



APPENDIX 14-1

***DELANY (2023)
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
REPORT***

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF A WINDFARM DEVELOPMENT

AT MEENBOG, COUNTY DONEGAL

Excavation Licence Number: 19E0739

An Bord Pleanála Reference Number: ABP-300460-17

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1. Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of the construction phase of a windfarm development was carried out by Dominic Delany and Associates on behalf of Planree Limited at Meenbog Windfarm, County Donegal between November 2019 and November 2020. The development involved the construction of 19 turbines, sub-station, met mast, 3 borrow pits, 2 temporary construction compounds, new site roads and upgrades to existing tracks and roads, as well as ducting and ancillary works. The work was carried out in compliance condition 17 of the planning (Planning Ref. ABP-300460-17). Nothing of archaeological interest was found during monitoring.

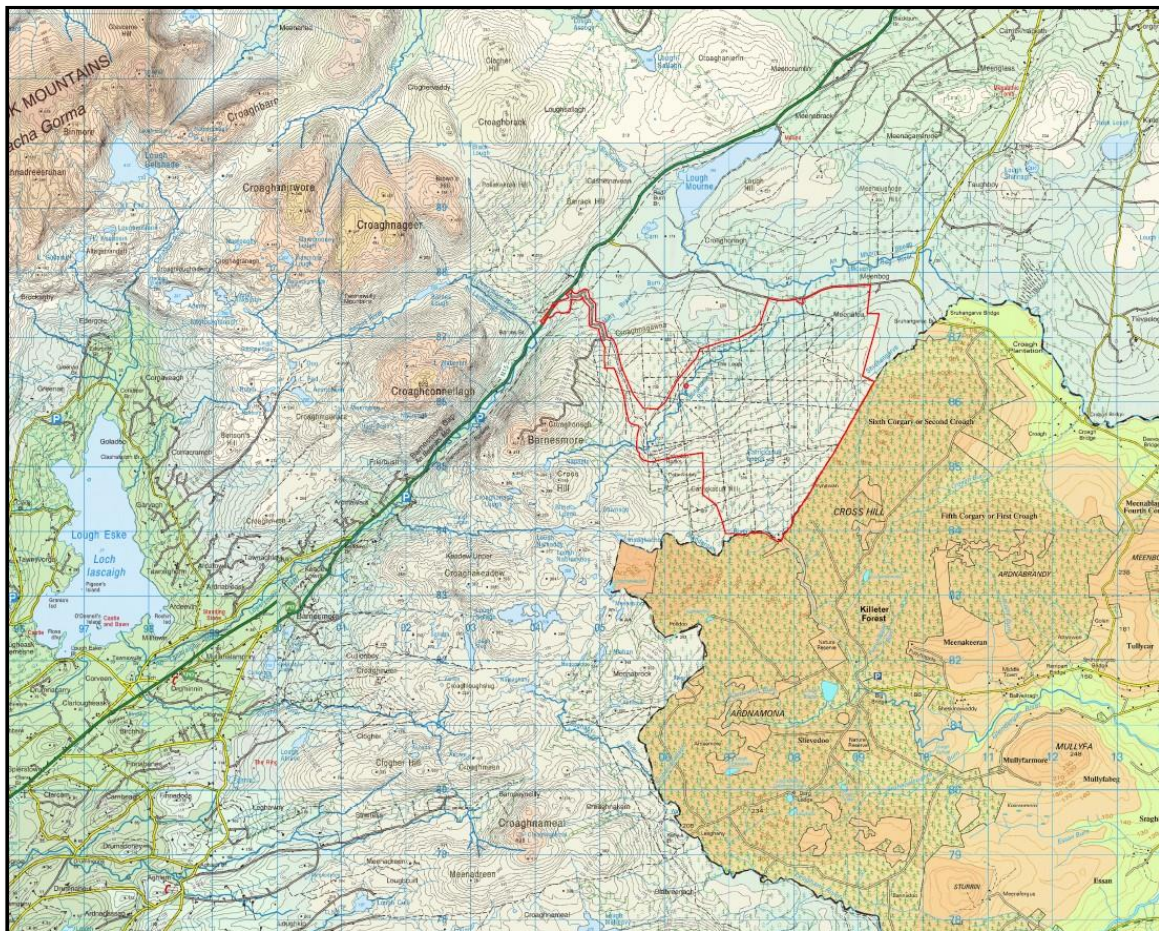


Figure 1 Site location map

2. Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological and historical background for the area of the proposed development is discussed in detail in the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report for Meenbog Windfarm (McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Ltd., 2017).

2.1 Recorded Monuments

There are no recorded monuments on the site of the windfarm. Fifteen recorded monuments are located within 5km of the nearest turbine, including four megalithic structures, two standing stones, three enclosures, two cashels, two crannogs and a holy well. Recorded Monument TYR014-002 (Crannog possible) is the only recorded monument within 2km of a wind turbine.

There are two recorded monuments on the N15 along the ducting route between Clogher substation at Cullionboy and the windfarm; DG085-005, the site of a megalithic structure of which there is no surface trace, and DG094-026, the site of a kiln which was archaeologically excavated in advance of road realignment in 1999.

2.2 Topographical Files - National Museum of Ireland

A length of rope was recovered from the bog in Croaghonagh c. 500m north of the site. Two finds of flint were recovered from the bog in Corlea c. 8km to the southeast of the site. The following details are recorded for these finds:

Reg. No.: 2006:31

Monument: None

Finds: Length of 'straw' rope

Townland: Croaghonagh

Reg. No.: 1951:114

Monument: None. 'Found underneath 8 feet of bog'

Finds: Flint spearhead (polished)

Townland: Corlea

Reg. No.: 1962:103

Monument: None. 'Found in bog'

Finds: Flint flake

Townland: Corlea



Figure 2 Aerial image of site showing blanket bog and forestry (entrance to windfarm highlighted)

2.3 Archaeological Investigations on the site of the Proposed Development

There have been no previous archaeological investigations on the site of the development. Archaeological monitoring of the N15 realignment works uncovered a drying kiln at Keadew Lower, which was excavated under license 99E0379.

2.4 Architectural Heritage

There are no items of architectural heritage interest on the site of the development. There are two bridges listed by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) on the Castlederg Road to the north of the site. One of these bridges is associated with the construction of the West Donegal Railway in 1882. The other is thought to have been built by Lord Henry the Fourth of Lifford at the time of construction of Meenglass Castle to the northeast between 1840 and 1860. The parapet wall on this bridge is in quite poor repair and appears to have been breached at the eastern end (plate 1). There is an upstanding cottage (plate 2) on the west bank of the river south of this bridge and there are the remains of an earlier house (plate 3) across the road to the northwest. Neither of these structures appear on the 1st edition ordnance survey map and are likely to date from the late 19th or early 20th century.



Plate 1 Roadbridge across Bunadowen River built *circa* 1860



Plate 2 Modern cottage south west of roadbridge



Plate 3 Ruined remains of cottage northwest of roadbridge

3. Monitoring

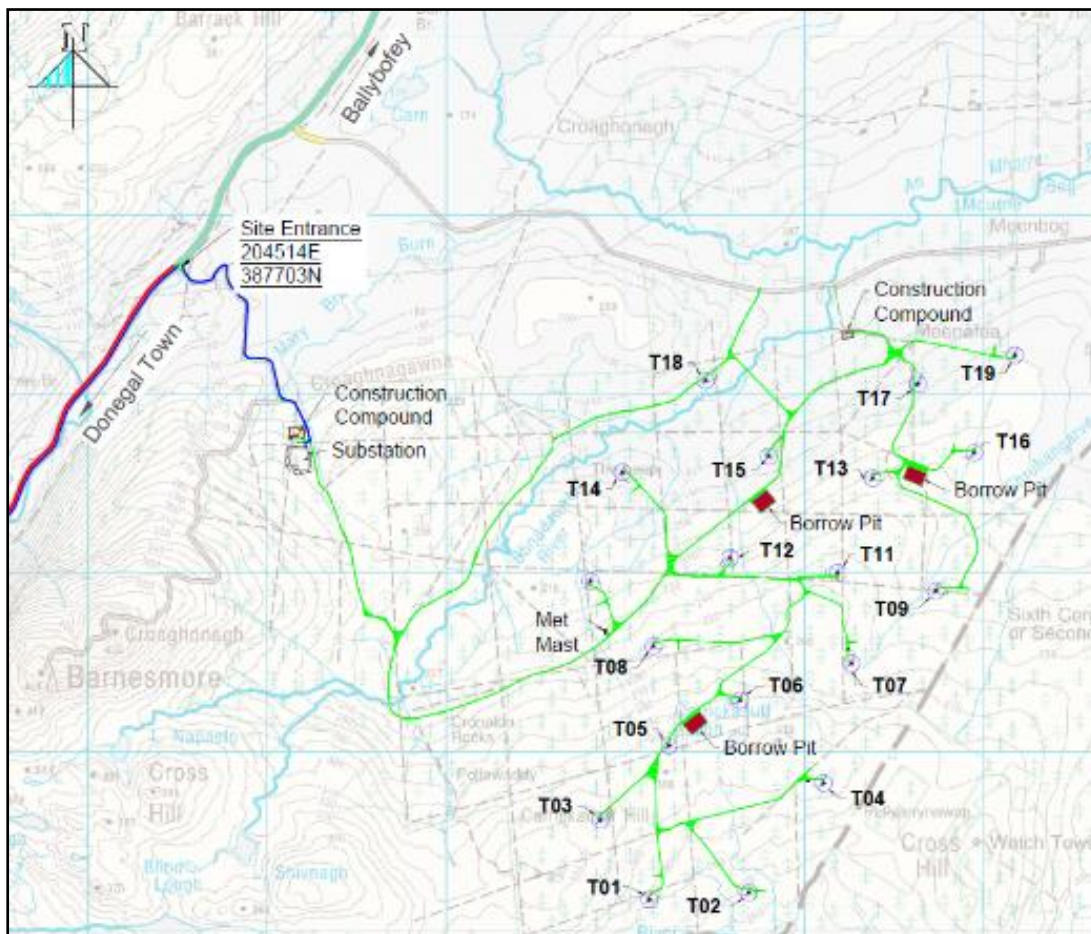


Figure 3 Meenbog Windfarm site layout

3.1 Archaeological Monuments

There are no recorded monuments on the site of the windfarm. There are two recorded monuments, DG085-005 (Megalithic structure) and DG094-026 (Kiln), on the N15 along the ducting route between Clogher substation and the windfarm. There was no impact on these monuments (see section 3.7).

3.2 Vernacular Architecture and Landscape Features

There are no architectural or vernacular features on the site. There are two 19th century road bridges on the Castlederg Road on the northern boundary of the site. Two cottages, one of which is ruined, are located on this same road. None of these features was impacted by the development. The wall of the railway bridge was rebuilt during the construction phase but not as part of the development. A culvert associated with the railway dating from 1882 was exposed north of the site entrance (plate 4). It was constructed of stone lintels and is typical of road culverts of the time (plate 5). The culvert was preserved *in situ*.



Plate 4 Exposed culvert in section face to north of site entrance



Plate 5 Interior of culvert showing flagstone flooring and mortared wall

3.3 Roads

Construction of the road network on the site of the windfarm involved temporary widening of the existing forestry roads for the purposes of a construction traffic haul road followed by permanent upgrading for transport of turbines. The forestry roads generally had sandy stone fill over brash laid directly over peat. The peat depths varied from 1m to 3m. The peat usually overlay silty clay and sandy clay over gravel and rock. This stratigraphy was occasionally interrupted by upcast from drainage or road works. There was some variation in the construction of the forestry roads with frequent instances of fishing net and plastic flotation drums fulfilling the roll of geogrid in floating roads. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered in the monitoring of road excavations.



Plate 6 Road between first borrow pit and temporary compound



Plate 7 Looking southwest at the road south of T18

3.4 Turbines

T1

T1 is located in the very south of the site in felled forestry to the east of Carrickaduff Hill, at a height of 290m O.D. The ground falls away steeply to the south of the turbine base area. Excavations began in late August 2020. The peat was quite stable but the excavation was quickly stoned-up on account of the water ingress. Peat depths averaged about 1.5m in the south of the site but the peat was shallower on the footprint of the base, generally comprising 0.4m to 0.5m of peat under matted moss, very occasional grass, tree stumps and brash. The ground falls away sharply here. The underlying stratigraphy consists of broken rock in a sandy clay matrix over rock.



Plate 8 Looking southwest at peat excavations at T1

T2

T2 is located in the south of the site in felled forestry at 270m O.D. Excavation of the hardstand began on 29th September. There was 2m of peat in the east reducing to 1m in the west with rising bedrock between. The peat dried out as excavations proceeded to the southwest with firm well humified peat of between 2m and 2.5m under grass, moss and heather and over broken stone and rock in a silty clay matrix with occasional rising bedrock. Excavation of the turbine base began on 6th October. The ground here was wet with up to 1m of grassy mossy sod peat over very soft humified peat.



Plate 9 Looking east at excavations of hardstand at T2



Plate 10 Looking northwest at excavation of turbine base at T2

T3

Excavations at T3 began at the beginning of August 2020. Peat here is generally shallower and drier than elsewhere in the south of the site. This is high ground near the summit of Carrickaduff Hill at a height of 315m O.D. Peat deposits deepened to the west. There was up to 3m of peat in the west of the turbine base and 2m in the east of the base while the hardstand to the east again generally had about 1m of peat. Excavation of peat continued into late August when the north east edge of the hardstand was completed. Peat here measured 1.5m and was stable with a mature profile.



Plate 11 Looking south at turbine base during peat excavations at T3

T4

Excavation of T4 took place in October 2020. The site of the turbine and hardstand was on high level ground c. 300m O.D. The area excavated was in felled forestry. There were deep deposits of peat with occasional rising bedrock and substantial deposits of soft gravels and clay. There was significant water ingress from the surrounding bog and mitigation measures included construction of causeways and infill and pumping of water from excavated areas.



Plate 12 Looking east at T4 during peat excavation

T5

T5 is centrally-located in the southern part of the windfarm. This is high ground west of Carrickaduff lough at just over 300m O.D. The site of the turbine and hardstand is in felled forestry with the ground consisting of tree stumps in grass and moss over peat. Excavations began at the end of August 2020 and continued throughout September. The ground here was wet and excavated areas were immediately stoned up, with a bulwark placed against the *in-situ* peat and the space between quickly filled with rock. There were deep deposits of up to of 4m peat here ranging from scraw and spongey top layers to well humified peat in the lower levels.



Plate 13 Looking northeast at site of T5 pre peat excavation



Plate 14 Looking northeast at T5 during peat excavation

T6

T6 was located on high rocky ground in the centre of the site at over 300m O.D. There was relatively little peat here with shallow deposits generally less than 1m in depth. The ground rose to the east and rising bedrock had to be broken following peat stripping.



Plate 15 Looking west during excavations at T6



Plate 16 Looking northwest at T6 following base and hardstand strip

T7

Not excavated to date.

T8

T8 is located in the centre of the site in mature forestry at a height of 250m O.D. Peat along the road to the turbine was firm and well humified with deposits of between 1m and 2m. Peat deposits on the site of the turbine were generally shallower but there were deep deposits of soft gravel and sandy clay.



Plate 17 East-facing section of peat during excavation of road to T8



Plate 18 Looking north at excavation of turbine base at T8

T9

T9 is located in the east of the site close to the Tyrone border. It is in felled forestry and rises gradually from west to east. There is an average of 1m of peat over broken stone in sandy grey to green clay. The ground undulates somewhat with up to 1.5m of peat in low lying spots.



Plate 19 Looking west at site of T9 pre-excavation



Plate 20 Looking west at T9 post peat excavation

T10

T10 was located in relatively low ground which is starting to rise out of the Bunadower River valley at a height of 215m O.D. The peat was wet and the base and hardstand were excavated using causeways and cell walls to separate and contain an area of bog. The peat was then be excavated in orderly fashion.



Plate 21 Looking north at peat excavations at T10

T11

T11 was located on high ground towards the east of the site with commanding views over the surrounding countryside. The site was in felled forestry at a height of 255m O.D. The peat was quite wet here, particularly the ground at the hardstand on the west of the site. This area was excavated piecemeal and stoned up immediately. The ground rose to the east and there was some rising bedrock with shallower firmer peat here.



Plate 22 Looking north at hardstand excavation and fill at T11



Plate 23 West facing section in east of hardstand area at T11

T12

T12 is located in the centre of the site on rising ground at 230m O.D. The site falls away severely to the north and west and large amounts of stone were required to level it out. The peat was wet in the west and north on the site of the turbine but was drier and firmer over rising bedrock in the east and south on the site of the hardstand. The site was under immature plantation and felled trees with brash.



Plate 24 Looking north at site of T12 pre-excitation



Plate 25 Looking north at peat excavations for turbine base at T12



Plate 26 Southeast-facing peat section at hardstand for T12

T13

T13 is located on rising ground towards the northeast of the site at 220m O.D. It is in felled forestry with birch regrowth. Excavation of the turning area at the entrance to the turbine began on 5th August 2020. There is rising bedrock throughout with shallow peat less than 1m deep. Grass and moss cover 0.5m of mossy scraw over better peat which comes down onto sandy clay and green mica sand on broken rock. There are preserved grasses, *calluna* root and moss on rock under the basal sand and very occasional roots in the basal peat layers. Rising bedrock with ridges of outcrop to the west with no more than 0.5m of peat over silty sand and broken rock onto the bedrock.



Plate 27 Looking west at T13 hardstand

T14

T14 was located in relatively low ground of 185m O.D., south of the Bunadownen River in an area known as 'The Leap'. The road and turbine base were excavated intermittently throughout the summer of 2020. The road to the turbine falls sharply through felled forestry and some deep peat was excavated on the lower reaches in the north as it approached the river valley. The ground in the south was covered in shallower peat and had underlying rock. The bog on the site of the hardstand was deep and required the wide pad machine to excavate up to 4m of well humified peat.



Plate 28 Looking northwest at T14 base

T15

T15 was located in the north of the site in an area of felled forestry with young regrowth. Excavations began in July 2020. Digging in the west showed 1m of peat under felled forestry. This overlay gravelly clay with large cobbles. There was very little wood in the peat. Excavations in the east showed less than 1m of peat, usually between 0.5m and 0.7m over gravelly clay.



Plate 29 Looking northwest at T15 hardstand

T16

Excavation of the road to T16 began in October 2020. The ground rose steeply initially with shallow peat over rock and gravel. It then fell into a valley with wet peat 2m to 3m in depth. There was a bank of rock on the west as the road nears the hardstand on high open ground. Digging of the hardstand began on 22nd October. There was a short break in excavations with work resuming on 6th November when the turbine base was excavated. This area is characterized by rising bedrock with less than 1m of peat over rock in the centre of the base. There were pockets of deeper peat on all sides as the rock fell away to a maximum depth of 2m on the eastern edge of the base. The peat was very grassy all the way to the basal levels with heather, grass and sphagnum on top.



Plate 30 T16 base looking south

T17

T17 is located in the northeast of the site in felled forestry with peat under grass and moss. Excavations began in July. The hardstand area sloped from east to west with less than 1m of peat in the east and up to 2.5m in the west next to the road. Generally there was about 1m of peat over stone and rising bedrock in clay. The turbine base was to the west of the hardstand and had slightly deeper peat with depths of 1.5m in the west of the base. The peat overlay boulders in sandy light brown clay. The entrance was widened on 30th July. There is a 2m fall in the west of the hardstand between the rear (east) and front (west). There were occasional roots in the basal layers but there is no ancient wood in the peat only stumps and roots from the recently felled plantation.



Plate 31 Looking east at excavation of T17 Hardstand



Plate 32 T17 Base looking south

T18

Topsoil stripping began on the Peat Storage Area opposite T18 on Friday 25th September. The turbine and Peat Storage Area are located in felled forestry sloping down west to east towards the existing forestry road. There was rock outcrop in the west just outside the footprint of the hardstand. Shallow relatively dry peat of 1m or less overlay grey and brown sandy clay over grey dry sandy clay onto rock. Excavation of the hardstand began on 13th October 2020. There was rising bedrock in the northeast

with peat of less than 1m under felled forestry. Peat deepens to 1.75m to 2m further south towards the base and overlies sandy gravel and clay with frequent cobble sized stone. Excavation of the turbine base began on 4th November with 1.5m of overburden over 2m of peat onto gravel and clay.



Plate 33 Looking southwest at T18 hardstand excavation



Plate 34 Looking east at T18 base excavation

T19

T19 is located on a relatively level plateau in the northeast of the site at about 200m O.D. Excavation of the road into the turbine began on 20th August 2020. The initial stages of the road climbed through plantation. The stratigraphy here consisted of up to 2m of firm peat onto rock with no excessive water. The road levels out at the summit where the turbine and hardstand are located and peat here is shallow but wet. There was a maximum of 1.5m of peat onto rising bedrock here. The ground is level and plantation free with grass and heather on relatively flat moorland falling away to the northeast and south. There were deeper peat deposits in the north and west of the hardstand with depths of 2.5m onto gravel over rock. There was rising bedrock in the east and south.



Plate 35 Looking west across T19 hardstand post topsoil stripping

3.5 Borrow pits

Borrow pits were stripped of topsoil or peat before extraction began. As these were areas of rising bedrock or outcrop the topsoil or peat cover was generally shallow. Nothing of archaeological interest was found in these areas.



Plate 36 Borrow pit 1 was located at the road junction west of T12



Plate 37 Borrow pit 1 in use as peat disposal area



Plate 38 Borrow pit 2 was located south of T15



Plate 39 Borrow pit 3 between T13 and T16

3.6 Ancillary Works

Ancillary works consisted of digging drains, settlement ponds and peat storage areas. These works were subject to intermittent monitoring. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered.



Plate 40 Drain north of substation



Plate 41 Settlement pond northeast of substation



Plate 42 Peat Storage Area located southeast of the substation



Plate 43 Peat Storage Area at T18

3.7 Substation and Compound

The substation and compound were located in the northwest of the site and were quite separate from the turbines which are almost all on higher ground east of the Bunadower River. The substation was excavated periodically starting in November 2019 with the final peat removal taking place in June 2020. The bulk of the excavation work took place in Spring 2020.



Plate 44 Peat excavations at site of substation



Plate 45 Peat excavations at compound site

3.8 Ducting

Ducting on site took place in the side of roads which had been upgraded during the initial phase of construction. As such the removal of peat had already been monitored and the ducting work was subject to intermittent monitoring only.



Plate 46 Looking northwest along ducting route between compound and substation

Works at the cable connection to Clogher substation were inspected on various dates in 2019 and 2020. There are two recorded monuments and two NIAH sites located in the vicinity of the works. None of these sites were impacted by the works and no archaeology was found during monitoring of excavations.



Plate 47 Looking west along ducting route

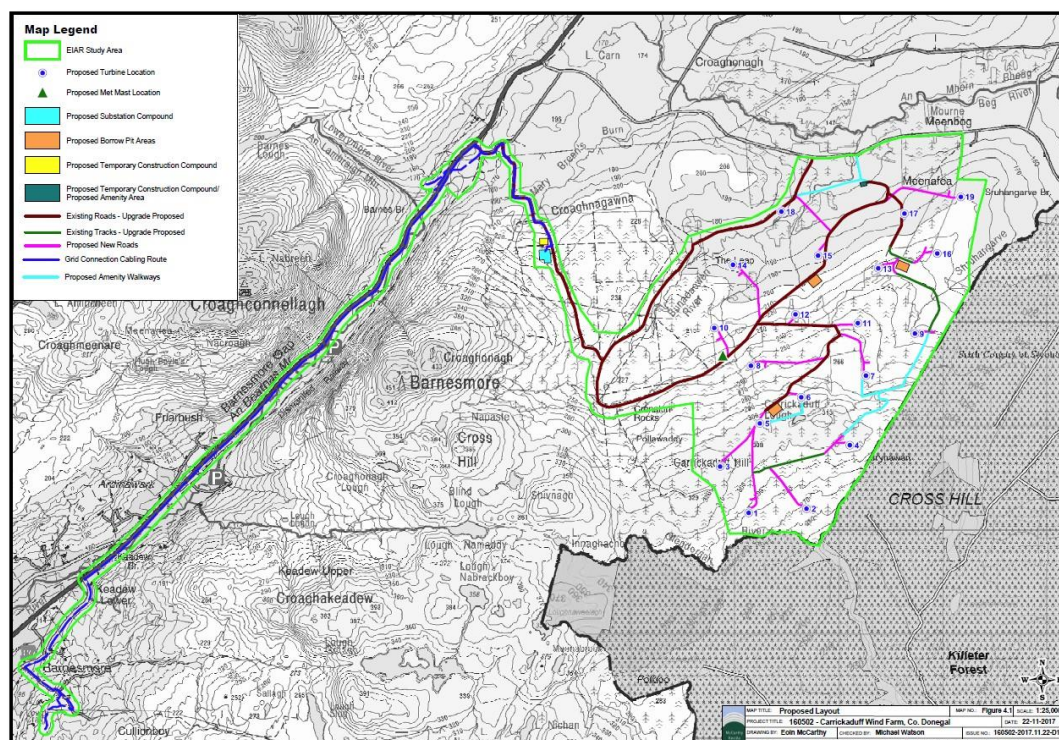


Figure 4 Map showing cable route to Clogher substation

DG005-085 Site of Megalithic Structure

This site has been designated a redundant record since the compilation of the EIAR cultural heritage chapter. It is located on the river bank several metres from the hard shoulder where it is proposed to lay ducting. The site is as described in the inventory as consisting of a number of large boulders. The bank has recently been planted with willows. No archaeology was found during monitoring.



Plate 48 Looking north at DG005-085



Plate 49 Looking east at point of cable route closest to DG005-085

DG094-026 Kiln

This site was fully excavated as mitigation of the N15 re-alignment. No archaeology was found during monitoring.



Plate 50 Looking north at site of DG094-026

NIAH Ref. 40909424 Road Bridge

Ducting was installed under the bridge using directional drilling.



Plate 51 Looking west at road bridge NIAH Ref. 40909424

NIAH Ref. 40909423 Milestone

A milestone which is included in the National Inventory Architectural Heritage (Reg No 40909423) is located in the vicinity of the works. The milestone dates from 1775 and is assessed as being of social and historical interest and is of regional importance. It was on the opposite road carriage at the junction of local road leading to the Clogher substation and the old Barnes road. There was no impact on the milestone and no archaeology was found during monitoring.



Plate 52 Looking west at milestone NIAH Reg. No. 40909423



Plate 53 Looking northwest showing milestone (left) and nearest point of cable works (marked by cones at right)

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Archaeological monitoring of peat excavations on the site of the Meenbog Wind Farm was carried out between November 2019 and November 2020. All road widening, ducting and hardstand and turbine base excavations were monitored, with the exception of Turbine 7 which has yet to be excavated. Nothing of archaeological interest was found during monitoring and no cultural heritage impact occurred. A culvert associated with the West Donegal railway embankment uncovered near the entrance to the site was preserved *in situ*.

Archaeological monitoring of peat excavation works is recommended at the site of Turbine 7.

Recommendations may be subject to ratification by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Appendix 1 Archaeological Monitoring September-October 2022

Archaeological monitoring resumed at Meenbog Windfarm on Monday 5th September 2022. Initial works involved grading of a road west of the borrow pit and building up berms around peat cells.

Borrow Pit

Excavation works began in earnest on Wednesday 7th September with stripping of the borrow pit SW of T16. Excavations here continued intermittently until 5th October. The site of the borrow pit slopes from the peat cell in front of the base down towards the road. Stratigraphy was composed of 1.2m overburden of previously excavated peat over 1.5m of peat near the road. There was less than 1m of overburden on the higher ground, and the *in situ* peat depth varies with some rising bedrock with boulders. There was generally sandy clay under the peat with some soft shaley rock. Stratigraphy remained consistent across the borrow pit but was slightly deeper in the SW corner where there was 1.5m of overburden peat over 1m of *in situ* peat onto rock in grey clay.



Plate 54 Looking west at Borrow Pit post peat excavations

T16 extension

Work began at T16 on Thursday 22nd September with the widening of the entrance. There was 1.5m to 2m of peat with 1m of very hairy spongy scraw and peat over more developed peat down onto stony grey clay. Stratigraphy here generally consisted of 2m of fibrous moderately humified peat over brown clay. Water ingress made the peat very wet. There were some large stumps and roots in the basal layer. On the north side of the hardstand the peat was shallower reaching depths of no more than 1.5m but was equally wet. There was occasional branch wood in the basal layer in this area but

none showed signs of having been worked. Work on the hardstand was completed on 3rd October. Nothing of archaeological interest was found.



Plate 55 Peat section face in T16 hardstand extension

Access Road to Borrow Pit and T16

On Wednesday 5th October the access road to T16 and borrow pit was realigned. This involved removing the north east corner before the turn in and the south west corner south of the borrow pit. Peat varied in depth between 0.6m and 1.5m with occasional very large boulders onto grey sandy clay. There was substantial upcast on the eastern side of the road from previous road excavations.

Main Site Access Road

Between Thursday 15th September and Thursday 22nd September excavation works involved the realignment of the access road from the N15 up to the substation. Work began in the west and progressed east taking out each of the sharp bends in the upgraded existing forestry road. Excavations took place largely in cutaway bog. At the first bend peat depths averaged 2m in cutaway and 3m on the ridges. There were large amounts of wood at the base of peat including roots, stumps and branches. These occurred at a depth of 2.5m.

Excavations began on the second corner on Wednesday 21st September. There was generally stable peat under overburden of spread excavated peat to a depth of 2.5m on the south side. The north side consisted of overburden with mixed grey clay over 0.2m of a stone and sand old forestry track over stable peat.



Plate 56 Looking east at Site Access Road Realignment

Road to T9

On Tuesday 4th October work began on excavating a new road to T9. Stratigraphy consisted of 1.5m of fibrous peat under brash and felled tree stumps in an area otherwise covered in reed.



Plate 57 Looking west at peat section in new road to T9

NE Junction

There is a major road junction in the NE of the site where roads to T19, T17 and beyond, and T15 and beyond meet the forestry access road from the Dearg Line. Excavation of the southern end of this junction took place from 5th October to 7th October. There was some overburden at the southern end of excavations but generally there was between 1.5m and 2m of peat under reed cover overlying 0.2m of sticky, sandy clay with frequent rock.



Plate 58 Looking south at extension of NE junction

Summary

Archaeological monitoring of peat excavations on the site of a windfarm development at Meenbog, Co. Donegal was carried out in September and October 2022. Nothing of archaeological interest was found during monitoring and no cultural heritage impact occurred.

Recommendations

Archaeological monitoring of peat excavations is recommended at the site of turbine T7, which is yet to be excavated. Any additional excavations that may be required must also be subject to archaeological monitoring, as required under condition 17 of the planning (Planning Ref. ABP-300460-17).