

Archaeological Desktop Assessment

The South – North Access Road

(Abbey Road to Belmont Road)

Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny

Client: O'Connor Sutton Cronin

Local Authority: Kilkenny County Council

Issue date: September 2024

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Copies of this report have been presented to:	O'Connor Sutton Cronin
Please Note:	The International and European conventions on the protection of cultural heritage ratified in Ireland have been taken into consideration for the purposes of this report. The National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, the Heritage Act 1995, Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999, The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and guidelines issued by the statutory bodies have been consulted in the assembly of this report. All of the recommendations made within this assessment are based on design plans and information provided by the client at the time of writing. Should any alterations be made to design plans or development proposals, further assessment may be necessary. Recommendations are subject to approval by the National Monuments Service at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and by the National Museum of Ireland.
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1. Introduction

This archaeological desktop assessment had been prepared by Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. for O'Connor Sutton Cronin, acting on behalf of Kilkenny County Council, as supporting information for a Part 8 application of planning permission by Kilkenny County Council in relation to The South – North Access Road, an infrastructural development linking Abbey Road (LP3412) to Belmont Road (R711) in Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny. The statutory objective underpinning the Council's delivery of the new road scheme is provided for in the Ferrybank Belview Local Area Plan 2017, which is also restated in the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The purpose of the archaeological desktop assessment is to identify potential archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage constraints and impacts in respect of the infrastructural development. To that end, the purpose of the report is to:

- (i) evaluate the nature and extent of known archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage assets at, and around the site;
- (ii) address potential impacts on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage assets, including potential visual effects and potential impacts on sub-surface archaeological remains; and
- (iii) provide mitigation recommendations to address potential impacts on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage assets.

1.1 Site Location

The South – North Access Road is aligned between Abbey Road (LP3412) (to the south) and the R711 (former N25) road, or Belmont Road (to the north), in Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny. The Ferrybank area is located to the north of the River Suir, forming a suburban area associated with the expansion of Waterford City on the north bank of the Suir (Figure 1). The South – North Access Road will link existing access roads serving residential developments, Abbey Meadows on Abbey Road at the Abbeygate Shopping Centre, which is situated in Rathculliheen townland, and Clover Meadows off the R711 Belmont Road, which is situated in Abbeylands townland; the existing access roads serve as sections of the link road constructed under previously granted planning permissions (Figure

2). The South – North Access Road will for the most part be constructed through Rathculliheen townland.

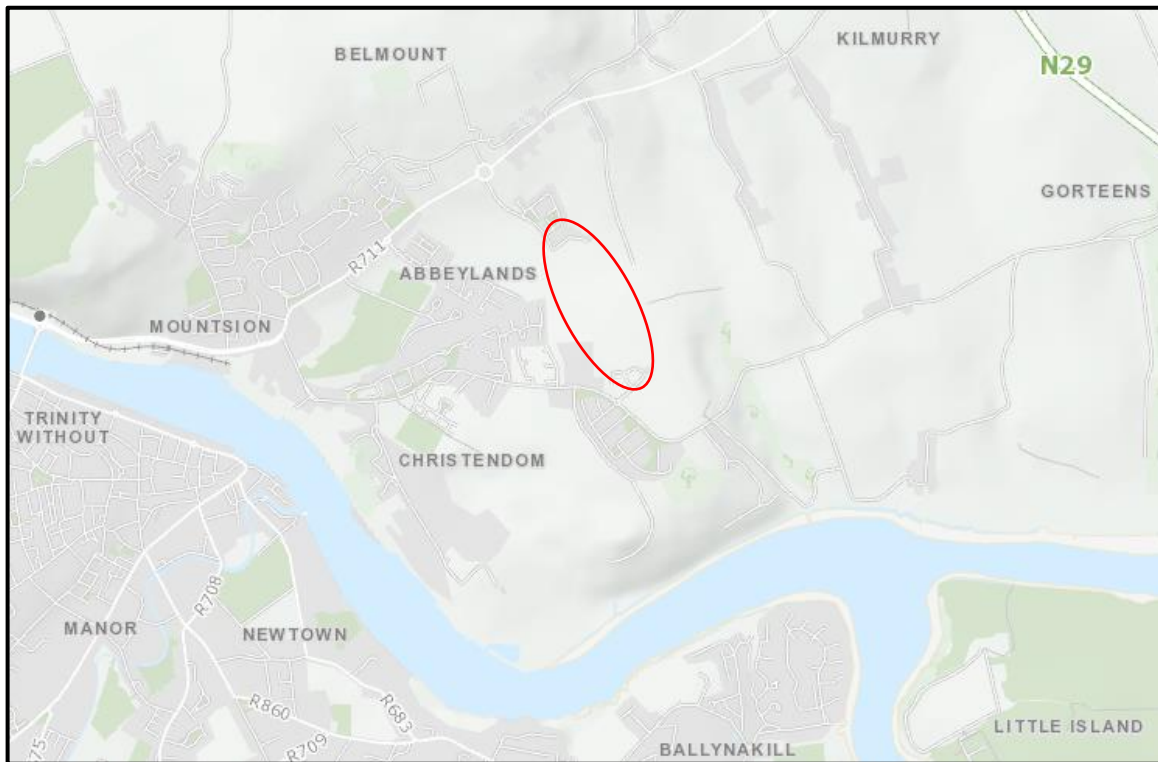


Figure 1 Location of The South – North Access Road, Ferrybank (outlined red) in wider context (Tailte Eireann - Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

1.2 Site Description

The South – North Access Road is aligned in a wider landscape of undulating and rising ground north of the River Suir, where the landscape is drained by a number of tributary streams running generally NNW-SSE into the Suir. One of these streams forms the eastern boundary of Rathculliheen townland, flowing in a steep-sided valley.

The topography in Rathculliheen townland at the location of The South – North Access Road is generally rising from all sides, comprising a low natural ridge, oriented NNW-SSE, from which there are extensive views; the crest of the ridge was chosen as the setting for a late 18th century mansion known as Newpark House, where remnants of its coach house and walled gardens, along with the remains of more modern activity associated with a former pig production business survive on the surface of the ridge. The land is steepest to the east side of the ridge, with more gently rising ground from the remaining sides, with a low-lying wetland to the centre west side of the ridge, centred on a pond. The natural ridge rises to a maximum height of c. 40m OD.

The South – North Access Road is aligned through undeveloped land between the existing sections of link road at Abbey Meadows and the Abbeygate Shopping Centre and Clover Meadows, which is bisected by the former railway line between Ferrybank and New Ross, part of the Waterford, New Ross and Wexford Railway that operated between 1904 and 1963. The abandoned railway now forms part of the South East Greenway, having recently been constructed along the railway line, the land to either side of the railway being in the ownership of private developers. The land to the south of the railway line, surrounding the remains of the former Newpark House and later piggery business remains in agricultural use; the land to the north of the railway line is no longer used for agricultural purposes, but is used recreationally by residents of the surrounding residential estates.

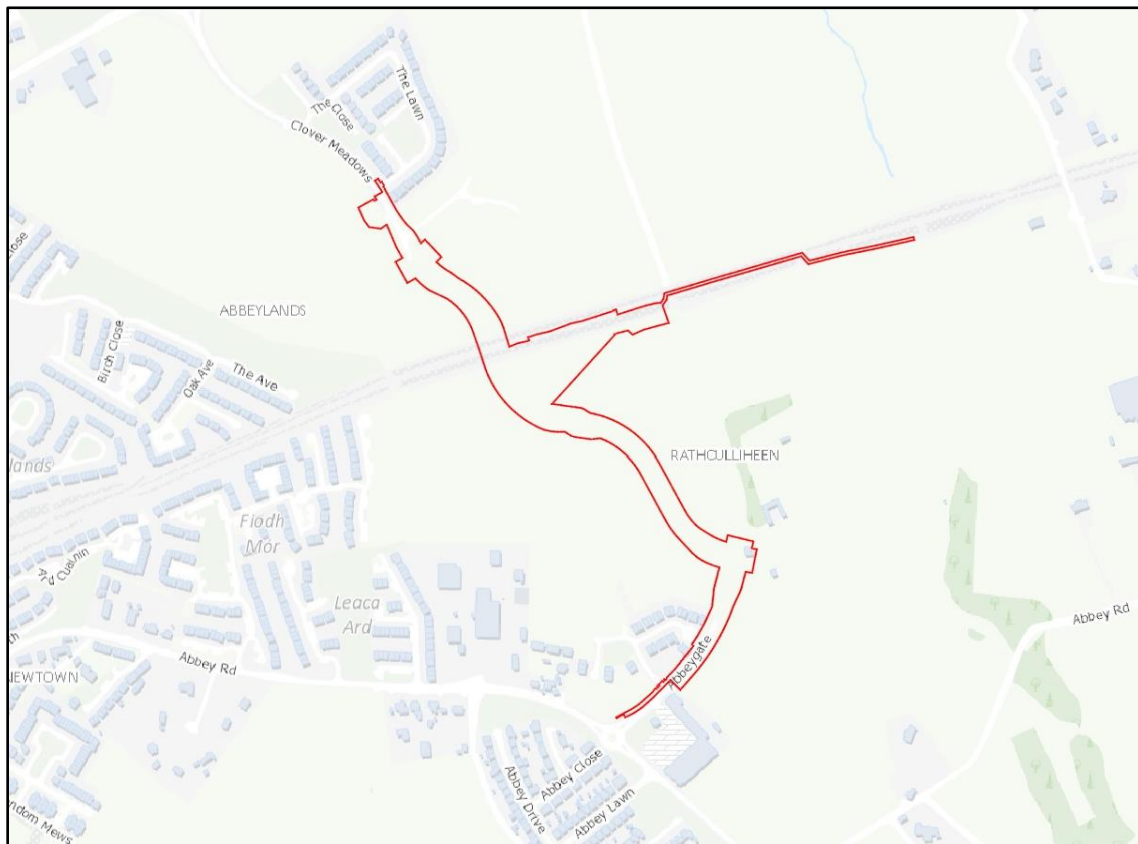


Figure 2 Location of The South – North Access Road, Ferrybank (outlined red) in local context (Tailte Eireann - Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

1.3 Development Description

The purpose of The South – North Access Road is to facilitate the continued development of zoned lands at Rathculliheen and surrounding townlands. The scheme will measure approximately 940m long, having variable width (c. 18m – 25m), linking with approximately

400m of roadway already provided by private developers at the Abbey Meadows and Clover Meadows estates (Figure 3). Junctions will be required and positioned along the extent of the road to facilitate access to the zoned lands, and a new bridge structure over the former railway line will form part of the scheme. The provision of a surface water drainage system will include attenuation storage (above and below ground) and a storm drain aligned partly on the former railway line and partly to the south side of railway embankment, heading east and discharging to the existing stream that forms the eastern boundary of Rathculliheen townland. The scheme will also incorporate a new carpark (accommodating c. 172 no. parking spaces and 2 no. bus parking spaces) on the immediate south side of the railway line, at the bridge crossing on the railway. The carpark will service the South East Greenway, recently constructed along the railway line.

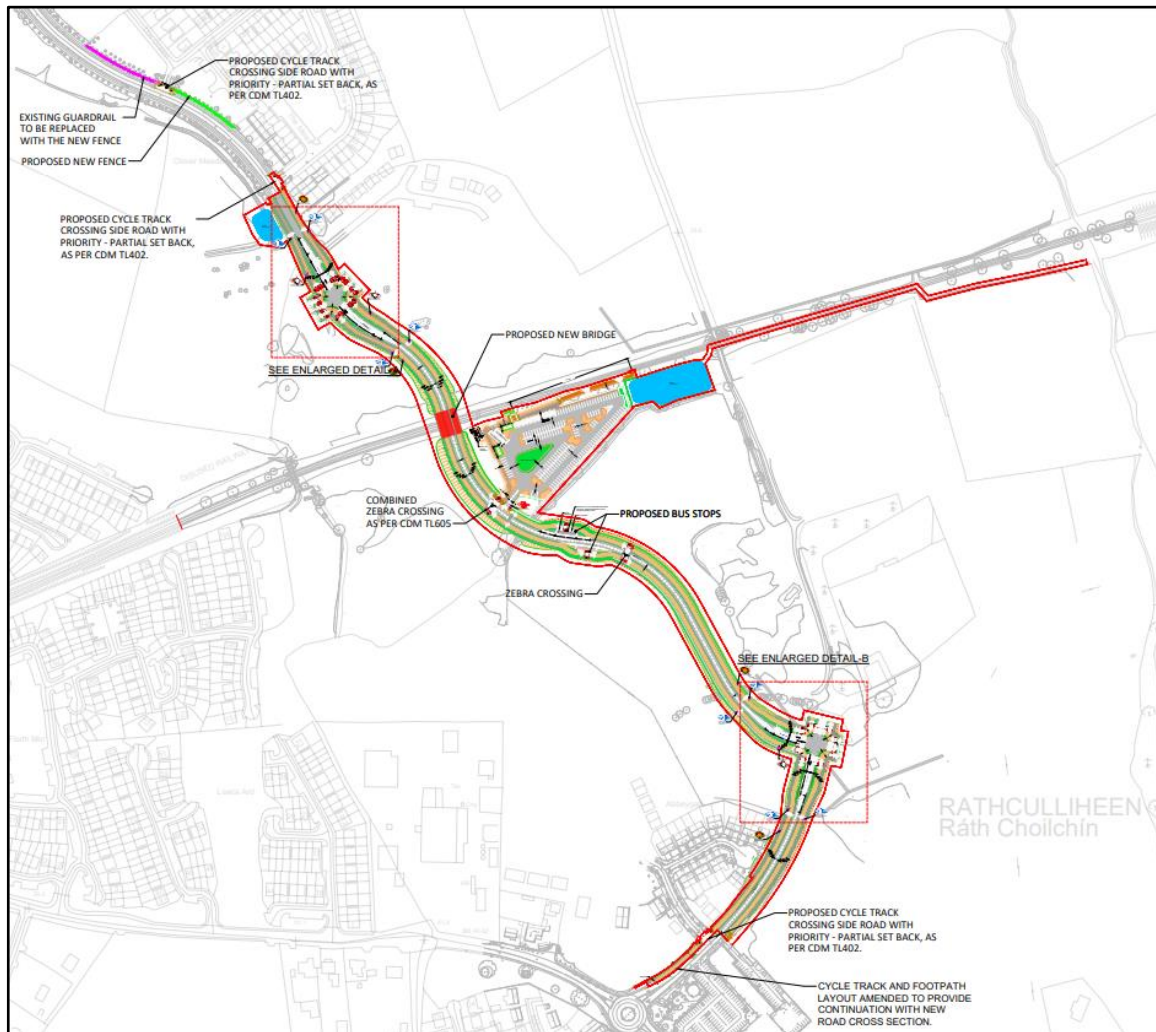


Figure 3 Finalised layout of The South – North Access Road (Source: O'Connor Sutton Cronin, dated 12.07.2024).

1.4 Planning Background

The zoned lands held by private developers to either side of the former railway line in Rathculliheen and Abbeylands townlands have been subject to past planning applications and permissions for mixed-use residential developments. Planning permissions include 03/760 and 05/1351, relating to land on the north side of the railway line, and 03/1711 and 08/620, relating to land on the south side of the railway line. Prior archaeological assessments, forming part of Environment Impact Statements, following by non-invasive (geophysical survey) and invasive (test-trenching) archaeological investigation techniques, have formed part of the planning process in respect of the above permissions. The results of past archaeological investigations are detailed in Section 3.6, Previous Archaeological Investigations, below.

2. Assessment Methodology

This assessment report is based on a desk-top study of relevant archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage sources, supported by an on-site inspection. The assessment is guided by relevant legislation, standards and guidelines in respect of archaeology and cultural heritage, as follows.

2.1 Legislative Protection for Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

Ireland has ratified and is guided by several international and European conventions, charters and directives on the protection of archaeological and cultural heritage, principally:

- International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice Charter) 1964;
- UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (The World Heritage Convention) 1972;
- European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention) 1985;
- European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention) 1992; and

- European Council Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment (85/337/EEC) (as amended).

National legislation protecting archaeology and cultural heritage sites comprises:

- National Monuments Acts 1930-2014;
- Heritage Act 1995;
- Cultural Institutions Act 1997;
- Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999;
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); and
- Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Act 2023 (enacted and partially commenced at date of writing, September 2024).

The following standards and guidelines were also consulted as part of this assessment:

- Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999), Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands;
- Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation (1999), Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands;
- Archaeology & Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (2000), The Heritage Council;
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011), Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands.
- Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment of TII National Road and Greenway Projects (2024), Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

2.2 Desktop Study

The following were the principal desk-based sources consulted:

National Monuments

Under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, archaeological sites in the ownership or guardianship of the State or a Local Authority and sites under Preservation Orders are

designated as National Monuments. Such sites are offered the highest level of protection under Irish legislation.

Record of Monuments & Places and Sites and Monuments Record

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 of the 1994 National Monuments (Amendment) Act. The statutory RMP is a list of archaeological monuments known to the National Monuments Service (NMS). The RMP is based on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) files housed at the National Monuments Service, with new sites identified being added to the SMR and then scheduled for inclusion in the statutory RMP. These sites are accorded statutory protection as recorded monuments under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014.

Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

The topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) are the national archive of all known antiquities recorded by the NMI. These files relate primarily to artefacts but also include references to monuments and contain a unique archive of records of previous excavations. The find-spots of artefacts can be an important indication of the archaeological potential of an area. Any archaeological object found without a known owner at the time it was found is protected under National Monument's legislation and is deemed to be in the ownership of the State.

Excavations Bulletin and Excavations Database

The Excavations Bulletin is both a published annual directory and an on-line database that provides summary accounts of all the excavations carried out in Ireland – north and south – from 1969 to the present. The on-line database has been compiled from the published Excavations Bulletins from the years 1970-2010, with additional online-only material from 2011 onwards. The database gives access to summary descriptions of archaeological excavation reports, and is updated on a constant basis.

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is an ongoing survey within the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. The work of the NIAH involves identifying and recording the architectural heritage of Ireland, from AD1700 to the present day and includes country houses, churches, mills, bridges and other structures of note,

inclusive of historic gardens and designed landscapes. The NIAH for Kilkenny was published in 2006, and structures rated as being of regional or above importance are included in the Minister's recommendations to the planning authorities for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures.

Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027

Each City and County Development Plan is compiled in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and contains lists of national monuments, registered historic monuments, recorded monuments, archaeological landscapes, and archaeological sites subject to preservation orders, as well as a Record of Protected Structures (RPS), which includes structures deemed to be of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, inclusive of industrial heritage sites and historic gardens and designed landscapes.

The Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out Kilkenny County Council's vision and strategy for the proper planning and sustainable management of the County's heritage. Heritage, Culture and the Arts are addressed in Volume 1, Chapter 9, with Archaeological Heritage (Section 9.3.1) and Architectural Heritage (Section 9.3.2) addressed under the all-encompassing title of Built Heritage (Section 9.3); Cultural Heritage is addressed in Section 9.4 of the plan. The RPS is accessible on Kilkenny County Council's web mapping application available at kilkennycoco.maps.arcgis.com.

Archaeological Heritage is defined in the plan (pg. 140) as "...the material remains left behind by past societies and includes structures, places, sites, features or portable objects, whether on land, underwater or in the intertidal zone". The plan acknowledges that, in addition to physical impacts, "...development can impact on the visual appreciation, setting and amenity of recorded monuments. Such impacts should be adequately assessed and, where possible, eliminated or minimised" (pg. 141).

Objective 9C outlines Council aims to:

"protect archaeological sites and monuments (including their setting), underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, and in the Urban Archaeological Survey of County Kilkenny or newly discovered sub-surface and underwater archaeological remains."

Archaeological Development Management Requirements are as follows:

- To endeavour to preserve in situ all archaeological monuments, whether on land or underwater, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and any newly discovered archaeological sites, features, or objects by requiring that archaeological remains are identified and fully considered at the very earliest stages of the development process and that schemes are designed to avoid impacting on archaeological heritage.
- To require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological remains.
- To ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sited and designed appropriately so that it does not seriously detract from the setting of the feature or its zone of archaeological potential. Where upstanding remains of a Recorded Monument exist a visual impact assessment may be required to fully determine the effect of any proposed development.
- To require the retention of surviving medieval plots and street patterns and to facilitate the recording of evidence of ancient boundaries, layouts etc. in the course of development.
- To safeguard the importance of significant archaeological landscapes from developments that would unduly sever or disrupt the relationship, connectivity and/or inter-visibility between sites.

Ferrybank Belview Local Area Plan 2017

Further detail on the built heritage of the wider study area is laid out in Chapter 7.0 of the Ferrybank Belview Local Area Plan 2017, with archaeological and architectural heritage addressed under Built Heritage, Section 7.1.

Cartographic Sources

Information gathered from cartographic sources is fundamental to the identification of archaeological and architectural heritage sites, including cultural landscapes e.g. demesne landscapes, which, based on the level of landscape change, are now often identified from cartographic records alone. The earliest Ordnance Survey maps date to the late 1830s and early 1840s, but much change has occurred in the use and treatment

of the landscape in the intervening years, particularly during the second half of the 20th century, making these a valuable resource in tracing the development of a study area.

Toponymy Sources

A townland name may preserve information relating to its archaeology, history, folklore, ownership, topography or land use. Most placenames were anglicised by the Ordnance Survey, which began in the 1830's. Despite some inaccuracies in translation, the Gaelic, Viking, Anglo-Norman and English origins of placenames are generally recognisable. The Placenames Database of Ireland website (www.logainm.ie) hosts online bi-lingual placename research and archival records for townlands.

Aerial Photographs

Aerial photographs are a useful aid in identifying archaeological monuments that are not visible at ground level. Variations in the way plants grow can indicate sub-surface remains and can indicate the location of subsurface monuments such as ringforts, deserted medieval villages or ring-ditches. Many monuments recorded by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) have been identified through use of aerial photographs as an archaeological survey tool.

Documentary Sources

Documentary sources are a valuable means of completing the written archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage record of an area, and of gaining insight into the history of the receiving environment. A list of all consulted documentary sources is provided in bibliographic form.

2.3 On-Site Inspection

On-site inspection offers the opportunity to examine a study area in light of desk-based research and evidence. Inspection is essential in determining the nature and extent of any surviving above-ground evidence, and in predicting the potential effects of a proposal on potential below-ground remains. A site inspection was conducted by the author along the alignment of The South – North Access Road, Ferrybank over two days, 29-30 November 2023.

3. Receiving Environment

3.1 Archaeological and Historical Background

The townland of Rathculliheen extends in a linear fashion south to north from the north bank of the River Suir to a point just north of the R711 Belmont Road (old N25), part of the Waterford to New Ross road. It currently forms part of the Barony and Civil Parish of Kilculliheen, but traditionally formed part of the Barony of Ida, comprising the south-east of County Kilkenny, being transferred to the Barony of Kilculliheen in 1841. Ida is thought to derive from a pre-Norman sept, the *Ui Deaghaigh*, O'Dea in English, whose tribal lands occurred in the district of Slieverue, in the south-east of the ancient kingdom of *Osraige* (O'Kelly 1985), which corresponds with the present diocese of Ossory. *Osraige* emerged as a powerful kingdom in the early 7th century, successfully fighting off incursions by the Vikings during the 9th century (Murtagh 2000). In the early 12th century, the kingdom fragmented, and comprised three sub-kingdoms on the arrival of the Anglo-Normans to south-east Ireland in 1169 AD, south County Kilkenny and the land of the *Ui Deaghaigh* being ruled as part of *Deasceart Osraige* by Cearbhall MacGilla Patraic (Murtagh 2000).

The townland is anglicised from the Irish *Ráth Choilchin*, containing the Irish root word *ráth*, meaning a fort, and is translated as (St.) Calchin's rath (O'Kelly 1985). The townland is recorded from the late medieval period, and has been variously spelt, being recorded in 1541 as *Rathkyllyn*, in 1584-7 as both *Rathkiline* and *Rathkilkellehine* and in 1659 as *Rathclehene* (www.logainm.ie). The townland adjoins Abbeylands and Newtown (formerly part of a larger Abbeylands land unit, along with Christendom townland) to the west, and Kilmurry to the east, Kilmurry townland containing the nearby village of Slieverue. Abbeylands, in Irish *Fearann na mainistreach*, relates to the former lands of the Augustinian abbey or nunnery of Kilculliheen, from *Cill Cailchin*, the church of Cailchin (WA009-008----). The nunnery's dedicated to an early Irish saint suggests that an early medieval church may previously had stood at the site (Murtagh 2000). The site of the nunnery, on a knoll above the River Suir at *Port Mor*, now Ferrybank (O'Kelly 1985), is believed to be marked in the modern landscape by the present Church of Ireland Abbey Church, fronting the Abbey Road to the west of Rathculliheen.

Prehistoric activity in the immediate locality of Rathculliheen and The South-North Access Road alignment is dominated by monuments of Bronze Age origin (c. 2200-700 BC), where

field survey has identified the remains of numerous *fulachtaí fia*. 10 such sites are recorded between the R711 Belmont Road and the River Suir in Abbeylands, Newtown and Christendom townlands, immediately west of Rathculliheen, all generally situated in close proximity of contour 30m OD. *Fulacht fia* are described as a horseshoe-shaped or kidney-shaped mound consisting of fire-cracked stone and charcoal-enriched soil built up around a sunken trough located near or adjacent to a water supply, such as a stream or spring, or in wet marshy areas. The first recorded use of the Irish term '*fulacht fiadh/fia*' (cooking pit of the deer or of the wild) as relating to ancient cooking sites was in the 17th century. The monuments are generally interpreted to have been associated with cooking, as they were clearly used to prepare large quantities of boiling water, although cooking may not have been an exclusive or main use. It has been argued that such monuments could have been used as saunas or sweat-houses, used for bathing, or for a semi-industrial purpose such as washing or dyeing of cloth or in the preparation of leather (Waddell 1998). A similar monument is the burnt mound, described as a circular or irregularly shaped mound of material consisting of burnt stones, ash and charcoal with no surface evidence of a trough or depression. Levelled examples can appear as a spread containing burnt stones. These can be of any date from the Bronze Age to the early medieval period (5th - 12th century AD).

An Early Bronze Age burial was also uncovered nearby, during construction of the GAA pitch at Slieverue village. Here, a short cist (KK043-036----) containing the cremated bones of one individual was found in association with a piece of quartz. Many standing stones have also been recorded in south County Kilkenny, including in the north-east part of Rathculliheen townland (KK046-034----), where a rectangular stone (1.2m x 0.5m) of Old Red Sandstone, oriented ENE-WSW, sits on an E-facing slope above the stream valley that forms the townland boundary between Rathculliheen and Kilmurry (the stream also forms a parish boundary). A second standing stone sits approximately 0.5km to the north of the Rathculliheen example, in adjacent Ballinvoher townland (KK043-070----), also standing above the same stream valley. Standing stones are described as a stone which has been deliberately set upright in the ground, usually orientated on a NE-SW axis, although other orientations do occur, and varying in height from 0.5m up to 6m. They functioned as prehistoric burial markers, commemorative monuments, indicators of routeways or boundaries and date from the Bronze and Iron Ages (c. 2200 BC - AD 500), with some associated with early medieval ecclesiastical and burial contexts (c. 5th-12th centuries). Therefore, in the absence of excavation at either the Rathculliheen or Ballinvoher examples it is not possible to date these sites securely to the Bronze Age.

The presence of a possible concentric enclosure in Rathculliheen (KK046-035----) has been added to the archaeological record as recently as 2015. A concentric enclosure is described as circular area enclosed by two or more concentric earth and/or stone banks with a wide space or berm between the enclosing banks. The space/berm consists of a wide flat area, which may have acted as some sort of bailey. Excavated examples suggest an Iron Age date for this monument type (c. 500 BC - AD 400). The possible concentric enclosure at Rathculliheen is recorded with an overall diameter of c. 90m, visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs dated August 1996. There is a gap of c. 20-30m between the inner (diam. c. 50m) and outer enclosure.

Archaeological work on the N25 Waterford City Bypass, which involved the systematic investigation of land on both sides of the River Suir, included 11 townlands in County Kilkenny, passing approximately 1.6m to the north of the R711 Belmont Road (old N25) and the townland of Rathculliheen. The results pushed back the earliest evidence of human occupation of the Lower Suir Valley to 7000-8000 BC, when Mesolithic people were hunting and gathering in close proximity of the River Suir and its tributaries (Eogan and Shee Twohig 2011), at a time when the Lower Suir Valley would have been densely wooded (Timpany in Eogan and Shee Twohig 2011). The results also significantly add to the prehistoric archaeological record of the region, with a large number of sites dating to the Bronze Age, reinforcing the conclusion that the landscape at, and in the immediate hinterland of The South – North Access Road was well settled and utilised from the Bronze Age, and that associated settlement related evidence may well be found in the vicinity of the many recorded *fulachtai fia*.

The results of archaeological work on the N25 demonstrates that the second millennium BC marked a period of expanding settlement and growing population (Eogan and Shee Twohig 2011), and a programme of radiocarbon dating confirmed that *fulachtai fia* were used throughout the Bronze Age in the Lower Suir Valley. Environmental reconstruction of the Lower Suir Valley in the Early and Middle Bronze Age (2200-1100 BC) showed increasing reed swamp along the river at this time, above which was carr-woodland, the floor of which would have been boggy. This reflects an increase in wetter conditions, a process that had commenced in the Neolithic (4000-2400 BC), driven by sea-level changes, and may account for the high number of *fulachtai fia* recorded on presently drier ground in Abbeylands, Newtown and Christendom townland. The excavations also demonstrated that while Iron Age (700 BC-AD 400) activity was disparate and small in scale in comparison to Bronze Age evidence, the identification of Iron Age activity reflects continued

settlement from the Bronze Age into later prehistory, and the possible concentric enclosure (KK046-035---) in Rathculliheen could well reflect continued Iron Age or early medieval settlement, as suggested in the placename.

The possible concentric enclosure in Rathculliheen is sited at the southern end of the crest of the ridge through Rathculliheen, which was clearly the focus of settlement in the post-medieval period, where the ridge became the setting of the late 18th century mansion known as Newpark House, with surrounding parkland. Newpark House was built by the Newports, a rich and powerful 18th century banking family; the house subsequently passed to the Bloomfield family (Bence-Jones 1980), and by 1848 the proprietor was William Fitzgerald (Dean 2016). The house burnt down in 1932 (Bence-Jones 1980, Dean 2016), and was demolished. However, a review of Griffith's Valuation suggests that the Newport family was still the property owner, as reps. of Sir J. Newport acted as the lessors of the house, with garden, two gate-lodges and land to William Fitzgerald. The first full-scale valuation of property in Ireland, Griffith's Valuation was overseen by Richard Griffith and published between 1847 and 1864. From the 1960s, the former Newpark House estate was the focus of a pig production business, when numerous modern farming units were built to the west side of the surviving coach house and walled garden; additional modern piggery units were built to the north side of the walled garden, amongst the remnants of earlier buildings. Newpark House was a seven bay three-storey structure, with rounded ends, as known from an 1898 photo (Plate 1) reproduced in *Vanishing Country Houses of Ireland* (The Knight of Glin *et al.*, 1988).



Plate 1 Newpark House in 1898 as reproduced in *Vanishing Country Houses of Ireland*, The Knight of Glin *et al.* 1988 (Source: Hurley 2008).

3.2 Cartographic Analysis

Early post-medieval maps of Ireland clearly record the parish of Kilculliheen, with a 1607 map by Gerhard Mercator recording the parish as 'Katekillin' (Figure 4).



Figure 4 Extract from a 1607 map of Ireland by Gerhard Mercator (Source: www.oldmapsonline.org).

More detail of the parish is recorded by the Down Survey in the mid-17th century. The Down Survey is a mapped survey carried out during the period 1656 - 1658 under the direction of Sir William Petty that recorded land confiscated from Irish Catholics following the Cromwellian war in Ireland (1649-1653). The Survey recorded parish and townland boundaries and their areas with precision throughout Ireland, capturing other details pertaining to roads, rivers, towns, churches, castles, houses and fortifications, as well as topographic and land use detail.

The Down Survey County map of Kilkenny and the barony map relating to Ida, Igrin and Ibercon both record Killculliheen parish, as 'Killcleehen', and also record a 'Killcleehen' (Killculliheen) townland and a 'Rathcleen' (Rathculliheen) townland, the county map (Figure 5) clearly showing a structure on a possible raised site close to Kilmurry on the eastern boundary. A significantly sized settlement in 'Rathcleen' (Rathculliheen) is shown on the more detailed barony map (Figure 6), the exact location of which is unknown, but which could well be in the immediate landscape of The South – North Access Road alignment.



Figure 5 Extract from the Down Survey County Map of Kilkenny, 1656-58 (Source: downsurvey.tcd.ie).

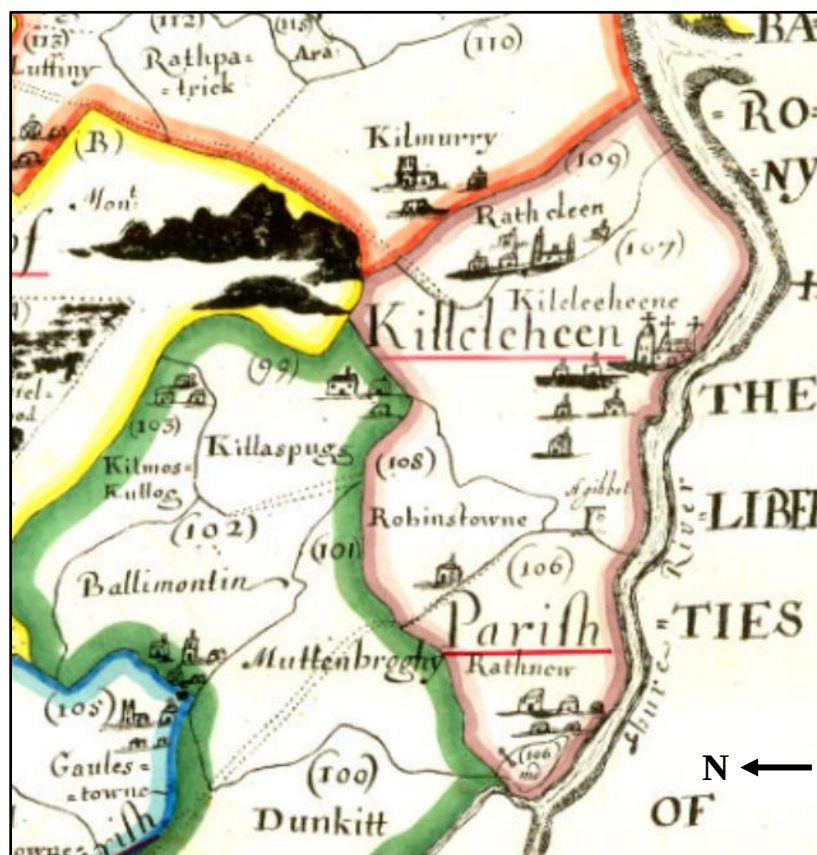


Figure 6 Extract from the Down Survey barony map of Ida Igrin Ibercon, 1656-58 (North to left of image)
(Source: downsurvey.tcd.ie).

A mid-18th century map by Richard and Scale, dated 1764 (Figure 7), covering the environs of Waterford city, including to the north bank of the River Suir, records the alignment of present-day Abbey Road, and does appear to show settlement at a crossroads labelled 'Rathcullyheen', at the location of Newpark House and parkland, suggesting settlement preceding the later 18th century Newpark House. This crossroads appears to have been modified with the landscape design associated with the development of Newpark House, which saw the present Abbey Road sweep southwards in a large curve below the ridge on which Newpark House was sited. The Richard and Scale map records field boundaries in detail and with accuracy, and records a notable roughly oval-shaped land unit a short distance NW of the 'Rathcullyheen' crossroads, directly east of which there is a building annotated 'Ballyfielly'. The road extending north from the 'Rathcullyheen' crossroads survives in the present-day landscape as a narrow road running north from the remains of the Newpark House walled garden over the present railway cutting.

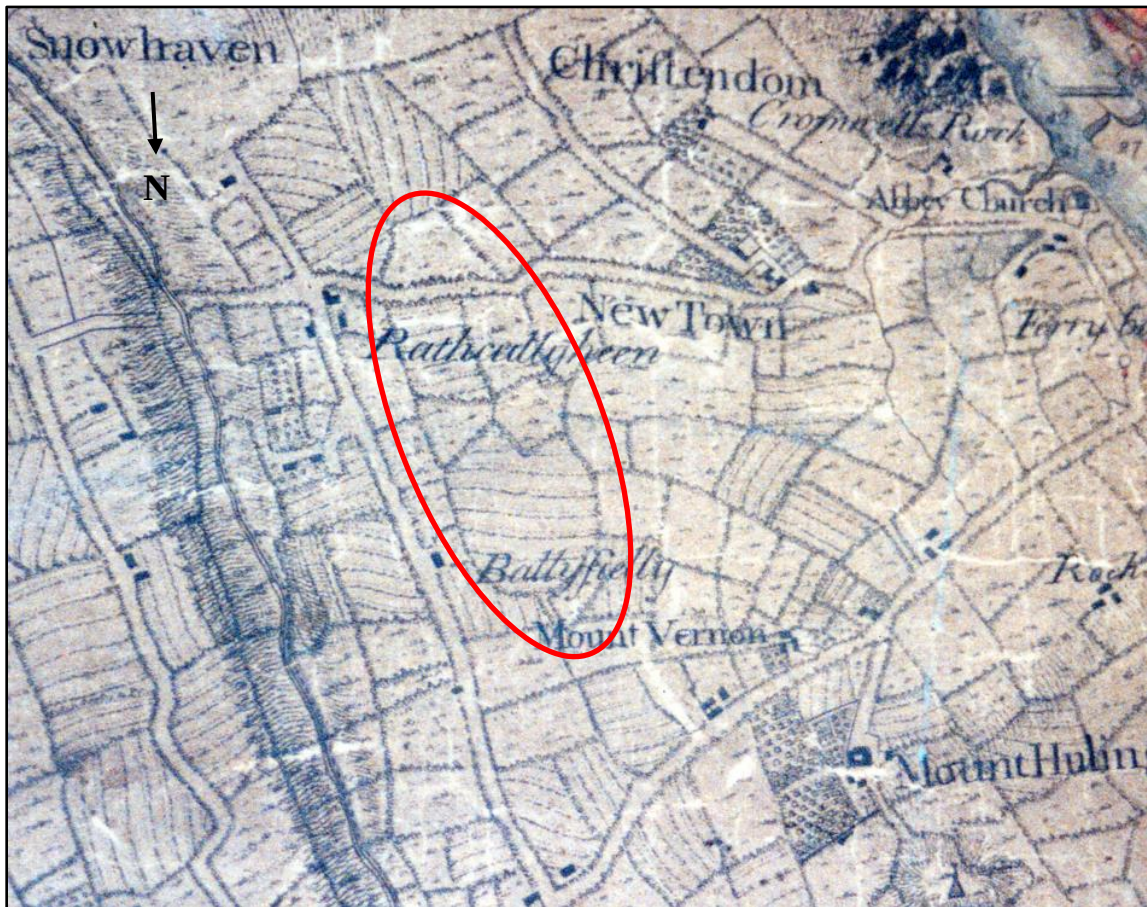


Figure 7 Extract from the Richards and Scale environs map of Waterford, 1764, showing the approximate location of The South – North Access Road (red outline) (North is to the bottom of the image) (Source: Waterford City Archives).

Newpark House is clearly an estate of note by the beginning of the 19th century, and is named on an 1802 map by J. Taylor, included in William Tighe's 'Statistical observations relative to the county of Kilkenny' (Figure 8) to the eastern boundary of 'Kilcullyheen' parish.



Figure 8 Map of Kilkenny County by Taylor, J, dated 1802, included in William Tighe's 'Statistical observations relative to the county of Kilkenny' (Source: libguides.ucd.ie).



Figure 9 A map of the county of Waterford by William Larkin, dated 1818 (6 sheets engraved by S. J. Neele, London 1819) (Source: libguides.ucd.ie).

A map of Waterford city showing the borough boundary and its division into electoral wards, created between 1896 and 1948, is based on an earlier plan of 1831 by George Hotham, titled 'County of the City of Waterford' (Figure 10). The recorded borough boundaries are as at 1896, added by Benjamin Graham, Waterford City Engineer at this time. Additional information about the history of the City has also been added, including the date (1743) when the City was first lighted with oil lamps and when first lit with gas lighting (1819). The Waterford borough boundary is shown following the stream forming the eastern boundary of Rathculliheen, and the map details the layout of Newpark Ho. and grounds, recording a number of internal roads, wooded parkland, and a distinct walled garden. Land to the north side of the walled garden is annotated 'Ann-Field'.



19

The first ever large-scale survey of Ireland was undertaken by the Ordnance Survey between 1829 and 1842, producing highly accurate maps at different scales. The first edition Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (Sheet KK046), surveyed in 1838 and published in 1842 (Figure 11), is the first map to record the alignment of The South – North Access Road in detail, recording roads, field boundaries, trees and the layout of Newpark House and parkland with accuracy. Two avenues are shown extending from Gate Lodges on Abbey Road, with Newpark House sited to the south side of extensive walled gardens. A second significantly sized building is also shown fronting a roadway to the north side of the gardens, the function of which is uncertain; the footprint of the building is not that of typical farm buildings, and it is backed by fields also forming part of the Newpark estate, the northernmost boundary of which is annotated as a nursery. The entrance avenue to Newpark House curves past the house, and a tree-lined field boundary or other landscape feature also curves in an opposite direction west of the house, as if following existing contours or features in the landscape. The other landscape feature of note on the map is a roughly oval-shaped land unit, which is subdivided into four fields; this oval-shaped land unit is also recorded on Richard and Scale's 1764 map (Figure 7), and may reflect an earlier enclosing element in the landscape. The south-east boundary of this feature borders mature parkland at the Newpark House estate.

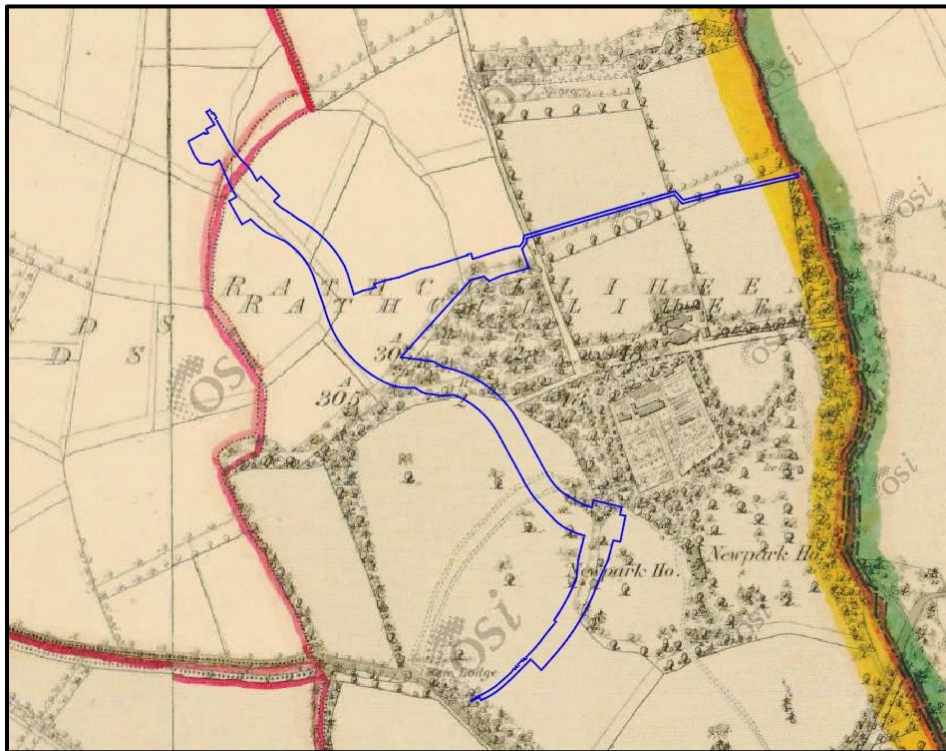


Figure 11 Extract from the first edition Ordnance Survey 6" map 1842 overlaid with The South – North Access Road alignment (outlined blue) (Tailte Eireann - Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

The revised 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (Sheet KK046-04), surveyed in 1902 and published in 1903 (Figure 12), is similar in detail to the first edition map, recording the still extant Newpark House and associated walled gardens, parkland, and possible farm buildings beyond the walled gardens to the north; coach house structures have been added to the south-west corner of the walled gardens. The notable landscape change is the addition of the Waterford to New Ross railway line, which is shown under construction to the immediate north of the Newpark House parklands, which severs part of the former grounds of the estate, containing a nursery, from the extant structures. The railway also necessitated the provision of a railway bridge on the road that accessed the Newpark estate from the north; to the south-east side of the railway bridge, a structure is shown linked with drainage channels, and may have served a drainage or water supply function. The railway also bisects the roughly oval-shaped land unit first shown on Richard and Scale's 1764 map, to the north-west of the Newpark walled gardens; this served to isolate a triangular piece of ground on the south side of the new railway line.

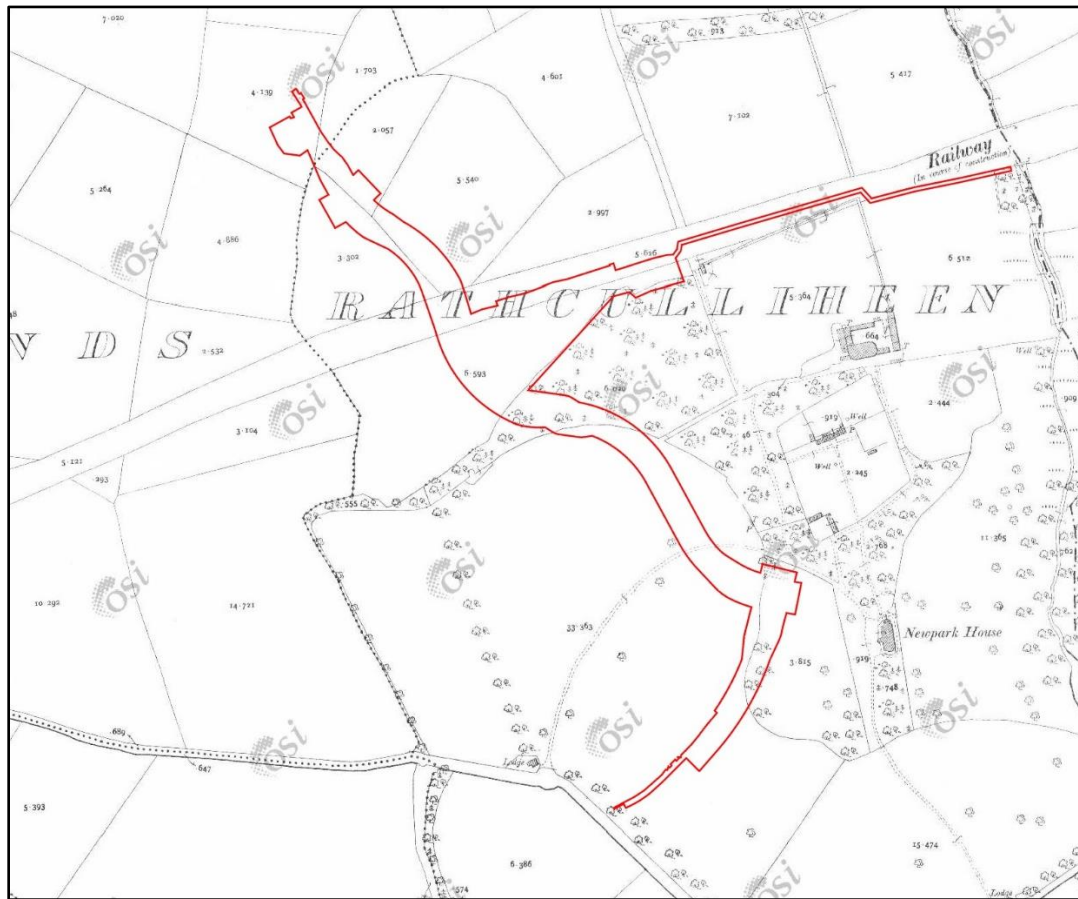


Figure 12 Extract from the Ordnance Survey 25" map 1903 overlaid with The South – North Access Road alignment (outlined red) (Tailte Eireann - Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

The mid-20th century 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, published in 1953 (Figure 13), records the surviving landscaped estate following the burning and demolition of Newpark House in 1932. With the exception of the loss of the house, most of the designed landscape elements associated with Newpark survive, although there is less evidence of parkland trees. The Waterford to New Ross railway line is shown complete to the north of the estate grounds. Throughout all map editions of the Ordnance Survey, field boundaries to the north of the Newpark House estate remain unaltered.

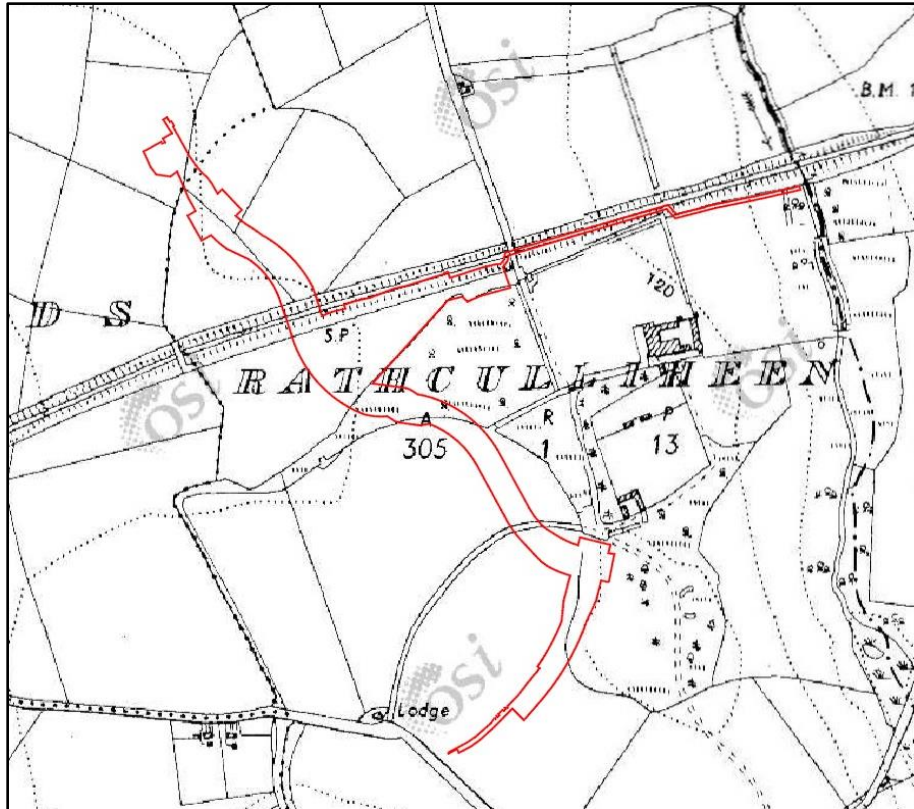


Figure 13 Extract from Ordnance Survey 6" map 1953 overlaid with The South – North Access Road alignment (outlined red) (Tailte Eireann - Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

3.3 National Monuments

No National Monuments are situated at, or in immediate hinterland of The South – North Access Road alignment. Granny Castle, National Monument No. 253, sited on the immediate north bank of the River Suir, is situated over 5km to the WNW. Three national monuments are recorded to Waterford City, all on the south side of the River Suir - Double Tower (No. 671) and Reginald's Tower (No. 661) forming part of the historic city's medieval town defences, and The French Church off Greyfriar's Street, a 13th century Franciscan Friary Church (No. 205).

3.4 Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)

Archaeological monuments currently recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) within a 1km radius of The South – North Access Road alignment are listed in Table 1. A total of sixteen monuments are recorded, being essentially prehistoric in origin and dominated by the class *fulacht fia*. The medieval religious house relating to the nunnery of Kilculliheen (WA009-008----), with an associated graveyard (WA009-008001-), is located just over 1km to the SW, while the medieval Kilmurry complex of monuments, including a tower house castle (KK046-028----), chapel (KK046-028001-), church (KK043-038001-) and holy well (KK043-037001-) are situated just over 1km to the NE.

Figure 14 shows recorded monuments relative to The South – North Access Road alignment. Each monument is represented by a red dot, which equates with the known approximate centre of the record and is not indicative of its geographic extent. The locations for the recorded *fulachtaí fia* were originally marked on a working 6-inch Ordnance Survey sheet (OS 46) prior to 1987 by staff of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI), most likely using 6-inch map coordinates (Jean Farrelly, NMS, 04.12.2023, pers. comm.). As will be seen in following sections, for some of the *fulachtaí fia* sites there is some inaccuracy between the recorded map locations and actual locations.

Records of monuments that are scheduled for inclusion in the next issue of the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) are surrounded by a zone (*shaded pink*). The zones do not define the exact extent of the monuments but rather are intended to identify them for the purposes of notification under Section 12 of the National Monuments Act (1930-2014); each is referred to as a 'zone of notification'. With the exception of four monuments, KK046-031----, KK046-032----, KK046-033---- (all in Newtown) and KK046-030---- (in Abbeylands), recorded monuments listed below in Table 1 are scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the statutory RMP.

Table 1 Recorded monuments within a 1km radius of The South – North Access Road alignment.

SMR No.	Class	Townland	ITM Grid Reference (E,N)	Proximity (m) ¹
KK046-009002-	Fulacht fia	Abbeylands	662358, 613526	72m
KK046-010----	Fulacht fia	Abbeylands	662263, 613372	0m

¹¹ Distances are approximate, and measured from the outer edge of the pink shaded Zone of Notification to the outer edge of The South – North Access Road alignment.

SMR No.	Class	Townland	ITM Grid Reference (E,N)	Proximity (m) ¹
KK046-011----	Fulacht fia	Abbeylands	662349, 613268	38m
KK046-012----	Fulacht fia	Abbeylands	662228, 613095	243m
KK046-013001-	Fulacht fia	Christendom	661948, 612425	902m
KK046-013002-	Fulacht fia	Christendom	662039, 612399	837m
KK046-014----	Fulacht fia	Christendom	662336, 612503	535m
KK046-015----	Fulacht fia	Christendom	662384, 612418	570m
KK046-008----	Fulacht fia	Abbeylands	662094, 613582	289m
KK046-009001-	Fulacht fia	Abbeylands	662383, 613614	156m
KK046-030----	Fulacht fia	Abbeylands	661737, 613353	626m
KK046-031----	Hearth	Newtown (Kilculliheen By.)	662313, 612333	707m
KK046-032----	Excavation - miscellaneous	Newtown (Kilculliheen By.)	662362, 612300	703m
KK046-033----	Hearth	Newtown (Kilculliheen By.)	662381, 612266	727m
KK046-034----	Standing stone	Rathculliheen	662698, 614013	652m
KK046-035----	Concentric enclosure	Rathculliheen	662858, 612875	0m

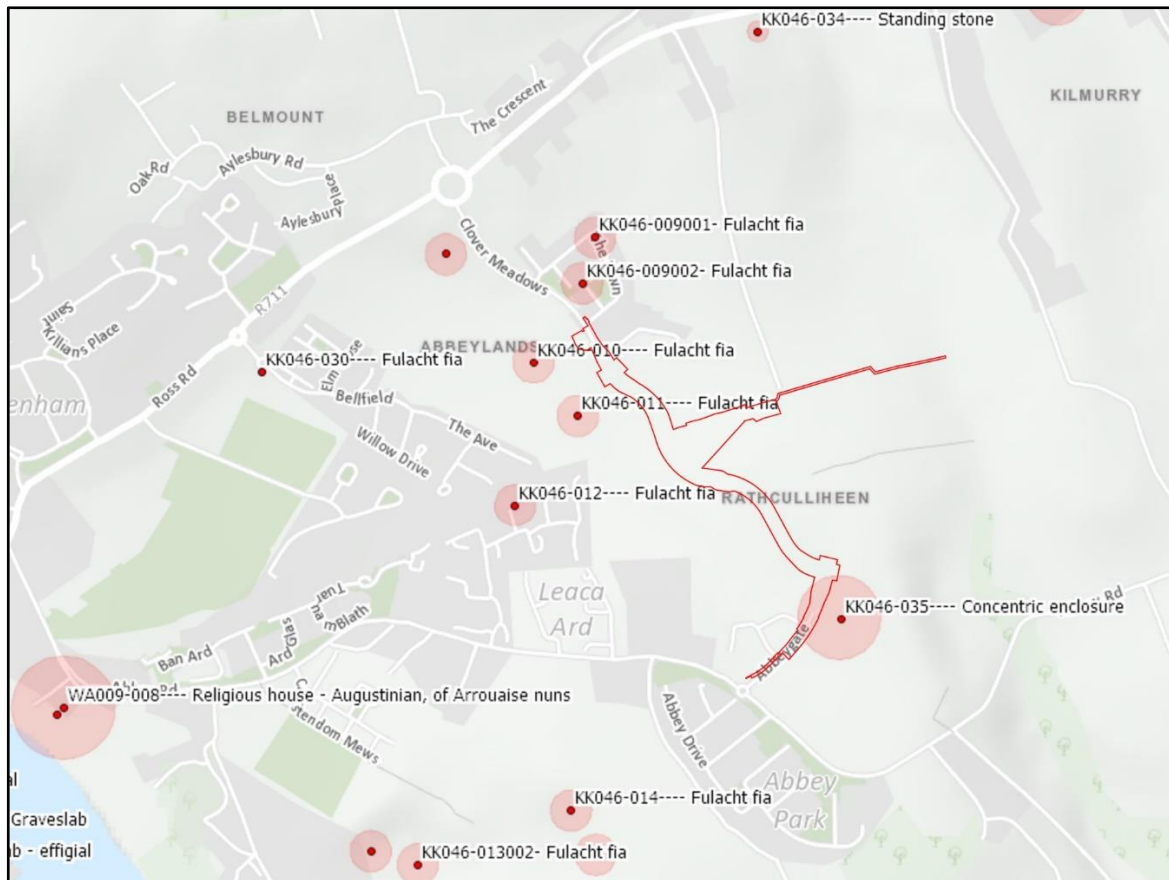


Figure 14 Distribution map of sites listed in the Sites and Monuments Record (red dots), and Zones of Notification (shaded pink), relative to The South – North Access Road alignment (outlined red) (Tailte Eireann - Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

3.5 Aerial Photographs

The following aerial photographs, which are available on Tailte Eireann's website, Geohive, were consulted, dated on the website as follows: MapGenie Imagery 1995, 1996-2000, 2001-2005, 2006-2012, Digital Globe Imagery 2011-2013 and MapGenie Imagery 2013-2018; the aerial photographs were accessed via the website on 11 November 2023. A current satellite Bing image, dated c. 2022/2023, recording the present-day setting was sourced at bing.com

The successful detection of archaeological sites through aerial photography varies, being dependant on several factors that include the position of the sun, the type of crop growing and the amount of rainfall in a growing season. In some years, such as during the drought of 2018, sites were clearly visible, while in others the same site would be undetectable from the air.



Figure 15 Aerial image dated 1995 showing the layout of a modern piggery in the remnants of a designed landscape associated with the former late 18th century Newpark House, north of Abbey Road (Source: geohive.ie).

The consulted aerial photographs show the gradual development of the Ferrybank area and the immediate hinterland of The South – North Access Road alignment. There were no residential developments between Abbey Road and R711 Belmont Road in 1995 (Figure 15), when a modern pig production business at the late 18th century Newpark House site remained in operation – the modern piggery comprised a large number of buildings / sheds sited to both the north and west sides of the walled garden and former coach house of the earlier Newpark House, with the two original entrance avenues off Abbey Road (at the locations of two former lodge houses associated with Newpark House) still clearly visible, the westernmost avenue being clearly the main entry to the property; a further access road is shown from the north.

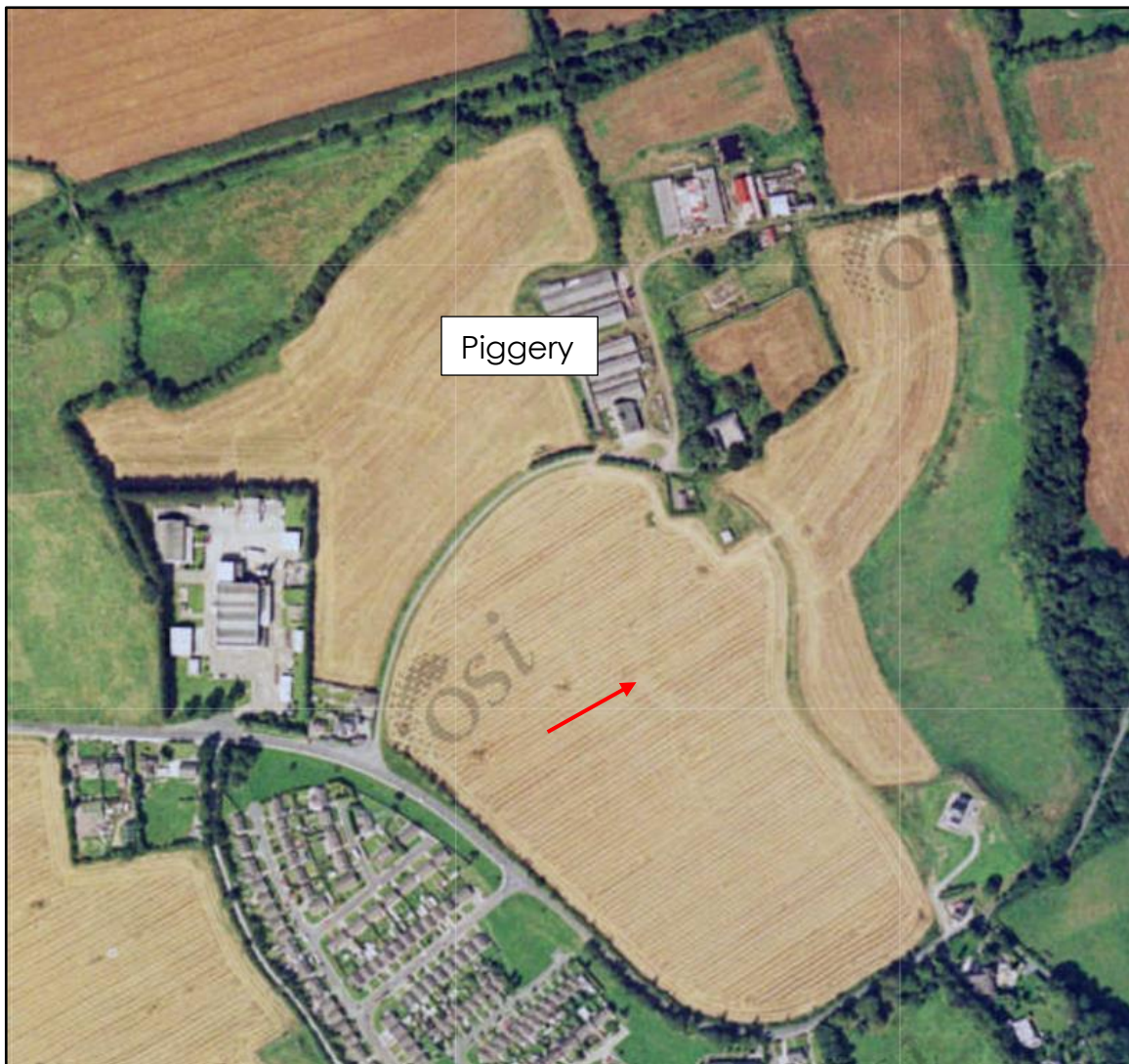


Figure 16 Aerial image titled 1996-2000 showing possible cropmarks (red arrow) within arable land defined by the two historic entrance avenues associated with the former late 18th century Newpark House (Source: geohive.ie).

The aerial photographs since 1995 demonstrate that the majority of the land traversed by The South – North Access Road has been farmed as arable land, the image titled 1996-2000 capturing potential curvilinear cropmarks in an arable field defined by the alignments of the two historic entrance avenues off Abbey Road that served the former Newpark House (Figure 16). The potential curvilinear cropmarks are better captured on low-level Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) aerial photographs taken in August 1996 (Figure 17). It is evident when comparing the ASI aerial photographs with historic Ordnance Survey maps that some of the cropmarks correlate with former field boundaries or landscape features associated with the designed landscape at Newpark House, while it is also possible that this landscape, including parts of the curving entrance avenues, may mirror an archaeological feature that well preceded the development of Newpark House and its grounds.



Figure 17 Extract from ASI aerial photograph (1) 27 taken in August 1996 showing cropmarks recorded as monument KK046-035---- (Source: National Monuments Service archives).

A slightly later aerial, titled 2001-2005, shows the residential estates in Abbeylands townland, to the west of The South – North Access Road alignment, in development, and interestingly a series of dark spreads are visible in cultivated fields between the R711 Belmont Road and the railway line (Figure 18). These dark spreads, in the main, relate to the recorded *fulachtai fia* in Abbeylands, although there is some inaccuracy between the early map readings for the monuments and the actual locations as represented by the spreads visible in the aerial image.

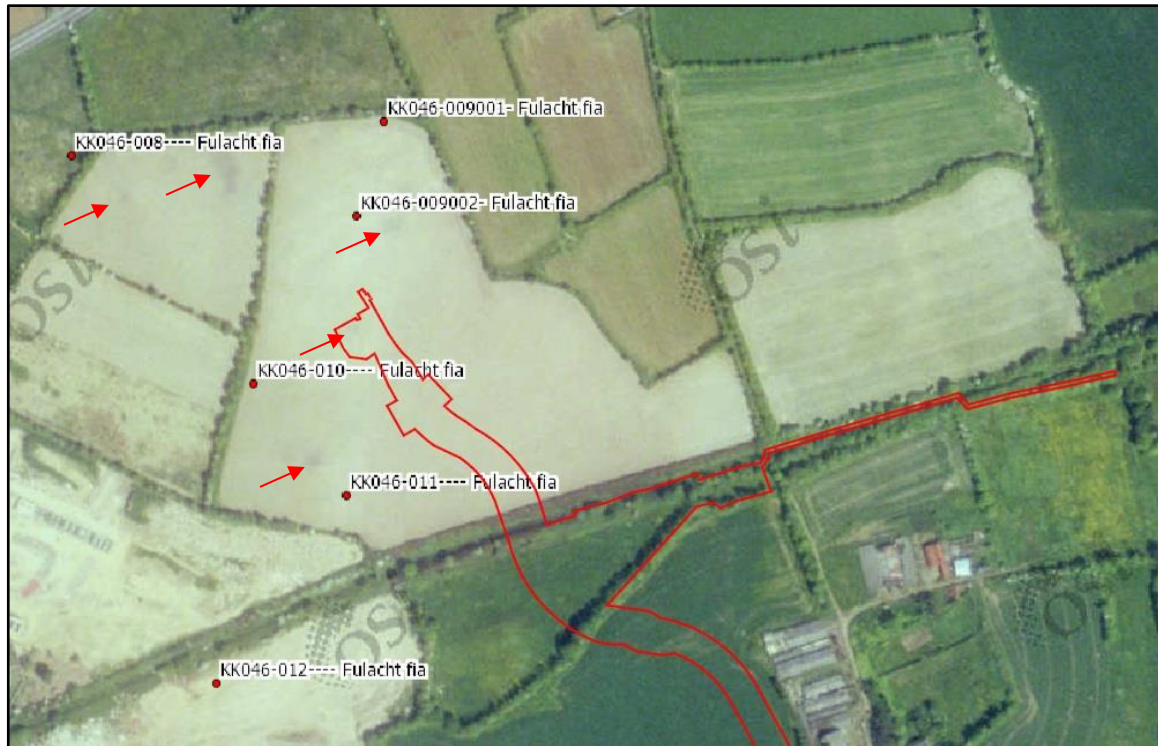


Figure 18 Aerial image titled 2001-2005 showing dark coloured spreads within cultivated fields (red arrows) relative to the general alignment of The South – North Access Road (outlined red) south of the R711 Belmont Road. The visible spreads relative to the recorded SMR sites (red dots) shows some inaccuracy between the recorded SMR site and the actual site (Source: heritagedata.maps.arcgis.com).

The 2006-2012 image records the landscape of The South – North Access Road following the completion of residential developments at Abbey Meadows, north of Abbey Road, which developed to either side of the main entrance avenue to the former Newpark House, and at Clover Meadows off the R711 Belmont Road, where there has been a clear cessation in the use of the land west and south of the Clover Meadows estate as farmland. In the ownership of a private developer, the undeveloped land at Clover Meadows has undergone some construction related disturbance during the development of the Clover Meadow estate. At the former Newpark House grounds, notably the modern piggery comprising numerous buildings to the west and north sides of the Newpark House walled

garden and coach house, have wholly been removed, and the location of recorded monument KK046-035---- has been utilised for the deposition of spoil and/or debris. This present-day setting is also captured on aerial image 2011-2013, and on a c. 2022/2023 Bing satellite image (Figure 19).

Throughout all images, a single triangular piece of ground, created following the construction of the railway through Rathculliheen, to the north of Newpark House, remains uncultivated and under pasture; a permanent pond and wetland has developed in this piece of ground over approximately the last 20 years, although this land is likely to have always been wet.

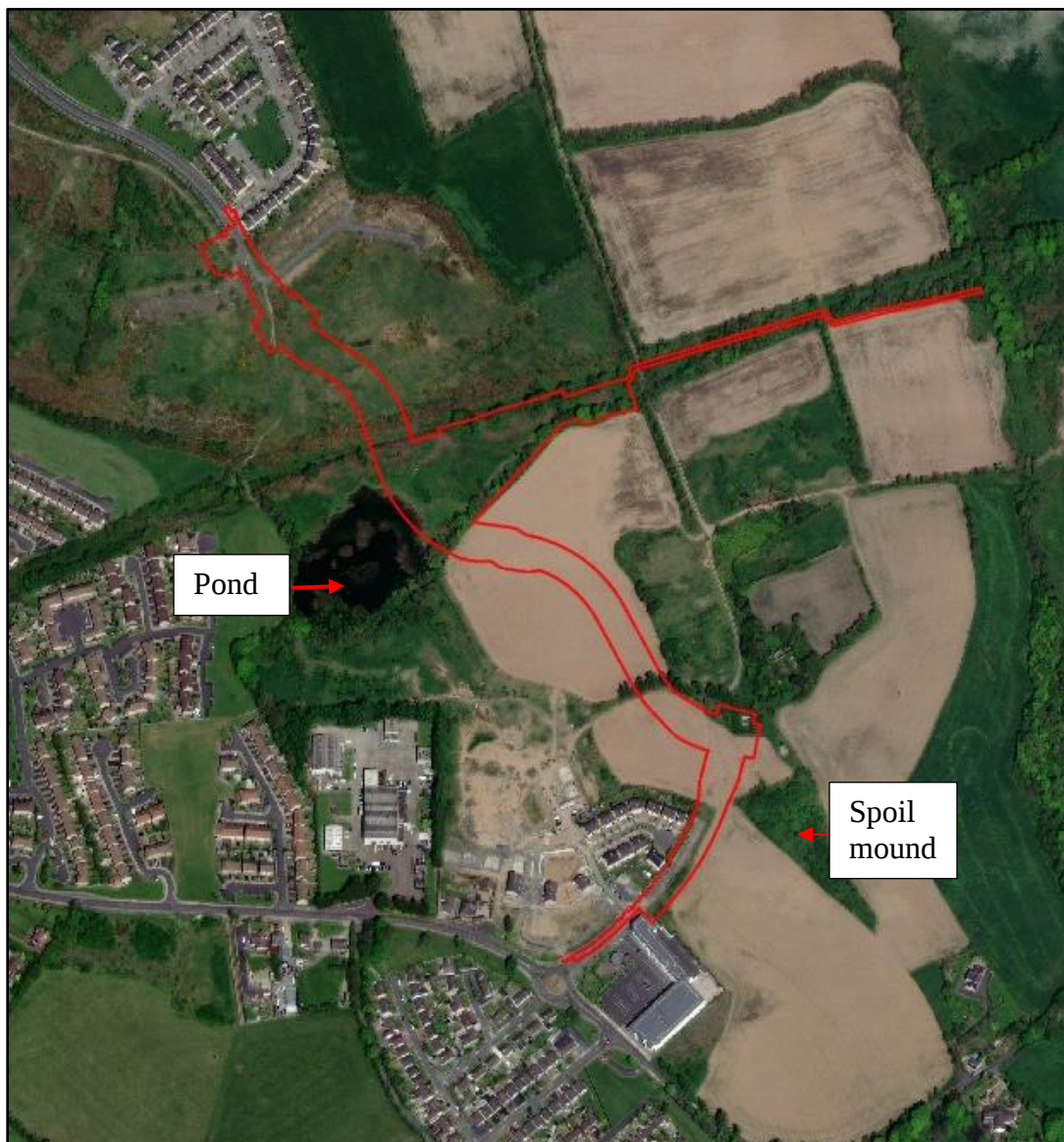


Figure 19 Satellite image c. 2022/2023 showing the location of The South – North Access Road (outlined red) in its present setting and immediate hinterland (Source: bing.com).

3.6 Previous Archaeological Investigations

A number of prior archaeological investigations and excavations are of direct relevance to The South – North Access Road, having been carried out in connection with planning application and permissions relating to mixed used developments by private developers to either side of the road's alignment, and to both sides of the railway line, through Rathculliheen and Abbeylands townland.

In the early 2000s, in connection with the development of the Clover Meadows estate and subsequent planned building phases under planning reference 03/760, a 25.55 - hectare site at Rathculliheen and Abbeylands was the subject of archaeological geophysical survey followed by two phases of test-excitation. The site contained five of the recorded *fulachtaí fia* sites in Abbeylands, KK046-008---, KK046-009001-, KK046-009002-, KK046-010---, and KK046-011---. Initially, a non-invasive geophysical survey (licence no. 03R0042; Nicholls 2003) was followed by selective test-excitation (licence no. 03E0681; Nicholls and McQuade 2003) (Figure 20).

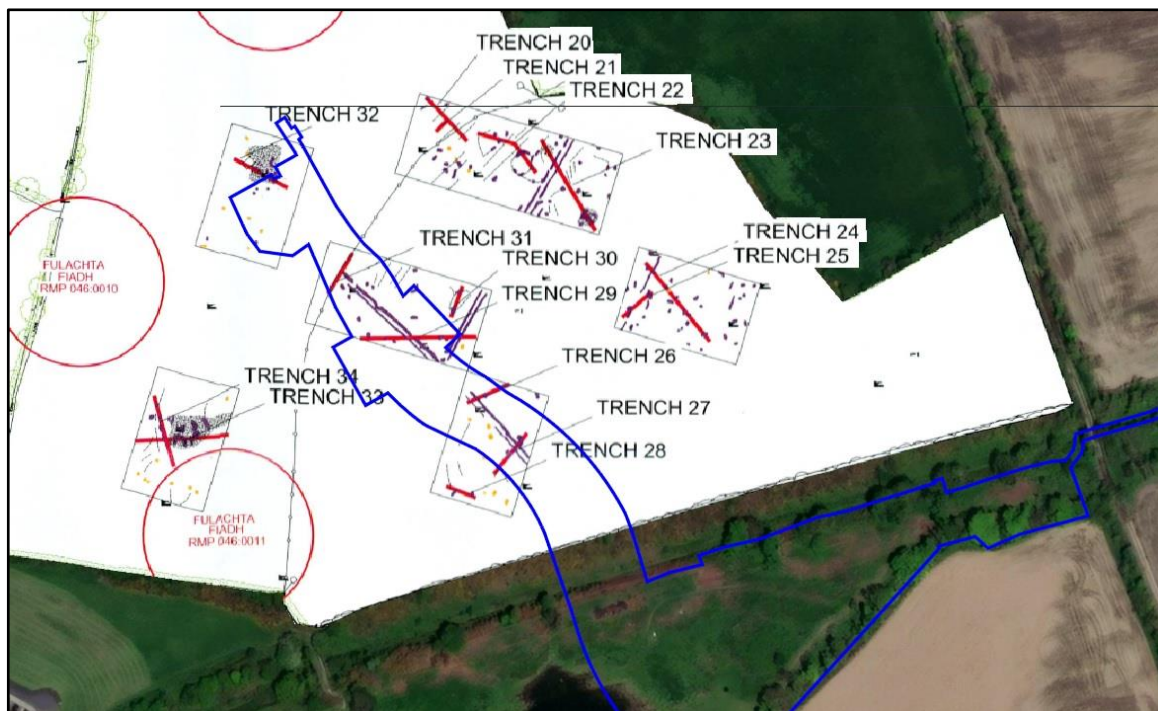


Figure 20 The South – North Access Road (outlined blue) overlaid on geophysical survey results (Nicholls 2003) and test trench array (Nicholls and McQuade 2003) (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd.).

The combined geophysical survey and test-excavations confirmed that the remains of eight *fulachtaí fia* were present at the site, adding three additional unknown sites to the archaeological record; it was also established that a number of the recorded *fulachtaí fia*

locations were incorrect, including KK046-010---- and KK046-011----, and that many were plough damaged, their mounds removed, with burnt material being present in plough soil. This has resulted in the sites now presenting as burnt spreads. Several possible pits and postholes, and small areas of burning were also recorded, principally around the remains of the *fulachtai fia*, and notably within an area defined by an enclosing boundary to the south-east of the assessed site. The results dictated that a further comprehensive programme of test-excavation across the whole of the site be carried out, which undertaken by The Archaeology Company in 2004, under licence no. 04E1582 (Noonan & Tierney, Dec 2004).

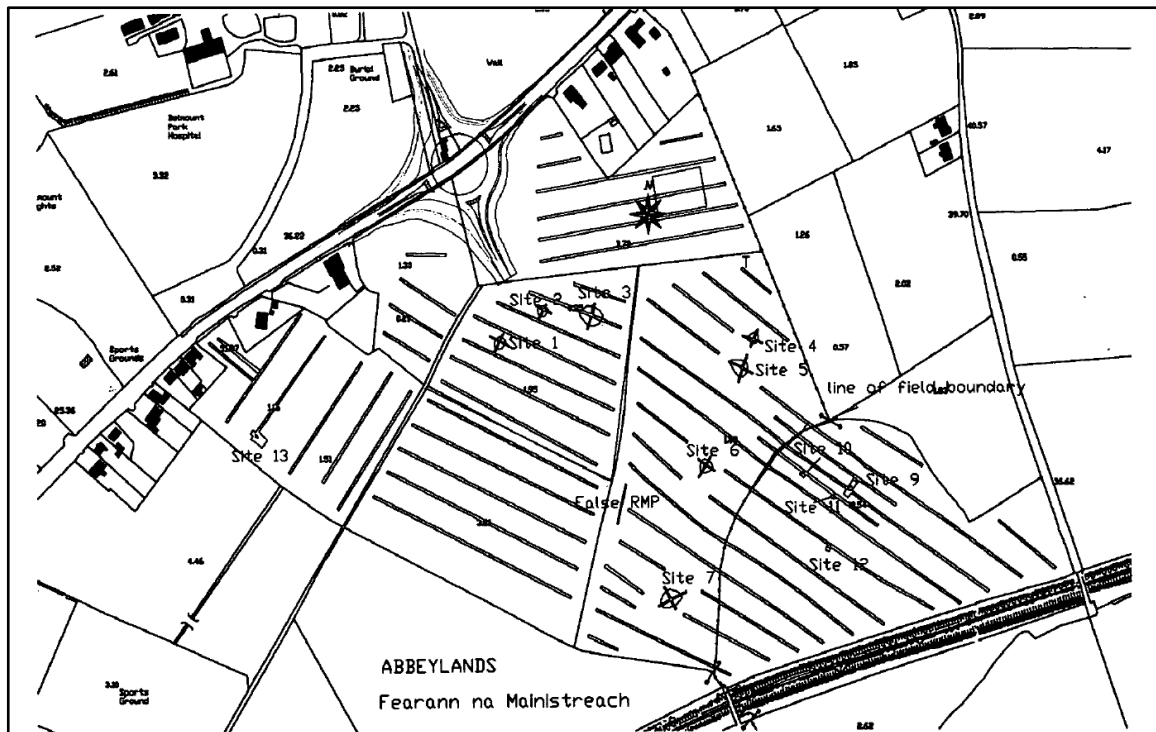


Figure 21 Test trench array under licence 04E1582 to the north of the railway line in Rathculliheen and Abbeylands townlands, reproduced from Noonan & Tierney Dec 2004. Locations of archaeological sites are numbered between 1 and 13.

55 linear trenches were mechanically excavated (Figure 21), with trenches excavated at known monuments finished by hand. The purpose of intensive testing was to more thoroughly assess the archaeological potential of the site, and to limit or replace a requirement for archaeological monitoring during construction. It was concluded, following the comprehensive programme of test-excavation, that the nature and extent of archaeological remains across the site had been fully determined, and that no further investigations, such as monitoring during construction, was required, subject to implementation of the archaeological mitigation measures outlined in the test-excavation

report (Noonan & Tierney, Dec 2004). However, the regulatory authority at the time did require archaeological monitoring of all topsoil stripping associated with the development, given the prevalence of archaeology at the site.

Test-excavation under licence no. 04E1582 targeted the known *fulachtai fia*, establishing their location with more accuracy, and their extent. Test-excavation also uncovered three additional *fulachtai fia* and an area of pit activity (4 x sites containing at least 16 pit features) on a plateau/raised platform in the field bordering the railway line (Figure 22). The area of pit activity is located within the roughly oval-shaped land unit evident on historic maps and mentioned above under Section 3.2, Cartographic Analysis. The archaeological potential of the curvilinear boundary around this land unit was considered during test-excavation, but was not identified as archaeological (i.e. it was determined to be part of a field boundary), and it was concluded that the pit activity is related to a possible unenclosed prehistoric settlement. The pit features uncovered, labelled Sites 9-12 on Figures 21 and 22, occur within an area measuring roughly 100m².

Archaeological investigations established that the currently recorded location of *fulacht fia* KK048-008--- is incorrect, and that its correct location was recorded as Site 1 by Noonan & Tierney (Dec 2004) (Figure 22). Similarly, testing at the recorded location of *fulacht fia* KK048-010--- uncovered no archaeology, and the site co-ordinates are also considered to be incorrect; its correct location was recorded as Site 6 by Noonan & Tierney (Dec 2004). The recorded location of *fulacht fia* KK048-011--- is also slightly inaccurate, and its correct location is slightly further north-west, recorded as Site 7 by Noonan & Tierney (Dec 2004).

Other than Site 1, KK048-008---, which was recommended for excavation, all other sites were to be preserved *in-situ* (Site 1, KK048-008--- was later excavated under licence no. 04E1582 (Elder April 2005)). Site 2 *fulacht fia* should be preserved *in-situ* below the level of the existing section of link road off the R711 Belmont Road; the extent of the archaeology at Site 2 measured 13m x 10m and was uncovered 0.25m below the ground surface. Site 3 *fulacht fia* should be preserved in public green space at Clover Meadows to the east side of the link road close to Site 2 (Site 3 measured 29m x 23.6m, uncovered 0.30m below ground level). Site 6 lies immediately next to the southernmost extent of existing link road, and was also to have been preserved *in-situ* as part of planned public open space. The extent of Site 6 measures 13m x 13m, uncovered 0.30m below ground level. The area of pit activity confined to a roughly 100m² area on the highest ground nearest the railway line was also to be preserved *in-situ*, by amending design plans to change the area into public

open or green space. No deep-rooting trees, shrubs or other vegetation were to be sited on any known archaeology throughout the site.

Other than confirmation of the full resolution of Site 1, KK046-008---- through excavation, there is no evidence of further archaeological investigation at the remaining sites, and it is understood that archaeological material at each of the remaining sites is present immediately below topsoil level.

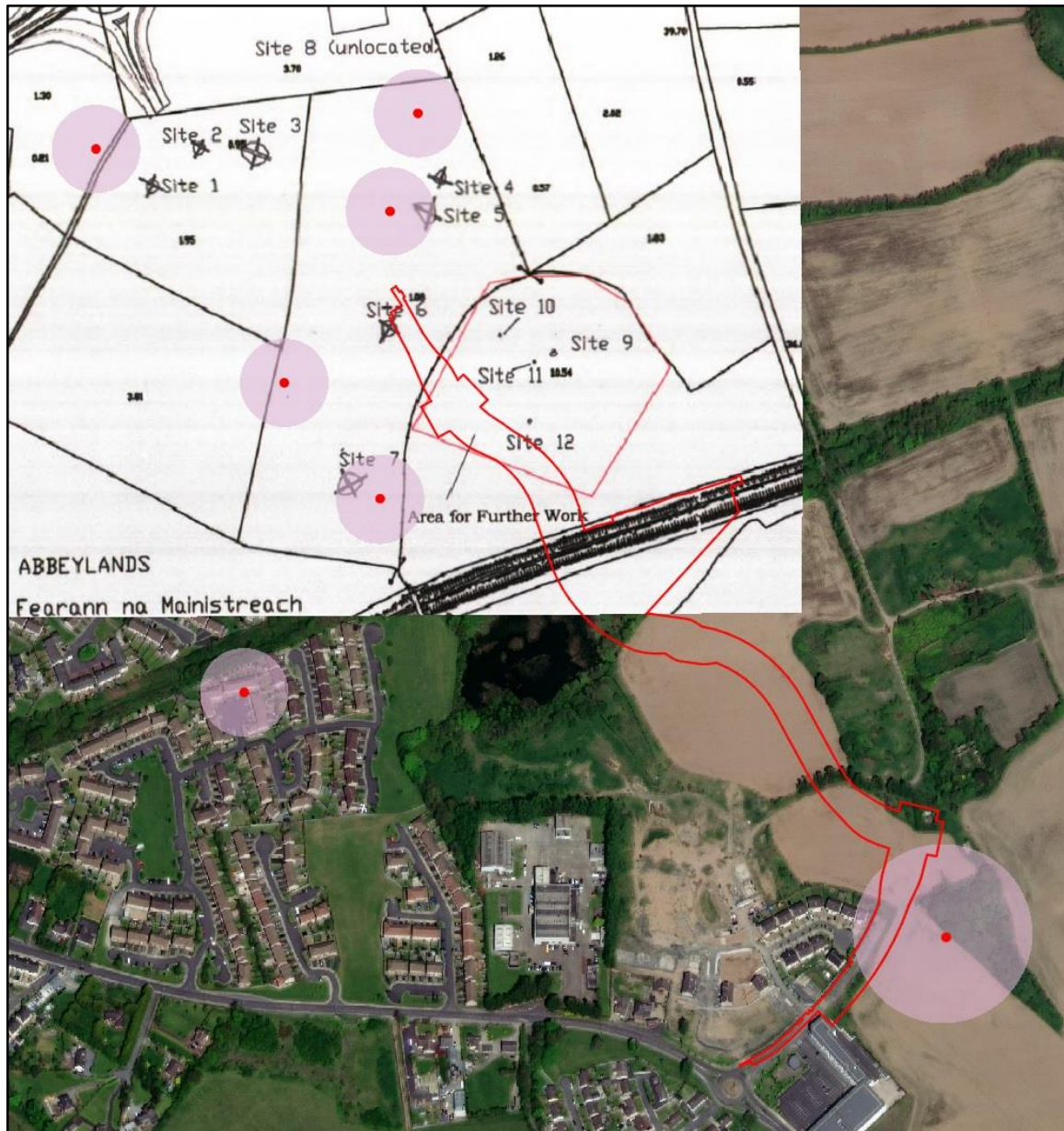


Figure 22 The South – North Access Road (outlined red) overlaid on locations of archaeological sites confirmed under licence 04E1582 to the north of the railway in Rathculliheen and Abbeylands townlands, reproduced from Noonan & Tierney Dec 2004. Locations of archaeological sites are numbered between 1 and 13.

In 2008 (Excavations Bulletin 2008:731), Maurice Hurley test-excavated a 7.8-hectare site in Rathculliheen under planning reference 08/620, at the site of the former Newpark House, within the walled gardens, and on sloping ground to the south of the house site, here targeting the location of a tree-ring shown on historic Ordnance Survey maps within the landscape estate at Newpark House (Figure 23). The location of the tree-ring was targeted given the placename Rathculliheen may signify the occurrence of a rath or ringfort in the immediate landscape. At the time, monument KK046-035----, a possible concentric enclosure, was not recorded on RMP map Sheet 46 and was not specifically targeted, as a result, during test-excitation.

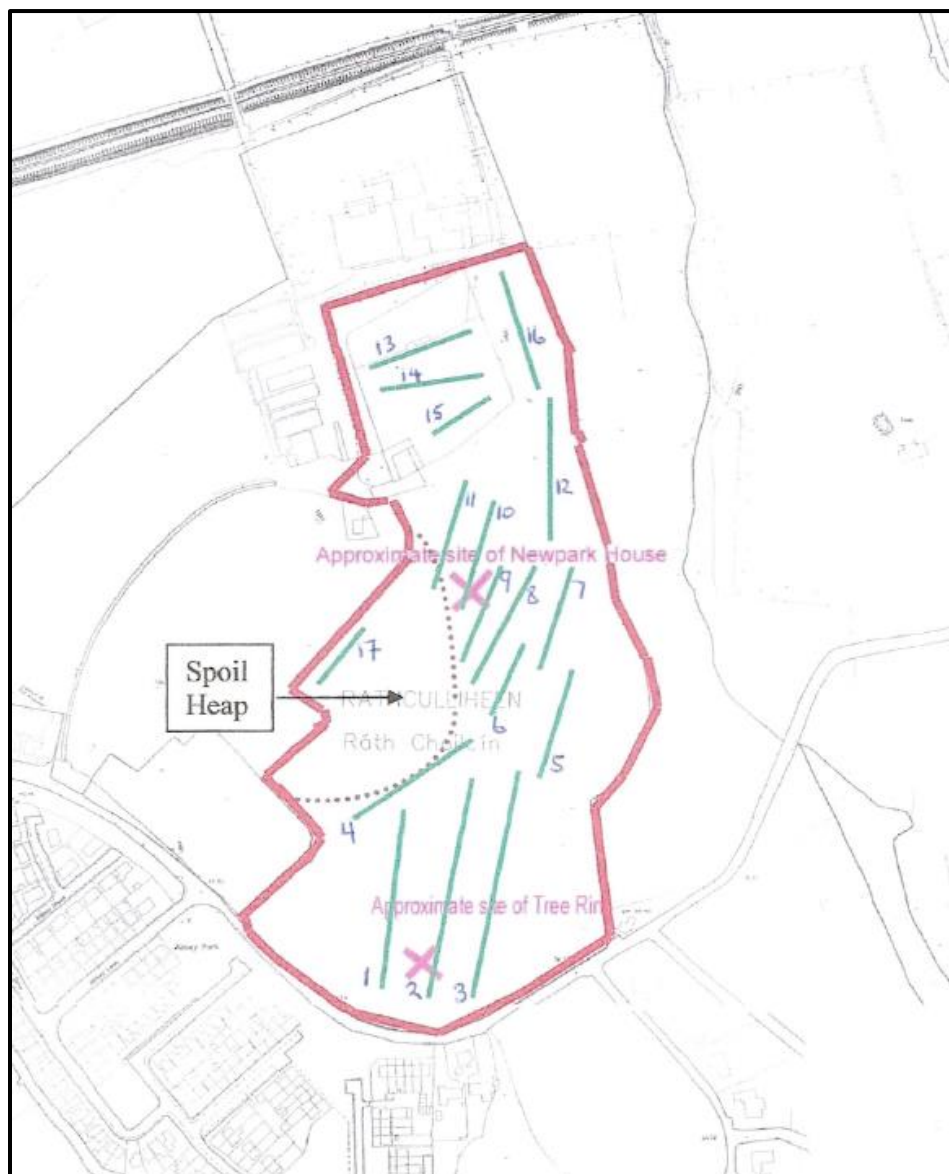


Figure 23 Test trench array excavated under licence 08E0675 to the south of the railway in Rathculliheen townland, at the site of Newpark House and walled gardens, reproduced from Hurley 2008.

A total of 13 test trenches were excavated under licence no. 08E0675; no trace of the former tree-ring was apparent, and the exact site of Newpark House was not recognisable as no *in-situ* foundations, floors, basements etc. were unearthed. Rather, the general location of the house was recognisable by concentrations of red brick, mortar and stone in the topsoil, with areas of backfilled soil containing rubble, more than 1m deep in places. The only finds were 19th and 20th century pottery and window and bottle glass. No archaeology associated with an earlier monument at the site of Newpark House was identified during testing.

At this time, a derelict dwelling house still stood to the north side of the walled garden, but all the pig production units had been demolished. A spoil heap (stockpiled topsoil), removed from earlier building phases on Abbey Road, had been deposited to the immediate west side of the Newpark House site, on the currently recorded location of monument KK046-035----

3.7 Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

There are no records in the Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) of archaeological find spots provenanced to either Rathculliheen or Abbeylands townlands (NMI topographical files searched by NMI staff 20 November 2023).

3.8 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

No buildings or structures are recorded in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) Building Survey in Rathculliheen townland, or in the immediate hinterland of The South – North Access Road.

The closest recorded NIAH buildings are Rockland House in Christendom, approximately 1.25km to the SW; the Board of First Fruits Abbey Church (22900905) at the site of the medieval parish church of Kilculliheen and earlier nunnery, Abbey House (22900907) and a Gate Lodge (22900906), all in Abbeylands over 1km to the WSW; and the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Ferrybank (22900904), also in Abbeylands, approximately 1km to the W.

Newpark House, Rathculliheen is however included in the NIAH Garden Survey, Survey ID 1838, where it is recorded that a factory and agricultural buildings have been constructed at the site. The Survey records very little in the way of surviving landscape features, noting only the presence of the extensive 'kitchen/walled and productive gardens'.

3.9 Record of Protected Structures

Similarly, no buildings or structures are recorded in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) on, or in the immediate hinterland of The South – North Access Road.

Dissimilarly to the NIAH, the RPS does list three buildings or structures provenanced to Rathculliheen townland, all sited close to the north bank of the River Suir - a house and outbuildings at Giles Quay (Ref. C656), a terrace of two houses (Ref: C657) and a flour mill and mill cottage (Ref. C658). With the exception of Ref. C657, a terrace of two houses, which is located in Rathculliheen townland, the other RPS entries listed to Rathculliheen are in fact located in adjacent Kilmurry townland. Larkfield House and outbuildings (Ref. C655) are also listed in Kilmurry townland, to the east of Rathculliheen.

3.10 On-Site Inspection

A site inspection of The South – North Access Road alignment was carried out over two days on 29 and 30 November 2023 (**Plates 2-17**). The inspection commenced at Abbey Road, where the existing section of link road at the Abbey Meadows estate was being used as part of a construction compound associated with an expansion of the estate at Abbeygate; service-related construction work on the link road has included some soil stripping at the north extent of the existing road, around a manhole. The existing road is constructed on gently rising ground just below the crest of a low ridge that contains the remains of the former Newpark House estate, and impinges on the west side of recorded monument KK046-035----, concentric enclosure (**Plate 2**).

The arable land at, and around the remains of the former Newpark House, and at the site of monument KK046-035----, concentric enclosure, was under a low fodder crop at the time of the inspection, the site of the concentric enclosure being partly covered in a long mound of spoil and debris (stone amongst debris contains some worked building stone), originating from past construction activities in the immediate area, and now well vegetated with grass cover and willow and bramble scrub. The site of monument KK046-035---- is at the southernmost end of the ridge, and overlooks Abbey Road, Abbey Meadows estate and Abbeygate Shopping Centre; there are also extensive views from the site over a steep stream valley to the east, as well as to the north. With the exception of some 19th and 20th century ceramic (stoneware, earthenware) and glass fragments, along with clay building material, such as red brick, and a square cut metal nail, no

archaeological artefacts were noted in the exposed soil at the site of monument KK046-035----. On the field surface, a low scarp is partly visible on the slope on the south-west side of the monument, and to the south-east side two broad, shallow undulations were noted; a very slight or denuded bank is also just discernible to the NW side (**Plate 3**). These subtle surface features could relate to a former boundary feature in the landscaped estate at Newpark House, recorded on historic Ordnance Survey maps.

The former landscaped estate associated with Newpark House is now very modified, with the surviving walled gardens and former coach house (which had been modified as a dwelling) being the main surviving architectural elements (**Plates 6-7**). The modified coach house has deteriorated since the early 2000's, and since the removal of most traces of the former pig production business that operated around the site. A single, modern bungalow, hidden within the remnants of an overgrown garden and by a privet hedge, sited to the immediate SW of the walled gardens and former coach house, is likely to have been associated with the pig production business. It sits at the end of the curved entrance avenue off Abbey Road, still partly surviving, and represented by two partial rows of evergreen trees and a partly sealed surface (**Plate 4**). The locations of the former pig production units and sheds to the west and north sides of the walled gardens remain outside the cultivated farmland, and are increasingly overgrown with dense grass and pockets of willow, bramble and furze scrub; these areas also contain some high, vegetated spoil mounds (**Plate 5**).

The South – North Access Road alignment runs through these features, immediately SW of the walled gardens and former coach house, traversing a gentle slope below the crest of the ridge, and through a deep drainage ditch that represents the NW boundary of the parkland that once surrounded Newpark House (**Plate 8**); this ditch is up to 2m deep and c. 1.5m wide, comprising a ditch on the SE side of an earthen bank, which is lined with mature oak trees and faced on the NW side by a drystone wall, measuring approximately 0.80m high (**Plate 9**). This tree-lined boundary represents part of a larger oval-shaped land unit recorded on historic maps, which was bisected by the construction of the Waterford to New Ross railway in the early 20th century, which isolated a triangular piece of ground to the south side of the railway that has now become the site of a wetland. This triangular area of ground is possibly the least disturbed ground on The South – North Access Road alignment, having been isolated from adjacent farmland by the railway and not been subject to modern cultivation. The wetland, comprising a pond with surrounding vegetation, sits at the low-lying SW part of this area, with the higher ground to the NE

becoming increasingly vegetated in dense bramble scrub; visible ground between the scrub and pond is slightly undulating, and could well contain remains of unrecorded *fulachtai fia* or burnt mound material (**Plate 10**).

The South – North Access Road will include drainage eastwards from this triangular area of ground, aligned partly on the former railway line and partly to the south side of railway embankment, discharging into a natural stream to the NE side of the Newpark House walled gardens; the stream is sited in a valley at the base of the ridge below the Newpark House site, and represents the natural eastern boundary of Rathculliheen townland (**Plates 11-12**). An existing drainage ditch runs parallel with the south side of the railway line/embankment, forming part of a drainage network associated with the former Newpark House. The stream, and slope above, may also have been a focus of archaeological activity, and contain further remains of unrecorded *fulachtai fia* or burnt mound material. The natural course of the stream has been modified slightly during the early 20th century construction of the railway, and it is carried beneath the railway through a high-arched cut stone culvert.

The land to the north side of the railway line has not been in agricultural use since the commencement of construction at the Clover Meadows estate, which was completed in 2007. While planned phased development of the land has not been completed to date, it is clear the whole of the property has been subject to varying types of disturbances, during both construction of the Clover Meadows estate and post its completion. The land, which rises southwards from the existing estate, and rises from the west, has a dense covering of grass, as well as increasing pockets of scrub, and is utilised for walking by residents of surrounding estates. It has also been used for planting of young oak trees, and there are numerous narrow, shallow ditches, possibly installed as drainage when the oak trees were planted. The trees and narrow ditches are present across the plateau/raised platform where an area of archaeological pit activity was recorded during archaeological investigations in the early 2000s. There is also some evidence for shallow test pits, as well as a large vegetation covered spoil mound across this area. The partial remains of a timber post and wire enclosure (measuring c. 4.5m x 2.5m) was also noted on the alignment of The South – North Access Road, though its function is not known (**Plates 14-16**).

Existing services, sections of roadway, and hardcore surfaces are present on and around the road's alignment. The location of *fulacht fia* KK046-010----, which was labelled Site 6 as part of archaeological investigations in the early 2000s, is at the very southern extent of the

existing section of link road at Clover Meadows, opposite the gable ends of the southernmost row of houses (**Plate 17**). There is a sealed road surface, a gravelled walking track, remnants of a low concrete wall, and possible service alignment at, and around the location of Site 6, and it is unclear what, if any preservation measures were taken during these activities, and if archaeology associated with Site 6 survives. The proposed South – North Access Road layout includes a 390m² attenuation pond positioned at the location of Site 6.

Site Inspection Plates



Plate 2 View NW across site of monument KK046-035--- from the existing section of link road at the Abbey Meadow estate; the crest of the ridge at the monument site is covered by a vegetated spoil and debris mound (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 3 View SE across site of monument KK046-035--- from The South – North Access Road alignment; vegetated spoil and debris mound to left of image (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 4 View N on alignment of The South – North Access Road with modern bungalow hidden in vegetation in centre; mature evergreens to left of image represent alignment of former avenue to Newpark House (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 5 View NW on alignment of The South – North Access Road across site of former piggery to west side of walled gardens at Newpark House (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 6 Former Newpark House coach house, later modified as a dwelling (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 7 Part of the west wall of the surviving walled gardens at Newpark House (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 8 View NW on alignment of The South – North Access Road to oak lined field boundary representing former boundary of Newpark House parkland (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 9 View NW across ditch and earthen bank on oak tree lined field boundary representing former boundary of Newpark House parkland (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 10 View NW along the alignment of The South – North Access Road in triangular area of ground with low-lying pond to left of image and railway cutting across centre (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 11 View ENE parallel with S side of railway line, toward stream valley on east side of ridge below Newpark House site (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 12 View southwards on stream forming natural east boundary of Rathculliheen townland, on S side of railway line (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 13 View WSW along railway cutting toward crossing point of The South – North Access Road; arched bridge carrying 18th century roadway that accessed the Newpark House area from the north (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 29.11.2023).



Plate 14 View SE along the South – North Access Road alignment to the north side of the railway line at the Clover Meadows estate (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 30.11.2023).



Plate 15 Evidence of possible test-pits or other construction related disturbance on the plateau/raised platform above the Clover Meadows estate (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 30.11.2023).



Plate 16 A timber post and wire fence on The South – North Access Road alignment at the Clover Meadows estate (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 30.11.2023).



Plate 17 General location of monument KK046-010 or Site 6 at the southernmost end of existing link road at Clover Meadows (Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. 30.11.2023).

4. Impact Statement and Mitigation

Recommendations

4.1 Discussion

The South – North Access Road is sited immediately below the crest of a low ridge in Rathculliheen townland, to the north of the River Suir, in an archaeological landscape that was well settled from the Bronze Age. Recorded *fulachtaí fia* are well represented in the immediate landscape to the west of the ridge, and an area of pit activity that may represent a related, unenclosed prehistoric settlement was identified during archaeological investigations in the early 2000s on the crest of the ridge at its north end; this area of pit activity is not currently listed in the SMR or RMP.

The placename Rathculliheen signifies the possible presence of a ringfort or other fort in the immediate landscape, and a recorded monument, KK046-035, a possible concentric enclosure, has been added to the archaeological record in recent years, sited

to the southern end of the Rathculliheen ridge; this monument may represent continued use of the landscape in the late prehistoric or early medieval period. This monument was not identified in archaeological assessments dating from the early 2000s at Rathculliheen and Abbeylands, as it appears to have been added to the SMR later, and the monument has not been specifically targeted in previous archaeological investigations to date.

Certainly, the Rathculliheen ridge was considered suitable for settlement in the post-medieval period, when the crest of the ridge was chosen as the setting for a late 18th century mansion known as Newpark House. Historic cartographic evidence also highlights that a settlement may well have preceded Newpark House in the medieval or early post-medieval period, centred on a former crossroads that was modified during the development of the Newpark House designed landscape and parkland. While much of the designed landscape at the former Newpark House is lost or modified, its significant walled gardens remain, as does a dilapidated former coach house.

There is no surface trace of recorded monument KK046-035----, or of recorded *fulachtaí fia* or pit activity to the north side of the railway line, and it seems likely that subsurface archaeological remains will have been disturbed to varying degrees as a result of developments at the Abbey Meadows and Clover Meadow estates, particularly to the remains to the north side of the railway around Clover Meadows. Undeveloped land here has been subject to some construction related disturbance, and has been planted with young oak trees and cut with numerous narrow, shallow ditches. All of the archaeological features identified during archaeological investigations associated with the development of the Clover Meadow site in the early 2000s were identified close to the surface, directly beneath the topsoil, and had the potential to be indirectly impacted by any activity that went below the level of the topsoil.

4.2 Impacts

The South – North Access Road will directly impact the location and Zone of Notification of monument KK046-035----, concentric enclosure, where it is aligned on, and beyond the existing section of link road at the south end of the scheme off Abbey Road.

The South – North Access Road will directly impact the actual location of monument KK046-010----, *fulacht fia*, which was confirmed during archaeological investigations in the early 2000s to be sited at the southern extent of the existing section of link road at the north end of the scheme off the R711 Belmont Road (labelled Site 6 on Figures 21 and 22).

The South – North Access Road is also aligned in very close proximity of a 100m² area sited to a platform/raised plateau to the south of Clover Meadows containing numerous pits, which has been identified as a possible unenclosed prehistoric settlement site. From available evidence, the South – North Access Road alignment just avoids the pit locations, the closest pit (labelled Site 12 on Figures 21 and 22) being within 10m of the alignment.

The scheme, in its entirety, is considered to be sited in a landscape of archaeological potential, and greenfield environments on the road alignment, as well as on ancillary development, such as carparking and drainage, are considered to have archaeological potential. Earthworks carried out in association with the scheme have the potential to unearth and directly impact previously unknown archaeological remains.

As the known archaeology is all subsurface, there will be no direct visual impact on archaeological monuments, although the setting of recorded monuments, as well as the surviving designed landscape and setting of surviving architectural features associated with the former Newtown House will be directly impacted.

4.3 Mitigation Measures

Archaeological and cultural heritage is a non-renewable resource and calls for careful management and treatment. Mitigation measures are necessary where archaeological monuments or other cultural heritage item exists in order to comply with national policy guidelines and statutory provisions for the protection of archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage, including the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999 and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

It is recommended that the alignment of The South – North Access Road to the south side of the railway line be subject to a programme of geophysical survey, carried out under licence by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Geophysical survey will seek to identify potential subsurface archaeological remains, either directly related to monument KK046-035---, concentric enclosure, or to other previously unknown archaeological remains. Geophysical survey will be followed by archaeological test-excavation, also to be carried out under licence by a suitably qualified archaeologist, to investigate anomalies or possible features identified in the results of the geophysical survey.

On the alignment of The South – North Access Road to the north side of the railway line, it shall be necessary to establish with more certainty the location of archaeology identified in the early 2000s, including the location of monument KK046-010----, *fulacht fia* (Site 6) and the area of pit activity. The approach should be discussed with the National Monuments Service, who may require geophysical survey, test-excavation, monitoring of soil stripping or a combination of methods. Any surviving material associated with monument KK046-010----, *fulacht fia* (Site 6) should be resolved in full through archaeological excavation in the event the remains cannot adequately be preserved *in-situ*.

All groundworks during construction should be monitored under licence by a suitably qualified archaeologist given the extent of known archaeological activity in the immediate landscape. Archaeological monitoring will facilitate the recording of any potential subsurface features or deposits of archaeological interest that may be exposed.

Sufficient time should be allowed in the construction programme to facilitate any required archaeological resolution. Any ancillary groundworks that may take place in association with The South – North Access Road, such as drainage earthworks, should also be subject to archaeological monitoring.

All potential direct impacts on the surviving architectural elements associated with the late 18th century Newpark House, namely the extensive walled gardens and derelict coach house, should be avoided; the architectural features should not be utilised as a construction compound, or similar, or for the deposition of spoil or other debris. It is architectural best practice to provide for a drawn and photographic survey and record of the architectural elements of Newpark House and grounds prior to any modification.

Preservation *In-Situ*

In accordance with archaeological legislation and Kilkenny County Council policy, there will be presumption in favour of 'preservation *in situ*' of archaeological remains, in the event archaeological features or deposits are identified. Preservation *in-situ* is always the preferred option and often the cheaper option for developers.

Preservation by Record

Only where preservation *in-situ* is not possible should full or part removal of archaeological features or deposits be considered, by way of archaeological excavation. If this option is to be considered, the relevant bodies and authorities would have to satisfy themselves that the development cannot be relocated or redesigned to avoid removal of

archaeological material. Full resolution of archaeological material can be costly and time consuming.

PLEASE NOTE: Recommendations are subject to review and approval by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and by the National Museum of Ireland.

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