14	75	0.65m	Northeast to southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 19). Topsoil (C1) was sod (brown silty clay) sitting over dark grey silty clay subsoil seen at the northern end. The natural (C2) was a mid-grey clay with frequent stone and occasional boulders, belonging to the bedrock. No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified in the trench.
15	-	-	Not excavated due to overhead electricity wires (Figures 5 & 6, Plates 1 & 2).
16	-	-	Not excavated due to overhead electricity wires (Figures 5 & 6, Plates 1 & 2).
17	-	-	Not excavated due to overhead electricity wires (Figures 5 & 6, Plates 1 & 2).
18	11	0.2m	East to west aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 20). Black peaty clay topsoil (C1) over burnt spread material (C3).
19	29	0.2 to 0.3m	Northeast to southwest aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 21). Black peaty clay topsoil (C1) over burnt spread (C3). Possible pit C4 south of burnt spread C3.
20	27	0.3 to 0.55m	East to west aligned trench (Figures 5 & 6, Plate 22). Mid brown silty clay topsoil (C1). Natural (C2) ranged from orange boulder clay west of the

Trench Number	Length (m)	Trench depth (m)	Description
			trench to greyish brown clay east of the trench. Burnt mound spread (C5) is in the centre of the trench.

Table 4: Context descriptions

Context	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Basic Description
C1				Topsoil
C2				Natural
C3	19	11.2	-	A sub-oval-shaped burnt mound spread (Figures 5 & 6, Plates 20 & 21). It was truncated by McHale Road to the east. It was filled with charcoal-rich black clayey silt with oxidised red, orange, and yellow stone.
C4	2m	Min. 0.65	-	A possible pit (Figures 5 & 6, Plates 30 & 21) located 2m south of burnt spread C3. It ran beyond the trench's limit to the east and was filled with soft black clayey silt.
C5	16	15.5	-	Sub-circular shaped burnt mound spread, (Figures 5 & 6, Plates 12, 13 & 14) filled with charcoal rich black clayey silt with oxidised red, orange and yellow stone. The northern edge of the spread peters out towards the band of trees to the north.

6. MATERIAL CULTURE

No archaeological objects or finds were recovered, and no palaeo-environmental samples were taken.

7. CHRONOLOGY/DATING

The burnt mound spreads C3 and C5, also known as fulachta fia are most commonly dated to the Bronze Age (c. 2200–800 BC), largely to the Middle–Late Bronze Age (Brindley et al. 1990; Corlett 1997), however, many examples are now also known to date from the Neolithic (4000–2500 BC), Chalcolithic (2500–2200 BC) and earlier Iron Age (800–100 BC) (Hawkes 2018, chapter 5).

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Two areas of archaeology, Areas A and B, were identified during testing. A burnt mound spread (C5) was identified in Area A, and a burnt mound spread (C3) and a possible pit (C4) were identified in Area B.

The proposed development will adversely impact both of these areas. Construction works will remove both of these sites, so full excavation is recommended.

9. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of 15 test trenches were excavated, covering 597 linear meters. The topsoil was mainly a peaty clay with large stone boulders. The natural varied from orange boulder clay to bedrock to compact gravel. A previous development had disturbed the northern end of the field, causing large overgrown spoil heaps. At the southern end, overhead electricity cables prevented the southwestern corner from being tested.

Testing at the southern end of the site identified two burnt mound spreads (C3 and C5) and a possible pit (C4). The burnt mound spread C3 was identified in Trenches 11, 18, and 19, and a possible pit (C4) was identified in Trench 19. The second burnt mound (C5) was identified to the north in Trenches 7, 8, and 20.

The proposed development will directly impact the archaeological features. Preservation in situ is not an option; therefore, preservation by record (full excavation) is recommended.

It is recommended that:

1) Monitoring of topsoil stripping be carried out in Area A (measuring 35m by 35m) at the location of the identified burnt mound spread C5. The feature identified and any additional features exposed within this area should be preserved by record (full excavation) prior to construction commencing.

2) Monitoring of topsoil stripping should be carried out in Area B (measuring 35m by 25m) at the location of the identified burnt mound spread C3 and the possible pit C4. The features identified and any additional features exposed within this area should be preserved by record (full excavation) prior to construction commencing.

3) Monitoring of groundworks should be carried out in Area C (measuring 35m by 25m) in the southwest corner. This area was beneath the overhead electricity wires, where it was not possible to excavate a test trench.

All excavation and monitoring shall be carried out by a licence-eligible archaeologist under licence from the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage.

10. POST-EXCAVATION PROGRAMME

No post-excavation work is necessary.

11. EXCAVATION BULLETIN

County: Mayo

Site name: Lawn Road, Gorteendrunagh, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Sites and Monuments Record No.: MAO78:003: Historic Town

Licence number: 24E0613

Author: Derek Gallagher

Site type: Test trenching

Period/Dating: Burnt Mounds

ITM: 515137, 780010

Date of completion: *July 2024*

Summary: A total of 15 test trenches were excavated, covering 597 linear meters. The topsoil was mainly a peaty clay with large stone boulders. The natural varied from orange boulder clay to bedrock to compact gravel. A previous development had disturbed the northern end of the field, causing large overgrown spoil heaps. At the southern end, overhead electricity cables prevented the southwestern corner from being tested.

Testing at the southern end of the site identified two burnt mound spreads (C3 and C5) and a possible pit (C4). The burnt mound spread C3 (measured c. 11m by 19m) was identified in Trenches 11 and 18. A possible pit

(C4) was identified 2m to the south in Trench C19. The second burnt mound (C5) (measured c. 16m by 15.5m), was identified to the north in Trenches 7, 8, and 20.

The proposed development will directly impact the archaeological features. Preservation in situ is not an option; therefore, preservation by record (full excavation) is recommended.

Derek Gallagher, Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit Ltd, Unit 21 Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co Louth

12. PUBLICATION PLAN

An account of this archaeological assessment and its results will be published online as an excavation bulletin for the *Summary Accounts of Archaeological Excavations in Ireland* (see Section 11).

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An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

2	4	E	0	6	1	3	X

Site Owner	Mayo County Council
Address	Aras an Chontae, The Mall, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Planning Authority	Mayo County Council
Planning Reg. No.	N/A
Excavation Type	Test trenching
Site	Lawn Road, Gorteendrunagh, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Contractor/Developer	Mayo County Council

Description of Proposed Development

The proposed development will consist of:

a large-scale housing development with green areas, private gardens, car parking, bicycle parking, potential creche, pedestrian and cycle lanes, and all ancillary works.

Archaeological Condition

The archaeological test trenching is to be carried out at a pre-planning phase at the request of the client.

Impact Statement and recommendations

A total of 15 test trenches were excavated, covering 597 linear meters. Testing at the southern end of the site identified two burnt mound spreads (C3 and C5) and a possible pit (C4). The burnt mound

spread C3 was identified in Trenches 11, 18, and 19, and the possible pit C4 was identified in Trench 19. The second burnt mound, C5, was identified to the north in Trenches 7, 8, and 20.

The proposed development will directly impact the archaeological features. Preservation in situ (avoidance) under a 10m buffer zone is not an option; therefore, preservation by record (full excavation) is recommended.

It is recommended that -

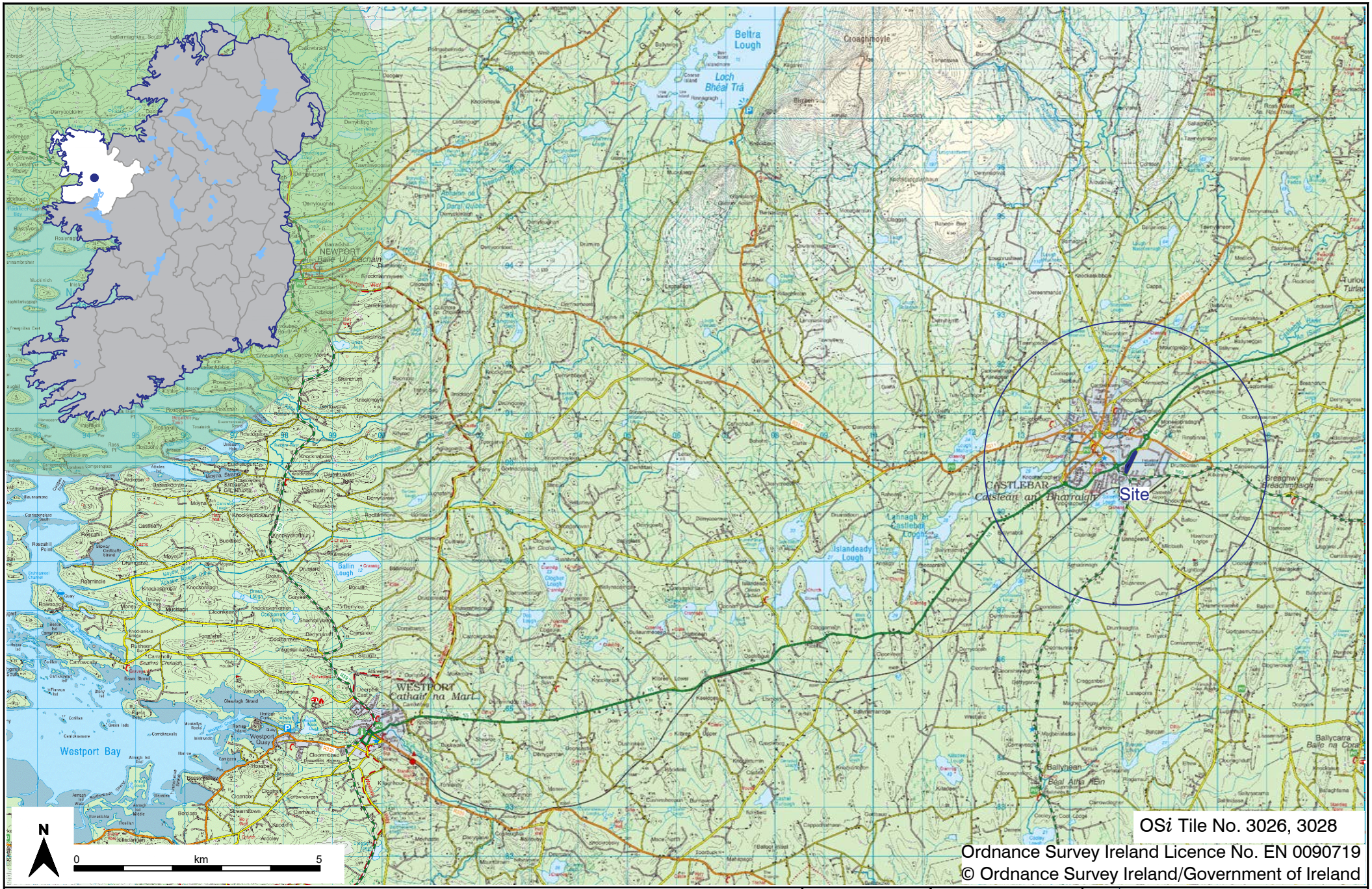
1) Monitoring of topsoil stripping is carried out in Area A (measuring 35m by 35m) at the location of the identified burnt mound spread C5. This feature and any additional features exposed within this area should be preserved by record (full excavation) prior to construction commencing.

2) Monitoring of topsoil stripping is carried out in Area B (measuring 35m by 25m) at the location of the identified burnt mound spread C3 and the possible pit C4. The identified features and any additional features exposed within this area should be preserved by record (full excavation) prior to construction commencing.

3) Monitoring of groundworks in Area C (measuring 35m by 25m) in the southwest corner. This area was beneath the overhead electricity wires, where it was not possible to excavate a test trench.

All excavation and monitoring shall be carried out by a licence-eligible archaeologist under licence from the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage.

Signed:	Derek Gallagher	**Date:**	**31/07/24**



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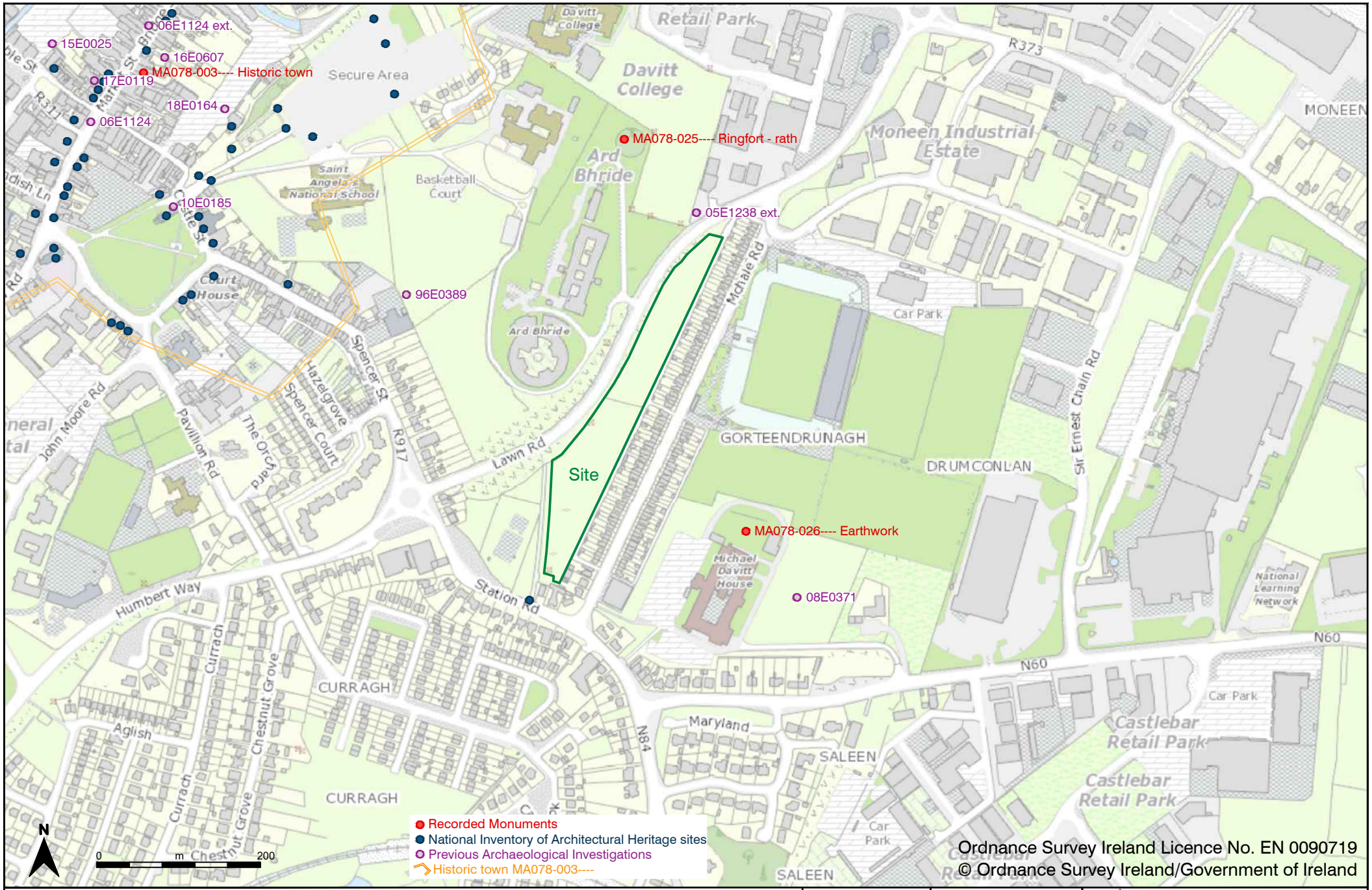
Project Lawn Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	**Date** July 2024	**Drawing No.** 2466_C1001	ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT
Figure 1 Location of site		**Scale** 1:100,000 @ A4	



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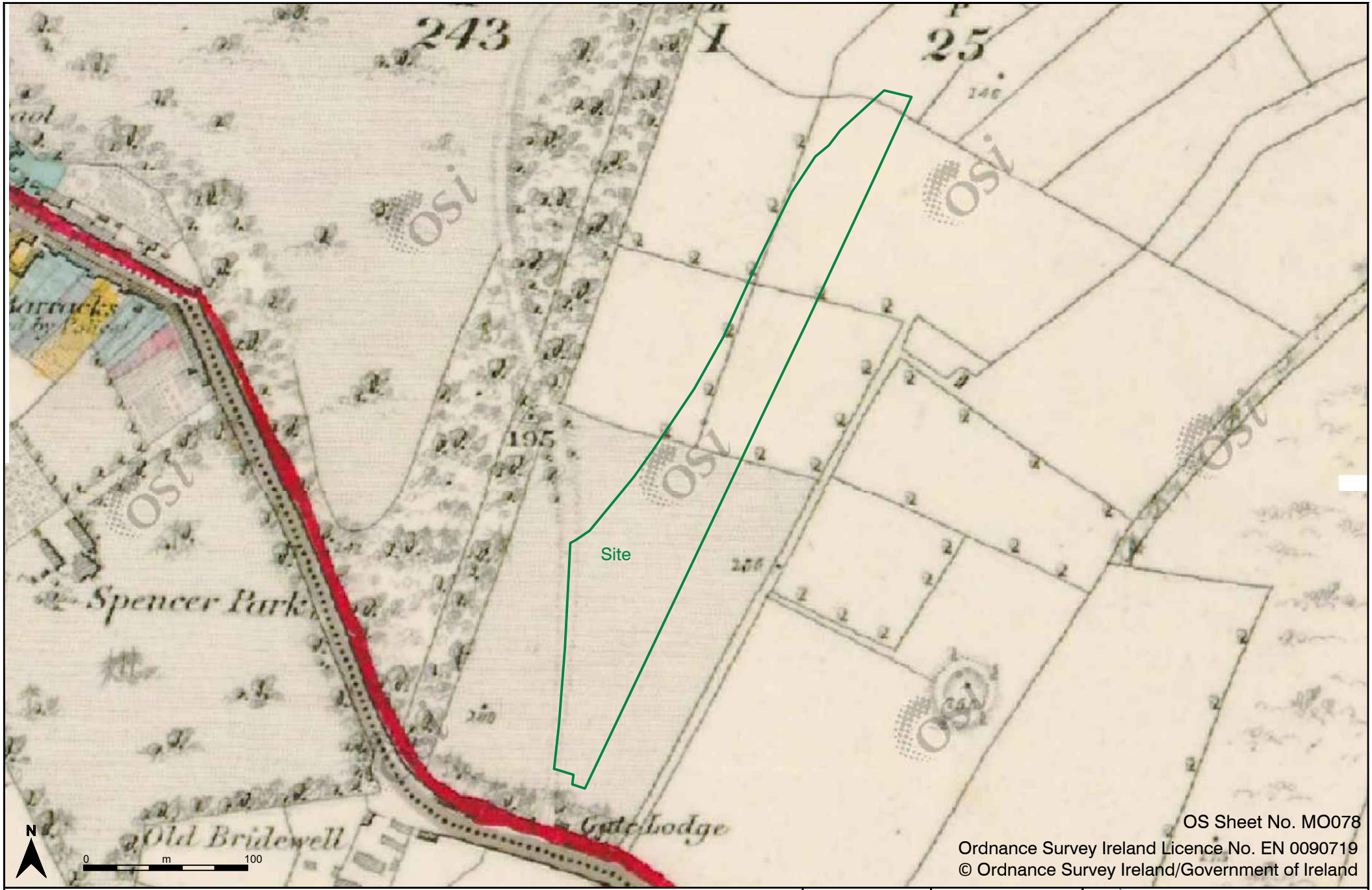
Project Lawn Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	**Date** July 2024	**Drawing No.** 2466_C1002	ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT
Figure 2 Location of site, previous archaeological investigations and nearby *Sites and Monuments Record* sites		**Scale** 1:6,000 @ A4	



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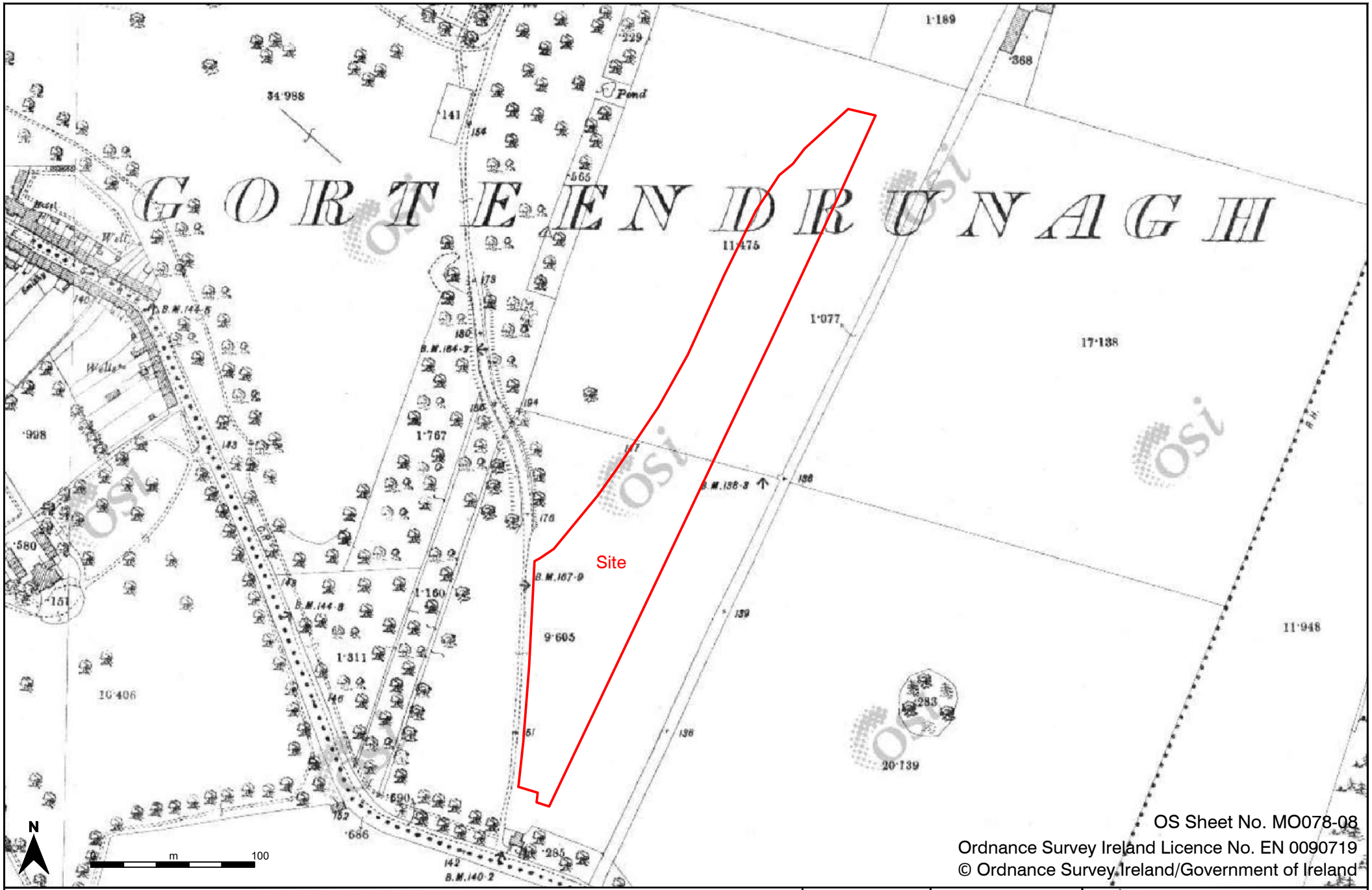
Project Lawn Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	**Date** July 2024	**Drawing No.** 2466_C1003	ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT
Figure 3 Extract from 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map (surveyed 1837 - published 1839), showing location of site		**Scale** 1:3,000 @ A4	



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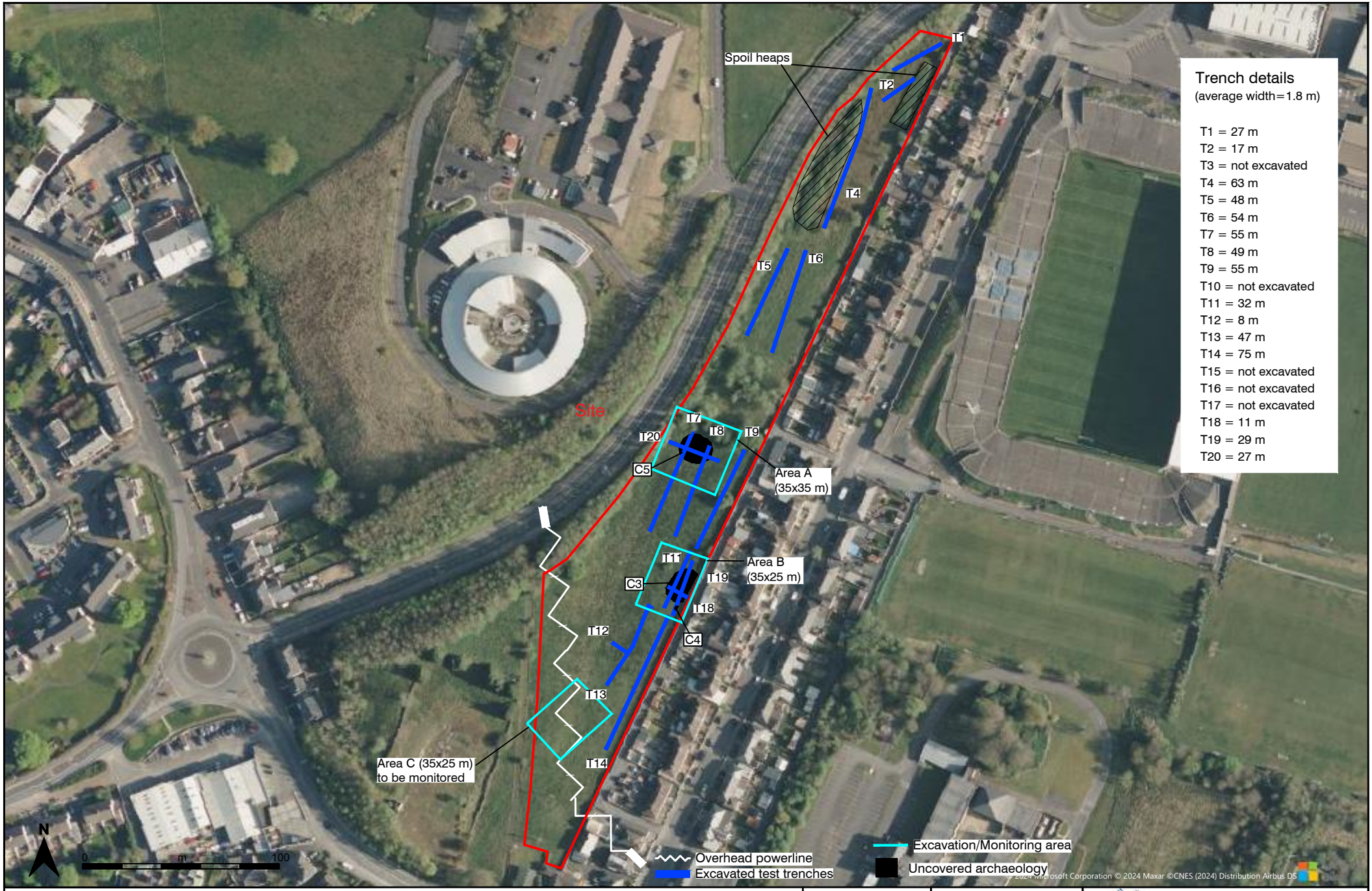
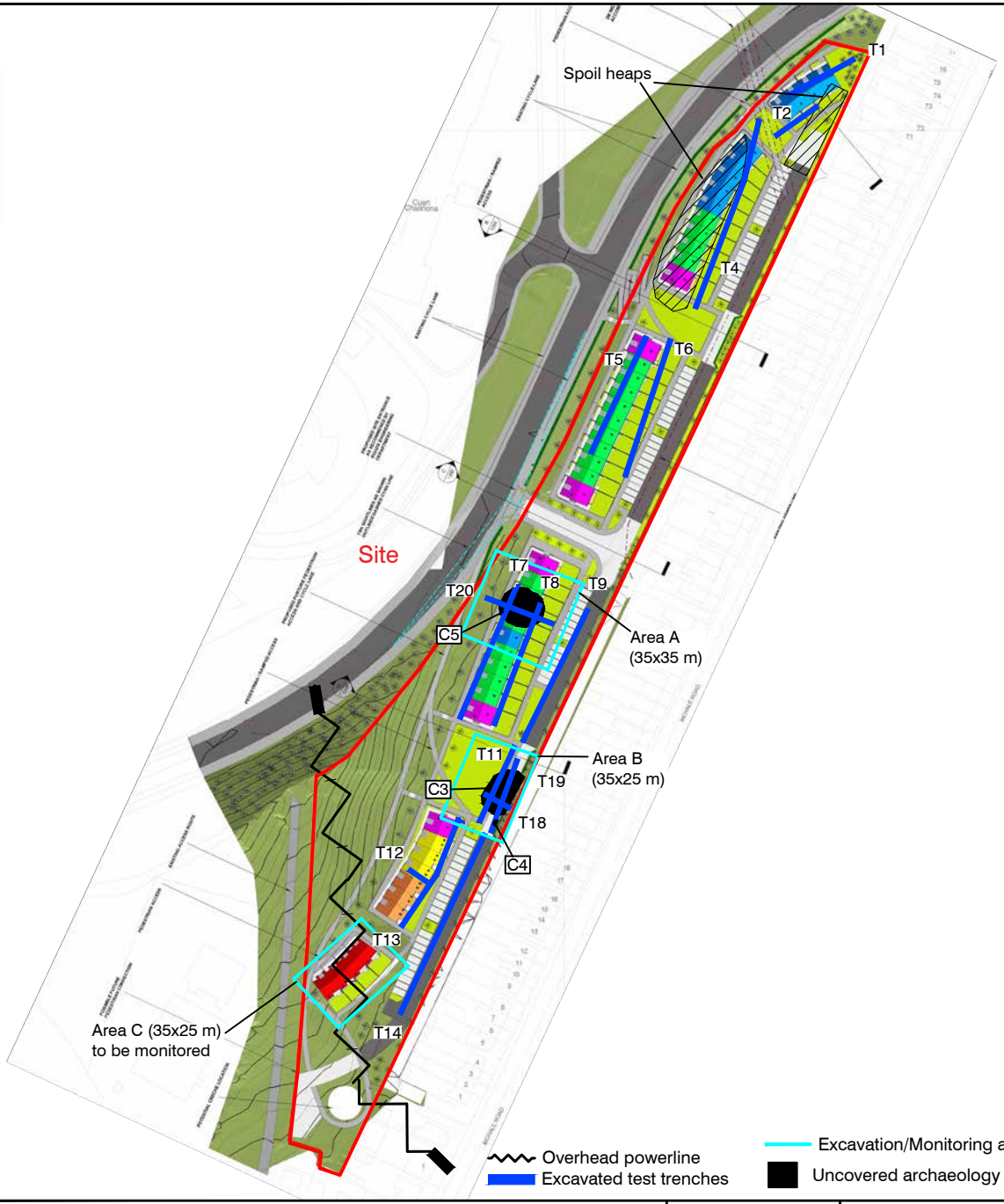
Project Lawn Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	**Date** July 2024	**Drawing No.** 2466_C1004	ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT
Figure 4 Extract from 3rd edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 25-inch map (surveyed 1895 - published 1898), showing location of site		**Scale** 1:3,000 @ A4	



Project Lawn Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	**Date** July 2024	**Drawing No.** 2466_C1005	ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT
Figure 5 Aerial view of site, showing location of excavated test trenches, uncovered archaeology, proposed excavation areas and area to be monitored		**Scale** 1:2,500 @ A4	





Trench details
(average width=1.8 m)

T1 = 27 m
T2 = 17 m
T3 = not excavated
T4 = 63 m
T5 = 48 m
T6 = 54 m
T7 = 55 m
T8 = 49 m
T9 = 55 m
T10 = not excavated
T11 = 32 m
T12 = 8 m
T13 = 47 m
T14 = 75 m
T15 = not excavated
T16 = not excavated
T17 = not excavated
T18 = 11 m
T19 = 29 m
T20 = 27 m

N

0 m 100

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Project Lawn Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	**Date** July 2024	**Drawing No.** 2466_C1006	ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT
Figure 6 Detail of site development, showing location of excavated test trenches, uncovered archaeology, proposed excavation areas and area to be monitored		**Scale** 1:2,500 @ A4	



Plate 1: Southwest view of site, showing overhead electricity wires



Plate 2: Southwest corner of site, showing overhead electricity wires



Plate 3: Overgrown spoil heap, at northern end of site, looking east



Plate 4: Overgrown spoil heap at northern end of site, looking west



Plate 5: Services



Plate 6: Trench 1, looking northeast



Plate 7: Trench 2, looking southwest



Plate 8: Trench 4, looking north



Plate 9: Trench 4, looking northwest



Plate 10: Trench 5, looking northeast



Plate 11: Trench 6, looking northeast



Plate 12: Trench 7, with burnt mound spread C5, looking northeast



Plate 13: Trench 8, showing burnt mound spread C5, looking northeast



Plate 14: Trench 20, with burnt mound spread C5, looking west



Plate 15: Trench 9, looking northeast



Plate 16: Trench 11, with burnt mound spread C3, at northern end, looking northeast



Plate 17: Trench 12, looking east



Plate 18: Trench 13, looking northeast



Plate 19: Trench 14, looking northeast



Plate 20: Trench 18, with burnt mound spread C3, looking east



Plate 21: Trench 19, with burnt mound spread C3, looking southwest



Plate 22: Possible pit C4, in trench 19, looking south