

17 CULTURAL HERITAGE (ARCHAEOLOGICAL & ARCHITECTURAL)

17.1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter details an archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage assessment undertaken in advance of a proposed residential development within the townlands of Castletown and Newtownbalregan, County Louth (ITM 702648, 808266, Figure 17.1). This assessment has been carried out to ascertain the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological, architectural and historical resource that may exist within the area. This assessment was undertaken by Faith Bailey and Elizabeth Di Vincenzo of IAC Archaeology (IAC).

The majority of the proposed development is formed by three open fields bound to the north by the Castletown Road (a portion of which is included within the proposed development); to the east by Mount Avenue (that forms the townland boundary between Castletown and Farrandreg); to the west by a local road and greenfield and to the south by greenfield. The townland boundary between Castletown and Newtownbalregan traverses the site and forms the western limit of the site.



Figure 17.1: Site Location (Google Earth 2024)

This study determines, as far as reasonably possible from existing records, the nature of the archaeological and cultural heritage resource in and within the vicinity of the application area using appropriate methods of study. Desk-based assessment is defined as a programme of study of the historic environment within a specified area or site that addresses agreed research and/or conservation objectives. It consists of an analysis of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely heritage assets, their interests and significance and the character of the study area, including appropriate consideration of the settings of heritage assets (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014). This leads to the following:

- Determining the presence of known archaeological and built heritage sites that may be affected by the proposed development;
- Assessment of the likelihood of finding previously unrecorded archaeological remains during the construction programme;
- Determining the impact upon the setting of known cultural heritage sites in the surrounding area.

17.1.1 Guidance and Legislation

This assessment has been undertaken having regard to the following legislation and guidelines.

- National Monuments Act, 1930 to 2014;
- The Planning and Development Acts, 2024;
- Heritage Act, 1995 (as amended);
- Draft Advice Notes on Current Practice (in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements), 2015, EPA;
- Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Report 2022, EPA;
- Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, 1999, (formerly) Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and Islands; and
- Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2000 and the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000.

17.1.2 Consultation

Following the initial research, a number of statutory and voluntary bodies were consulted to gain further insight into the cultural background of the study area, as follows: -

- Level Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH) – the Heritage Service, National Monuments: Record of Monuments and Places; Sites and Monuments Record; Monuments in State Care Database and Preservation Orders.
- National Museum of Ireland, Irish Antiquities Division: topographical files.
- County Louth Planning Section.
- Trinity College Dublin, Map Library: Historical and Ordnance Survey Maps.

17.2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Research for this chapter comprised a paper survey of all available archaeological, historical and cartographic sources, including a previous programme of geophysical survey carried out within the site, which was followed by a programme of archaeological test trenching. A field inspection of the proposed development area was also carried out.

17.2.1 Paper Survey

- Record of monuments and Places for County Louth;
- Sites and monuments Record for County Louth;
- National Monuments in State Care Database;
- Preservation Orders List;
- Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland;
- Cartographic and written sources relating to the study area;
- Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027;
- Dundalk Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031;
- Aerial photographs;
- Excavations Bulletin (1970-2025); and

- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is a list of archaeological sites known to the National Monuments Section, which are afforded legal protection under Section 12 of the 1994 National Monuments Act and are published as a record.

Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) holds documentary evidence and field inspections of all known archaeological sites and monuments. Some information is also held about archaeological sites and monuments whose precise location is not known e.g. only a site type and townland are recorded. These are known to the National Monuments Section as 'un-located sites' and cannot be afforded legal protection due to lack of locational information. As a result, these are omitted from the Record of Monuments and Places. SMR sites are also listed on a website maintained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH) – www.archaeology.ie.

National Monuments in State Care Database is a list of all the National Monuments in State guardianship or ownership. Each is assigned a National Monument number whether in guardianship or ownership and has a brief description of the remains of each Monument. The Minister for the DoHLGH may acquire national monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The state or local authority may assume guardianship of any national monument (other than dwellings). The owners of national monuments (other than dwellings) may also appoint the Minister or the local authority as guardian of that monument if the state or local authority agrees. Once the site is in ownership or guardianship of the state, it may not be interfered with without the written consent of the Minister.

Preservation Orders List contains information on Preservation Orders and/or Temporary Preservation Orders, which have been assigned to a site or sites. Sites deemed to be in danger of injury or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the 1930 Act. Preservation Orders make any interference with the site illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can be attached under the 1954 Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders with the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister.

The topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland are the national archive of all known finds recorded by the National Museum. This archive relates primarily to artefacts but also includes references to monuments and unique records of previous excavations. The find spots of artefacts are important sources of information on the discovery of sites of archaeological significance.

Cartographic sources are important in tracing land use development within the development area as well as providing important topographical information on areas of archaeological potential and the development of buildings. Cartographic analysis of all relevant maps has been made to identify any topographical anomalies or structures that no longer remain within the landscape.

Documentary sources were consulted to gain background information on the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage landscape of the proposed development area.

Development Plans contain a catalogue of all the Protected Structures and archaeological sites within the county. The Louth County Development Plan (2021-2027) and Dundalk Local Area Plan (2025-2031) were consulted to obtain information on cultural heritage sites in and within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development areas.

Aerial photographic and LiDAR coverage is an important source of information regarding the precise location of sites and their extent. It also provides initial information on the terrain and its likely potential for archaeology. A number of sources were consulted including aerial photographs held by the Ordnance Survey, Bing Maps, Google Earth and the Open Topographic Data Viewer.

Excavations Bulletin is a summary publication that has been produced every year since 1970. The hard copy publication summarises every archaeological excavation that has taken place in Ireland during that year up until 2010 and since 1987 has been edited by Isabel Bennett. This information is vital when examining the archaeological content of any area, which may not have been recorded under the SMR and RMP files. Since 2010 all summary information up until 2025 is available online (www.excavations.ie).

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage is a state initiative established under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999 tasked with making a nationwide record of significant local, regional, national and international structures, which in turn provides county councils with a guide as to what structures to list within the Record of Protected Structures. The NIAH have also carried out a nationwide desk-based survey of historic gardens, including demesnes that surround large houses.

17.2.2 Field Inspection

Field inspection is necessary to determine the extent and nature of archaeological and historical remains and can also lead to the identification of previously unrecorded or suspected sites and portable finds through topographical observation and local information.

The archaeological and architectural field inspection entailed -

- Walking the proposed development and its immediate environs.
- Noting and recording the terrain type and land usage.
- Noting and recording the presence of features of archaeological or historical significance.
- Verifying the extent and condition of any recorded sites.
- Visually investigating any suspect landscape anomalies to determine the possibility of their being anthropogenic in origin.

17.2.3 Impact Assessment

The quality and type of an effect can be classed as one of the following (as per the Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports [EPA 2022]):

- negative effect: A change which reduces the quality of the environment, for example a change that will detract from or permanently remove an archaeological or cultural heritage site from the landscape;
- neutral effect: A change which does not affect the quality of the environment; or
- positive effect: A change which improves the quality of the environment, for example a change that improves or enhances the setting of archaeological or cultural heritage sites.

The below terms are used in relation to the archaeological and architectural heritage and relate to whether a site will be physically affected upon or not:

- direct effect: Where an archaeological/cultural heritage feature or site is physically located within the footprint of the proposed development and entails the removal of part, or all, of the monument or feature; and
- indirect effect: Where a feature or site of archaeological or cultural heritage merit or its setting is located in close proximity to the footprint of a development.
- Neutral: No effects (either negative or positive) are predicted.

17.2.4 Significance of Effect

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.

Slight Effects

An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.

Moderate Effects

An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.

Significant Effects

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 Effects

An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.

Effects as defined by the EPA 2022 Guidelines (pg. 50).

17.3 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

17.3.1 Archaeological and Historical Background

The proposed development area is located in the townlands of Newtownbalregan and Castletown, within the parish of Castletown and barony of Upper Dundalk. The site comprises three open fields bound to the north by the Castletown Road.

The northeast portion of the proposed development is situated within the Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP) for the historic town of Castletown (LH007-118). The site also borders 'Dún Dealgan', a motte and bailey castle, which is a National Monument in state guardianship (Nat Mon. 388) and a recorded monument (LH007-118007). A souterrain (LH007-118008) is recorded on the southern side of the National Monument and a cist burial (LH007-118009) has been reconstructed on the avenue bank of the motte. Within the proposed development there is a recorded monument that consists of a standing stone (LH007-118006) known as the 'Lia Lingadon', on the northeast slope of the motte. There are a further 25 recorded monuments within a 500m radius of the proposed development area (Figure 17.2). Of these sites, ten have been subject to archaeological preservation by record.

There are five structures included on the RPS within a 500m radius of the proposed development area (Figure 17.3). The nearest RPS is the Gate Piers (RPS Ref.: D089) to Castletown Castle, c. 165m to the northeast. There is one structure listed in the NIAH within the study area, which is also listed in the RPS. This comprises a house (NIAH Ref.: 13900737, RPS Ref.: D090), located c. 235m to the northeast.



Figure 17.2: Recorded archaeological monuments surrounding the proposed development area



Figure 17.3: Recorded built heritage sites surrounding the proposed development area

17.3.1.1 Prehistoric Period

Mesolithic Period (c. 8000-4000 BC)

Recent discoveries may suggest the possibility of a human presence in the southwest of Ireland as early as the Upper Palaeolithic (Dowd and Carden 2016); however, the Mesolithic period is the earliest time for which there is clear evidence for prehistoric human colonisation of the island of Ireland. During this period people hunted, foraged and gathered food and appear to have led a primarily

mobile lifestyle. The presence of Mesolithic communities is most commonly evidenced by scatters of worked flint material, a by-product of the production of flint implements.

There is no archaeological evidence of Mesolithic activity within the immediate environs of the proposed development area. Test Trenching carried out in 2002 ahead of the Dundalk Western Bypass (DWB) identified several prehistoric sites. This included Newtownbalregan 1.2, located c. 1km west-northwest of the proposed development area, where several lithic flakes were identified as being Mesolithic in date (Delaney 2002; Licence No. 02E0373).

Neolithic Period (c. 4000–2500 BC)

During this period communities became less mobile and their economy became based on the rearing of stock and cereal cultivation. The transition to the Neolithic was marked by major social change. Communities had expanded and moved further inland to more permanent settlements. This afforded the development of agriculture which demanded an altering of the physical landscape. Forests were rapidly cleared and field boundaries were constructed. Pottery was also being produced, possibly for the first time.

A Neolithic house was discovered c. 436m northwest of the proposed development area during excavations ahead of the DWB at Newtownbalregan 5 (Bayley 2003a, Licence No. 03E0114; RMP LH007-172). This building was circular in plan with a diameter of c. 5m. Prehistoric pottery and Neolithic flint blades were also found in association with this house. Evidence of early Neolithic settlement within the wider locale of Castletown is indicated by various other sites found on the route of the Dundalk Western Bypass at places such as – Littlemill 1, Donaghmore 1a, and Faughart 5.

With the advent of the Neolithic period the emergence of the megalithic tomb occurred. The nearest recorded megalithic tomb was located c. 2 km northwest from the site. This passage tomb was destroyed by quarrying in 1826 and a decorated stone from the site now marks its former location (LH006-015001). These sites appear in relative abundance in the wider landscape with a concentration of tombs in the Flurry Valley, c. 5km to the northeast of the site and scattered throughout the Cooley peninsula to the northeast.

Bronze Age (c. 2500–800 BC)

This period is marked by the use of metal for the first time. As with the transition from Mesolithic to Neolithic, the transition into the early Bronze Age was accompanied by changes in society. Megaliths were replaced in favour of individual, subterranean cist or pit burials that were either in isolation or in small cemeteries. These burials contained inhumed or cremated remains and were often, but not always, accompanied by a pottery vessel.

Over 7,000 burnt mounds or *fulachta fia* sites have been recorded in the country and c. 1,500 examples excavated, making them the most common prehistoric monument in Ireland (Waddell 2022, 164). Although burnt mounds of shattered stone occur as a result of various activities that have been practiced from the Mesolithic to the present day, the Bronze Age has long been believed to have seen the peak of this activity. Dating evidence from a growing number of burnt mounds, suggests activities resulting in burnt mounds were being carried over a span of 3,500 years in Ireland (Hawkes 2018). They are typically located in areas where there is a readily available water source, often in proximity to a river or stream or in places with a high-water table. In the field burnt mounds may be identified as charcoal-rich mounds or spreads of heat shattered stones, however, in many cases, the sites have been disturbed by later agricultural activity and are no longer visible on the field surface. Nevertheless, even disturbed spreads of burnt mound material often preserve the underlying associated features, such as troughs, pits and gullies, intact.

There are seven recorded *fulachta fia* sites within 500m of the proposed development area. The majority of these were uncovered during various excavations in the local area, as discussed below. The nearest example (LH007-121) was located c. 98m southeast of the proposed development area and was discovered during archaeological works along a pipeline corridor (Bolger 2002; Licence No. 00E0698). Such sites are typically associated with habitation and although no Bronze Age houses have been found in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area, an early Bronze Age habitation site was uncovered in advance of the construction of the DWB (LH007-171). Here a series

of hearths, pits and post/stakeholes were excavated and one pit contained 170 sherds of early Bronze Age pottery (Bayley 2003b; Licence No. 03E0113).

During the Bronze Age there was a societal shift away from the megalithic burial styles of the Neolithic Period. Typically, individual remains were more modestly interred. Cremated or inhumed bodies were often placed in a cist, a small stone box set into the ground, or a stone-lined grave. A reconstructed cist (LH007-118009) is situated to the immediate southwest of the proposed development, relocated from Tankardstown, c. 1.7km to the west (LH006-037).

Evidence for potential prehistoric activity was identified within the proposed development area during the course of the geophysical survey. One worked lithic consisting of a flint drill, was recovered at ITM 702696/808340 and was deposited with the National Museum Ireland of Ireland. In addition to this a gold finger ring (NMI Ref. 1984:153) was previously discovered within the site to the north of the standing stone (LH007-118006). The ring has been assessed by the National Museum and is considered to be of high status. The standing stone may have its roots grounded in the Bronze Age.

Iron Age (c. 800 BC–AD 500)

There is increasing evidence for Iron Age settlement and activity in recent years as a result of development-led excavations as well as projects such as Late Iron Age and Roman Ireland (Cahill Wilson 2014). Yet this period is distinguishable from the rather rich remains of the preceding Bronze Age and subsequent early medieval period, by a relative paucity within the current archaeological record. The Iron Age in Ireland is problematic for archaeologists as few artefacts dating exclusively to this period have been found and without extensive excavation it cannot be determined whether several monument types, such as ring-barrows or standing stones, date to the late Bronze Age or Iron Age. It is likely that there was significant continuity in the Iron Age, with earlier monuments re-used in many cases. Several Iron Age sites were identified during the construction of the DWB, the nearest of which was a roundhouse (LH004-145) located c. 2km north. No definite sites of this date have been identified in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area.

According to local tradition the large Motte and Bailey castle (LH007-118007) on the eastern boundary of the proposed development area is believed to have been built on the former location of *Dún Delca*, otherwise known as 'Dún Dealgan' anglicised to Dundalk. It is linked to the legendary *Cúchulainn* in the Ulster Cycle stories, which are based in the Iron Age (Gosling 1993, 243). Likewise, the standing stone (LH007-118006) immediately adjacent to the proposed development area is 'Lia Lingadon', or the 'stone of Lingadon'. The date of this stone is unknown, although typically they are Bronze Age in date. This stone, within legend is linked to *Cúchulainn*'s mother. Many aspects of the folklore and stories of the Ulster Cycle originate in this period but they have been altered significantly over time. Although these two monuments are attributed to mythological characters it remains possible that they represent places of local significance during the Iron Age.

17.3.1.2 Early Medieval Period (AD 500–1100)

The early medieval period is depicted in the surviving sources as an almost entirely rural based society. Territorial divisions were based on the *túath*, or petty kingdom, with Byrne (1973) estimating that there may have been at least 150 kings in Ireland at any given time. This period, with a new religious culture and evolving technologies, saw significant woodland clearance and the expansion of grassland. A new type of plough and the horizontal mill were two innovations that improved agriculture and allowed for the population to increase. Consequently, from c. AD 500 onwards, the landscape became well settled, as evidenced by the profuse distribution of ringforts, a dispersed distribution of enclosed settlements, normally associated with various grades of well-to-do farming and aristocratic classes in early medieval Ireland (Stout and Stout 1997, 20). The former site of 'Dún Dealgan', with possible origins in the Iron Age as mentioned above, remained a significant location and is specifically mentioned in historical sources in AD 1002. It appears to have been one of the chief places of assembly in what was still Ulster at that time (Gosling 1993, 243).

Although the early medieval 'Dún Dealgan' no longer survives in its original form, there are numerous archaeological features from this period in the immediate locale of the proposed development area. The archaeology of settlement from this time is often expressed as ringforts and there are over 30,000

examples of these features throughout the Irish landscape. The simplest form of the ringfort is a c. 30m diameter circular enclosure defined by a bank and ditch representing the farms and homes of people at that time. Much larger and more elaborate examples exist, often attributed to individuals or families of high status. Another common archaeological feature of the early medieval rural landscape is the souterrain with over 3,500 known examples across Ireland. Typically, they exist as stone-built, subterranean passages or galleries often terminating in small rooms or chambers. They are often associated with settlements such as ringforts but can also be isolated features and their function is that of either refuge or cold storage. They vary considerably in dimensions and one of the largest examples in Ireland was discovered at Tateera c. 1.2km northwest of the proposed development area (Hayes 2005; Licence No. A010/001). This souterrain was 70m long with numerous chambers and galleries throughout the length of the feature.

Eight souterrains are located within 500m of the proposed development area the nearest of which (LH007-118008) is within the bank of 'Dún Dealgan' Motte, supporting the fact that this later medieval mound was built on top of a pre-existing early medieval dún or fort. This souterrain is relatively large with a total length of c. 18m, comprised of three drystone-built passages forming a Z-shaped plan. Other isolated souterrains are scattered across the local area. A ringfort with an associated souterrain was excavated c. 512m northwest of the proposed development area ahead of the DWB (Bayley 2003c, Licence No. 03E0115). The enclosure was large with a diameter of c. 46m and several bronze finds of personal ornamentation indicated that this was a high-status site. Externally, 5m to the southwest of the ringfort ditch was a souterrain, c. 46m in length, which comprised 33m of intact tunnels. Some of the roof lintels displayed prehistoric rock art, suggesting they may have been re-used from a nearby megalithic tomb.

17.3.1.3 Medieval Period (AD 1100–1600)

Norman involvement in Ireland began in 1169, when Richard de Clare and his followers landed in Wexford to support Diarmait MacMurchadha, deposed King of Leinster, in his bid to regain the Kingdom of Leinster. Two years later de Clare (Strongbow) inherited this kingdom through marriage to Diarmuid's daughter Aoife. By the end of the 12th century the Normans had superseded the previous ruling elites in much of the country. Large land grants given by the King to his followers meaning that great swathes of land were parcelled out among the Norman elites in process known as sub-infeudation. The lands of Uriel including the area of Dundalk was granted to Bertram de Verdun who established a motte and bailey castle (LH007-118007) at Castletown in c. 1185. This site sits on the eastern boundary of the proposed development area and was likely constructed in an effort to benefit from the native significance attributed to the site. It is a large circular steep-sided mound with a diameter of c. 43m and a height of c. 9–10m. A small D-shaped bailey, c. 8m by 9m, was defined by an earthen bank and adjoined the fosse of the motte at the northwest. A much larger bailey existed to the east, but this has now been almost totally destroyed by modern waterworks. It is likely that the Anglo-Norman motte was constructed directly on top of the earlier 'Dún Dealgan' site and this is supported by the record of a souterrain at the base of the slope (LH007-118008).

It is unclear how much of an impact Bertram de Verdun had on the area as he died on crusade with Richard I in c. 1192. Later, his son granted parts of Uriel to Hugh de Lacey II upon his marriage to Leceline de Verdun. It was at this time that Dundalk was split into Upper and Lower. The de Verdun and de Lacy families were united through marriage throughout the 13th and 14th centuries (Tempest and O'Connell 1943).

This period saw the evolution and consolidation of a network of territorial and administrative boundaries including baronies, parishes, manors and townlands. It was largely based on, and significantly influenced by, pre-existing borders and settlement patterns. In many instances the Norman tenurial system appropriated the older established land units known as *túaths* but called the territories manors (MacCotter 2014). Part of this programme was the foundation and development of a number of nucleated settlements, some with associated urban functions and a large majority of which survive as towns and villages to the present day. Many of these sites were centres of importance before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans as evidenced by early medieval 'Dún Dealgan'. As well as the enlargement of older urban centres, new towns were created such as Dundalk and Drogheda. At the same time, the establishment of many new monasteries, typically from Continental

orders such as the Augustinians and Franciscans, occurred. This included a Augustinian religious house (LH007-119021), c. 2.5km southeast of the proposed development area in Dundalk.

The original mote and bailey castle at Castletown was assaulted and partly destroyed by Edward Bruce in 1318. During the later medieval period (post-1350), a new type of residence known as a tower house emerged in Ireland. It was essentially a vertical stack of rooms that was set within a larger walled enclosure often accompanied by a gatehouse. In the wider area around Dublin, especially along the 'frontier zone', there are a substantial number of tower houses and fortified buildings. This may be in part due to the presence of 'The Pale', which was defined as a hinterland around the centre of Anglo-Norman rule based in Dublin. During the 15th century the 'Subsidised Castles Act' provided grants of ten pounds to encourage the construction of castles to assert a crown-loyal presence along the eastern coast.

By the mid-14th century the de Verdun family had no eligible male heirs with the last four daughters and co-heiresses married and living in England acting as absentee landlords (Tempest and O'Connell 1943, 182). Much of their lands were sold and by 1402 Castletown was bought by a Sir John Bellew. His son, Sir Richard Bellew, received a ten-pound grant to build a castle of the standard dimensions at Castletown in 1472 (LH007-118003). Although the exact position is not precisely known, and there is no further record of this castle, a 1655 map of Castletown and Dundalk clearly shows a castle southeast of Castletown crossroads c. 70m northwest of the proposed development area (Tempest 1957, 36). Bellew gained a further grant in 1479, for a second, larger, castle at Castletown. This tower house (LH007-118001), surviving intact today, is located c. 250m northwest of the proposed development area. It is likely that the church and graveyard (LH007-118005/11), located c. 215m east-northeast of the proposed development area, date to this later medieval period. The upstanding remains are either 15th or 16th century and this building was likely constructed to replace an earlier unrecorded church, meeting the demands of the growing community in Castletown.

17.3.1.4 Post-Medieval Period (AD 1600–1800)

At the transition between the medieval and the post-medieval period, Castletown appears on Richard Bartlett's 1600 map of the area between Lough Neagh and Dundalk. The map labels it as Castleton with a pen drawing of the tower house to the west of the walled town of Dundalk. As the 17th century progressed there was a concentrated and systematic reduction of all of Ireland to English authority, largely through conflicts and the forced settlements known as 'The Plantations'. After the Confederate Wars, as part of the process of achieving colonial dominion, a number of surveys (Simington's Civil Survey of 1654–56) and mapping programmes (Down Survey 1655–58) were completed. Land holdings were recorded on a barony level based on parish and townland units with written descriptions of the landholders and information of the land use to facilitate transfer of properties. Despite the obvious negative effects of colonial map drafting this survey is the first ever detailed land survey on a national scale anywhere in the world and gives great insight into Ireland at this time.

The Down Survey Map from 1655 is the earliest depiction of lands surrounding the proposed development area. It shows 'the Castle and Towne of Castletowne'. The motte (LH007-118007-) is not shown as possessing a structure and it is labelled as 'Castletown Mount', whilst both of Richard Bellew's tower houses are depicted. A cluster of houses surround the larger of the tower houses (LH007-118001) and a mill is drawn to the immediate west of what appears to be the castle grounds or gardens. Although the church is not labelled in this image, it would have certainly existed at this time. Two graveslabs (LH007-118004/10) date to the mid-17th century and interestingly one has the name Walter Bellew and the date 1631 inscribed on it.

The 18th century saw a dramatic rise in the establishment of large residential houses around the country, including County Louth. This was largely due to the fact that after the turbulence of the preceding centuries, the success of the Protestant cause and effective removal of any political opposition, the country was at peace. It is apparent that Castletown underwent some change during this period. Two houses were built adjacent to the tower house (LH007-118001) in the 1740s but by the mid-19th century many of the houses clustered around the tower house are gone and a demesne had been established around the main house (D090, NIAH 13900737). A flour mill is still located on

the river. In 1780, a local man named Patrick Byrne, who is referred to as a pirate and a smuggler of considerable wealth, began to erect a gothic house on top of the motte (LH007-118007). The house was destroyed during the violence of the 1798 rebellion and reduced to the 'Folly'. The house was rebuilt in 1850 by T. Vesey Dawson as a country retreat but fell into disrepair and was purchased by the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society to be used for a museum. In 1921 it suffered further damage from fire that occurred during the War of Independence and then the Civil War, which meant that these plans were abandoned (Hannon 2015).

County Louth, as with most counties across Ireland, suffered during the mid-19th century from starvation created by the Potato Famine. This is illustrated by the figures for the population at the time. In 1836 the population of County Louth was approximately 126,000. However, by 1882 that figure had dropped dramatically to approximately 77,000. This illustrates the stark effect that conditions created by the Famine had on the local population through death and migration.

17.3.2 Summary of Previous Archaeological Fieldwork

A review of the Excavations Bulletin (1970–2025) has revealed that four archaeological investigations have taken place within the proposed development area and a further 20 investigations within the wider study area. These are summarised below.

In 2019, a geophysical survey was conducted across the proposed development area by Earthsound under licence 19R0136. This included Magnetometer Survey and Electrical Resistivity Survey. The results of the Magnetometer Survey is shown in Figure 17.4. The area was divided by relict field boundaries, a number of which relate to divisions shown on historic mapping. Further agricultural evidence was noted in the detection of cultivation furrow. Potential archaeological activity was found across the site and included a ring ditch and possible annex; a possible double ditched enclosure; potential habitation zones and a possible outer bailey feature associated with the adjacent extant motte and bailey. In addition, a large number of magnetic trends were detected across the survey area. These were weakly magnetic and were interpreted as relating to archaeological, agricultural or geological activity.

The geophysical survey was followed by the programme of archaeological test trenching and metal detection, which was carried out in 2020 (O'Regan and Meharg 2020, Licence Nos. 20E0151 and 20R0062). The layout of test trenches was designed to investigate the potential of geophysical anomalies. A total of 124 trenches were excavated and this revealed 11 small archaeological areas, which are labelled as AA1-11 and shown on Figures 17.5a and 17.5b.

AA1: Four pits, all of which contained charcoal, but no dating evidence was recovered.

AA2: Linear ditch that measured 1.1m in width and 0.3m in depth. A single flint flake (Find was recovered from this context. This ditch only appeared in Trench 33 and was not identified in the adjacent trenches (34 and 35) to the east.

AA3: A ditch was recovered that roughly followed the contours at the bottom of the hill of 'Dun Delga' and may have been associated activity at the Motte. No dating evidence was recovered from the feature.

AA4: A shallow pit that was irregular in plan and measured 0.78m in length, 0.63m in width and had a depth of 0.11m. The feature contained some charcoal and some evidence of burning but no dating evidence was recovered.

AA5: A sub-oval hearth measuring 1.34m by 0.8m with a depth of 0.05m. No dating evidence was recorded during the works.

AA6: A sub circular pit measuring 0.7m in length by 0.65m in width. Charcoal was identified within the fill of the pit but no dating evidence was recorded.

AA7: Two pits. The largest of these was irregular in plan and extended beyond the limit of excavation but had an exposed width of 1.13m and a depth of 0.12m. The second pit was located c. 0.2m to the east and was sub-oval in plan and measured 0.23m in length and 0.19m in width. Both pits contained charcoal.

AA8: A ditch was recorded in Trench 92 and measured 0.93m in width and 0.27m in depth.

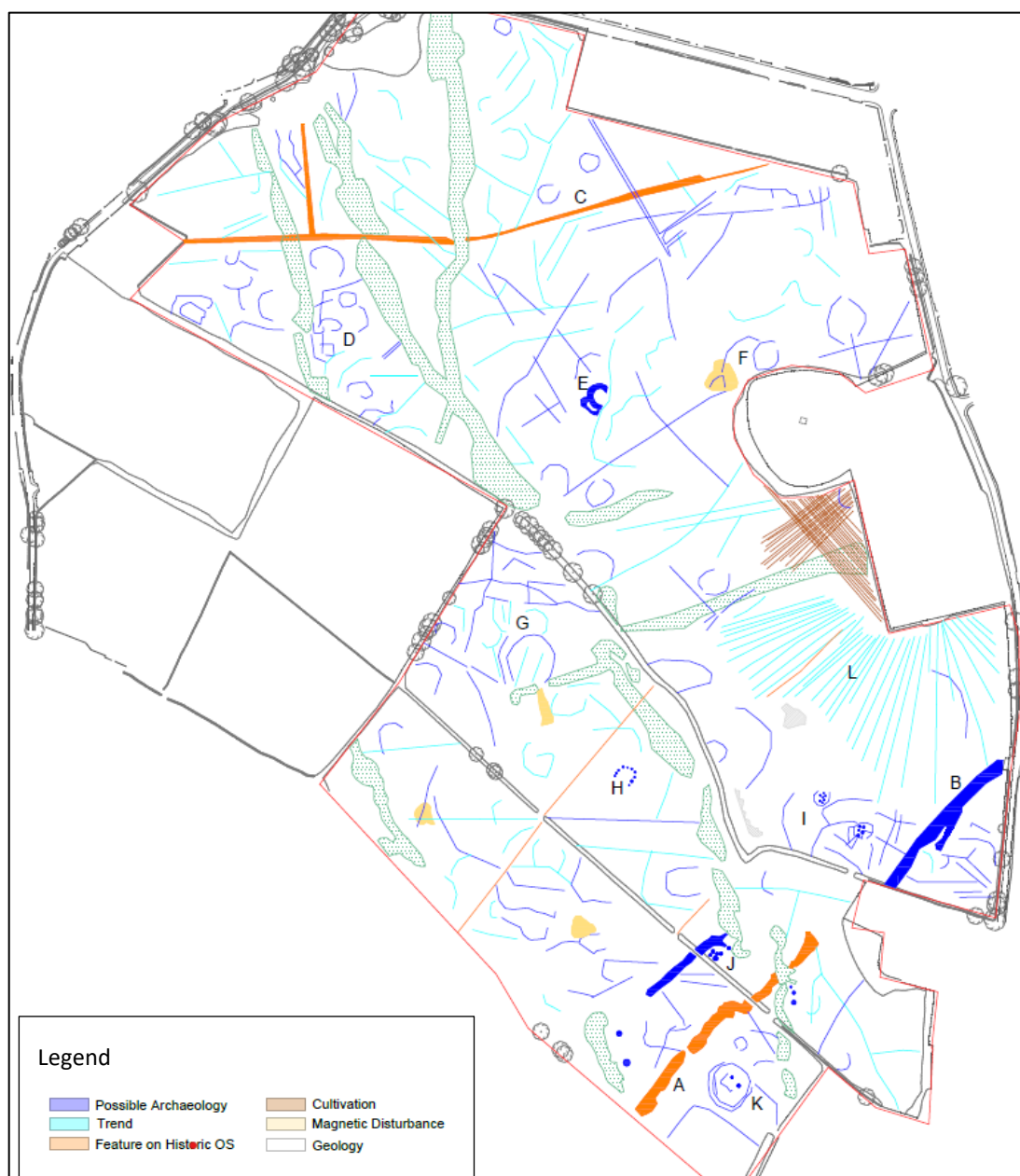


Figure 17.4: Results of geophysical survey within the proposed development area (2019)

AA9: A potential figure-of-eight kiln or furnace was identified measuring 1.4m in length, 0.67m in width and 0.8m deep. Such kilns were in use from the Bronze Age to the medieval times, but no dating evidence was recovered from the feature.

AA10: A single posthole or post pit was recorded that was sub-circular in plan measuring 0.76m by 0.72m and had a depth of 0.2m. The fill was black brown sandy silt and rich in charcoal indicating that a post may have burned in-situ.

AA11: A curvilinear ditch was identified in Trench 119 that measured 1.1m in width and extended beyond the extents of excavation, it had a depth of 0.2m and the single fill. Although this feature returned no finds a bronze rectangular artefact was found in close proximity to this ditch during metal detection.

The metal detecting was carried out during testing and a number of topsoil finds were recovered from the trenches. These included modern buttons or coins and pieces of modern or unidentifiable Iron.

Finds of note include a lead or pewter figure of Jesus Christ, a rectangular piece of indented bronze and a long piece of non-ferrous metal.

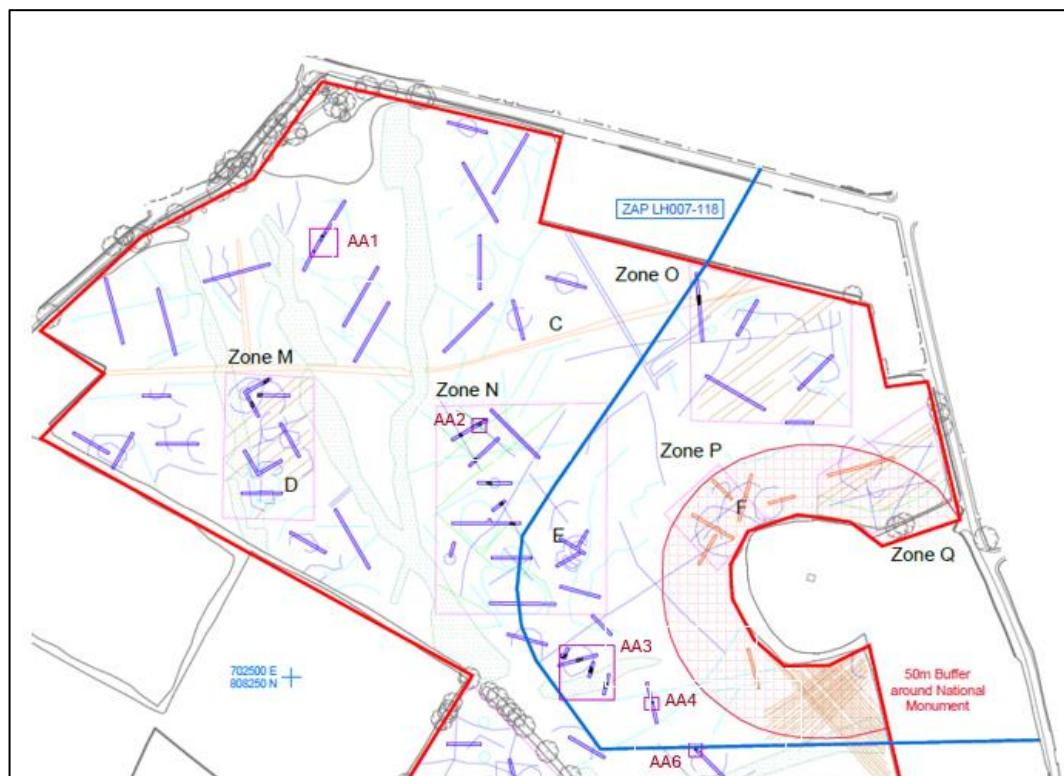


Figure 17.5a: Location of AA1-4 and AA6 within the northern part of the proposed development area

Monitoring for the Farrandreg Drainage Scheme identified a hearth and a number of pits, one of which contained 200 sherds of collared urn pottery and three sherds of possible Beaker pottery, c. 50m to the east of the proposed development area (Bolger 2000c; Licence No. 00E0299; LH007-133). In addition, two *fulachta fia* were recorded during monitoring in 2002 c. 158-219m to the east (Bolger 2000a; Licence No. 00E0698; LH007-121/5). One of these was identified extending into the site in 2019; however, excavation of this feature in 2023 confirmed that the burnt spread remains were ex-situ, most likely disturbed by a 19th-century water channel (Bennett 2023:682, Licence No. 23E0337).

A test excavation was carried out along a section of the Farrandreg Drainage Scheme, c. 51m to the east of the proposed development area, following on from a geophysical survey (Bolger 2000b; Licence No. 00E0082). This encountered several sherds of coarse pottery and a series of pits and post-holes. The pits were identified as rubbish pits associated with the adjacent souterrain (LH007-034) and the presence of a tanged knife and spear ferrule suggest an early medieval date for the features.

A number of sites were excavated in advance of the M1 DWB. These consisted of a *fulacht fia*, c. 364m to the west (Hayes 2004; Licence No. 04E0817; LH007-183); a Beaker phase habitation site, c. 3401m to the west (Bayley 2003b; Licence No. 03E0113; LH007-171); a Neolithic roundhouse and two Bronze Age *fulachta fia* troughs, c. 436m to the northwest (Bayley 2003a; Licence No. 03E0114; LH007-172/3) and a circular ringfort with a souterrain, c. 429m to the northwest (Bayley 2003c; Licence No. 03E0115; LH007-174001/2).

A *fulacht fia* was revealed during testing for a proposed housing development at Farrandreg, c. 401m to the east (Murphy 1995, Licence No. 95E0113; LH007-124). During construction works for the development a dry-stone souterrain, c. 287m east was recorded and excavated (Murphy 1998; Licence No. 95E0109 ext.; LH007-123).

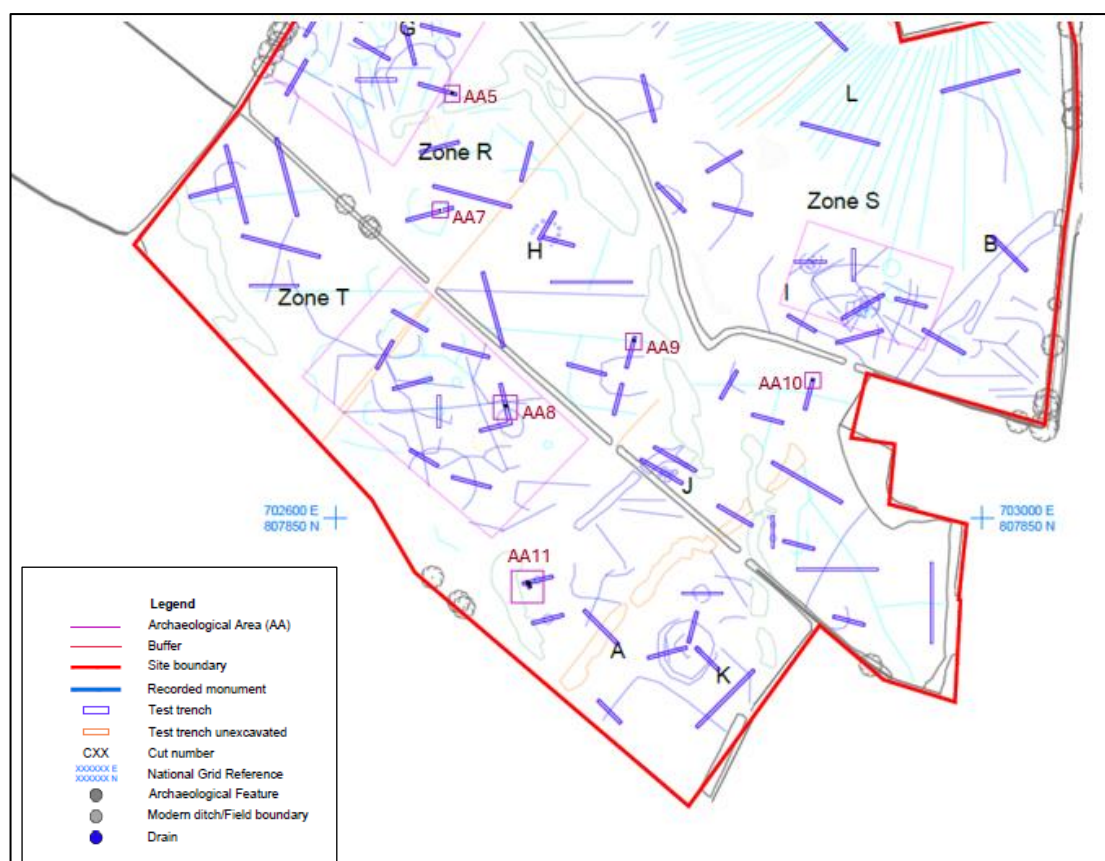


Figure 17.5b: Location of AA5 and AA7-11 within the southern part of the proposed development area

Monitoring in advance of the construction of a housing development at Farrandreg identified an oval pit filled with *fulacht fia* material, c. 410m to the east of the proposed development area and a burnt mound c. 327m to the east, both of which were subsequently excavated (Danaher 2001a, Licence No. 01E0947; Danaher 2001b, Licence No. 01E1008; LH007-136; Danaher 2001c, Licence No. 01E1009; LH007-135).

Unlicensed monitoring of topsoil-stripping for the sewerage scheme exposed a *fulacht fia* c. 412m to the east of the proposed development area (Lynch 1998a). During excavation of the site a trough containing a fragment of cremated bone was revealed (Lynch 1998b Licence No. 98E0573; LH007-122). In addition to this a multi-chambered souterrain was investigated in advance of the scheme, c. 325m to the east (Lynch 1999a; Licence 99E0624 No. 607; LH007-034).

The eight licences tabulated below (Table 17.1) did not identify anything of archaeological significance within the study area of the proposed development.

Licence No	Reference	Distance from Development
E005288	Bennett 2023:624	Within proposed development
CO01113; E005438; W000465	Bennett 2022:744	Immediate east at Castle- motte and bailey (LH007-118007)
20E0344	Bennett 2020:531	Immediate east
95E0281	Bennett 1995:203	c. 40m north
99E0216	Bennett 199:595	c. 65m north
03E1855	Bennett 2003:1255	c. 114m north
98E0278	Bennett 1998:457	c. 190m northeast
14E0446	Bennett 2014:201	c. 247m east
98E0191	Bennett 1998:456	c. 270m north

20E0657	Bennett 2023:623	c. 306m southeast
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Table 17.1: Archaeological Investigations that revealed nothing of significance

17.3.3 Cartographic Analysis

Richard Bartlett Map, 1600

This is an early depiction of Castletown. It shows a crude drawing of a tower house to the west of the walled town of Dundalk.

Symone Garstin's Map of The Castle and Town of Castletown 1655

This early map shows a northeast-facing oblique view of Castletown in the mid-17th century. The 'Dún Dealgan' motte (LH007-118007) is depicted in the foreground with no structure existing on the top. Richard Bellew's 1472 tower house (LH007-118003) is shown to the southeast of the main cluster of dwellings. Several rows of houses sit along the road to Dundalk running west-east. A road runs from this to the north towards the location of the second, larger, 1479 tower house (LH007-118001). A mill is located to the west of the tower house grounds sitting on a small tributary of the Castletown River. The approximate location of the proposed development area sits in open land in the foreground of the illustration.

Matthew Wren's Topographical Survey of County Louth, 1766

This map depicts general topographic features but lacks detail. The larger tower house (LH007-118001) is shown at the centre of Castletown and Richard Bellew's first castle is no longer depicted. There are fewer small buildings drawn in the area; however, this may be a result of this specific stylistic representation. Lands to the east are drawn as parkland with large gardens radiating outwards from Dundalk. 'Dún Dealgan' motte (LH007-118007) and the area representing the proposed development area are marked as open fields. The west-northwest-east-southeast road to Dundalk borders the northern edge of the proposed development area reaching a square at the centre of Castletown. From here a north-south road runs to the east of the motte. Much of this road layout still exists in modern Castletown. A small stream is also marked as running through the proposed development area on a west-east orientation just south of the motte.

Taylor and Skinner's Map of County Louth, 1778

This map shows an extensive road network around the settlement of Dundalk, as well as numerous topographical features. The proposed development area is located within the townland of 'Newtownballyregan'. The motte (LH007-118007) and the area contained within the proposed development are depicted as open fields. A laneway runs from the crossroads to the north of the motte in a south-westerly direction, bisecting the proposed development area (Figure 17.6).

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1843, scale 1:10,560

This is the first accurate historic mapping coverage of the area containing the proposed development area. The site is located primarily in the townland of Castletown with the southernmost part of it crossing into Newtownbalregan and part of the southern edge of the proposed development running along the Lisnawully townland boundary (Figure 17.6).

A road or laneway crosses west-east through the proposed development area north of the motte (LH007-118007), which is also marked on Taylor and Skinner's map. It runs from what appears to be a farmyard abutting the western boundary to the road on the eastern side. The Castletown/Newtownbalregan townland boundary is drawn on the map. This exists today as a modern field boundary running through the middle of the site. A dwelling, no longer present, is shown on the northern boundary road and appears to sit within the proposed development area.

The road layout has become more formalized with the square at Castletown becoming a crossroads with a number of houses surrounding it. Byrne's Folly is marked on the top of the motte (LH007-118007). The tower house (LH007-118001) is labelled and several ancillary buildings are shown around it. The lands surrounding the tower house have become more managed and open. The clusters of dwellings depicted in Symone Garstin's 1655 map are no longer present, apparently replaced by

parkland and gardens. A flour mill is shown to the west of the tower house in a similar position as the mill shown on Garstin's map. The church and graveyard (LH007-118005/11) are visible south of the castle with a schoolhouse also labelled within the graveyard.



Figure 17.6: Extract from Taylor and Skinner's 1778 map showing the approximate location of the proposed development area

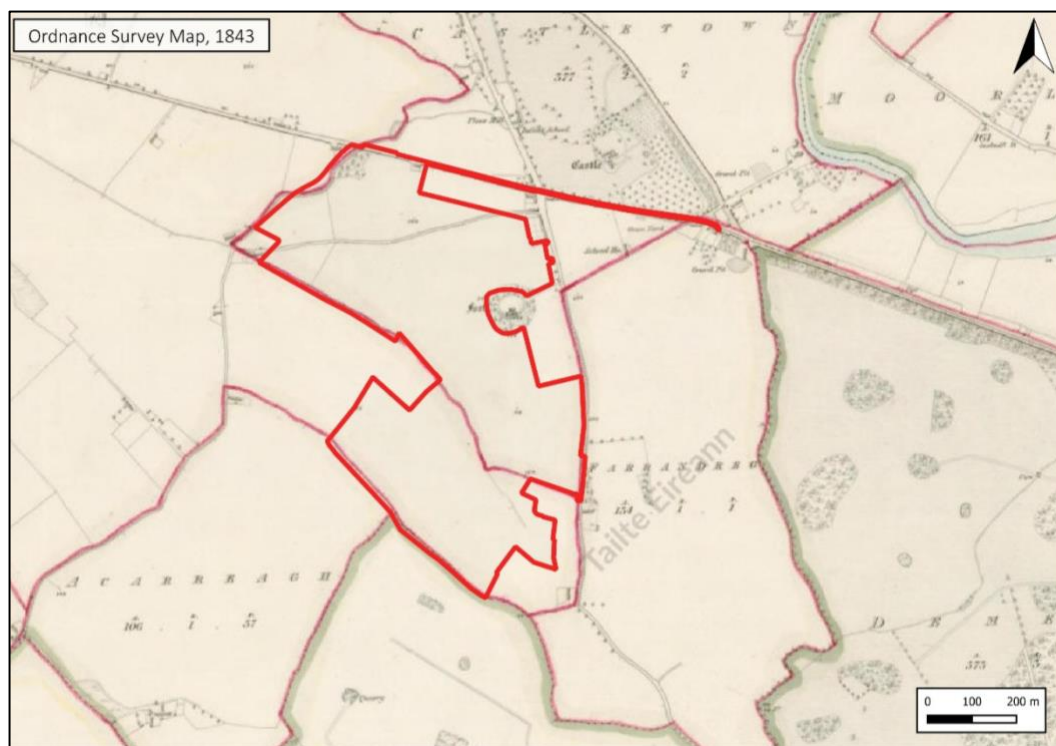


Figure 17.7: Extract from the first edition OS map (1843) showing the proposed development area

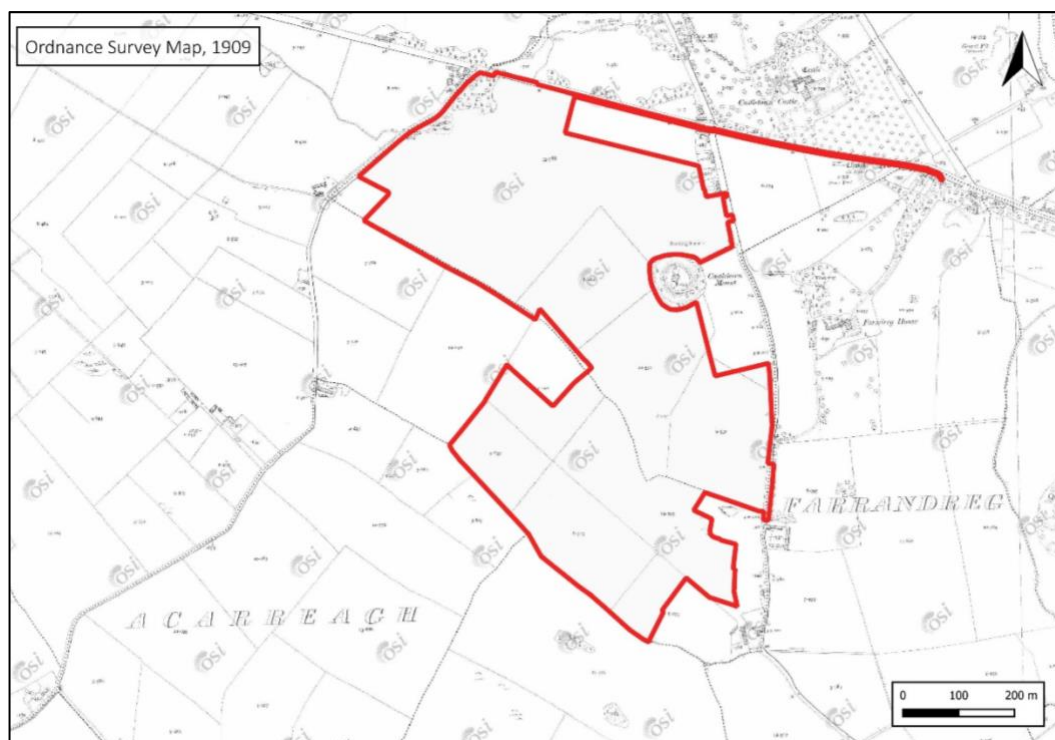


Figure 17.8: Extract from the 1909 OS map showing the proposed development area

Ordnance Survey Map, 1909, scale 1:2,500

Several changes occurred since the first edition OS map (Figure 17.8). The proposed development area now sits within divided fields. The northern portion is typically open and the road that ran across the site has been removed. New field systems are also marked as present. The area between the motte and the Castletown/Newtownbalregan townland boundary to the south has been divided into four fields. The area between Newtownbalregan and Lisnawully has also been subdivided into five fields. The standing stone (LH007-118006) within the proposed development area is now labelled and the small dwelling along the northern road boundary of the site is no longer present.

Several new buildings appear around the Castletown crossroads and the castle grounds are still open with some wooded areas. The mill is now labelled as disused, the church is in ruins and the school house is no longer in the graveyard (LH007-1180011).

Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1938-8, scale 1:10,560

The site still sits within open fields, the sub-divisions south of the motte (LH007-118007) have been removed, whilst those between Newtownbalregan and Lisnawully are still present. Several new dwellings have been built along the northern boundary of the site and the souterrain (LH007-118008) within 'Dún Dealgan' motte is labelled.

17.3.4 County Development Plan

17.3.4.1 Record of Monuments and Places

The Louth County Development Plan (2021–2027) and Dundalk Local Areal Plan (2025-2031) recognise the statutory protection afforded to all Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) sites under the National Monuments Legislation (1930–2014). The development plan lists a number of aims and objectives in relation to archaeological heritage (Appendix 17.4).

A standing stone (LH007-118006), known as the 'Lia Lingadon', lies within the eastern portion of the proposed development area. The northeast portion of the proposed development is also situated within the ZAP for the historic town of Castletown (LH007-118). There are a further 27 archaeological sites within a 500m radius of the proposed development all within the townlands of Castletown,

Farrandreg, Newtownbalregan and Lisnawully (Table 17.2; Figure 17.1; Appendix 17.1). Of these sites, ten have been preserved by record as part of archaeological investigations.

The proposed development area borders 'Dún Dealgan', a motte and bailey castle, which is a National Monument in state guardianship (Nat Mon. 388) and a recorded monument (LH007-118007). A souterrain (LH007-118008) is recorded on the southern side of the National Monument and a cist burial (LH007-118009) has been reconstructed on the avenue bank of the motte.

RMP No.	Location	Classification	Distance from development
LH007-118006	Castletown	Standing Stone	0m
LH007-118	Castletown	Historic Town	0m
LH007-118007	Castletown	Castle- motte and bailey	Immediate east of proposed development
LH007-118009	Castletown	Cist (present location)	c. 11m southwest
LH007-118008	Castletown	Souterrain	c. 61m east
LH007-118003	Castletown	Castle- unclassified	c. 75m northeast
LH007-025	Castletown	Souterrain	c. 120m northwest
LH007-121	Farrandreg	<i>Fulacht fia</i>	c. 168m southeast
LH007-118011	Castletown	Graveyard	c. 165m east-northeast
LH007-118005	Castletown	Church	c. 215m east-northeast
LH007-118004/10	Castletown	Graveslabs	c. 215m east-northeast
LH007-125	Farrandreg	<i>Fulacht fia</i>	c. 230m southeast
LH007-024	Castletown	Souterrain	c. 245m northwest
LH007-118001	Castletown	Castle- tower house	c. 250m northeast
LH007-199	Farrandreg	Standing Stone	c. 260m southeast
LH007-118002	Castletown	Stone head	c. 260m northeast
LH007-123*	Farrandreg	Souterrain	c. 287m east-northeast
LH007-133*	Farrandreg	Habitation site	c. 290m east
LH007-034	Farrandreg	Souterrain	c. 330m southeast
LH007-135*	Farrandreg	<i>Fulacht fia</i>	c. 330m east
LH007-200	Farrandreg	Standing Stone	c. 355m southeast
LH007-183*	Newtownbalregan	<i>Fulacht fia</i>	c. 360m west
LH007-171*	Newtownbalregan	Habitation site	c. 400m west
LH007-124*	Farrandreg	<i>Fulacht fia</i>	c. 400m east-northeast
LH007-136*	Farrandreg	Excavation-miscellaneous	c. 405m east
LH007-122*	Farrandreg	<i>Fulacht fia</i>	c. 405m east
LH007-172/173*	Newtownbalregan	House- Neolithic and <i>fulacht fia</i>	c. 430m northwest
LH007-174001/2*	Newtownbalregan	Ringfort and souterrain	c. 475m northwest
LH007-061	Lisnawully	Souterrain	c. 500m south
LH007-035	Lisnawully	Souterrain	c. 500m southeast

Table 17.2: Recorded archaeological sites in the study area

*Subject to archaeological excavation

17.3.4.2 Record of Protested Structures

The Louth County Development Plan (2021–2027) and Dundalk Local Area Plan (2025–2031) recognises the value of the built heritage to the town and county, and is committed to the protection and enhancement of this heritage by providing measures for the protection of architectural heritage. These include the establishment of a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).

There are five structures included on the RPS within 500m of the proposed development, all situated within the townland of Castletown (Table 17.3; Figure 17.3; Appendix 17.2).

RPS No.	Name	Distance From Development	Designation
D089	Gate Piers to Castletown Castle	c. 165m northeast	RPS
D088	Castletown Church and Graveyard	c. 215m east-northeast	RPS, RMP
D090	House	c. 235m northeast	RPS
D091	Tower house	c. 250m northeast	RPS, RMP
D092	Stone head	c. 260m northeast	RPS, RMP

Table 17.3: Protected Structures in the study area

17.3.4.3 Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

The proposed development area is not located within an ACA. In addition, there are no designated ACAs in the study area.

17.3.5 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

17.3.5.1 Building Survey

A review of the NIAH survey of County Louth was undertaken as part of this assessment and included buildings within 500m of the study area. There is one structure (House, NIAH 13900737) listed on the NIAH building survey within the Castletown townland and it is also a protected structure (RPS D090) (Table 17.3, Appendix 17.2).

17.3.5.2 Garden Survey

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of County Louth (1843) shows the extent of demesne landscapes as shaded portions of land within the study area. These were established as a naturalised landscaped setting for the large houses of the landed gentry. Castletown Castle and later house are located within a demesne landscape is located c. 80m to the northeast of the proposed development area. The demesne is marked on the first edition OS map with areas of planting and a walled garden. Today much of the former demesne has been lost due to the development of a school within the site, along with modern residential development along the roads that formerly flanked the landscape.

The first edition OS map shows a small triangular demesne landscape and an unlabelled house c. 350m north of the proposed development area. By the time of the 1909 OS map the house is labelled as 'Castletown House', along with a pond and planting. Today no trace of the landscape survives and the site is occupied by a modern church and graveyard.

The 1909 OS map shows a designed landscape located to the immediate east of the proposed development area, although it is not present on the first edition OS map. The principal structures is labelled as Farndreg House. Today the main structure remains present but the entire landscape has been subject to modern development.

Lisnawully demesne was established as a large designed landscape c. 430m south of the proposed development area. The first edition shows a large but modestly designed landscape, which had been developed further by the 1909 OS map. Today, whilst the principal structures remains extant, the landscape as a whole has been subject to a large amount of modern development.

The first edition OS map also shows a large demesne landscape located c. 405m to the east of the proposed development area. This was established as part of Dundalk House, which formerly fronted onto the main street through the town. It contained numerous characteristics of a designed landscape, including extensive planting, footpaths, a large walled garden and outbuildings, farm yard, dove cot and an ice house. Today the former demesne has almost disappeared due to modern development, including the construction of the railway through the middle of the landscape. The ice house does survive, along with a small portion of the former demesne planting, within a small green space in the central part of the former demesne.

17.3.6 Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

Information on artefact finds from the study area in County Louth has been recorded by the National Museum of Ireland since the late 18th century. Location information relating to these finds is important in establishing prehistoric and historic activity in the study area. There are a large number of artefacts recorded from within the townland of Castletown, which are listed in Appendix 17.3. These include a number of medieval and post medieval pottery sherds, animal teeth, clay pipe fragments, a gold ring recovered from the motte at Castletown, an iron arrowhead also found at the motte and a flint arrowhead.

17.3.7 Aerial Photographic and LiDAR Analysis

Inspection of the aerial photographic coverage of the proposed development area held by the Ordnance Survey (1995–2013), Google Earth (2008–2025), Bing Maps and LiDAR coverage has been carried out as part of this assessment. No previously unrecorded sites or features of archaeological potential were noted. Historic aerial coverage was also reviewed, including oblique aerials views of the motte at Castletown, held by Cambridge University and dating to 1965. No previously unrecorded archaeological features were noted in the vicinity of the existing monument.

17.3.8 Cultural Heritage

The term ‘cultural heritage’ can be used as an over-arching term that can be applied to both archaeology and architecture. It also refers to more ephemeral aspects of the environment, which are often recorded in folk law or tradition or possibly date to a more recent period. The archaeological and architectural features and landscapes discussed through this chapter also constitute cultural heritage features.

As noted within the historic background the site of the motte at Castletown plays an important role within Irish mythology, which is also reflected in a further name given to the site: Cúchulainn’ Castle. Legend states that Cúchulainn may have been born at the site and it is also mentioned in the Irish Epic, ‘Táin Bó Cuailgne’ as the place from where the ‘boy warrior Cúchulainn bases himself while attacking the forces of Queen Maeve’. Prior to the 11th century the site was referred to as ‘Delga’ and it was only after a mention in the Annals of Ulster (1002AD) that the prefix ‘Dún’ was added. It is possible that ‘Dun Dealga’ was perhaps a reference to a legendary Firbolg chieftain named Dealga. The historic and archaeological evidence certainly indicates that there was a significant early medieval site at this location prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans.

17.3.8.1 Placename Analysis

Topographic names are an invaluable source of information on topography, land ownership and land use within the landscape. They may also provide information on history; archaeological monuments and folklore of an area. A place name may refer to a long-forgotten site and may indicate the possibility that the remains of certain sites may still survive below the ground surface. The Ordnance Survey surveyors wrote down townland names in the 1830’s and 1840’s, when the entire country was mapped for the first time. Some of the townland names in the study area are of Irish origin and through time have been anglicised. The main references used for the place name analysis are Irish

Local Names Explained by P.W Joyce (1870) and Logainm.ie. A description and possible explanation of each placename in the environs of the proposed development are provided in the below table.

Placename	Derivation	Possible meaning
Castletown	<i>Dun Dealgan</i>	Fort of Dealgan (named after a legendary Fir Bolg Chiefain.
Newtownbalregan	<i>Baile Riggan</i>	Town of Riggan
Acarreagh	<i>Acar Ríach</i>	Grey Acre or Land
Lisnawully	<i>Lios a mhullaigh</i>	Fort of the Summit
Farrandreg	<i>Fearann dearg</i>	Red land

Table 17.4: Placename Analysis

17.3.8.2 Townland Boundaries

The townland is an Irish land unit of considerable longevity as many of the units are likely to represent much earlier land divisions. However, the term townland was not used to denote a unit of land until the Civil Survey of 1654. It bears no relation to the modern word 'town' but like the Irish word *baile* refers to a place. It is possible that the word is derived from the Old English *tun land* and meant 'the land forming an estate or manor' (Culleton 1999, 174).

Gaelic land ownership required a clear definition of the territories held by each sept and a need for strong, permanent fences around their territories. It is possible that boundaries following ridge tops, streams or bog are more likely to be older in date than those composed of straight lines (ibid. 179).

The vast majority of townlands are referred to in the 17th century, when land documentation records begin. Many of the townlands are mapped within the Down Survey of the 1650s, so called as all measurements were carefully 'laid downe' on paper at a scale of forty perches to one inch. Therefore, most are in the context of pre-17th century landscape organisation (McErlean 1983, 315).

In the 19th century, some demesnes, deer parks or large farms were given townland status during the Ordnance Survey and some imprecise townland boundaries in areas such as bogs or lakes, were given more precise definition (ibid.). Larger tracks of land were divided into a number of townlands, and named Upper, Middle or Lower, as well as Beg and More (small and large) and north, east, south and west (Culleton 1999, 179). By the time the first Ordnance Survey had been completed a total of 62,000 townlands were recorded in Ireland.

Although not usually recorded as archaeological monuments in their own right, townland boundaries are important as cultural heritage features as they have indicated the extents of the smallest land division unit in the country- the townland- which have been mapped since the 19th century. It remains unclear how old these land units actually are, although it has been convincingly argued that they date to at least the medieval period and may be significantly older than this (McErlean 1983; MacCotter 2008).

The proposed development area is bisected by the townland boundary that separates Castletown to the north and Newtownbalregan to the south. This is formed by a well-established hedgerow. The remainder of the site is surrounded by townland boundaries, which follow the existing road network for the most part.

17.3.9 Field Inspection

A field inspection has been carried out of the proposed development area, which was undertaken prior to the commencement of archaeological testing. The proposed development area, as noted during the course of this assessment, is formed by three large fields of agricultural land, which are bounded by mature field boundaries. The southern portion of the site is relatively level, with the motte at Castletown located at a higher elevation in the landscape to the north, as shown in Plate

17.1 (National Monument in state guardianship (Nat Mon. 388), recorded monument (LH007-118007). The motte is formed by a tall mound in the landscape, topped by the ruins of the post medieval house and surrounded by a moat. The site is planted with mature trees, the presence of which are indicated within the historic maps. A modern waterworks has been established to the immediate southeast of the monument, which once formed part of the bailey.

To the north of the motte and bailey castle is a recorded standing stone (LH007-118006, Plate 17.2). This is a granitic boulder that measures 1.3m in height and 0.7m in width, with a square section. The stone is located c. 20m northeast of the castle site and whilst it has been linked to the legend of Cúchulainn, it may be Bronze Age in date.

The western portion of the proposed development slopes in a western direction from the motte and bailey, whereas the northern portion of the site slopes in a northern direction towards the Castletown Road. Castletown Road itself is flanked by modern residential development until it reaches the Castletown Crossroads. Here the original stone demesne boundary wall that surrounded the former demesne associated with the house and tower house, which is labelled as Castletown Castle within the historic mapping. The demesne and the structures are now in use as a school.



Plate 17.1: View north across the proposed development area, showing Castletown Motte and Bailey Castle

The field inspection confirmed the presence of the recorded monuments within and adjacent to the proposed development. None of the small archaeological features that were identified during test trenching were found to possess surface expression during the field inspection. No previously unrecorded structures or architectural heritage merit were noted within or immediately adjacent to the development area.



Plate 17.2: Standing stone LH007-118006, facing south

17.3.10 Conclusion

The proposed development area is located within the townlands of Newtownbalregan and Castletown, Mount Avenue, Dundalk, Co. Louth. The proposed development area is located within the ZAP for the historic settlement of Castletown, which is a recorded monument (LH007-118). In addition it contains one recorded monument, a standing stone (LH007-118006). The site also directly borders 'Dún Dealgan', a motte and bailey castle, which is a National Monument in state guardianship (Nat Mon. 388) and a recorded monument (LH007-118007). This site, whilst archaeological in form, is also a significant cultural heritage site, given its links to Cúchulainn and the mythology that survives from Iron Age Ireland.

There are a further 27 recorded monuments within the study area, ten of which have been subject to preservation by record. Given the high archaeological potential of the proposed development area, this assessment has been informed by a programme of geophysical survey and archaeological test trenching. Metal detection was also carried out during the testing. Although a number of archaeological anomalies were identified during the course of the geophysical survey, the targeted programme of test trenching only identified 11 small areas of archaeological potential. These comprised isolated pits for the most part, along with several ditches. The lack of archaeological activity is surprising given the presence of a significance early medieval and medieval monument in the landscape. It is therefore likely that the proposed development area has been primarily in use as agricultural lands for centuries, with earlier habitation possibly located further to the north of the motte at Castletown.

There are no Protected Structures or NIAH structures located in or directly adjacent to the proposed development area. The closest building comprises the gate entrance to Castletown Castle (RPS Ref.: D089), c. 165m to the northeast. No previously unrecorded structures of built heritage merit were identified in or within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area during the course of the assessment.

17.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development comprises 1,058no. dwellings (765no. houses, 150no. duplex units, and 143no. apartments) including 2no. duplexes with an option to accommodate a childcare facility at ground floor level; a local centre comprising ground floor retail units, a medical unit, and mobility hub; provision of a c.194 place childcare facility; all in buildings ranging in height from 1 to 6 storeys. All associated and ancillary site development and infrastructural works, hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment works, including public, communal and private open space; public lighting; surface car parking spaces; bicycle parking; ESB substations; bin stores; provision of a foul sewage pumping station; laying a foul rising main along Castletown Road from the proposed new access to the development eastward to the Castletown Road and Bellewsbridge Road Junction.

The layout of the proposed development is shown in Figure 17.9, with archaeological constraints, including AA1-11 illustrated.

A comprehensive description of the Proposed Development is presented in Chapter 3 of this EIAR.

A review of other off-site developments was completed as part of this assessment. Chapter 3 of this EIAR details the existing, proposed and granted planning permissions on record in the area, a review of these planning permissions has been completed as part of this assessment.

17.5 POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

17.5.1 Proposed Development

17.5.1.1 Construction Stage

Archaeological Heritage

As noted during the course of this assessment, a programme of geophysical survey and archaeological test trenching has been carried out across the proposed development area. Eleven small areas of archaeological significance were identified. Ground works associated with the construction of the proposed development will result in direct, negative (permanent) impacts on ten of these sites (AA1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). Prior to the application of mitigation, the significance of effect is considered to be moderate.

AA5 will be preserved in-situ as part of the development and as such will not be impacted by the proposed construction works. It remains possible that inadvertent direct, negative (permanent) impacts may occur, prior to the application of mitigation, due to the passing of plant or other construction activities.

The proposed development borders 'Dún Dealgán', a motte and bailey castle, which is a National Monument in state guardianship (Nat Mon. 388) and a recorded monument (LH007-118007). The monument will not be directly impacted by the proposed construction works as a 50m buffer has been established between the development and the monument, as shown on Figure 17.9. Construction works have the potential to result in an indirect, negative (temporary) impact on the setting of the monument, and the significance of effect is considered to be moderate.

A standing stone (LH007-118006) is located within the proposed development area, but will be preserved in-situ within the defined buffer area surrounding the motte and bailey castle. Therefore the site will not be directly impacted by construction works associated with the proposed development. Construction works have the potential to result in an indirect, negative (temporary) impact on the setting of the monument, and the significance of effect is considered to be slight.

Groundworks associated with the proposed development have the potential to result in direct, negative (permanent) impacts on small or isolated archaeological features that have the potential to survive beneath the current ground level, outside of the footprint of the excavated test trenches and artefacts that may survive within the topsoil across the area. Prior to the application of mitigation, these effects may range from moderate to significant, depending on the nature, extent and significance of any remains that may be present.

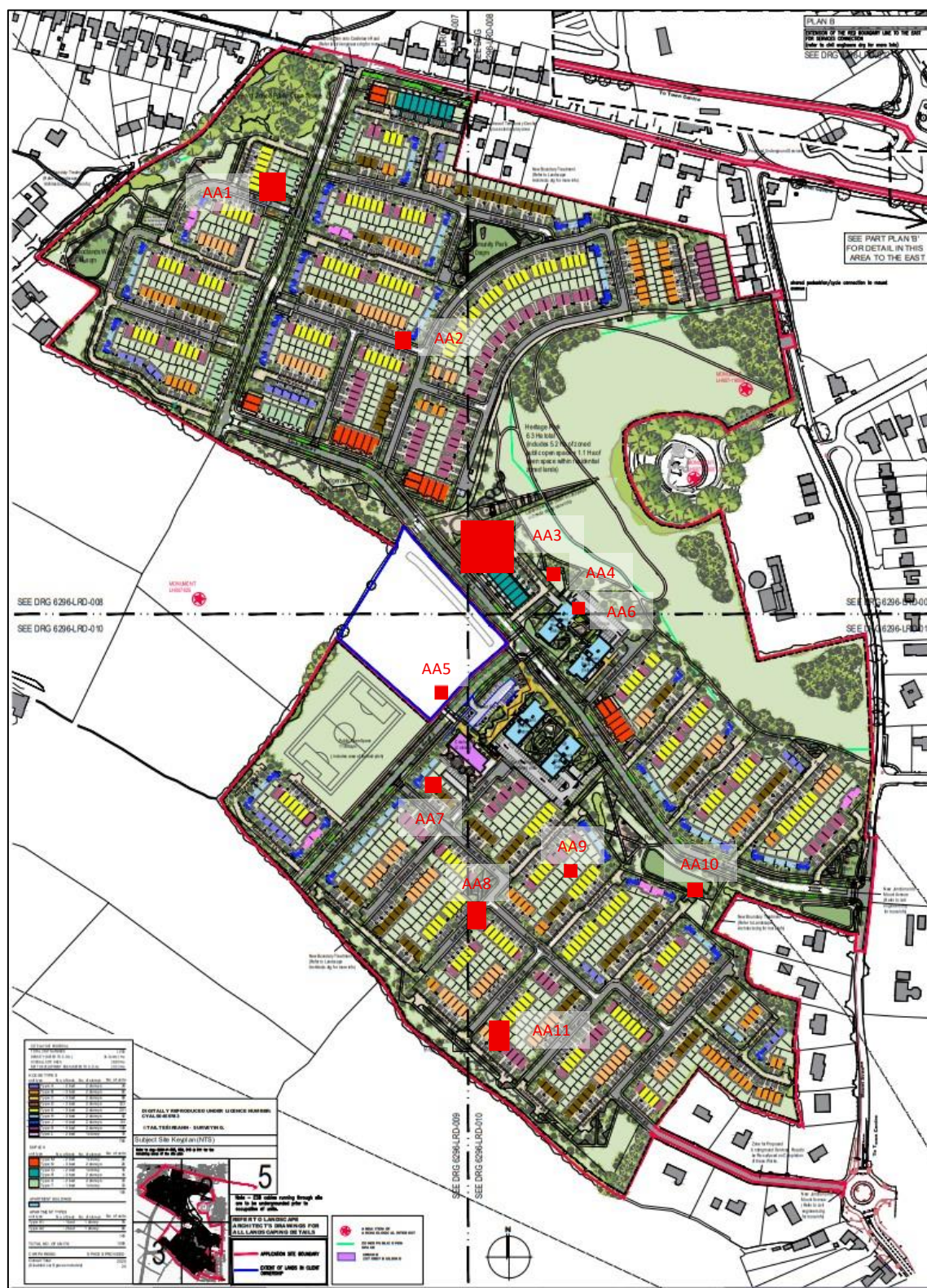


Figure 17.9: Plan of proposed development showing archaeological sites identified during testing

Architectural Heritage

The construction of the proposed development will not result in any direct or indirect impacts on the architectural heritage resource.

Cultural Heritage

As part of the construction of the proposed development a section of the townland boundary that separate Castletown from Newtownbalregan will be removed. The section of the boundary measures c. 250m. This is a direct, negative (permanent) impact with a moderate significance of effect.

17.5.1.2 Operational Stage

Archaeological Heritage

As noted above, the proposed development borders 'Dún Dealgan', a motte and bailey castle, which is a National Monument in state guardianship (Nat Mon. 388) and a recorded monument (LH007-118007). The monument will not be directly impacted by the operation of the proposed development as a 50m buffer has been established between the development and the monument, as shown on Figure 17.9. The operation of the development will result in an indirect, negative (permanent) impact on the setting of the monument, although the monument will remain the landmark feature in the area. Sections through the development, showing the roof heights of the development illustrate this (reproduced in Figure 17.10 below).

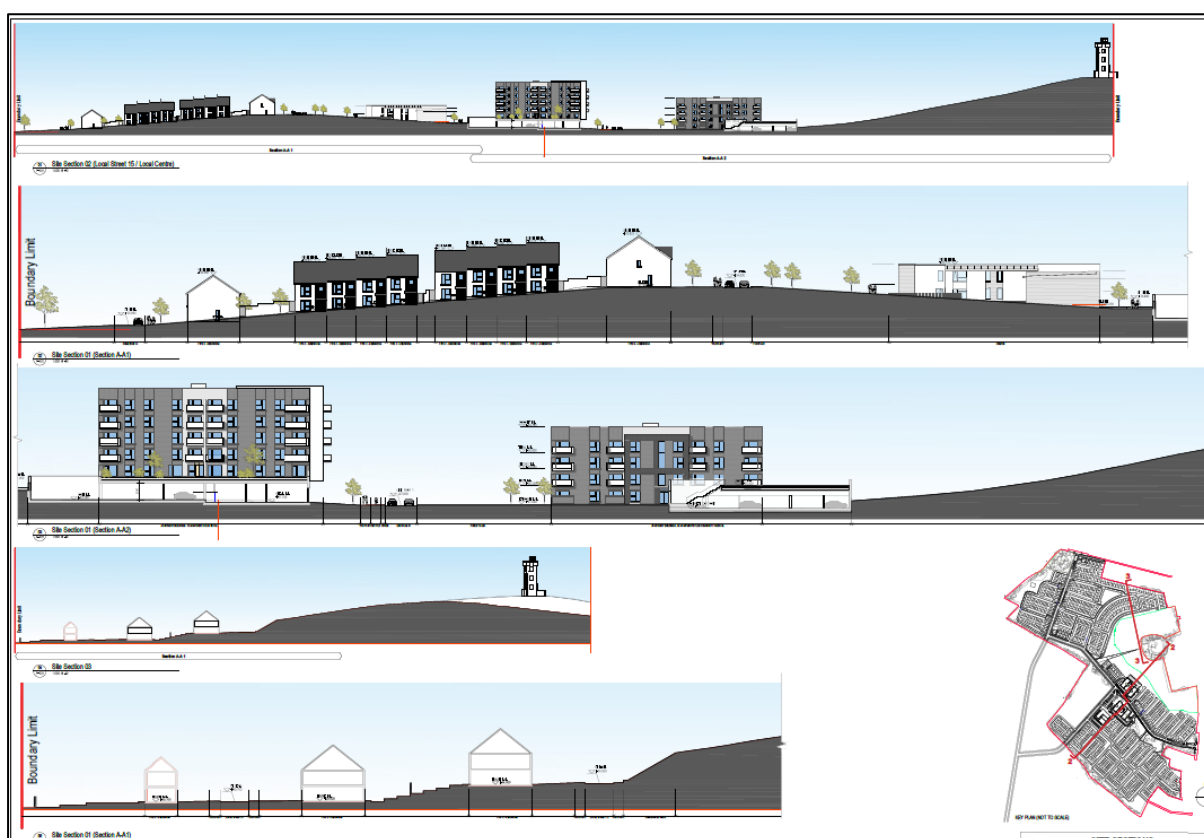


Figure 17.10: Sections through the proposed development including Castletown Motte and Bailey

Currently the motte and bailey is only accessible to the public from Mount Avenue, to the east of the monument. The access to the monument provides no opportunity to view the motte in the landscape, as the proposed development area is currently under private ownership. Whilst the operation of the proposed development will result in an impact on the setting of the monument, this is offset by the fact that public access to the monument will be significantly improved and it will be visible in its current landscape setting from the south, west and north.

The standing stone (LH007-118006) is located within the proposed development area and will be preserved in-situ within the defined buffer area surrounding the motte and bailey castle. Therefore, the site will not be directly impacted by the operation of the proposed development. The operation phase does have the potential to result in an indirect, negative (permanent) impact on the setting of

the monument, and the significance of effect is considered to be slight. This is offset by the fact that the standing stone, as part of the operation, will become accessible to the public. This is an improvement as the proposed development area is currently in private ownership.

Architectural Heritage

The operation of the proposed development will not result in any direct or indirect impacts on the architectural heritage resource.

Cultural Heritage

The operation of the proposed development will not result in any direct or indirect impacts on the cultural heritage resource, other than those detailed above.

17.5.1.3 Do-Noting Impact

If the proposed development were not to proceed there would be no negative impacts on the archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage resource; however, the opportunity to provide public access to the recorded standing stone would be lost, along with improved access to the Castletown Motte and Bailey.

17.5.2 Cumulative

17.5.2.1 Construction Stage

All proposed and permitted developments within the 500m study area have been reviewed for potential cumulative construction impacts upon the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage resource. No cumulative impacts have been identified upon the archaeological resource, as the archaeological remains within the proposed development area will be preserved by record or in-situ. No surrounding developments will result in any effects on the Motte and Bailey Castle.

No cumulative construction impacts have been identified upon the architectural or cultural heritage resource.

17.5.2.2 Operational Stage

All proposed and permitted developments within the 500m study area have been reviewed for potential cumulative operation impacts upon the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage resource. No cumulative operation impacts have been identified upon the archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage resource. This is due to the fact that no surrounding development will result in effects on the Motte and Bailey Castle and no operational impacts are predicted as part of the proposed development, subject to this assessment, on the architectural and cultural heritage resource.

17.6 MITIGATION MEASURES (AMELIORATIVE, REMEDIAL OR REDUCTIVE MEASURES)

17.6.1 Proposed Development

17.6.1.1 Construction Stage

Archaeological Heritage

Whilst it is noted that preservation in-situ is the preferred manner in which to conserve the archaeological resource, this will not be possible for the small archaeological areas identified at AA1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, during archaeological test trenching. As such, these archaeological areas will be preserved by record prior to the commencement of construction. This will be carried out under licence to the National Monuments Service of the DoHLGH.

AA5 will be preserved in-situ as part of the development, but in order to prevent inadvertent impacts from surrounding construction activities, the site will be fenced off during the construction phase.

In addition, the buffer area surrounding the motte and bailey castle (National Monument in state guardianship (Nat Mon. 388), recorded monument LH007-118007) and standing stone (LH007-118006), will be temporarily fenced off during construction, in order to prevent inadvertent impacts during construction.

All topsoil stripping associated with the development will be subject to archaeological monitoring and a strategic programme of metal detecting. These works will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under licence to the National Monuments Service of the DoHLGH. If any archaeological remains are identified during the course of these works, further mitigation will be required such as preservation in-situ or by record. Any further mitigation will require agreement from the National Monuments Service.

No mitigation measures are required for the architectural heritage resource during the construction phase.

The removal of the townland boundary between Castletown and Newtownbalregan will be subject to archaeological monitoring. This work will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under licence to the National Monuments Service of the DoHLGH.

17.6.1.2 Operational Stage

Archaeological Heritage

In order to enhance the public appreciation of the motte and bailey castle and recorded standing stone, which will be set within public open space, information panels will be erected at appropriate locations within the development area that provide information on these monuments and the results of archaeological investigations carried out during the construction of the development.

17.6.2 Cumulative

No cumulative impacts have been identified and as such, no mitigation measures are required.

17.7 RESIDUAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

17.7.1 Proposed Development

17.7.1.1 Construction Stage

Following the completion of mitigation measures there will be no significant negative residual impacts on the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage resource.

17.7.1.2 Operational Stage

Following the completion of the mitigation measures, there will be a slight positive residual impact on the recorded motte and bailey castle and standing stone.

17.7.1.3 Worst Case Impact

Under a worst-case scenario, the proposed development would disturb previously unrecorded and unidentified archaeological deposits and artefacts without proper excavation and recording being undertaken.

17.7.2 Cumulative

All permitted and proposed developments within the study area have been assessed in conjunction with the proposed development. No cumulative residual impacts have been identified in relation to the cultural heritage resource.

17.8 MONITORING

The mitigation measures detailed above would also function as a monitoring system to allow the further assessment of the scale of the predicted impacts and the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.

17.9 REINSTATEMENT

The proposed development does not include a decommissioning or reinstatement phase. Therefore, reinstatement is not applicable to this assessment.

17.10 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

No difficulties were encountered during the compilation of this chapter.