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Archaeological Assessment at Roscam townland, Rosshill, Galway. Planning.



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1.0 Background

1.1 Introduction

This report was compiled by the writer on behalf of Kegata Ltd., (trading as Alber Homes), Galway. It is an archaeological assessment on the site of a proposed Strategic Housing Development at Roscam townland, Rosshill, Galway. The proposed development site broadly comprises four fields, covering an area of just under 25 acres and it previously formed part of Rosshill Golf Course (Par 3), which ceased to operate in the early-2000s. The southern limit of the site is partly within the *Zone of Notification* for a Recorded Monument, being located immediately to the north of a folly/landscape feature RMP No. GA094-070, which is also a protected structure, RPS 8803. Rosshill House, located to the east of the application site across the Rosshill Road and set within a small irregular-shaped demesne, was owned by the Comyns-Davenport family and outbuildings associated with the estate are located within the proposed development site. The site is also located to the south of a protected structure, Rosshill Railway Bridge (RPS 8806, NIAH 30409423). An archaeological field and desk study has been requested to accompany an application for planning permission at the site. There were two previous planning applications on the site; 05/352 and 06/816, and permission for a housing development was granted for the latter application.

Site visits were carried on 23rd February and 7th August, 2019.

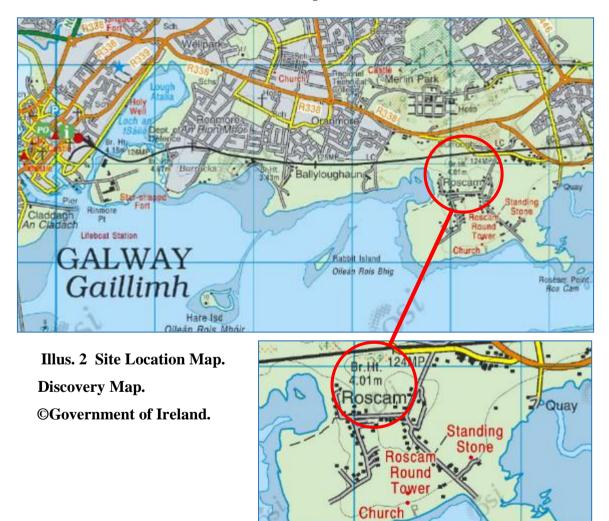
1.2 Brief

An Archaeological Assessment (Field and Desk Study) has been requested on the site by the applicant. The brief for the preparation of an Archaeological Assessment was as follows:

- A. Historical Research, including cartographic research.
- B. Site visit and photographic survey of site.
- C. Archaeological impact assessment.
- D. Recommended migratory procedures to avoid/lessen the impact of the development on archaeological or potential archaeological features.



Illus. 1 Site Location Map. ©Government of Ireland.



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Roscam Point



Illus. 3 Aerial photograph showing site of the proposed development (Google Maps).



Illus. 4 Aerial photograph, showing site of the proposed development (Digitalglobe, <u>www.archaeology.ie</u>).

1.3 Locational Information

Townland	Roscam	County	Galway
OS Map No.	GA094	RMP No. RPS	Partly within <i>Zone of</i> <i>Notification</i> for RMP No. GA094-070. Adjacent to RPS 8803, folly.
Parish	Oranmore	ITM	534165/725007

^{1.4} The Proposed Development

The development description for the proposed development is as follows:

The application is for a residential development consisting of 342 no. units comprising 185 no. houses and 157 no. apartments, including a ground-floor community space, office, cafe and retail unit. A two-storey childcare facility. The provision of public realm landscaping including shared public open space and play areas, public art, public lighting, resident and visitor parking including car rental bays, electric vehicle charging points and bike rental spaces. Pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular links throughout the development. Access road and junction improvements at Rosshill Road/Old Dublin Road. Provision of all associated surface water and foul drainage services and connections including pumping station. All associated site works and ancillary services.

1.5 Planning Context

The present local authority aims, strategies and policies regarding architectural heritage and protected structures are contained in the 'Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023' issued by Galway City Council. The following aim, strategy and policy of the GCDP are particularly relevant to the current development proposal:

Policy 8.2 Built Heritage - Record of Protected Structures

Encourage the protection and enhancement of structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures.

Ensure new development enhances the character or setting of a protected structure.

Avoid protected structures becoming endangered by neglect or otherwise by taking appropriate action in good time.

Consider the inclusion in the Record of Protected Structure of buildings and structures of special interest.

Consult with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs regarding any planning applications relating to protected structures and national monuments.

Implement proactive measures to encourage the conservation of protected structures.

Policy 8.5 Archaeology

Protect the archaeological heritage of the city.

Ensure that proposed development within the designated city centre Zone of Archaeological Potential is not detrimental to the character of an archaeological site or its setting.

Have regard to the archaeological recommendations of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Rural, Regional and Gaeltacht Affairs on any planning applications.

Endorse the sustainable use of archaeological heritage as an educational and cultural resource and promote public awareness of the archaeological heritage of the city.

Require the surveying, recording or excavation of archaeological heritage during the development process where appropriate.

Seek the preservation in-situ or, at a minimum, preservation by record of archaeological sites/monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places.

Ensure that any development proposal with potential to impact on archaeological heritage includes for an archaeological assessment. This includes within terrestrial, riverine, inter-tidal and sub-tidal environments.

Promote the protection of the varied industrial heritage of the city and encourage greater appreciation and public awareness of this heritage.

2.0 Methodology

An archaeological assessment was carried out on the site. This comprised the following:

2.1 Field and Desk Study

As a starting point, the desk study involved a search of historic sources on both the site and the wider area of Roscam townland. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland files were consulted, as were other archaeological reports relating to the area. Recorded Monuments are identified in the text by their numbers beginning 'RMP No.'. Other written sources were also

researched as were aerial photographs and cartographic sources. The database of excavations in Ireland was also consulted. Site visits were then carried out on 23rd February and on 7th August, 2019.

2.2 Legislative Context

There are no Recorded Monuments or protected structures within the site of the proposed development. The red line boundary for the proposed development site is located c. 4m north of an octagonal walled garden which is associated with a late-nineteenth century folly. The folly and its associated walled garden are a Recorded Monument (RMP No. GA094-070) and a protected structure RPS 8803. Part of the *Zone of Notification* for the folly extends into the proposed development site for an estimated distance of c. 17m. Given the proximity of the proposed development site to the folly and its walled garden, it is subject to the provisions of both the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 and, with regard to visual impact on the protected structure, the Local Government Planning and Development Act, 2000.

3.0 Historical Background

The townland of Roscam is located in the parish of Oranmore and the barony of Dunkellin in County Galway. The townland name Roscam is derived from the Irish, '*Ros Cam*' meaning 'crooked point or wood'¹.

There are eighteen Recorded Monuments in Roscam townland, thirteen of which are associated with the ecclesiastical site associated with St. Odran, brother of St. Ciarán of Clonmacnoise, near the shoreline to the south of the townland (Illus. 2). The ecclesiastical site comprises an ecclesiastical enclosure (RMP No. GA094-02002), a multi-period medieval church (RMP No. GA094-02001), a round tower (RMP No. GA094-02004), and a graveyard (RMP No. GA094-02003), as well as bullaun stones, and graveslabs, located over 500m to the south of the subject site². The other recorded monuments in the townland comprise a standing stone and cist (RMP No. GA094-071 and -071001, located over 545m to the south-east) as well as an enclosure (Sites and Monuments Record No. GA094-122, located over 80m to the north-east).

¹ O'Donovan, J., 1838, Ordnance Survey Name Books.

² Files of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. <u>www.archaeology.ie</u>

O'Donovan recorded the proprietor of Roscam townland as Patrick Commons, Esq, of 'Roscam House', which he noted was built in 1835³. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1838 shows the only estate in the townland named as 'Rosshill House' (Illus. 5) and it may be assumed that O'Donovan was referring to this building in his description. Slater's Dictionary of 1846 listed 'Patrick Commons, Ross hill', as one of the landed families in Galway. Extensive land holdings are recorded for Thomas Comyns in Griffith's Valuation of 1855, with Comyns both owning and renting land in Roscam from the Governors of the Erasmus Smith School. An article collected by Samuel J. Maguire gives an account of the profit in rents to tenants made by Mr Cummin in Roscam on the land he had himself rented from the Erasmus Smith charity⁴. In the mid-to-late nineteenth century the estate was in the ownership of George Comyns Davenport, who was a Borough Magistrate. His grave is located in Roscam graveyard⁵. A Catholic family, the Comyns Davenports presented the altar rails to the Augustinian Church in Galway City in the early-twentieth century. The 1901 Census shows the house at Rosshill inhabited by the Davenport sisters, Georgina, Jane, Genevieve and Fanny and two servants. In 1911 another sister, Whilmina, is named.

The historic mapping (Illus. 5-7) shows the site of the proposed development in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The site is located to the north-west of Rosshill House, the irregular-shaped demesne of which extends to the edge of the larger demesne of Merlin Park to the north-west. The north-western corner of the proposed development site is in the townland of Merlin Park, with the majority of the site in the townland of Roscam (Illus. 5). The First Edition OS 6" Map of 1838, shows a series of outbuildings occupying the centre of the site to the north-west of Rosshill House (Illus. 5). A landscaped area is shown on this map in the area of the folly, (RMP No. GA094-070/RPS 8803), with the enclosing walls appearing to be of square plan. The Second Edition OS 25" Map names the folly as 'Ornamental Mound' and depicts it as being enclosed by the distinctive octagonal walls (Illus. 6). The Record of Protected Structures describes the feature as a 'multi-step pyramid folly', within a walled garden. The site features are described as 'beebowls, kerbing, cart house and dovecote' and its special interest relates to its archaeological and historic importance.

³ O'Donovan, J., 1838, Ordnance Survey Name Books.

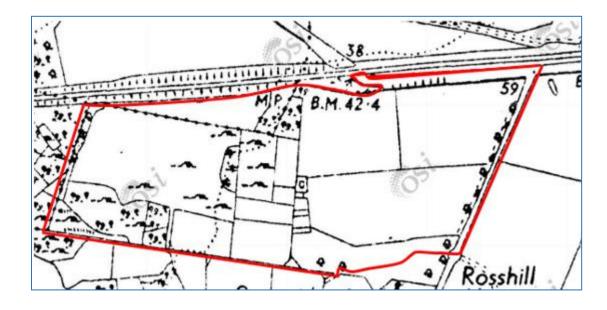
⁴ Maguire, S. J. Education. places.galwaylibrary.ie/history/

⁵ Historicalgraves.com Roscam. Leaflet issued by Galway City Council.

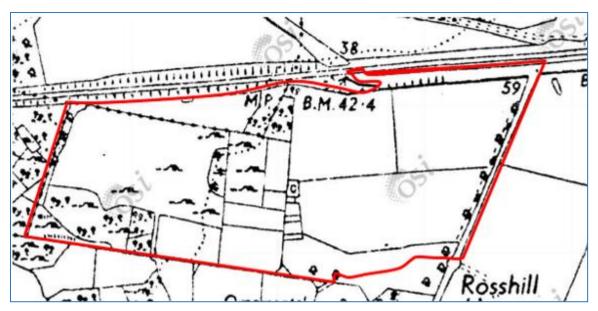
The historic maps clearly show the impact of the railway on the landscape in the midnineteenth century (Illus. 6). Immediately to the north of the subject site, the Midland Great Western line cuts east-west through townland of Roscam. The railway bridge, RPS 8806, was constructed in 1851 and it comprises rock-faced abutments with a cast iron and steel panelled superstructure, having wrought iron railings to the east parapet. Its special interest relates to its architectural, technical and historic importance. There are no artefacts noted in the National Museum Topographical files for the townland of Roscam. There is one excavation recorded for Roscam townland recorded in the online excavations database, <u>www.excavations.ie</u>: Thaddeus Breen, 10E0172 Excavation of vernacular buildings close to the ecclesiastical remains RMP No. GA094-072001. The extent of the golf course is recorded in an aerial photograph from 1995 (Illus. 8), comprising five fields, three of which are within the site of the proposed development.



Illus. 5 Historic Mapping. Extract from First Edition OS 6" Sheet, GA094, 1838.



Illus. 6 Historic Mapping. Extract from Second Edition OS 25" Sheet, GA094, 1890-98.



Illus. 7 Historic Map Cassini Edition OS 6" Sheet, GA094, 1940s.



Illus. 8 Aerial photograph, 1995, showing subject site within Rosshill Golf Course.

RMP No.	Description	Townland	ITM Co-ordinate	Distance
GA094-070	Folly	Roscam	534216/724854	c. 4m*
GA094-071	Standing Stone	Roscam	534655/724499	608m
GA094-071001	Cist	Roscam	534655/724499	608m
GA094-072001	Church	Roscam	534288/724213	c. 640m
GA094-072002	Ecclesiastical Enclosure	Roscam	534327/724219	c. 640m
GA094-072003	Graveyard	Roscam	534325/724183	c. 640m
GA094-072004	Round Tower	Roscam	534287/728263	c. 640m
GA094-072005	Grave slab	Roscam	534296/724211	c. 640m
GA094-072006	Grave slab	Roscam	534325/724183	c. 640m
GA094-072007	Holed stone	Roscam	534325/724183	c. 640m
GA094-072008	Bullaun stone	Roscam	534323/724148	c. 640m
GA094-072009	Bullaun stone	Roscam	534325/724156	c. 640m
GA094-0720011	Graves lab	Roscam	534325/724183	c. 640m
GA094-0720012	Cross slab	Roscam	534325/724183	c. 640m
GA094-0720013	Leacht	Roscam	534329/724194	c. 640m
GA094-0720014	Architectural Fragment	Roscam	534325/724183	c. 640m
GA094-075	Castle	Roscam	535104/724807	c. 788m
GA094-122 SMR	Enclosure	Roscam	534274/725182	100m

* 4m from redline boundary to folly wall and 38.5m from redline boundary to centre of folly.

Table 1 List of Recorded Monuments in the townland of Roscam.



Illus. 9 Location of Recorded Monuments and Protected Structures in townland of Roscam.

RPS No.	DESCRIPTION	NIAH No.	TOWNLAND	DISTANCE
8801	Standing Stone	-	Roscam	c. 608m
8802	Monastic Site with Round Tower	-	Roscam	c. 640m
8803	Roscam Folly	-	Roscam	c. 4m*
8804	Thatched House-Doughiska Road	-	Roscam	c. 643m
8805	Gatekeeper's Lodge	_	Roscam	c. 643m
8806	Rosshill Railway Bridge	30409423	Roscam	c. 32m

* 4m from redline boundary to folly wall and 38.5m from redline boundary to centre of folly.

Table 2 List of Protected Structures in the townland of Roscam.

4.0 Site Description

The site of the proposed development comprises just under 25 acres, currently under pasture. The site is accessed via a third-class road off the old Dublin Road, to the east of the railway bridge, RPS 8806. The lands within the site are undulating. There is a gentle northward fall in the north-eastern two-thirds of the site but the ground falls away significantly to the western third of the site, with sweeping views to the wooded area along the western boundary.

There are two featureless fields to the north-east (Plate 1), enclosed by drystone walls which are lined with trees and shrubs, with modern ground disturbance noted close to the entrance gate along the eastern boundary (Plate 2). The field to the south-east of the site is large with a scatter of trees through the centre. The folly, RMP No. GA094-070/RPS 8803, forms the boundary to the south-east of the site. It comprises a high ivy-covered stone wall (Plate 3), having an octagonal plan, and it measures c. 60m in diameter. There is a circular structure with cruciform extensions in the centre of the folly.



Plate 1 Fields at north-east of proposed development site.



Plate 2 Ground disturbance at the north-eastern boundary, near the entrance to the site.



Plate 3 Folly, RMP No. GA094-070/RPS 8803, from north.



Plate 4 Ruined outbuildings in centre of site, from south.



Plate 5 Ruined outbuildings at centre of the site, from south-east.



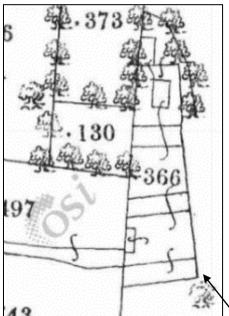
Plate 6 View of the ruined outbuildings and modern silage pit, from north.



Plate 7 View of outbuildings from south-east, with dovecote in foreground.



Plate 8 East gable with elliptical arch and overgrown dovecote openings above.





Illus. 10 Extract fromIllus. 11 Photograph of the ruined outbuilding, showingSecond Edition OS 25" Map,evidence of a dovecote. After Spellissy.

GA094, showing outbuildings.

Centrally located within the site is a heavily-overgrown range of ruined masonry outbuildings (Illus. 10, Plates 4-8). Based on the historic mapping, it appears the range comprises the remains of three outbuildings, orientated east-west, with the buildings opening to the east. It appears from the Second Edition 25" Map (Illus. 10), 1890-98, that the buildings were not roofed from the late-nineteenth century onwards. The buildings are located within a roughly trapezoidal-shaped walled area, orientated north-south, and the longest building is located to the south (Plate 4). The gables to the longest building survive (Plates 4, 5, 7 and 8) but the side walls are denuded. The presence of a dovecote or pigeon house in the eastern gable of this building was published by Sean Spellissy in 1999 (The History of Galway; Illus. 11) but it is currently overgrown and the dovecote is not visible (Plate 8). According to the photographic evidence the dovecote comprises over a dozen squared boles in the upper section of the east gable. While medieval dovecotes can be elaborate round structures, simpler examples, such as the Rosshill example, are also known to have been incorporated into the gables of farm sheds in Ireland. The elliptical arch to the ground floor opening in the gable, typical of a more formal farmyard, gave access to vehicular storage (Plates 7-8). The middle of the three outbuildings is in an advanced state of decay and the interior is filled with rubble stone. A modern silage pit (Plate 6), orientated north-south, was constructed through

the outbuilding to the north, with the western gable of that building surviving but overgrown with ivy.

There is a further ruined masonry outbuilding located to the north of the main range, incorporated into the field boundary of the north-eastern field of pasture.

There is an area of rock outcrop c. 90m to the west of the range of outbuildings, from where the ground falls significantly to the west (Plate 9). The ground falls towards the western boundary, through a single large field of pastureland with three linear settings of trees, orientated north-west/south east (frontsplate). This long field still contains visible reminders of the former golf club, with a scattering of small excavated areas representing bunkers (Plate 10). The ground rises again to the south-west and west, along the site boundary.



Plate 9 Fall in ground from east to west.



Plate 10 Small bunker, located to south-west of site.

The field boundary to the south-west comprises a long linear moss-covered mound of stone. There is a tree-lined avenue, possibly associated with the Merlin Park estate, running along the western boundary. This area of woodland is marked on the historic maps but the avenue, which measures c. 10m in width, is not clear on the mapping. The avenue is flanked by a low much-denuded drystone wall to the east and by a higher more substantial drystone wall to the west (Plate 11).



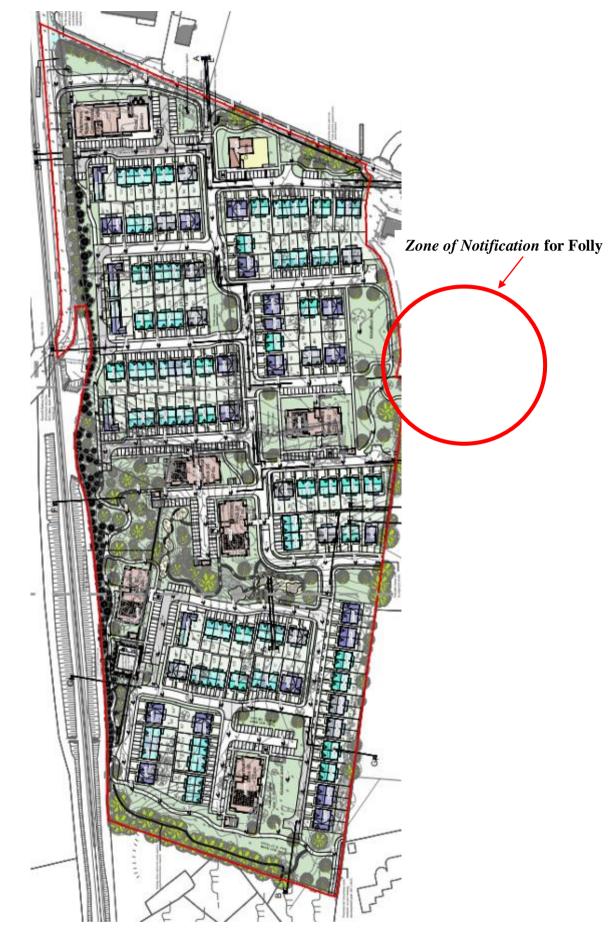
Plate 11 Walls flanking 10m wide track to western boundary of site.

5.0 Impact of the Proposed Development

A full description of the archaeological potential of the proposed development site is discussed in this section. The impacts of a development of this kind can be assessed in two principal ways; physical impact and visual impact.



Illus. 12 Plan of the Proposed Development.



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Illus. 13 Plan of the Proposed Development, showing Zone of Notification for folly.

Potential Impact	Assessment
Impact Physical impact on known archaeological or architectural heritage sites:	There are no Recorded Monuments within the proposed development site and therefore no known archaeological remains will be physically impacted by the development. The site is partly located within the <i>Zone of Notification</i> for a folly, Recorded Monument GA094-070, which is located along the southern boundary but the development will have no direct physical impact on this feature. The proposed development will see the removal of three ruined nineteenth century outbuildings from the centre of the development site. The outbuildings are not located within the curtilage of the folly, being physically removed from that feature, and they are not within the <i>Zone of Notification</i> for a Recorded Monument. There is evidence of a dovecote in the gables of the largest outbuilding but this feature could not be seen or recorded during the survey due to dense ivy growth. The outbuildings have an historical value due to their connection with the small nineteenth century estate associated with Rosshill House. The buildings also contain a number of features of historic merit, including the dovecote in the east gable of the southern building as well as the elliptical arch below the dovecote. These feature and the buildings themselves are consistent with the design of farm buildings. None of the buildings survive to their original height and it is unlikely that the buildings have foundations of sufficient structural strength to support new masonry and new roofs. As the overall original form of the buildings as ruins within the development would have had an impact on the functionality of the development.
	development.

1. Physical and Visual Impact on Archaeological and Architectural Heritage

	·
Visual impact on	There are no known archaeological sites within the proposed
known	development area.
archaeological or	
architectural	There are no protected structures within the site to be impacted
heritage sites	visually by the proposed development but the folly, protected structure RPS 8803, forms part of the south-eastern boundary of the site. The design of the proposed development preserves the setting of the folly. The plans for the development show housing units occurring outside the <i>Zone of Notification</i> for the folly, which allows a generous buffer zone of undeveloped, albeit landscaped, ground adjacent to the folly. This will retain its setting and preserve the visual amenity of the folly. There is also a railway bridge, RPS 8806, to the north of the site. The proposed development site is located at a sufficient remove from the railway bridge and will not constitute a visual impact on the protected structure.
Physical impact on destroyed archaeological sites:	The historic mapping does not record the presence of known but destroyed archaeological sites within the site boundary.
Physical impact on undiscovered archaeological features or finds:	The archaeological profile of the surrounding area suggests that the site has low to moderate archaeological potential. It is not known if any heretofore unrecorded archaeological finds or features were disturbed during the groundworks at the site to facilitate the development of the golf course.

Plate 12 View towards the railway bridge, RPS 8806, beyond northern boundary of the proposed development site.



6.0 Mitigation

The most sensitive heritage asset in the vicinity of the proposed development site is the folly, RMP GA094-070/RPS 8803. The plan of the proposed development has sought to ensure the character and setting of the folly is preserved and the design has ensured that no development occurs within the *Zone of Notification* for the feature. The *Zone of Notification* constitutes an adequate buffer zone and it preserves the setting and the character of the folly, Recorded Monument/protected structure. The development will see the removal of the ruined outbuildings within the site. It is recommended that these are fully recorded, particularly the remains of the dovecote, which is now overgrown with ivy. Due to the scale of the site, monitoring of topsoil stripping may be recommended in mitigation by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

A planning application is being prepared for submission to An Bórd Pleanála for a Strategic Housing Development at Roscam townland. An archaeological assessment at the site was requested by the client.

The results of the archaeological field and desk study have shown that there are no Recorded Monuments or protected structures within the site of the proposed development. The nearest Recorded Monument/protected structure, a nineteenth century folly, RMP No. GA094-070/RPS 8803, borders the site to the south-east. Ruined farm building associated with Rosshill House are located centrally in the development site, where a dovecote/pigeon house is known to exist in one gable.

The proposed development will not have a direct physical impact on any Recorded Monuments or protected structures. It will see the removal of the ruined farm buildings within the site.

In terms of visual impact, the nineteenth century folly, RPS 8803, is located along the southern boundary of the site. The proximity of the folly to the proposed development site has resulted in the low-level development proposals within a buffer zone, mainly comprising a play area and landscaped green space. The buffer zone extends beyond the *Zone of Notification* from the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and it will preserve the character and setting of the protected structure.

It is recommended the dovecote in the north gable of the ruined farm building within the proposed development site is recorded prior to any works being carried out. Due to the scale of the site, monitoring of topsoil stripping may be recommended in mitigation by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

All recommendations are subject to the approval of the Department of the Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Heritage Officer, Galway City Council.

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Anne Carey