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Lobinstown Quarry

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Appendix 12 **Cultural Heritage**

2024

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12 APPENDIX CULTURAL HERITAGE

12.1 SITES IN THE RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES

ME012-029---- Ringfort- rath Rathbranchurch

Situated on a shelf that is on a S-facing slope. This is a slightly raised, circular, grass and rush-covered area (diam. 38 m WNW-ESE) defined by an earthen bank (at N: Wth of base 4.5 m; int. H 0.6 m; ext. H 1.7 m) with some bushes and an outer fosse (at N: Wth of top 3.7 m; Wth of base 2.6 m; ext. D 0.25 m) that has been re-cut as a drain with a field bank outside it SE-W. The original entrance (Wth at base 1.9 m) with a causeway (Wth of top 1.6 m; H 0.2 m) is at SE. It remains unplanted in a forest with a fallow area (Wth 20 m) around it.

12.2 SITES IN THE SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

Examination of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), which is maintained by the Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, on the 8th of March 2023 indicated that there are no SMRs listed in the application area or the study area.

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.