

Proposed Large Scale Residential  
Development at Rathgowan, Mullingar,  
Co. Westmeath  
**Applicant: Marina Quarter Ltd.**

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# Volume II

## Main Statement

### CHAPTER 15

#### Cultural Heritage & Archaeology



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## 15 Cultural Heritage & Archaeology

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### 15.1 Introduction

This chapter of the EIAR was prepared to assess the potential significant effects of the proposed development on the cultural heritage resource. This resource encompasses several aspects of tangible assets including archaeological sites, monuments and artefacts, architectural heritage structures, including their associated curtilages, industrial and vernacular heritage as well as intangible assets such as folklore, oral tradition, historical associations and language.

The assessment is based on programmes of desktop research, field inspections and the results of a programme of archaeological test trenching which was carried out as part of an Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared for a previous planning application within the proposed development site (Westmeath Co. Council (WCC) ref. 21/139).

The chapter should be read in conjunction with Appendix 15.1, which contains a report on the results of the programme of archaeological test trench investigations in the fields within the proposed development site (Dunne 2020, Licence ref. 20E0255).

### 15.2 Expertise & Qualifications

This chapter of the EIAR has been prepared by Tony Cummins of John Cronin and Associates.

Mr. Cummins is a professional archaeologist with 28 years' experience and holds primary and post-graduate degrees in archaeology (B.A. 1992 and M.A. 1994, University College Cork). He has extensive experience in the preparation of cultural heritage and archaeological impact assessments for proposed residential developments and was involved in the preparation of EIARs for the following projects:

- Ballinglanna Residential Development, Glanmire, Co. Cork
- Golf Links Road Residential Development, Ennis, Co. Clare
- Rathgowan Residential Development, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

### 15.3 Proposed Development

The full description of the proposed development is outlined in Chapter 2 'Development Description' of this EIAR.

#### 15.3.1 Aspects Relevant to this Assessment

The construction phase of the proposed residential development will require the removal of the topsoil layer and the excavation of foundations and other infrastructure within the underlying natural subsoil. These types of ground works have the potential to result in direct negative effects on aspects of the cultural heritage resource such as sub-surface archaeological features.

## 15.4 Methodology

### 15.4.1 Study Area

The study area reviewed as part of the assessment comprised the area within the proposed development site and the lands extending for 500m in all directions from its boundary. The review of this study area facilitated an appraisal of the baseline cultural heritage environment of the location of the proposed development site and its environs and informed the assessment of potential direct impacts on identified constraints or indirect impacts on their settings.

### 15.4.2 Relevant Legislation & Guidance

The guidelines relevant to the assessment include the *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht 2011) and the *Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage* (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999). The assessment was also informed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 2022) *Guidelines for Information to be Contained in EIAR* and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS 2011) *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*.

The National Monuments Service (NMS), which is currently based in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, is responsible for the protection of Ireland's archaeological heritage.

The following sections presents summaries of the legal and planning policy frameworks relevant to this assessment in order to provide a context for the statutory protection assigned to the cultural heritage resource. The management and protection of cultural heritage in Ireland is achieved through a framework of national laws and policies which are in accordance with the provisions of the Valetta Treaty (1995) (formally the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, 1992) ratified by Ireland in 1997; the Granada Convention (1985) (formally the European Convention on the Protection of Architectural Heritage), ratified by Ireland in 1997; and the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003, ratified by Ireland in 2015. The locations of World Heritage Sites (Ireland) and the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites submitted by the Irish State to UNESCO were reviewed and none are located within the environs of the study area.

#### 15.4.2.1 Archaeological Legislation and Planning Polices

The National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended), the Heritage Act 1995 (as amended) and relevant provisions of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 are the primary means of ensuring the satisfactory protection of archaeological remains. There are a number of mechanisms under the National Monuments Act (as amended) that are applied to secure the protection of archaeological monuments. These include the designation of National Monument status for sites of national significance, the Register of Historic Monuments (RHM), the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), and the placing of Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders on endangered sites.

Section 2 of the National Monuments Act, 1930 defines a National Monument as 'a monument or the remains of a monument, the preservation of which is a matter of national importance'. The State may

acquire or assume guardianship of examples through agreement with landowners or under compulsory orders. Archaeological sites within the ownership of local authorities are also deemed to be National Monuments. The prior written consent of the Minister is required for any works at, or in proximity to, a National Monument or at sites which are subject to a Preservation Order. There are no National Monuments in State Care or archaeological sites assigned Preservation Orders located within the study area.

The RMP was established under Section 12(1) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 and was based on the earlier SMR and RHM. It comprises lists and maps of archaeological monuments and places for each county in the State and all listed archaeological sites receive statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1994. No works can be undertaken at their locations or within their surrounding designated Zones of Notification without providing two months advance notice to the NMS. There are no recorded archaeological sites located within the proposed development site while there is one example, which no longer remains extant, located within 500m of its boundary (See Section 15.6).

The County Westmeath Development Plan 2021-2027 includes the following relevant objectives in relation to the protection of the archaeological resource within the county:

- CPO 14.5: Seek to ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage, and in this regard, applications will be referred to the National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht for comment.
- CPO 14.6 Seek to ensure the protection of archaeological sites and monuments and their settings and archaeological objects that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are the subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments. Seek to ensure the protection and preservation of archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.
- CPO 14.7 Ensure that any development adjacent to an archaeological monument or site shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site, or its setting and shall be sited in a manner which minimises the impact on the monument and its setting. Development which is likely to detract from the setting of such a monument or site will not be permitted.

The Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 as extended includes the following policies and objectives in relation to the protection of the archaeological resource within the town:

- P-ARC1: To protect the archaeological heritage of the town in accordance with Departmental Guidelines
- P-ARC2: To strictly control development that may be detrimental to any feature or site of archaeological significance or that may seriously detract from the interpretation and setting of these sites.
- P-ARC3 To protect and retain surviving medieval plots and street patterns in the town.
- P-ARC4: To ensure that all sites of archaeological potential are protected from development that may injure any potentially important archaeological features or sites.
- O-ARC2: To provide guidance to developers in relation to proposals for development that may potentially impact upon the archaeological heritage, drawing their attention to additional

published government guidance available such as 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (1999)

- O-ARC3: To require, where appropriate, that an Archaeological Assessment be carried out by a suitably qualified person prior to the commencement of any activity that may impact upon the archaeological heritage.
- O-ARC5 To impose conditions on development that will affect sites of archaeological potential to ensure that appropriate measures are taken for the identification and mitigation of the archaeological impacts, including a licensed excavation and recording of remains prior to commencement of development where appropriate.

#### 15.4.2.2 Architectural Heritage Legislation and Planning Policies

Protection of architectural heritage is provided for through a range of legal instruments that include the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Heritage Act 1995 (as amended) and the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and National Monuments (Misc. Provisions) Act 1999. The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires all Planning Authorities to keep a 'Record of Protected Structures' (RPS) of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. As of the 1st of January 2000, all structures listed for protection in current development plans, have become 'protected structures'. Since the introduction of this legislation, planning permission is required for any works to a protected structure that would affect its character. A protected structure also includes the land and other structures within its curtilage. While the term 'curtilage' is not defined by legislation, the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Local Authorities* (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2011), describes it as the parcel of land immediately associated with a structure and which is (or was) in use for the purposes of the structure. In addition, local authorities must provide for the preservation of places, groups of structures and townscapes of architectural heritage significance through the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was established to record architectural heritage structures within the State and while inclusion in the NIAH does not provide statutory protection listing in the inventory is a signifier of architectural heritage value and it is intended to advise local authorities on compilation of their Record of Protected Structures. The NIAH also includes a Survey of Historic Gardens and Landscapes which comprises a non-statutory, desk-based survey of such features.

Details on the Protected Structures and NIAH-listed features within the study area are provided in Section 15.6 of this chapter.

The County Westmeath Development Plan 2021-2027 presents a number of objectives to ensure the protection of the architectural heritage resource within the County and these include:

- CPO 14.27 Protect and conserve buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures and to encourage the sympathetic re-use and long-term viability of such structures without detracting from their special interest and character.
- CPO 14.28 Protect the architectural heritage of Westmeath through the identification of Protected Structures, the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), the

safeguarding of designed landscapes and historic gardens, and the recognition of structures and elements that contribute positively to the vernacular and industrial heritage of the County.

- CPO 14.44 Encourage the retention and appropriate re-use of vernacular buildings, including vacant traditional farm buildings, where appropriate and encourage the retention of the original fabric such as windows, doors and other significant features of historic buildings.

The Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 as extended includes the following policies in relation to the protection of the architectural resource within the town:

- P-BH1: To protect and conserve buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures and to resist the demolition of such structures in accordance with 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities'
- P-BH2: To prevent forms of development that would be injurious to the town's architectural and archaeological heritage.
- P-BH3 To preserve and protect Mullingar's built environment in terms of streetscapes, individual buildings and features of historical, architectural or artistic interest.
- P-BH 4: To resist the demolition of vernacular architecture of historical, cultural and aesthetic merit, which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of the local streetscape.
- P-BH5: To secure the protection of the architectural heritage value and historic built fabric of Columb Barracks and St. Loman's Hospital, in accordance with the provisions of Part IV of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended.
- P-BH6: To promote and facilitate the regeneration and redevelopment of Columb Barracks and St. Loman's Hospital, in a manner consistent with an agreed framework for these strategic sites.
- P-BH7 To protect the character of designated Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) including the public realm area associated therewith and to resist inappropriate development that would detract from the heritage value of these areas.

### 15.4.3 Desktop Research

Documentary research was carried out on the recorded and potential cultural heritage resource within a study area encompassing the lands within the proposed development site as well as lands extending for 500m in all directions from its boundary. This was carried out in order to identify any recorded archaeological, architectural and other cultural heritage constraints within this area and facilitated an evaluation of the potential presence of unrecorded cultural heritage sites or features within the proposed development site.

The principal sources reviewed for the assessment of the recorded archaeological resource were the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) maintained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The current Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for County Westmeath and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), including the NIAH Building and Garden Surveys were reviewed in order to assess the designated architectural heritage resource within the study area.



Other sources consulted as part of the programme of desktop research comprise the following:

- *Development Plans*: The County Westmeath Development Plan 2017-2023 and the Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (as extended) were consulted as part of this assessment. These publications identify buildings listed in the Record of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and detail the Council's policies and objectives for the protection of the archaeological and architectural heritage resource.
- *Database of Irish Excavation Reports*: This online database contains summary accounts of licensed archaeological site investigations carried out in Ireland (North and South) from 1970 to present. Current data was accessed via [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie) in May 2023.
- *Literary Sources*: Various published literary sources were consulted in order to assess the archaeological, historical, architectural heritage and folklore record of the study area and these are listed in Section 15.13 of this chapter.
- *Archaeological Survey of Ireland*: While there is no published archaeological inventory for County Westmeath, the National Monuments Service's online Historical Environment Viewer ([www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)) presents inventory descriptions compiled by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland for a range of known archaeological sites within the county.
- *Historic Maps*: The detail on historic maps sources can indicate the presence of past settlement activity, including features of potential archaeological and architectural heritage significance that no longer have any surface expression. Available cartographic sources dating from the 17th century onward were reviewed and relevant extracts are presented in Section 15.6 of this chapter.
- *Aerial/Satellite Imagery*: A review of available online aerial and satellite images of the study area was undertaken in order to ascertain if any traces of unrecorded archaeological sites were visible.
- *LiDAR Imagery*: The proposed development is within the coverage area of Office of Public Works (OPW) LiDAR data which has been published online by the Geological Survey Ireland. This form of imagery has the potential to reveal the presence of archaeological sites with low surface expression and was reviewed as part of the assessment.
- *Irish Heritage Council: Heritage Map Viewer*: This online mapping resource ([www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie)) is a spatial data viewer which collates various cultural heritage datasets sourced from, among others, the National Monuments Service, National Museum of Ireland, local authorities, the Royal Academy of Ireland and the Office of Public Works.
- *National Museum of Ireland Topographical Files*: These files comprise a written and digital archive which records known information in relation to the discovery locations of Irish archaeological artefacts, including those held in the museum's collection. The files are archived in the museum's premises in Kildare Street, Dublin and were inspected as part of the desktop study. The archive contains no files recording the discovery of artefacts within the environs of the proposed development site.
- *Irish National Folklore Collection*: Transcribed material from the National Folklore Collection archive has been digitised and published online at [www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie).
- *Placenames Database of Ireland*: This online database ([www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie)) provides a comprehensive management system for data, archival records and placenames research conducted by the State.

- *UNESCO designated World Heritage Sites and Tentative List:* There are two World Heritage Sites in Ireland (Brú na Bóinne and Sceilg Mhichíl) and a number of other significant sites are included in a Tentative List was put forward by Ireland for consideration in 2022.
- *Westmeath Industrial Heritage Survey:* This desk-based survey was carried out on behalf of Westmeath County Council and the Heritage Council of Ireland and seeks to record the industrial heritage of the county. A review of the locations of recorded industrial sites was carried out as part of the assessment.

#### 15.4.4 Field Survey

A field-walking survey of all areas of the proposed development site was carried out to assess the lands in terms of modern land use, vegetation cover and the potential for the presence of previously unrecorded archaeological sites or structures of architectural heritage interest. The field survey results are described within Section 15.2.4 of this chapter.

#### 15.4.5 Archaeological Test Trenching

All of the fields within the boundary of the proposed development were subject to a programme of archaeological test trenching in 2020 (Dunne 2020, Licence ref. 20E0255). This site investigation was carried out as part of an Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared for a previous planning application within the proposed development site (Westmeath Co. Council (WCC) ref. 21/139). The only identified feature of archaeological potential within the fields was a single pit feature of unknown date located in the southeast area. The Archaeological Impact Assessment Report recommended that this pit feature should be subject to a full archaeological excavation in advance of the construction phase. The Notification of Decision issued by WCC for the application included a condition (No. 10) stating that the developer should carry out the recommendations set out in the Archaeology Report submitted as part of the application. A copy of the full test trenching report is provided in Appendix 15.1.

#### 15.4.6 Assessment of Impacts

The methodology used for the assessment of potential impacts has been informed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 2022) *Guidelines for Information to be Contained in EIAR*, in accordance EIA requirements of codified EU Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by EU Directive 2014/52/EU, per current Planning Legislation, concerning EIA assessment: Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (Part X) and in Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

The following summation of the criteria used to assess impacts is provided in order to concisely outline the methodology specifically applied to the cultural heritage resource. Assessment is achieved by a consideration of the duration, quality, type, value and magnitude of effect(s) on the cultural heritage resource:

*Duration of Effect* is assessed based on the following criteria:

- Momentary (seconds to minutes)
- Brief < 1 day

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- Temporary <1 year
- Short-term 1-7 years
- Medium Term 7-15 years
- Long Term 15-60 years
- Permanent > 60 years
- Reversible: Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration

The *Quality of Effect* on the cultural heritage resource can be positive, neutral or negative.

- Positive: a change which improves the quality of the cultural heritage environment (e.g. increasing amenity value of a site in terms of managed access, signage, presentation etc. or high-quality conservation and re-use of an otherwise vulnerable derelict structure).
- Neutral: no change or effects that are imperceptible, within the normal bounds of variation for the cultural heritage environment.
- Negative: a change which reduces the quality of the cultural heritage resource (e.g., visual intrusion on the setting of an asset, physical intrusion on features/setting of a site)

The *Type of Effect* on the cultural heritage resource can be direct, indirect or no predicted impact.

- Direct: where a cultural heritage site is physically located within the footprint of the proposed development, which will result in its complete or partial removal.
- Indirect: where a cultural heritage site or its setting is located in close proximity to the footprint of the proposed development.
- None predicted: where the proposed development will not adversely or positively affect a cultural heritage site.

The *Magnitude of Effect* is based on the degree of change, incorporating any mitigation measures, and is based on a consideration of the character, duration, probability and consequences (Table 15.1). The magnitude can be negative or positive and is ranked without regard to the value of the asset according to the following scale: High; Medium; Low and Negligible. The descriptions of magnitudes presented in Table 15.1 are based on guidance published in *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* (ICOMOS 2011, 16-7).

**Table 15.1 Magnitudes of Effect on Cultural Heritage Assets**

Magnitude	Description
High	<p>Most or all key archaeological or architectural materials affected such that the resource is totally altered.</p> <p>Comprehensive changes to setting.</p> <p>Changes to most or all key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; extreme visual effects; fundamental changes to use or access; resulting in total change to historic landscape character.</p> <p>Major changes to area that affect Intangible Cultural Heritage activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation</p>

Magnitude		Description
Medium		<p>Changes to many key archaeological or historic building materials/elements such that the resource is clearly/significantly modified.</p> <p>Considerable changes to setting that affect the character of the archaeological asset.</p> <p>Changes to the setting of a historic building, such that it is significantly modified.</p> <p>Change to many key historic landscape elements, parcels or components, visual change to many key aspects of the historic landscape, considerable changes to use or access, resulting in moderate changes to historic landscape character.</p> <p>Considerable changes to area that affect the Intangible Cultural Heritage activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.</p>
Low		<p>Changes to key archaeological materials/historic building elements, such that the resource is slightly altered/slightly different.</p> <p>Slight changes to setting of an archaeological monument.</p> <p>Change to setting of a historic building, such that it is noticeably changed.</p> <p>Change to few key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; slight visual changes to few key aspects of historic landscape; slight changes to use or access; resulting in limited change to historic landscape character.</p> <p>Changes to area that affect the Intangible Cultural Heritage activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.</p>
Negligible		<p>Very minor changes to key archaeological materials or setting.</p> <p>Slight changes to historic building elements or setting that hardly affect it.</p> <p>Very minor changes to key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; virtually unchanged visual effects; very slight changes to use or access.</p> <p>Very minor changes to area that affect the Intangible Cultural Heritage activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.</p>

### Value Assessment

While various legal designations exist for elements of the Irish cultural heritage resource (see Section 15.4.2), there are currently no formal criteria for grading the values of individual elements of this resource. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) does apply a ranking system (Regional, National and International) to structures included in that inventory and, while these rankings do not confer a graduated level of protection they have been utilised as a value indicator for NIAH-listed structures for the purpose of assessment.

Given the absence of formal value criteria or guidelines, the evaluations used in this assessment have been informed by guidelines presented in the *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* (ICOMOS 2011). The evaluation of the values of cultural heritage assets is

not intended as definitive but rather as an indicator which contributes to a wider judgment based the individual circumstances of each asset. The application of values included a consideration of their legal designations (e.g., National Monuments), condition / preservation; historical significance, group value, rarity, visibility in the landscape, fragility/vulnerability and amenity value on a case-by-case basis. It is noted that archaeological monuments, whether extant or levelled, have the potential to possess sub-surface attributes, such as artefacts, human burials or other archaeological remains, that may possess values that cannot be discerned without recourse to archaeological excavation but are unlikely to be affected in the absence of direct negative impacts. The value of all known or potential assets that may be impacted by development are ranked according to the following scale as defined by ICOMOS: Very High; High; Medium; Low, Negligible, Unknown (Table 15.2). The values assigned to relevant cultural heritage assets within the area were determined following the completion of the desktop research combined with subsequent site inspections and are outlined in Section 15.6.9.

**Table 15.2 Indicative Factors for Assessing the Value of Cultural Heritage Assets**

Value	Description
Very High	World Heritage Sites (including Tentative List properties). Sites, buildings or landscapes of acknowledged international importance. Intangible associations with individuals or innovations of global significance.
High	Nationally designated sites, buildings and landscapes of significant quality, rarity, preservation and importance. Undesignated assets of the quality and importance to be designated. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives. Archaeological Landscapes with significant group value. Intangible associations with individuals or innovations of national significance.
Medium	Designated or undesignated assets that can contribute significantly to regional research objectives, including buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations. Conservation Areas and historic townscapes containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character. Intangible associations with individuals or innovations of regional significance.
Low	Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of limited value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives. Historic Townscape or built-up areas of limited historic integrity in their buildings and settings. Intangible associations with individuals or innovations of local significance.
Negligible	Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest. Landscapes little or no significant historical interest. Buildings or urban areas of no architectural or historical note; buildings of an intrusive character.
Unknown	Assets whose importance has not been ascertained. Buildings with some hidden (i.e., inaccessible) potential for historic significance.

The *Significance of Effects* is assessed based on a consideration of the Magnitude of the Impact combined with the Value of the cultural heritage asset. The Significance can be described as Profound, Very Significant, Significant, Moderate, Slight, Not Significant or Imperceptible (Table 15.3 and Table 15.4).

**Table 15.3 Significance of Effects (per EPA EIAR Guidelines 2022)**

Significance	Description
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences
Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment
Profound	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics

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**Table 15.4 Significance of Effects Matrix (per EPA EIAR Guidelines 2022)**

<b>Magnitude of Impact</b>	<b>High</b>	Not Significant/ Slight	Moderate/ Significant	Significant/ Significant	Very Significant/ Profound
	<b>Medium</b>	Not Significant	Slight	Moderate/ Significant	Significant/ Very significant
	<b>Low</b>	Not Significant/ Imperceptible	Slight/ Significant	Not Significant	Moderate
	<b>Negligible</b>	Imperceptible	Not Significant/ Imperceptible	Not Significant/ Slight	Slight
		<b>Negligible</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
	<b>Value/Sensitivity of the Asset</b>				

### 15.4.7 Consultation

A Section 247 and a Section 32B meetings were held with the Council. No additional consultations were carried out for this chapter.

## 15.5 Difficulties Encountered

The were no limitations or difficulties encountered during the compilation of this assessment.

## 15.6 Baseline Environment

### 15.6.1 General Context

The proposed development site is located within the townland of Mullingar and is situated on the western outskirts of the modern suburbs of Mullingar town. It is occupied by two level, vacant pasture fields which are bound by the Mullingar Western Relief Road (R394) to the west and Ashe Road to the south with modern housing developments to the east, north and south.

## 15.6.2 Desktop Study

Relevant cultural heritage sources and datasets have been interrogated and retrieved from current state and local authority sources and are considered accurate at the time of writing in May 2023. The dating framework used for each period of the archaeological record is based on the framework presented in the *Guidelines for Authors of Reports on Archaeological Excavations* as published by the National Monuments Service (2006). The published inventory entries for recorded archaeological sites and designated architectural heritage structures within the study area are presented. Information acquired from other sources consulted during the desktop study is also presented, including published content, historic maps and aerial, satellite and LiDAR imagery.

### 15.6.2.1 Archaeological and Historical Context

There are no recorded archaeological sites located within the proposed development site while there is one example located within the surrounding 500m study area (Table 15.5 and Figure 15.1). A review of the current SMR, as published on the National Monument Service's online Historic Environment Viewer ([www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)), revealed that it contains no records for the presence of any unlocated archaeological sites within the environs of the proposed development site.

**Table 15.5 Recorded Archaeological Sites within the Study Area**

Monument No.	Class	Townland	ITM E	ITM E	Distance from site
WM019-089003-	Standing Stone	Mullingar	642900	753343	230m to east



**Figure 15.1** Location of recorded archaeological site (red dot) and designated architectural structures (yellow dots) within 500m study area (cyan line). The western end of the Zone of Archaeological Potential around Mullingar town is indicated in pink in bottom left corner.

#### *Early Prehistoric Periods*

Until the recent identification of Palaeolithic human butchery marks on animal bones recovered from cave sites which have been dated to the Palaeolithic period, the earliest recorded evidence for human activity in Ireland dated to the Mesolithic period (7000–4000 BC) when groups of hunter-gatherers lived on the heavily wooded island. The archaeological record indicates that these mobile groups favoured coastal, lake and river shores which provided a transport and food resource. They did not construct any settlements or monuments that have left any above ground traces although their presence in an area can often be identified by scatters of worked flints in ploughed fields or during earthmoving undertaken as part of development works. The Neolithic period (4000-2400 BC) began with the arrival and establishment of agriculture as the principal form of economic subsistence, which resulted in more permanent settlement patterns in farmlands within areas of cleared forestry. As a consequence of the more settled nature of agrarian life, new site-types, such as more substantial rectangular timber houses and various types of megalithic tombs, and artefacts such as pottery begin to appear in the archaeological record during this period. There are no recorded Mesolithic or Neolithic sites located within the study area.



### *Late Prehistoric Periods*

The advent of the Bronze Age period (c. 2400–500 BC) in Ireland saw the introduction of a new artefactual assemblage, including metal and ceramic objects, to the island. This period was also associated with the construction of new monument types such as wedge tombs, standing stones, stone rows/circles and burnt mounds known as fulachta fia. The development of new burial practices during this period also saw the construction of funerary monuments such as cairns, barrows, boulder burials and cists. The arrival of iron-working technology in Ireland saw the advent of the Iron Age (600 BC – 400 AD). Relatively little has been known about Iron Age settlement and ritual practices until recent decades when the corpus of evidence has been greatly increased by the discovery of sites dating to this period during development projects. It is noted that while the vast majority of prehistoric settlement sites leave no above ground remains their foundations and occupation deposits, which may contain artefactual and environmental remains, can often survive below modern ground surfaces. The study area contains one recorded standing stone (WM019-089003-) but the Archaeological Survey of Ireland notes that this is likely a boundary feature of 19th century date and it is detailed in the below section relating to the post-medieval period. While there are no recorded late prehistoric sites within the study area a programme of archaeological excavations within a proposed development site on the opposite (west) side of the Mullingar Western Relief Road (R394) did reveal three pits with cremated human remains which were interpreted as being of likely Bronze or Iron Age date (see Table 15.6 below).

### *Early Medieval Period*

The early medieval period began with the introduction of Christianity to Ireland and continued until the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the late 12th century (c. 400–1169 AD). While this period saw the emergence of the first phases of urbanisation around the larger monasteries and the Hiberno-Norse ports, the dominant settlement pattern continued to be rural-based and founded on an agricultural economy centred on enclosed farmsteads known as ringforts. These are the most common early medieval sites within the Irish landscape and comprise circular enclosures delimited by earthen banks formed of material thrown up from a concentric external ditch. While there are ringforts located within the wider landscape around Mullingar town, there are no recorded examples, or other early medieval sites, within the study area.

### *Late Medieval and Post-Medieval Periods*

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the late 12th century marks the advent of the Irish high medieval period which continued to c.1400 and was followed by the late medieval period which extended to c.1550. These periods saw the expansion of Irish urbanisation as many of the port cities developed into international trading centres and numerous villages and towns began to develop throughout the country, often within the environs of Anglo-Norman manorial centres which were defended by fortifications. By the 15th century the native Irish chieftains and lords began to construct tower-house castles within their own landholdings as centres of territorial control. There are no known archaeological sites dating to either period located within the study area and there is also little historical information on the settlement and land-use patterns within the study area during these periods. The proposed development site is located c.670m outside the western end of the Zone of Notification around the medieval core of Mullingar town, as designated by the National Monuments Service, and it likely formed part of the settlement's agricultural hinterland during this period.

The centuries following 1550 comprise the post-medieval period which continued into the middle of the 19th century and the period thereafter is often described as early modern. The first century of the post-medieval period was a turbulent time in Ireland history and saw a prolonged period of wars between the 1560s and 1603 with further conflicts arising during the Cromwellian Wars (1649–53). This period saw the extensive dispossession of forfeited Gaelic lands and the final disintegration of the Gaelic order in the early 17th century followed the Battle of Kinsale (1601), the conclusion of the Nine Years War (1603) and the Flight of the Earls (1607).

The post-medieval period saw the development of high and low status stone houses throughout the Irish countryside and rural settlement clusters at this time typically consisted of single-storey thatched cottages with associated farm buildings while two-storey farmhouses became more common as the 19th century progressed. An agricultural boom in the late 18th and early 19th centuries saw a rise in prices for both tillage and dairy produce and resulted in Irish landlords investing in extensive land improvement works within their holdings. This included widespread land drainage works, introduction of soil nutrients, grass planting and the enclosure of open lands into field systems that survive to the present-day. The popularity and success of potato farming contributed to a population boom during the 18th and early 19th centuries and its failure in the middle of the latter century was to have devastating consequences. The settlement pattern throughout much of the rural landscape was greatly affected by the Famine period and its aftermath which saw the depopulation of many areas. The following decades were marked by an increasing move away from small-scale subsistence farming towards more market-led pasture, assisted by the development of the Co-Op system, which also increased the extent of land reclamation of previously marginal lands.

The following summary of the development of Mullingar town and its environs during the medieval and post-medieval periods have been sourced from *the Irish Historic Town Atlas Volume 5: Mullingar* (Andrews *et al* 1992). The name Mullingar first appears in a 12th-century account of the life of an earlier local saint named Colman of Lynn. The existing town was founded by the Anglo-Normans after the Petit family were granted lands in the area by Hugh de Lacy in 1170 and quickly established a manor there around a motte and bailey which was later replaced by a stone castle. These fortifications were located by the banks of the River Brosna in the area now occupied by the town centre. The first record of a burgess dates to 1201 and the town received its first grant to hold fairs in 1207. By the 1230s the settlement contained a parish church, Augustinian and Dominican monasteries, a hospital and a Frankhouse where travellers were housed. Mullingar became the main county town in 1542 after the creation of the County of Westmeath during Henry VIII's reign. The town was struck by plague in 1575 which decimated the population, and in 1597 it was burned by Hugh O'Neill during the Nine Years' War. Later, in 1690, the town was occupied by the Williamite Army who used it to stockpile arms and supplies during their campaign against the Jacobite forces. The 17th-century Down Survey records that townland of Rathgowan, which contains the proposed development site, formed part of the possessions of Sir Luke Fitzgerrald in 1641 and was in the ownership of Richard Sherbrooke in 1670 when it contained 76 plantation acres of profitable land.

The existing townscape within the town centre developed after a devastating fire which swept through Mullingar in 1747. The strategic location of the town within a rich agricultural hinterland, combined with its location on the road between Dublin and Galway, saw it become an important centre for the wool and cattle trade during the 18th century. The 19th century saw the town continue to develop as

an important trade and transport centre following the opening of the Royal Canal in 1806 and the Midland Great Western Railway in 1848, both of which further connected the town with Dublin. The town also became an important army base in the 19th century with several regiments stationed at a barracks in the town which were built in 1814 and first occupied in 1819. The original barracks were built to accommodate 1000 soldiers and it was originally named Wellington Barracks. The barracks was renamed Columb Barracks after Patrick Columb, a member of the National Army who was killed on Mary Street, Mullingar in 1922. A 19th century description of the lands in the environs of the town notes that the system of agriculture was in an unimproved state; with not much waste land, but a considerable quantity of bog; and that stone of good quality for building is quarried (Lewis 1837). Further details on the layout of the proposed development site during the 19th century are presented in the below review of cartographic sources.

The study area contains one recorded archaeological site of potential 19th century date, and this comprises the former location of an upright stone (WM019-089003-), which has been described as follows by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland:

*Site of possible standing stone located in field to the N of Columb Barracks on the outskirts of Mullingar town (WM019-089----). The constraint circle on the Record of Monument and Places Map for Co. Westmeath marks the site of a standing stone in the wrong field. An archaeological assessment was carried out in this field by Clare Mullins in 1997 prior to a housing development and no archaeological features were identified. A note on the map in the SMR file indicates that the possible standing stone originally was located in the field to the E of the constraint circle. The car park of a large shopping centre now stands in the area where the possible standing stone was originally located. It is possible that this standing stone was not a prehistoric monument but the remains of a 19th century War Department Boundary Stone marking out the boundary of the military property belonging to Columb Barracks. There are numerous boundary stones depicted in this field on the 1910 ed. OS 25-inch map.*

A review of the Westmeath Industrial Heritage Survey ([www.westmeathculture.ie](http://www.westmeathculture.ie)) revealed that it does not contain any entries for undesignated features of industrial heritage significance within the proposed development site.

#### *Database of Irish Excavation Reports*

As previously noted, a programme of archaeological test trenching was carried out within the proposed development site in 2020 and the results of this investigation are detailed in Section 15.6.7. The Database contains three entries for archaeological investigations carried out within fields to the west of the proposed development site in 2006 and 2007 which were undertaken in advance of a proposed housing development that did not proceed. Pre-development archaeological test trenching revealed a pit feature of archaeological potential, and this was subsequently subject to a full excavation (Table 15.6).

**Table 15.6 Summary of Database of Irish Excavation Report Descriptions**

Licence No.	Summary of Database Descriptions
06E0953	A probable Bronze Age pit feature was uncovered during testing. It presented as a black outer and grey inner circle with a total diameter of 0.35m. A quarter section revealed three depositions, the first a grey silt, the second the charcoal-rich lining of the pit and the final grey ash-enriched deposit. This final central deposit contained burnt-bone fragments that could clearly be seen in section. Full excavation of the pit feature and its environs and monitoring of topsoil removal in the vicinity of the pit was recommended and this was subsequently carried out under an extension to Licence 06E0953 (see below entry).
06E0953 ext.	A 20m by 20m area of excavation was opened around the pit feature described above revealed two additional pits that also contained burnt bone fragments. One of the pits was slightly larger than the others and showed signs of in situ burning, with scorched clay at the base of the pit extending out over the rim. It also contained the same charcoal-enriched clay/silt deposits, but it had a higher percentage of ash and burnt bone than the other pits. It seems likely from this evidence that this pit was used to carry out cremations and the burnt bones were deposited in the other two. No evidence of other features such as enclosing elements or ditches was found. No diagnostic artefacts were found within the pits. It is likely, however, that the burials date from the late Bronze Age or Iron Age. Monitoring of topsoil removal in the remainder of the field was recommended.
20R0256 21E051	A geophysical survey (20R0256) and archaeological testing (21E051) were carried out within a proposed development site which adjoins a ringfort (WM019-046). The geophysical survey identified a number of anomalies with archaeological potential and testing revealed the presence of a post-medieval vernacular house and outbuilding, an isolated pit with in-situ burning, and two charcoal-production kilns and a post-hole.

### 15.6.3 Architectural Heritage

The Record of Protected Structures published in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 lists no Protected Structures within the proposed development site and it is not located within, or in the close environs of, an Architectural Conservation Area. There are a number of Protected Structures within the surrounding study area and the majority of these are also listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (Table 15.7 and Figure 15.1). The nearest Protected Structure to the proposed development is Barrack View (RPS 019-020), which is a late 19th century farmhouse contained within a property on the opposite (south) side of Ashe Road and is outside the southwest end of the boundary of the proposed development. This building was formerly listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH 15310002), which assigned it a 'Local' rating, but it is no longer included in that inventory. No curtilage lands or features associated with the farmhouse were noted within the proposed development site on historic map sources or during field inspections and test trenching investigations. The Record of Protected Structures also includes various buildings within the 19th century Columb Barracks complex which is located c.200m to the southeast of the proposed development site. The area between the barracks and the proposed development are occupied by a modern school and housing developments constructed during recent decades. The study area also contains the former location of Rathgowan House, which was an early 20th century residence listed in the NIAH (ref. 15310001). This building was situated within a property located c.200m to the west of the proposed development and is no longer extant.

**Table 15.7 Designated Architectural Heritage Structures within Study Area**

Name	Description	RPS no.	NIAH no.	NIAH rating
St Finian's College	Handball Alley	WM019-015	15309015	Regional
Rathgowan House (levelled)	House	-	15310001	Regional
Barrack View	House	WM019-020	-	-
Columb Barracks	House	WM019-021	15310003	Regional
Columb Barracks	Monument	WM019-023	15310006	Local
Columb Barracks	Barracks	WM019-024	15310007	Regional
St. Colman's chapel	Chapel	WM019-025	15310008	Regional
Columb Barracks	Prison	WM019-032	15310015	Regional
Columb Barracks	Well	WM019-033	15310016	Regional
Columb Barracks	Barracks	WM019-034	15310017	Regional
Columb Barracks	Barracks	WM019-035	15310018	Regional
Columb Barracks	Bath house	WM019-036	15310019	Regional

#### 15.6.4 Cartographic Review

The cartographic sources examined for the study area comprised the 17th-century Down Survey mapping (Figure 15.2), the 1st edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) map (1838) (Figure 15.3) and the 25-inch OS map (1913) (Figure 15.4). The parish and barony maps compiled during the 17th-century Down Survey were carried out following the Cromwellian wars in the middle of that century and they present high-level pictorial depictions of major fortifications, churches and houses, settlement centres, roads, bridges and topographical features as well as summary information on existing land use and/or potential agricultural capability. The mapping depicts the lands to the west of Mullingar and no large structures are shown in this area. The proposed development site is shown as an area of vacant farmland with sub-rectangular fields on the 6-inch and 25-inch editions OS maps and no potential features of archaeological or architectural heritage significance were noted within the proposed development site.



Figure 15.2 Extract from 17th century Down Survey map showing Mullingar town and its environs (source [www.downsurvey.tcd.ie](http://www.downsurvey.tcd.ie))



Figure 15.3 Extract from 1st edition 6-inch OS map (1838) [OSI Licence 0003323]

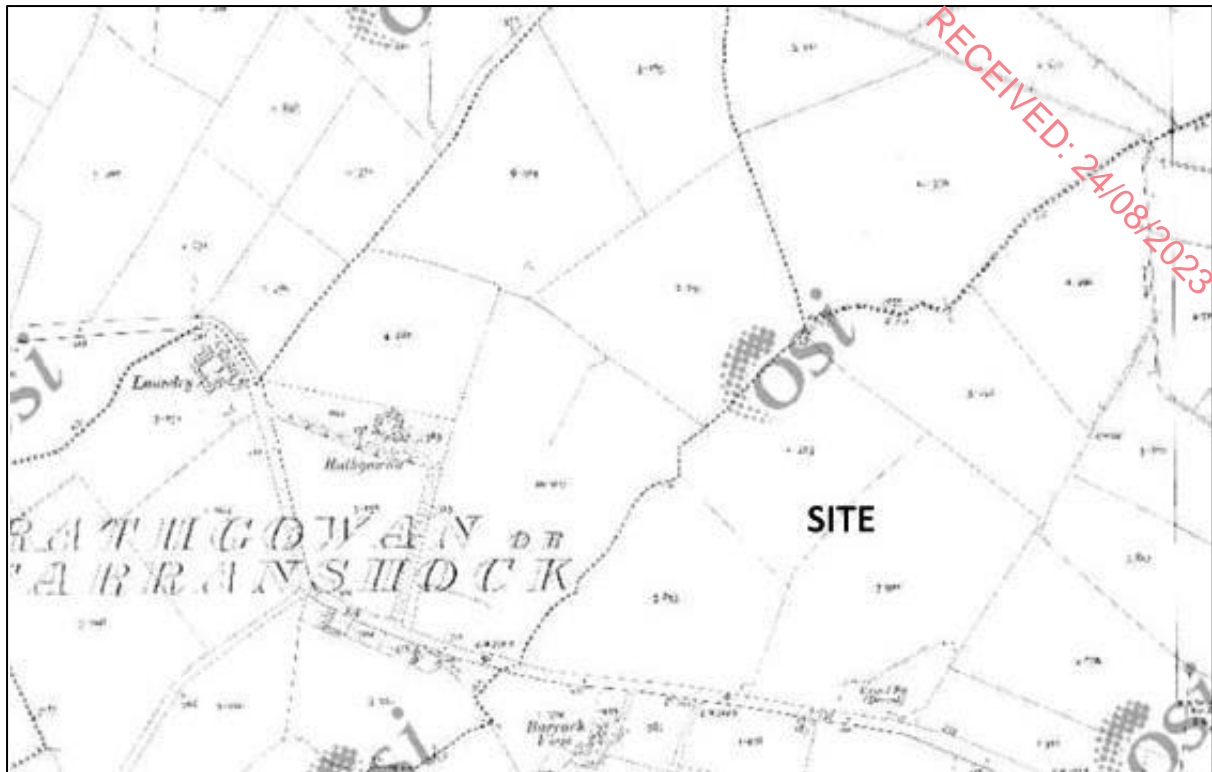


Figure 15.4 Extract from 25-inch OS map (1913) [OSI Licence 0003323]

### 15.6.5 Review of Aerial, Satellite and LiDAR Imagery

A review of publicly accessible aerial, satellite and LiDAR sources published by the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, Google, Bing Maps and the Geological Survey of Ireland (LiDAR) was undertaken in order to assess if any traces of potential unrecorded archaeological sites were visible within the proposed development site. The reviewed images all show the area within the proposed development site occupied by vacant, enclosed pasture fields and no evident traces of any potential unrecorded archaeological sites were noted (Figure 15.5 and Figure 15.6).



Figure 15.5 Satellite image of the proposed development site (source: Bing maps)

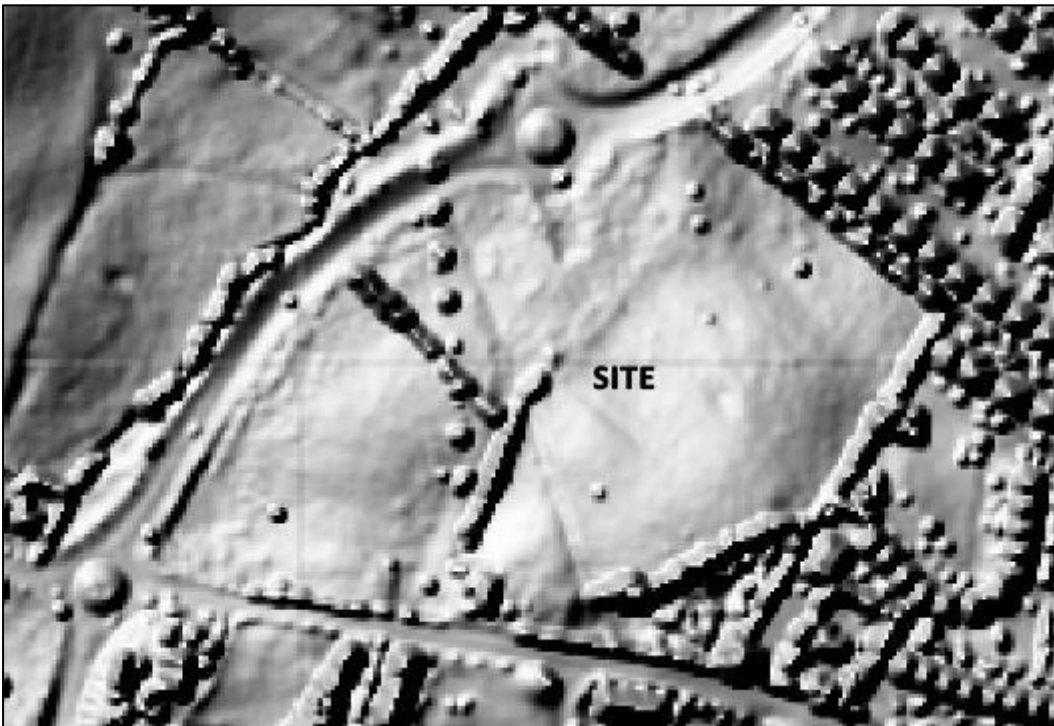


Figure 15.6 LiDAR image of the proposed development site

### 15.6.6 Undesignated Cultural Heritage Assets

While encompassing the archaeological and designated architectural heritage resource, cultural heritage also includes various undesignated assets such as settlements, demesne landscapes, vernacular structures, townland boundaries, folklore, placenames and historical events. There are no



vernacular buildings, or structures of any date, located within the proposed development site and it does not form part of a historic demesne landscape. A review of the National Folklore Commission's Schools Collection ([www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie)) revealed that it does not contain any entries relating to stories or traditions associated with the study area.

Townlands are the smallest unit of land division in the Irish landscape and many preserve early Gaelic territorial boundaries that pre-date the Anglo-Norman conquest. The layout and nomenclature of Irish townlands was recorded and standardised by the work of the Ordnance Survey in the 19th century. The Irish translations of the townlands names often refer to natural topographical features, but name elements may also give an indication of the presence of past human activity within the townland, e.g., dun, lios or rath indicate the presence of a ringfort while temple, saggart, termon or kill record an association with a church site. The proposed development site is located within the west end of the large townland of Mullingar (An Muileann gCearr), which encompasses the town centre to the east, and the *muileann* element of the name translates as 'mill'. There are no watercourses within the study area and the townland name is likely associated with historic milling activity elsewhere in the townland. There are no townland boundaries extending through the proposed development site.

#### 15.6.7 Field Survey

There are two pasture fields within the proposed development site. The west field is generally level with a slight rise in ground terrain to the northwest. The majority of the field is well drained, except for the southwest corner where a number of reed-covered hollows were noted. These appear to be related to works associated with the construction of the adjacent Mullingar Western Relief Road. A well-maintained hedgerow forms the south boundary, a low denuded earthen bank, topped with a mature tree line forms the east and west boundaries and a modern timber fence encloses the field to the west. An overhead power line traverses the field and there is an ESB substation adjoining its southeast corner. The east field is also in use as pastureland and has a moderate rise to the north before levelling to the northwest. A modern timber fence forms the enclosing elements to the west and northwest and the remaining boundaries are formed by low earthen banks topped with mature tree lines. There are no structures of any date located within the fields and no surface traces of any potential unrecorded archaeological sites were identified.

#### 15.6.8 Archaeological Test Trenching

All of the fields within the boundary of the proposed development were subject to a programme of archaeological test trenching in 2020 (Dunne 2020, Licence ref. 20E0255) which was carried out as part of an Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared for a previous planning application within the proposed development site (Westmeath Co. Council (WCC) ref. 21/139). A copy of the full test trenching report is provided in Appendix 15.1. The works entailed the excavation of twelve linear test trenches totalling 1055m in length and the upcast soil from each trench was visually inspected and systematically scanned with a metal-detector (Licence 20R0091) to assist in the identification of artefacts.

The site investigation revealed a mid to dark brown silty clay topsoil layer across the two fields and this measured 0.3- 0.5m in depth and contained occasional inclusions of modern pottery, plastics, glass and modern metal debris. The topsoil overlay a mottled orange-brown clay natural subsoil layer

with occasional natural inclusions of grey clays, manganese and gravel bands. Cultivation furrows truncated the subsoil surface, and these measured between 0.3-1.2m in width and 0.05-0.2m in depth. They were orientated northeast-southwest, evenly spaced and were infilled with topsoil material containing moderate inclusions of animal bone, brick and charcoal fragments with occasional inclusions of clay pipe stems and modern pottery sherds. Manual investigation of a series of furrows showed a number to have sharp sides with slightly rounded bases suggestive of hand/spade dug lazy beds. The earliest finds from the fills of these furrows were clay pipe stems which was indicative of post-medieval or early modern date for their creation.

One potential archaeological pit was revealed in the east field, and this was circular in plan measuring 1.5m in diameter and limited manual investigation indicates it is 0.3m in depth. Metal detecting of the adjacent spoil from the trench revealed a fragment of polished copper alloy. While this pit feature is of unknown date, the potential that it is archaeological in origin is not discounted.

The Archaeological Impact Assessment Report recommended that this pit feature should be subject to a full archaeological excavation in advance of the construction phase (see Appendix 15.1). The Notification of Decision issued by Westmeath County Council for the application included a condition (No. 10) stating that the developer should carry out the recommendations set out in the Archaeology Report submitted as part of the application (WCC ref. 21/139). The online planning file on the County Westmeath planning enquiry system includes a letter from the Development Applications Unit which states that:

*Having reviewed a report of an archaeological assessment carried out on this site, I can confirm that the National Monuments Service will have no archaeological objection to the development proceeding as planned, provided the pit feature discovered during test excavations is excavated archaeologically, as recommended in the assessment report.*

*<http://193.178.30.18/idoocswebdpss/ViewFiles.aspx?docid=171812&format=djvu>*

### 15.6.9 Discussion

There are no recorded archaeological sites within the proposed development site and there are no extant examples located within 500m of its boundary. The only recorded archaeological site located within the surrounding study area comprises the former site of a 19<sup>th</sup> century upright stone (WM019-089003-) which no longer survives and is of likely negligible cultural heritage value. The proposed development is also located c.670m outside the Zone of Notification around the historic core of Mullingar town. The proposed development site was previously subject to a programme of archaeological test trenching and the full excavation of a single pit feature of unknown date, which remains *in situ* within the site, was previously included as a condition in the County Westmeath grant of permission for an earlier application at this location (WCC ref. 21/139). This condition is in accordance with an observation/recommendation of the National Monuments Service, via the Development Applications Unit, during statutory consultations carried out as part of that planning application (see Section 15.6.8).

There are no Protected Structures, including associated curtilage features, or NIAH-listed buildings located within the proposed development site. There are a number of Protected Structures located

within the surrounding study area. Barrack View (RPS 019-020), a 19th century farmhouse, is located c.30m to the southeast of the site. This house was formed assigned a 'Local' rating by the NIAH and is no longer listed in that inventory, which indicates that the NIAH have assessed the house to be of low cultural heritage value. No curtilage features associated within this house, such as a garden or outbuildings, are located within the boundary of the proposed development site. Columb Barracks is located c.400m to the southeast of the proposed development and contains a number of buildings listed as Protected Structures (see Table 15.7 and Figure 15.1) which form a coherent group of 19th century military structures of likely high value. No intervisibility between the barracks and proposed development was noted during the site inspection. In addition, the proposed development site is not located within, of in the close environs of, an Architectural Conservation Area.

No undesignated features of cultural heritage interest, such vernacular or industrial heritage structures, townland boundaries, demesne lands or historical associations, were identified within the proposed development site.

## 15.7 The 'Do nothing' Scenario.

A 'Do Nothing Scenario' will see the continued preservation of recorded and potential cultural heritage features within the study area.

## 15.8 Potential Significant Effects

### 15.8.1 Construction Phase

There RMP and SMR list no recorded archaeological sites within the proposed development lands and no surviving examples are listed within 500m of its boundary. The construction phase of the proposed development will, therefore, have no predicted impact on the designated archaeological resource.

A programme of archaeological test trenching was carried out within the proposed development site in 2020 (see Section 15.6.8 and Appendix 15.1). This revealed one pit feature of unknown date which has the potential to be archaeological in origin. Ground works during the construction phase will have the potential to result in a permanent, direct, negative effects on this pit feature and this will require mitigation.

There are no designated architectural heritage structures located within the proposed development site and it contains no undesignated structures of architectural heritage interest. In addition, the proposed development site is not located within, or in the close environs of, an Architectural Conservation Area. The 19th century farmhouse known as Barrack View which is listed as a Protected Structure (RPS 019-020) is located on the opposite side of Ashe Road from the proposed development and was formerly rated as 'Local' significance by the NIAH. The proposed development will result in a temporary, indirect, not significant impact on the setting of this building during the construction phase. The former location of the early 20th century Rathgowan House, which is listed in the NIAH (ref. 15310001), is located c.200m to the west of the proposed development site. This house was demolished in recent years and no construction impacts on the setting of this levelled structure are, therefore, predicted. Columb Barracks, which contains a range of Protected Structures (see Table 15.7

and Figure 15.1) is located c.200m to the southeast of the proposed development, with modern buildings in the area between their locations, and no construction phase impacts on the setting of the barracks are predicted.

There are no undesignated vernacular structures, demesne lands, or historic settlements located within the proposed development site and no intangible attributes, such as historical or folklore associations, were noted during the assessment. No construction phase impacts on undesignated or intangible elements of the cultural heritage resource are therefore predicted.

### **15.8.2 Operational Phase**

There are no extant recorded archaeological sites within the proposed development site or within 500m of its boundary. The proposed development will, therefore, have no predicted impacts on the setting of any recorded archaeological sites during the operational phase. Following the successful implementation of archaeological mitigation measures presented in Section 15.9, it is predicted that no impacts will arise in relation to the potential archaeological resource within the proposed development site during the operational phase.

There are no designated architectural heritage structures located within the proposed development site, it is not located within an ACA, and it contains no undesignated structures of architectural heritage interest. The proposed development will result in a not significant, indirect impact on the setting of Barrack View farmhouse (RPS 019-020) during the operational phase. No intervisibility between Columb Barracks, located c.200m to the southeast, and proposed development was noted during the field survey and a number of modern developments have been constructed in the area between their locations. The operational phase of the proposed development will, therefore, result in no predicted impacts on the setting of the barracks.

Given the absence of undesignated vernacular structures, demesne lands, or historic settlements located within the proposed development site combined with no known associated intangible attributes, such as historical or folklore associations, it is concluded that no operational phase impacts of such elements of the cultural heritage resource will arise.

### **15.8.3 Cumulative Effects**

A review of the proposed Phase 3 residential development (Westmeath County Council planning ref. 22/515) to the west of the proposed development site revealed that its location contains no recorded archaeological sites or designated architectural heritage structures.

The location of a Part 8 Housing Scheme (22 no. units) at St. Brigid's Green, which is c.230m to the east of the proposed development site, was reviewed and it contains no recorded archaeological sites or designated architectural heritage structures.

The location of a Part 8 Housing Scheme (17 no. units) at the junction of Delvin and Robinstown Road, Springfield, Mullingar, which is c.2.05km to the east of the proposed development site, was reviewed and it contains no recorded archaeological sites or designated architectural heritage structures.

The location of a Part 8 Housing Scheme (15 no. units) on four sites at Ennell Court and Trinity Cottages, which is c.670m to the southeast of the proposed development site, was reviewed and it contains no recorded archaeological sites or designated architectural heritage structures.

The location of a Part 8 Housing Scheme (32 no. units) at Friar's Mill Road/Canal Avenue, which is c.1.46km to the east of the proposed development site, was reviewed and it extends into the Zone of Notification of the recorded location of a levelled Franciscan Friary (WM019-089013-). A review of the Database of Irish Excavations ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)) revealed that a number of archaeological investigations have been carried out as part of development projects in the Friar's Mill Road area and none have identified remains of the friary site.

The section of the Mullingar Western Relief Road along the east side of the proposed development site does not contain the recorded locations of any archaeological sites or architectural heritage structures.

Based on the review of the above developments, the proposed development is not predicted to act in combination with them to result in any cumulative impacts on the cultural heritage resource of the area.

The proposed development site does not contain any recorded archaeological sites, Protected Structures, NIAH-listed buildings or gardens, or other structures of industrial or vernacular heritage significance and will not result in any cumulative impacts relating to relevant cultural heritage policies and objectives outlined in the Westmeath County Council County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Mullingar Local Area Plan (LAP) 2014-2020.

## **15.9 Mitigation**

### **15.9.1 Construction Phase Mitigation**

The pit feature identified during the 2020 programme of test trenching within the proposed development site will be subject to a full archaeological excavation in advance of construction phase works at its location (see Appendix 15.1). This mitigation measure will comply with a condition included in the previous grant of permission for a previous planning application within the proposed development site (WCC ref. 21/139) as well as the National Monuments Service's observations/recommendations in relation to that development (see Section 15.6.8). There are no structures of architectural heritage interest or other cultural heritage assets located within the proposed development site and no mitigation measures for these elements of the cultural heritage resource are required.

### **15.9.2 Operational Phase Mitigation**

All required mitigation measures will be enacted during the construction phase and, therefore, no cultural heritage mitigation measures during the operational phase of the proposed development are predicted.

### **15.9.3 Cumulative Mitigation**

No cumulative impacts on the cultural heritage resource are predicted and, therefore, no mitigation measures for such impacts are required.

RECEIVED: 24/08/2023

## **15.10 Residual Impact Assessment**

### **15.10.1 Construction Phase**

The proposed development site does not contain recorded archaeological sites or architectural heritage structures and the construction phase will result in no residual impacts on these elements of the cultural heritage resource. The mitigation measures presented in Section 15.9 will provide for the proper and adequate recording of a pit feature of archaeological potential by full archaeological excavation. This will result in a high magnitude of impact on this feature of unknown date which will be ameliorated by the creation of a full and detailed archaeological record, the results of which shall be publicly disseminated. This shall result in a potential slight/moderate range of significance of effect in the context of residual impacts on the unrecorded archaeological resource.

### **15.10.2 Operational Phase**

The proposed development will result in a not significant, indirect residual impact on the setting of Barrack View farmhouse (RPS 019-020) during the operational phase.

### **15.10.3 Cumulative Impact**

No residual cumulative impacts on the cultural heritage resource have been identified.

## **15.11 Risk of Major Accidents or Disasters**

No risks of major accidents or disasters associated with cultural heritage resource are predicted.

## **15.12 Significant Interactions**

No significant interactions between the cultural heritage resource and other topics assessed in this EIAR are predicted.

## 15.13 References & Sources

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- International Council on Monuments and Sites (2011) *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*.
- Lewis, S. (1837) *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*. 2 Volumes, Lewis & Company, London.
- National Monuments Service (2006) *Guidelines for Authors of Reports on Archaeological Excavations*.
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- Westmeath County Council (2018) *County Westmeath Heritage Plan 2018-2023*.
- Westmeath County Council (2021) *County Westmeath Development Plan 2021-2027*.

### *Consulted online sources:*

- <http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/ourservices/planning/conservationheritage/heritageresources/>
- <http://gis.teagasc.ie/soils/map.php> (Soils)
- <http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html> (Geology)
- <http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer/#V2,591271,743300,1,10> (Historic OS maps)
- <http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php> (Down Survey)
- [http://spatial.dcenr.gov.ie/imf/imf.jsp?site=GSI\\_Simple](http://spatial.dcenr.gov.ie/imf/imf.jsp?site=GSI_Simple) (Bedrock)
- [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) (SMR and NIAH)
- [www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie) (Folklore)
- [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie) (Archaeological investigations)
- [www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie) (Placenames)
- [www.heritagemaps.ie/WebApps/HeritageMaps/index.html](http://www.heritagemaps.ie/WebApps/HeritageMaps/index.html) (Irish Heritage Council)
- <http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie/LandedEstates/jsp/property-show.jsp?id=2025> (Landed Estates Database, National University of Galway)
- <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b7c4b0e763964070ad69bf8c1572c9f5> (Geological Survey Ireland LiDAR data)