

**Brief of Evidence**  
**Archaeology and Cultural Heritage**  
**Galway Harbour Extension**

**January, 2015**

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**Presented by:**

**ANNE CAREY**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
**AND**  
**HISTORIC BUILDINGS CONSULTANT**



## 1.0 Qualifications and Professional Experience

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My name is Anne Carey and I am a contract Archaeological and Built Heritage Specialist.

**Qualifications:** I hold a Bachelor of Arts (Honours Degree) in Archaeology and History and a Masters in Archaeology from University College Galway (now National University of Ireland Galway). I also hold a Masters in Urban and Building Conservation from the School of Architecture, University College Dublin, which I completed in 2004.

**Experience:** I have twenty-five years experience as a professional archaeologist and ten years experience as a Historic Buildings Specialist. I am a Full Member of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (MIAI). I am a former Director of the Archaeological Services Unit, Ltd., and have been based in Galway all my professional life.

**Projects:**

**Archaeology:**

- Excavations at Spanish Arch, Galway.
- Excavations at Galway Arms, Galway.
- Excavations on N18, at Ballycasey, Co. Clare.
- Cadamstown Bridge, Co. Offaly.
- Ennis Friary, Ennis, Co. Clare.

**Built Heritage Impact Assessments:**

- Johnston's Court, Sligo.
- Marsh Road, Drogheda.
- Kilkenny Shop, High Street, Galway.
- Lagore House, Co. Meath.
- Woodlawn House, Co. Galway.
- High Street, Kilkenny City.
- Druid Theatre, Galway.
- Picture Palace (Solas), Galway.
- Hargodan's Public House, Sligo.
- Old Brewers Club, The Coombe, Dublin
- No. 9 Montpelier Terrace, Galway.
- Former Industrial School, Letterfrack.
- St. Coleman's Church, Kinvara.
- Cill Einde, An Spidéal.

## **2.0 Knowledge of the Area:**

I have extensive knowledge of the archaeological and architectural heritage of Galway City. I have been involved with site investigation works at the Lough Atalia Railway Bridge since 2010. I have visited the project area to carry out field inspection, photographic survey and monitoring of engineering trial pits.

## **3.0 Methodology**

The aim of the terrestrial Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Study is to identify and to assess all archaeological and cultural heritage sites that may be impacted upon by the proposed harbour extension. The methodology employed comprised a desktop study, where sources related to the history of the area were consulted, including cartographic sources. Field survey was carried out to assess visual impact on the cultural heritage of the area.

My initial role was to prepare the archaeological section of the EIS that referred to the Lough Atalia Railway Bridge. I was also commissioned to present my terrestrial findings and to include those of the Archaeological Study, which was prepared by Laurence Dunne and Julianna O'Donoghue, archaeologists.

## **4.0 Receiving Environment**

The site of the proposed harbour extension is located on the northern side of Galway Bay, c. 11km from its eastern end at Oranmore. It is situated in a relatively sheltered area, with Nimmo's Pier to the west and Renmore to the east, flanked by Hare Island and Mutton Island to the east and west respectively. The proposed development site is located to the south of the existing Galway Harbour Board Enterprise Park, which itself is situated to the south-east of the existing harbour and the medieval city of Galway (RMP No. GA094:100). The proposed development will necessitate the lowering of the public road under the Lough Atalia Railway Underbridge (Protected Structure, RPS10002), to the north of the proposed harbour extension.

There are no known monuments of archaeological or architectural interest in the vicinity of the proposed harbour extension. The closest Recorded Monument to the proposed development site is the 17<sup>th</sup> century bastioned earthen fort at Rinmore (RMP No.

GA094:057), along the shoreline to the east. The south west of the fort, including the south west bastion, has been eroded away by the sea, exposing elevations of between 1m to 3m. To the west, at a distance of around 300m from the proposed development site, is the site of the non-extant Rintinane Fort (RMP No. GA094:112), a sister-fortification to the fort at Rinmore. Forthill Cemetery (GA094:099) lies some 500m north west of the proposed harbour extension site, around 160m south west of the Lough Atalia Underbridge. As the name 'Forthill' suggests, the site was used in the early to mid-seventeenth century as a bastion fort and it was also the site of a sixteenth century Augustinian friary. Both were destroyed by 1645. A holy well (RMP No. GA094:097) is located at a distance of around 545m north east of the Lough Atalia Underbridge, along the northern shoreline of the lake, close to the Lough Atalia Road. It is the last remaining holy well of three tidal wells along this shoreline. It is dedicated to St. Augustine and was refurbished by the Galway Civic Trust in 2000. The days for visiting the well were traditionally the last Sunday in July and on St. Augustine's feast-day on 28<sup>th</sup> August, though the tradition is not now observed as it was in the past. The medieval city of Galway, RMP No. GA94:100, is located at a distance of around 700m north west of the proposed harbour extension site.

The closest Protected Structures to the proposed development site comprise Nimmo's Pier in the Claddagh (RPS 2206, Quays, Piers and Locks, including Gates), which is 160m from the proposed development site, the existing Dun Aengus Dock (RPS 2206, Quay Wall and Dock Gates), which is 400m from the proposed development site and Limerick Steamship House (RPS 6703), which is 700m from the proposed development site. The proposed development will not physically impact, injure or damage the Recorded Monument or the Protected Structures. The Lough Atalia Railway Underbridge, Protected Structure (RPS 10002), comprises the element which will be most closely impacted upon by the proposed road lowering works. It is located at a distance of around 600m to the north west of the proposed harbour extension.

## **5.0 Historical Background**

The siting of the Anglo-Norman town at the mouth of the Galway River (now the River Corrib), was part of a wider settlement plan for the region of Connaught, which had been conquered by Richard de Burgo in 1235. The Anglo-Norman settlement of Connaught concentrated on the good agricultural lands to the east of the county, with Loughrea as the

principal manor, providing rich agricultural produce that was traded through the port of Galway. The walls of Galway, construction of which began in 1270, enclosed a modest enough area of 11 hectares but the city's wealth grew due in no small part due to the strong sea trade that developed from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, with the archaeological record showing strong links with French trading routes in particular. The original port of the medieval town, which was recorded in a drawing by Thomas Phillips in 1685, operated from a quay (RMP GA094:100058) in what is now the Fishmarket. The city developed an independent merchant class whose wealth was based on the lucrative trading links that saw wine, iron, lead, spices and silks imported and wool, fish, hides and tallow exported. The turbulent years of the 1600s saw the fortunes of the city decline, with trade not improving for many years. These difficult years resulted in the improvement of the fortifications of the city, with new forts being constructed from the early years of the seventeenth century onwards. The bastion fort at Forthill was the focus of much citizen unrest during the 1641 Rebellion and the sister-fortifications of Rinmore and Rintinane were constructed by the citizens of Galway in 1643 as part of a strategy to lay siege to the fort, which was held by the English garrison. These forts flanked the mouth of the harbour and successfully prevented relief ships from entering, thereby causing the garrison to capitulate after seven weeks. The fort at Forthill and the remains of the Augustinian Friary were demolished between 1643 and 1645.

The eighteenth century saw a number of important developments in the city, with the footprint of the city beginning to expand and grow to the south. The location of the dock was changed by Edward Eyre, with the construction of a new dock, (known as Eyre's Dock or the old mud dock), in the early eighteenth century at the end of the Long Walk, which itself had been built on land reclaimed from the sea to the south of the medieval town. The new dock was constructed to allow for larger ships to service the city.

An economic revival in the mid-nineteenth century saw a number of notable developments occurring in Galway. The industrial archaeology throughout the city in this period is important but that to the south of the medieval city is particularly impressive, involving as it did the use of lands reclaimed from the sea and construction of a larger dock. Developments included the construction of Nimmo's Pier, on the other side of the river from the old mud dock constructed by Eyre. This dressed limestone pier, which was built in 1822 and which includes a wide range of mooring bollards, was a remarkable

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engineering feat. Closer to the medieval city, a new dock (now called the Commercial Dock) was constructed in 1842 in the salt marsh area between Merchants Road and Forthill. The railway was extended to Galway in 1851, necessitating the construction of a swivel bridge over Lough Atalia, known as the Lough Atalia Viaduct. The underbridge at Lough Atalia is a component of the larger viaduct, both having fine cut-stone piers, with the piers for the underbridge rising without footings or abutments. The section of the works at Lough Atalia comprising the underbridge was carried out by James Stephen's Foundry in Merchant's Road, Galway, possibly to the patented design specified by Fairbairn. Two plates on the bridge bear the name of James Stephens and the date, 1851. Though some works to the underbridge at Lough Atalia have been carried out by CIE/Irish Rail over the years, partly due to damage suffered due to high vehicles striking the underside of the arches, it is still largely intact.

In the late nineteenth century the docks were again developed, with the construction of the Dun Aengus Dock in 1882, expanding it to the south east. The Commercial and the Dun Aengus Dock were linked in 1964. The access bridge to the south east of the harbour was built on reclaimed land in 1993. In 1996 the Galway Harbour Board commenced reclamation of further lands to the south east, on which the Enterprise Park was constructed.

## **6.0 Impact Assessment**

In the Impact Assessment the physical and cultural impact of the harbour extension on Galway City and its environment will be assessed. This includes not only an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on known sites of archaeological or architectural significance but also an assessment of the cultural impacts concerned with the traditional and social assets.

The cultural impact includes a very wide definition, consisting of physical assets such as architecture, settlements, features and structures and the less clearly defined but highly significant assets such as folklore, tradition, artistic and literary connections. In a city like Galway, this must also include the arts, customs and traditions of the city and the institutions that define the sense of place. The existing harbour itself is one of the city's cultural assets, being part of the physical maritime infrastructure that Galway considers part of its heritage and its future. Though a relatively small number of the inhabitants of

Galway are directly involved in the working side of the port, the majority would identify with Galway as a port-city. These passive links to the maritime culture of the city should not be underestimated. They are reflected in the arms of Galway, which depicts a galley with sails furled, a motif that has been reproduced as the GAA crest for both city and county. These symbols show the importance of the maritime aspect of the town's economy. It is clear that Galwegians would feel that something important had been lost if the port would fade or cease to operate. It derives its cultural status from both its long standing shipping tradition to the current visual image of ships arriving to the port in close proximity to the city centre. The physical port, with its piers, quays and dock buildings is part of Galway's cultural makeup.

In terms of physical impact, no upstanding historic structure, no items of archaeological or architectural heritage significance or their surrounds, curtilage or attendant grounds will be physically impacted upon by the construction of the Galway Harbour Extension. Groundworks associated with the development will occur close to sites of known archaeological or architectural interest, namely Forthill Cemetery and the Lough Atalia Underbridge, but no known archaeological monuments or Protected Structures will be damaged as a result of these works.

The construction of the harbour extension will not have an adverse impact on the coastal fort at Rinmore, which has suffered the loss of a quarter of its surface area due to erosion by the sea. The proposals will have a positive impact on the level of coastal erosion, reducing the wave impact on the Recorded Monument.

The visual impact of the proposed extension to the harbour will be negligible on the Recorded Monuments of Galway City and environs. The new extension will not significantly interrupt existing views to and from the Recorded Monuments in closest proximity to it, namely the bastion fort in Rinmore, Forthill Cemetery and the medieval city or its associated Protected Structures, as the height and scale of the proposed harbour buildings are for the most part low and not exceeding two-storeys in general, with one building of four-storeys. The eroded south-west side of Rinmore Fort which faces the proposed development site and the inward-looking nature of the medieval town will not be visually compromised by the development. The Protected Structures and residential developments along Architectural Conservation Area's of Dock Road and the Long Walk

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are at a sufficient remove not to constitute a negative impact. Overall there is sufficient space separation to retain the integrity of the existing harbour and its protected structures but sufficient visual connection to retain its cultural tie to the city. The existing harbour, with its use enhanced as a marina for both local and visiting vessels, would allow a continuation of the active and passive links between the people of Galway and the port. The practice, long held in Galway, of people going to the port to see visiting vessels of interest would continue. This existing port space would be enhanced further by the removal of the heavy port work to a safer and more secure site, while still being connected visually from the viewing area along the proposed Cruise Terminal and the end of the Renmore Promenade overlooking the Fishing Pier and yard and on to the main new quays. In extending the port, the new proposed facilities will add to the marine cultural aspects of the City traditions in this regard, extending the Claddagh / Galway / Salthill Marine ambience to the existing dock and out to the new publicly accessible harbour elements now proposed.

The eastern end of Nimmo's Pier, Protected Structure, situated at a distance of 160m across the mouth of the existing dock, is the closest architectural heritage site to the proposed extension and the scope of the development will be seen from here, with sea views to the east interrupted by the proposed extension. As a result, the development may be seen as having a negative impact on Nimmo's Pier. Given that the current view to the east from Nimmo's Pier is towards the more-industrial section of the existing Galway Harbour Board Enterprise Park, it will have the benefit of having that view improved by the removal of the more utilitarian section of the port to a more carefully designed setting in the new extension and the view of the proposed marina will be an improvement in this regard.

With regard to the Lough Atalia Underbridge, it is proposed to reduce the level of the roadway and footpaths running under the bridge at Lough Atalia, with a maximum depth of 1.2m below current road level below the centre of the underbridge.

The proposed development at the Lough Atalia Underbridge will expose the foundation of the bridge but it does not envisage any intrusive impact on the bridge itself. The works are solely concerned with lowering the surface of the carriageway and footpaths under the bridge.

The maximum depth to be achieved below current ground level is 1.2m, occurring under the bridge itself. The roadway will reach this depth through reducing the height of the road surface gradually on either side of the bridge.

The proposals will not significantly visually injure the visual amenity of the Lough Atalia Underbridge. The existing views of the bridge from both approaches will not be impeded in any way. The general setting of the bridge will remain largely unaltered. The proposed alterations are in keeping with the industrial/functional nature of the general setting, in which the Lough Atalia Viaduct forms a central focal point. The main alteration to the site, the reduced road level and footpaths, will have a slightly negative impact on the visual amenity of the existing bridge structure by introducing a more pronounced depression under the bridge than currently exists. The appearance of the sides of the bridge will not be significantly different, as trial pits have shown that the rusticated limestone construction of the bridge abutments continue below the level of the proposed lowering, which will make the bridge appear higher.

In terms of cultural impact, the new extension to the existing harbour will lead to a permanent change in the shape of the existing coastline, impacting on the perception of the residents of Galway of the image of the 'port'. The proposed principal commercial port activities will be separated from the city by water for the first time in the form of the Lough Atalia channel with bridge access only. The Galway Harbour Extension will not be a through-route, like the existing port, but an end destination in itself.

In dealing with potential social impact, this impact is considered to be neutral, as the new harbour's commercial, fishing and nautical quays will not negatively encroach on life for those either living in or visiting Galway City, or on the rich cultural life of the city. No existing cultural pursuits will be interrupted or inconvenienced by the proposed harbour extension and the perception of Galway as a place to live and a destination to visit will not be altered. The design of the proposed harbour seeks to provide a more positive, coherent and legible viewing focus than the existing exposed frontage of the Galway Harbour Enterprise Park.

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## **7.0 Mitigation Measures**

Every effort has been made to avoid direct impacts on archaeological or architectural heritage features. No Recorded Monuments will be directly impacted by the proposed harbour extension. The Lough Atalia Railway Underbridge, Protected Structure, will primarily be visually impacted upon by the proposed road-lowering but the works, comprising the exposure of the foundations to the underbridge, will not be intrusive or damaging to the structure.

Any ground works associated with the proposed development will be the subject of archaeological monitoring. The overwhelming majority of the project involves construction of the extension to the existing harbour on reclaimed land from the sea, using materials dredged immediately adjacent. The ground disturbance on existing land will be minimal but it will be the subject of archaeological monitoring brief.

## **8.0 Summary/Conclusion**

In the Impact Assessment the physical and cultural impact of the harbour extension on Galway City and its environment was assessed. This included not only an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on known sites of archaeological, architectural or cultural significance but on the physical character of the city, with the cultural impacts concerned with the traditional and social assets.

It has assessed the impacts on the bastion fort of Rinmore, on Forthill Cemetery and on the historic city, which are Recorded Monuments and are included in the Record of Monuments and Places compiled by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and afforded protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. It has been established that there will be no direct physical impact on any Recorded Monuments in the vicinity of the proposed harbour extension. Minor groundworks are proposed to the pavement immediately outside Forthill Cemetery (GA094-099) and these works will be archaeologically monitored. The visual impact of the proposed development on the Recorded Monuments will be minimal.

It has assessed the impact on the Protected Structures associated with the existing harbour and with Nimmo's Pier and with the Architectural Conservation Area's of the Long Walk and 1-6 Dock Road. It has also assessed the impact on the Lough Atalia Underbridge, which is a Protected Structure (RPS 10002). It has established that there will be no intrusive impact on the bridge itself but that there will be a slightly negative visual impact arising from a change in the level of the road under the bridge. This negative impact is offset by the reduction in incidents of damage to the bridge, which has caused it significant damage in recent decades.

The underbridge forms the main point of intersection between the railway and road traffic in the city, with the impressive Lough Atalia Viaduct extending east beyond the city centre. It has been damaged in the past due to being struck by large vehicles and the current bridge height is not suitable for the type of traffic using the Lough Atalia Road, some of which comprises articulated lorries and other large vehicles. Lowering the road level will enable the traffic to continue to use this route with a reduced risk to the bridge itself. It is not intended that the underbridge itself be impacted upon by any of the works.

The people of Galway have both active and passive links with the port of Galway, in a variety of ways. From the port workers / fishers / anglers to the marina users and to the locals visiting the docks to see the variety of vessels that use the facility, the port means different things to different people. The local and tourist interest in the Volvo Ocean Races in recent years, which had the existing port at its heart, resonated strongly in the city. Essentially the port is part of Galway life and, with its direct maritime functions, is an essential part of the City's cultural make-up. The proposed extension to the harbour will not damage this relationship, with the continued use of the existing port as a marina. The proposed extension will be a new focal point for the ongoing interest in the maritime activities that has characterised the relationship Galway has with its port.

