



**Newport Ball Alley Footbridge,
Clonbealy and Tullow, Newport, Co. Tipperary**

Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment Report

for

Tipperary County Council

Margaret McNamara

TVAS Ireland Ltd

J25/43

September 2025

ITM 572535 662320

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Summary

Site name: Newport Ball Alley Footbridge, Clonbealy and Tullow, Newport, Co. Tipperary

Townland: Tullow and Clonbealy

Parish: Kilvellane

Barony: Owney and Arra

County: Tipperary

Planning Ref. No: Pre-planning

National Grid Reference: ITM 572535 662320

Naturally occurring geology: N/a

TVAS Ireland Job No: J25/43

RMP: -

Licence No: n/a

Licence Holder: n/a

Fieldwork: Margaret McNamara

Site activity: Site visit

Date of fieldwork: 24th August 2025

Date of report: 1st September 2025

Report author: Margaret McNamara

Summary of results: An archaeological assessment including desk-based research and site visit of the proposed Newport Ball Alley Footbridge, Clonbealy and Tullow, Newport, Co. Tipperary, concluded that archaeological testing is required in two locations on the banks of the River Small.

Monuments identified: -

Location and reference of archive: The primary records (written, drawn and photographic) are currently held at TVAS Ireland Ltd, Ahish, Ballinruan, Crusheen, Co. Clare.

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Report J25/43a

Introduction

This report documents the results of a desk-based archaeological assessment of the site of the proposed Newport Ball Alley Footbridge, Clonbealy and Tullow, Newport, Co. Tipperary (ITM 572535 662320) (Figs 1-2).

The following Government publications set out many of the procedures relating to planning/development and archaeology:

Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (DAHGI 1999a)

Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation (DAHGI 1999b)

Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS 2000)

Review of Archaeological Assessment and Monitoring Procedures in Ireland (Lambrick and Doyle 2000).

Archaeology in the Planning Process (OPR/DHLGH 2021)

The planning background

A proposal is being prepared by Tipperary County Council for the installation of a new footbridge over the River Small, a tributary of the Mulkear River to link the park at the Newport Ball Alley to Pound Street. The proposed bridge is approximately 20 m in length, 1.8 m width, spanning the River Small in a north to south orientation between a wooded area at the southern bank (Tullow townland) to a raised area of parkland on the northern bank (Clonbealy townland). Also proposed is resurfacing of an existing path and the creation of a seating area with tables, at Clonbealy and Tullow, in Newport town, Co. Tipperary (Figs 1-2 and 9).

The proposed redevelopment is currently at design stage and a planning application has not yet been submitted. The following report was commissioned to aid the planning process.

In addition to the *Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028* (Tipperary County Council 2022), the *Newport Town Centre First Plan* (Tipperary County Council 2024) provides guidelines for the development of the town. This document notes the architectural heritage value of the town centre including the riverine area around Tullow Bridge containing the proposal site and references the presence of handball alleys in this area.

Location, topography and geology

The proposed development site is located in the townlands of Clonbealy and Tullow, in the parish of Kilvellane, barony of Owny and Arra, Co. Tipperary (ITM 572535 662320).

The irregularly-shaped site is in the centre of Newport town close to the Mulkear River (also known as the Newport River) and the River Small (also known as the Cully River). The Mulkear flows along the

western boundary of the site and the River Small flows through the centre of the site, to be spanned by the proposed new footbridge. Mature trees line the riverbanks. At the east a projection of the site boundary extends along the entrance road, north of the River Small. The northern part of the site contains a partially-ruined handball alley complex (architectural heritage site NIAH Reg. No. 22311006; RPS Reg. No. 784) and a green space bisected by a pathway. The green space contains a number of gravel areas, two of which contain mill stones. A shoeing stone (RPS 2941) is also located on the site just north of the River Small. The southern end of the site, on the opposite side of the River Small, contains a small wooded area and a laneway connecting to Pound Street. Tullow Bridge (NIAH 22311010; RPS 785) spans the Mulkear River a short distance south of the site.

The site lies between approximately 56m above Ordnance Datum at the southern and centre, rising to between 58m and 61m above OD at its northern end.

According to the Geological Survey of Ireland the site lies on alluvium and till derived from Devonian sandstones (www.gsi.ie).

Archaeological and historical background

A search of documentary and cartographic sources was made. Information was gathered from the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the *Excavations* database and publications (Bennett 1987-2010), and from holdings of the Tipperary County Library, Co. Tipperary, amongst other sources held locally and online.

The proposal site straddles the townlands of Clonbealy and Tullow. Clonbealy or *Cluain Béala* translates as ‘plain of the pass, mouth or opening’. The name is first recorded in the mid-16th century as *Cluonebeala*. Other iterations of the name include *Clonebeally*; *Clounebeally*; *Clounebially* (AD 1654), *Clonebealy*; *Clonekely* (1657), *Clonebeally*; *Clonebealy* (1660), *Clonbally* (1666/7), *Clonekealy* (1685) and *Clonbagly* (1729) (www.logainm.ie). Tullow or *An Tulaigh* translates simply as ‘a hill’ and is first recorded in the mid-17th century as *Tullagh*. Other iterations of the name include *Tully* (1654); *Tillagh* (1657); *Tully* (1660); *Tullree* (1666); *Towloe* (1666/7); *Tolla* (1667); *Tulla* (1685); *Touligh* (1754); *Tullow* (1778) and *Tullo* (1787) (*ibid.*).

Cartographic sources

The Down Survey, conducted under the command of William Petty in the 1650s, recorded almost all of Ireland in great detail. Some of the maps were unfortunately lost or destroyed in the following centuries. The Owny and Arra barony map (Fig. 3) shows the placenames *Tullagh*, *Portanenahasky*, *Drumnedernory*, *Sheurlagh* and *Shourebegg* and *Clonebealy* in the parish of Killmalane and Killniragh (<http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-map>).

The earliest detailed maps of the Newport area date to 1732 and 1770 and are held by the National Library. The earlier is *A map of the lands of Clonbealy Tullow Coolnacalla Derryleigh and Kilnacappagh ... in the barony of Owny and Arra and County of Tipperary as the bounds were shewed me by Henry Lane and Michael Gleeson; late the estate of George Hickman ... Surveyed for the Honble. Robert Jastling [Jacelyn?] His Majestys Attorney General in a joint survey with Mr Thomas Townsend surveyor on behalf of the above named George Hickman in August 1732. By Tim. Bridge. Scale 40 perches to an inch.* (MS21 F.47 / (005). This is a map of landholdings and areas, with no detail illustrated other than the bridge.

The 1770 map is more detailed and shows the town itself (Fig. 4); the layout of the rivers and the streets of Newport is recognisable and broadly corresponds with modern mapping. ‘Clonbeally’ and ‘Tulla’ townlands are noted, albeit in slightly different places to modern divisions, as is an area of land (possibly an estate) named ‘Mountlane’ that occupies the part of Clonbealy on the west side of what is now Pound Street. A ‘Charter School’ is illustrated north-east of the town and the part of the

settlement on the western bank of the river is labelled 'Newport Dr Waller'. The location of the proposed development site is largely in the triangle formed by the confluence of the River Small and the Mulkear River. There are several substantial-looking buildings in the approximate location of the proposal site: two L-shaped structures side by side against the river edge. Given their position adjacent to two rivers it is likely that these structures represent a complex of mill buildings. Immediately north of the site a number of smaller buildings are accessed from a small laneway at the point that Pound Street crossed the River Small. A *Charter School* is illustrated further along Pound Street, outside the town. The part of the proposal site on the south side of the river is in an area with no illustrated buildings, adjacent to the bridge.

The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map at 6" to the mile (1840) (Fig. 5), shows a similar picture to the 18th century map. The small town of Newport is located at the confluence of the Mulkear and Small Rivers. Church Street, Main Street and Cork Street are aligned west to east and Pound Street and Jail Street north-east to south; streets in the centre of the town are notably wide. The proposed development site is shown predominantly in the townland of Clonbealy in the fork of the two rivers, and partially in the townland of Tullow on the south side of River Small. A large house, *Rose Hill*, and two outbuildings stand north of the site and these are doubtless some of the buildings shown on the earlier map, still accessed via a driveway leading from Pound Street. South of *Rose Hill* a T-shaped *National School* occupies the extreme northern edge of the proposal site and a rectangular building annotated as *Corn Mill* stands in the southern half of the site on the northern bank of the River Small. This mill building is presumably one surviving element of the complex of buildings shown on the 18th century map, lending credence to the suggestion that the earlier mapped structures were mill-related. South of the River Small the previously open plot is somewhat built up, but a laneway positioned between dwellings accesses Pound Street. Another school complex, annotated as *Charter School* and *School Ho.*, as shown on the earlier map, is still present outside the town.

The OS 25" to the mile map (surveyed 1902) (Fig. 6) shows a much expanded town. An additional building is shown within the proposal site west of the original school and the annotation now reads *Schools*. The plot to their south is divided into two school yards and two small buildings are present to the south-west. The location of the corn mill is now occupied by a much smaller building, no longer annotated. Land on the south side of the River Small is more built up than on the previous map edition, including within the proposal site itself, although the laneway still leads to the river edge here.

The OS 6" map published in 1901-1905 is based on the same survey as the 25" edition (Fig. 7).

Modern mapping (e.g. Fig. 2) and aerial imagery (Fig. 8; www.osi.ie; www.google.ie/maps) spanning the period between 1995 and the present show a much expanded town. In relation to the proposal site, three handball alleys now occupy the site of the schools and no other boundaries or buildings are apparent, with an area of landscaped grass and footpaths to their south. *Rose Hill*, north of the site, retained a rural character until the early 21st century when new housing estates were built, although on *Rose Hill* house itself appears still extant. On the south side of the River Small the laneway remains and is proposed to be incorporated into the development. The river edge here is overgrown on satellite images, but in recent years an adjacent area has been cleared as a car park.

Record of Monuments and Places / Sites and Monuments Record

There are seven monuments or sub-monuments (Table 1) listed on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and/or Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) within approximately 1km of the proposed works (Fig. 7) and as shown on the departmental website (www.archaeology.ie; Farrelly and O'Brien 2002).

Table 1: Sites and Monuments Record / Record of Monuments and Places monuments in the vicinity of the site

SMR No.	Townland	Type	ITM	Distance from site (m)
TN031-072----	Foildarrig	Ritual site – holy well	573184 663369	1km NNE
TN031-073----	Clonbealy	Earthwork	572776 663172	782m N
TN037-001----	Newport, Tullow	Bridge	572512 662298	17m S
TN037-003----	Tullow	Water mill – unclassified	572256 661880	509m SW
TN037-004----	Tullow	Ringfort – rath	572588 661695	597m S
TN037-005----	Derryleigh	Ringfort – rath	573393 662000	885m ESE
TN037-046----	Newport	Font	572386 662282	136m SW

The closest monument is Tullow Bridge, located less than 20m south of the proposed development site. The following description of the bridge is provided on the departmental website:

Modern bridge traverses Mulkear river replacing 19th century stone bridge the arches of which were supported on large columns of which only one survives (www.archaeology.ie)

The SMR file repeats the same information, additionally referring to the 1732 map held by the National Library and noting that the mid 17th century Civil Survey mentions a bridge, suggesting that this has been an important crossing point for several centuries.

The surrounding landscape contains a number of medieval monuments including a water mill, a font and two early medieval ringforts. An unclassified earthwork is also recorded and a medieval/post-medieval holy well possibly dedicated to St Bridget (www.archaeology.ie).

Previous excavations

The results of archaeological investigations in Ireland are published in summary form in Excavations (Bennett 1987-2010) and online at www.excavations.ie. A search of both sources was made for Newport town, the townlands of Clonbealy and Tullow and the surrounding townlands of Newport, Foildarrig, Mackney (Bourke), Carrowkeale, Cooldrisla, Carrowkeale, Derryleigh, Coolnacalla, Cranavaneen, Rossary More and Foxhall. No entries are recorded for most of these townlands, although some investigations have been conducted in the study area.

Testing was carried out at the site of a former supermarket within the ZON of Tullow Bridge on the opposite side of Pound Street and on the southern bank of the River Small. Early modern walls and floor surfaces were encountered but nothing of an archaeological nature (Hayes 2009). One excavation entry for Tullow townland pertains to monitoring close to bridge TN031-001 and enclosure TN031-004, where evidence of agricultural practices (ploughing, reclamation) was revealed, but nothing of archaeological significance (Collins 2002). In 2011 archaeological wade surveys undertaken along the route of a proposed water pipeline passed through Tullow and Clonbealy but no archaeology was discovered (Coughlan 2011).

Monitoring of the Mulkear River and its tributaries between Annacotty and Newport between 1997 and 1998 involved oversight of the repair of all the bridges, construction of new sluices, deepening and widening of drains, sections of river embankments and the dredging and embankment of the Newport River. The dredged soil was spread on the banks and metal detected before being made into embankments. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered (Collins 1998).

Two entries are included for Carrowkeale townland. Test trenching of a proposed house site in 2009 identified possible cut features including a pit measuring 0.50m in diameter and 0.35m in depth. The proposed development was relocated to avoid these features (Ó Droma 2009). Testing of a proposed house site in 2018 found no archaeology (Sweetman 2018).

National Museum of Ireland Topographical files

Information on artefact finds has been recorded by the National Museum of Ireland since the late 18th century. According to the National Museum of Ireland Finds Database (2010) as available online at www.heritagemaps.ie, the closest recorded find is a bronze sword with horn hilt (1934:5634) found between Newport and Castleconnell.

It should also be noted that there are two millstones located on the proposal site (described in site visit section). It is unclear if these stones were used in the corn mill once located on the site.

Documentary sources

Introduction

Newport was originally known as *Tull(a)* or *Tulaigh* which translates as ‘hill’ (www.logainm.ie). Other iterations of the name include *Portanecaske*, *Portanenacasky*, *Portanenahasky* (AD 1654-57); *Portannasky*, *Portanenashasky*, *Portanenashaskee* (1660-1666); *Portenenehasty* (1685); *Portnenalasky*; *Portnecask* (1722-1728); *Portanacask* (1742-49). Other versions include *Tulac Seasta* or *Tulach Sheasta* ‘the hill that stands’ and *Port an Aonaigh* (1840s) (*ibid.*). The land was originally owned by the Ryans and a small settlement had developed at a strategic fording point at the confluence of the Mulkear and Small Rivers by the mid-17th century, where fairs were held. Following the Cromwellian conquest the land was redistributed to Cromwellian soldiers; Lieutenant Richard (Warren) Waller and Captain Henry Shrimpton in the mid-17th century. Richard Waller acquired the Ryan towerhouse Castle Cully and constructed Castle Waller House out of the ruined tower (www.landedestates.ie). Henry Shrimpton was granted land in Tullow, including a settlement located on the eastern bank of the Mulcair, described in 1659 as a small village with a forge and three bakers (Hayes 2000; Sweeney 2007). It appears that the Wallers acquired the lands of Henry Shrimpton and combined the settlements of Tullow and Portnacskey into a new village named Newport and were thereafter responsible for the future development and prosperity of the town. The baronetcy of Newport was created for Robert Waller in 1780. Waller residences in Newport town include Newport House, Churchfield and Bloomfield (www.landedestates.ie). By the early 20th century, the town had developed into the largest settlement in the barony. A number of historic buildings are associated with the proposed development site. A corn mill, 18th/19th century in origin, stood on the bank of the River Small until the late 19th century. A 19th century national school was still located at the northern end of the site in the early 20th century. The school building fell into disrepair and a handball alley complex created within its ruins in the 20th century, although the alleys since fell out of use in the mid-20th century. A green public space was developed south of the alleys in the latter part of the 20th century.

Evidence relating to structures in and around the site

Corn mill

The 1st edition OS map depicts a corn mill on the proposal site on the northern bank of the River Small. As the mill is no longer upstanding it is difficult to gauge its antiquity, form or function, however a more substantial collection of buildings is shown here on a 1770 map of the town and it is likely that these represent a larger mill complex than that surviving at the time of the OS map survey. Two millstones are now decoratively positioned on the site, but it is unclear if these are original to the location, as other mills may have utilised the watercourse nearby. No mill is recorded in ‘Clounebeally’ in the Civil Survey of 1654-6 (Simmington 1934, 191), however a water mill is listed at ‘Tullagh & Purtanenacasky’ (*ibid.*, 189). This is likely to be Recorded Monument TN037-003, shown on the 1st edition map as ‘old mill’, on the river to the south of Newport. The exact date of the Clonbealy mill is unknown, however, assuming it was not present in the 1650s, it was presumably built at some point between the late 17th and late 18th centuries.

Mills have existed in Ireland since early medieval times. There were 118 water-mills listed in

Tipperary in the Civil Survey (Cullen 1977). Surviving images of these early mills depict vertical mills with breast- or over-shot wheels. These structures were small, possibly two-stories high, and often had a dual purpose, such as working a mill-stone or operating pounders to finish cloth or crush seed (ibid., 6). It is likely that these mills continued to process grain until at least the middle of the 18th century when the market was affected by flour imports from larger mills in England (ibid., 7). In the 18th century a new market for flour developed as Dublin expanded resulting in a demand for grain from mills outside the capital, leading to the establishment of new mills for the Dublin and local markets. Improvements in mill technology, including additional prepping and bolting of the grain prior to grinding, led to a better quality flour. Additional structures were required to store the larger quantities of grain and flour produced (ibid., 8-9). Tipperary emerged in the early 1770s as the third most important county in the trade and one of the largest mills in the country was located at Marlfield, Clonmel. Many of the countryside mills operated until the mid-19th century (ibid., 21-25). Much of the finance needed to establish the mills came from the landed classes, many directly involved in milling (ibid., 18-20), and the Waller family were likely behind milling ventures in Newport. The fourth Baronet of Newport; William Waller, married into the Guinness brewing family in the 19th century and his son, Arthur, rose to the position of Chief Engineer and Chief Brewer in Guinness. Bassett's 1889 directory lists George Cullen as a miller in Newport (Bassett 1889).

National School

A national school (Newport National School) is depicted on the site in Clonbealy townland circa 1840 and a school complex is still shown on the site circa 1902 with an additional building constructed west of the initial school by the early 20th century. A plaque on the handball alley complex which now stands on the site of the school reads '1879' suggests a renovation of the school in the late 19th century. A brief survey of the extant walls indicate that the school was an impressive and substantial cut-stone building with large windows. Free primary school education was introduced in Ireland in 1831 and schools constructed to a general OPW design, containing the same basic features including an entrance porch, cloakroom, classroom, tall sash windows, an open fireplace and high ceilings. Additional features such as toilet blocks and the segregation of boys and girls were also features and a possible explanation for the renovation of Newport school in the late 19th century, including a boundary splitting the school yard in two (endaoflaherty.com).

It is possible that the school was one of the early OPW schools, although Samuel Lewis, writing in 1837, only notes the Charter School and Endowed School in the town. A local online history notes that the first Roman Catholic national school had been constructed by the mid-19th century (<https://irishjohnsmith.com/>). Slaters Directory of 1856 also refers to a Charter School and Endowed School in Clonbealy, with Revd. Mr Heffernon associated with the Charter School and Mr Garoon with the Endowed School (<https://www.igp-web.com/tipperary/slaters/newport.htm>). *Bassett's Directory* of 1889 lists a charter school and national schools. James Kinmonth is associated with the charter school and Mr Broderick, Miss H O'Connor and Miss E O'Connor with the national schools (<https://www.libraryireland.com/genealogy/bassett/tipperary/newport.php>). The 1901 census lists a Church of Ireland school master in Clonbealy townland (James Kinmonth and his family; wife Mary and children Frederick, Arthur, Florence, Ethel and Alfred). John Flynn and Catherine O'Dea (both resident on Cork Road) are listed as Roman Catholic teachers in 1901. Catherine O'Dea is still recorded as a national school teacher in 1911. Honoria O'Connor and Mary Bourke (resident on Pound Street) are recorded as RC national school teachers, with Bridget Rainsford listed as an RC national school teacher on Pound Street in 1911. The 1911 census also lists Church of Ireland national school teacher Margaret Llewellyn, her parents Henry (RIC retiree) and Annie and siblings Annie, Henry and William (<https://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>). It is possible that the CoI teachers were involved with the Charter School or Endowed School.

Handball alley

The complex of handball alleys at Clonbealy appears to be 19th century in origin and fell out of use in the 1960s. The earliest purpose-built alleys in Ireland date to the early 19th century and were generally constructed by stonemasons. These buildings could be freestanding or buttressed against other buildings, such as castles or churches. It is possible that the concrete handball alleys at Clonbealy replaced an earlier stone-built example. As noted above, a plaque on the handball alley complex which

now stands on the site of Newport National School reads '1879', suggesting a renovation of the alleys (or school) in the late 19th century. The NIAH website (www.buildingsofireland) notes that the alleys were extended in 1879 and 1897. The concrete alleys utilised the remnants of the school building. The extant alley structure partially sits inside the ruined school structure.

These alleys were often referred to as 'big alleys' because of their large 60 x 30 feet court size combined with the height and length of their walls. The ready availability of cement made this dramatic jump in scale possible...Hundreds of big alleys were constructed between the 1920s and 1940s. Initially, these alleys used the gable walls of other buildings for structural support (incl. parochial halls, new or 19th century schoolhouse, and sometimes limekilns) or extended the solidly built masonry walls of older alleys...In some instances, there were fully enclosed courts with upper-level seating galleries (<https://irishhandballalley.humap.site/map/collections/parochial-halls-and-primary-schools>).

The alley complex on the site is substantial with a central ground floor alley and two adjacent alleys located at a higher level and accessed by stairs. Shelters are located underneath the higher-level alleys. The ground floor central alley and that to the east are of similar size, while the western alley is smaller. This smaller alley stands closest to the remaining walls of the school and its length and width appears to be dictated by the extant school walls. It is possible that this was the first alley constructed on the site. The size of the Clonbealy alley structure is a indicator of the popularity of the sport in 19th/20th century Ireland and the importance of the sport as a recreational and social activity.

Shoeing stone

A shoeing stone is located at the southern tip of the site on the northern bank of the rivers at the point where the two rivers meet. Shoeing stones are a smithing apparatus used to hold cartwheel bands. At least two smithies are shown near the proposal site on Cork Street on the 2nd edition OS map (1902). Earlier evidence for two forges on Cork Street is recorded in Slaters Directory of 1856 under proprietors Joseph Allen and Cornls. Brien (<https://www.igp-web.com/tipperary/slaters/newport.htm>). The 1901 census records the following blacksmiths on Cork Road in Newport; James Quinlan, Michael Quinlan, William Hinchey, Charles Connell, Patrick Connell, Michael Ryan, James Ryan, William O'Reilly and Martin O'Reilly. The 1911 census lists James and Michael Quinlan, Charles O'Connell, Timothy Ryan and William O'Reilly as blacksmiths on Cork Road (<https://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>).

The stone was located at the river edge to avail of the water to cool the hot metal. A fire was lit close by to heat the metal before placing it on the stone. The following description of this activity is included on an information panel located near the stone. A link with the local 'boys school' is noted.

The shoeing stone at the riverside under the bridge at Newport was the location of the 'unpredictable fantail of sparks', a fire of coal and turf was built around in a circle. Shoeing the wheel was an occasional pursuit when the accumulation of wheels warranted. The huge fire caused a stir for the schoolboys in the adjoining school. The location of the shoeing stone at the river side was dictated by the necessity for a plentiful supply of cold water for rapid cooling of the iron bands. In the early 1900s there were at least seven blacksmiths employed at O'Connel's (O'Connell?) forge in Cork rd. and the need for a plentiful supply of turf, especially during the 'emergency' generated additional seasonal employment in the bog (Newport Tidy Towns Committee 2012).

The exact date of the stone is unclear but an early-mid 19th century date is likely.

17th century documentary sources

The Civil Survey of 1654-6 provides information on the townlands of 'Clounebeally' and 'Tullagh and Purtanenacasky'. The proprietors of Clounebeally in 1640 were John Ryan of Craige and Dermott Ryan of Clounebeally. The Survey notes that the land is 'at present totally wast without any Improvemnt. or accomodation' (Simmington 1934, 191). John Ryan, Teige Ryan and Hugh Ryan were the

proprietors of Tullagh and Purtanenacasky in 1640. The following is noted:

Upon this lands is ye ruines of a water mill. Likewise a ffayre twice a year vizt in June & October. And through this land runneth ye River Owny upon wch River there is a Bridge Upon this land wch land is at present totally wast (Simington 1934, 189)

19th century documentary sources

The *Tithe Applotment Books* of 1827 list one individual in Newport; James Laffan (www.titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie).

Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* of 1837 describes Newport or 'St John's Newport' as containing 163 houses and 852 inhabitants. The town is the property of Sir Edmund Waller. There are two barracks (one in the old charter school) and a constabulary police force. Fairs are held in April, May, July and October and include a large bullock fair. The only school mentioned is located near the barracks (Lewis 1837).

The *Griffith Valuations* of 1855 lists 50 individuals in Clonbealy townland and the surnames Bourke, Buckley, Carey, Casey, Caples, Connor, Connors, Cullen, Dooly, Dunne, Dwyer, Fitzgerald, Garvin, Gleeson, Grogan, Hassett, Heffernan, Hogan, Kennedy, Lewis, McGrath, Meara, Mulcahy, Quilty, Rose, Ryan, Shea and Wixted. There are 46 individuals recorded in Tullow townland with surnames Allen, Blake, Bourke, Brennan, Carroll, Casey, Coffey, Cox, Cullen, Egan, Fitzgerald, Greene, Joyce, Keenivan, McDonnell, Meehan, O'Brien, Poe, Quinlan, Ryan, Scully, Shea, Tuohy and Wixted. The accompanying map is difficult to reconcile with the list of occupiers but there is a reference to a John H. Garvin resident in Clonbealy (possibly in Rose Hill) and also a reference to a school-house. There is also a school-house linked to a Reverend John Heffernan (<https://griffiths.askaboutireland.ie/>).

Slaters Directory of 1856 lists the following rate payers in Clonbealy townland: Wellington Rose Esq., Revd. Mr. Heffernon (Charter School), Mr. Garoon (Endowed School), Wm. Gleeson, Margt. Carrol, Sir E. Waller, Michael Caplis, Thos. Casey, Wm. Ryan, Thos. Magrath, John Lewis and Anne Shea. The rate payers listed for Pound Street are Sir E. Waller, Henry Rose and John Fitzgerald and on Cork Street the rate payers are Joseph Allen (including forge), Robert Flyod, John Coffey, Pat Coffy, Danl. Ryan, Laurence Ryan, Revd. Jas. Healy, Joseph Green, Lord Bloomfield, Jeremiah Ryan, Cons. Brien, Thos. Lynch, Cornls. Brien (including forge), Hanora Quinlan, Michl. Carrol and Mary O'Brien (<https://www.igp-web.com/tipperary/slaters/newport.htm>).

Basset's Directory of 1889 describes the town of Newport as 'well built and slated'. Sir Charles Waller, Bart., is given as the principal owner of the town. The town is industrious with many types of businesses and services listed, including a post master, miller, dispensary, provisions provider, grocers, victualler, bakers, egg exporters, creameries, saddlers, hotel proprietors. Schools are noted including a charter school and national schools. (<https://www.libraryireland.com/genealogy/bassett/tipperary/newport.php>).

20th century documentary sources

The 1901 census lists approximately 200 people in Newport town, with 47 individuals recorded in Clonbealy townland. A similar array of surnames is recorded as that listed in the Griffith Valuation with some additions such as Benton, Callaghan, Howard, Kennelly, Kinmonth, Lambert, Mahoney, McCarthy, O'Malry, Sparrow, Sheeran, Sorensen and Vestergaard. The occupations listed are RIC district inspector, parish priest, school master and organist, farmer, dairy man, dairy assistant, builder, shopkeeper and farmer, draper, housekeeper, domestic servant and labourer (<https://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>). The 1911 census lists 42 individuals in Clonbealy with the new surnames of Corrigan, Llewellyn, O'Halloran, Ralph and Rigg. Occupations listed include RIC officer, RIC pensioner, parish priest, national school teacher, milliner, farmer, agricultural labourer, nursery governess, housekeeper, house and palourmaid, cook, domestic servant, coachman.

Architectural heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage of Ireland (NIAHI) describes structures of architectural heritage value across Ireland (www.buildingsofireland.ie). Buildings gain protection by being listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) within development plans for any given planning authority (Tipperary Co. Co. 2022).

There are two listed architectural heritage sites located within the proposed development site (Table 2); the handball alley structure (NIAH Reg. No. 22311006; RPS Reg. No. 784) and the shoeing stone (RPS 2941). Tullow Bridge is located a short distance south of the site (NIAH 22311010; RPS 785).

Table 2: Architectural heritage sites in vicinity of the scheme

Reg. No	Townland	Name / description
NIAH 22311001 RPS 789	Clonbealy	Clareview – Charter school
NIAH 22311004	Newport	Church Street - Saint John's Church – mausoleum
NIAH 22311007	Newport	Church Street – Catholic Church of the Most Holy Redeemer
NIAH 22311008	Newport	Church Street - Saint Mary's Church – school
NIAH 22311009	Newport	Main Street – house
NIAH 22311006 RPS 784	Clonbealy	Rose Hill – handball alley
NIAH 22311010 RPS 785	Newport	Main Street – Tullow bridge
NIAH 22311012	Newport	Chapel Lane – Saint John's Catholic Church
NIAH 22311018	Tullow	Custom Gap Road – Newport Courthouse
NIAH 22311020 RPS 2941	Tullow	Custom Gap Road - Newport Courthouse - bridewell
	Clonbealy	Clonbealy (shoeing stone)

The handball alley complex is described as follows on the NIAH website:

Description

Three handball alleys were constructed in mass concrete against the rendered random stone walls of a former two-storey national school. Alleys were extended in 1879 and 1897, before becoming disused in 1965. Contains remnants of tiered precast concrete seating and steps to ball alleys, and blocked window openings with stone sills to school building. Date plaque to school in partition wall.

Appraisal

Handball was one of the sports promoted by the Gaelic Athletic Association, and was very popular throughout Ireland during the first half of the twentieth century when most towns and villages constructed a handball alley. The decline in popularity of the sport in the latter half of the twentieth century resulted in their disuse and sometimes demolition, with the result that they are becoming increasingly rare. This group of handball alleys has social significance for its ability to provide information about the fluctuations in popularity of this sport (www.buildingsofireland.ie).

The shoeing stone is only included on the RPS and no description is provided. The stone is original to the site. As detailed above, shoeing stones were part of the toolkit of blacksmiths and these large flat stones with a central hole were used to hold the metal bands of cartwheels so that they could be shaped and fitted. The Clonbealy stone is located on the bank where the Mulkear and Small Rivers meet and is detailed further on the section on the site visit.

Tullow Bridge is described on the NIAH website:

Description

Single-arch concrete road bridge over River Mulcair, built c.1930. Decorative chevron cut-outs to parapet. String course to bridge and abutments, excised to vehicular sides and with panels to abutments. Remains of earlier bridge at northwest corner of existing bridge has round dressed limestone pier and remains of second, supporting sandstone upper structure with dressed voussoirs, string course, rendered parapets and with arch between standing pier and river bank.

Appraisal

A picturesque bridge crossing the Mulcair River, from the early twentieth century in a prominent location in Newport. The remains of the earlier sandstone construction indicate the historical significance of the location as a river crossing (www.buildingsofireland.ie).

The remaining architectural heritage sites in the neighbourhood include churches and a mausoleum (18th-20th century) on Church Street and Chapel Lane, 19th century schools on Pound Street (Clareview - charter school/barracks) and Church Street, a 19th century courthouse and bridewell on Custom Gap Road and a 19th century house on Main Street.

Discussion of archaeological and historical background

The proposal site is located in an area rich in archaeological potential due to its riverine setting and location at a fording point at the confluence of two rivers; the Mulcair and Small. There is potential for riverine archaeology including *fulachtaí fia*, riverside settlements, fording structures (bridges etc), boats, mill sites, fish traps, weirs and also potential for the discovery of archaeological artefacts deposited in the river.

The site has definite potential for post-medieval discoveries. A large complex of buildings is shown within the site bounds on the north side of the River Small, probably a mill complex that survived, in part, until the mid 19th century. Also within the site were two school 19th century school buildings. Mill stones displayed in the park on the site may be associated with one or more mills. A large handball alley complex (19th-20th century) and shoeing stone (19th-20th century), both listed architectural heritage structures, are presently located within the site. The proposed development site contained and still contains structures central to the post-medieval industrial, educational and social history of Newport.

Site visit (Plates 1-18)

The site was visited by archaeologist Margaret McNamara on 24th August 2025. A walkover and brief photographic survey was conducted.

North of the river (Plates 1-6)

The main part of the site, north of the River Small, is entered via a narrow road accessed from Pound Street. The site is largely a green space which has been landscaped into a small public park. The park is relatively level at its highest point from which it slopes gradually southwards to meet the river bank(s). The handball alley structure stands at the highest point of the park at the north edge of the site. The east and south-east edge of the park is enclosed by a wooden fence beyond which lies an overgrown river bank with mature trees and hedges.

The south edge of the park is open to the rivers. A gravel path winds through the lawns to a short set of steps (stone and concrete) which lead down to the river bank, from where the Tullow Bridge can be seen. The western edge of the site is bordered by a large shrub bed enclosed by a low stone wall, beyond which lies riverbank overgrowth. A plaque containing a poetry/lyric inscription is set into the wall. The plaque reads 'Dear Old Newport Town Here. By The Mulcair Banks I Stray'.

The park contains two well-manicured lawn areas with circular flower beds and rectangular gravel beds. There is also a small circular stone feature with a hole in the centre (diameter of circle approximately 0.30m; diameter of hole approx. 0.15m) set into the eastern lawn, potentially another related feature.

The sloping ground on either side of the steps leading down to the river has been planted in a sparse manner, enclosed by stone kerbing, and a semi-circular stone seating structure can be found west of the steps. The shoeing stone and associated information panel are sited east of the steps.

Proposed bridge crossing (Plates 7-9)

The proposed pedestrian bridge will sit east of the shoeing stone, spanning a short distance at a low fording point on the River Small. Both sides of the bank here are overgrown, although on the opposite side of the river (in Tullow townland) a narrow gravel track forms a laneway connecting back to Pound Street to the south-east.

Corn mill location and millstones (Plates 10-12)

The approximate location of the corn mill, as depicted on 18th century (Fig. 4) and 19th century (Fig. 5) historic maps, coincides with an overgrown section of the bank of the River Small. The scrubby nature of this area made a detailed survey of this area difficult and no obvious structures are apparent in this area, although there may be mill features extant beneath the overgrowth. Within the landscaped lawns, two of the gravel beds contain millstones. It is unclear if these stones are original to the site or the mapped corn mill. Both millstones are set on edge into concrete plinths. The larger stone, at the east, measures approximately 1m in diameter and the smaller, western stone approximately 0.50m. Remnants of metal and possibly wooden fixings are evident in the central holes (approx. 0.20m in diameter).

National schools (Plates 13-16)

The most evident remnant of the schools located on the site are at the western end of the handball alley complex.

A portion of the west and north wall of the western school building (see on the 1902 OS – Fig. 6) now form part of the west and north wall of the western handball alley. The walls are tall and composed of cut sandstone and red brick. The west wall is approximately 13m long and 3.5m high and contains four window openings, each approximately 2m high and 1m wide. The window openings have been blocked on the interior side by the concrete bricks which form the handball alley. A small door has been created at ground level in the west wall, presumably relating to the alley. The northern wall of the western alley is taller, possibly 4m, and contains no openings.

Another tall cut stone wall is located on the western edge of the central handball alley and this is likely to be part of the earlier school building visible on maps from the mid 19th century (Fig. 5). Blocked-up windows are also evident in the dividing walls of the handball alley structure indicating that the internal walls of the school were used to define the alley structures. A plaque located in the west wall of the central alley reads '1879 Newport National School'. Of course, it is also possible that there was an earlier cut stone handball alley structure here following the demise and ruin of the school.

Handball alley (Plates 1-2 and 13-17)

The handball alley complex is large, with total dimensions of approximately 28.5m north-west to south-east by 24.5m. The structure is predominantly composed of concrete although there may be a cut stone core to the walls as remnants of the earlier school structure (or an earlier cut stone alley structure) are evident adjacent to and within the alley walls. The alleys are roofless and open to the

south. The floor of the alleys is composed of large slabs of stone. Small opening/doorways (approx. 0.70m by 0.50m) are located at ground in the west wall of the west alley and in the east wall of the central alley. The central alley is the largest of the three, measuring 23m by 13m. The east alley measures 20m by 9m and the west alley 12.5m by 7m. The east and west alleys are set at a higher level than the central alley and are accessed by steps. Small shelters underneath the stairwells and seating areas at the southern end of the higher level alleys are also part of the design of the complex.

Shoeing stone (Plate 8 and 18)

As noted previously, the shoeing stone is located at the southern end of the site, on the river bank and close to the point where the two rivers meet. The stone is set in a an octagonal structure, with four longer and four shorter sides and a circular hole of similar shape. The stone measures approximately 1.5m in diameter and the structure is 1m high, composed of a mixture of stone and concrete. Surrounding the shoeing stone is a larger circular paved area (2m in diameter) bounded by partial stone kerbing.

Conclusion and Archaeological Impact Statement

In accordance with *Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation* (DAHGI 1999b), an archaeological impact statement is to be made. The impact statement should describe the following:

...possible direct or indirect effects of the proposed development on archaeological deposits, features or objects. The archaeological impact statement must be based on the results of the overall archaeological assessment as well as the results of the test excavation. (DAHGI 1999b, 21)

Receiving environment

The documentary research has demonstrated that, although the proposal site does not contain any known or recorded archaeological monuments, it is located in an area of strong archaeological potential due to its position in a potentially archaeologically rich riverine landscape close to fording points.

A large complex of buildings (likely a water mill) and two national school buildings were once located here and a later handball alley structure stands on the site, incorporating elements of the 19th century school buildings. Millstones are present on the site, albeit used in a decorative manner in the park, and a shoeing stone utilised by local blacksmiths in the 19th/20th centuries remains in its original position on the river edge.

Development impact (Figs 9-10)

The nature of the proposed development works means that direct impact will be limited for most of the site. There are no plans to impact the handball alley structure and the green space that forms most of the site has already been at least partially disturbed by 20th century landscaping works. Path resurfacing is all that is proposed for this area. The shoeing stone on the river bank will similarly remain in place.

The area of greatest impact coincides with the area of highest archaeological potential - the two ends of the proposed pedestrian bridge. The northern end of the bridge is directly in the location of the corn mill shown on mid 19th century mapping (Figs 5 and 10) and indeed the probable larger mill complex on late 18th century mapping (Fig. 4). The date of this mill(s) is unknown, but buildings stood here by 1770 and the mill could have been in place for several decades or centuries before that date.

Both ends of the bridge will also unavoidably impact the river bank itself, which carries relatively high archaeological potential. Documentary sources refer to mills in the area and these could have operated on either side of the river.

Without detailed engineering and construction design it is not possible to determine the exact nature of the below-ground impact, however it is highly likely that mini-piling will be used rather than poured foundations for the two bridge abutments. Regardless of the technique, any archaeological material on either side of the river at the bridge location would be impacted by these works.

The proposal, as it currently stands, will not involve direct impact on the river bed itself.

Mitigation recommendations (Fig. 10)

For the dryland part of the development, it is recommended that further assessment be carried out to establish whether any archaeological material is present in the areas proposed for development impact, specifically the two ends of the bridge. On the north site this would particularly be the potential for sub-surface structural remains of the mapped mill(s), however other archaeological remains could be present on the river bank on either side of the watercourse. Following vegetation clearance, archaeological test trenches should be excavated to examine the areas indicated on Figure 10.

Although there is no proposed impact on the riverbed as part of this development, it is recommended that an archaeological wade inspection place in the river itself prior to commencement of works in order to identify any features of archaeological potential which may exist on the river bed or banks in the vicinity of the proposed bridge. The survey should be carried out under licence by a suitably-qualified underwater archaeologist.

All ground disturbance associated with the development should also be subject to licensed archaeological monitoring.

Should archaeological material be revealed during the test trenching, survey or monitoring, further archaeological mitigation, including preservation *in situ* or full archaeological excavation may be required.

These mitigation proposals can be achieved by an appropriately worded condition attached to a grant of permission.

The opinions given in this archaeological assessment report are made subject to approval by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.



Margaret McNamara MA
TVAS Ireland Ltd
September 2025

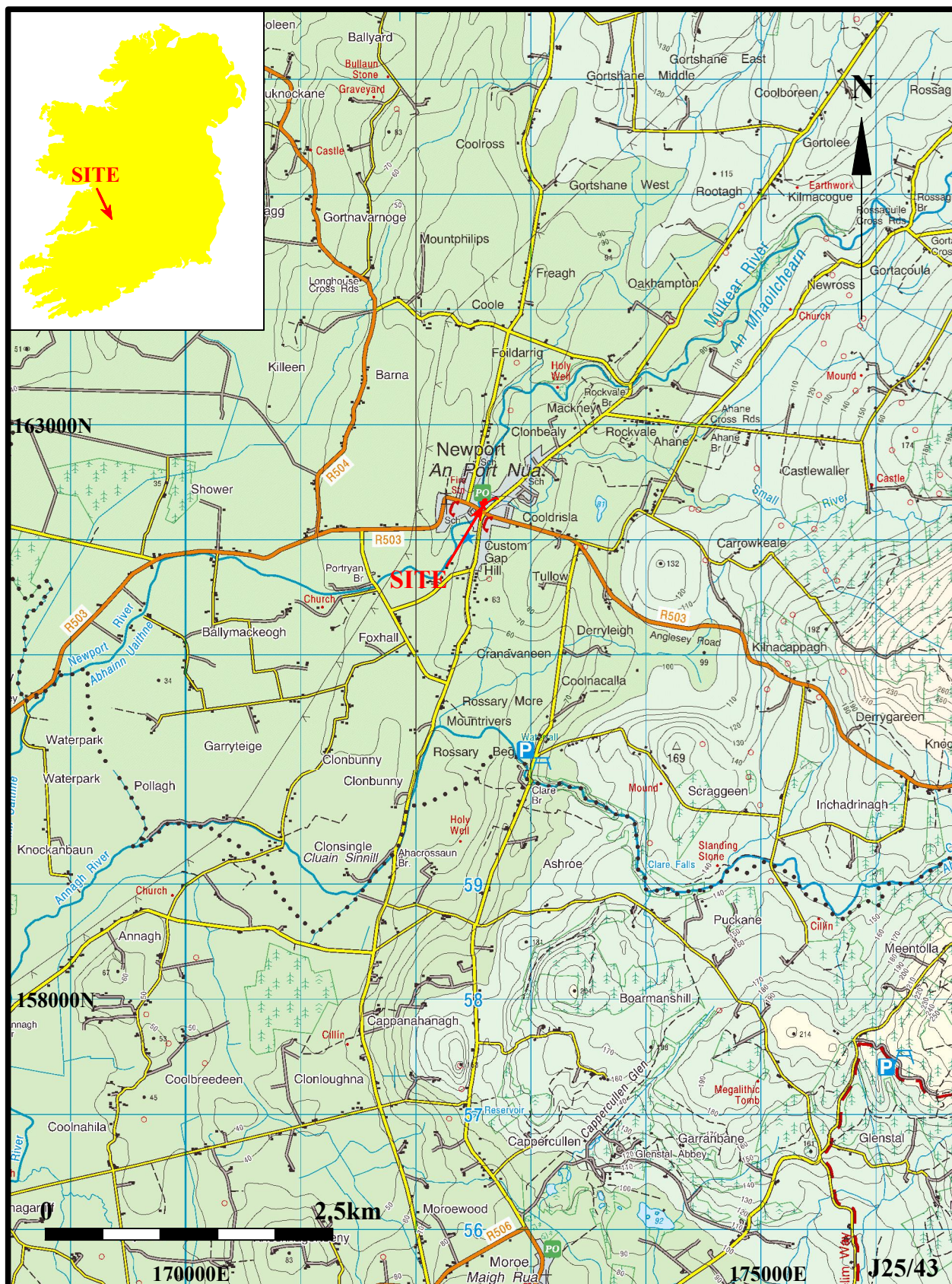
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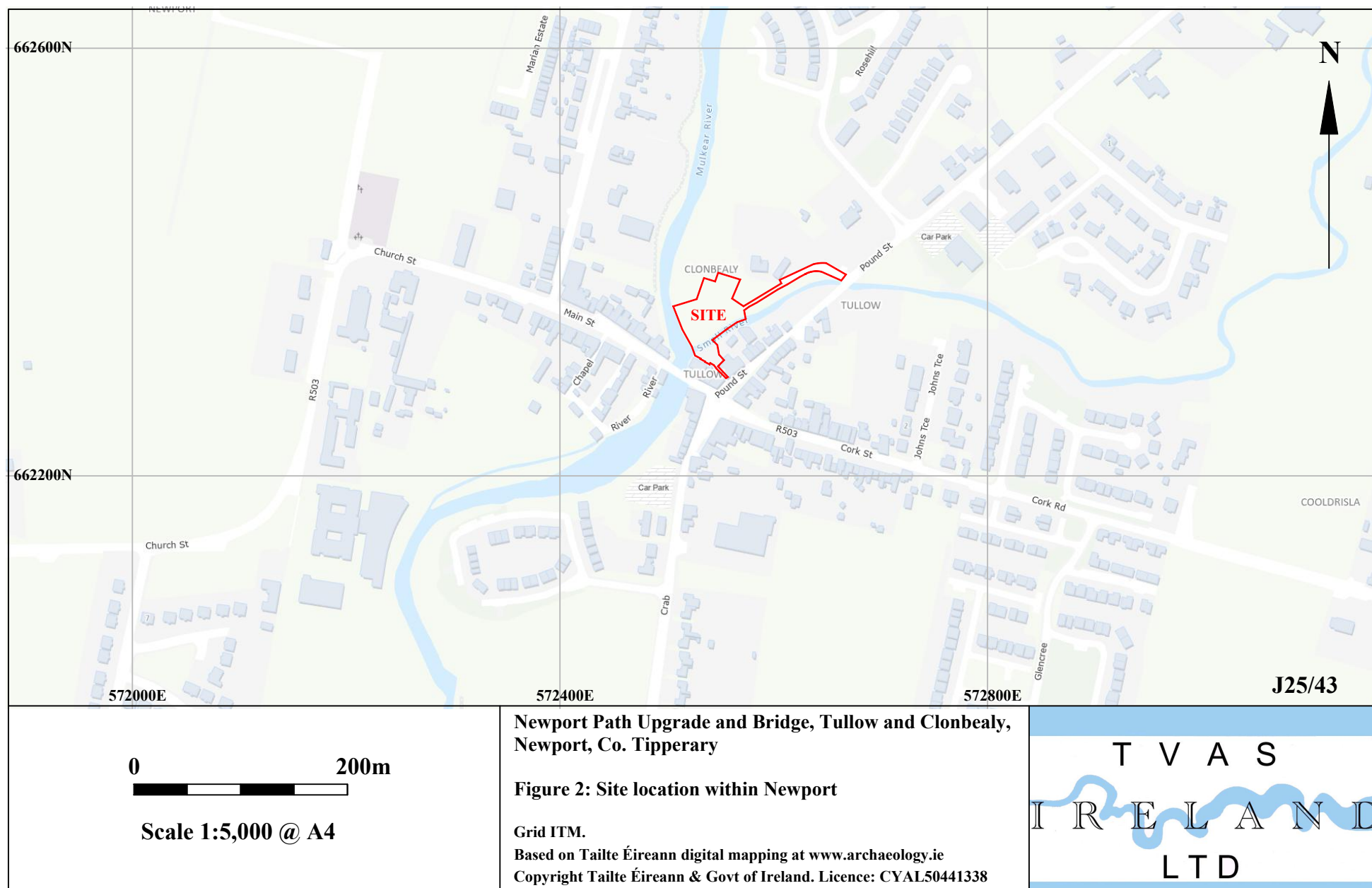
Figure 1: Site location

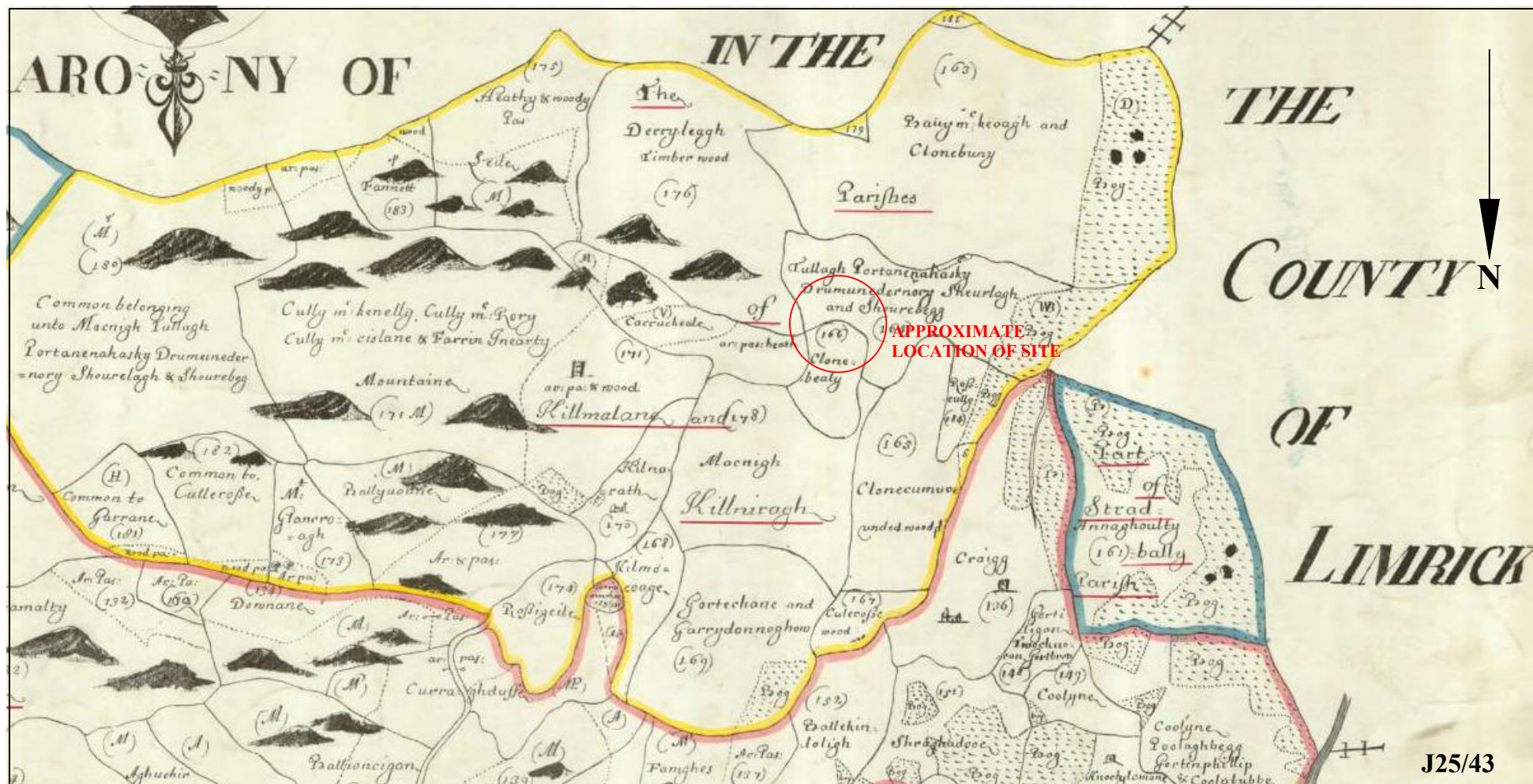
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Figure 3: Site on Down survey map 1657-8

Not to scale.

Owney & Arra barony map accessed via: <https://downsurvey.tchpc.tcd.ie/>

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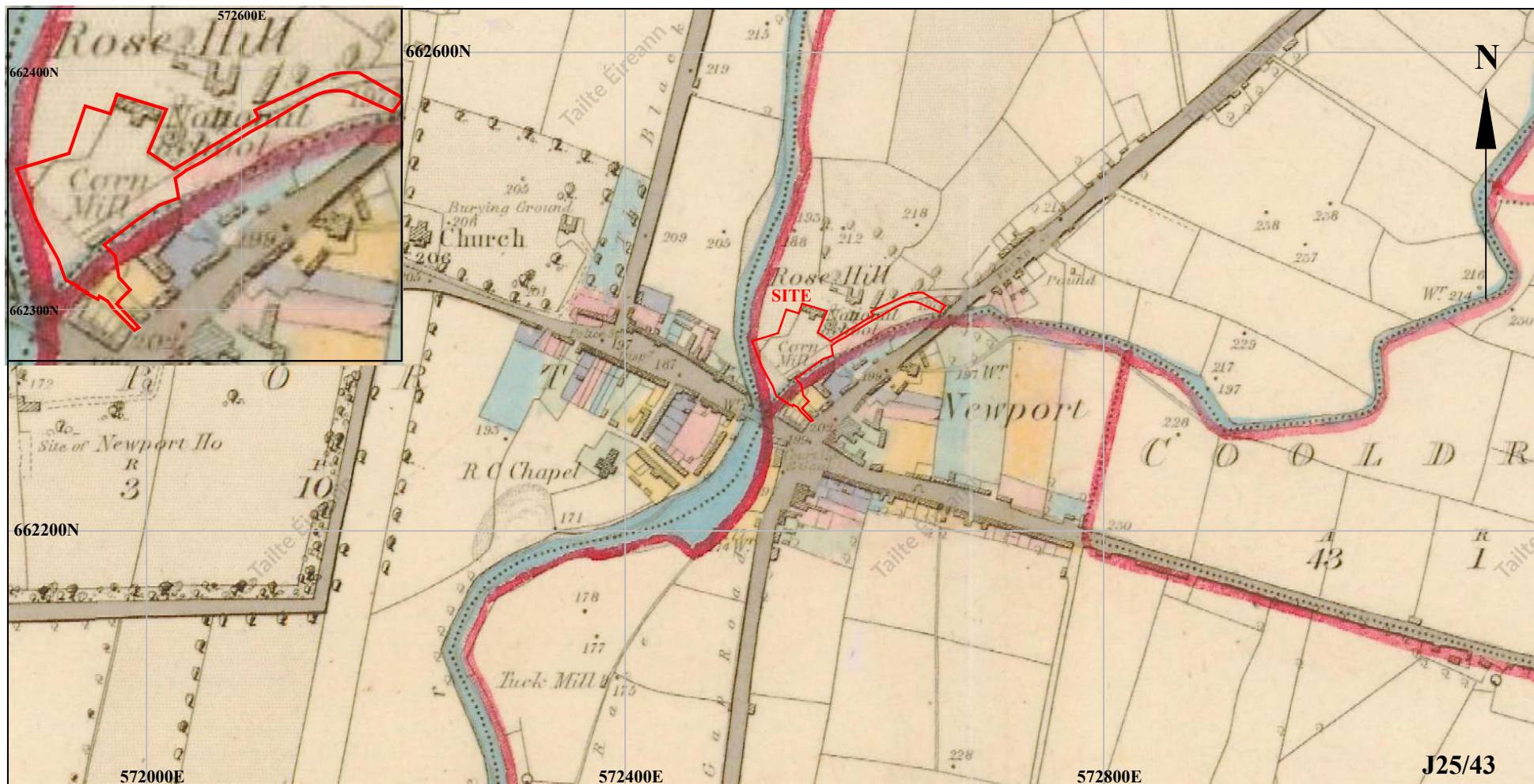
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Figure 4: Site on Longfield map 1770

Scale 1:5,000 @ A4

Map of Derryleigh Coolnacalla and the town of Newport in the barony of Ownly and
Arra and County of Tipperary from the Longfield Map Collection
National Library of Ireland MS 21 F.47 / (006)

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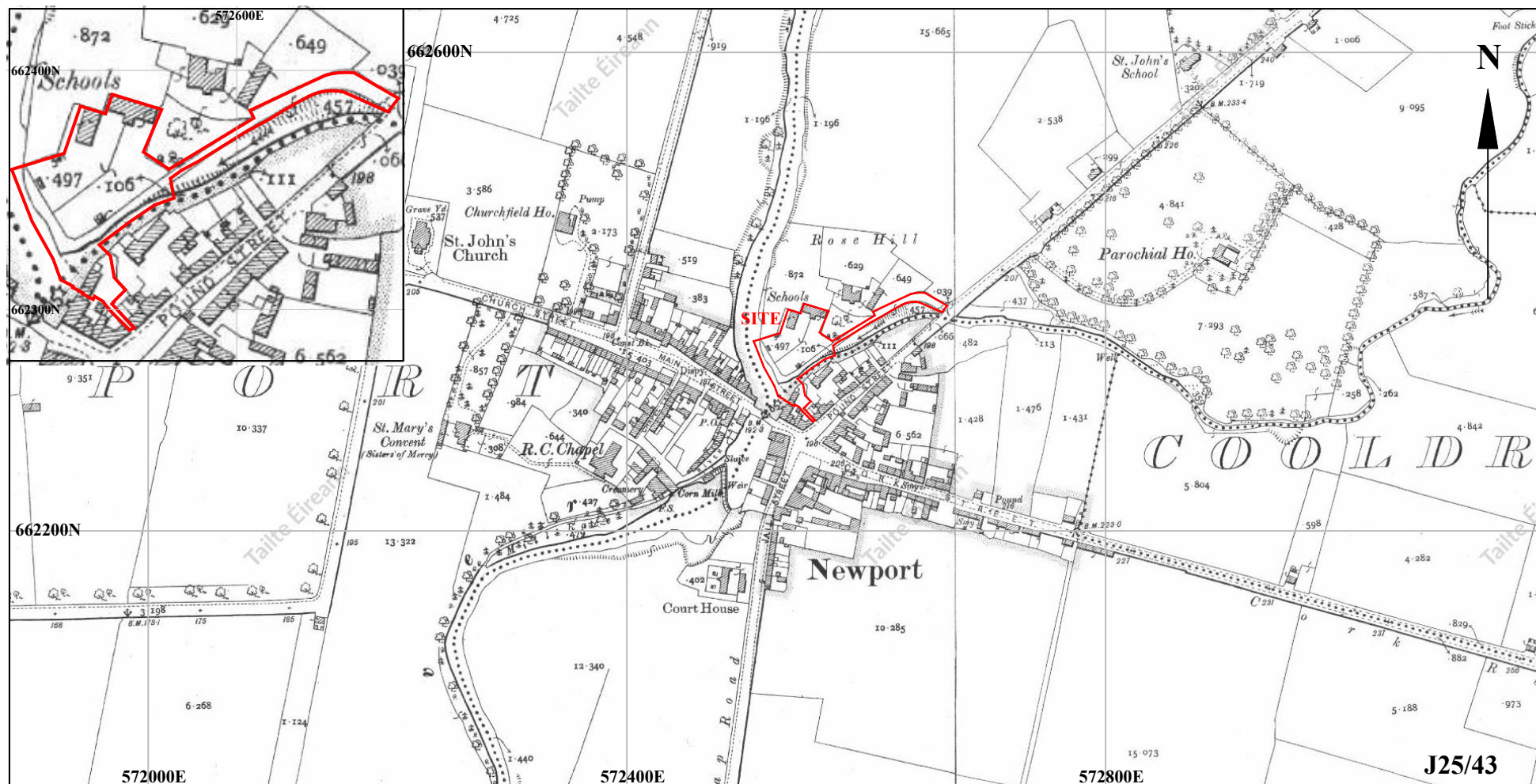
Figure 5: Site on 1843 Ordnance Survey map

Grid ITM.
Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile. Sheet TY037. Surveyed 1839.
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Scale 1:5,000 @ A4
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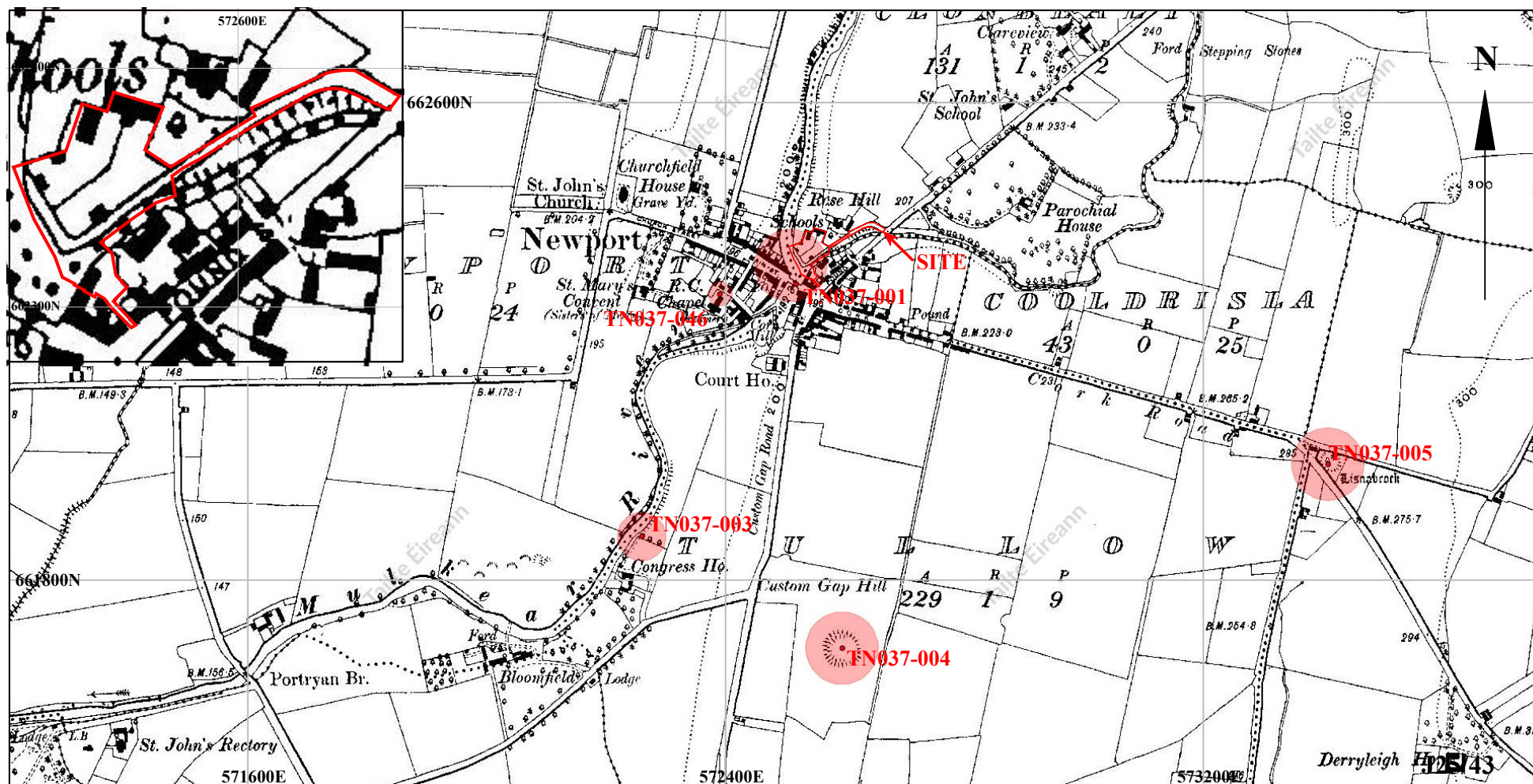
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Figure 6: Site on 1904 Ordnance Survey map

Grid ITM.
Ordnance Survey 25" to 1 mile. Sheets TY037-02, 03. Surveyed 1902.
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0 400m

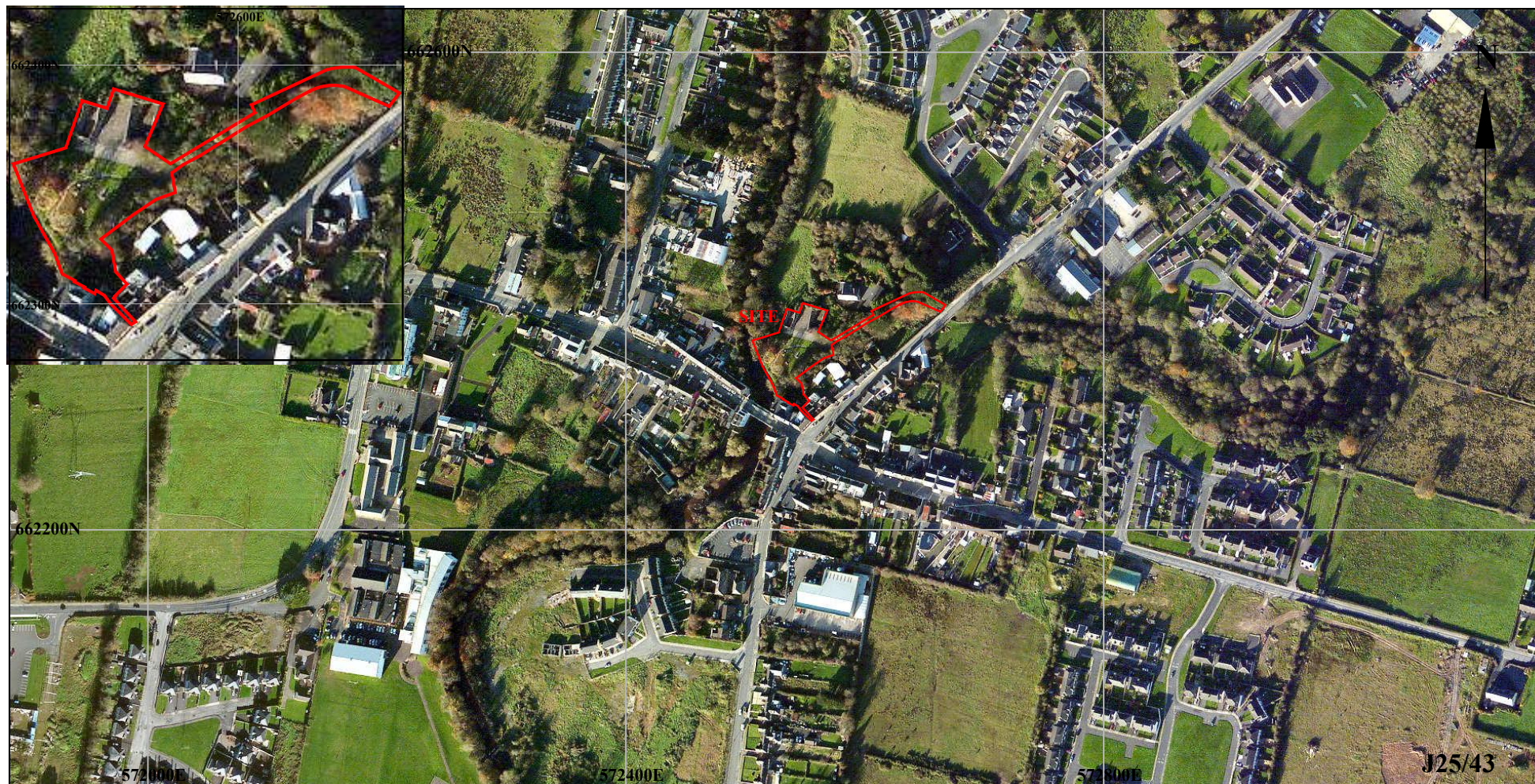
Scale 1:10,000 @ A4
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Figure 7: Site on 1907 Ordnance Survey map showing
Recorded Monuments

Grid ITM.
Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile. Sheet TY037. Revised 1901-1905.
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0 200m

Scale 1:5,000 @ A4
(inset at 1:2,500)

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Figure 8: Site on satellite image 2011-2013

Grid ITM.
Based on Ordnance Survey Ireland aerial digital globe map.
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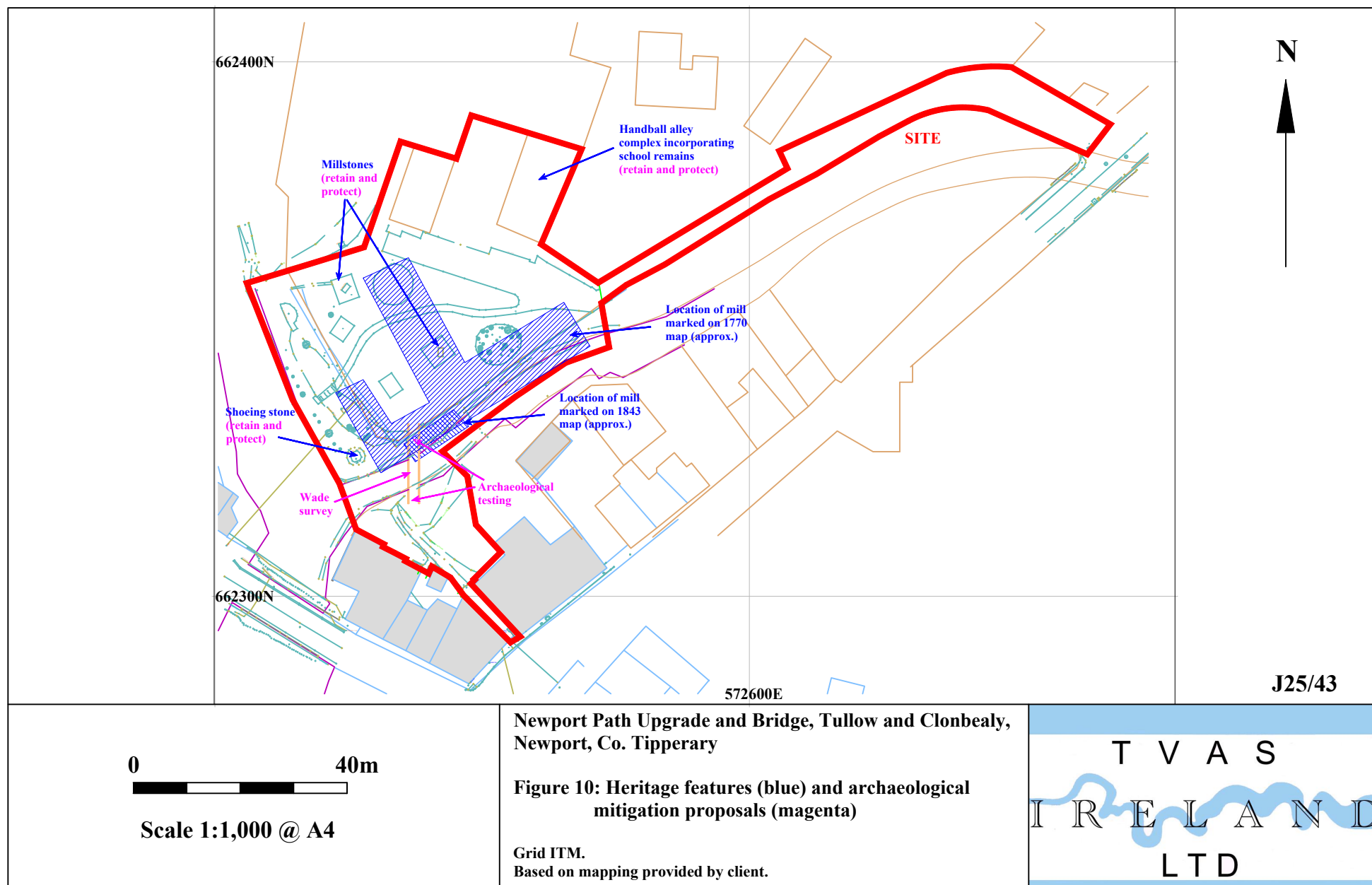


0 40m
 Scale 1:1,000 @ A4

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Figure 9: Proposed development layout

Grid ITM.
 Based on development layout plan provided by client.
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**Plate 1: Green space on northern side of river, alleys to right.
Looking south-west**



**Plate 2: Handball alleys and millstones.
Looking north-east**



**Plate 3: View from the riverbank of steps to green area, with shoeing stone panel.
Looking south-east**



**Plate 4: Tullow Bridge over the Mulkear.
Viewed from the riverbank.
Looking south**



**Plate 5: Small circular stone feature in eastern lawn.
Looking north-east**



**Plate 6: Riverside seating on the Mulkear River bank.
Looking south**

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Plates 1-6

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Plate 7: Confluence of Small and Mulkear Rivers, location of proposed pedestrian bridge at right. Looking north-west



Plate 8: View from shoeing stone, across proposed bridge location to laneway. Looking south-east



Plate 9: Laneway on south side of river leading to Pound Street. Looking south-east

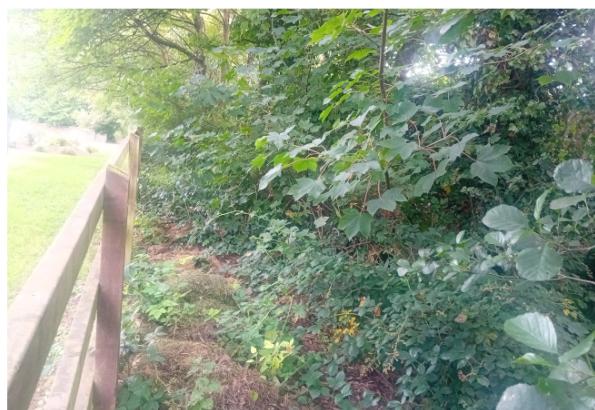


Plate 10: Site of corn mill on historic map, now overgrown riverbank. Looking north-east



Plate 11: Larger millstone set in park area. Looking north-east



Plate 12: Smaller millstone in park. Looking south-west

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Plates 7-12

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**Plate 13: Extant west wall of western school,
incorporated into handball alley.
Looking north-east**



**Plate 14: Extant west wall of school.
Looking south-east**



**Plate 15: Blocked up school window in
exterior of wall.
Looking east**



**Plate 16: Northern part of western/central
handball alleys - school walls.
Looking east**



**Plate 17: Central and eastern alleys.
Looking north**



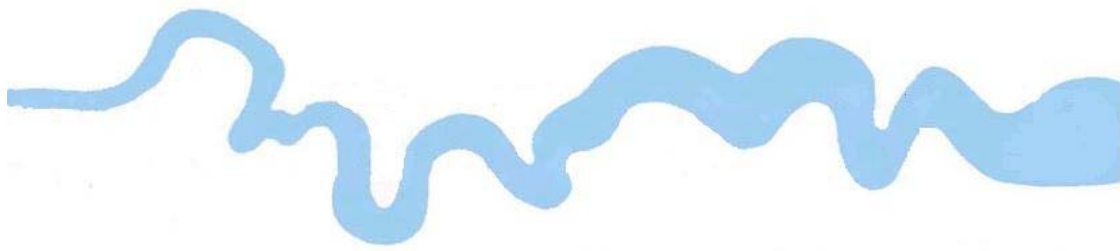
**Plate 18: Shoeing stone viewed from
riverbank.
Looking north-east**

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Plates 13-18

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