

Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny

Archaeological Test Excavation Report

Licence No: 24E1133

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Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny

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SITE NAME	Bennettsbridge Quarry
CLIENT	Bennettsbridge Limestone
INVESTIGATION TYPE	Archaeological Test Excavation
PLANNING REF	Preplanning
TOWNLAND	Kilree
IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR	653911, 649715
RMP NO	N/A
RPS NO	N/A
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANT	Archer Heritage Planning Ltd.
ARCHAEOLOGIST	Aidan O'Connell
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SUMMARY

This archaeological impact assessment was undertaken by Archer Heritage Planning Ltd. at the location of a proposed quarry extension at Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny. The assessment consisted of a desk-based study and site inspection, followed by licensed archaeological test trenching targeted on the results of geophysical survey. The assessment aims to identify and describe known and potential archaeological and cultural heritage constraints within the site and offer recommendations for the mitigation of such impacts. The following factors were identified in the course of the assessment.

- The site is large in scale (25.1ha).
- No stray finds or archaeological objects are recorded in the NMI Topographical Files at Kilree or its immediate surroundings
- The closest Recorded Monument to the subject site is located 75m to the W (KK023-049001-Enclosure).
- No potential archaeological sites were noted on the consulted cartographic sources.
- No potential archaeological features were recorded in aerial photos of the subject site.
- No previous archaeological excavations conducted have been carried out within the subject site. Previous excavations in the vicinity of the site uncovered the presence of prehistoric and early medieval activity.
- There are no Protected Structures within the site or its immediate surroundings.
- Seven anomalies were detected during magnetometer survey, five of those were recommended for trench testing. None of these proved to be archaeological.
- A total of 2841 linear m (5115 sq. m.) of test trenches were mechanically excavated across the site under constant archaeological supervision. No archaeological sites, features or finds were identified.

It is concluded, following desk based assessment, site inspection, geophysical survey and licensed archaeological test trenching that the potential for the continued survival of buried archaeological sites or features is:

- Neutral for the areas where the geophysical survey and test trenching was conducted without obstruction.
- Low-moderate for the forest plantation area where geophysical testing was not conducted and test trenching took place to a limited capacity.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The greatest threat to buried archaeological deposits occurs during large-scale removal of topsoil during the initial construction phase groundworks. The proposed development will involve the removal of topsoil from the site and the clearance of field boundaries in order to facilitate quarrying of limestone bedrock. It is therefore concluded the impact of the proposed development on potential buried archaeological remains would be direct, negative and permanent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the area of forest plantation is subject to archaeological monitoring during topsoil stripping.

NOTE: All conclusions and recommendations expressed in this report are subject to the approval of The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the relevant local authorities. As the statutory body responsible for the protection of Ireland's archaeological and cultural heritage resource, the DHLGH may issue alternative or additional recommendations.

Revision	Status	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	Final	4th December 2024	AOC (Archer)	MMcC (Archer)	CMcG

1. INTRODUCTION

This Archaeological Assessment was carried out across lands at Kilree, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny, (ITM 653911, 649715, Figure 1). It has been prepared by Archer Heritage Planning Ltd. The assessment incorporates the results of desk based assessment, geophysical survey and targeted test excavation. The test excavation was carried out by Aidan O'Connell under licence 24E1133 issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI). The aim of the assessment is to define the interpretation and archaeological significance of geophysical anomalies recorded in the course of the previous high resolution magnetometry survey.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed application area is located in the townland of Kilree, Co. Kilkenny c.1 km to the west of Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny. The application site is situated in flat grassland with an area of forestry to its southern extent (Figure 1).

3. METHOD STATEMENT

The following sources were consulted in the preparation of this report:

- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)/ Sites and Monuments Record¹
- Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland
- Aerial photography
- Historical maps
- Documentary research
- Relevant on-line databases (e.g. Excavation Bulletin; NRA Archaeological Database).

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Brief archaeological & historical background

The subject site is located in the townland of Kilree, Co. Kilkenny, on OS Six Inch sheets No.24, c.1.15km to the west of Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny. The townland name is derived from 'Cill re', the cill meaning church². Bennettsbridge was named after St. Benet. The village is located at major crossing of the river Nore. The original bridge was constructed in late 13th century and destroyed by

¹ Archive Unit National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

² <https://www.logainm.ie/en/8450>

1763 flood. There is record of Bennett's Bridge in 1393, when John Midleton, guardian of the chapel of St. Mary received licence to fortify the bridge. Current bridge is of a 19th century construction.

On the death of the last King of Leinster, Diarmait Mac Murchade, in 1171 his Anglo-Norman son-in-law Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, claimed the Lordship of Leinster, including Osraige. By the time of his death in 1176, when control of Leinster passed to King Henry II, the process of subinfeudation (the granting of lands by lords to their dependents, to be held by feudal tenure) had begun but it isn't known how well advanced it was in the study area. The Annals of the Four Masters records the death of Donnell Mac Gillapattrick, Lord of Osraige, in 1176 and the death of his son Donnell Mac Gillapattrick, Lord of Osraige, in 1185. So Anglo-Norman settlement in the study area may have occurred after this. The de Rochford's had been granted Killaree by the mid thirteenth century as the Feodary of Richard de Clare of 1247 records Thomas and Milo de Rochford as holding 1/4 and 1/8 of a Knight's fee in Lavertach (Killaree) (Brooks 1950, 233). The de Rochford's held Killaree until the seventeenth century.

The process of Anglo-Norman settlement or sub-infeudation was often associated with the construction of timber castles, known as Motte and Baileys. These earthwork fortifications were used to house and defend the Norman lords and their retinues while they set about the process of pacifying and organizing their new fiefs. There are no mottes in the study area but the Motte of Threecastles (KK014-025005-) is just outside it to the north. Walter de Rochford of castle Odogh was recorded as holding the same fees in 1344 (Ibid. 234). Castle Odogh may have been one of the castles in Threecastles townland to the north (KK014-025006-) although Carrigan (1905 vol 2, 269) described Black Castle (KK014-049----) to the south of the application area as being the residence of the Rochfords till the Cromwellian confiscations).

The fifteenth century was characterised by the decline of Anglo-Norman power in Ireland which had been ebbing since the early fourteenth century. Part of the response to this was the construction of masonry tower houses which commenced in the early fifteenth century and lasted until the end of the sixteenth century. The unclassified castle in Killaree townland (KK014-049----) is depicted on the Down Survey map as a multi-story tower that was still occupied in the seventeenth century and was probably a Tower House. During the reign of King James I John Rochford is recorded as holding the fee of Killaree (Brooks 1950, 234) In the Down Survey Killaree townland is recorded as held by John Rochford but by 1670 had come into the hands of Jane Coote the Countess of Mountrath (Downsurvey.tcd.ie).

4.2 Topographical Files

The National Museum of Ireland Topographical Files is the national archive of all known antiquities recorded by the National Museum listed by county and townland/street. These files relate primarily to artefacts but also include references to monuments and contain a unique archive of records of previous

archaeological excavations. The Museum files present an accurate catalogue of objects reported to that institution from 1928. The topographical files were consulted at www.heritagemaps.ie. No stray finds or archaeological objects are recorded at Kilree or its immediate surroundings.

4.3 Record of Monuments & Places

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is a statutory inventory of archaeological sites protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 (Section 12, 1994 Act), compiled and maintained by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI). The inventory concentrates on pre-1700 AD sites and is based on a previous inventory known as the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) which does not have legal protection or status (see www.archaeology.ie).

There are no Recorded Monuments within the subject area. There are 14 RMPs in total within 1km radius of the subject site. Particularly RMPs KK023-049001-(enclosure) and KK023-049002-(enclosure) are located respectively 75m and 105m W of the site boundary.

Details of Recorded Monuments within a 1km radius of the subject site are presented in Appendix 1.

4.4 Cartographic Sources

Analysis of historic mapping can show human impact on landscape over a prolonged period. Large collections of historical maps (pre- and early Ordnance Survey maps as well as estate or private maps) are held at the Glucksman Map Library, Trinity College and other sources (UCD Library, Ordnance Survey Ireland, local libraries and published material). The development of the site and its vicinity recorded through the eighteenth to twentieth century cartography are described below in Table 1 (Figure 3). No potential archaeological features were recorded within the subject site.

Map	Date	Description
1 st edition OSI	1842	The area is depicted as a mosaic of agricultural fields. Two clusters of buildings are present within the site; one in the centre and another in the southern portion of the site.
2 nd edition OSI	1899-1902	No change from the previous map
Last edition OSI	191945-8	No change from the previous map

Table 1: Cartographic sources relating to the site

4.5 Aerial photography

Aerial photography (or other forms of remote sensing) may reveal certain archaeological features or sites (earthworks, crop marks, soil marks) that for many reasons may not be appreciated at ground level. Online orthostatic photographs of the site were examined (Ordnance Survey Ireland 1995, 2000 &

2005; Digital Globe 2011-13 and Aerial Premium 2012-2018; see Figure 4). No potential archaeological features were recorded within the subject site.

The area is depicted as agricultural fields in use as grassland or tillage from 1995 (B&W photography) to present (Figure 4). The beginning of the forest plantation area appears first on the 2009 Google Earth Pro aerial photography.

4.6 Previous Archaeological Excavations

The Excavation Bulletin is a database of summary accounts of archaeological excavations in Ireland and Northern Ireland from 1970 onwards. Summaries relating to archaeological excavations undertaken by the National Roads Authority are also available on-line and were consulted for any adjacent sites. Reports on licensed archaeological works are also held by the Archive Unit of the National Monuments Section.

There were several archaeological investigations conducted to the south of the site along the N9/N10 Kilkullen to Waterford route. Licensed excavations A032/106; E3727, A032/107; E3728 and A032/108; E3729 discovered a number of pits, cremation pit and settlement activity. There are no dates or periods given on excavations.ie. Licensed excavation E003643, also to the S of subject site uncovered the presence of an early medieval enclosure with five inhumations. The details of archaeological licensed works in the surrounding area are presented in Appendix 2.

4.7 Architectural Heritage

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to safeguard architectural heritage in accordance with Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Under S.51 (1), a County Council must compile a Record of Protected Structures (RPS), which lists all structures which are of special *architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical* interest. The protection, unless otherwise stated, includes the exterior and interior of the structure, lands lying within its curtilage (boundary), other structures and their interiors within the curtilage, plus all fixtures and fittings which form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures. Buildings can be added to, or deleted from the RPS at any time, though generally this occurs when the county development plan is being reviewed. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was established on a statutory basis under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999. Its purpose is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. It is intended to provide a basis for recommendations of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to Local Authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in Records of Protected Structures (RPS). There are no protected structures within the subject area. The nearest RPS is Kilree House (C839) located c. 320m to the W.

4.8 Geophysical Survey

The magnetometer survey was conducted by Earthsound Geophysics in September 2024 (NMS Licence No. 24R0429) on four fields (16.3 Ha) in the proposed development. Part of the southeast of the application area could not be surveyed due to the presence of woodland. The survey revealed a series of relict field divisions as well as two field boundaries which relate to features shown on the historic ordnance survey mapping. The influence of agriculture was also seen in the detection of cultivation furrows and imported soils as well as interference from two cattle feeding troughs. Three arcing possible ditch or cut features were also detected which may be archaeological in origin. While a large area of magnetic enhancement is most likely geological in origin.

Anomalies 1 and 6 are relict field boundaries visible on the 1947 edition OS six-inch map and don't require further assessment. Anomalies 2-5 and 7 are potentially of archaeological significance, (although 7 is of low significance) and will require archaeological testing to assess their archaeological significance. There is no indication of anything associated with RMP KK023-049001-, KK023-049002- extending into the application area.

The full list of magnetic anomalies is presented below in tabulated form.

No.	Description/interpretation	Significance	Impact	Action
1	Linear ditch 183m in length. Matches a relict field boundary shown on the first edition -1947 edition OS six-inch map.	Low	High	Don't test
2	Arcing possible ditch or cut features, measuring 46m in length. May be archaeological in origin.	Potential	High	Test
3	Oval possible ditch or cut features, measuring 41m in diameter. May be archaeological in origin.	Potential	High	Test
4	Arcing possible ditch or cut features, measuring 38m in length. May be archaeological in origin.	Potential	High	Test
5	Arcing possible ditch or cut feature, measuring 45m in length. May be archaeological in origin.	Potential	High	Test
6	Linear ditch 27m in length. Matches a relict field boundary shown on the first edition -1947 edition OS six-inch map.	Low	High	Don't test
7	Area of magnetic enhancement which measures 65m in width and stretches across the width of the survey area. Unlikely to be archaeological in origin given its scale. Situated within a sloping field this anomaly is likely to be geological in origin.	Low	High	Test

Table 2: Geophysical survey results

5. TEST EXCAVATION

5.1 Introduction

Test excavation was undertaken on 25th-29th of November 2024 in mixed weather conditions. Trenches were set out with the aid of a Geomax Zenith 15 GPS receiver accurate to <2cm. They were positioned across the site with the aim of assessing the archaeological potential defined by the geophysical survey. An appropriate sample of the overall site was subject to test excavation. Trench locations were agreed in advance with the NMS. Excavation of topsoil was undertaken mechanically with the aid of a 20-tonne mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless/grading bucket and working under constant archaeological supervision. Each trench was inspected visually for archaeological remains and all trenches were reinstated following completion of the archaeological works.

5.2 Constraints

Portion of the site is covered by young forest plantation. The plantation is significantly affected by ash dieback disease. Test trenches there were limited to accessible areas.

5.3 Results

Test excavation was undertaken on 25th-29th of November 2024 by Aidan O'Connell and Bart Korfanty of Archer Heritage Planning Ltd. under excavation licence 24E1133. A total of 18 trenches were excavated across the site (2842 linear meters/5115 sq. m; Figure 5). The forest plantation area present within the site boundary proven to be problematic. Some of the trenches were relocated or excavated partially. Trenches T13, T18 and T19 were not excavated. New locations for additional trenches were chosen based on accessibility. Trench T16 was moved to the south by c. 8m and lengthened by c. 10m. Trench 12 was moved W by c. 7m and lengthened by c. 18m. Trench T17 was moved W by c 8m and excavated partially (127m out of 246m). New locations were chosen (covered by dead young ash trees) to excavate additional trenches (T20, T21). The trees were removed by mechanical excavator, the trenches were excavated and the locations were recorded using Geomax Zenith 15 GPS receiver with RTK corrections. The topsoil comprised friable, dark brown clay loam. This ranged in depth from 0.2-0.6m across the site. The exposed subsoil comprised dark orangeish-gray silty clay. At several locations across the site the underlying bedrock was clearly visible under the shallow topsoil. The results of the test trench excavations are presented below in Table 3 in tabulated form. No archaeological sites, features or finds were discovered.

Trench	L x B x D (metres)	Target	Description
1	225 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	Tree linear magnetic trends	The trends were indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology

Trench	L x B x D (metres)	Target	Description
2	196 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	Four magnetic trends	The trends were indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology.
3	178 x 1.8 x 0.2-0.5	Two magnetic trends, anomalies 2 and 3, area of highly magnetic material,	The trends and both of the anomalies were indiscernible in the subsoil. The area of highly magnetic material appeared as concentration of modern materials (wood, tarmac, concrete fragments), no archaeology.
4	126 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	One magnetic trend	The trend was indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology.
5	18 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	Anomaly 4	The anomaly was indiscernible in the subsoil.
6	175 x 1.8 x 0.4-0.5	Two magnetic trends	The trends were indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology. Historic field boundary present in the northern portion of the trench.
7	175 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	One magnetic trend	The trend was indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology.
8	175 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	Area of magnetic enhancement	The area of magnetic enhancement was indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology.
9	175 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	One magnetic trend	The trend was indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology.
10	335 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.5	Six magnetic trends and anomaly number 5	The trends and the anomaly were indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology found.
11	136 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	One magnetic trend	The trend was indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology found.
12	140 x 1.8 x 0.2-0.3	No targets	No archaeology found.
13	-	-	Not excavated.
14	224 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	One magnetic trend and an area of magnetic enhancement (7)	The trend and an area of magnetic enhancement were indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology found.
15	224 x 1.8 x 0.3-0.4	Two magnetic trends and an area of magnetic enhancement (7)	The trends and an area of magnetic enhancement were indiscernible in the subsoil, no archaeology found.
16	63 x 1.8 x 0.1-0.3	No targets	No archaeology found.
17	127 x 1.8 x 0.2-0.3	No targets	No archaeology found.
18	-	-	Not excavated.
19	-	-	Not excavated.
20	87 x 1.8 x 0.1-0.2	No targets	No archaeology found.
21	62 x 1.8 x 0.1-0.2	No targets	No archaeology found

Table 3: Test trench results

5.3 Discussion

A total of 2841 linear m (5115 sq. m.) of test trenches were mechanically excavated across the site under constant archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated at locations previously agreed with the DHLGH and positioned with reference to Geophysical Survey 24R0240. Trenches T13, T18 and T29 were not excavated due to constraints (Trees). Additional trenches T20 and T21 were set out and excavated in accessible areas. None of the geophysical anomalies recommended for testing were discernible within the subsoil. The geophysical anomalies appear to have been the result of natural variations of deeper underlying geology. The testing of the forest plantation area was limited to accessible locations.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Summary of baseline data

This archaeological impact assessment was undertaken by Archer Heritage Planning Ltd. at the location of a proposed quarry extension at Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny. The assessment consisted of a desk-based study and site inspection, followed by licensed archaeological test trenching targeted on the results of geophysical survey. The assessment aims to identify and describe known and potential archaeological and cultural heritage constraints within the site and offer recommendations for the mitigation of such impacts. The following factors were identified in the course of the assessment.

- The site is large in scale (25.1ha).
- No stray finds or archaeological objects are recorded in the NMI Topographical Files at Kilree or its immediate surroundings.
- The closest Recorded Monument to the subject site is located 75m to the W (KK023-049001-Enclosure).
- No potential archaeological sites were noted on the consulted cartographic sources.
- No potential archaeological features were recorded in aerial photos of the subject site.
- No previous archaeological excavations conducted have been carried out within the subject site. Previous excavations in the vicinity of the site uncovered presence of prehistoric and early medieval activity.
- There are no Protected Structures within the site or its immediate surroundings.
- Seven anomalies were detected during magnetometer survey, five of those were recommended for trench testing. None of these anomalies proved to be archaeological in nature.

- A total of 2841 linear m (5115 sq. m.) of test trenches were mechanically excavated across the site under constant archaeological supervision. No archaeological sites, features or finds were identified.

It is concluded, following desk based assessment, site inspection, geophysical survey and licensed archaeological test trenching that the potential for the continued survival of buried archaeological sites or features is:

- Neutral for the areas where the geophysical survey and test trenching was conducted without obstruction.
- Low-moderate for the forest plantation area where geophysical testing was not conducted and test trenching took place at a limited capacity.

6.2 Proposed development

The proposed development consists of an extension to the existing Bennettsbridge Limestone quarry.

6.3 Impact Assessment

The greatest threat to buried archaeological deposits occurs during large-scale removal of topsoil during the initial construction phase groundworks. The proposed development will involve the removal of topsoil from the site and the clearance of field boundaries in order to facilitate quarrying of limestone bedrock. It is therefore concluded the impact of the proposed development on potential buried archaeological remains would be direct, negative and permanent.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the area of forest plantation is subject to archaeological monitoring during topsoil stripping.

NOTE: All conclusions and recommendations expressed in this report are subject to the approval of The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the relevant local authorities. As the statutory body responsible for the protection of Ireland's archaeological and cultural heritage resource, the DHLGH may issue alternative or additional recommendations.

8. REFERENCES

8.1 Bibliography

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Carrigan, Rev. W. 1905 (Reprint 1981) *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, 4 vols. Kilkenny. Roberts Books and Wellbrook Press.

MacCotter, P. 2008. *Medieval Ireland*. Dublin.

Prendergast, E. 2011 'Killaree, Co. Kilkenny', in M. Cahill, & M. Sikora, M. (eds) *Breaking ground, finding graves - reports on the excavations of burials by the National Museum of Ireland, 1927-2006*, 2 vols. Dublin. Wordwell Ltd. in association with the National Museum of Ireland.

8.2 Web references

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Cartographic sources www.geohive.ie [accessed December 2024]

Aerial Photography <http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html> [accessed December 2024]

Online Excavations bulletin www.excavations.ie [accessed December 2024]

Kilkenny County Council Record of protected Structures [accessed December 2024]

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage www.buildingsofireland.ie [accessed December 2024]



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3rd December 2024

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Table of RMP/SMR sites within 1 km of site

RPM/SMR No	Class	Townland	ITM	Distance to site
KK023-047001-	Castle - unclassified	KILREE (Knocktopher By.)	653453, 650099	c. 640m NW
Indicated on the 1st (1839) ed. OS 6-inch map as 'Castle (in ruins)' and described in the OS Letters (1839) as, 'a small portion of the walls of a castle on Kilree Townland' (O'Flanagan 1930, vol. 1, 280 (94)). Hogan (1860-61, 365) describes it as, 'the remains of a rude stone edifice, which may have been either a church or a castle. The east wall is about three feet [c. 0.9m] high, and the remainder is a mass of rubbish, little above the level of the ground'. According to Carrigan (1905, vol. 3, 372), 'Kilree castle, still traditionally remembered to have belonged to the "Friars," stood within a few perches [1 perch = 5m] of Mr. Whitecroft's house; a part of it yet remains. It marks the position of the monastic Grange of Kilree'. O'Kelly (1969, 153) also mentions this castle and states that it is, 'built on an elevation called the Cruaichín, commanding a fine view'.				
KK023-098001-	Church	KILREE (Knocktopher By.)	653403, 650066	c. 640m NW
According to Carrigan (1905, vol. 3, 372), 'Kilree castle [KK023-047001-], still traditionally remembered to have belonged to the "Friars," stood within a few perches of Mr. Whitecroft's house; a part of it yet remains. It marks the position of the monastic Grange of Kilree. Close beside it was a church or chapel, the graveyard attached to which was come upon, some years ago, when the foundation of Mr. Whitecroft's house was being cut. The field adjoining this house and the fragment of the old castle, is called "Gorhee na soggarth," the Priest's Field'. It is likely that the house referred to as Mr. Whitecroft's house is Kilree House which was built between 1839 and 1947 and is located c. 70m SW of the Kilree castle. This suggests that the church (KK023-098001-) and graveyard (KK023-098002-) are located in the area adjacent to and, at least partially, occupied by the house.				
KK024-008001-	Church	WALLSLOUGH	654191, 650726	c. 1000m NE
According to Carrigan (1905, vol. 3, 372), "Kilree Church" stood about a quarter of a mile [c. 400m] east of the castle, in the "Church Field." No trace whatever remains of it now. The graveyard, in which it stood, has been obsolete, time out of mind; has neither enclosing rampart, nor appearances of graves; and is now quite overgrown with bushes'. The graveyard (KK024-008002-) is indicated on the 1st (1839) ed. OS 6-inch map and on the 1899-1902 revision.				
KK024-008002-	Graveyard	WALLSLOUGH	654191, 650726	c. 1000m NE
Indicated on the 1st (1839) ed. OS 6-inch map as an unenclosed sub-rectangular area (dims. c. 24m N-S; c. 27m E-W in the N portion, narrowing to c. 21m in the S portion) and as a triangular area (dims. c. 28m N-S; c. 19m E-W) on the later revision (1899-1902). According to Dan Byran (1966, vol. 19, 59-60) it was situated on a little elevation, just over the stream that divides Dunbell from Holdenstown, about opposite the "avenue" that runs from near Prospect House into the fields towards Holdenstown. It was quite small, unfenced, but surrounded by a ring of old, large, whitethorn bushes. It is understood to have disappeared recently during land reclamation'. Carrigan (1905, vol. 4, 290) notes that Dunbell had belonged to Jerpoint Abbey until the Dissolution of the Monasteries, after which it became a civil parish. Byran (ibid.) suggests that as a monastic grange it is likely to have had a chapel, which could have been at the location of the graveyard in Holdenstown.				
KK023-048001-	Enclosure	KILREE (Knocktopher By.)	653192, 649682	c. 720m W
On level ground. A roughly oval enclosure (max. diam. c. 45m) indicated on the 1st (1839) ed. OS 6-inch map, the W side, running NW-SE is depicted as being straight, and the monument is contained within a small roughly triangular-shaped field. On the 1947 revision OS 6-inch map the field boundaries to the E and S have been removed and the W field boundary, running NW-SE, transects the W sector. The monument was inspected in March 1957 when it was densely overgrown with thorny scrub (OPW Correspondence, 25 March 1957). The interior (int. diam. 32m N-S; 39.6m E-W) was enclosed by a collapsed dry stone wall (Wth 3m; int. H 0.3m; ext. H 1.06m) and outer fosse (Wth 3.65m; D 0.76m) (ibid.). By August 1957 the monument had been levelled (OPW Correspondence, 16 August 1957). Aerial photographs (CUCAP AYK062, 9 July 1969; BDI039, 14 July 1970; BGG011 and BGG012, 16 July 1971) show the enclosure as a cropmark with a wide deep fosse and a small circular cropmark, probably a hut site (KK023-048002-) in the W quadrant of the interior.				
KK023-048002-	Hut site	KILREE (Knocktopher By.)	653174, 649680	c. 720m W

RPM/SMR No	Class	Townland	ITM	Distance to site
Within the W quadrant of an enclosure (KK023-048001-). A small circular cropmark, probably a hut site, identified on aerial photographs (CUCAP AYK062, 9 July 1969; BDI039, 14 July 1970; BGG011 and BGG012, 16 July 1971)				
KK023-049001-	Enclosure	KILREE (Knocktopher By.)	653684, 649303	c. 550m SW
Indicated as an oval enclosure (diam. c. 40m) on the 1st (1839) ed. OS 6-inch map and as a square enclosure with rounded corners on the 1947 revision with an unenclosed area (dims. c. 28m NW-SE; c. 24m NE-SW) outlined as a dashed line adjoining to the E. By 1969 the enclosure had been levelled and is visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs (CUCAP AYK063, 9 July 1969; BDI038, 14 July 1970). Also visible as cropmarks on these aerial photographs are an enclosure (KK023-049002-) which adjoins to the W and another (KK023-049003-) located c. 70m to the W.				
KK023-049002-	Enclosure	KILREE (Knocktopher By.)	653657, 649288	c. 550 SW
An oval enclosure (dims. c. 36m N-W; c. 47m N-S) identified as the cropmark of a fosse on aerial photographs (CUCAP AYK063, 9 July 1969; BDI038, 14 July 1970). On the OS 6-inch maps (1839 1st ed. and 1947 revision) a field boundary is indicated running along the W edge of the enclosure, from SSW-W. An enclosure (KK023-049001-) conjoins to the E and another enclosure (KK023-049003-), also identified as a cropmark on the aerial photographs, is located c. 30m to the WNW.				
KK023-049003-	Enclosure	KILREE (Knocktopher By.)	653581, 649306	c. 570m SW
A circular enclosure (dims. c. 36m) identified as the cropmark of a fosse on aerial photograph (CUCAP AYK063, 9 July 1969). On the OS 6-inch maps (1839 1st ed. and 1947 revision) a field boundary with a trackway is indicated running NW-SE, through what is visible on the aerial photograph as the W sector the enclosure. Another field boundary is also indicated on these maps running along the S edge of the enclosure, this has since been levelled and is visible as a cropmark on the aerial photograph. Two conjoined enclosures (KK023-049001- and KK023-049002-) conjoins to the E are located c. 70m to the E and c. 30m to the ESE respectively.				
KK023-063----	Enclosure	RATHCLOGH	653744, 648877	c. 890m SW
A roughly circular enclosure (diam. c. 32m) which appears to be faintly indicated on the 1st (1839) ed. OS 6-inch map and is outlined on the 1947 revision. The monument was levelled in 1961 as part of reclamation work (OPW correspondence). It is visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs (CUCAP BGG013, 16 July 1971; GB89.AN.05, 22 July 1989) as an enclosure (overall diam. c. 50m) defined by a levelled bank and external fosse and another outer concentric fosse, the two fosses are c. 10m apart.				
KK023-098002-	Graveyard	KILREE (Knocktopher By.)	653403, 650066	c. 640m NW
According to Carrigan (1905, vol. 3, 372), 'Kilree castle [KK023-047001-], still traditionally remembered to have belonged to the "Friars," stood within a few perches of Mr. Whitecroft's house; a part of it yet remains. It marks the position of the monastic Grange of Kilree. Close beside it was a church or chapel, the graveyard attached to which was come upon, some years ago, when the foundation of Mr. Whitecroft's house was being cut. The field adjoining this house and the fragment of the old castle, is called "Gorhee na soggarth," the Priest's Field'. It is likely that the house referred to as Mr. Whitecroft's house is Kilree House which was built between 1839 and 1947 and is located c. 70m SW of the Kilree castle. This suggests that the graveyard is located in the area adjacent to and, at least partially, occupied by the house.				
KK024-032----	Enclosure	BENNETTSBRIDGE (Shillelogher By.)	654591, 649041	c. 940m SE
On the N end of a ridge running NE-SW. Identified on a Grand Jury Map, 1812-24 as an enclosure. A house has been built at this location.				

Appendix 2: Table of previous excavations in vicinity of site

Excavation No.	RMP/SMR	ITM	Location	Ex. Bulletin Ref.	Author
07E0576	KK024-006	654808, 650884	Sheastown, Kilkenny	2007:1018	C. O Drisceoil
Testing was carried out at Sheastown, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny on a proposed quarry extension site that was partially within the area of constraint for KK024-006 Enclosure-Circular and adjacent to the areas of constraint for KK024-009(01), Enclosure Cropmark, KK024-009(02), Enclosure and KK024-029, Enclosure Cropmark. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered					
11E0390	KK024-029	655061, 650845	SHEASTOWN QUARRY EXTENSION, BENNETTSBRIDGE, Kilkenny	2011:378	C. O Drisceoil
Test excavations were undertaken for a 2.7ha extension to an operating sand and gravel pit at Sheastown. Testing of a proposed northern extension area to the quarry was undertaken previously in 2007 (<i>Excavations</i> 2007, no. 1018, 07E576). This yielded nothing of archaeological significance. Nine trenches were excavated in the 2011 extension, which was within the area of constraint for a probable moated site. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted in these excavated test trenches. It was recommended that the topsoil-stripping for the development be monitored.					
A032/109; E3730	N/A	655268, 650128	AR094, Bennettsbridge, Kilkenny	2007:885	P. Lynch
This site was located within the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford road scheme along Contract 2, Phase 4B, Knocktopher to Powerstown, on a relatively flat field adjacent to the River Nore. The earliest phase on the site was represented by a double ring-ditch (inner ring-ditch 12.5m in diameter, outer ring-ditch 20.5m in diameter). The ring-ditches were cut by a medieval, square enclosure, so it is currently thought that the ring-ditches are prehistoric in date, probably Neolithic or Bronze Age. Two Mesolithic bann flakes recovered from the outer ring-ditch are more likely to be incidental finds and not indicative of any earlier origin. The square enclosure (43m by 43m) contained medieval pottery in its ditch fills. A large pit containing medieval pottery, iron nails, a copper fragment and charred macrobotanical material, two L-shaped linear features and a line of post-holes which could represent a structure also contained medieval pottery and whetstones and are therefore likely to be associated with the enclosure. A stone-lined, keyhole-shaped cereal-drying kiln cut into the enclosure ditch is also likely to be related. A human burial (east-west) was also found just outside the south-south-west corner of the enclosure; it had been disturbed and the disarticulated remains were recovered c. 2m from the main burial.					
E003643	N/A	654379, 649683	AR093, Kilree 3, Kilkenny	2008:725	P. Lynch
This site was located within the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme, Waterford to Powerstown Phase 4 – Knocktopher to Powerstown. It was situated on an east-sloping hill with good visibility and consisted of an early medieval, multi-ditch enclosure with one timber-lined souterrain and one subterranean passageway, also a probable souterrain. A circular ditch (Ditch 1: 1.15–3.47m width by 0.4–1.4m depth) enclosed an area 90.6m east-west by 85.5m. The primary, mainly sterile fills in the ditch had resulted from natural slumping and silting, indicating that the ditch had remained open for some time. The middle fills contained occupational debris and an inhumation burial, and the final, upper fills had been deliberately backfilled. There was no evidence of a bank, either internal or external. A later ditch (Ditch 3) obscured the exact location of the entranceway into the enclosure which appeared to have been along the north-east section. Inside the area enclosed by Ditch 1 was a concentric, internal enclosure (Ditch 2: 1.7m width by 0.965m), c. 38m in diameter. There was a possible causewayed entrance in the east of this internal enclosure. A second inhumation burial was identified in the interior. Internal field divisions/livestock enclosures were evident along with numbers of possible post-holes and pits, although no patterns or alignments were discernible. Two smaller annexes were associated with Ditch 1; these were formed by Ditch 3 (enclosed area: 24m north-south by 43m) and Ditch 4 (37m east-west by 20m); a burial was associated with Ditch 3. No significant features were recorded within these annexes. Several drainage ditches were identified across the site, especially in the areas which were prone to flooding during the N9/N10 excavations. An earth-cut souterrain (Souterrain A) was found within the enclosed area; it consisted of a drop-hole shaft in the east, which sloped westwards into a subterranean restricted linear passageway (14m long by 0.8m wide), which had two right-angled turns and which led to a lower, square chamber (16m ² ; 3m deep). The chamber contained in situ upright wooden posts, along with several collapsed oak roof planks (left as a dark impression in the floor surface), and the					

Excavation No.	RMP/SMR	ITM	Location	Ex. Bureau Ref.	Author
passageway also had evidence of decayed upright posts, indicating that the souterrain had been reinforced with timber. A partially metallised floor surface was evident in both the chamber and also the passageway. A billhook and a small iron anvil were found within the fills of this feature. Another subterranean passageway (10.2m long by 5m wide by 2.3m deep), possible chamber and drop-hole (which was stone-lined in places, giving it a corbelled effect) may represent the remains of a second earth-cut souterrain (Souterrain B) which was positioned in the south-western interior of Ditch 1. There was no evidence for a ramp between the drop-hole and the passageway; possibly steps or a ladder had been used to provide access in and out of the passageway. The drop-hole was later used as a waste pit from which a decorated, partial copper vessel rim and a sherd of Roman Samian ware were recovered. The fills within Souterrain B indicated at least three discernible phases of use: construction, occupation and abandonment. This was possibly an earth-cut souterrain, as there was no evidence of drystone or wood construction; it appears that a large pear-shaped cut was constructed into which Souterrain B was erected. A compacted floor surface was evident in both the passageway and also the chamber. A pseudo-pennannular, possible copper-alloy brooch was found in this layer. The fills over the floor surface contained charcoal, animal bone and wood fragments indicating some degree of occupation/use. In the final phase of use the souterrain was abandoned and backfilled after it had subsided. A total of five inhumations were present in isolated positions across the site. Two burials were located within Ditches 1 and 3; one burial was positioned in the internal area of Ditch 2, with the remaining two burials on the outer edges of Ditches 1 and 4. The inhumations were in varying orientations: north-south, north-east/south-west, north-west/south-east; associated finds recovered included a broken flint scraper, a metal knife, and a fragment of lignite bracelet. The later medieval activity consisted of a stone-lined, keyhole-shaped kiln with evidence for three phases of use, situated within the south-eastern fills of Ditch 1, as well as several smaller kilns and three metalworking pits which contained charcoal, slag and burnt clay. The post-medieval features on-site consisted of several field drains and a large, modern stone-filled pit.					
A032/108; E3729	N/A	654258, 649544	AR092, Kilree, Kilkenny	2007:981	P. Lynch
This site, located within the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford road scheme along Contract 2, Phase 4B, Knocktopher to Powerstown, was located in a flat field with general views of the surrounding areas. A modern limestone quarry was located to the north of the site. An area 33m by 27m was stripped and five pits and several linear features were revealed. One of the pits was subrectangular and contained charcoal, burnt bone and burnt soil. A further two pits, one of which contained burnt bone fragments, and a hearth were cut into a linear feature (possibly a drainage ditch).					
A032/107; E3728	N/A	654026, 649354	AR091, Kilree, Kilkenny	2007:980	P. Lynch
This site was located within the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford road scheme along Contract 2, Phase 4B, Knocktopher to Powerstown, in a flat field with general views of the surrounding areas. A modern limestone quarry was located to the north-east of the site. An area 23.5m by 30m was stripped and a large, subrectangular pit (1.46m length by 1.1m width) with a charcoal-rich fill with four stake-holes and a post-hole in its base was revealed. A possible circular hearth (0.55m diameter by 0.12m depth) with an oxidised base was located c. 10.5m to the south-east of this pit. A second hearth (0.88m by 0.72m by 0.11m) containing charcoal and heat-shattered stone also had an oxidised base. A possible cremation pit (0.4m by 0.62m by 0.38m) was covered with a saddle quernstone which was lying face down on the pit; the association between the stone and the pit is unknown.					
A032/106; E3727	N/A	653588, 648893	AR090, Rathclough, Kilkenny	2007:1003	P. Lynch
This site was located within the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford road scheme along Contract 2, Phase 4B, Knocktopher to Powerstown, in the centre of an undulating rectangular-shaped pasture field with general views of the surrounding areas. An area 33.8m by 19.6m was stripped and a stake-hole and three small pits, possibly waste pits containing deliberately deposited waste material (heat-affected stones, charcoal, chert and flint debitage), perhaps from a hearth, were revealed. A further five pits containing similar material were located c. 9m north-west of this activity.					

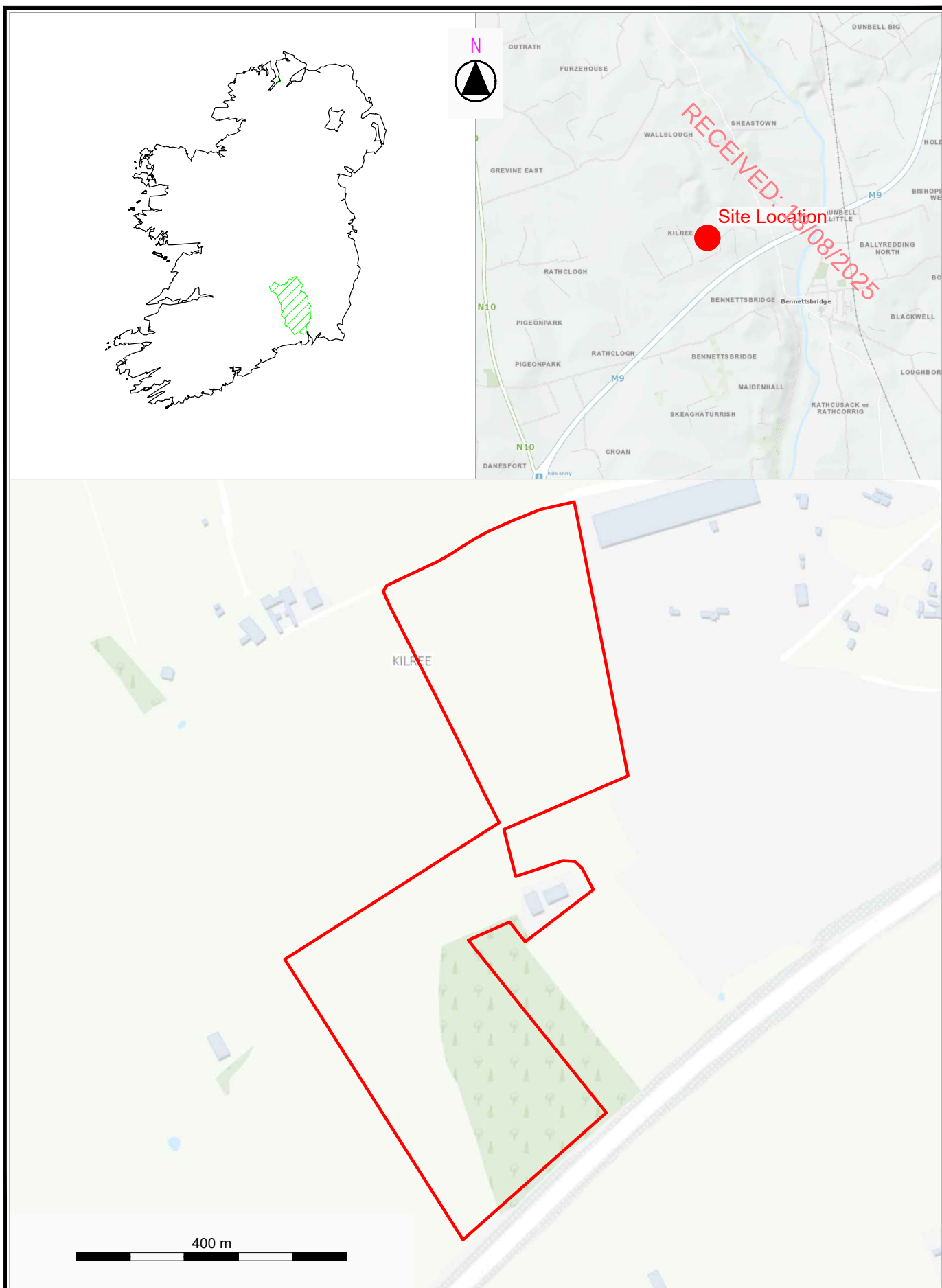


Figure 1: Location of site

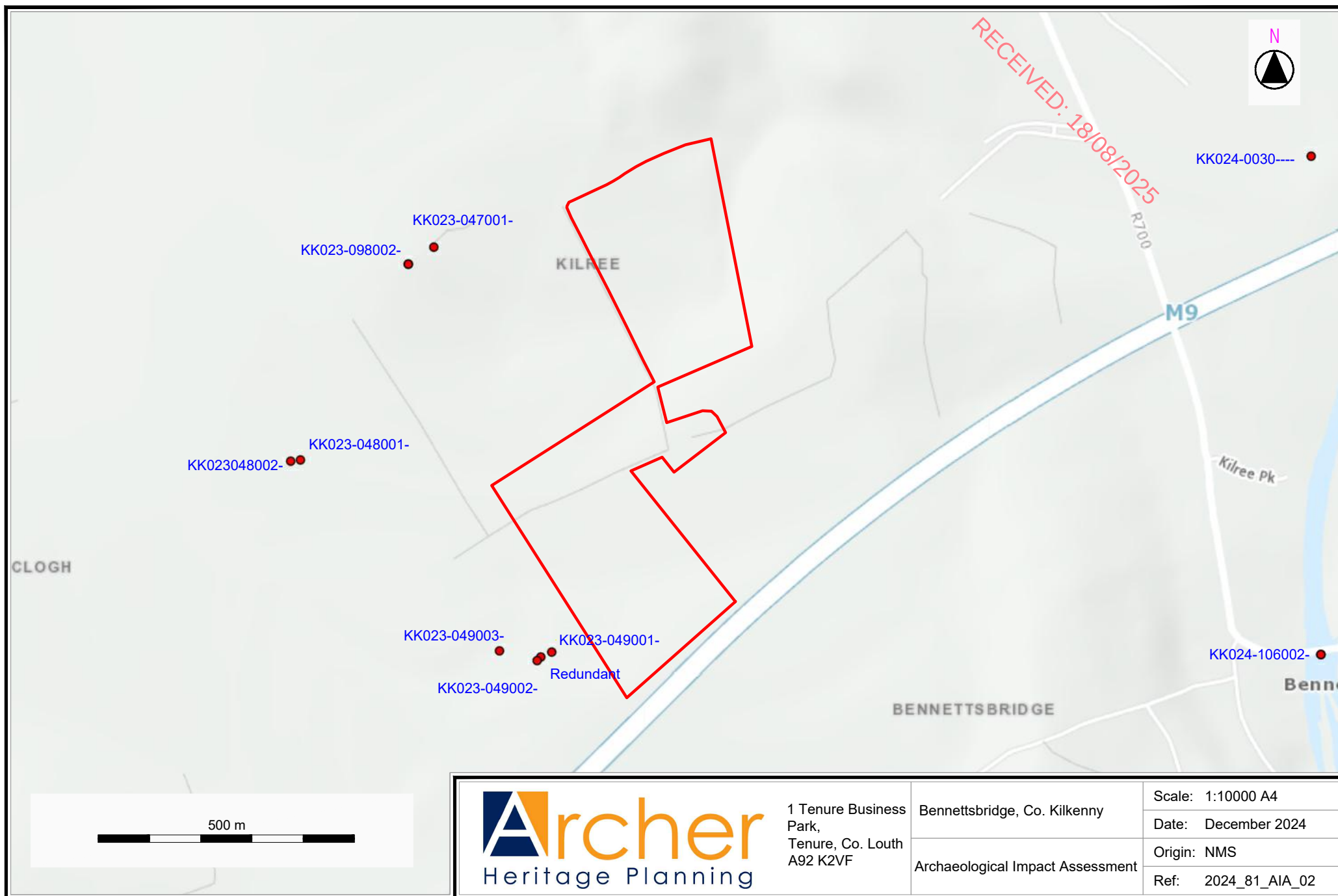
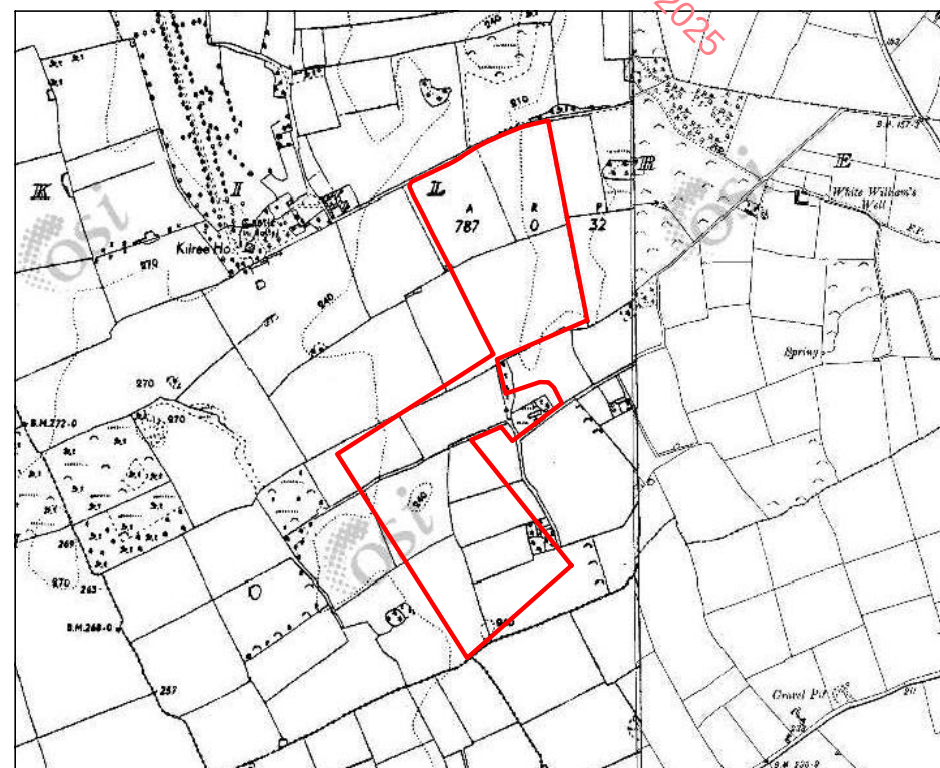
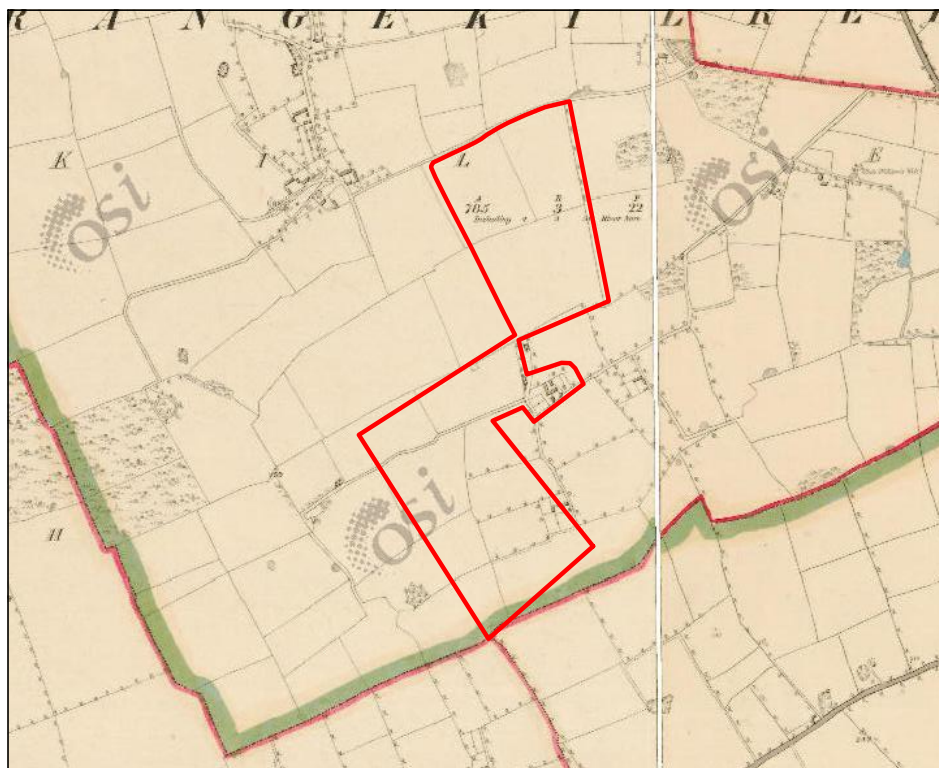


Figure 2: Location of site with surrounding RMPs



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- (l) 1st edition OSI - 1842
- (r) Last edition OSI - 1945-8



1 Tenure Business
Park,
Tenure, Co. Louth
A92 K2VF

Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny
Archaeological Impact Assessment

Scale: Not to scale
Date: December 2024
Origin: NMS
Ref: 2024_81_AIA_03

Figure 3: Extracts from historical maps



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(l) 1995
(r) 2013-18



1 Tenure Business
Park,
Tenure, Co. Louth
A92 K2VF

Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny

Archaeological Impact Assessment

Scale: Not to scale

Date: December 2024

Origin: NMS

Ref: 2024_81_AIA_04

Figure 4: Extracts from aerial photography

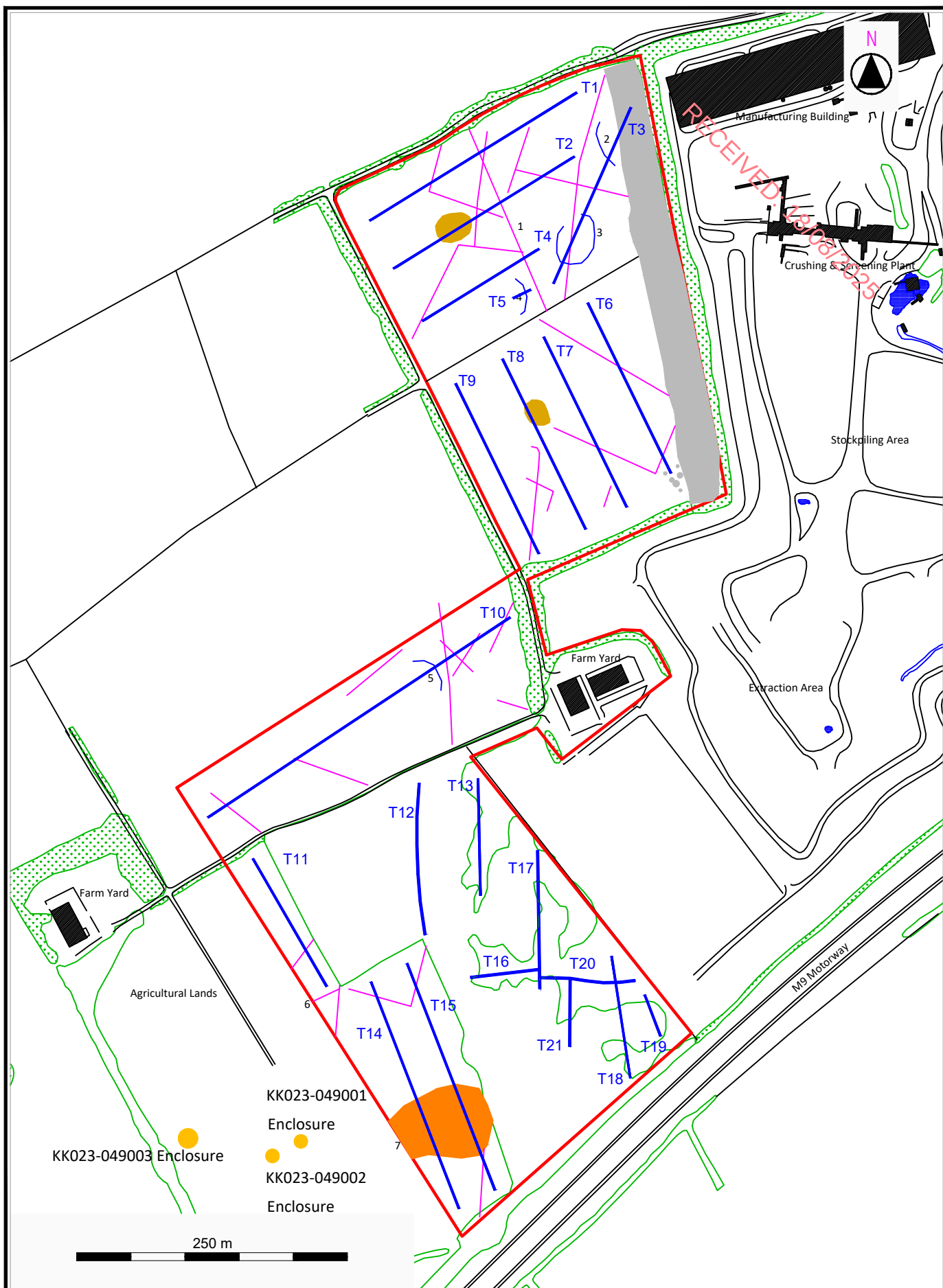


Figure 5: Test trench locations with geophysical survey



Plate 1: Trench T1, looking SW

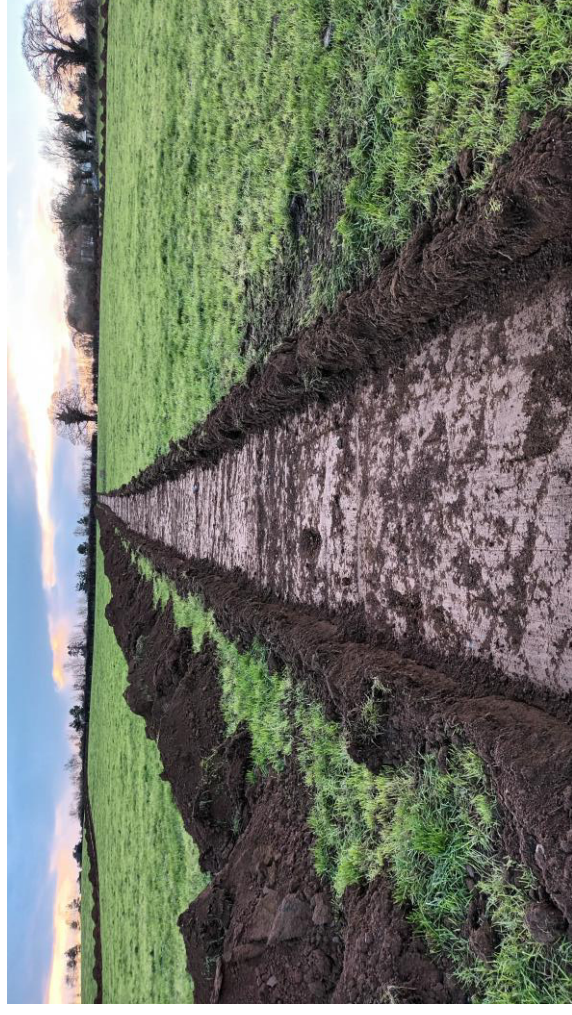


Plate 2: Trench T2, looking SW



Plate 3: Trench T3, looking SW

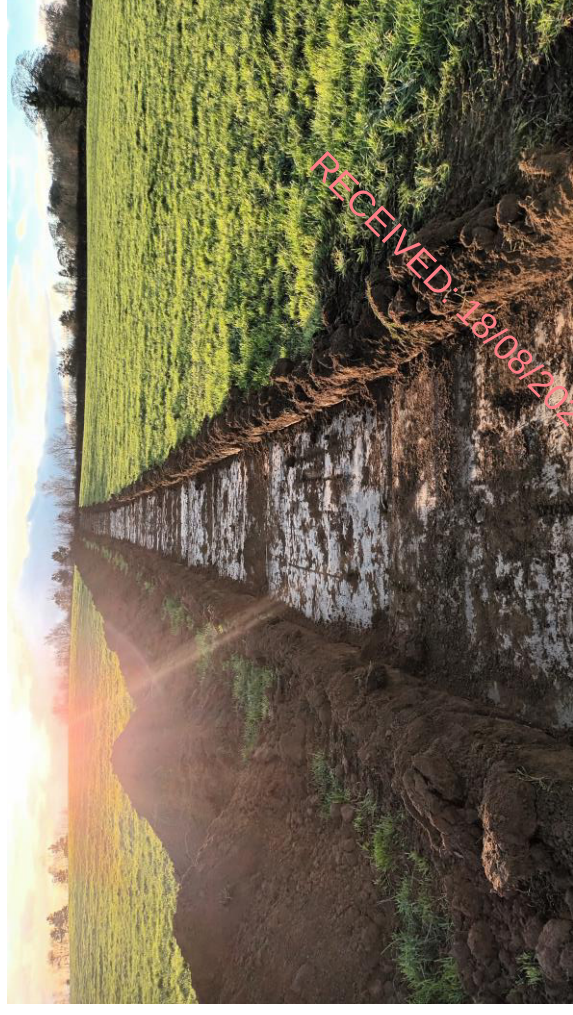


Plate 4: Trench T4, looking SSW



Plate 5: Trench T5, looking SW



Plate 6: Trench T6, looking NW



Plate 7: Trench T7, looking SE



Plate 8: Trench T8, looking NW



Plate 9: Trench T10, looking E



Plate 10: Trench T11, looking NW



Plate 11: Trench T12, looking N



Plate 12: Trench T14, looking NW



Plate 13: Trench T15, looking NW



Plate 14: Trench T17, looking S



Plate 15: Trench T20, looking E



Plate 16: Trench T21, looking S

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Plate 17: Inaccessible location of trench T13



Plate 18: Trees removal in location of trench T20, looking E

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