

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
OF THE PROPOSED
GORT PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT
SCHEME,
COUNTY GALWAY**

ON BEHALF OF: GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT

This assessment has been prepared on behalf of Galway County Council, to study the impact, if any, on the archaeological and historical resource of the proposed Gort Public Realm Enhancement Scheme at Gort, County Galway (ITM 545095, 702138). It was carried out by Matt Brooks of IAC Archaeology.

The scheme comprises works along Crowe Street, Church Street, Bridge Street, Market Square, New Car Park and Canon Quinn Park, in addition to portion of Lowry's Lane and Bolands Lane. There are 12 recorded archaeological sites within the study area, of which two are located within the proposed scheme comprising the town of Gort (GA122-093) and the site of a castle (GA122-097). The location given for the castle (GA122-097) in the SMR, which is within the proposed scheme footprint, is indicative only as there are no extant remains above ground and its precise location is unknown. There is potential for remains associated with these recorded monuments to be impacted by the proposed scheme, in particular, the castle.

The proposed scheme footprint lies within the zone of archaeological potential for the historic town of Gort (GA122-093). It is possible that ground works associated with the proposed development may have a direct negative impact on any archaeological remains associated with the early development of the town. This would be caused by ground disturbances carried out below the modern ground surface (c. 0.4m depth).

The approximate location of Gort castle (GA122-097) is also recorded within the proposed scheme footprint. While there are no surviving upstanding remains of the castle, it is possible that elements of the structure and related activity survive below the current ground surface. If present, ground works associated with the proposed development may have a direct negative impact on any archaeological remains associated with the castle. This would be caused by ground disturbances carried out below the modern ground surface (c. 0.4m depth).

Whilst it is clear that the proposed scheme footprint has been subject to development and disturbance during the post-medieval and modern periods it is not clear how this disturbance may have affected the archaeological resource. As such, ground disturbances below the modern road levels (+0.4m), such as the excavation of service diversions etc, may have an adverse impact on previously unrecorded archaeological features or deposits that have the potential to survive beneath the current ground level.

It is recommended that all ground disturbances that result in excavations beneath c. 0.4m depth of (modern road surface and overburden), which are associated with the proposed scheme be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist under licence from the National Monuments Service. If any features of archaeological potential are discovered during the course of the works further archaeological mitigation may be required, such as preservation in -situ or by record. Any further mitigation will require

approval from the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL

The following report details an archaeological assessment undertaken in advance of a proposed Gort Public Realm Enhancement Scheme at Gort, County Galway (Figure 1; ITM 545095, 702138). This assessment has been carried out to ascertain the potential impact of the proposed scheme on the archaeological and historical resource that may exist within the area. It was undertaken by Matt Brooks of IAC Archaeology (IAC), on behalf of Galway County Council.

The archaeological assessment involved a detailed study of the archaeological and historical background of the proposed scheme and the surrounding area. This included information from the Record of Monuments and Places of County Galway, the topographical files within the National Museum of Ireland and all available cartographic and documentary sources for the area. A field inspection has also been carried out with the aim to identify any previously unrecorded features of archaeological or historical interest.

1.2 THE DEVELOPMENT

Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project on Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street, Church Street, and Canon Quinn Park (Figure 2) to include:

1. Redesigned paved areas along Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street and Church Street including new surface materials, installation of a new lighting scheme, hard and soft landscaping and street furniture (The proposed works are located within the Architectural Conservation Area, and in the vicinity of Recorded Protected Structures RPS No 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 3445, 3451, 3452, 3453, 3459, 3464, 3467, 3468, 3469, 3471, 3472.
2. Provision of an upgraded and expanded pedestrianised civic/public space in the Market Square.
3. Provision of new pedestrian crossings.
4. Installation of new road alignments including reduction in carriageway widths and traffic calming measures.
5. Installation of new street furniture and cycle parking.
6. Rationalised on-street car parking throughout the application area including the provision of new disabled and age friendly parking provision.
7. The provision of 2No. new public off-street car parks and Crowe Street and Barrack Street.
8. Installation of new landscaping including street trees and planting.
9. Upgrade works to the existing Canon Quinn Park including the installation of play equipment, seating, lighting and ancillary infrastructure.
10. Installation of a new signage and way-finding scheme.

11. Undergrounding of overhead cables and the removal of redundant overhead cabling.
12. Installation of upgraded surface water drainage infrastructure including provision of nature-based, sustainable urban drainage solutions.
13. The relocating of existing public bus-stop to Bridge Street/George Street and provision 1No. new coach drop off area on Market Square.
14. All other associated site and ancillary works at Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street, Church Street, and Canon Quinn Park.

2 METHODOLOGY

A study area, defined as 250m from the boundary of the proposed scheme, was assessed to inform this report. Research was undertaken in two phases. The first phase comprised a paper survey of all available archaeological, historical and cartographic sources. The second phase involved a field inspection of the scheme footprint

2.1 PAPER SURVEY

- Record of Monuments and Places for County Galway;
- Sites and Monuments Record for County Galway;
- National Monuments in State Care Database;
- Preservation Orders List;
- Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland;
- Cartographic and written sources relating to the study area;
- Galway County Development Plan (2022–2028);
- Gort Local Area Plan (2013–2023);
- Aerial photographs;
- Excavations Bulletin (1970–2023).

Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is a list of archaeological sites known to the National Monuments Section, which are afforded legal protection under Section 12 of the 1994 National Monuments Act and are published as a record.

Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) holds documentary evidence and field inspections of all known archaeological sites and monuments. Some information is also held about archaeological sites and monuments whose precise location is not known e.g. only a site type and townland are recorded. These are known to the National Monuments Section as ‘un-located sites’ and cannot be afforded legal protection due to lack of locational information. As a result, these are omitted from the Record of Monuments and Places. SMR sites are also listed on a website maintained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH) – www.archaeology.ie.

National Monuments in State Care Database is a list of all the National Monuments in State guardianship or ownership. Each is assigned a National Monument number whether in guardianship or ownership and has a brief description of the remains of each Monument. The Minister for the DoHLGH may acquire national monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The state or local authority may assume guardianship of any national monument (other than dwellings). The owners of national monuments (other than dwellings) may also appoint the Minister or the local authority as guardian of that monument if the state or local authority agrees. Once the site is in ownership or guardianship of the state, it may not be interfered with without the written consent of the Minister.

Preservation Orders List contains information on Preservation Orders and/or Temporary Preservation Orders, which have been assigned to a site or sites. Sites deemed to be in danger of injury or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the 1930 Act. Preservation Orders make any interference with the site illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can be attached under the 1954 Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders with the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister.

The topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland are the national archive of all known finds recorded by the National Museum of Ireland. This archive relates primarily to artefacts but also includes references to monuments and unique records of previous excavations. The find spots of artefacts are important sources of information on the discovery of sites of archaeological significance.

Cartographic sources are important in tracing land use development within the scheme as well as providing important topographical information on areas of archaeological potential and the development of buildings. Cartographic analysis of all relevant maps has been made to identify any topographical anomalies or structures that no longer remain within the landscape.

Documentary sources were consulted to gain background information on the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage landscape of the proposed scheme.

Development Plans contain a catalogue of all the Protected Structures and archaeological sites within the county. The Galway County Development Plan (2022–2028) and the Gort Local Area Plan (2013–2023) were consulted to obtain information on cultural heritage sites in and within the immediate vicinity of the proposed scheme.

Aerial photographic coverage is an important source of information regarding the precise location of sites and their extent. It also provides initial information on the terrain and its likely potential for archaeology. A number of sources were consulted including aerial photographs held by the Ordnance Survey and Google Earth.

Excavations Bulletin is a summary publication that has been produced every year since 1970. This summarises every archaeological excavation that has taken place in Ireland during that year up until 2010 and since 1987 has been edited by Isabel Bennett. This information is vital when examining the archaeological content of any area, which may not have been recorded under the SMR and RMP files. This information is also available online (www.excavations.ie) from 1970–2023.

2.2 FIELD INSPECTION

Field inspection is necessary to determine the extent and nature of archaeological and historical remains, and can also lead to the identification of previously unrecorded or suspected sites and portable finds through topographical observation and local information.

The archaeological field inspection entailed -

- Walking the proposed scheme and its immediate environs.
- Noting and recording the terrain type and land usage.
- Noting and recording the presence of features of archaeological or historical significance.
- Verifying the extent and condition of any recorded sites.
- Visually investigating any suspect landscape anomalies to determine the possibility of their being anthropogenic in origin.

3 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed scheme is located within the townlands of Gort, Ballyhugh and Lavally, Parish of Kiltartan and Barony of Kiltartan in County Galway. It comprises parts of Crowe Street, Church Street, Bridge Street, Market Square, New Car Park and Canon Quinn Park. There are 12 recorded archaeological sites within the study area, of which two are located within the proposed scheme footprint. These comprise the town of Gort (GA122-093) and the site of a castle (GA122-097)

3.1.1 Prehistoric Period

Mesolithic Period (c. 8000–4000 BC)

Recent discoveries may suggest the possibility of a human presence in the southwest of Ireland as early as the Upper Palaeolithic (Dowd and Carden 2016), however; the Mesolithic period is the earliest time for which there is clear evidence for prehistoric human colonisation of the island of Ireland. During this period people hunted, foraged and gathered food and appear to have led a primarily mobile lifestyle. The presence of Mesolithic communities is most commonly evidenced by scatters of worked flint material, a by-product of the production of flint implements.

There is no archaeological evidence of Mesolithic activity within the immediate environs of the proposed scheme.

Neolithic Period (c. 4000–2500 BC)

During this period communities became less mobile and their economy became based on the rearing of stock and cereal cultivation. The transition to the Neolithic was marked by major social change. Communities expanded and moved to create more permanent settlements. This afforded the development of agriculture, which demanded an altering of the physical landscape. Forests were rapidly cleared and field boundaries were constructed. Pottery was also being produced, possibly for the first time. The advent of the Neolithic period also provided the megalithic tomb tradition. There are four types of tombs in Ireland, namely the Court Cairn, Portal Tomb, Passage Tomb and Wedge Tomb; of which the latter style straddles the Neolithic to Bronze Age transition. There are several megalithic tombs recorded in the Burren region; however, none are located in the vicinity of the study area.

While recent years have seen a large increase in the number of identified Neolithic settlement and habitation sites, there is no archaeological evidence to substantiate Neolithic settlement within the immediate environs of the proposed scheme. Excavations in advance of the M18 Gort to Crusheen Road Scheme revealed some evidence of Neolithic activity in the townland of Rathwilladoon, c. 8km to the south-southwest (Delaney et al 2012).

Bronze Age (c. 2500–800 BC)

This period is marked by the use of metal for the first time. As with the transition from Mesolithic to Neolithic, the transition into the early Bronze Age was accompanied by changes in society. Megalithic tombs were replaced in favour of individual, subterranean cist or pit burials that were either in isolation or in small cemeteries. These burials contained inhumed or cremated remains and were often, but not always, accompanied by a pottery vessel.

Over 7,000 burnt mounds or *fulacht fia* sites have been recorded in the country and c. 1,500 examples excavated, making them the most common prehistoric monument in Ireland (Waddell 2022, 164). Dating evidence from a growing number of burnt mounds, suggests activities resulting in burnt mounds were being carried over a span of 3,500 years in Ireland (Hawkes 2018). The Bronze Age has long been believed to have seen the peak of this activity. They are typically located in areas where there is a readily available water source, often in proximity to a river or stream or in places with a high-water table. In the field, burnt mounds may be identified as charcoal-rich mounds or spreads of heat shattered stones; however, in many cases, these sites have been disturbed by later agricultural activity and are no longer visible on the field surface. Nevertheless, even disturbed spreads of burnt mound material often preserve the underlying associated features, such as troughs, pits and gullies, intact. Numerous burnt mounds have been recorded in advance of the M18 Gort to Crusheen Road Scheme in 2008, the nearest of which are located in the townlands of Drumminacloghan, c. 1.37km to the southwest, Ballyboy, c. 4km to the southwest, Rathwilladoon, c. 8km south-southwest and Gortavoher, c. 10km to the south, (Delaney et al. 2012).

There are no recorded Bronze Age sites within the vicinity of the proposed scheme; however, it is likely there was activity associated with the river and the resources it would have provided, throughout the prehistoric period.

Iron Age (c. 800 BC–AD 500)

There is increasing evidence for Iron Age settlement and activity in recent years as a result of development-led excavations as well as projects such as Late Iron Age and Roman Ireland (Cahill Wilson 2014). Yet this period is distinguishable from the rather rich remains of the preceding Bronze Age and subsequent early medieval period, by a relative paucity within the current archaeological record. The Iron Age in Ireland is problematic for archaeologists as few artefacts dating exclusively to this period have been found and without extensive excavation it cannot be determined whether several monument types, such as ring-barrows or standing stones, date to the late Bronze Age or Iron Age. It is likely that there was significant continuity in the Iron Age, with earlier monuments re-used in many cases.

There are no known monuments in the vicinity of the proposed scheme that would suggest an active presence of Iron Age communities in this area; but the area would have remained attractive for settlement to prehistoric groups during this time. In the wider area, archaeological excavations carried out in advance of the M18 Gort to Crusheen Road Scheme recorded an Iron Age burial site at Ballyboy, c. 4km to the

southwest (Delaney et al. 2012). The ringditch contained the cremated remains of at least one individual, numerous multi-coloured glass beads and an antler dice.

3.1.2 Early Medieval Period (AD 500–1100)

The early medieval period is depicted in the surviving sources as an almost entirely rural based society. Territorial divisions were based on the *túath*, or petty kingdom, with Byrne (1973) estimating that there may have been at least 150 kings in Ireland at any given time. This period, with a new religious culture and evolving technologies, saw significant woodland clearance and the expansion of grassland. A new type of plough and the horizontal mill were two innovations that improved agriculture and allowed for the population to increase. Consequently, from c. AD 500 onwards, the landscape became well settled, as evidenced by the profuse distribution of ringforts, normally associated with various grades of well-to-do farming and aristocratic classes in early medieval Ireland (Stout and Stout 1997, 20).

The ringfort or rath is considered to be the most common indicator of settlement during the early medieval period (Stout 1997). One of the most recent studies of early medieval settlement enclosures has suggested that there is potential for at least 60,000 such sites to have existed on the island (O’Sullivan et al. 2014, 49). Ringforts were often constructed to protect rural farmsteads and are usually defined as a broadly circular enclosure delineated by a bank and ditch. Ringforts can be divided into three broad categories – univallate sites, with one bank or ditch; multivallate sites with as many as four levels of enclosing features and platform or raised ringforts, where the interior of the ringfort has been built up. These enclosed sites were intimately connected to the division of land and the status of the occupant.

There are eight ringforts and cashels (similar enclosed settlement sites which are stone built) within c. 1km of the proposed scheme with the closest site (GA122-097001) located c. 33m to the southeast. Fahey (1893, 15, 174) noted that the 7th century King Guaire had a ‘palace’ here, known as ‘*Gort insi Guaire*’. This translates as the ‘Field of the island of Guaire’. Presumably, it was an earthwork, possibly a ringfort, although no details of its form or extent are known. Guaire became King of Connacht in AD 655. He had two royal residences, one in Kinvara, known as Dunguaire and another in Gort. By about AD 700 Guaire's family were no longer kings of Connacht. The O’Clearys were recognised as chiefs of *Ui Fiachrach Aidhne*, a district which was roughly co-extensive with the diocese of Kilmacduagh, or south County Galway. They were succeeded by the O’Hynes and the Kilkellys around the close of the 10th century (McNamara and Grey 2000).

An increase in settlement in the early medieval period is also well attested to by the large number of souterrains (or underground passages) that have been recorded throughout the wider vicinity of the proposed scheme. Quite often souterrains are found in association with ringforts. Souterrains are generally regarded as having had a defensive or protective function, as evidenced by the complex construction of many of the sites, with narrow winding passages, deliberate obstructions, and small chambers. Raiding was endemic during the early medieval period and souterrains may have served to house portable valuables and non-combatants during a raid. Several

potential ringforts, souterrains and areas of early medieval activity have been identified in the landscape surrounding the proposed scheme, which further indicates an active early medieval population in the Gort area. Two souterrains are recorded in the townland of Lavally within c. 1km of the proposed scheme (GA123-063001 and GA123-066).

3.1.3 Medieval Period (AD 1100–1600)

The piecemeal conquest by the Anglo-Normans of Ireland, which commenced in AD 1169, had a fundamental impact on the Irish landscape. Their presence was strongest in the east of the Country, and it is mainly in this region that land was carved up and granted to the newly arrived lords who participated. The main success of the Anglo-Norman occupation was the welding of scattered territories into a cohesive unit through the introduction of the English form of shire government. The rural landscape became a network of manorial centres; these units would generally contain a castle (motte and bailey), a manorial house and a number of dwellings, with extensive surrounding acreage. During the 14th to 16th centuries, tower houses were the typical residence of the Irish gentry and are a common feature in the Irish landscape.

The O'Shaughnessy's came to prominence in the 12th century and held sway to the lands of Gort until the end of the 17th century despite fierce opposition from the Normans and later the English. According to Fahey, the castle (GA122-097) at Gort was built on the site of the 'palace' of *Guaire Aidne Mac Colmáin* (1893, 211-12). It is also believed to have been the principal residence of Sir Roger O'Shaughnessy, Lord of *Kineal Aedh*, when he was created a baronet by Henry VIII in 1545. It should be noted that the SMR file for the castle (GA122-097) states that the location given in the SMR should be considered indicative as nothing of the castle remains upstanding and its exact location is unknown.

In 1600, during the course of an assault on Dermot O'Connor by Theobald Burke (*Teboid na Loing*), son of the celebrated Grace O'Malley, O'Connor and a number of his men were obliged to seek sanctuary in an adjoining church (GA122-099). But Burke refused to recognise the right of sanctuary and set the church on fire. About 40 of O'Connor's men either lost their lives in the flames or were killed as they attempted to escape (Fahey 1893, 234-5). The church referred to 'probably stood on the north side of the present town, at the place known as the "Grove"' (ibid.). A housing estate and commercial units now occupy this area to the immediate northeast of the proposed scheme.

3.1.4 Post-Medieval Period (AD 1600–1800)

The ending of the Williamite Wars saw the beginning of a comparative politically calm era, which allowed the country's landowners the security to experiment with the latest styles of architecture without the need to refer to defensive matters. Initially, constraints on available resources resulted in mansions of a relatively modest scale and relatively plain appearance; however, as the Irish aristocracy's sense of security grew over the following decades, their greater access to wealth helped foster a shift towards more ostentatious buildings.

The family of Prendergast-Smyth were granted the estates of the O'Shaughnessy's at the end of the 17th century, after the Battle of the Boyne. The Prendergast-Smyths began to build the town of Gort as we know it today. One of their members, John Prendergast Smyth was granted the title Lord Gort in 1817. From then onwards Gort became a thriving market town (see below). In the later 18th century, the 'historic castle and mansion were levelled to the earth, to supply space and building material for the present unoccupied military barrack' (ibid.), c. 22m to the southeast of the proposed scheme (GA122-097002). The only surviving fragments are a twin-light late medieval window and a possible medieval doorway which appear to have been reinstated into later barrack walls.

It is clear the town thrived in the 19th century, Lewis records that there were busy markets every Saturday, while fairs for cattle and sheep were held three times a year, and pig fairs twice a year, each held within the market square within the proposed scheme (1837). He also records that there were 3627 residents in Gort at this time, and 563 houses, primarily stone-built and three or four stories high (ibid.). The flour-mill in the town was producing 7000 barrels of flour a year during Lewis' time (1837).

As the road networks expanded and mapping increased in the 18th century, milestones were set at locations along the main routeways to advise travellers of distances. A milestone (GA122-098) is currently recorded c. 60m north of the scheme boundary, although its original location was a further c. 46m to the north on the main road from Galway to Limerick

3.2 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

A review of the Excavations Bulletin (1970–2023) has revealed that a number of investigations have been carried out within the scheme and the surrounding environs, which are summarised below.

Archaeological testing was undertaken at Bridge Street within the proposed scheme footprint in 2001 (Bennett 2001:515, Licence No. 01E0927). No evidence for features/deposits of archaeological significance was identified in the exposed stratigraphy. It was noted that the natural layers were found at a greater depth in the east of the trenches, suggesting that the original ground level sloped to the river.

Archaeological testing also took place at three locations in the centre of the town at Church Street, Church Road and Bridge Street (where the potential for an Early Christian enclosure was noted in proximity to St Colman's Church (GA122-006)) (Bennett 2009:404, Licence No. 09E0508). Nothing of archaeological interest was identified in any of the trenches; the ground was mostly made-up with rubble and silt fills. Monitoring of excavation works took place under the same licence. At Queen Street disturbed layers of late medieval domestic deposits were recorded in the trench and a sherd of Merida-type pottery was recovered. In Glenbrack townland, disarticulated human remains, comprising cranial and mandible fragments from an adult male and a humerus fragment from an adolescent female, were discovered in the former townland boundary ditch.

Archaeological testing and monitoring of groundworks were carried out at a site at Kinincha Road c. 147m to the northeast of the proposed scheme (Bennett 2006:806, Licence No. 05E1052 ext). Subsequent testing in 2005 revealed very disturbed human remains possibly the remnants of a burial ground (Bennett 2005:609, Licence No. 05E1052). Further investigations in 2006 revealed a further 13 possible burials.

Excavations were carried out at The Grove, c. 220m to the northeast of the proposed scheme revealing 25 burials (Bennett 2006:807, Licence No. 06E0925). Phase 1 burials were dated to the medieval period, while Phase 2 burials belonged to a post-medieval phase.

An archaeological assessment was carried out at Bridge Street in advance of a river channel alteration scheme in 1997. The works revealed post-medieval pottery and the remains of an earlier field system (Bennett 1997:209, Licence No. 97E0147).

3.3 CARTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

William Petty, Down Survey Barony of Kilcartan in County Galway, c. 1655

The map of this barony was destroyed by fire in 1711 and there are no known copies, therefore, it is not known to what extent the settlement at Gort may have been depicted on this map.

George Taylor and Andrew Skinner, Maps of the Roads of Ireland, 1777 (Figure 3)

While this map does not provide great detail, it does confirm that a significant settlement was by this time present at Gort. The 'Gort River' features prominently in this map, with the majority of the town on its western bank. The main cross roads of the town is shown, which would become Market Square and may have been functioning as such at this time. Of note, is the residence of 'Ryndyfen', home of the Prendergasts, credited with much of the early development of Gort as a town.

William Larkin, A map of the county of Galway, 1819 (Figure 3)

This map does not provide great detail however it illustrates the town of Gort with the Cannahowna River passing through it. The proposed scheme is within the centre of the town defined by a road network that is similar to the present-day layout. Crowe Street, Bridge Street and Church Street were established at this time and were lined by structures.

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1842, scale 1:10,560 (Figure 4)

This is the first accurate historic mapping coverage of the area containing the proposed scheme. The roads of Crowe (Crow) Street, Bridge Street and Church Street are still defined within the schemes footprint as is the Square. Barrack Street is partially developed and leads east towards the 'Caliver Barracks' which is possibly the location of Gort Castle (GA122-097). Queen Street at this time has not been developed with this portion of the proposed scheme placed within open lands between St. Colman's Church (R.C. Chapel; GA122-008), a Church (Gort Library/ St.

Colman's Church; GA122-006) and a Police Barracks. Gort Bridge is also shown within the southern extent of the proposed scheme.

Ordnance Survey Map, 1895, scale 1:2,500 (Figure 5)

This map now shows the formation of Church Road (Queen Street) with an open area fronting the road. A water pump and weigh house are marked within Market Square, with Barrack Street now fully formed to the east. The 'Cavalry Barracks on Site of Gort Castle' is shown within the proposed scheme to the east of Barrack Street. The Waterford & Limerick Railway is depicted for the first time, to the south of Gort Bridge and Bridge Street. A well is marked within the greenfield section of the proposed scheme between Lowry's Lane and Bolands Lane. The milestone (GA122-098) recorded c. 60m to the north of the proposed scheme is depicted c. 46m further to the north of its current position on Crowe Street.

Ordnance Survey Map, 1916, scale 1:1,056

There are no changes of note from the previous mapping.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2023 recognise the statutory protection afforded to all Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) sites under the National Monuments Legislation (1930–2014). The development plan lists a number of aims and objectives in relation to archaeological heritage (Appendix 2).

There are two recorded monuments located within the footprint of the proposed scheme, comprising the town of Gort (GA122-093) and the site of a castle (GA122-097). It should also be noted that the SMR file for the castle (GA122-097) concludes that the location given in the SMR is indicative only as its exact location is unknown and there are no upstanding remains extant.

A further ten recorded archaeological sites are located within the 250m study area of the proposed development area (Table 1; Figure 1; Appendix 1). This includes the record of a church (GA122-099) in the town of Gort, for which no location is known. It is speculated to be within an area c. 125m to the northeast of the proposed scheme, where commercial premises and a housing estate have been constructed (SMR file).

None of these sites are protected as National Monuments in State Care or subject to Preservation Orders.

TABLE 1: Recorded archaeological sites in proximity to the study area

RMP NO.	LOCATION	CLASSIFICATION	DISTANCE *
GA122-093	Gort	Town	Within the scheme
GA122-097	Gort	Castle - unclassified	Within the scheme (indicative location only)
GA122-008	Ballyhugh	Church	c. 5m east
GA122-097001	Gort	Ringfort - rath	c. 22m southeast

RMP NO.	LOCATION	CLASSIFICATION	DISTANCE *
GA122-097002	Gort	Barracks	c. 22m southeast
GA122-006	Ballyhugh	Church	c. 30m southwest
GA122-006001	Ballyhugh	Graveyard	c. 48m southwest
GA122-098	Gort	Milestone	c. 60m north
GA122-109	Lavally	Mill - corn	c. 71m southeast
GA122-096	Gort	Redundant record	c. 169m northeast
GA122-108	Lavally	Designed landscape feature	c. 218m southwest
GA122-099	Gort	Church	Unknown

*Note: distance given is to the nearest boundary of the proposed scheme

3.5 TOPOGRAPHICAL FILES OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

Information on artefact finds from the study area in County Dublin has been recorded by the National Museum of Ireland since the late 18th century. Location information relating to these finds is important in establishing prehistoric and historic activity in the study area. There are no finds recorded within the proposed scheme or its immediate environs.

3.6 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Inspection of the aerial photographic coverage of the proposed scheme held by the Ordnance Survey (1995–2013), Google Earth (2008–2021), Bing Maps, and Apple Maps revealed that the proposed scheme remains largely unchanged since 1995. The road layout and areas of greenfield (Canon Quin Park and a portion of land between Lowry's Lane and Bolands Lane) have remained unchanged. The area marked for New Car Park (indicative location of Gort Castle; GA122-097) has experienced disturbance in the form of a structure and formation of hardstanding. No previously unrecorded sites of archaeological potential were noted within the aerial imagery.

3.7 FIELD INSPECTION

The field inspection sought to assess the proposed scheme, its previous and current land use, the topography and any additional information relevant to the report. During the course of the field investigation the proposed development site and its surrounding environs were inspected (Figure 1).

The western portion of the proposed scheme footprint consists of Church Street. Church Street is a wide street, which travels in a north-easterly direction towards Market Square. Church Street is surfaced in modern tarmac, with wide footpaths on both sides and is occupied by 19th century buildings (Plate 1). Market Square is sub-triangular in layout with a large central island within the roadway, surrounded by car parking (Plate 2). A group of cultural heritage features are located on the island in Market Square, including a water pump and a small structure with a crane on the western side (Plate 3). This building is a weigh-house dating to the 19th century and was associated with the former use of the area for markets. There is also a commemorative stone and a religious monument to the northeast of the weigh-house (Plate 4 and 5). On the southern side of Market Square, St. Colman's Roman

Catholic Church is a recorded monument (GA122-008) and is contained within a wall and metal railings (Plate 6).

The proposed scheme will continue north from Market Square on to Crowe Street, a narrower street lined by terraced structures, which, based on the cartographic sources date to the 19th century (Plate 7). The recorded milestone (GA122-098) is present, within a narrow grass strip alongside the footpath on the eastern side of Crowe Street (Plate 8). The milestone displays damage to its northern face and lies c. 60m to the north of the scheme boundary.

The proposed scheme footprint also includes Barrack Street, which is a narrow street, lined by terraced structures of early 19th century date (Plate 9). At the eastern extent of the proposed scheme, the indicative location of Gort Castle (GA122-097) as recorded by the SMR, is occupied by a heavily overgrown brownfield site to the immediate north of Barrack Street (Plate 10). To the south of Barrack Street, the upstanding structure of the barracks (GA122-097002) is present (Plate 11).

At the southern end of the proposed scheme footprint, a bridge is present over the Cannahowna River. This bridge is dated 1771 on the masonry work (Plate 12); however, the NIAH records the bridge as c. 1820 in date. The proposed scheme continues from Bridge Street, which is lined by 19th century structures, on to Queen Street in a westerly direction, then turning northwest to meet Church Street. In this area, the proposed scheme will include the public space of Canon Quinn Park (Plate 13). There are two millstones within the park, which have been repurposed as seating or low tables (Plates 14 and 15). There are also a number of grave markers in churchyard to the immediate north of Canon Quinn Park (Plate 16); however, these are located outside the footprint of the proposed scheme.

No previously unknown features of archaeological significance were noted during the field inspection.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This archaeological assessment was commissioned by Galway County Council to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological features in advance of the proposed Gort Public Realm Enhancement Scheme in Gort, County Galway. There are two recorded archaeological sites within the footprint of the proposed scheme, comprising the town of Gort (GA122-093) and the site of a castle (GA122-097). There are a further ten recorded archaeological sites within the study area. The location given in the SMR record for the castle (GA122-097) is noted as indicative only as its precise location is currently unknown given that no upstanding remains survive. In addition, the milestone (GA122-098, which is recorded c. 60m to the north of the scheme boundary does not occupy its original position and originated from a site c. 46m further to the north.

A review of the Excavations Bulletin (1970–2023) has revealed that a number of investigations have been carried out within the scheme and the surrounding environs. Testing was undertaken at Bridge Street within the proposed scheme in 2001 but revealed no evidence of features/deposits of archaeological significance. Testing and monitoring at three locations in the centre of the town revealed disturbed layers of late medieval domestic deposits.

Analysis of cartographic sources has revealed that the proposed scheme itself has remained relatively unchanged from the post-medieval to modern periods, comprising a street plan that follows roughly the same layout to the present day. A water pump and weigh house are marked at Market Square, while ‘Cavalry Barracks on Site of Gort Castle’ is found also within the proposed scheme. The milestone (GA122-098) the RMP places within the northern extent of the proposed scheme is depicted c. 46m to the north of its recorded position on Crowe Street as shown on historic OS mapping.

Analysis of the aerial photographic record available for the area failed to identify any previously unknown archaeological features in the area. The road layout and single areas of greenfield (Canon Quin Park and a portion of land between Lowry’s Lane and Bolands Lane) have remained unchanged. The area marked for New Car Park (indicative location of Gort Castle; GA122-097) has experienced disturbance in the form of a structure and formation of hardstanding. A field inspection confirmed the developed urban nature of the existing streetscape and did not identify any previously unrecorded features or areas of archaeological potential.

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

Impacts can be identified from detailed information about a project, the nature of the area affected and the range of archaeological resources potentially affected. Archaeological sites can be affected adversely in a number of ways: disturbance by excavation, topsoil stripping; disturbance by vehicles working in unsuitable conditions; and burial of sites, limiting access for future archaeological investigation. Upstanding archaeology can be affected adversely by direct damage or destruction arising from development, from inadvertent damage arising from vibration, undermining etc. and also by indirect impacts to a building's visual setting, view or curtilage.

5.1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- The proposed scheme footprint lies within the zone of archaeological potential for the historic town of Gort (GA122-093). It is possible that ground works associated with the proposed development may have a direct negative impact on any archaeological remains associated with the early development of the town. This would be caused by ground disturbances carried out below the modern ground surface (c. 0.4m depth).
- The approximate location of Gort castle (GA122-097) is also recorded within the proposed scheme footprint. While there are no surviving upstanding remains of the castle, it is possible that elements of the structure and related activity survive below the current ground surface. If present, ground works associated with the proposed development may have a direct negative impact on any archaeological remains associated with the castle. This would be caused by ground disturbances carried out below the modern ground surface (c. 0.4m depth).
- Whilst it is clear that the proposed scheme footprint has been subject to development and disturbance during the post-medieval and modern periods it is not clear how this disturbance may have affected the archaeological resource. As such, ground disturbances below the modern road levels (+0.4m), such as the excavation of service diversions etc, may have an adverse impact on previously unrecorded archaeological features or deposits that have the potential to survive beneath the current ground level.

5.2 MITIGATION

- It is recommended that all ground disturbances that result in excavations beneath c. 0.4m depth of (modern road surface and overburden), which are associated with the proposed scheme be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist under licence from the National Monuments Service. If any features of archaeological potential are discovered during the course of the works further archaeological mitigation may be required, such as preservation in -situ or by record. Any further mitigation will require approval from the

National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

It is the developer's responsibility to ensure full provision is made available for the resolution of any archaeological remains, both on site and during the post excavation process, should that be deemed the appropriate manner in which to proceed.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to approval by the National Monuments Service of the Heritage and Planning Division, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

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George Taylor and Andrew Skinner, Maps of the Roads of Ireland, 1777.

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Ordnance Survey maps of County Galway, 1842, 1895 and 1916.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

www.excavations.ie – Summary of archaeological excavation from 1970–2023.

www.archaeology.ie – DoHLGH website listing all SMR sites.

www.heritagemaps.ie – The Heritage Council web-based spatial data viewer which focuses on the built, cultural and natural heritage.

www.googleearth.com – Satellite imagery of the proposed scheme.

www.bing.com – Satellite imagery of the proposed scheme

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SMR/RMP SITES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

SMR NO.	GA122-093
RMP STATUS	Not scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Gort
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545078 702143
CLASSIFICATION	Town
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	Within the scheme
DESCRIPTION	-
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-097
RMP STATUS	Not scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Gort
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545202 702198
CLASSIFICATION	Castle - unclassified
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	Within the scheme
DESCRIPTION	<p>According to Fahey (1893, 211-12) the castle at Gort was built on an island on the site of the 'palace' of Guaire Aidne Mac Colmáin, the sixth century king of Connacht. It seems likely that it was the principle residence of Sir Roger O'Shaughnessy, Lord of Kineal Aedh, when he was created baronet by Henry VIII, A.D. 1545 (Fahey 1893, 212). And it was here that the O'Shaughnessy, a few years later, entertained the Lord Deputy and his escort at a banquet almost regal in its ostentatious display. 'On the 12th July he encamped near Gort, and dined at O'Shaughnessy's house so worshipfully that divers wondered at it, for such a dinner or the like of it was not seen in any Irishman's house before.' (quoted in <i>ibid.</i>) His son, Dermot, petitioned Elizabeth I to have it and other castles re-granted to him in 1567 (Cal. S.P. Ire. 1509-73, 340) and, in 1574, it is simply recorded as in the possession of the 'OShaghnes' (Nolan 1901, 114). As is evident from the following account a substantial dwelling house had been built close to the castle by the mid-seventeenth century and the whole enclosed by a bawn.</p>
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-099
RMP STATUS	No scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP

TOWNLAND	Gort
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545031 702361
CLASSIFICATION	Church
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 1m northeast
DESCRIPTION	In an area of flat but rough pastureland near the N limits of Gort town. In 1600 during the course of a vicious assault on Dermot O'Connor by 'Theobald Burke (Teboid na Loing), son of the celebrated Grace O'Malley, O'Connor and a number of his men were obliged to seek sanctuary in an adjoining church. But Burke refused to recognise the right of sanctuary and set the church on fire. About 40 of O'Connor's men either lost their lives in the flames or were killed as they attempted to escape (Fahey 1893, 234-5). According to Fahey (ibid.), the church referred to 'probably stood on the north side of the present town, at the place known as the "Grove"'. In the early 1840s the land owner came across large quantities of human remains from a pit or cave beside the church. The church was 'barely traceable' in Fahy's time (ibid.). The area marked 'The Grove' on the OS 6-inch maps was field-walked but no visible surface trace of the church was evident and it could not be precisely located. A housing estate and commercial units now occupy this area.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-008
RMP STATUS	Not scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Ballyhugh
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545033 702054
CLASSIFICATION	Church
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 5m east
DESCRIPTION	-
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-097001
RMP STATUS	Not scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Gort
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545233 702162
CLASSIFICATION	Ringfort - rath
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 22m southeast

DESCRIPTION	On an island in the Gort River within Gort town. Fahey (1893, 15, 174) noted that the 7th-C King Guaire had a 'palace' here, known as 'Gort insi Guaire'. Presumably it was an earthwork, possibly a ringfort, although no details of its form or extent are known. Not precisely located. The 18th-C military barracks (GA122-097002-) were subsequently built on its site (ibid., 15). The ITM coordinates provided here are only indicative of its general location based on the available evidence.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-097002
RMP STATUS	Not scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Gort
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545233 702162
CLASSIFICATION	Barracks
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 22m southeast
DESCRIPTION	-
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-006
RMP STATUS	Not scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Ballyhugh
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545049 701936
CLASSIFICATION	Church
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 30m southwest
DESCRIPTION	-
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-006001
RMP STATUS	Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Ballyhugh
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545047 701918
CLASSIFICATION	Graveyard
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 48m southwest
DESCRIPTION	-
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-098
RMP STATUS	Scheduled for inclusion for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Gort
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545035 702354
CLASSIFICATION	Milestone
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 60m north (moved from its original position c. 46m to the north)
DESCRIPTION	On the N outskirts of Gort town, in a grassy verge the E side of the R458. This milestone, named 'M.S.' on the 1922 edition of the OS 6-inch map, has been moved c. 50m to the S of its original location (ITM 545014, 702405). It consists of a well-dressed flat-topped trapezoidal-shaped limestone pillar (H 0.56m; Wth 0.28 at front, 0.42 at rear; D 0.35m) with a narrow chamfer to the front angles. The inscription on the front face would have read '17 From Galway' but, due to severe spalling, all that survives of it is '--/--om/Galway' (O'Sullivan 2021, No. 1). The milestone is one of nine in the study area, see also GA122-147----, GA122-148----, GA113-189----, GA113-217----, GA113-218----, GA103-217----, GA103-218-- and GA103-219----). (McManus 2022, 8-10, No. 1; SMR file)
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-109
RMP STATUS	Not scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Lavally
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545293 702174
CLASSIFICATION	Mill - corn
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 71m southeast
DESCRIPTION	-
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-096
RMP STATUS	Not scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Gort
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545118 702505
CLASSIFICATION	Redundant record
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 169m northeast

DESCRIPTION	This record relates to a fine example of a 19th-C water pump and stone trough. They are not archaeological monuments.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	GA122-108
RMP STATUS	Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP
TOWNLAND	Lavally
PARISH	Kiltartan
BARONY	Kiltartan
I.T.M.	545182 701753
CLASSIFICATION	Designed landscape feature
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 218m southwest
DESCRIPTION	In level grassland on the E bank of the Cannahowna River. Indicated and annotated 'G.P.' (gravel pit) on the OS Fair Plan and as an irregular enclosed tree plantation on the OS 1:2500 plan (surveyed 1912-16). An oval flat-topped mound of earth and stone (30m NE-SW; 24m NW-SE) is visible. Slight traces of a low bank are visible at S. Large rocks and boulders are scattered in the WSW sector. Most of the trees have been removed. Possibly a quarry site that was subsequently landscaped.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

APPENDIX 2 LEGISLATION PROTECTING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The cultural heritage in Ireland is safeguarded through national and international policy designed to secure the protection of the cultural heritage resource to the fullest possible extent (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999, 35). This is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the *European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (Valletta Convention), ratified by Ireland in 1997.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The *National Monuments Act 1930 to 2014* and relevant provisions of the *National Cultural Institutions Act 1997* are the primary means of ensuring the satisfactory protection of archaeological remains, which includes all man-made structures of whatever form or date except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes. A National Monument is described as 'a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto' (National Monuments Act 1930 Section 2). A number of mechanisms under the National Monuments Act are applied to secure the protection of archaeological monuments. These include the Register of Historic Monuments, the Record of Monuments and Places, and the placing of Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders on endangered sites.

OWNERSHIP AND GUARDIANSHIP OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS

The Minister may acquire national monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The state or local authority may assume guardianship of any national monument (other than dwellings). The owners of national monuments (other than dwellings) may also appoint the Minister or the local authority as guardian of that monument if the state or local authority agrees. Once the site is in ownership or guardianship of the state, it may not be interfered with without the written consent of the Minister.

REGISTER OF HISTORIC MONUMENTS

Section 5 of the 1987 Act requires the Minister to establish and maintain a Register of Historic Monuments. Historic monuments and archaeological areas present on the register are afforded statutory protection under the 1987 Act. Any interference with sites recorded on the register is illegal without the permission of the Minister. Two months' notice in writing is required prior to any work being undertaken on or in the vicinity of a registered monument. The register also includes sites under Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders. All registered monuments are included in the Record of Monuments and Places.

PRESERVATION ORDERS AND TEMPORARY PRESERVATION ORDERS

Sites deemed to be in danger of injury or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the 1930 Act. Preservation Orders make any interference with the site

illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can be attached under the 1954 Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders with the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister.

RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES

Section 12(1) of the 1994 Act requires the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (now the Minister for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) to establish and maintain a record of monuments and places where the Minister believes that such monuments exist. The record comprises a list of monuments and relevant places and a map/s showing each monument and relevant place in respect of each county in the state. All sites recorded on the Record of Monuments and Places receive statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1994. All recorded monuments on the proposed development site are represented on the accompanying maps.

Section 12(3) of the 1994 Act provides that ‘where the owner or occupier (other than the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands) of a monument or place included in the Record, or any other person, proposes to carry out, or to cause or permit the carrying out of, any work at or in relation to such a monument or place, he or she shall give notice in writing to the Minister of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands to carry out work and shall not, except in case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Minister, commence the work until two months after giving of notice’.

Under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004, anyone who demolishes or in any way interferes with a recorded site is liable to a fine not exceeding €3,000 or imprisonment for up to 6 months. On summary conviction and on conviction of indictment, a fine not exceeding €10,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years is the penalty. In addition, they are liable for costs for the repair of the damage caused.

In addition to this, under the *European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989*, Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) are required for various classes and sizes of development project to assess the impact the proposed development will have on the existing environment, which includes the cultural, archaeological and built heritage resources. These document’s recommendations are typically incorporated into the conditions under which the proposed development must proceed, and thus offer an additional layer of protection for monuments which have not been listed on the RMP.

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000

Under planning legislation, each local authority is obliged to draw up a Development Plan setting out their aims and policies with regard to the growth of the area over a five-year period. They cover a range of issues including archaeology and built heritage, setting out their policies and objectives with regard to the protection and enhancement of both. These policies can vary from county to county. The Planning and Development Act 2000 recognises that proper planning and sustainable

development includes the protection of the archaeological heritage. Conditions relating to archaeology may be attached to individual planning permissions.

Galway County Development Plan (2022–2028)

ARC 1

Legislative Context

Support and promote the preservation, conservation and appropriate management and enhancement of the County's archaeological sites and monuments, together with the settings of these monuments, having regard to the legislative, statutory and policy provisions relevant to the conservation of the archaeological heritage.

ARC 2

Archaeological Sites

Seek to encourage and promote awareness of and access to archaeological heritage of the County for all, through the provision of information to landowners and the community generally, in co-operation with statutory and other partners.

ARC 3

Archaeological Landscapes

To facilitate where possible the identification of important archaeological landscapes in the County.

ARC 4

Protection of Archaeological Sites

Protect archaeological sites and monuments their settings and visual amenity and archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments, or that are newly discovered and seek to protect important archaeological landscapes.

ARC 5

Development Management

All planning applications for new development, redevelopment, any ground works, refurbishment, and restoration, etc. within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to Recorded Monuments or within the historic towns of County Galway will take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation.

ARC 6

Burial Grounds

Protect the burial grounds, identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, in co-operation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Encourage the local community to manage burial grounds in accordance with best conservation and heritage principles.

ARC 7

Battlefield Sites

Protect the Battle of Aughrim site and other battlefield sites and their settings.

ARC 8

Underwater Archaeological Sites

To protect and preserve the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites and associated features. In assessing proposals for development, the Council will take account of the potential underwater archaeology of rivers, lakes, intertidal and sub-tidal locations.

ARC 9

Recorded Monuments

Ensure that any development in the immediate vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sensitively designed and sited and does not detract from the monument or its visual amenity.

ARC 10

Zones of Archaeological Potential

To protect the Zones of Archaeological Potential located within both urban and rural areas and around archaeological monuments generally as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places. Any development within the ZAPs will need to take cognisance of the potential for subsurface archaeology and if archaeology is demonstrated to be present appropriate mitigation (such as preservation in situ/buffer zones) will be required.

ARC 11

Industrial and Post Medieval Archaeology

Protect and preserve the archaeological value of industrial and post medieval archaeology such as mills, limekilns, bridges, piers, harbours, penal chapels and dwellings. Proposals for refurbishment, works to or redevelopment/conversion of these sites should be subject to careful assessment.

ARC 12

Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes

Have regard to archaeological concerns when considering proposed service schemes (including electricity, sewerage, telecommunications, water supply) and proposed roadwork's (both realignments and new roads) located in close proximity to Recorded Monuments and Places and their known archaeological monuments.

Gort Local Area Plan (2013–2023)

Policy BH1 – Built Heritage

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the conservation of architectural and archaeological heritage, including the Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Area and Recorded Monuments and Places and other important features of architectural or archaeological heritage within the Plan Area. Galway

County Council will ensure the implementation of the legislative, statutory and policy provisions relevant to the conservation of built heritage, including the following (and any updated/superseding documents):

- Legislative provisions in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended).
- Statutory provisions in the Galway County Development Plan, including the Record of Protected Structures.
- Policy guidance in the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015, the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004, the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers and the National Policy on Town Defences 2008.

Policy BH2 – Cultural Heritage

It is the policy of Galway County Council to acknowledge and promote awareness of the origins, historical development and cultural heritage of the town, to support high quality developments that relate to local heritage and to ensure that new development respects and is responsive to the cultural heritage of Gort

Objective BH8 – Archaeological Heritage

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage in the Plan Area, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development 2000 (as amended), the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended), the National Policy on Town Defences 2008 and the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers.

Objective BH9 – Monuments and Places

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of the monuments and places included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), together with the integrity of their character and setting, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development 2000 (as amended), the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended), the National Policy on Town Defences 2008 and the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers. This will include the protection of all monuments on the list provided by the National Monument Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which has statutory responsibility in this area.

Objective BH10 – Zones of Archaeological Potential (refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Ensure that all planning applications for new developments and all proposed infrastructure projects/ schemes in close proximity (30m) to Recorded Monuments and Places (RMPs) and within Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAPs) are referred to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and take account of the archaeological heritage of the area, any advice received from the DAHG and the need for archaeological assessments and, where appropriate, mitigation measures.

Objective BH11 – Local Place Names

Protect local place names as an important part of the cultural heritage and unique character of the Plan Area. Support the use of appropriate names for new developments that reflect the character and heritage of the area and that contribute to the local distinctiveness of Gort. New developments will be required to consult with Coiste Logainmneacha Chontae na Gaillimhe, the Galway County Council „Placename Committee“, and to identify an appropriate name for new developments that reflect the local heritage and character of the area.

APPENDIX 3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND THE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL REMAINS

Impacts are defined as ‘the degree of change in an environment resulting from a development’ (Environmental Protection Agency 2022). They are described as profound, significant or slight impacts on archaeological remains. They may be negative, positive or neutral, direct, indirect or cumulative, temporary or permanent.

Impacts can be identified from detailed information about a project, the nature of the area affected and the range of archaeological and historical resources potentially affected. Development can affect the archaeological and historical resource of a given landscape in a number of ways.

- Permanent and temporary land-take, associated structures, landscape mounding, and their construction may result in damage to or loss of archaeological remains and deposits, or physical loss to the setting of historic monuments and to the physical coherence of the landscape.
- Archaeological sites can be affected adversely in a number of ways: disturbance by excavation, topsoil stripping and the passage of heavy machinery; disturbance by vehicles working in unsuitable conditions; or burial of sites, limiting accessibility for future archaeological investigation.
- Hydrological changes in groundwater or surface water levels can result from construction activities such as de-watering and spoil disposal, or longer-term changes in drainage patterns. These may desiccate archaeological remains and associated deposits.
- Visual impacts on the historic landscape sometimes arise from construction traffic and facilities, built earthworks and structures, landscape mounding and planting, noise, fences and associated works. These features can impinge directly on historic monuments and historic landscape elements as well as their visual amenity value.
- Landscape measures such as tree planting can damage sub-surface archaeological features, due to topsoil stripping and through the root action of trees and shrubs as they grow.
- Ground consolidation by construction activities or the weight of permanent embankments can cause damage to buried archaeological remains, especially in colluviums or peat deposits.
- Disruption due to construction also offers in general the potential for adversely affecting archaeological remains. This can include machinery, site offices, and service trenches.

Although not widely appreciated, positive impacts can accrue from developments. These can include positive resource management policies, improved maintenance and access to archaeological monuments, and the increased level of knowledge of a site or historic landscape as a result of archaeological assessment and fieldwork.

PREDICTED IMPACTS

The severity of a given level of land-take or visual intrusion varies with the type of monument, site or landscape features and its existing environment. Severity of impact can be judged taking the following into account:

- The proportion of the feature affected and how far physical characteristics fundamental to the understanding of the feature would be lost;
- Consideration of the type, date, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, rarity, potential and amenity value of the feature affected;
- Assessment of the levels of noise, visual and hydrological impacts, either in general or site-specific terms, as may be provided by other specialists.

APPENDIX 4 MITIGATION MEASURES AND THE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE

POTENTIAL MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE REMAINS

Mitigation is defined as features of the design or other measures of the proposed development that can be adopted to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset negative effects.

The best opportunities for avoiding damage to archaeological remains or intrusion on their setting and amenity arise when the site options for the development are being considered. Damage to the archaeological resource immediately adjacent to developments may be prevented by the selection of appropriate construction methods. Reducing adverse effects can be achieved by good design, for example by screening historic buildings or upstanding archaeological monuments or by burying archaeological sites undisturbed rather than destroying them. Offsetting adverse effects is probably best illustrated by the full investigation and recording of archaeological sites that cannot be preserved *in situ*.

DEFINITION OF MITIGATION STRATEGIES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The ideal mitigation for all archaeological sites is preservation *in situ*. This is not always a practical solution, however. Therefore, a series of recommendations are offered to provide ameliorative measures where avoidance and preservation *in situ* are not possible.

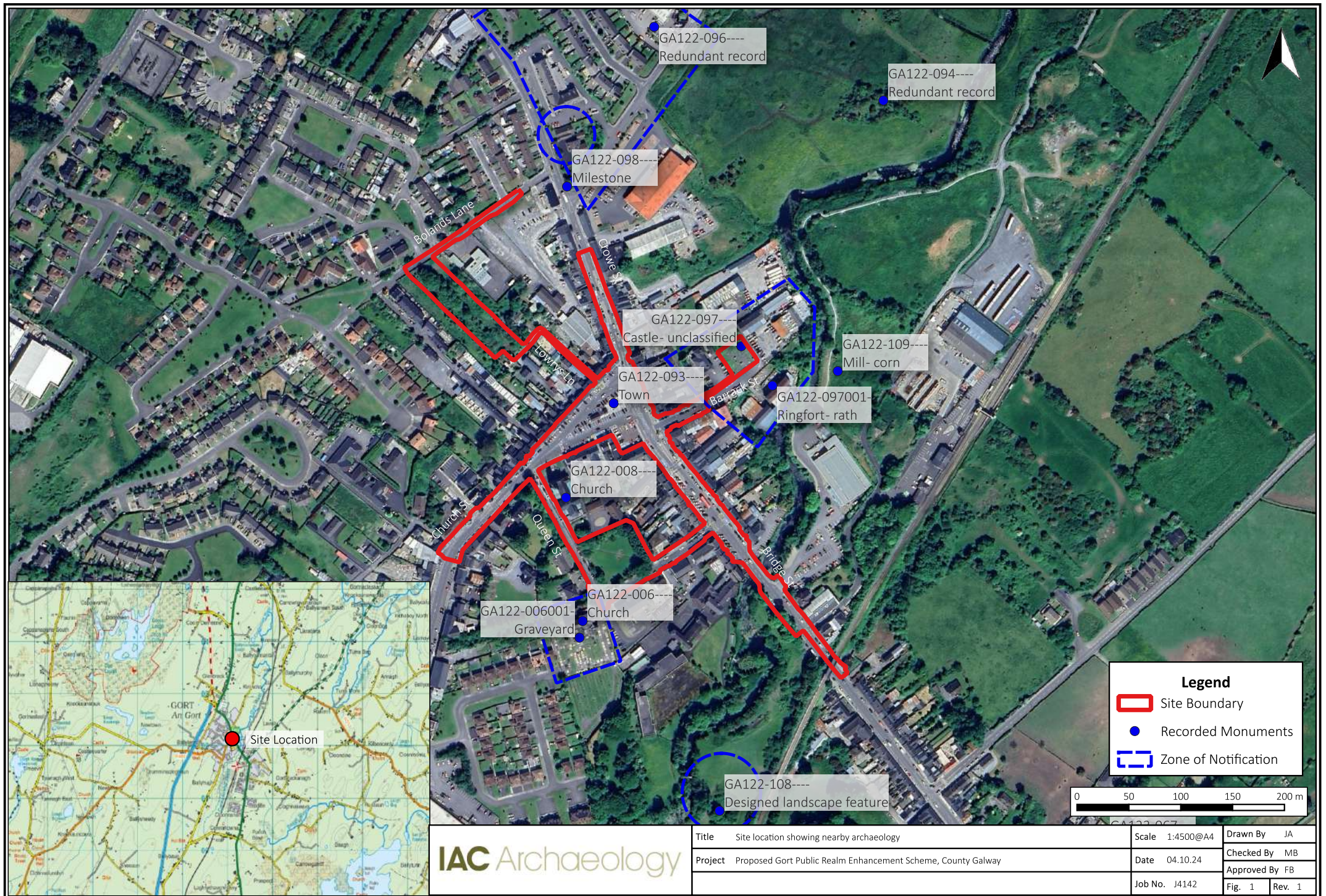
Archaeological Test Trenching can be defined as ‘a limited programme of intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate’ (ClfA 2020a).

Full Archaeological Excavation can be defined as ‘a programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines, records and interprets archaeological deposits, features and structures and, as appropriate, retrieves artefacts, ecofacts and other remains within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. The records made and objects gathered during fieldwork are studied and the results of that study published in detail appropriate to the project design’ (ClfA 2020b).

Archaeological Monitoring can be defined as ‘a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be

disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive (ClfA 2020c).

Underwater Archaeological Assessment consists of a programme of works carried out by a specialist underwater archaeologist, which can involve wade surveys, metal detection surveys and the excavation of test pits within the sea or riverbed. These assessments are able to access and assess the potential of an underwater environment to a much higher degree than terrestrial based assessments.





IAC Archaeology

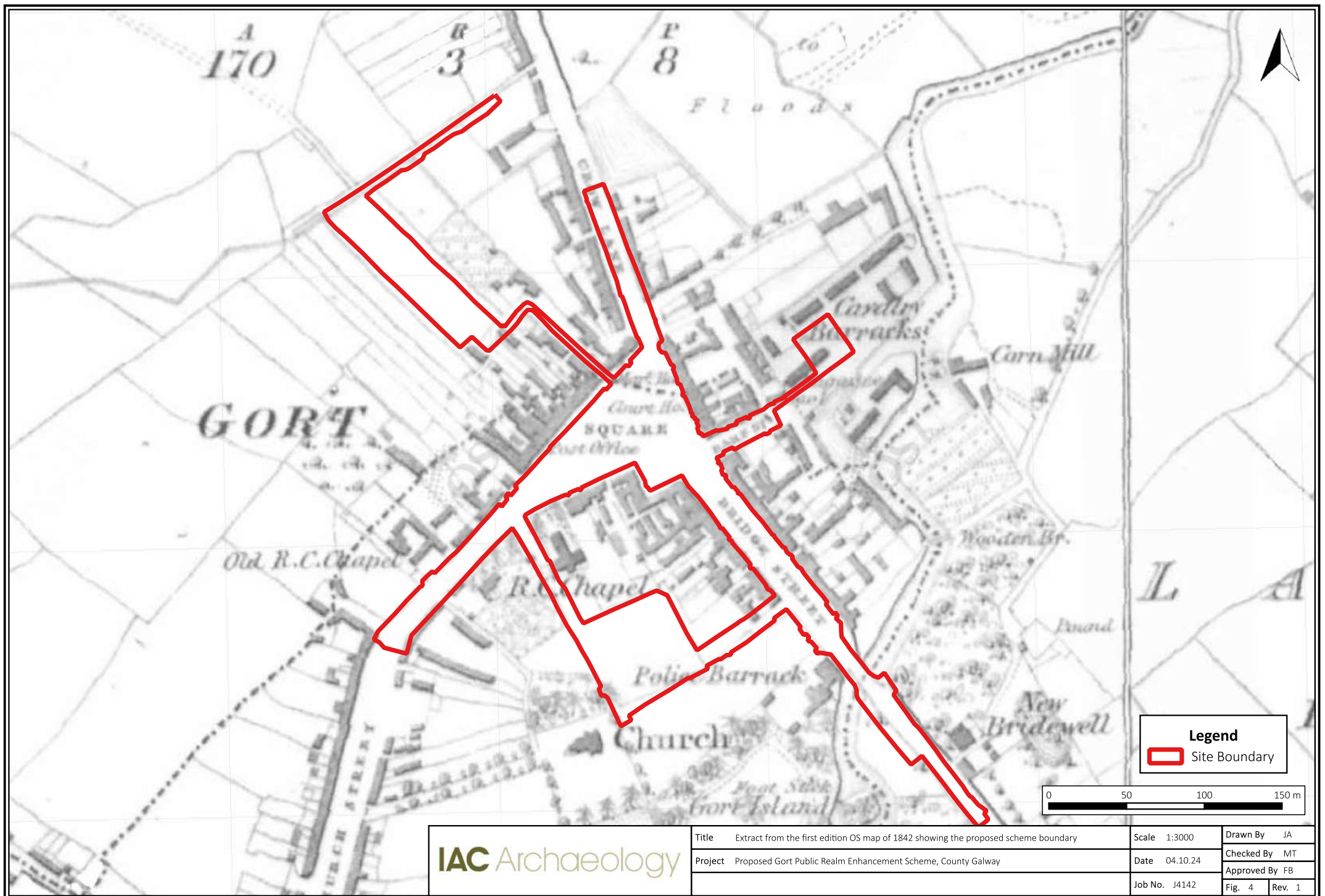
Title: Plan of the proposed development	Scale: NTS	Drawn By: JF
Project: Proposed Gord Public Realm Enhancement Scheme, County Galway	Date: 04.10.24	Checked By: FB/MT
	Job No.: J4142	Fig. 2 Rev. 0

Taylor and Skinner 1777



Larkin 1819





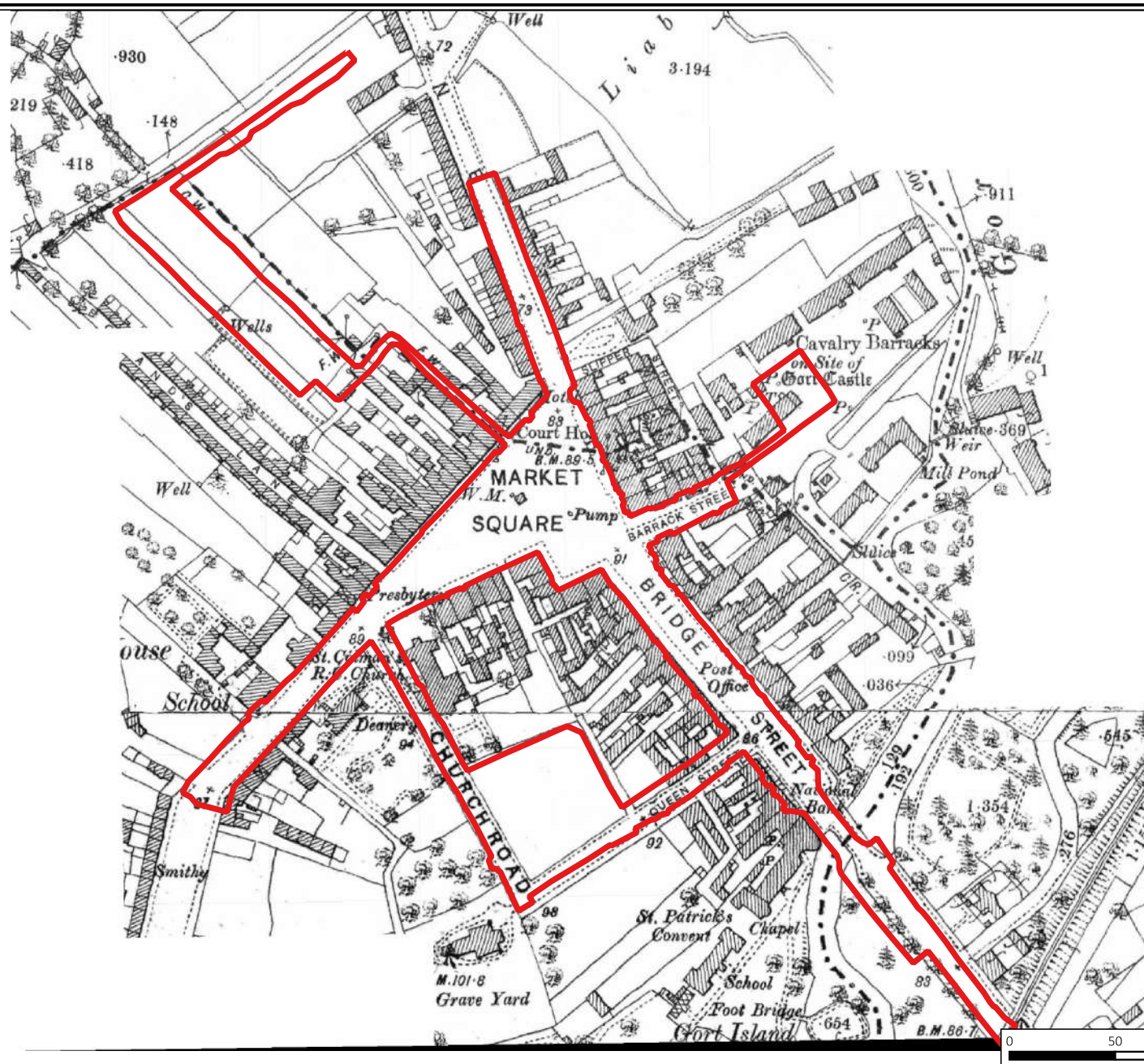




Plate 1: Church Street, facing northeast



Plate 2: Market Square, facing northeast



Plate 3: Crane house and pump, facing east



Plate 4: Commemorative plaque, facing southwest



Plate 5: 'Christ the King' monument, facing north



Plate 6: St. Colman's RC Church, facing south



Plate 7: Crowe Street, facing north



Plate 8: Milestone (GA122-098), facing southwest



Plate 9: Barrack Street, facing east



Plate 10: Indicative location of Gort Castle (GA122-097), facing northwest



Plate 11: Barracks (GA122-097002), facing southeast



Plate 12: Inscription on the bridge over Cannahowna River, facing east



Plate 13: Canon Quinn Park, facing southeast



Plate 14: Millstone in Canon Quinn Park



Plate 15: Second millstone in Canon Quinn Park



Plate 16: Burial area within churchyard, facing north