

Castlepollard Quarry, Deerpark, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath

Castlepollard Quarry

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Appendix 12

Cultural Heritage

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Part of the Breedon Group

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Westmeath County Council Planning Authority - Inspection Purposes Only!

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12 APPENDIX CULTURAL HERITAGE

12.1 SITES IN THE RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES

WM007-033---- Benisonlodge Ringfort – rath

Situated on a low rise in pasture-land on the landscaped demesne lands of Benison Lodge 500m to SW. Ringfort which appears to have been converted into a tree-ring in the post 1700 period as part of the landscaping of the lands around Benison Lodge. An oval-shaped area (dims. 30m NE-SW; 22m NW-SE) enclosed by a poorly preserved earth and stone bank, shallow fosse from NNE-E-SE and elsewhere by a narrow ledge, with an outer earthen bank at NE. A tree-covered outer bank of earth and stone encloses this monument at an average distance of 15m which appears to be the result of post-1700 landscaping when the ringfort was converted into a tree-ring. The interior of the ringfort rises towards the centre, and has traces of cultivation ridges which run NE-SW. Remains of a rectangular house site (WM007-033001-) visible in the NW quadrant.

WM007-033001- Benisonlodge House - indeterminate date

Situated on a low rise in pasture-land on the landscaped demesne lands of Benison Lodge 500m to SW. Ringfort (WM007-033----) which appears to have been converted into a tree-ring in the post 1700 period as part of the landscaping of the lands around Benison Lodge. Remains of a rectangular house site (approx. dims. 6m NE-SW x 5m NW-SE) visible in the NW quadrant of a ringfort (WM007-033----). It is possible that this building may be the remains of a post-1700 summer house associated with Benison Lodge.

WM007-034---- Benisonlodge Ringfort – rath

Situated on the crest of a steep prominent ridge in undulating pasture-land. Depicted on the 1837 ed. OS 6-inch map as a sub-circular enclosure intersected by post-1700 field boundaries at N, SSE and SSW. On the revised 1911 ed. OS 25-inch map the enclosure is depicted as a sub-rectangular shaped field intersected by post-1700 field boundary at S and W. Visible as tree-lined earthwork on Digital Globe aerial photograph. Present remains consist of a sub-circular shaped slightly raised area (approx. diam. 30m N-S; 19m E-W) defined by a poorly preserved earthen bank and shallow fosse visible from N-E-SE only. Intersected by field boundaries at W & S. Possible entrance gap at SE (with 1.7m). The raised interior slopes from S to N. Traces of cultivation ridges are visible running E-W across the surface of the interior.

WM007-035---- Ballany Hilltop enclosure

Monument marked on Ordnance Survey Fair Plan map as 'Rahindoon or Turgesius' Fort and on the revised 1875 map as 'Turgesius' Fort'. This hilltop enclosure was reputedly the ninth century residence of Turgesius or Turgéis, a Norwegian who was described in the year 843 as the 'lord of the foreigners' (AFM, 467).

Situated on top of a prominent hill at the W end of a high prominent natural ridge near the W side of Lough Lene located c. 800m to NNE. The SW side of the hill is almost cliff-like as to

steepness and the outer edge of the inner bank is near its upper edge. The other sides of the hill are gentler. Magnificent views for miles around.

Monument consists of a large slightly uneven enclosure (diam. 50m N-S; c. 55m WNW-ESE) rising slightly from the perimeter towards the centre, bounded by a massive earth and stone bank with a narrow steep-sided shallow flat-bottomed rock-cut fosse and remains of a counterscarp bank at its outer foot. The crest of the inner bank has several small modern disturbance gaps. The fosse is visible from S-E-N-NNW. Natural rock outcrop is visible in its outer face on the ESE from SE-S-W-N. The outer bank is visible from NNE-N-NW. The entrance is represented on the NNW by a wide gap (Wth 3m) in the inner bank and a causeway (Wth 2.1m; L 7.5m) across the fosse. The interior slopes from E-W and shows extensive traces of disturbance. A shallow fosse-like depression runs from ENE - WSW through the interior and a second similar depression runs at right angles to it just W of centre. These are presumably the remains of old drains and the four quadrants thus created show traces of old cultivation ridges. Outside the perimeter of the monument on the SE are the remains of quarrying activity.

WM007-036---- Gillardstown Ringfort – rath

Situated on a steep prominent hill in pasture-land with good views of surrounding countryside. Ringfort (WM007-058----) 50m to SE. A sub-circular shaped area (approx. dims. 48m N-S; 57m E-W) enclosed by a well preserved earthen bank (max. H 1.5m) and slight fosse, both of which have several small disturbance gaps. The interior slopes from ENE-WSW, and has traces of cultivation ridges running NW-SE. In the NE quadrant of the interior there is an oval round-topped mound (max. H 1.5m), which appears to be the remains of an OS trigonometrical station measuring the height 408ft as depicted on the 1911 ed. OS 6-inch map.

12.2 SITES IN THE SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

WM007-134---- Deerpark Earthwork

Semi-circular shaped earthwork (approx. dims. 33m E-W) transected at S by Gillardstown townland boundary running E-W depicted on 1837 ed. OS 6-inch map, may be the remains of an archaeological monument. This earthwork is now located inside modern coniferous forestry plantation.

12.3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

12.3.1 POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

Impacts can be identified from detailed information about a project, the nature of the area affected, and the range of archaeological resources potentially affected. Quarry developments can affect the archaeological resource of a given landscape in a number of ways:

- Permanent and temporary land-take, associated structures, landscape mounding, and their construction may result in damage to or loss of archaeological remains and deposits, or physical loss to the setting of historic monuments and to the physical coherence of the landscape;
- Archaeological sites can be affected adversely in a number of ways: disturbance by excavation, topsoil stripping and the passage of heavy machinery; disturbance by vehicles working in unsuitable conditions; or burial of sites, limiting accessibility for future archaeological investigation;
- Visual impacts on the historic landscape sometimes arise from construction traffic and facilities, built earthworks and structures, landscape mounding and planting, noise, fences and associated works. These features can impinge directly on historic monuments and historic landscape elements as well as their visual amenity value;
- Landscape measures such as tree planting can damage sub-surface archaeological features, due to topsoil stripping and through the root action of trees and shrubs as they grow;
- Ground consolidation by construction activities or the weight of permanent embankments can cause damage to buried archaeological remains;
- Disruption due to construction also offers in general the potential for adversely affecting archaeological remains. This can include machinery, site offices, service trenches, etc; and
- Although not widely appreciated, positive impacts can accrue from permitted developments. These can include positive resource management policies, improved maintenance and access to archaeological monuments and the increased level of knowledge of a site or historic landscape as a result of archaeological assessment and fieldwork.

12.3.2 PREDICTED IMPACTS

There is no standard scale against which the severity of impacts on the archaeological and historic landscape may be judged. The severity of a given level of land-take or visual intrusion varies with the type of monument, site or landscape feature and its existing environment. Severity of impact can be judged taking the following into account:

- The proportion of the feature affected and how far physical characteristics fundamental to the understanding of the feature would be lost;
- Consideration of the type, date, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, rarity, potential and amenity value of the feature affected; and
- Assessment of the levels of noise, visual and hydrological impacts, either in general or site-specific terms, as may be provided by other specialists.

Impacts are defined as:

“the degree of change in an environment resulting from a development”
(Environmental Protection Agency 2002, 30).

Impacts are described as imperceptible, not significant, slight, moderate, significant, very significant or profound on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage remains (Details with respect to Significance Criteria are provided in Appendix 3).



12.4 MITIGATION MEASURES AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

Mitigation is defined as features of the design or other measures of the proposed development that can be adopted to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset negative impacts.

The best opportunities for avoiding damage to archaeological remains or intrusion on their setting and amenity arise when the site options for the development are being considered. Damage to the archaeological resource immediately adjacent to developments may be prevented by the selection of appropriate construction methods. Reducing adverse impacts can be achieved by good design, for example by screening historic buildings or upstanding archaeological monuments or by burying archaeological sites undisturbed rather than destroying them. Offsetting adverse impacts is probably best illustrated by the full investigation and recording (preservation by record) of archaeological sites that cannot be preserved *in situ*.

12.4.1 DEFINITION OF MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The ideal mitigation for all archaeological sites is preservation *in situ*. This however is not always a practical solution, and a series of recommendations are therefore offered to provide ameliorative measures where avoidance and preservation *in situ* are not possible.

Preservation by record through archaeological excavation involves the scientific removal and recording of all archaeological features, deposits and objects to the level of geological strata or the base level of a given development. Full archaeological excavation is recommended where initial investigation has uncovered evidence of archaeologically significant material and where avoidance of the site is not possible.

Archaeological test trenching is defined as:

“that form of excavation where the purpose is to establish the nature and extent of archaeological deposits and features present in a location which it is proposed to develop (though not normally to fully investigate those deposits or features) and allow an assessment to be made of the archaeological impact of the proposed development” (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999, 27).

12.5 REFERENCE

DoAHGI (1999). *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage*. Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (DoAHGI), Dublin, Ireland.