

A Proposed Development at
Kingston Park, Galway City

Archaeological Screening Report

Rory Sherlock MA PhD MIAI
Consultant Archaeologist

April 2025

SHERLOCK ARCHAEOLOGY
Consultant Archaeologists
Birchall
Oughterard
Co. Galway

SHERLOCK ARCHAEOLOGY
Consultant Archaeologists
Coolbawn
Nenagh
Co Tipperary



Table of Contents

List of Figures and Plates	ii
Executive Summary.....	1
1 Introduction.....	2
1.1 General	2
1.2 Site Location	2
1.3 Study Area	6
1.4 Objectives and Methodology	7
2 The Receiving Environment	8
2.1 Legislative Status and Planning Context.....	8
2.2 Known Archaeological Sites in the Area.....	9
2.3 Recent Archaeological Excavations	9
2.4 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.....	9
2.5 NIAH Survey of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes	9
2.6 Record of Protected Structures.....	10
2.7 Cartographic Evidence.....	11
3 Site Description.....	12
3.1 Field 1	12
3.2 Field 2	12
3.3 Field 3	12
3.4 Field 4	14
3.5 Field 5	14
3.6 Field 6	15
3.7 Field 7	16
3.8 Field 8	16
4 The Proposed Development	18
5 Conclusions and Recommendations.....	19
5.1 Conclusions.....	19
5.2 Recommendations	19

List of Figures and Plates

Figure 1: Site Location: The site is situated in the townlands of Ragoon and Clybaun, Galway City	2
Figure 2: Location Map (extract from OS 6" map - 1st ed. from 1837) with site indicated	3
Figure 3: Location Map (extract from OS 25" map from 1895) with development site outlined	4
Figure 4: Site Location Map (OSI Street Map from Historic Environment Viewer)	8
Plate 1: Aerial view of the proposed development site (outlined in blue)	5
Plate 2: GIS-derived aerial view of the development area (yellow shading).....	6
Plate 3: View of Field 1 looking north – the area was recently cleared of scrub	11
Plate 4: View of Field 2 looking west – the area was recently cleared of scrub.....	11
Plate 5: View of Field 3 looking northwest, with gorse scrub evident	13
Plate 6: View of Field 4 looking north.....	13
Plate 7: Boulders at the northern end of Field 4	14
Plate 8: Boulders and orthostats within the eastern boundary of Field 5.....	15
Plate 9: Looking east across Field 6	15
Plate 10: Looking northwest across Field 7	16
Plate 11: Looking southeast across Field 8	17
Plate 12: Eighteenth or nineteenth century architectural fragments	17

Executive Summary

This report has been prepared in advance of the proposed development of a park at Kingston, in Galway City. This study aims to assess the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage environment which currently exists on and around the proposed development site, evaluate the likely impacts that a proposed development will have on this environment, and recommend suitable mitigatory measures. The study area upon which this report is based extends 500m from the site boundary in all directions and incorporates parts of the townlands of Clybaun, Ragoon, Pollnarooma West, Knocknacarragh, Shangort, and Ballymoneen East.

The site of the proposed development, which extends to *circa* 4.61 ha, is divided into two parts by a public road leading from a roundabout on the Western Distributor Road to Knocknacarra National School. The site is generally in rough pasture, with scrub noted in many areas, though extensive scrub-clearance works have recently been undertaken in the northern part of the site.

There are no known archaeological monuments on the site, there are no Protected Structures on the site, and there is only one known archaeological site within 500m of the boundary of the proposed development site, this being the site of a levelled ringfort located 150m to the south. It is clear, therefore, that the proposed development site should be considered very suitable, in archaeological terms, for development, though further mitigatory works may be required due to the size of the site.

This report recommends that, if *An Bord Pleanála* decide to grant approval for the proposed development, input from the National Monuments Service should be sought when a draft outline of the proposed works is available, so that further mitigatory measures, if any are required, can be agreed.

1 Introduction

1.1 General

1.1.1 This report has been prepared for MKO, Tuam Road, Galway, in relation to their work, undertaken on behalf of Galway City Council, on a proposed park development on lands at Kingston on the west side of Galway City.

1.1.2 This report was prepared in April 2025 by Dr Rory Sherlock, Consultant Archaeologist, following a site visit and a short programme of documentary research.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The proposed development site lies in the townlands of Clybaun and Ragoon, Co. Galway, at ITM 526455, 724659.

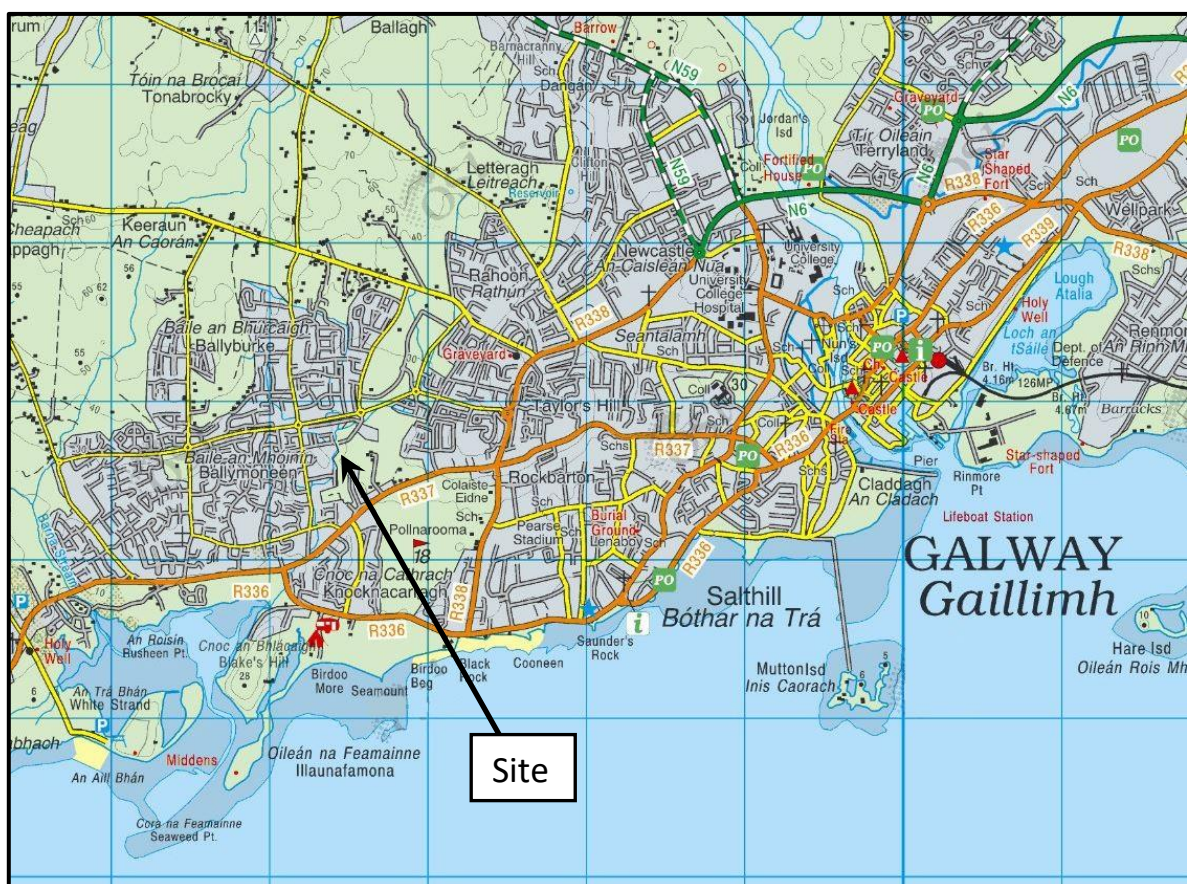


Figure 1: Site Location: The site is situated in the townlands of Rahoon and Clybaun, Galway City (Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. CYAL50292372 – ©Ordnance Survey Ireland / Government of Ireland)

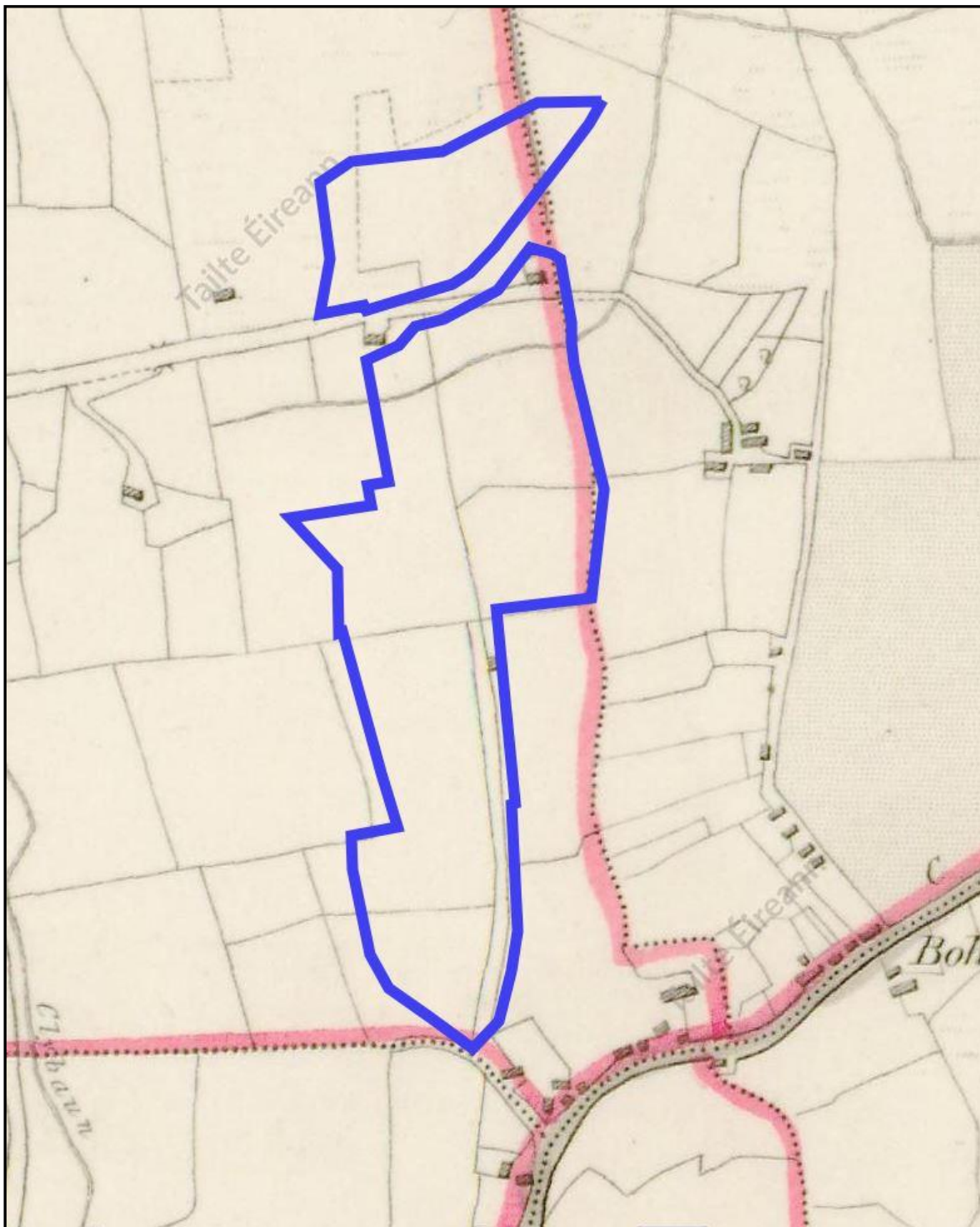
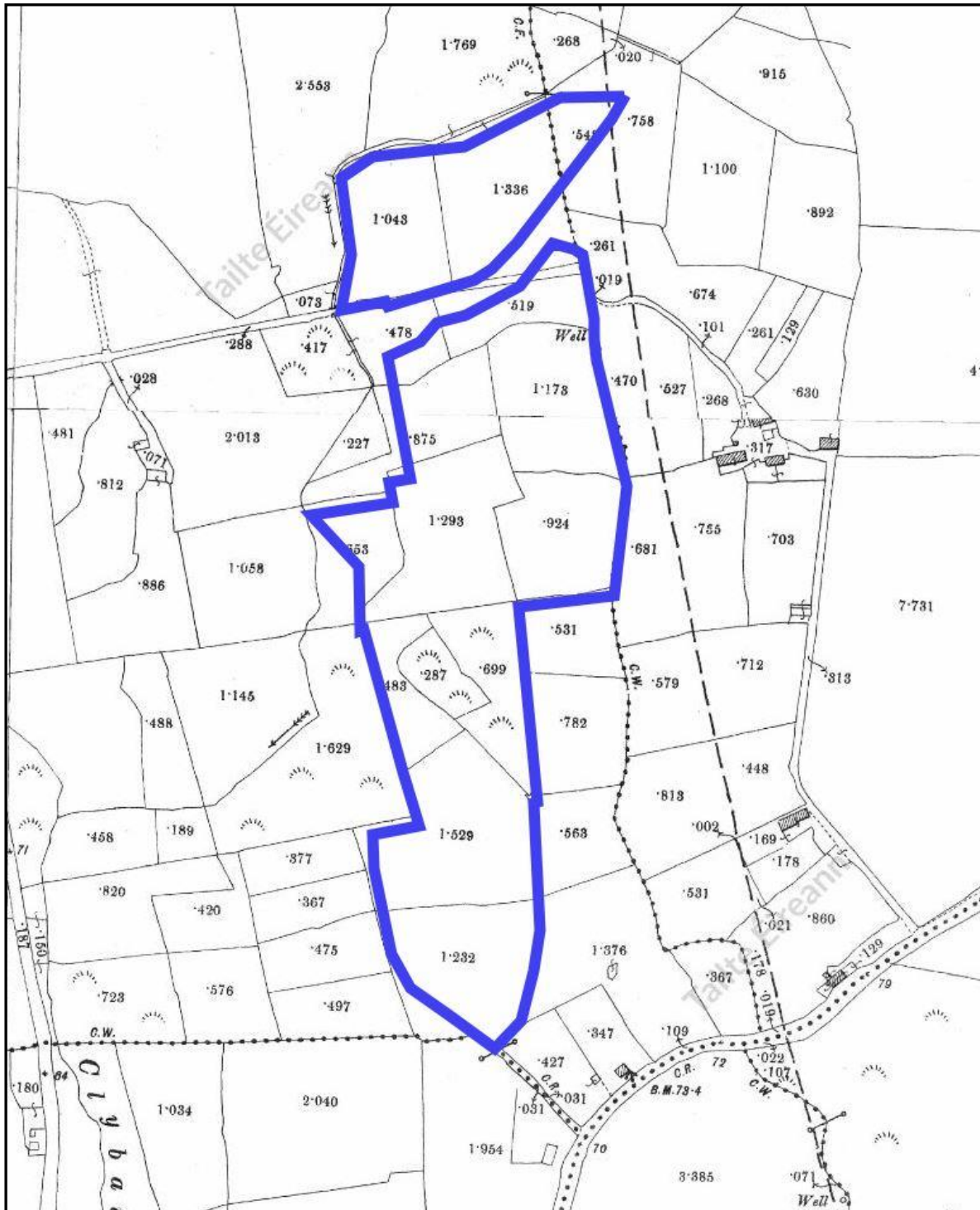


Figure 2: Location Map (extract from OS 6" map - 1st ed. from 1837) with site indicated by blue outline (Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. CYAL50292372 – ©Ordnance Survey Ireland / Government of Ireland)



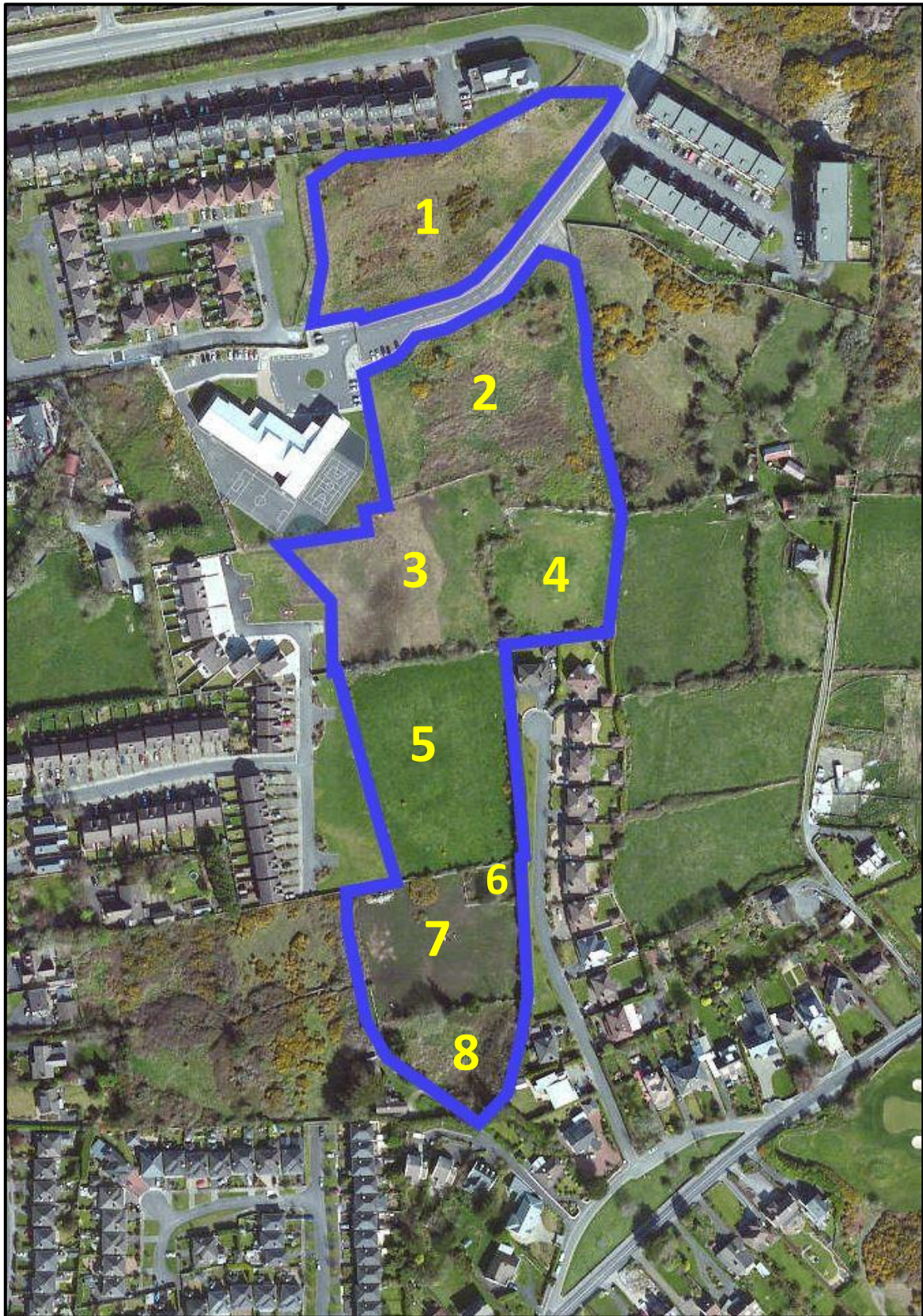


Plate 1: Aerial view of the proposed development site (outlined in blue) with field numbers (yellow)
(Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. CYAL50292372 – ©Ordnance Survey Ireland / Government of Ireland)



Plate 2: GIS-derived aerial view of the development area (yellow shading), with the 200m (dashed yellow line) and 500m (solid yellow line) buffers, with known archaeological sites indicated with red dots

1.3 Study Area

- 1.3.1 The study area upon which this report is based extends 500m from the site boundary in all directions and incorporates parts of the townlands of Clybaun, Ragoon, Pollnarooma West, Knocknacarragh, Shangort, and Ballymoneen East. The area is today generally known as Kingston, after the Kingston Road which passes just to the south of the site, which in turn is named after Kingstown House, which was formerly located *circa* 350m to the east.

1.4 Objectives and Methodology

1.4.1 Objectives

This study aims to assess the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage environment which currently exists on and around the proposed development site.

1.4.2 Desktop Research Methodology

The desktop research element of this study utilised several documentary and cartographic sources, and the main sources consulted may be summarised as follows:

- National Monuments Service's online Historic Environment Viewer
- Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) & Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)
- Unpublished archive of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
- NIAH Survey of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- Record of Protected Structures for Galway City
- Excavations Bulletin
- Aerial Photographs
- Cartographic Sources

1.4.3 Fieldwork Methodology

A site inspection by a professional archaeologist is a key component of any Archaeological Screening Report. During the site inspection the archaeologist records any known monuments and also seeks to identify and record any hitherto unrecorded features of archaeological or cultural heritage significance. The archaeologist walks the site, records the current land use, notes any inaccessible areas, and takes a series of photographs to illustrate the report. The site under consideration in this study was visited by the author on 24/03/2025.

2 The Receiving Environment

The site of the proposed development is occupied by a series of pasture fields, some of which are partly overgrown with scrub and some of which have lately been cleared of scrub.

2.1 Legislative Status and Planning Context

- 2.1.1 No known archaeological monuments exist on the site of the proposed development and, furthermore, no part of the site is in the Zone of Notification for any archaeological site.
- 2.1.2 No structures on the site of the proposed development are listed by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.
- 2.1.3 No structures on the site of the proposed development are listed in the Record of Protected Structures for Galway City.

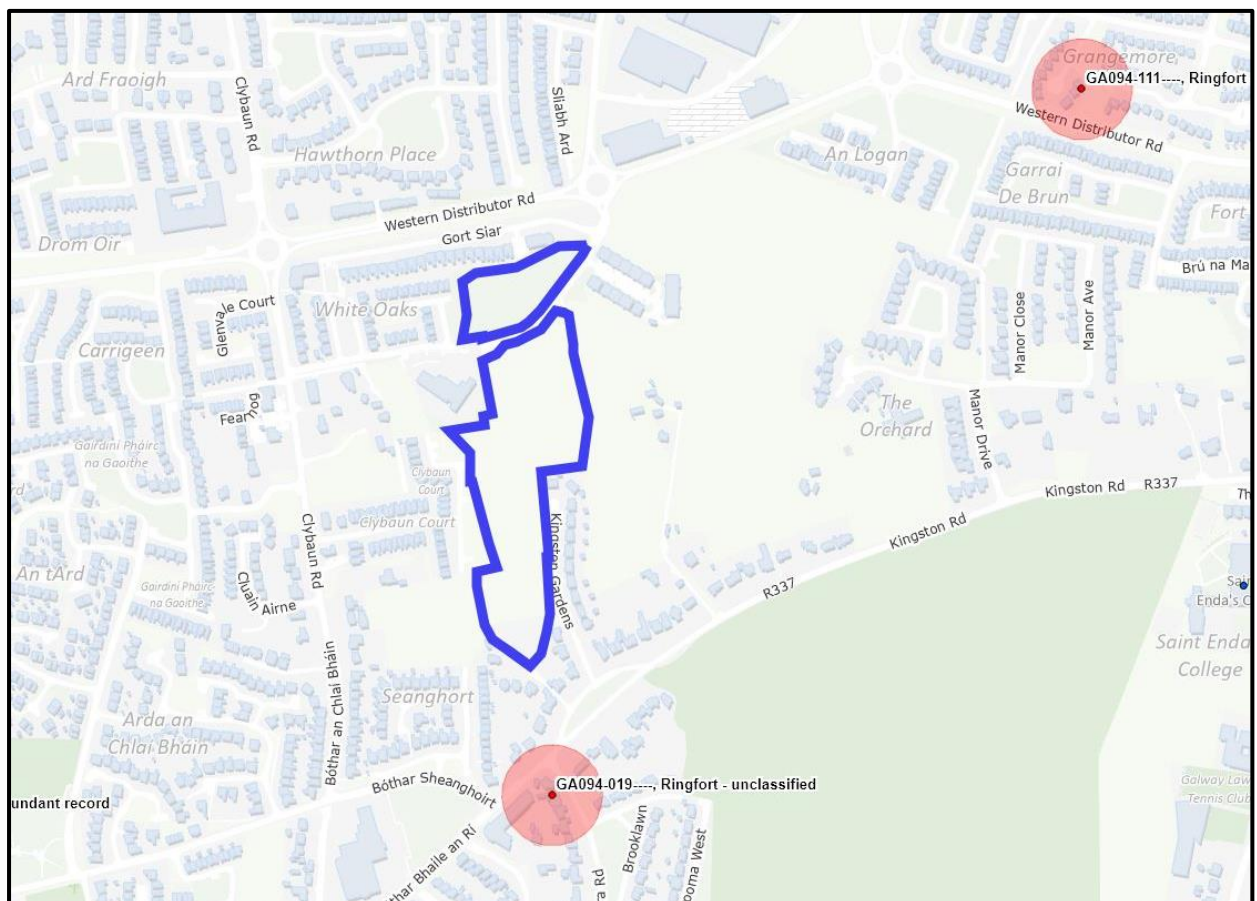


Figure 4: Site Location Map (OSI Street Map from Historic Environment Viewer) – the proposed development site is outlined in blue. Also shown are known archaeological sites (red dots – see Section 2.2) and their Zones of Notification (pink overlay).

(Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. CYAL50292372 – ©Ordnance Survey Ireland / Government of Ireland)

2.2 Known Archaeological Sites in the Area

2.2.1 In summary, just one known archaeological site lies within 500m of the boundary of the proposed development site (Plate 2). This site is protected by the National Monuments Act 1930, as amended.

2.2.2 The archaeological sites and monuments located within 500m of the proposed development site are listed in the Sites and Monuments Record (RMP) for County Galway as follows:

- The site of a levelled ringfort (GA094-019----) lies *circa* 152m south of the proposed development site in Knocknacarragh townland.

2.2.3 The ringfort is described by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland as follows:

GA094-019---- : Ringfort - unclassified : KNOCKNACARRAGH

Description: *In low marshy terrain. Marked on 1st ed. of OS 6-inch map as a circular enclosure (D c. 25m). No visible trace survives: a house occupies the site on 3rd (1945) ed. of OS 6-inch map.*

2.3 Recent Archaeological Excavations

2.3.1 A search through the online national database of archaeological excavations (www.excavations.ie), using the names of each of the townlands within the 500m study area, uncovered no relevant records of archaeological discoveries. Several accounts of large scale linear developments (drainage works etc.) did mention one or more of the townlands under study, but no finds of interest were reported from the study area.

2.4 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

2.4.1 No structures listed by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage lie within the study area for the proposed development.

2.5 NIAH Survey of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

2.5.1 The gardens of Kingstown House are listed by the NIAH's Survey of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes (NIAH Ref.: GA5331), though the house and the gardens are no longer

extant. The NIAH describes the various elements as follows, based largely on the Ordnance Survey first edition 6" map from the 1830s.

Description: *A modest pre-1841 site. The pre-1841 house, outbuildings, and walled garden are gone, as are the access routes and gates. Now occupied in areas by a recent housing estate and large school-like structure.*

Principal Building: *Detached pre-1841 house on irregular plan, facing southeast, extended or rebuilt c.1870, when used by Christian Brothers. Replaced c.1980 by large single-storey structure on cross plan, now in commercial use.*

Outbuilding: *Ranges, pre-1841 and c.1870 marking two sides of yard to rear of house, now gone*

Productive Garden: *Pre-1841 walled garden on irregular plan to northwest of house, now gone*

Farmland: *Partly in use as grassland. Some of historic field structure remaining*

Avenue, Drive or Walk: *Pre-1841 main access from southeast across curved path to house, now gone. Service route, pre-1841, just east of main access leading to yard and outbuildings to rear of house, now gone and replaced by housing estate road on different layout.*

Gate Lodge or Gateway: *Pre-1841 gates to southeast of house site, now gone*

- 2.5.2 Kingstown House lay *circa* 364m east of the proposed development site in Ragoon townland, while the demesne lands associated with the house extended westwards to come within *circa* 112m of the eastern boundary of the site. No surviving element of the Kingstown House demesne, and no site of former elements of the same, will be affected directly by works on the proposed development site.

2.6 Record of Protected Structures

- 2.6.1 The site of the ringfort described in Section 2.2 of this report, which lies *circa* 152m south of the proposed development site, is also listed on Galway City Council's Record of Protected Structures (RPS No. 4801), and is therefore protected under the Planning and Development Act 2000. This listing is somewhat unusual, in that the RPS usually lists only extant structures whereas the ringfort in question was levelled many years ago, but nevertheless the site is protected under legislation.

2.7 Cartographic Evidence

- 2.7.1 The Ordnance Survey 6" map from the 1837 (Figure 2) shows no features of archaeological significance on the site of the proposed development. It does show two small structures, likely to be small houses or agricultural buildings, but these no longer survive.
- 2.7.2 The Ordnance Survey 25" map from 1895 (Figure 3) shows no features of archaeological significance on the site of the proposed development, but it does show a well on the eastern boundary. This feature could not be found during the site visit.



Plate 3: View of Field 1 looking north – the area was recently cleared of scrub



Plate 4: View of Field 2 looking west – the area was recently cleared of scrub

3 Site Description

The site of the proposed development, which extends to *circa* 4.61 ha, is divided into two parts by a public road leading from a roundabout on the Western Distributor Road to Knocknacarra National School (Plate 1). The northern portion of the site, extending to *circa* 0.91 ha, has recently been cleared of scrub and will be described within this report as Field 1. The southern portion of the site, which extends to *circa* 3.69ha, contains Fields 2 to 8, which are generally labelled from north to south.

3.1 Field 1

Field 1 is bounded to the south by the access road leading to the nearby school, to the north by a modern housing estate, and to the west by an open drain and, beyond that, another modern housing estate (Plate 1). The field has recently been cleared of scrub (Plate 3) and so it was quite accessible on the day of the site visit. Modern rubbish was noted across the area and several trees had been left *in situ* when the scrub was removed recently using a tracked mechanical excavator. No features of archaeological interest were noted in this field.

3.2 Field 2

Field 2 is bounded to the north by the access road leading to the nearby school, to the south by Fields 3 & 4, to the west by the nearby school, and to the east by farmland (Plate 1). The field has recently been cleared of scrub and so it was quite accessible on the day of the site visit. Modern rubbish was noted across the area and several trees had been left *in situ* when the scrub was removed recently using a tracked mechanical excavator (Plate 4). The field is quite undulating, but no evidence was found for the well which is indicated on the eastern edge of the field on the Ordnance Survey 25" map from 1895 (Figure 3). No features of archaeological interest were noted in this field.

3.3 Field 3

Field 3 is bounded to the north, east and south by Fields 2, 4 and 5 respectively, to the northwest by the nearby school, and to the west by a modern housing estate (Plate 1). The field appears to have been cleared of scrub at some point between 2011 and 2013 (see aerial imagery in Historic Environment Viewer), but this has since recovered and several dense

stands of gorse are now found in the area (Plate 5). No features of archaeological interest were noted in this field.



Plate 5: View of Field 3 looking northwest, with gorse scrub evident



Plate 6: View of Field 4 looking north

3.4 **Field 4**

Field 4 is bounded to the north and west by Fields 2 and 3 respectively, to the east by adjacent farmland, and to the south by a modern housing estate (Plate 1). The field is generally clear of scrub (Plate 6) and the field has not been enlarged or reduced in size since the Ordnance Survey 25" map was surveyed in 1895. A series of small boulders were noted close to the northern edge of the field (Plate 7), one of which is split into two parts, but the stones are not considered to be of archaeological interest. The six stones measure up to 1.1m x 60cm x 30cm, extend over an area measuring *circa* 15m E-W, and some of the stones are clearly not set into the ground, but merely lie upon it.



Plate 7: Boulders at the northern end of Field 4

3.5 **Field 5**

Field 4 is bounded to the north by Field 3, to the west and east by modern housing estates, and to the south by Fields 6 and 7 (Plate 1). The field is generally clear of scrub (Plate 6), is somewhat undulating, and was created through the amalgamation of several smaller fields since the Ordnance Survey 25" map was surveyed in 1895. No features of archaeological interest were noted in this field, but parts of the eastern boundary wall were noted as being somewhat unusual, as it was composed of several large boulders and orthostats interspersed with drystone walling (Plate 8) – these elements were not considered to be of archaeological significance, but appear to derive from field clearance works.



Plate 8: Boulders and orthostats within the eastern boundary of Field 5

3.6 Field 6

Field 6 is bounded by drystone walls which separate it from Field 5 to the north, from Field 7 to the west and south, and from a modern housing estate to the east (Plate 1). This small field (Plate 9), which measures just 29m (E-W) by 18m (N-S), is not indicted on the Ordnance Survey 25" map, which was surveyed in 1895, and so the field is likely to have been created in the twentieth century. No features of archaeological interest were noted in this field.



Plate 9: Looking east across Field 6

3.7 *Field 7*

Field 7 is bounded to the north by Field 5, to the east by a modern housing estate, to the south by Field 8, and to the west by an overgrown laneway and by rough grazing (Plate 1). This field (Plate 10) has some overgrown areas within it, but is mostly open grazing, and no features of archaeological interest were noted within it.



Plate 10: Looking northwest across Field 7

3.8 *Field 8*

Field 8, at the southern tip of the proposed development site, is bounded to the north by Field 7, to the southeast by adjoining properties, and to the southwest by an overgrown laneway (Plate 1). This field (Plate 11) is heavily overgrown with briars and scrub, but no features of archaeological interest were noted within it. Several dressed blocks of limestone (Plate 12) were noted in the wall between Fields 7 and 8, where a tracked excavator had recently breached the boundary, but these appear to be early modern in date (1700-1900) and are likely to have been brought here in the early twentieth century during the construction of the drystone wall between Fields 7 and 8, which is circa 17m to 25m further south than the E/W-orientated wall shown in the area on the Ordnance Survey 25" map of 1895.



Plate 11: Looking southeast across Field 8



Plate 12: Eighteenth or nineteenth century architectural fragments in the drystone wall between Fields 7 and 8

4 The Proposed Development

- 4.1 The development proposal for the site involves the creation of a civic amenity or park, but the precise nature of the development has not yet been finalised. In general terms, developments of this scale (4.61 ha) require the developer to commission an Archaeological Impact Assessment report (AIAR) before or during the planning process, so that the local authority and the National Monuments Service can understand the archaeological context of the site and can consider the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological heritage.
- 4.2 The proposed development of a park on the site may, or may not, involve widespread ground disturbance and this will be key to the decision making process in terms of further archaeological mitigation. The need for an AIAR for this proposed development cannot be determined until the nature of the proposed development emerges through the ongoing design process, but the scale of the site, being significantly greater than the 0.5 ha threshold commonly used as a marker of large-scale developments in the context of archaeological mitigation, almost certainly means that more extensive archaeological mitigation will be sought by the National Monuments Service in due course.
- 4.3 While further archaeological mitigation, which could include geophysical survey or test excavation, may be required in due course, it is clear that the archaeological potential of the proposed development site is low. There are no known archaeological monuments on the site, there are no Protected Structures on the site, and there is only one known archaeological site within 500m of the boundary of the proposed development site, this being the site of a levelled ringfort located 150m to the south. It is clear, therefore, that the proposed development site should be considered very suitable, in archaeological terms, for development, though further mitigatory works may be required due to the size of the site.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 This report has described the archaeological context of a proposed development site at Clybaun and Ragoon, Galway City. There are no known archaeological monuments on the site, there are no Protected Structures on the site, and there is only one known archaeological site within 500m of the boundary of the proposed development site, this being the site of a levelled ringfort located 150m to the south.
- 5.1.2 This report concludes that the archaeological potential of the proposed development site is low, since a programme of cartographic and documentary research, and the site visit undertaken for this report, uncovered nothing of archaeological significance on the site.
- 5.1.3 This report concludes that the proposed development site should be considered very suitable, in archaeological terms, for development, though further mitigatory works may be required due to the size of the site.

5.2 Recommendations

- 5.2.1 If *An Bord Pleanála* decide to grant approval for the proposed development, it is recommended that input from the National Monuments Service should be sought when a draft outline of the proposed works is available.