

Appendix 13. Cultural Heritage

Appendix 13-6 Previous Archaeological Excavations

An examination of previous excavations carried out within and around the area The for development provides a useful framework for assessment of the study area in terms of its archaeological significance as well as its archaeological potential. The Archaeological Excavations Bulletin is an annual fieldwork gazetteer for Irish Archaeology; it was checked for a record of any licensed archaeological investigations carried out in the vicinity of the development area between 1970 and 2019.

Site name: CAHERBRISKAUN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** A024/1.9

Author: Bruce Sutton and John Lehane, Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.

Site type: No archaeology found

ITM: E 544939m, N 727868m

Machine testing was undertaken as part of Contract 1 of the N6 Galway–Ballinasloe Road scheme (Phase 1 testing) to ascertain the date and extent of the remains of pre-famine structures and an associated field system that is to be partially destroyed during the course of the construction of the dual carriageway. The testing aimed to examine several geophysical anomalies that corresponded well with structures shown on OS mapping. Work on site revealed no physical remains of these structures nor cultivation patterns. No further work is proposed at the site.

The work was commissioned by Galway County Council National Roads Design Office and sponsored by the National Roads Authority. RPS-MCOS Ltd acted as principal consultants for the scheme.

Site name: CARAUNDUFF

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** A024/1.10

Author: John Lehane, Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.

Site type: No archaeology found

ITM: E 545217m, N 727895m

Machine testing was undertaken as part of Contract 1 of the N6 Galway–Ballinasloe Road scheme (Phase 1 testing). Testing was primarily concerned with the possible remains of a structure highlighted by a geophysical survey (conducted by ArchaeoPhysica) carried out in the area. No material of an archaeological nature was revealed during testing. No further work is proposed at the site.

The work was commissioned by Galway County Council National Roads Design Office and sponsored by the National Roads Authority. RPS-MCOS Ltd acted as principal consultants for the scheme.

Site name: TOBERROE

Sites and Monuments Record No.: GA084–129 **Licence number:** E003700

Author: John Lehane, for Eachtra Archaeological Projects

Site type: No archaeology found

Period/Dating: N/A

ITM: E 545986m, N 727375m

Phase 1 archaeological investigations and townland boundary surveys commissioned by Galway County Council and the National Roads Authority were undertaken along the 27.2 km N18 Oranmore to Gort (Glenbrack to Rathmorrissy) national road scheme. Testing was carried out between September and December 2007. The purpose of the investigation was to identify any possible features associated with the monument, a burnt mound, and to ascertain their character and extent.

A total area of 20 m by 15 m was topsoil-stripped 42 m from the burnt mound on the border of Toberroe and Rathmorrissy townlands. This was the third in a group of burnt mounds in the immediate area. The removal of the topsoil revealed no archaeologically significant material. A number of possible linear features were investigated by means of half-section. The linear features, which ran parallel to the existing drystone field boundary, were on average 0.45 m wide and 0.1 m deep (orientated north to south). None of these features were believed to be of an archaeological nature, and this site was therefore considered fully resolved.

Site name: RATHMORRISSY

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** A024/1.13

Author: John Lehane, Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.

Site type: Field system and Structure

Period/Dating: Multi-period

ITM: E 546464m, N 727236m

Machine testing was undertaken as part of Contract 1 of the N6 Galway–Ballinasloe Road scheme (Phase 1 testing) to ascertain the date and cultural associations of a field system and a standing stone, which are to be partly destroyed in the course of road construction. A small stone-built feature was also identified within the field, which was excavated. It initially appeared to be a well. Upon excavation it was proven to be non-archaeological. The field system was surveyed and the 'standing stone' was identified as a glacial erratic. No further work is proposed at the site.

Work was commissioned by the Galway County Council National Roads Design Office and sponsored by the National Roads Authority. RPS-MCOS Ltd acted as principal consultants for the scheme.

Site name: Rathmorrissy

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** E004024

Author: Tony Bartlett, Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd, Unit 1, Wallingstown Business Park, Little Island, Co. Cork.

Site type: Ringfort

Period/Dating: —

ITM: E 546393m, N 728360m

Excavation was carried out at Rathmorrissy, Co. Galway, in advance of the M17 Galway (Rathmorrissy) to Tuam Archaeological Services Contract (2010) forming part of the N17/N18 Gort to Tuam PPP scheme in County Galway. The Archaeological Services Contract (2010) was commissioned by Galway County Council and funded by the National Roads Authority. Full excavation was undertaken at the site in May and June 2010.

The ringfort comprised the main enclosing elements including the ditch, bank and entrance. The entrance features included a cobbled surface, with associated stone alignment/ridge and four post-holes. Internal features comprised a house structure (Structure 1), an animal pen (Structure 2), a rough cobbled surface, a metallised surface, one large pit, two small pits and a small group of post-holes. Three inhumations (SK2, SK3 and SK4) were also found within shallow grave-cuts which abutted the interior face of the eastern section of the bank. Two large pits truncated the bank and ditch in the south and the bank and interior in the north.

The ditch

The external diameter of the ditch was 63 m (north–south), while the internal diameter was 55 m (north–south). The ditch measured 95.5 m in length; the remainder of the ditch survives *in situ* to the west of the site outside of the CPO area. The causewayed entrance to the ringfort was located to the north-east. The ditch had a V-shaped profile with a flat base. The average width of the ditch was 4.32 m, and the average depth was 2.14 m. The ditch was interrupted by a 3.4 m-wide causeway where the termini were straight and steep-sided, extending to the base of the ditch at an angle of approximately 45 °.

The ditch fills were consistent throughout the entire length. The basal deposit comprised a layer of mid-grey/brown silty clay containing occasional animal bone. Overlying this were slump deposits. A single cultural layer derived from occupation debris, containing animal bone, burnt bone, charcoal and mollusc shells, was immediately on top of this, suggesting a relatively short and single phase of occupancy at the site. Of particular interest within this deposit were the fragmented remains of a human cranium (SK1). For a length of approximately 4m from each terminus of the ditch at the entrance, copious amounts of small to large-sized stones were excavated from the lower levels of the ditch. These stones may represent a wall that stood at the termini of the ditch. In addition to this concentration of stones, for a length of approximately 20 m on either side of the entrance, singular large stones were also noted within the lower ditch fills and at the base of the ditch. These stones may represent revetments situated at the outside of the bank at that location (near the entrance). Overlying the cultural layer was a layer of mid-grey/brown silty clay, above which was mid-red/brown silty clay. Overlying this was a thin lens of mid-grey/brown silty clay with frequent pebbles, which in turn was under a layer of mid-orange/brown silty clay. Two deposits were recorded to the west of the causeway entrance. They comprised charcoal-enriched silty clay which overlaid a single layer of stones both of which were found within one of the upper fills of the ditch. The last fill of the ditch comprised topsoil overlying a layer of mid-brown/grey silty clay.

Finds from the ditch included a possible ferrous nail, a fragment of broken whetstone, modern bottle glass, a piece of worked antler, a possible ferrous knife fragment, a single piece of flint debitage, a fragment of a ferrous knife and a possible chert blade. Three pieces of slag were also recovered from the cultural deposit.

The bank

The external diameter of the bank was 55 m (north–south), while the internal diameter was 45 m (north–south). Two large pits have truncated the bank in the north and south (see below). The bank within the excavation area survived to a maximum length of 66 m, an average width of 5.5 m and an average height of 1.1 m. Excavation revealed a number of layers of redeposited natural. Below the bank deposits, *in situ* subsoil was found to overlie the natural with no evidence of buried topsoil remaining. After the removal of topsoil from the surface of the bank, a layer of stones was revealed. This layer extended from the apex of the bank down towards the interior limit of the bank.

The entrance

The entrance, located to the north-east, was 3.4 m wide between the bank termini and 3.8 m wide between the ditch termini. It had an overall length, taking in the bank and ditch, of 8.5 m north-east–south–west. A cobbled surface was revealed at the entrance, which overlay a fine gravel ‘bedding’ layer. Two large post-holes 1.22 m apart were present between the bank termini. Immediately inside the post-holes (towards interior of ringfort) was a linear arrangement of stones, each end of which was found to slightly overlay a second set of post-holes 1.8 m apart, which in turn were found to be abutting the first set of post-holes.

Of particular interest at the entrance was the discovery of two ‘nail/stud-like’ (identical) iron objects, found within the linear stone arrangement. These may be interpreted as some form of gate furniture, such as iron heels which would allow the gate to move or pivot.

The house (Structure 1)

The footprint of a round house defined by a slot-trench was excavated at the southern extent of the ringfort, a mere 0.68 m from the bank. It had a maximum internal diameter of 4.55 m (east–west) and external diameter of 5.64 m (east–west). The circular slot-trench had vertical sides and a flat base, giving an overall U-shaped profile. It was an average 0.6 m in width and 0.42 m in depth. The slot-trench contained packing stones and packing clay along the exterior of the cut, while a single charcoal-rich silty clay fill with animal bone and burnt bone was found inside the packing stones. Four post-holes were found in the base of the slot-trench. A total of eight *in situ* burnt planks and a small number of possible burnt daub lumps were present in the north-west portion of the slot-trench inside the packing stones. The entrance to the round house faced east north-east, in the general direction of the entrance to the ringfort and measured 0.86 m wide.

There were also indications of post-holes evidenced by voids found within the packing stones, where there was no trace of post-holes at the base of the slot-trench. The evidence suggests that the walls of the house comprised post-and-plank construction.

The animal pen (Structure 2)

Approximately 5 m north of the round house a second circular structure, defined by a slot-trench, was excavated. It had a maximum internal diameter of 5.8 m (north–south) and a maximum external diameter of 6.32 m (north–south). The circular slot-trench had sloping sides and a rounded base, giving an overall U-shaped profile. It varied in width along its length with a maximum of 0.42 m and a minimum of 0.15 m. It also varied in depth along its length with a maximum of 0.3 m and a minimum of 0.05 m. Two entrances were found in the north-east and south-west and were 0.5 m and 0.78 m wide. Two fills were found within the slot-trench. The lower fill was localised at the south-east terminus of the north-eastern entrance and comprised frequent charcoal, occasional animal bone and occasional small lumps of burnt clay. Overlying this, the main fill continued the entire length of the cutting and contained charcoal and occasional animal bone.

A post-hole was found abutting the outside of the south-west entrance and was filled with the same material as the overall slot-trench. Five figure-of-eight-shaped post-holes were found at the base of the

slot-trench. Two stake-holes were found within the internal side of the slot-trench, close to the north-east entrance. The stake-holes at the north-east entrance may have held stakes that functioned as part of a gate at that location, while the post-hole at the south-west entrance may have held a post that functioned as part of a gate there.

The cobbled surface

A rough cobbled surface was found 1.5 m east of Structure 2 and 3 m north-east of Structure 1. It was sub-oval in plan and comprised small to medium-sized sub-angular and sub-rounded stones loosely set.

The metalled surface

A metalled surface was found 0.5 m east of the round house (Structure 1). It was sub-oval in plan and comprised small rounded and sub-rounded stones tightly set. Its proximity to Structure 1 may suggest that it functioned as a working area associated with activity related to the round house.

The pits

A total of five pits were excavated at the site, two of which are possibly contemporary with the life of the ringfort. One of the pits was sub-ovoid in plan and contained a single charcoal-rich fill. A single body sherd of pottery was recovered from the fill. The other pit was located 0.45 m to the south-east of the round house (Structure 1) and the same distance south-west of the metalled surface. It was sub-oval in plan and contained a single fill of silty clay with occasional charcoal and animal bone.

Three pits are probably the result of modern truncation that occurred sometime in the 18th or 19th century. Two of these were quite large and truncated the bank and ditch of the ringfort. In the north of the ringfort, a pit had cut through the bank and part of the interior. It was sub-oval in plan and was filled with topsoil overlying a loose layer of stone which in turn overlay the natural subsoil. A sherd of 18th/19th-century bottle glass was recovered from within the stones of the fill. Another pit was located in the south of the ringfort and had truncated the bank and ditch. It was sub-oval in plan and filled with topsoil which overlay the natural subsoil. The third pit was situated in the centre of the ringfort, 4.1 m north of Structure 2. It was sub-oval in plan and contained three fills of possible modern origin.

The post-holes

A small group of four post-holes was located adjacent to the western limit of excavation, 4.4 m north-west of Structure 2. They were all shallow features with differing morphology and did not make up any coherent pattern. The first was sub-oval in plan and contained a single fill containing occasional charcoal. The second post-hole was subrectangular in plan and contained a single fill containing occasional charcoal. The third was subcircular in plan and contained a single fill. The fourth post-hole was sub-oval in plan and contained a single fill containing frequent charcoal. A fifth post-hole was located 2.5 m south of the above cluster and 0.9 m north-west of Structure 2. This post-hole was sub-oval in plan and contained a single fill containing occasional charcoal and burnt bone.

The inhumations

Three inhumation burials were found immediately inside the eastern section of the bank of the ringfort: SK2–4. Two of the burials (SK2 and SK3) were adjacent to one and other, while SK 4 was located 5.7 m to the north.

SK2 appears to be a juvenile and was laid out in a shallow grave in an extended supine position and orientated east–west, with the head to the west. SK3 is clearly a child and was also laid out in a shallow grave in an extended supine position and orientated east–west, with the head to the west. SK4 appears to be an adult and was laid out in a shallow grave in a flexed position, placed on its left side and orientated east–west, with the head to the west.

A geophysical survey of the area of the Rathmorrissy ringfort which extended outside the CPO to the west was conducted in May 2010 by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd under registration number R219. This revealed the full extent of the ditch of the ringfort, together with a number of anomalies, one of which corresponded to the location of a pit feature partially excavated within the CPO. There were no indications of a souterrain being present at Rathmorrissy.

Site name: BALLYGARRAUN WEST

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** A024/1.15

Author: John Lehane and Eoghan Moore, Valerie J Keeley Ltd.

Site type: Burial

Period/Dating: Undetermined

ITM: E 548169m, N 727301m

Testing was undertaken as part of Contract 1 of the N6 Galway–Ballinasloe Road scheme (Phase 1). A single human skeleton was found during test excavations at Ballygarraun West, Co. Galway. The skeleton was found in a subrectangular grave-cut 1.5 m in length, 0.8 m in maximum width and 0.2 m in maximum depth. The cut was filled by a mid-brown silty clay with several large stones at the surface, possibly the remnants of a disturbed covering cairn (probably the result of agricultural activity).

The skeleton was oriented with the head to the west. Bone preservation was poor, although the skeleton appeared to be that of a juvenile (probably female), 16–19 years of age. The skeleton was in the supine position, with the arms and legs extended and the hands lying on the pelvis. A single fragment of antler appeared to have been placed upon the pelvic girdle of the individual. The skeleton lay on a shallow bed of carbonised clay containing a small amount of burnt bone. No associated burials were found in the area and the skeleton was fully excavated during the testing phase of works.

The work was commissioned by Galway County Council National Roads Design Office and sponsored by the National Roads Authority. RPS-MCOS Ltd acted as principal consultants for the scheme.

Site name: BALLYGARRAUN SOUTH

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** A024/1.16

Author: John Lehane, Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.

Site type: No archaeology found

Period/Dating: N/A

ITM: E 548361m, N 727250m

Machine testing was undertaken as part of Contract 1 of the N6 Galway–Ballinasloe Road scheme (Phase 1 testing). Testing was primarily concerned with the possible remains of a structure, pits and ditches that were highlighted by a geophysical survey carried out in the area by ArchaeoPhysica. No material of an archaeological nature was discovered during testing. No further work is proposed at the site. Work was commissioned by Galway County Council National Roads Design Office and sponsored by the National Roads Authority. RPS-MCOS Ltd acted as principal consultants for the scheme.

Site name: Ballygarraun North & Ballygarraun South

Sites and Monuments Record No.: None **Licence number:** 21E0704

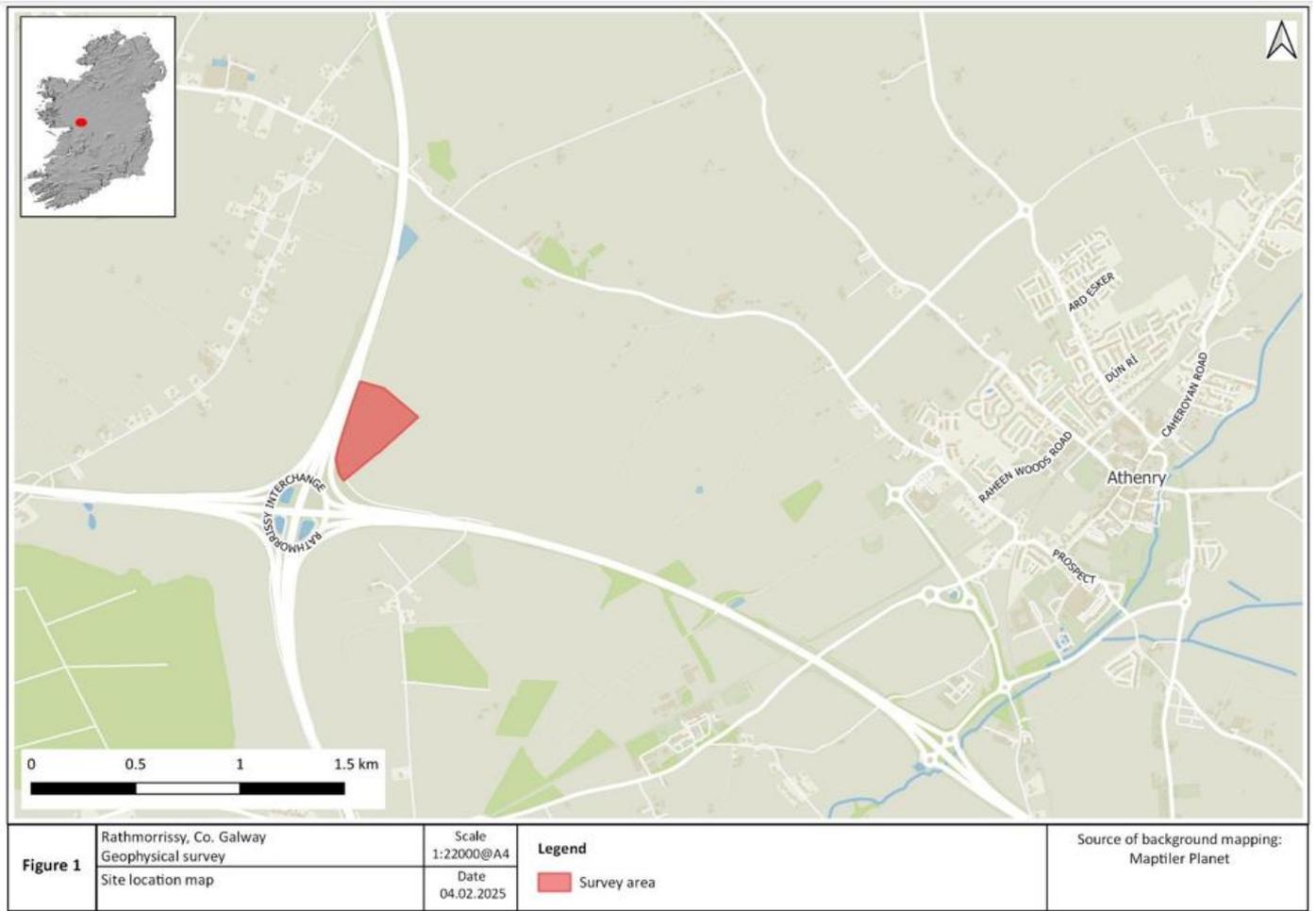
Author: Dominic Delany

Site type: No archaeology found

Period/Dating: —

ITM: E 548751m, N 728113m

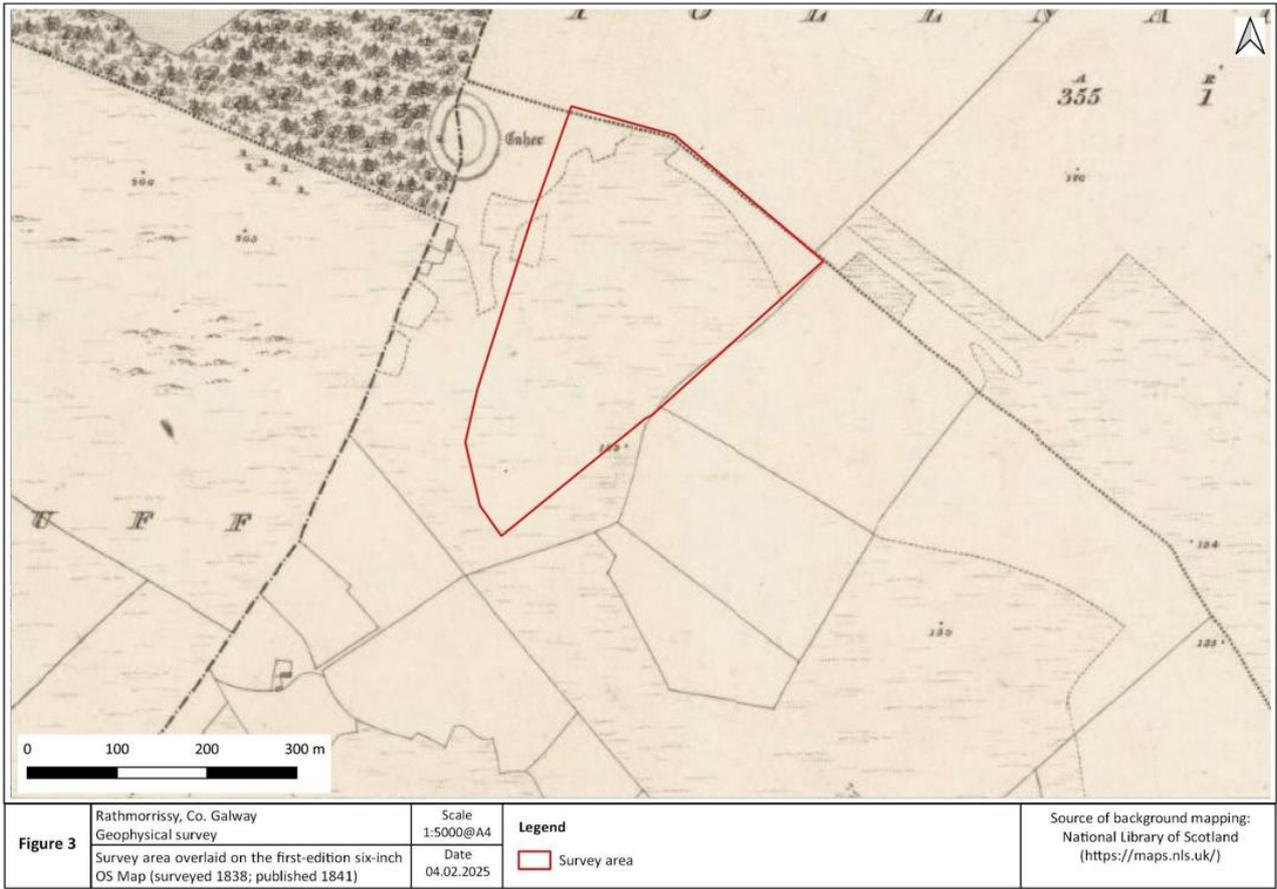
Pre-development testing was carried out along the proposed Athenry Northern Relief Road at Ballygarraun North and Ballygarraun South, Co. Galway in November 2021. The route comprises approximately 800 m of roadway and a roundabout linking into previously constructed sections of the Athenry Northern Relief Road. There are no recorded monuments on the development site, or in its immediate vicinity. The site does however contain a reputed 'Fairy Tree', a whitethorn of considerable age located on gently sloping ground in the middle of a small field in the north-west of the development site. The tree is not in the line of the road or roundabout and consideration is being given as to how best preserve this natural and cultural heritage feature. A 14-tonne tracked excavator fitted with a wide grading bucket was retained to open 46 test trenches on the sites of the proposed roadway, roundabout and attenuation pond. The testing methodology consisted of centreline testing with offsets at 15 m intervals on the north-west/south-east section of road and attenuation pond, and linear trenching on the north-east/south-west section of road and roundabout. The stratigraphy generally comprised of 0.15-0.35 m of topsoil over orange clay subsoil and grey sand, gravel and stone. The subsoil layer was generally confined to the lower-lying areas within the individual fields. On the higher ground it appeared as a thin, patchy layer or was absent altogether. There were numerous small, generally sub-circular features (average diam. c. 1 m) consisting of a central deposit of dark grey-black clayey silt, surrounded by light grey silty clay, with an outer ring of oxidised red/brown gravel. These natural features are most likely decayed stones. A series of six shallow linear features (average Wth. 0.6 m, D. 0.175 m), extending north north-west–south south-east and positioned at 8-10 m intervals, were uncovered within one of the fields in the southwest part of the route. A couple of stone-filled drains (Wth. 1 m) were also uncovered within two of the fields in this area. These features are clearly related to post-medieval and modern agricultural practices. No archaeology was found.



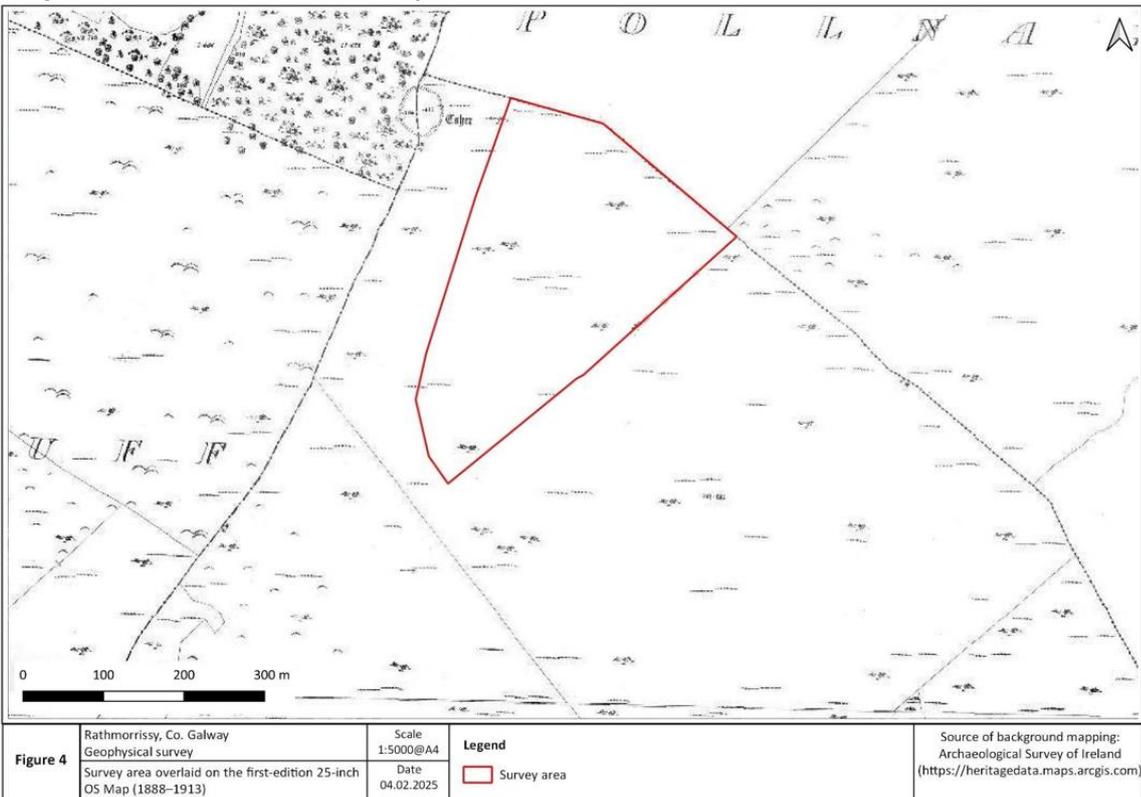
Appendix 13, Figure 13-1 - Site Location map, showing survey area highlighted in red (as referenced within Chapter 13, Volume 2 of the EIAR).



Appendix 13, Figure 13-2 - Location of Recorded Archaeological Sites in the vicinity of the survey area (as referenced within Chapter 13, Volume 2 of the EIAR)



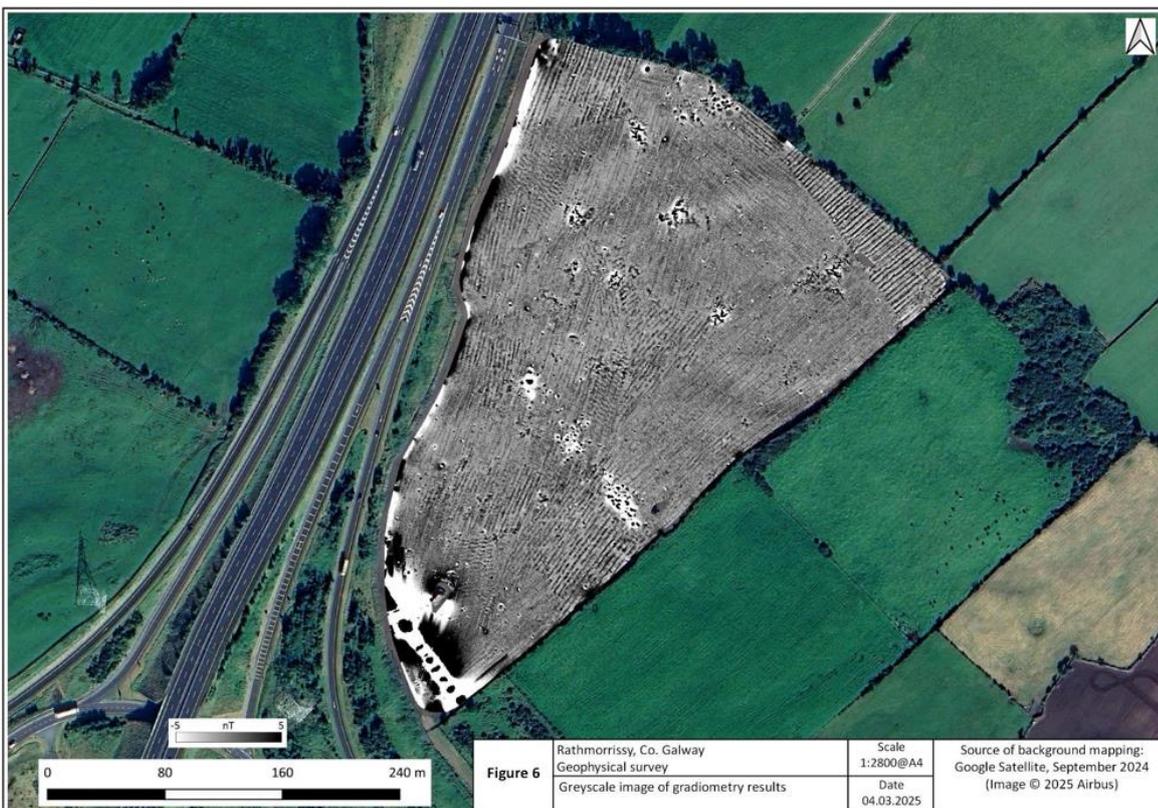
Appendix 13, Figure 13-3 - Geophysical survey area overlaid on the first-edition six-inch Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed 1838; published 1841) (as referenced within Chapter 13, Volume 2 of the EIAR)



Appendix 13, Figure 13-4 - Geophysical survey area overlaid on the first-edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey Map (1888-1913) (as referenced within Chapter 13, Volume 2 of the EIAR)



Appendix 13, Figure 13-5 – Geophysical survey area (as referenced within Chapter 13, Volume 2 of the EIAR).



Appendix 13, Figure 13-6 - Greyscale image of gradiometry results (as referenced within Chapter 13, Volume 2 of the EIAR)



Appendix 13, Figure 13-7 - Interpretive Plan showing principal geophysical anomalies (as referenced within Chapter 13, Volume 2 of the EIAR).