

JOHN CRONIN & ASSOCIATES

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Proposed underground grid connection route, Clondardis Solar Farm to Irishtown Substation, Mullingar, County Westmeath Archaeological screening report

Prepared by
John Cronin & Associates
3a Westpoint Business Centre
Link Road
Ballincollig
Cork

Commissioned by:
Fehily Timoney & Co
Core House
Pouladuff Road
Cork

On behalf of:
Harmony Solar Mullingar Ltd

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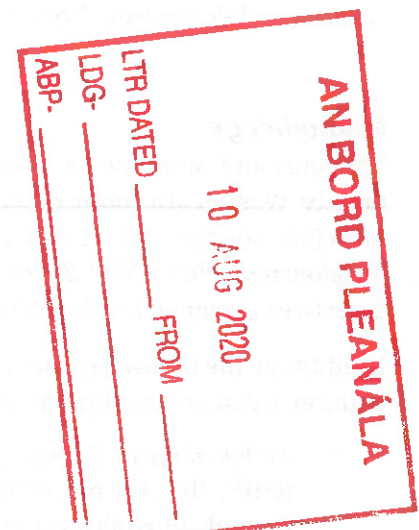
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1. Introduction

John Cronin and Associates have been commissioned by Fehily Timoney & Co, on behalf of Harmony Solar Mullingar Ltd, to compile an archaeological screening report of a study area centred on the proposed underground grid connection route for Clondardis Solar Farm. Harmony Solar Mullingar Ltd propose to establish an underground grid connection (UGC) between the previously approved Clondardis Solar Farm (Westmeath County Council Planning reference: 176239) and Irishtown Substation to the northwest of Mullingar. The proposed development is located within the townlands of Clondardis, Slanestown, Slane More, Walshestown South, Walshestown North, Tullaghan and Irishtown. The substation at Irishtown is located c.2.5km northwest of the town centre of Mullingar, County Westmeath. The route of the proposed underground grid connection extends for distance of approximately 5km and predominantly extends along the local road network.

Section 2 of this report presents the results of a desktop study undertaken to identify the recorded and potential archaeological resource within the environs of the proposed Clondardis Solar Farm grid connection route and also presents an overview of the legal and planning framework designed to protect this resource. This section also presents the results of a review of other relevant sources undertaken to assess the potential for the existence of unrecorded archaeological sites and areas within the environs of the scheme. Furthermore, this section provides details on the legal and planning framework relevant to the archaeological resource within the environs of the proposed scheme. **Section 3** provides a written description and a selection of photographs to illustrate the character of the proposed route. **Section 4** of the report presents an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed works on the archaeological resource, while **Section 5** provides a summary of appropriate mitigation measures.

Methodology

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) for County Westmeath, both published by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI), were the principal sources for identifying known archaeological constraints. The *Westmeath County Development Plan (2014-2020)* was consulted to review the planning authority's policies and objectives designed for the protection of the archaeological resource.

In addition, the following sources were consulted in order to assess the potential for the presence of unrecorded archaeological sites within, and in vicinity to, proposed work areas:

- *Archaeological Survey of Ireland:* Since the publication of the original county SMRs and RMPs, the ASI has continued to record and add entries to the Sites and Monuments Record. In addition, the ASI has developed an online database and web viewer known as 'Historic Environment Viewer'. This has been developed to "enhance the user's experience by facilitating access to the database of the National Monuments Service Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in a seamless one stop point of access for both data resources" (Source: www.archaeology.ie).
- *Database of Irish excavation reports:* This database contains summary accounts of all licensed archaeological excavations carried out in Ireland (North and South) from 1969 to 2019.

- *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage* - The function of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage ('NIAH') is to record built heritage structures within the Republic of Ireland and to advise local authorities in relation to structures of interest within their areas. The NIAH commissions surveys of sites of architectural significance to assist in evaluating structures to be included in the RPS. Listing on the NIAH does not necessarily carry any statutory protection but does highlight the culturally significant aspects of the structure which ought to be conserved.
- *Historical publications and cartographic sources*: various published sources and historical maps were consulted as part of the assessment.
- *Aerial imagery*: available online aerial imagery of the study area was consulted in order to determine if any traces of unrecorded, sub-surface archaeological sites were evident in proximity to proposed work areas.

Grid route inspection

A windscreen survey of the proposed UGC route was undertaken on Wednesday 27th May by Camilla Brännström. The weather at the time of the survey was sunny with clear skies and good visibility. The study area was assessed in terms of historic landscape, land use, vegetation cover, presence and potential for undetected archaeological and architectural heritage sites/features. While this assessment has identified that a recorded archaeological monument (WM019-087---) is dissected by the proposed grid route in the townland of Walshestown North, no other archaeological sites or potential archaeological features were noted along the grid route during the inspection.

2. Context

Location

The study area comprises the route of the proposed underground cable (UGC) connecting Clondardis Solar Farm with the ESB substation at Irishtown (**Figure 1**). The substation at Irishtown is located c.2.5km northwest of the town centre of Mullingar, County Westmeath and the proposed grid route extends for an approximate length of 5km between these two locations. The vast majority of the proposed UGC will be carried by the existing local road network. The physical environment of this area is characterised by limited ribbon development in the townland of Irishtown and dispersed detached houses elsewhere along the route. The landscape consists of rolling patchwork farmland, which is largely pastoral, with the fields invariably enclosed by hedgerows.

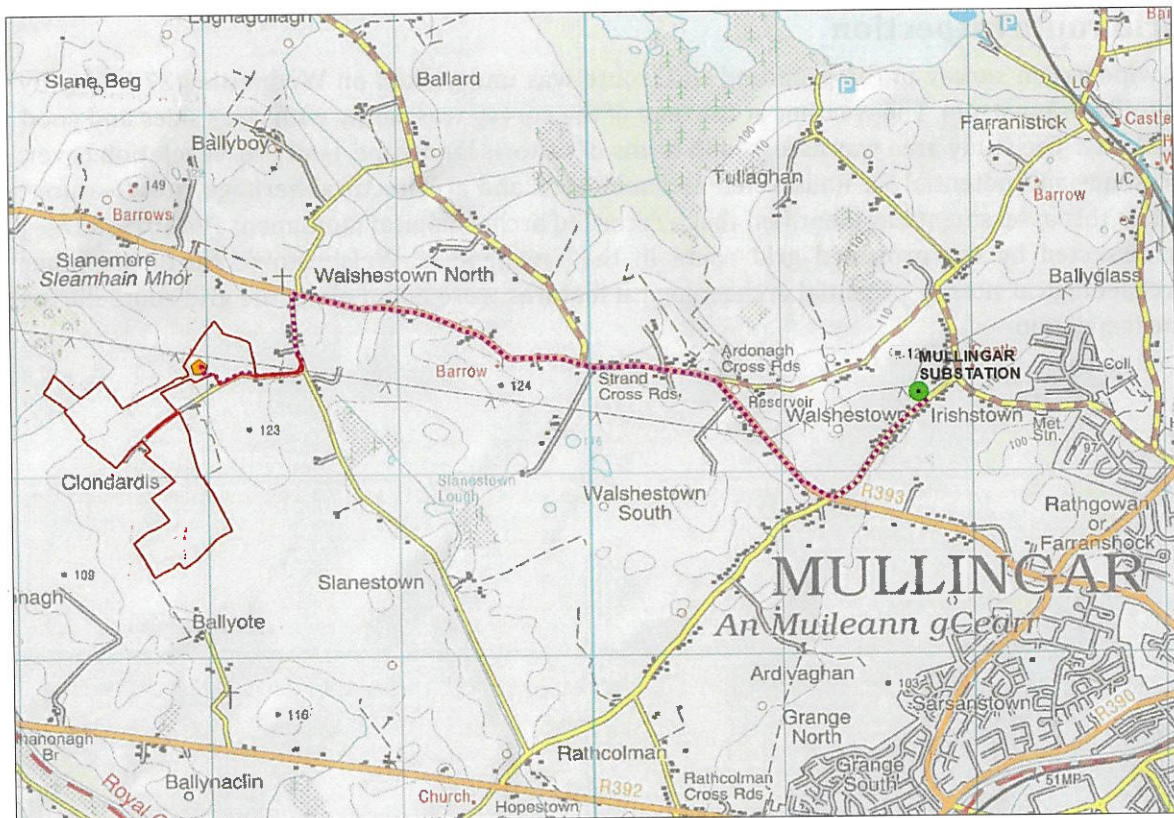


Figure 1: Overview of boundaries of the proposed grid route for Clondardis Solar Farm, Mullingar, County Westmeath

Legal and planning policy context

The management and protection of the archaeological resource in Ireland is achieved through a framework of international conventions and national laws and policies. This framework was established in accordance with the provisions of the 'European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (the Valletta Convention). The National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004, the Heritage Act 1995 and relevant provisions of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 are the primary Irish legal measures for ensuring the satisfactory protection of archaeological

remains, which are deemed to include all man-made structures, of whatever form or date, except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes.

A National Monument is described as 'a monument or the remains of a monument, the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto' (Section 2, National Monument Act, 1930). There are **no** National Monuments located within, or in close proximity to, the study area.

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 (1) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 and is based on the earlier Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). These records comprise lists and maps of archaeological monuments and places within each county in the State. All sites recorded on the RMP receive statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1994 and the National Monuments Service must be given two months' notice of any works proposed to be undertaken at these sites or within their surrounding designated Zones of Notification (ZON). There are **four** archaeological sites recorded on the RMP within 100m of the proposed UGC route (WM018-085001-, WM018-085002-, WM018-085003-, WM019-087----), these sites are listed in **Table 1** and mapped in **Figure 2** below. It must be noted that the public road, along which the grid route is proposed to extend, dissects a ringfort (WM019-087----) in the townland of Walshetown North.

Recorded archaeological sites that have been deemed to be in danger of damage or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the National Monuments Act, 1930 which make any interference to these sites illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can also be attached under the 1954 National Monuments (Amendment) Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation relevant to the site must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders by the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister. There are **no** relevant Preservation Orders within the study area.

The *Westmeath County Development Plan (2014-2020)* outlines the following relevant policies and objectives in relation to the protection of the archaeological heritage resource within the county:

P-AH1 To generally preserve in situ all archaeological remains and sites of importance, such as National Monuments, Recorded Monuments, their setting and context and zones of archaeological potential. Within zones of archaeological potential and in the vicinity of Recorded Monuments, development shall only be permitted where the Council considers the importance of the proposed development or other material considerations outweigh the value of the remains in question, in consultation with the National Monument Service.

P-AH3 To ensure that all sites of archaeological potential are protected from development that may injure any potentially important archaeological features or sites, in consultation with the National Monument Service.

O-AH1 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.

O-AH3 To promote pre-planning consultations in relation to proposed developments that may potentially impact upon Archaeological Heritage.

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O-AH4 To provide guidance to developers and landowners in relation to proposals for development that may potentially impact upon 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-AH7 To require where appropriate, that an Archaeological Assessment be carried out by a suitably qualified person, prior to authorisation or commencement, as appropriate, of any activity that may impact upon Archaeological Heritage.

O-AH8 To ensure that any development taking place either above or below ground which is within, adjacent to, or might affect sites and features of historical and archaeological interest, shall respect the character of the archaeological site and its setting, and shall be sited and designed so as not to undermine the character of the site and its setting.

O-AH9 To impose conditions on development that may impact upon sites of archaeological potential and 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.

Archaeological and historical context

There are **four** archaeological sites, at two separate locations, recorded by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) within 100m of the proposed underground grid connection route (**Table 1** and **Figure 2**). In the central portion of the route, within the townland of Walshestown South, there is a cluster of three sites comprising two barrows (WM018-085001-, WM018-085003-) and an enclosure (WM018-085002-). These sites are located between 50m and 95m to the southwest of the public road (R393) which will carry the underground cable. These sites share a single archaeological Zone of Notification (ZON) which extends to within c.20m of the proposed grid route at its nearest point. The closest monument, ring barrow WM018-085001-, is located c.50m southwest of the grid route. None of these sites will be impacted by any works associated with the proposed grid connection.

In the eastern portion of the proposed grid route, in the townland of Walshestown North, the recorded site of a ringfort (WM019-087----) is dissected by the R393 regional road which is proposed to carry the underground cable. The south-western quadrant of this monument was truncated when this road was constructed in the late 18th or early 19th century (the road was *in-situ* when the first edition 6-inch OS map was surveyed c.1834). The northern half the enclosing bank of this ringfort survives extant in the field to the immediate north of the route. It must be noted that the potential remains for the survival of subsurface archaeological features associated with the ringfort in the sub-strata underlying the R393 regional road. Further details and descriptions of these recorded archaeological sites can be found in the **Appendix** to this report.

Table 1: Recorded archaeological sites located within 100m of the proposed grid connection route

SMR No.	Class	Townland	ITM (E, N)	Distance
WM018-085001-	Barrow - ring-barrow	Walshestown South	639456, 754633	c.50m to SW
WM018-085002-	Enclosure	Walshestown South	639435, 754626	c.80m to SW
WM018-085003-	Barrow - mound barrow	Walshestown South	639424, 754616	c.95m to SW
WM019-087----	Ringfort -rath	Walshestown North	640670, 754470	On route

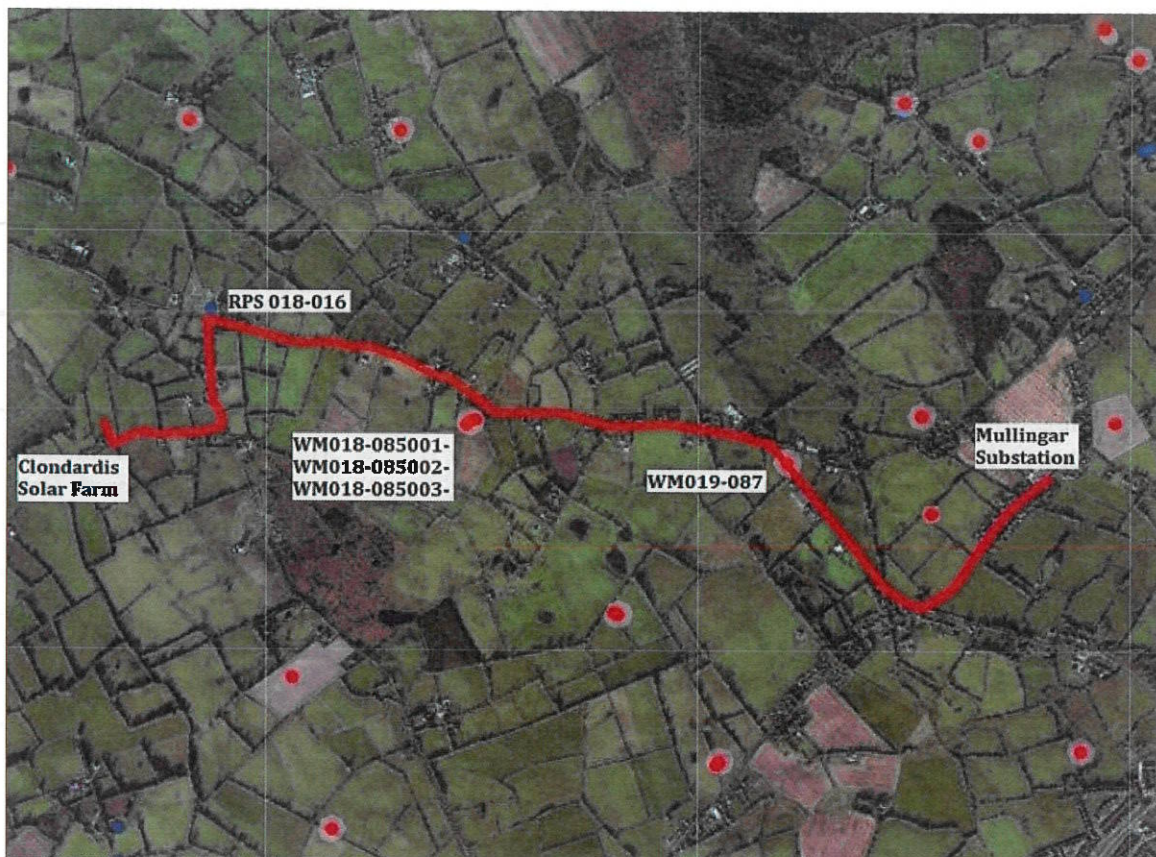


Figure 2: Showing location of RMPs, Zones of Notification and Recorded Protected Structures in relation to the proposed grid connection route (red line) of Clondardis Solar Farm. Recorded archaeological sites are marked by red dots and their Zones of Notification are purple. RPS sites are marked by blue dots.

The study area comprises the proposed route of the underground grid connection between Clondardis Solar Farm and Irishtown Substation to the northwest of Mullingar, County Westmeath. The proposed development extends in a general east to west direction along the local road network for a distance of c.5km, extending through the townlands of Clondardis, Slanestown, Slane More, Walshestown South, Walshestown North, Tullaghan and Irishtown. There is very little written historical documentation in relation to these townlands and the western periphery of the town of Mullingar. The anglicised name of Mullingar is derived from the Irish *An Muileann gCearr*, which translates as the wry or left-hand mill, and is thought to be connected with the site of a medieval watermill (WM019-089006-) located in the southern portion of Mullingar town. According to the 12th century *Life of St Colmán mac Luacháin* the name commemorates a miracle of the saint who caused the mill to turn left-handwise. The story from the *Life of St Colmán mac Luacháin* mentioned earlier records that the fort at Mullingar known as Dún Bri was given to the church of Lynn by Conall mac Suibhne, a 7th century King of Mide (Walsh 1957 84). The story occurs in 12th century life, however, and cannot be taken as an accurate account of 7th century events. But it demonstrates that Lynn held the land of Mullingar in the 12th century on which there was a secular, and perhaps a formerly royal, fort. For much of the early medieval period, the area surrounding Mullingar and the proposed grid connection route was under the control of the southern Uí Néill clans.

The urban settlement was founded by the Anglo-Normans through the Petit family who were granted lands there by Hugh the Lacy in 1170 and quickly established a manor there around a motte and bailey which was later replaced by a castle. The first record of a burgess dates to 1201

and the town received its first grant to hold fairs in 1207. By the 1230s Mullingar comprised 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, however, the town was struck by plague in 1575 which decimated the population, and in 1597 the town 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 Jacobites.

Despite a devastating fire which swept through Mullingar in 1747, the strategic location of the town within a rich agricultural hinterland helped it become an important centre for the wool and cattle trade with markets held regularly. The 19th century turned Mullingar into an increasingly important centre for trade and transport with the Royal Canal opened in 1806 and the Midland Great Western Railway in 1848 both linking the town with Dublin. The town also became an important base for the army who kept several regiments stationed at barracks in the town. The Mullingar Union Workhouse, established in 1841, has since become incorporated in St Mary's Hospital complex located c.600m to the northeast of the proposed development.

In his 1837 *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, Samuel Lewis described the town of Mullingar as follows:

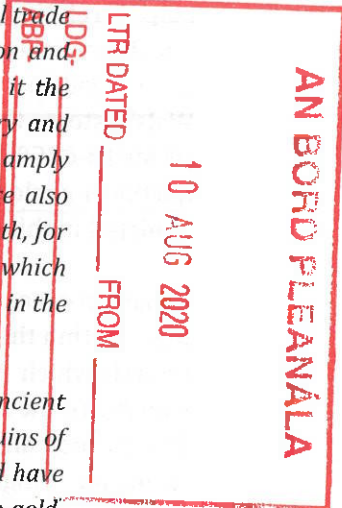
***MULLINGAR**, a market and assize town, and a parish, partly in the barony of FARTULLAGH, but chiefly in that of MOYASHEL and MAGHERADERNON, county of WESTMEATH, and province of LEINSTER, 20 miles (S. E.) from Longford, and 39 (W. by N.) from Dublin ; containing 8869 inhabitants, of which number, 4295 are in the town.*

This was one of the ancient palatinate towns founded by the English settlers of Meath. In 1227, Ralph he Petyt, Bishop of Meath, founded a priory here for canons regular of the order of St. Augustine, which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and was long designated the " House of God of Mullingar." A Dominican friary was founded here in 1237, by the family of Nugent, which attained such celebrity that general chapters of the order were repeatedly held in it. In 1329, Lord Thomas Butler was attacked near this town by Mac Geoghegan, and after an obstinate resistance was defeated and slain; and in 1464 the town was burned and destroyed by the people of Managh. Queen Elizabeth, in 1583, granted to the inhabitants a patent for holding two fairs of three days each, the tolls of which were to be appropriated to the fortification of the town, which lay exposed to the enemy. The monks of Multifarnham, in 1622, commenced the erection of a Franciscan friary, but it was never completed; the two previous religious establishments continued to subsist till the reign of Elizabeth, when they were finally dissolved. In 166], the castle, the two dissolved monasteries, with the town and adjacent lands, were by royal charter granted to Sir Arthur Forbes, ancestor of the Earl of Granard, and erected into a manor, with very extensive privileges ; and for better peopling the said manor, the town of Mullingar was by the same charter constituted the assize town for the county. In the war of the revolution, the town was fortified by Gen. de Ginke], and became the principal rendezvous of William's forces, From this place he led 2000 horse and 1000 foot against the Irish adherents of Jas. II., who had encamped at Ballymore ; and it was also the headquarters of William's army preparatory to the siege of Athlone.

The town is finely situated on the river Brosna, nearly in the centre of the county and of Ireland, and in a fertile and open tract, about halfway between Lough Hoyle and Lough Ennel ; it is partly encircled on the north by the royal canal from which it derives a great

increase of trade ; and the road to Sligo, which passes through it, affords additional facilities of communication. It consists of one principal street, about a mile in length, from which several smaller streets branch off in various directions; and contains 785 houses, most of which are handsome and well-built of stone and roofed with slate. There are barracks for infantry, adapted for 39 officers and 990 non-commissioned officers and privates, with stabling for 21 horses, and an hospital for 80 patients. The principal trade is in wool, for which this is the greatest mart in the county, its central situation and facility of communication with the Shannon and with Dublin having rendered it the commercial centre of a wide extent of country. There are an extensive brewery and malting establishment, and two large tanneries. The market is on Thursday, and is amply supplied; large quantities of butter are sold in firkins, and oats and frieze are also purchased extensively. The fairs are on April 6th, July 4th, Aug. 29th, and Nov. 11th, for wool, horses, horned cattle and pigs; that in November is a great horse fair, at which many English buyers attend. The market-house is a neat and commodious building in the centre of the town.

There are numerous Danish raths in the parish ; at Kinna are the ruins of an ancient church, in which the Hodsons of Green Park are interred ; at Beardstown are the ruins of an ancient fortress, and also at Balthrasna ; several coins and ornaments of gold have been found in the neighbourhood, and, in a bog near the town, a torques of pure gold, weighing 11 oz.



Excavations Database

The Excavation Database (excavations.ie) contains summary accounts of all licenced archaeological investigations carried out in Ireland (North and South) from 1969 onwards. It has been compiled from the published Excavations Bulletins from 1969 to 2010 and online material only from 2011 onwards, it now provides access to over 27,000 reports that can be browsed or searched using multiple fields, including year, county, site type, grid reference, license number, RMP number and author. The database contains no record of any licensed programmes of archaeological investigation being undertaken within 100m of the proposed grid route.

Historic buildings

Consultation of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) as outlined in *The Westmeath County Development Plan (2014-2020)* reveals a single protected structure located within the vicinity of the proposed grid route, this being Walshestown Roman Catholic Church. The main church building is situated c.40m north of the proposed cable corridor which follows the route of the existing R393 road (**Figure 2**). The chapel is set within a graveyard and surrounded by a rendered wall which is bounded by the R393 road to the south. Walshestown Church is also listed as a site of architectural merit within the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) (Reg. No. 15401817). This RPS and NIAH site will not be directly impacted by the proposed development works.

Cartographic review

A review of the historic Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of the study area was undertaken. These maps included the first edition 6-inch OS map (surveyed c.1834) (**Figures 3 and 4**) and 25-inch edition OS map (surveyed c.1907) (**Figures 5**). The first edition map reveals that the alignment of the existing local road network, including the R393, was in place at the time of survey of that map. A relatively small number of detached cottages are depicted along the roads in locations which are still occupied by houses today. The field pattern in the area also appears relatively unchanged in relation to its modern layout. A building marked in the location of the current Walshestown Church is labelled 'Mountain Chapel'. The first edition map depicts the ring barrow (WM018-085001-) in Walshestown South as a circular banked feature, while the surviving northern enclosing bank of the ringfort (WM019-087) in Walshestown North is only vaguely depicted in this map edition.

Consultation of the early 20th century 25-inch map indicates that no significant development took place within the subject area during the mid- to late 19th century. One exception is Walshestown Church which is depicted as a cruciform building with a graveyard shown to the west of the church. To the south of the church is a small rectangular building labelled 'Walshestown School'. The 25-inch map also depicts the ring barrow (WM018-085001) in Walshestown South and the truncated ringfort (WM019-087----) south of Ardonagh crossroads in the townland of Walshestown North. Additional subdivision of fields within the subject area is evident in the intervening period between the production of the first edition map and the 25-inch version.

The cartographic review revealed one potential unrecorded archaeological site located c.90m to the southwest of the proposed grid connection route in the townland of Walshestown South. The subcircular feature, which is depicted on the 25-inch map, measures c.18m in diameter and may potentially represent the remains of a ring barrow or small enclosure. It is possible, however, that this feature may also be associated with non-archaeological activity such as quarrying. The feature is also evident on aerial imagery of the subject area.

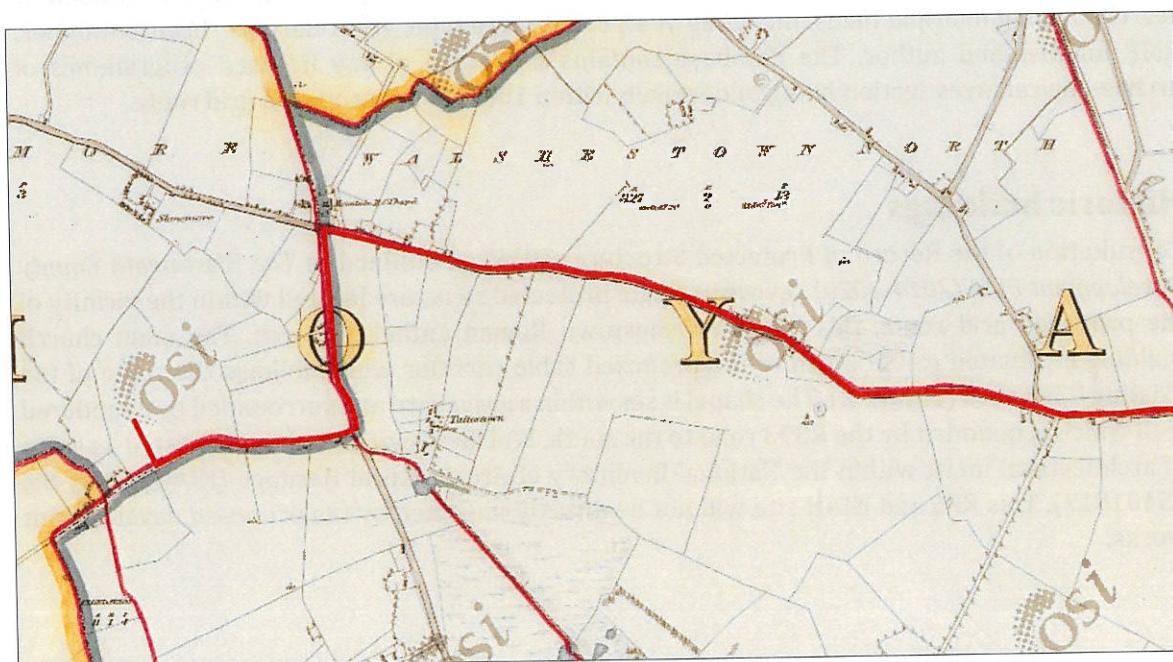


Figure 3: Extract from first edition 6-inch OS map (c.1838) depicting the western half of the subject area and its hinterland

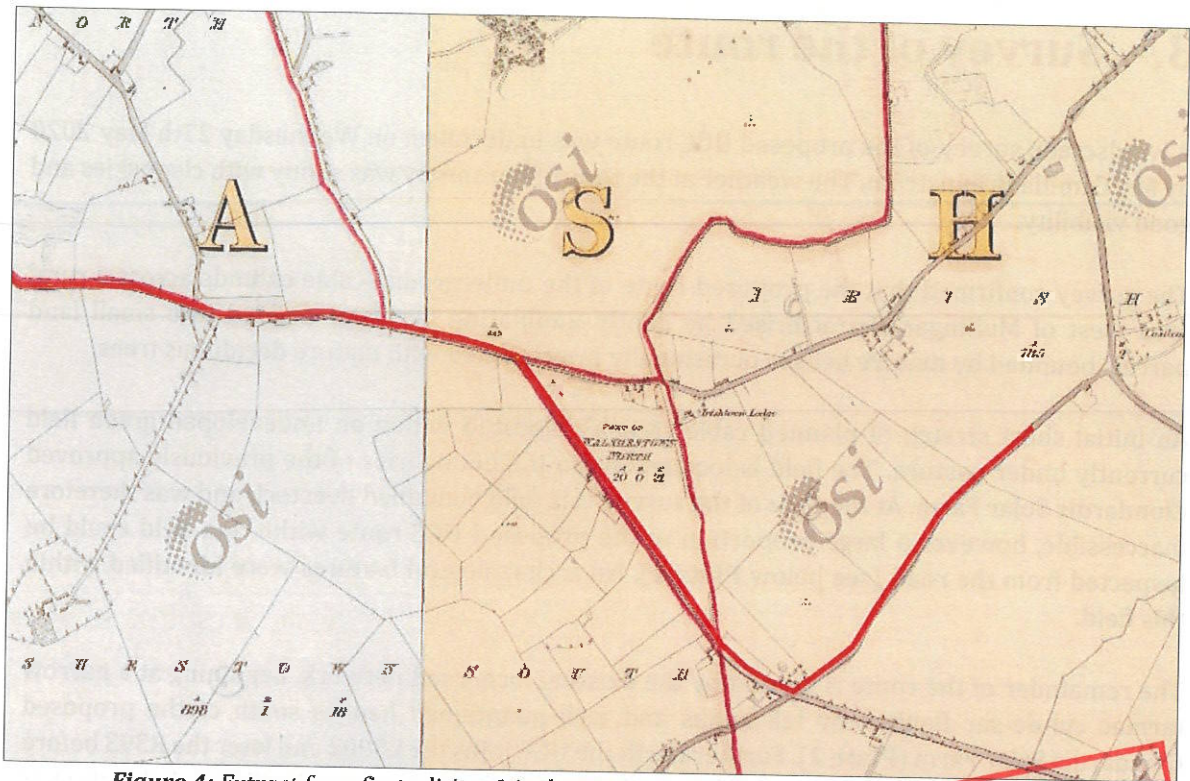


Figure 4: Extract from first edition 6-inch OS map (c.1838) depicting the eastern half of the subject area and its hinterland

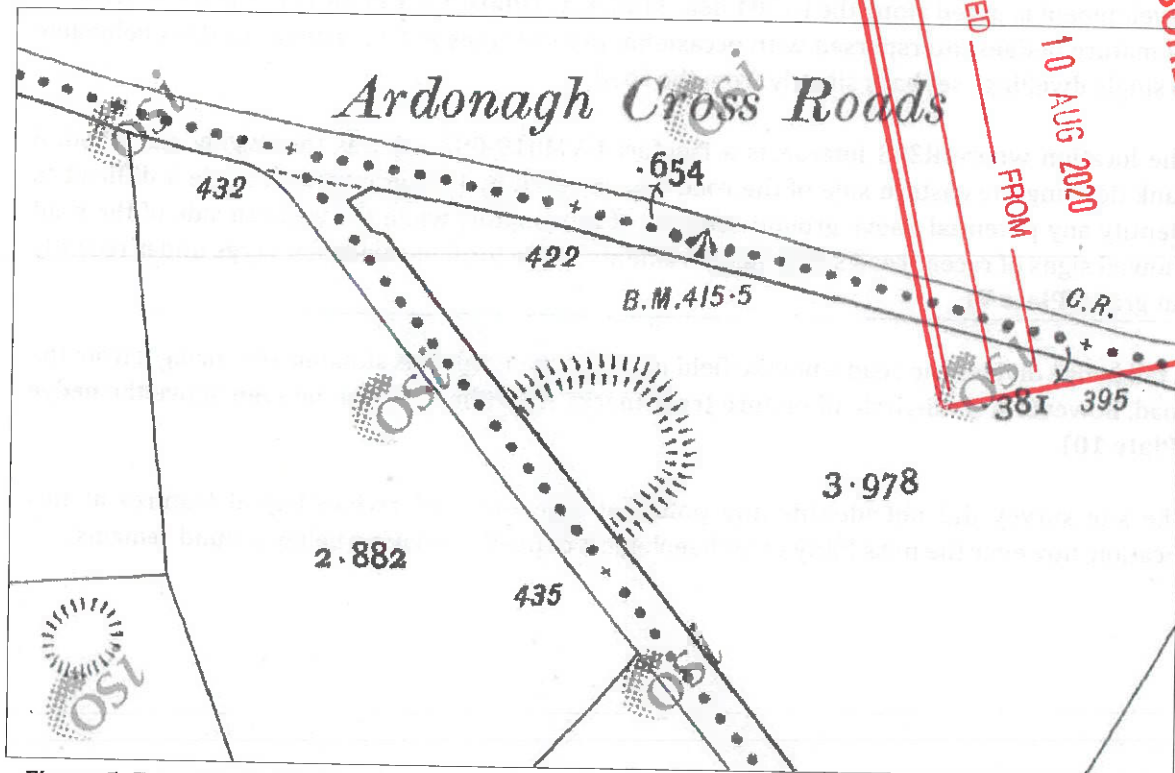


Figure 5: Extract from the 25-inch OS map (surveyed c.1911) depicting the portion of the proposed route which dissects the south-western quadrant of ringfort WM019-087. A potential unrecorded archaeological feature is also depicted in the bottom left of frame; this feature is located c.90m southwest of the proposed route

3. Survey of the route

A windscreen survey of the proposed UGC route was undertaken on Wednesday 27th May 2020 by Ms. Camilla Brännström. The weather at the time of the survey was sunny with clear skies and good visibility.

The survey confirmed that the proposed route of the underground cable extends across a rural area west of Mullingar characterised by gently undulating farmland divided into small land parcels bounded by mature hedges occasionally interspersed with mature deciduous trees.

An initial short stretch of planned cable trench is located within an undeveloped green field currently under pasture. The field is located within the boundaries of the previously approved Clondardis Solar Farm. At the time of the survey this field contained livestock and was therefore inaccessible, however a large proportion of the proposed UGC route within the field could be inspected from the road (see below **Plate 1**). No archaeological features were identified within this field.

The remainder of the route is carried by the existing local road network, beginning at a narrow tarmac cul-de-sac flanked by tall banks and well-maintained hedges south of the proposed Clondardis Solar Farm (**Plate 2**). Further north the UGC joins the L5802 and later the R393 before turning north along the L1701 in the townland of Irishtown where Mullingar Substation is located. The land use does not vary significantly throughout the proposed development route and is largely dominated by agricultural fields interspersed by individual dwellings. Increased ribbon development is noted along the L1701 near Mullingar (**Plate 2 - 8, Plate 11**). The roads are lined by mature hedges interspersed with occasional mature trees and occasional gardens belonging to single dwellings set back slightly from the road.

The location where R393 intersects a ringfort (WM019-087----) was thoroughly examined. A bank defining the eastern side of the road was covered by long grass which made it difficult to identify any potential above ground remains of the ringfort while the western side of the road showed signs of recent road safety improvements in the form of a wide flat verge under recently cut grass (**Plate 9**).

A tall hedge divides the road from the field in which the ringfort is situated, obscuring it from the road, however a semi-circle of mature trees marks its outline and can be seen above the hedge (**Plate 10**).

The site survey did not identify any potential above-ground archaeological features at this location, however the possibility of archaeological deposits surviving below ground remains.



Plate 1: Proposed route of UGC within the boundaries of the previously approved Clondardis Solar Farm development



Plate 2: Laneway forming the townland boundary between the townlands of Slanestown and Slane More, facing SW



Plate 3: Laneway forming the townland boundary between the townlands of Slanestown and Slane More, facing E



Plate 4: View of L5802 south of Walshestown Chapel facing S



Plate 5: View N towards Walshestown Chapel and the junction between R393 and L5802



Plate 6: View of R393 facing E



Plate 7: View from R393 towards ridge containing enclosure WM018-085002 and barrows WM018-085001 and WM018-085003, facing W



Plate 8: Showing location where R393 intersects ringfort WM019-087----, facing SE



Plate 9: Showing location of ringfort WM019-087---- to right and improved sightline to left, facing NW

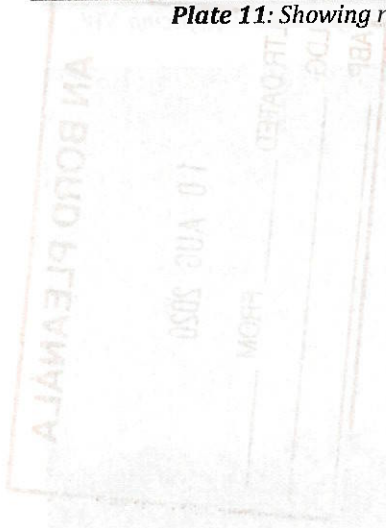


Plate 10: Showing location of ringfort WM019-087---- with location of projected bank marked by ranging rod, facing NE

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Plate 11: Showing ribbon development along L1701 south of Mullingar substation



4. Assessment of impact

The proposed underground cable (UGC) route extends between the previously approved Clondardis Solar Farm (Westmeath County Council Planning reference: 176239) and Irishtown Substation which is located c.2.5km northwest of Mullingar town centre, County Westmeath. Following a review of the available and relevant datasets, this archaeological screening report has identified one archaeological site (as recorded by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland) on the route of the proposed UGC. This site comprises a recorded ringfort (WM019-087----) in the townland of Walshestown North which is in eastern portion of the overall route. The ringfort was dissected by the road which will carry the UGC when the road was constructed in late 18th or early 19th century (see **Figure 6** below). The northern half the enclosing bank of this ringfort survives extant in the field to the immediate north of the route. Although above ground features associated with the ringfort were levelled during the construction of the road, the potential remains for the survival of subsurface archaeological features and artefacts beneath the road strata. As such, without appropriate mitigation, there is potential for **direct, negative impacts** on unrecorded subsurface archaeological features associated with this ringfort a result of the proposed scheme. There are no other recorded archaeological sites located within 50m of the proposed UGC route. Furthermore, neither the desktop assessment or grid route survey identified any potential, unrecorded archaeological sites or features along the route of the proposed UGC.



Figure 6: Graphic depicting the route of the proposed UGC (red line) as it passes through the ZON of ringfort (WM019-087----) in Walshestown North in the eastern portion of the UGC route

Following a review of the available datasets, no other recorded or potential archaeological sites have been identified along the route of the proposed UGC. While the vast majority of the underground cable will be carried by the existing public road network, a short portion of the route, at its westernmost extent, where it emerges from Clondardis Solar Farm, will not be carried by public road. Construction and maintenance of the existing public road network likely resulted in significant disturbance to the substrata underlying the public road, as such, excluding the area within the ZON surrounding ringfort WM019-087----, **the archaeological potential along the vast majority of the UGC can be considered to be low.**

However, similar levels of disturbance would not have occurred along the westernmost portion of the route (which is not carried by the public road), as such, this portion of the route can be considered to possess a **low to moderate archaeological potential.**

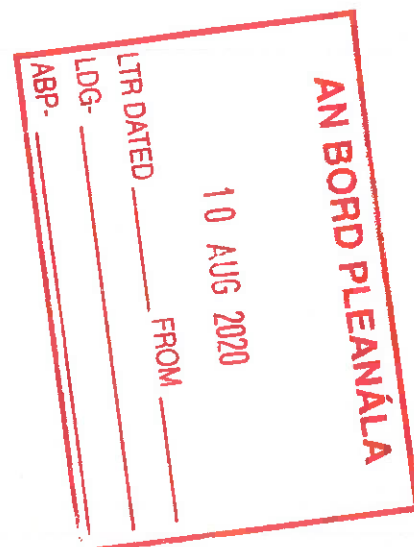
This screening report has identified no Recorded Protected Structures (RPS) or NIAH sites within the footprint of the proposed scheme. Therefore, the proposed scheme will **have no direct impacts** on the recorded architectural heritage resource.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

This archaeological screening report, comprising a desktop assessment and windscreen survey of the route of the proposed UGC, has revealed that the vast majority of the UGC route can be considered to possess a low archaeological potential. As construction and maintenance of the existing public road network likely resulted in significant disturbance to the substrata underlying the public road, **no archaeological mitigation** is recommended for the portions of the UGC route which are carried by the public road and which **do not extend** through the *Zone of Notification* (ZON) of any recorded archaeological site.

Portions of the UGC route which are not carried by the public road and which may impact on less disturbed or greenfield areas can be considered to be of low to moderate archaeological potential. It is recommended that any groundworks associated with the installation of the UGC route (including those for joint bays, communication boxes etc.) that impact on undisturbed or greenfield areas be subject to an **archaeological watching brief**.

Finally, this archaeological screening report has identified one archaeological site (as recorded by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland) on the route of the proposed UGC. This site comprises a recorded ringfort (WM019-087---) in the townland of Walshestown North which is in eastern portion of the overall route. While the south-western quadrant of this monument was truncated when this road was constructed in the late 18th or early 19th century, the potential remains for the survival of subsurface archaeological features and artefacts associated with the ringfort beneath the road strata. As such, it is recommended that all ground excavations associated the UGC which are undertaken within the *Zone of Notification* of this monument be subject to **archaeological monitoring**. The proposed UGC route extends through the ZON of this monument in a northwest to southeast direction, entering the 120m diameter ZON at ITM Grid co-ordinate 640627, 754507 and exiting at ITM Grid co-ordinate 640698, 754413.



6. References

Published sources

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Simms, A., Clarke, H. B., & Gillespie, R. (1992) (eds.) *Irish Historic Town Atlas Vol 5: Mullingar*.
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Internet resources

<https://www.archaeology.ie/monument-protection/>

<http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>

<http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/ourservices/planning/developmentplans/countydevelopmentplan2014-2020/>

<http://www.excavations.ie/>

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<https://www.logainm.ie/en/>



Appendix: Archaeological inventory entries

WM018-085001-

Class: Barrow - ring-barrow

Townland: WALSHSTOWN SOUTH

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: Surveyed in 2012 and described by McGuinness (2012, 39-40) as following: 'Very well preserved, roughly circular ring-barrow (Diam. 25.5m N-S x 25m E-W) composed of very stony earth, situated on upper E-facing slope of low hill. Monument comprises a central mound (base diam. 11.3m N-S x 10m E-W) surrounded by a flat-bottomed ditch, 2.7-3.2m in width, and a very stony outer bank, 3.5-4m in width from base of ditch to ground level outside. On S side is an irregularly shaped gap in the bank 5m in length, apparently due to later disturbance. Central mound, which appears to be raised slightly above level of surrounding ground, rises up to 1.5m above base of ditch on E side, being higher on N and E sides than S and W sides. Bank rises up to 1.4m above base of ditch on W side, being higher on S and W sides than N and E sides. Maximum depth of ditch below and perpendicular to a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform is 0.95m, and the distribution of such depths (N: 95cm; S: 85cm; E: 94cm; W: 95cm) indicates a fairly uniform depth around its circumference. Running SW from W side of barrow is a scarp or possibly a low bank 1.5m wide, the ground to NW of it being lower than that to SE; at 15.5m from the barrow it kinks to SSE, running as a scarp for another 10.5m to another barrow on summit of hill (WM018-085003-) 20m to WSW of ring-barrow. Running E from this mound in a very gently S-curving line for 20m is another low scarp, the ground to S being 0.3m lower than that to N and dropping down quite steeply. E end of this scarp is 7m SW of ring-barrow. These two scarps or low banks are identified as an 'Enclosure' in RMP (WM018-085002-), and although the second scarp does not join onto the ring-barrow, the overall effect is that the flattish summit of this low hill has been defined by a scarp, linking the mound at highest part of hill to the ring-barrow on slope of hill to ENE.

WM018-085002-

Class: Enclosure

Townland: WALSHSTOWN SOUTH

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: Situated on the top of a steep hill, in pasture, directly overlooking a steep sided valley to S with extensive views in all directions. Part of a complex of three monuments whereby ring barrow (WM018-085001-) is abutting to E, on the NE shoulder of the hill and mound barrow (WM018-085003-) is at the SW corner, on the SW shoulder of the hill. Not depicted on the 1837 ed. OS 6-inch map or the revised 1913 ed. OS 25-inch map. Monument described in 1980 as a rectangular-shaped area (approx. dims. 20m E-W; 16m N-S) enclosed by a low earthen bank, which is much worn in places and falls steeply to S. On the E side the bank abuts the ring barrow (WM018-085001-). Mound barrow (WM018-085003-) is located partially in the SW corner. Outline of rectangular-shaped enclosure is clearly visible on Digital Globe aerial photography.

Surveyed in 2012 and described by McGuinness (2012, 39-40) as following: 'Very well preserved, roughly circular ring-barrow (WM018-085001-) composed of very stony earth, situated on upper E-facing slope of low hill. Monument comprises a central mound surrounded by a flat-bottomed ditch, 2.7-3.2m in width, and a very stony outer bank, 3.5-4m in width from base of ditch to

ground level outside. Central mound, which appears to be raised slightly above level of surrounding ground, rises up to 1.5m above base of ditch on E side, being higher on N and E sides than S and W sides. Running E from this mound in a very gently S-curving line for 20m is another low scarp, the ground to S being 0.3m lower than that to N and dropping down quite steeply. E end of this scarp is 7m SW of ring-barrow. These two scarps or low banks are identified as an 'Enclosure' in RMP (WM018-085002-), and although the second scarp does not join onto the ring-barrow, the overall effect is that the flattish summit of this low hill has been defined by a scarp, linking the mound at highest part of hill to the ring-barrow on slope of hill to ENE.

WM018-085003-

Class: Barrow - mound barrow

Townland: WALSHSTOWN SOUTH

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: Surveyed in 2012 and described by McGuinness (2012, 40) as following:

'Subcircular, approximately flat-topped earthen mound (dims. 4.5 N-S x 6.1 E-W), on summit of low hill 20m to WSW of ring-barrow (WM018-085001-) and site of OS benchmark on older editions of OS 6" map. S side of mound has been heavily eroded by cattle in recent times, so that it currently has a D-shape, and difference between N-S and E-W diameters—over 1.5m—suggests that a substantial piece of the mound may have been removed. The curve of the mound suggests an original N-S diameter of up to 6.5m. Projecting from eroded S side is the end of a flat, horizontal slab 0.23m in width. Height of mound on intact sides is up to 0.66m. Mound appears to be linked by scarps to nearby ring-barrow (WM018-085001-).

WM019-087----

Class: Ringfort - rath

Townland: WALSHSTOWN NORTH (Part of)

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: Situated on the summit of a prominent steep-sided hill, in pasture with good views of Lough Owel to N, E and S. Depicted on the 1913 ed. OS 25-inch map as a semi-circular shaped earthwork (dims. 33m NW-SE) which is cut by the public road across the SW sector. Monument described in 1972 as a partially levelled earthwork enclosed by a steep earthen bank and traces of a fosse from NW-N-E-S only. The monument has been levelled from S-W-NW where it has been cut by the public road running NW-SE. The bank is best preserved from NW-N-NE, is very slight from NE-E-ESE and has been levelled from ESE-SE-S. The remains of a wide fosse are visible from NW-N-NNE and with traces at ENE. The original entrance is not recognisable. The interior has a slight ENE-facing slope and there are traces of cultivation ridges running ENE-WSW. Monument is visible today as the arc of a tree-lined earthwork on Digital Globe aerial photography.